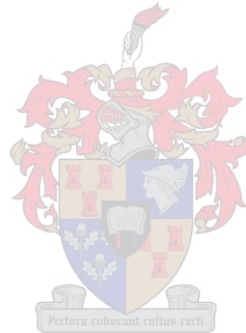


HEAD, HEART, AND HAND
The Huguenot Seminary and College and the Construction of
Middle Class Afrikaner Femininity, 1873-1910

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THESIS PRESENTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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Supervisor: Dr Sandra Swart

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.



Signature

Date

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the production of different forms of Afrikaner ‘femininity’ at the Huguenot Seminary and College in Wellington, between 1873 and 1910. Founded by Andrew Murray, the moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), specifically to train Dutch-Afrikaner girls as teachers and missionaries, the school was based on a model of women’s education developed at the Mount Holyoke Seminary in Connecticut and the majority of the teachers who worked at Huguenot until the 1920s were thus American-born and trained. The Huguenot Seminary proved to be an enormous success: it was constantly in need of extra room to house its overflow of pupils, the girls came near the top of the Colony’s teaching examinations from 1875 onwards, and its associated College – founded in 1898 – was one of the first institutions in South Africa where young women could study for university degrees. It had a profound impact on the lives of a considerable proportion of white, bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaner – and English-speaking – women during this period of rapid and wide-ranging transformation in South African society and politics.

This thesis evaluates the extent to and manner in which Huguenot created particular Afrikaner ‘femininities’. The discussion begins with an exploration of the relationship between the Seminary, the Mount Holyoke system of girls’ education, and the DRC’s evangelicalism during the religious ‘revivals’ sweeping the Cape Colony in 1874-1875 and 1884-1885, paying particular attention to the teachers’ attempts to foster a quasi-religious community at the Seminary, and to the pupils’ responses to the school’s intense religiosity. It moves on to a discussion of the discourses surrounding the ideal of the educated woman that arose in the Seminary and College’s annuals between 1895 and 1910, identifying three key forms of ‘femininity’ promoted in magazines’ articles, short stories, and poetry. Finally, the thesis examines the impact of the growth of an Afrikaner ethnicity (specifically in the form of the First Afrikaans Language Movement), the South African War (1899-1902), and Alfred Milner’s South Africanism, on the ‘femininity’ espoused by the Seminary and College between 1874 and 1910.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis ondersoek die voortbrenging van verskillende vorms van ‘Afrikaner-vroulikheid’ aan die Huguenote-Seminarie en Kollege te Wellington, tussen 1873 en 1910. Dié inrigting is deur Andrew Murray, die moderator van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) gestig, spesifiek vir die opleiding van Hollands-Afrikaanse meisies as onderwyseresse en sendelinge. Die model vir vroue-opvoeding waarop die skool gebaseer was, is by die Mount Holyoke Seminary in Connecticut ontwikkel. Die meerderheid leerkragte aan die Seminarie was dus tot in die 1920’s gebore Amerikaners wat in Amerika opgelei is. Die Huguenote-seminarie was uiters suksesvol: dit het voortdurend meer ruimte benodig om die groot aantal leerlinge te huisves; die meisies se prestasies het hulle vanaf 1875 ná aan die bopunt van die slaagsyfers van die Kolonie se onderwyseksamens geplaas; en die verwante Kollege – wat in 1898 gestig is – was een van die eerste inrigtings waar jong vrouens in Suid-Afrika met die oog op ’n universiteitsgraad kon studeer. Dit het ’n diepgaande indruk op die lewens van ’n aansienlike verhouding blanke, bourgeois Hollands-Afrikaanse – en Engelssprekende – vrouens gedurende hierdie tydperk van snelle en verreikende transformasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap en politiek gehad.

Die tesis evalueer die mate waarin en wyse waarop die Huguenote-inrigting spesifieke modelle van Afrikaner-vroulikheid geskep het. Die bespreking word ingelei met ’n ondersoek na die verhouding tussen die Seminarie, die Mount Holyoke-stelsel van onderrig vir meisies en die NGK se evangeliese leer gedurende die godsdienstige ‘herlewings’ wat van 1874-1875 en 1884-1885 dwarsdeur die Kaapkolonie plaasgevind het, terwyl aandag in besonder gewy word aan die leerkragte se pogings om ’n kwasi-godsdienstige gemeenskap aan die Seminarie te bevorder, en aan die leerlinge se reaksie op die skool se intense religiositeit. Dan volg ’n bespreking van die gesprekke rondom die ideaal van ’n opgevoede vrou wat tussen 1895 en 1910 in die Seminarie en die Kollege se jaarboeke na vore gekom het en drie sleutelvorme van ‘vroulikheid’ wat in tydskrifartikels, kortverhale en poësie bevorder is, word geïdentifiseer. In die laaste instansie ondersoek die tesis die impak wat die groei van Afrikaner-etnisiteit (spesifiek in die vorm van die Eerste Afrikaanse Taalbeweging), die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog (1899-1902) en Alfred Milner se Suid-Afrikanisme op die ‘vroulikheid’ wat tussen 1874 en 1910 deur die Seminarium aangeneem is, gehad het.

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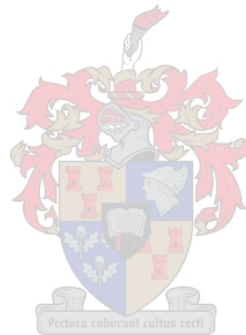
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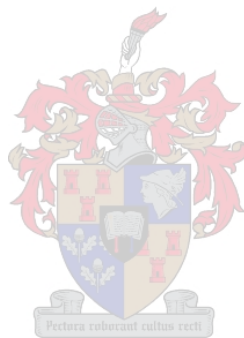
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INTRODUCTION

Education, Gender, and Colonialism

The 1904-1905 Calendar for the Huguenot Seminary and College states,

The aim and purpose of the Huguenot College and Seminary is to give its pupils a sound education, and at the same time so to mould and form the character that the young ladies may go out with an earnest purpose, and thus be better fitted for any sphere in life. This is the Huguenot Ideal.¹

A century later, the website for Bloemhof Girls' High School – founded by the Huguenot Seminary in 1875 to provide an education to the white girls of Stellenbosch – declares that it stands for '*[d]ie ontwikkeling van die identiteit en volwassenheid van die leerders tot verfynde jong dames wat hulle plek op alle terreine van die samelewing kan volstaan*'² ('the development of the identity and maturity of the learners so as to produce sophisticated young ladies who can take their place on every terrain within society'). On the homepage for La Rochelle Girls' High School in Paarl – acquired by the Huguenot Seminary as a branch school in 1890 – the headmistress writes,

It is our aim at La Rochelle to send a well-balanced, mature, young lady into the world. She is an individual who possesses a sound set of values, is determined to make a positive contribution to society and is able to meet the growing demands of modern life with confidence.³

The similarities between these three mission statements are striking: each of the schools emphasises that it aims to transform its pupils into 'ladies' and that, as a result, the education that it provides is as much about the formation of character – the inculcation of the 'right' set of values, the endorsement of a particular identity – as it is about academic achievement. Of course, today, this conceptualisation of the role of the school within society is by no means limited to Bloemhof and La Rochelle. The most cursory overview of a number of websites for both independent and former

¹ Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905 (Wellington: Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904), 12.

² Bloemhof Girls' High School, www.bloemhofschooll.co.za/staanvir.htm. Accessed 30 April 2005.

³ La Rochelle Girls' High School, www.larries.wcape.school.za/index.html. Accessed 30 April 2005.

model-C schools – all ‘elite’ schools – reveals that all of these institutions desire to shape young ladies and gentlemen to take their places as meaningful contributors to society.⁴

That this objective has not changed substantially in over a century shows up the extent to which schools catering for, and maintained by, the middle classes have retained one of the central features of education in the nineteenth century: ensuring the transmission of the ‘appropriate political perceptions’, the ‘associated cultural beliefs’, and the ‘related social attitudes’ to society’s youth.⁵ The role of the school within, particularly, bourgeois society was conceptualised as being one that guaranteed the continuance of the community’s values and beliefs from one generation to the next. In this way, schools frequently acted as social gatekeepers and boundary-markers – not only did they preserve class, gender, and, in colonial settings, racial divisions, but they perpetuated this status quo.⁶ As Robert Morrell has written in his study of the production of middle class settler masculinity in colonial Natal, ‘Natal’s elite boarding schools were powerful for symbolic rather than functionally educational reasons. They were signifiers of settler values. They were bastions of civilisation against the imagined threat of octopus-like black barbarity.’⁷ The analysis of elite schools opens up, then, a window onto the workings of nineteenth century middle class society and this is particularly true for colonial societies, where these schools formed part of efforts to establish and preserve social, political, and racial hierarchies.⁸

⁴ The websites for the independent (such as St Johns College in Johannesburg, www.stjcollege.com/ and Cape Town’s Herschel Girls’ School, www.herschel.co.za) and former model-C schools (like Pretoria Boys’ High, www.boyshigh.com/school/index.php and Rhenish Girls’ High in Stellenbosch, www.rhenish.co.za/General/GeneralHome.htm) are identical. Both Bloemhof and La Rochelle are former model-C schools, meaning that while they follow the state’s curriculum, they maintain a degree of independence in their choice of teaching staff, subjects, roster, extramural activities and so on. Peter Randall compares independent and former model-C schools to the public and grammar schools, respectively, of Britain. Peter Randall, *Little England on the Veld: The English Private School System in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982), 10-12.

⁵ J.A. Mangam, ‘Introduction: Imperialism, History and Education,’ in *‘Benefits Bestowed’? Education and British Imperialism*, edited by J.A. Mangam (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 5.

⁶ Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880-1920* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2001), 48-49; A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Arrow Books, [2002] 2003), 277-294.

⁷ Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen*, 49.

⁸ Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen*, 48. See, for example, Patrick A. Dunae, ‘Education, Emigration and Empire: The Colonial College, 1887-1905,’ in *‘Benefits Bestowed’? Education and British Imperialism*, edited by J.A. Mangam (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 193-210; Ann

The case for the significance of boys' schools in the entrenchment of the colonial order is, perhaps, more easily made than that for girls' education: it was, after all, schools like the South African College (1829) and Diocesan College (1849) in Cape Town, St Andrew's in Grahamstown (1855), and Michaelhouse (1896) in Natal that produced the army officers, civil servants, businessmen, and lawyers that upheld the system of colonial government.⁹ However, as R.W. Connell has written, 'Gender relations, the relations among people and groups organised through the reproductive arena, form one of the major structures of all documented societies';¹⁰ as colonialism has been studied from the perspectives of class and race, so the inclusion of gender in the analysis of colonialism allows for a more profound understanding of colonial societies.¹¹ Schools, as one of the social institutions in which gendered identities are created, contested, and imposed, occupy, thus, a particularly important position in the formation of colonial masculinities and femininities – and because of their status, the notions of gender emanating from elite schools have the potential to be exceptionally powerful.¹² Morrell, for example, has demonstrated the complexity of the relationship between settler masculinity and British colonial rule in Natal, showing the centrality of elite boys' boarding schools in contributing to the production of this masculinity.

Little research has been done about the role of elite girls' schools in the construction of femininity within colonial South Africa, and that which has been written has tended to focus on the experiences of African and English-speaking girls.¹³

Beck, 'Colonial Policy and Education in British East Africa, 1900-1950,' *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (May 1966): 115-138; Roger G. Thomas, 'Education in Northern Ghana, 1906-1940: A Study in Colonial Paradox,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1974): 427-467.

⁹ Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen*, 49.

¹⁰ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 72.

¹¹ See Helen Bradford, 'Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and its Frontier Zone, c. 1806-70,' *Journal of African History*, vol. 37 (1996): 351-370; Robert Morrell, 'Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* vol. 24, no. 4 (December 1998): 605-630.

¹² Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen*, 14-15; R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 191-193.

¹³ On the education of African women, see Heather Hughes, "'A Lighthouse for African Womanhood": Inanda Seminary, 1869-1945,' in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, edited by Cheryl Walker (Cape Town and London: David Philip and James Currey, 1990), 197-220; Deborah Gaitskell, 'Race, Gender and Imperialism: A Century of Black Girls' Education in South Africa,' in *'Benefits Bestowed'? Education and British Imperialism*, edited by J.A. Mangam (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 150-173; Anne Mager, 'Girls' Wars, Mission Institutions and the Reproduction of the Educated Elite in the Eastern Cape, 1945-1959,' *Perspectives in Education*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1992/1993):

While studies have been done on individual schools for Afrikaans girls,¹⁴ nothing has appeared on their contribution to the construction of Afrikaner femininities. In her thesis on the *Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging* (ACVV – Afrikaans Christian Women’s Society), Marijke du Toit remarks that ‘very little work has been done on the women’s seminaries that drew Afrikaans-Dutch students from the late nineteenth century.’¹⁵

It is this lacuna which my thesis seeks to address. Focussing on the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington, the first school in South Africa established specifically to teach Dutch-Afrikaner girls, this thesis investigates the production of different forms of ‘femininity’ at the institution, and its related College, between 1873 and 1910, examining the extent to which Huguenot complied with or contested dominant notions of ideal Dutch-Afrikaner womanhood during this period of rapid and wide-ranging transformation in South African society and politics.¹⁶

The Huguenot Seminary and College

On Monday, 20 January 1874, the usually sleepy Boland village of Wellington was filled to overflowing with ‘anxious papas and mamas with daughters whose hearts went pity-pat.’¹⁷ The occasion was the eagerly-anticipated opening of the Huguenot Seminary, a boarding school dedicated to providing a Christian education to the young women of the, predominantly Dutch-Afrikaner, white, middle class community of the

3-20. On the education of English-speaking girls, see Pamela Ryan, “‘College Girls Don’t Faint’: The Legacy of Elsewhere,” *JLS/TLW*, vol. 20, nos. 1-2 (June 2004): 30-31; Sylvia Vietzen, *A History of Education for European girls in Natal with Particular Reference to the Establishment of some Leading Schools, 1837-1902* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1973); Edna Bradlow, ‘Women and Education in Nineteenth-Century South Africa: The Attitudes and Experiences of Middle-class English-speaking Females at the Cape,’ *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 28 (1993): 119-150.

¹⁴ See, for example, J.J.F. Joubert, ‘Gesiedenis van Bloemhof’ (M.Ed. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1945); C.F. Booysen, ‘Gesiedenis van die La Rochelle Hoëre Skool, Paarl’ (B.Ed. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1922).

¹⁵ Marijke du Toit, ‘Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism: A Social History of the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging, c.1870-1939’ (D.Phil. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1996), 9.

¹⁶ I take the term ‘Dutch-Afrikaner’ from Marijke du Toit’s ‘Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism,’ to refer to the Cape’s middle class Dutch population – consisting of a growing number of professionals, successful shop-keepers, and wealthy farmers – as it negotiated an identity that was no longer exclusively European, yet distinct from the English-speaking and indigenous inhabitants of the Colony during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

¹⁷ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, 14 January 1874, Dutch Reformed Church Archive, Huguenot Seminary Collection (hereafter DRCA, HSC), K-Div 615.

Cape Colony. It was the project of Andrew Murray (1828-1917), the hugely influential moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) between 1862 and 1897, and was in response to what he believed to be the dearth of academically-rigorous, Christian girls' education in the Cape Colony.¹⁸

The founding of the school did, though, coincide with a generally heightened awareness of the plight of the Colony's middle class girls. Before the 1870s, middle class girls were, generally, educated at home, and usually by a governess.¹⁹ In terms of state education, in 1859 measures were instituted to encourage the training of female teachers, culminating in the creation of the fairly rudimentary 1872 Elementary Teachers' Examination to equip young women to teach. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, state schools aimed specifically at girls – teaching reading and writing in English, Dutch, arithmetic, needlework, geography, history, accounting, and household management – were founded, but these were never of a particularly high standard.²⁰ There were, though, a number of private girls' schools in existence; the Rhenish Institute in Stellenbosch had been founded by Rhenish missionaries for the education of their daughters in 1860;²¹ the Paarl Ladies' Seminary had been established sometime between 1861 and 1870 by a private individual, Pieter J. Hugo, and attracted a fairly large number of students;²² in 1871, the Springfield Convent and St Cyprian's School were founded by, respectively, the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches in Cape Town – and the Good Hope Seminary followed in 1873; other private schools operated in, among other places, Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, George, and Kimberley.²³ The standards at these schools were considerably higher than at the state, as well as the smaller 'Dame', schools, and, as a result, charged fees that the majority of parents would not be able to afford. While

¹⁸ The best source on Murray's life remains J. du Plessis's *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa* (London, Edinburgh, and New York: Marshall Brothers, 1919).

¹⁹ Bradlow, 'Women and Education in Nineteenth-Century South Africa,' 125-126.

²⁰ Ilse Hedwig Weder, 'Die Geskiedenis van die Opvoeding van Meisies in Suid-Afrika tot 1910' (M.Ed. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1938), 12-16.

²¹ For a brief history of the Rhenish Institute, later the Rhenish School, see *Rhenish – Our Century, 1860-1960*, Issued to Commemorate the Foundation of the Rhenish Girls' School (Stellenbosch: 1960).

²² The Paarl Ladies' Seminary was renamed La Rochelle in 1912 and became a state-funded girls' primary and high school. See *La Rochelle, Paarl, 1860-1960*, Uitgegee by Geleentheid van die Eeufees van die La Rochelle Meisieskool (Paarl: 1960), and Booyesen.

²³ Weder, 19-27.

Dutch-Afrikaans girls did attend these schools, concern, specifically, for their education was limited to Murray.

One of the issues that concerned him most was the need for well-trained teachers throughout the Colony and, particularly, in its rural areas. Moreover, being the leader of the DRC's evangelical wing, Murray was motivated by a profound desire to use education to convert adults and children to Protestant Christianity. It was partly for this reason that he decided to apply to the Mount Holyoke Seminary in South Hadley, Connecticut – a school originally established in 1837 to train female teachers and missionaries – for teachers to found a similar institution in his parish. In 1872, he was presented with a copy of Fidelity Fiske's biography of the founder of Mount Holyoke, *Recollections of Mary Lyon, with Selections from Her Instruction to the Pupils at Mt Holyoke Female Seminary* (1866) by a close friend, Miss Elliott.²⁴ The book made an impression immediately. Murray explained why he was so interested in Lyon's vision in 1898,

The first thing that struck me was the wonderful way in which she gave the head and the heart and hand an equal place in her training. She believed that women should receive the best intellectual training possible to enable them to fill their place aright. With this she believed the cultivation of a truly moral and religious character to be of supreme importance...With these high aims in head and heart, she combined most remarkably the culture of the hand. She honoured domestic work, not only as a duty to be willingly accepted when it was a necessity, but as a means of developing one's whole nature...and as fitting for true independence, and power to rule or help others.²⁵

The first two American teachers from Mount Holyoke arrived at the Cape at the end of 1873. Abbie Park Ferguson (1837-1919), born in Massachusetts, was the daughter of a Congregational minister and had worked in church schools for poor boys in Connecticut. Anna E. Bliss (1843-1925) was also the offspring of a Congregational preacher and was raised in Vermont. She had taught from a young age and professed an interest in mission work.²⁶ These two women brought to Wellington the curriculum, rules, roster, traditions, even the architectural plans, of the South Hadley school and met with resounding success: from its first year, the Huguenot Seminary – which provided what was,

²⁴ Du Plessis, 266-270; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 25 December 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

²⁵ Andrew Murray, 'The Mount of Sources,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 2. The school was called the Huguenot Seminary in homage to the French Huguenots who had settled in the Boland.

²⁶ Geo. P. Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot (Being the History of the Huguenot Institution at Wellington from the Intimate Papers of the Builders)* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1927), 5-10.

essentially, a secondary school education and teachers' training to young women between the ages of fifteen and twenty – was constantly in need of extra room to house its overflow of pupils, and the girls came near the top of the Colony's teaching examinations from 1875 onwards. Perhaps the best summary of the Seminary's growth appears in its Calendar for 1904 and 1905,

The growth of the Institution has been rapid – a success from the very beginning – and demand for advanced education has hastened the foundation of a collegiate department. This was recognised as a College in 1898, although college work had been done previous to that time.

The following different departments are at present in operation: – the Huguenot College, doing the work prescribed by the University of the Cape of Good Hope, preparing for its examinations in common with other Colleges of the country, and open to all who have passed the Matriculation Examination of the University; Huguenot Seminary (Girls' High School) at Wellington, which prepares for college work; the Department of Music; the Kindergarten; the [Teachers'] Training College and School under the direction of Mr James Harvie; the Huguenot Branch Seminary of the Paarl (sic), and the Huguenot Branch Seminary, Grey Town, Natal²⁷

By this time, Huguenot accepted girls as young as five in its kindergarten and opened its College to any woman who had passed the matriculation examination. It possessed seven purpose-built school buildings and dormitories, a well-stocked library, museum, herbarium, laboratories, gymnasium, and telescope (Ferguson is considered to be one of the pioneers of astronomy in South Africa).²⁸ In 1907, the Huguenot College Act was promulgated, placing the College on an equal footing with the other tertiary institutions in the country, and decreeing that by 1913 it would be an all-female College (men from the district were permitted to enrol up to that date).²⁹ The University College, as it became known in 1920, provided a university education to young women until 1950, when it was closed because of the small numbers of girls it was attracting. The government sold the College's buildings to the DRC, which opened its own Huguenot College the following year, but only offering courses in social and missionary work. The Teachers' Training College, admitting both men and women, was renamed the Wellington Teaching College during the 1920s and eventually became independent from Huguenot. The Seminary amalgamated with the Wellington Public Boys' School in 1954 to form the Huguenot High School. A Mission Training Institute for both sexes – under the care of Ferguson's

²⁷ Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 5-6.

²⁸ Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 7-11.

²⁹ Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1910 (Wellington: Huguenot College and Seminary, 1909), 3-17.

brother, George – was founded in 1877, but become a DRC concern in 1904. It closed in 1962.³⁰ Huguenot also established a series of branch seminaries – in Stellenbosch, Graaff-Reinet, Swellendam, Cradock, Paarl, Bethlehem, and Greytown, Natal – run by American teachers and the school’s alumni.³¹ Bloemhof and La Rochelle are two of these schools which remain existent.

The schools in the Boland, Karoo, Orange Free State, and Natal were not the sole American educational concerns in South Africa. In Natal, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions – to which Mount Holyoke was closely connected – had founded the Amanzimtoti Seminary for African boys in 1853 and the Inanda Seminary for girls in 1869. Inanda aimed to provide African young women with an education that combined academic and practical subjects, like sewing, cooking, and gardening, so as to train up a generation of women fit to be wives of (African) teachers and missionaries. Although there was some contact between Inanda and Huguenot – the daughters of many of the American missionaries there were sent to Wellington – this Seminary is beyond the scope of this study.³²

Ferguson was the first principal of the Seminary, and she was also the first president of the whole institution. She held that post – as well as being in charge of the College – between 1901 and 1910. In 1899, Bliss became the principal of the Seminary, and succeeded Ferguson as president in 1911, a post she held until 1920. Both these women had an enormous impact on both women’s education and missionary work in South Africa. They dominated Huguenot for the fifty years during which they had contact with the institution and, in many ways, their interests determined the future of the Seminary and College. The importance to which Ferguson attached to missionary work, for example, brought about the founding of the Huguenot Missionary Society (HMS) in 1878 which was to become, in 1889, the *Vrouwen Zending Bond* (VZB – Women’s Mission Society), one of the biggest Afrikaans women’s organisations of the twentieth

³⁰ H.W. van Niekerk, ‘Huguenote-Kollege: Die Eerste Monument vir die Franse Hugenote,’ *Opvoeding en Kultuur* (March 1989): 20-23.

³¹

³² See Hughes, 197-220 and Ryan, 30-31; Greg Cuthbertson and Louise Kretzschmar, “‘I Don’t Sing for People Who Do Not See Me’”: Women, Gender and the Historiography of Christianity in South Africa,’ in *Gender and Christian Religion: Papers Read at the 1996 Summer Meeting and the 1997 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, edited by R.N. Swanson (Woodbridge and New York: The Boydell Press, 1998), 496-497.

century. Indeed, the two women's religiosity – which, especially by the late 1890s, was not shared by all of the staff – caused Huguenot to retain its reputation as a relatively religious institution even after the founding of the College. Between 1873 and 1910, around forty American women taught either at Huguenot or one of its affiliated schools. Many returned to the United States upon retirement, but a number remained in the country, some marrying into the community (most notably, Blanche Ingraham who married into the prominent Jannasch family in Stellenbsoch in 1878, and Ella Dudley, who married Thomas Walker of the Victoria College in 1901).

Between 1874 and 1897, roughly 1293 girls had attended the Huguenot Seminary; the real number is probably a little higher because Huguenot's records do not include the day girls from the village who also enrolled at the Seminary.³³ In 1895, Ferguson estimated that four hundred girls had received teachers' certificates, while five hundred had taught.³⁴ The numbers at the school during the South African War are more difficult to ascertain, as record-keeping for the period is fairly limited. Between 1903 and 1910, though, about two thousand girls enrolled at Huguenot.³⁵ Thirty-one students received BA degrees from the College between 1898 and 1908, although more than this were enrolled at the College but did not graduate.³⁶ A total of three thousand young women over a period of thirty-six years is not a very high number, but not once in their letters do the teachers lament this. In fact, it would appear that in comparison to the other girls' schools in the area, this was an average total.³⁷ It must also be kept in mind that the numbers of children who attended school until the introduction of compulsory education between the ages of seven and fourteen for whites in 1905 were exceptionally low; in 1883, for example, only one sixth of white children (of whom there were roughly 50 000) of school-going age were attending school regularly in the Colony.³⁸

³³ These figures are taken from the 'Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4, (1898): 59-89.

³⁴ A.P. Ferguson, 'Our Huguenot Seminary,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 1 (1895): 23.

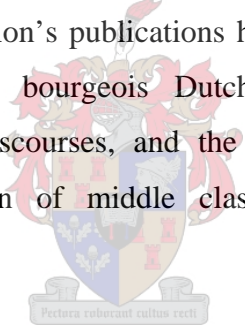
³⁵ Calendar of the Huguenot College, Wellington, 1910 (Wellington: Huguenot College, 1909), 18.

³⁶ Calendar of the Huguenot College, Wellington, 1910, 123-125.

³⁷ Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 7.

³⁸ A.L. Behr and R.G. Macmillan, *Education in South Africa*, second edition (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1971), 115; Ernst G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa (1652-1922): A Critical Survey of the Development of Educational Administration in the Cape, Natal, Transvaal and the Orange Free State* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Juta, 1925), 100.

Nevertheless, the popularity of the institution – except for a brief period during the South African War – was such that between 1874 and 1910 it received more applications for places than it could accommodate. Huguenot submitted more pupils than any other school for the teachers' and matriculation examinations,³⁹ and also sent out teachers and missionaries every year who founded schools for young women in other parts of the country, thus disseminating its vision for girls' education. Its position as the school of choice for the Cape Dutch-Afrikaans population's daughters meant that Huguenot, more than any other girls' school, exerted an influence within that community. The strength of its connection with two significant women's organisations – the VZB and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) – allowed it to reach a wider audience of women who were not Huguenot alumni. Furthermore, the closeness of its association with the DRC and its leadership lent the school a great deal of status in the eyes of the church's congregation. Thus, an analysis of the letters of the Seminary and College's teachers and the institution's publications has the potential to reveal not only contemporary understandings of bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaner femininity, but also Huguenot's response to those discourses, and the degree to which it was able to disseminate an alternative vision of middle class femininity to the community surrounding it.



Literature Review

The Huguenot Seminary and College and Girls' Education in South Africa

References to the Huguenot Seminary appear sporadically in articles and books on a range of subjects. There is one dedicated history of the school, *The Builders of Huguenot (Being the History of the Huguenot Institution at Wellington, from the Intimate Papers of the Builders)*, published by Abbie Ferguson's nephew, Geo. P. Ferguson, in 1927. It is, though, a largely hagiographical work which pays little or no attention to the social and political context in which the school was founded. A brief overview of the Huguenot Seminary and the collection of institutions related to it appears in H.W. van Niekerk's 1989 article 'Huguenote-Kollege: Die Eerste Monument vir die Franse Huguenote.' Du Toit cites the school as a manifestation of the general concern felt about education in the

³⁹ Geo. P. Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot*, 41.

1870s – and as an aspect of Murray’s particular interest in girls’ education. She focuses, too, on the role played by the Seminary and College’s alumni in the Afrikaans women’s philanthropic organisations that flourished after the South African War. Dana L. Robert, a specialist in the history of American women missionaries, also deals with the Seminary in her study of the relationship between Mount Holyoke Seminary and the missionary movement of the DRC. While devoting considerable space to a history of the development of the Seminary at Wellington, her interest is limited to an analysis of how ‘American women missionary teachers were a major influence on the creation of a missionary movement among Dutch Reformed women.’⁴⁰ Edna Bradlow refers to the Seminary briefly in a broader description of education available to nineteenth century girls in the Cape Colony, commenting only that it was ‘unique among religious foundations in being non-sectarian and state-supported.’⁴¹ Sylvia Vietzen, in her survey of the history of women’s education in Natal, refers to the Huguenot Seminary’s influence in terms of its connection to America and its teacher training.⁴² Perhaps the most unusual account of the Seminary’s early history is in the form of W.J. Rust’s M.A. thesis ‘*Lemietberge: Die Fiksionalisering van die Kleingeskiedenis van Enkele Vrouefigure van Wellington*’ (2000), in which she writes a novella – *Lemietberge* – focussing on the lives of a number of prominent Wellington women, including Ferguson from the 1870s, and then analyses it in the adjoining essay.⁴³ Three memoirs detail girls’ experiences at the Seminary and its related schools: P.J. Pienaar’s biography of her sister, *Ella Neethling deur haar Suster* (1927) documents Neethling’s education at the Bloemhof Seminary,⁴⁴ in M.E. Rothmann’s *My Beskeie Deel: ’n Outobiografiese*

⁴⁰ Dana L Robert, ‘Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement, 1874-1904,’ *Missionalia* 21, 2 (August 1993): 122. See as well Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), 96. Natasha Erlank has also written about the experiences of white, middle class women in South Africa as missionaries and teachers, but without touching on the Huguenot Seminary; see, for example, ‘John and Jane Philip: Partnership, Usefulness and Sexuality in the Service of God,’ in *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa*, edited by J de Gruchy (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), and “‘Thinking it Wrong to Remain Unemployed in these Pressing Times’: The Experience of Two English Women,” *South African Historical Journal* 33 (1995): 62-82.

⁴¹ Bradlow, ‘Women and Education in Nineteenth-Century South Africa,’ 136.

⁴² Vietzen, 130-131.

⁴³ W.J. Rust, ‘*Lemietberge: Die Fiksionalisering van die Kleingeskiedenis van Enkele Vrouefigure van Wellington*’ (M.A. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2000).

⁴⁴ P.J. Pienaar, *Ella Neethling deur haar Suster*, second edition (Paarl: Paarl Drukkers Maatskappy, [1927] 1928), 17-24.

Vertelling (1972), the author describes her short period at the Swellendam Seminary,⁴⁵ and Petronella van Heerden's *Kerssnuitsels* (1963) deals with Van Heerden's life at Huguenot during the South African War.⁴⁶

Undoubtedly, though, the most extensive source on Huguenot is the DRC archive's Huguenot Seminary Collection, which contains a substantial collection of letters written by the American teachers at the school, as well as, among other things, accounts books, journals, newspaper and magazine articles all connected to the school. This thesis draws its information from this rich source.

In terms of girls' education in South Africa, a full-length history of the development of girls' schools in this country has yet to be written. The closest approximation to this is Ilse Hedwig Weder's M.Ed. thesis 'Die Geskiedenis van die Opvoeding van Meisies in Suid-Afrika tot 1910' (1938), as well as Vietzen's study of white girls' education in Natal. Much has been researched about the education of African women, especially during the nineteenth century,⁴⁷ and a small number of studies have appeared on English-speaking girls' experiences of school.⁴⁸ Histories of specific girls' schools abound. Relevant to this study are C.F. Booyen's 'Geschiedenis van die La Rochelle Hoëre Skool, Paarl' (B.Ed. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1922), and J.J.F. Joubert's 'Geschiedenis van Bloemhof,' (M.Ed. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1945), and La Rochelle's official history.⁴⁹

Afrikaner Femininity and Gender

The representation of Afrikaner women in the writing of the Afrikaner Nationalist historiographical school tended to emphasise their position as *Volksmoeders*, or mothers of the Afrikaner *volk*, whose interests remained firmly within the domestic or philanthropic spheres. Willem Postma's *Die Boervrouw, Moeder van Haar Volk* (1918) celebrated Afrikaner women as the nurturers and defenders of the principles

⁴⁵ M.E. Rothmann, *My Beskeie Deel: 'n Outobiografiese Vertelling* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Tafelberg, 1972), 51-57.

⁴⁶ Petronella van Heerden, *Kerssnuitsels* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1963), 114-134.

⁴⁷ See Hughes, Gaitskell, 'Race, Gender and Imperialism,' and Mager.

⁴⁸ See Ryan, Vietzen, and Bradlow, 'Women and Education in Nineteenth-Century South Africa.'

⁴⁹ *La Rochelle, Paarl 1860-1960* (Paarl: 1960).

underpinning Afrikaner nationalism. An historical basis was provided for this ideological positioning of the Afrikaner woman in Eric Stockenstöm's *Die Vrou in die Geskiedenis van die Hollands-Afrikaanse Volk* (1921) which described women's contribution to the development of Afrikaner nationalism since the arrival of Dutch settlers in the Cape during the seventeenth century. These themes were picked up in *Moeders van ons Volk* by A.P. van Rensburg (1966), A. de Villiers's *Barrevoets oor die Drakensberg: Pioniersvroue van die Neëntiende Eeu* (1975), and *Ek Sien haar Wen* by F. van der Watt (1980). What these texts have in common is an understanding of Afrikaner women as pious, morally-superior, and willingly submissive nurturers of children and the underprivileged. As is the case with most nationalist historical writing, the purpose of these studies was not to analyse the lived realities of Afrikaner women, but to bolster an ideal femininity closely connected to the maintenance of Afrikaner nationalism. As a result, women are largely absent in the major works on the development of Afrikaner nationalism – such as G.D. Scholtz's *Die Ontwikkeling van die Politieke Denke van die Afrikaner* (1967-1984), and F.A. van Jaarsveld's *Die Afrikaner en sy Geskiedenis* (1959) and *The Awakening of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1868-1881* (1961).

Perhaps ironically, the liberal school's portrayal of Afrikaner women tends to echo this understanding of Afrikaner femininity, although without elevating it to the quasi-religious significance as was done in Afrikaner nationalist writing. When they are mentioned in studies of Afrikaner nationalism – in, for example, T. Dunbar Moodie's *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (1975) – Afrikaner women are depicted as devout and enthusiastic nationalists.⁵⁰ Yet this lack of work on Afrikaner women in liberal historiography is fairly typical of the school's attitude towards the position of women – let alone gender – within South African history: as a supplement to what they considered to be the major events and trends within the South African past.⁵¹ It was as a result of the rise of the Marxist and revisionist schools of historiography – as well as the feminism of the 1960s and 1970s – that an interest in

⁵⁰ T. Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1975), 17-21.

⁵¹ Penelope Hetherington, 'Women in South Africa: The Historiography in English,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1993): 242. For a discussion of the increase in interest in women's history internationally, see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, 'Placing Women's History in History,' *New Left Review*, no. 133 (May-June 1982): 5-29.

women's history emerged.⁵² Reflecting the political interests of the women and, to a lesser extent, men who produced this research, Marxist and revisionist studies tended to focus on the position of African woman as 'victims' of state capitalism and then emphasise their resistance to this oppression, in, for example, Deborah Gaitskell's Ph.D. thesis 'Female Mission Initiatives: Black and White Women in Three Witwatersrand Churches, 1903-1939' (1981). In Cheryl Walker's landmark volume of essays, *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (1990), ten of the pieces concentrate on black women, one is on Afrikaner women, and another on women's suffrage. Writing on white women was limited, generally, to analyses of the circumstances of working class women, such as Elsabe Brink's M.A. thesis, 'The Afrikaner Women of the Garment Workers' Union, 1918-1939' (1986).⁵³

However, since the early 1990s, a growing number of revisionist studies of have appeared on the construction of middle class, white femininity, as well as on Afrikaner women. Natasha Erlank, Kirsten McKenzie, and Simon Dagut have explored the ways in which white, mainly English-speaking, middle class women responded to their situation within colonial society,⁵⁴ while Walker has written extensively about the women's suffrage movement.⁵⁵ The literature on the relationship between Afrikaner women and nationalism has also expanded: Elsabe Brink has demonstrated how Afrikaner women were used by the nationalist movement to further its aims, particularly in relation to the

⁵² Perhaps the best summary of Marxist and feminist scholars' interest in women's history is Belinda Bozzoli's 'Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (April 1983): 139-171.

⁵³ Hetherington, 261. These trends are particularly well demonstrated in Bozzoli, 149-167.

⁵⁴ See, for example Kirsten McKenzie, "'My Own Mind Dying within Me": Eliza Fairbairn and the Reinvention of Colonial Middle-Class Domesticity in Cape Town,' *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 36 (May 1997): 3-23, 'Wollstonecraft's Models?: Female Honour and Sexuality in Middle-Class Settler Cape Town, 1800-1854,' *Kronos*, vol. 23 (November 1996): 57-90; Deborah Gaitskell, 'The Imperial Tie: Obstacle or Asset for South Africa's Women Suffragists before 1930?' *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 47 (November 2002): 1-23; Simon Dagut, 'Gender, Colonial "Women's History" and the Construction of Social Distance: Middle Class Women in Later Nineteenth-Century South Africa,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 2003): 555-572; Jane Haggis, 'Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender? Recent Women's Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism,' *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 13, nos. 1/2 (2001): 105-115.

⁵⁵ Cheryl Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa* (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1979), and 'The Women's Suffrage Movement: The Politics of Gender, Race and Class,' in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, edited by Cheryl Walker (Cape Town and London: David Philip and James Currey, 1990), 313-345.

construction of the *Volksmoeder*,⁵⁶ and Deborah Gaitskell and Elaine Unterhalter, and Anne McClintock have compared women's differing roles in Afrikaner and African nationalisms.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, as Du Toit points out, these studies present Afrikaner women as, essentially, the victims of nationalism – something which is taken to an extreme in Christina Landman's *The Piety of Afrikaans Women: Diaries of Guilt* (1994). The first major revision of this traditional view of Afrikaner women occurred in Lou-Marie Kruger's M.A. thesis 'Gender, Community and Identity: Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the *Volksmoeder* Discourse of *Die Boerevrou* (1913-1931)' (1991) in which she argued that Afrikaner women were actively involved in the production of 'nationalist' forms of femininity. This thinking has been developed in Louise Vincent's work on Afrikaner women's involvement in politics in the early- to mid-twentieth centuries,⁵⁸ as well as in Du Toit's writing on the ACVV.⁵⁹ Helen Bradford, in pieces focussing on the South African War, points out the effect of the conflict on the gendered nature of Afrikaner nationalism.⁶⁰ This most recent writing on Afrikaner women has emphasised the complexity of the relationship between women and nationalism, often

⁵⁶ Elsabe Brink, 'Man-Made Women: Gender, Class and the Ideology of the *Volksmoeder*,' in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, edited by Cherryl Walker (Cape Town and London: David Philip and James Currey, 1990), 273-292.

⁵⁷ Deborah Gaitskell and Elaine Unterhalter, 'Mothers of the Nation: A Comparative Analysis of Nation, Race, and Motherhood in Afrikaner Nationalism and the African National Congress,' in *Women – Nation – State*, edited by Natalie Yuval-Davis and F. Anthias (London: Macmillan, 1989), 58-78; Anne McClintock, 'Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,' *Feminist Review*, no. 44 (Summer 1993): 61-80.

⁵⁸ Louise Vincent, 'The Power Behind the Scenes: The Afrikaner Nationalist Women's Parties, 1915 to 1931,' *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 40 (May 1999): 51-64; 'A Cake of Soap: The *Volksmoeder* Ideology and Afrikaner Women's Campaign for the Vote,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1 (1999): 1-17; 'Bread and Honour: White Working Class Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930s,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1 (March 2000): 61-78.

⁵⁹ See Marijke du Toit, "'Moedermeesteres": Dutch-Afrikaans Women's Entry into the Public Sphere in the Cape Colony, 1860-1896,' in *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa*, edited by Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes, and Gary Minkley (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002); 'The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: *Volksmoeders* and the ACVV, 1904-1929,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (March 2003): 155-176; "'Dangerous Motherhood: Maternity, Care and the Gendered Construction of Afrikaner Identity, 1904-1939,' in *Women and Children First: International Maternal and Infant Welfare 1870-1945*, edited by Valerie Fildes, Lara Marks, and Hilary Marland (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁶⁰ See Helen Bradford's 'Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner Nationalism, Gender, and Colonial Warfare in the South African War,' in *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902*, edited by Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh, and Mary-Lynn Suttie (Athens and Cape Town: Ohio University Press and David Philip, 2002), 37-66; 'Regendering Afrikanerdom: The 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War,' in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), 207-225.

pointing out the degree to which white women were often complicit in perpetuating nationalisms.

These attempts to elide the traditional stereotypes of white women as victims, heroines, or villains within South African society have coincided with the rise in interest in gender studies, emulating a global turn towards gender, rather than exclusively women's history.⁶¹ In her 1996 article, 'Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and its Frontier Zone, c. 1806-70,' Bradford argues for the pivotal importance of gender in understanding the South African past. One of the offshoots of this interest is a growing body of work on masculinity in South Africa, drawing mainly from the theoretical basis established by Connell in *Masculinities* (1995).⁶²

This thesis locates itself within the most recent writing on gender and Afrikaner women in South Africa and takes its inspiration from, chiefly, Du Toit's work on the ACVV, as well as from Morrell's writing on schools and gender.

History of Childhood

This thesis is also indebted to one of the newest fields within the discipline: the history of childhood. The history of childhood arose partly as a result of the publication of Philippe Ariès's *L'Enfant et la Vie Familiale sous L'Ancien Régime* in 1960, translated as *Centuries of Childhood* in 1973. The work, although now largely discredited, was one of the very first to draw attention to the need to understand societies from the perspectives of their children. Not only does this reveal something about the concrete, material realities of children, but it also demonstrates society's changing understanding of the concepts of 'childhood' and 'youth'. The field has gained popularity in Europe and, particularly, America.⁶³ In 1993, Penelope Hetherington listed only one book on the

⁶¹ See Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,' *American Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.

⁶² See Robert Morrell (editor), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, London, and New York: University of Natal Press and Zed Books, 2001), as well as the special edition on masculinity in South Africa of the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 24, no. 4.

⁶³ For overviews of the development of the field, see Adrian Wilson, 'The Infancy of the History of Childhood: An Appraisal of Philippe Ariès,' *History and Theory*, vol. 19, no. 2 (February 1980): 132-153; Harvey J. Graff, 'Interdisciplinary Explorations in the History of Children, Adolescents, and Youth – For the Past, Present, and Future,' *The Journal of American History*, vol. 85, no. 4 (March 1999), 1538-1547; Hugh Cunningham, 'Histories of Childhood,' *The American Historical Review*, vol. 103, no. 4 (October

history of childhood in South Africa, Sandra Burman and Pamela Reynolds's *Growing Up in a Divided Society* (1986).⁶⁴ Since the publication of Burman and Reynolds's text, one major article on this history of childhood in South Africa has appeared – Bradlow's 1988 discussion of childhood in the Cape during the nineteenth century.⁶⁵ While this thesis does not contribute directly to an understanding of children and childhood during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, it does – like Morrell's writing on masculinity and schools,⁶⁶ Peter's Randall's *Little England on the Veld: The English Private School System in South Africa* (1982), and Pamela Ryan's "'College Girls Don't Faint': The Legacy of Elsewhere" (2004) – provide an understanding of the impact of education and schooling on the construction of gendered identities.

The Aims and Focus of this Study

This thesis investigates the production of Dutch-Afrikaner femininities at the Huguenot Seminary and College between the year of its founding, 1874, and 1910, when Ferguson resigned from her post as president of the institution. This is a period of South African history that witnessed the rise of a collection of nationalisms, the politicisation of the middle class Dutch-Afrikaner population, and the entry of both Dutch-Afrikaner and English-speaking bourgeois women into the political sphere; it experienced the enormous social and political upheaval of the South African War (1899-1902), and underwent a traumatic and difficult phase of reconstruction between 1902 and 1910. It was during these forty years that present-day understandings of South Africa as a geographical and political entity emerged. This thesis aims, thus, to explore the impact of this wide-ranging transformation on Huguenot's understanding of the place of the educated, middle class Dutch-Afrikaner woman within society.

The focus of this study is threefold. The subject of Chapter One is the impact of late-nineteenth century evangelicalism – manifested by a series of religious revivals in the Cape Colony during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s – on the Seminary's construction of

1998), 1195-1208; John Demos, 'Developmental Perspectives on the History of Childhood,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 2, no. 2 (Autumn 1971): 315-327; Richard T. Vann, 'The Youth of Centuries of Childhood,' *History and Theory*, vol. 21, no. 2 (May 1982): 279-297.

⁶⁴ Hetherington, 266.

⁶⁵ Edna Bradlow, 'Children and Childhood at the Cape in the 19th Century,' *Kleio* vol. 20 (1988): 8-27.

⁶⁶ See also Morrell's 'Masculinity and the White Boys' Boarding Schools of Natal, 1880-1930,' *Perspectives in Education*, vol. 15, no. 1: 27-52.

Dutch-Afrikaner ‘femininity’. It commences with a discussion of the Seminary’s founding, asking why the school and its American teachers were so well-received by the Colony’s Dutch-Afrikaner population, and then analyses the extent to which the so-called ‘Mount Holyoke model’ of girls’ education was implemented in the Colony. The Chapter compares the pupils’ reception of the Seminary’s rules, ethos, and values in 1874-1875, to their response to them in 1884-1885, showing up the extent to which the girls at the school accepted and resisted the forms of femininity espoused by their teachers.

Chapter Two argues that one of the principles underpinning the ‘Mount Holyoke model’ was the need for the young women at the institution to learn self-control. It illustrates this point through an analysis of the Huguenot Seminary and College’s annuals published between 1895 and 1910, identifying three key discourses of femininity at work within these magazines.

Finally, Chapter Three considers the impact of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and ‘South Africanism’ on Huguenot’s construction of Dutch-Afrikaner femininity between 1874 and 1910. It begins with a discussion of the Seminary’s positioning within the Colony’s middle Dutch-Afrikaans community, and considers the representation of the school in the poetry of the First Afrikaans Language Movement – generally considered to be one of the first manifestations of Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa. It then moves on to an exploration of the Seminary and College’s response to the politicisation of Dutch-Afrikaans middle class women during the South African War, as well as to the polarisation of the Dutch-Afrikaans and English-speaking communities as a result of the conflict.⁶⁷ The chapter concludes with an analysis of Huguenot’s reaction to the South Africanism of Alfred Milner and his Kindergarten’s efforts to unify white South Africa before the Act of Union in 1910.

⁶⁷ The term ‘South African War’ is used in preference to ‘Boer War’ or ‘Anglo-Boer War’ as it has become the accepted term for the 1899-1902 conflict in scholarly literature, and draws attention to the fact that it was not simply a ‘white man’s war’. Moreover, for the purposes of this study, as Saul Dubow has written, it also ‘suggests that...this was fundamentally a war *for* South Africa, in that the conflict cleared the terrain upon which the future of South African nationhood would be fought over and contested.’ Saul Dubow, ‘Imagining the New South Africa in the Era of Reconstruction,’ in *The Impact of the South African War*, edited by David Omissi and Andrew S. Thompson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 77, italics in the original; Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh, and Mary-Lynn Suttie, Introduction, in *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902*, edited by Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh, and Mary-Lynn Suttie (Athens and Cape Town: Ohio University Press and David Philip, 2002), xii.

Perhaps one of the dangers of an endeavour such as this one is to gauge the position of women – who, in this case, while white and middle class, were largely denied access to political, legal, or fiscal authority – in terms of their submission to, or subversion of, male power. Studies that theorise the place of women in society in these simplistic binary terms run the risk of both over-simplifying and falsifying the past. While it is clear that Ferguson, Bliss, and the other teachers employed by the Seminary and College enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and personal freedom, it would appear that they inculcated in many of their pupils a belief that the domestic space remained the ideal female environment – and almost simultaneously encouraging and preparing them to become teachers and missionaries. What this thesis hopes to demonstrate, thus, is the complexity of the world in which middle class Dutch-Afrikaner women operated – a complexity which is frequently underplayed in attempts to render these women either victims of patriarchy or heroines.



CHAPTER ONE

‘vessels meet for the Master’s use’*

The Mount Holyoke System and the Huguenot Seminary, 1874-1885¹**Introduction**

When Abbie Ferguson and Anna Bliss arrived in the Cape Colony at the beginning of November 1873, what surprised them from the very first was the warmth of the welcome they received from the local Dutch-Afrikaner population. A month after their arrival, the two teachers paid a visit to the farm of a local farming couple, known universally as Tante (aunt) Miete and Oom (uncle) Jacobs. Ferguson wrote that they ‘had a most cordial welcome. The school has taken so deep a place in the hearts of the people they feel that we belong to them as part of it’, adding that ‘every mail brings us some application [for a place at the school], and I fear that we shall have to refuse many from want of room.’² The building bought for the Seminary in Wellington was able to house only thirty-two students comfortably – meaning two girls to a room – requiring the remaining number of girls to board in a cottage in the village. (The Huguenot Seminary opened with thirty-seven pupils, but had received applications for sixty-one.)³ As Ferguson and Bliss –

* Papers based on earlier versions of the chapter, “‘Oh! for a Blessing on Africa and America’”: Evangelical Movements, Girls’ Education, and the Huguenot Seminary’ and “‘Handmaidens of the Kingdom [of God]’”: Evangelical Movements, Girls’ Education, and the Huguenot Seminary, 1873-1885,’ were presented at the Biennial Conference of the Southern African Historical Society at the University of Cape Town, 26-29 June 2005 and the Biennial Conference of the Society for the History of Children and Youth, Marquette University, Milwaukee, 4-7 August 2005, respectively.

¹ A.P. Ferguson, ‘Why Should Girls Go to College?’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 9 (1903): 10.

² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 25 December 1873, Dutch Reformed Church Archive, Huguenot Seminary Collection (hereafter DRCA, HSC), K-Div 615.

³ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 19 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Huguenot Seminary Journal, 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 622; Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 25 December 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606. The original building for the school, later known as the White House, was bought from a group of Anabaptists who believed that Wellington would be the site of the New Jerusalem; the sect collapsed unexpectedly in the middle of 1873 and the property came up for sale. It was bought for £1600 on 25 October of that year by the school’s governors. Geo. P. Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot (Being the History of the Huguenot Institution at Wellington from the Intimate Papers of the Builders)* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1927), 5; E. Macintosh, ‘Wellington: Its People and Institutions,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 3 (1897): 7.

assisted by Eliza the cook, and Mrs de Kock and Miss McGill, the teachers at the village school – prepared the school for its opening on Monday, 19 January 1874, they were pleased to ‘see the kindly interest the people take in the school. Many young men and old and boys have been helping, opening boxes, distributing the things and giving us a hand. The ladies have been no less ready.’⁴ Throughout the year, farmers ensured that the Seminary benefited from a steady supply of fruit, vegetables, meat, and butter; in November, the whole of Wellington participated in the school’s bazaar to raise funds for a new building.⁵

The enthusiasm with which the founding of the Huguenot Seminary was greeted would seem to suggest that no other school existed for the education of middle class Dutch-Afrikaans girls – that the widespread interest in the school was indicative it being in some way unique among the educational institutions already in existence in the Colony. This was only partly true. A number of successful and relatively expensive private girls’ schools in Paarl, Stellenbosch, and Cape Town, although offering tuition only in English, had been catering for the needs of the Dutch-Afrikaner and English communities since the mid-nineteenth century.⁶ The Rhenish Institute in Stellenbosch, the Paarl Seminary, and, in Cape Town, the Springfield Convent, St Cyprian’s, and the Good Hope Seminary, among others, provided the Colony’s young women with an education that balanced an academic training with instruction in the ‘accomplishments’ (singing, dancing, drawing, and so on) expected of middle class girls. Like the Huguenot Seminary, many of these schools were affiliated with churches (the Institute in Stellenbosch was run by the Rhenish Missionary Society, Springfield and St Cyprian’s were, respectively, Catholic and Anglican concerns), and had been in the charge of foreign women (mainly Germans and Scots) – what, then, rendered it so different and, potentially, so attractive?

This chapter argues that it was the closeness between the Huguenot Seminary and the DRC – and, specifically, the evangelicalism within the Reformed church under

⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 14 January 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁵ Ferguson and Bliss were particularly amused by the way in which the women of Wellington – ‘tall, thin, wrinkled, many of them without a good share of their teeth’ – completely took over their kitchen to provide dinner for the members of the public attending the bazaar. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 October 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁶ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 30 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

the leadership of Andrew Murray, junior – that caused the Seminary to be so popular. Indeed, it was this connection that lent the school its uniqueness: it was established by the DRC to be an educator of female missionaries and teachers, hence the choice of Ferguson and Bliss to found the institution. Both Ferguson and Bliss were alumni of the Mount Holyoke Seminary in South Hadley, Connecticut – a school dedicated to the training of teachers to assist in the work done by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Murray hoped that the women would establish a South African Mount Holyoke in his parish, Wellington. As a result, it will be shown that the DRC, through Murray, was both responsible for the founding of the Seminary, as well as for the structure of its curriculum. In doing so, it assisted in creating what was not so much a school, but a self-contained religious community where girls were prepared to perpetuate the Seminary's values in the outside world.

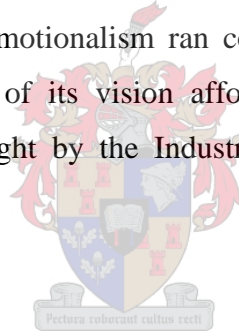
Nevertheless, this system of education did not go unchallenged. While this chapter will describe how the Mount Holyoke curriculum and understanding of women's education was accepted wholeheartedly by the pupils who attended the Huguenot Seminary during its early years – and specifically 1874 and 1875 – it will also show how the Mount Holyoke model came under a great deal of strain at the end of the school's first decade. It is clear that Huguenot entered a new phase during the 1880s, becoming a considerably bigger school and attracting girls who desired to study for the teachers' examination and not necessarily become missionaries. Yet, besides being the Seminary's anniversary year, 1884 (and, indeed, 1885) bore a striking resemblance to 1874: both years witnessed large-scale revivals in Wellington and whereas the events of 1874 had a profound effect on the girls in the Seminary, this was not the case ten years later. What a comparison of the events of the two years reveals is the extent to which the Huguenot Seminary's evangelicalism was a vital aspect to the very functioning of the school.

The Age of Atonement: Evangelicalism and Women's Education

Between 1849 and 1860, *De Kerkbode*, the pre-eminent publication of the DRC, published a number of articles detailing a series of protestant 'awakenings' occurring on an almost global scale: reports described the mass conversion of Christians in, amongst other places, Lapland and Sardinia in 1849, America in 1858, Spain, Bulgaria, and China

in 1859, and the Netherlands, Turkey, Scotland, and France in 1860.⁷ Acutely aware of the potential for a similar movement in South Africa, DRC ministers referred to these awakenings in their sermons, encouraging their congregations to read the pieces in *De Kerkbode*.⁸ The evangelicalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, frequently described as the ‘Age of Atonement,’⁹ was a sustained and powerful trend within Protestant churches which brought about a fundamental shift in Christian dogma.¹⁰ The impact of this movement extended beyond the congregations participating in the awakenings, making itself felt in the politics, economics, and social dynamics of the period.¹¹ Very broadly, this evangelicalism was characterised by a reliance on the Bible as the ultimate religious authority, a focus on Christ’s redeeming work as the heart of Christianity, and an energetic, individualistic approach to religious duties and social involvement.¹²

Evangelicalism’s popularity was largely a result of the tensions within a rapidly modernising western world: its emotionalism ran counter to the rational ideals of the Enlightenment,¹³ the simplicity of its vision afforded a sense of security to those bewildered by the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution.¹⁴ In America, and



⁷ George Euvrard Hugo, ‘Die Voorgeschiedenis van die Godsdiensige Herlewing op Worcester in 1860-1861’ (B.Div. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1952), 93-94, 96, 100-101.

⁸ Hugo, 102.

⁹ Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1988] 1995), 3-7.

¹⁰ Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, Introduction, in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, edited by Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3-5.

¹¹ For a thorough discussion of the wide-ranging influence of evangelicalism in, especially, Britain, see Hilton’s *The Age of Atonement*.

¹² Noll *et al.*, 6.

¹³ Derek Beales, ‘Religion and Culture,’ in *The Eighteenth Century: Europe 1688-1815*, edited by T.C.W. Blanning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 166; J.A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History 1550-1760* (London and New York: Arnold, 1987), 252-253. For a detailed discussion of the origins of English evangelicalism see John Walsh, ‘Origins of the Evangelical Revival,’ in *Essays in Modern English Church History in Memory of Norman Sykes*, edited by G.V. Bennett and J.D. Walsh (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966), 132-162.

¹⁴ John Walsh, ‘“Methodism” and the Origins of English-Speaking Evangelicalism,’ in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, edited by Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 24-28, 33; Hilton, 3.

especially in the northeast, it responded to an agricultural depression,¹⁵ as well as to the economic and demographic shifts which occurred as a result of the American Revolution.¹⁶ The first major evangelical ‘revival’ in the Cape Colony during 1860 occurred after a period of rapid change, beginning during the 1840s, as the Colony, drawn into the British imperial network of trade and administration, entered the modern world economy, and, developed what André du Toit calls a more ‘regular’ civil society.¹⁷

While providing its congregations with a means of coming to terms with radically changed realities, it also encouraged them to enter into work that would spread the evangelical gospel. Yet, simultaneously, and almost paradoxically, evangelicalism exalted the family – the private sphere – as the centre of its vision for society – and women were of central importance in ensuring that family life remained Christian.¹⁸ In this sense, for many women, evangelicalism was a means of empowerment: not only did the movement stress that all people – both men and women – were innately sinful and, hence, equally able of being saved, but that ‘[w]omen, assumed to be more emotional and affectionate than men, were increasingly assumed to be potentially closer to God. The prescriptive literature of the period emphasises that latent moral superiority, in terms which suggest women’s greater power to embody the evangelical appeal.’¹⁹ Evangelicalism emphasised those qualities – obedience, piety, self-control, self-denial, and charity – which were already an integral aspect of middle class femininity in Britain, America, and the Cape, celebrating and elevating a state with which a sizeable proportion

¹⁵ Joseph A. Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England between the Great Awakenings* (Washington: Christian University Press, 1981), 23.

¹⁶ Conforti, 184-185.

¹⁷ André du Toit, ‘The Construction of Afrikaner Chosenness,’ in *Many are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism*, edited by William R. Hutchinson and Hartmut Lehmann (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 128; Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen, and Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town, the Making of a City: An Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), 159-160; André du Toit, ‘The Cape Afrikaners’ Failed Liberal Moment, 1850-1870,’ in *Democratic Liberalism in South Africa: Its History and Prospect*, edited by Jeffrey Butler, Richard Elphick, and David Welsh (Middletown and Cape Town: Wesleyan University Press and David Philip, 1987), 37-38; Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), 201, 207-208.

¹⁸ F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 8, 12-13; Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States 1780-1860* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1985) 79.

¹⁹ Rendall, 74-75.

of women were intimately familiar,²⁰ and encouraging them to move outside the domestic space – as philanthropists, (the wives of) missionaries, and teachers – to assist in disseminating the evangelical message. Evangelicalism, then, contained both conservative and liberal elements – emphasising that the ‘natural’ place for women was in the realm of the domestic, while persuading many to lead lives of relative independence and responsibility – and this was particularly evident in the evangelical interest in education.²¹ By placing the onus on women, as mothers, charity workers, or missionaries, to nurture and raise good Christians, it appeared necessary to allow them a form of education ‘as a means of enhancing and enforcing their spiritual authority’.²²

In Britain and, particularly, in America, schools were founded by evangelists to provide young women with the kind of training it was believed would prepare them to prepare their children for lives as productive, Christian citizens, or would train them to teach – and spread the gospel – to the ‘heathen,’ either at home or abroad. What justified their education, thus, was that it was ‘useful’ – that it would benefit of others. One such institution was Mary Lyon’s Mount Holyoke Seminary, founded in 1837. Lyon had five chief objectives: the inculcation of a ‘social and domestic character’ in her pupils; the encouragement of a physical culture, as she believed that women could do nothing unless physically strong; and the encouragement of an ethos of ‘disinterested benevolence’ (or charity) within the school’s community. To this she added the desire to convert each member of the school’s family to evangelical Christianity, as well as provide her pupils with as thorough an academic education as possible.²³ What underpinned each of these goals was a belief that women should be made useful for the service of God – either as missionaries or in preparing the way for the second coming. Even the body was taken up in this aim, as, in keeping with the Enlightenment’s understanding of the relationship between the corporeal and the intellectual, a strong physique indicated a sturdy, hard-working character.²⁴ All this emphasis on discipline – of the spirit, the mind, and the

²⁰ Prochaska, 10.

²¹ Rendall, 75-77.

²² Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 14.

²³ Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), 96.

²⁴ Interestingly, in his publication *Primitive Physik* (1747), John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church, pointed out the need for good Christians to possess healthy bodies to house awakened souls. Roy

body – was intended to prepare the Seminary’s pupils for lives as, preferably, teachers or missionaries. Indeed, in Lyon’s view, the role of the male missionary and the female teacher was identical: to encourage the conversion of the unsaved. While she believed that women were naturally less adept at holding positions of leadership than men, and had a special duty to be wives and mothers, she did not see why awakened women should be disqualified as missionary teachers – for Lyon, the biggest social division was not between the genders, but between the saved and the unsaved.²⁵

In perpetuating these aims, she insisted that the girls take responsibility for cleaning the school; instituted a rigorously academic course of education (her pupils studied a range of subjects, from arithmetic, geometry, and rhetoric to botany, astronomy, and ecclesiastical history); made charity work part of the curriculum by requiring the pupils to donate money to foreign missions and inviting missionaries to speak to the school; held regular ‘revivals’ in the school to encourage each student to profess the desire to be ‘born again;’ and worked closely with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Between 1838 and 1850, 82.5% of Mount Holyoke’s graduates went into teaching, and nineteen percent of the pupils during this period never married;²⁶ by 1887, the Seminary had produced 175 foreign missionaries working in eighteen countries.²⁷ During the whole nineteenth century, Mount Holyoke supplied ten per cent of the Board’s women missionaries.²⁸ The Seminary developed a reputation for encouraging young women to delay – or refuse entirely – marriage, leaving the school with a ‘pious zeal to change the world.’²⁹ It was nicknamed the ‘Protestant nunnery’ for its piety and discipline – as well as the ‘rib factory’ for the number of girls from the Seminary who married theology students.³⁰

Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: How the Enlightenment Transformed the Way We See Our Bodies and Souls* (London: Penguin, [2003] 2004), 229-230.

²⁵ Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 97, 100.

²⁶ Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 97.

²⁷ Dana L. Robert, ‘Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement, 1874-1904,’ *Missionalia*, vol. 21, no. 2 (August 1993): 107.

²⁸ JoAnn Campbell, ‘“A Real Vexation”: Student Writing in Mount Holyoke’s Culture of Service, 1837-1865,’ *College English*, vol. 59, no. 7 (November 1997): 769.

²⁹ Robert, ‘Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement,’ 107. For a discussion of spinsterhood in New England, see Zsuzsa Berend, ‘“The Best or None!” Spinsterhood in Nineteenth-Century New England,’ *Journal of Social History*, vol. 33, no. 4 (summer 2000): 935-957.

³⁰ Robert, ‘Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement,’ 106-107. There is some suggestion that Lyon was involved in matchmaking certain of her pupils with young missionaries –

Murray found this vision of women's education particularly appealing,

The first thing that struck me was the wonderful way in which she gave the head and the heart and hand an equal place in her training. She believed that women should receive the best intellectual training possible to enable them to fill their place aright. With this she believed the cultivation of a truly moral and religious character to be of supreme importance...With these high aims in head and heart, she combined most remarkably the culture of the hand. She honoured domestic work, not only as a duty to be willingly accepted when it was a necessity, but as a means of developing one's whole nature...and as fitting for true independence, and power to rule or help others.³¹

It is understandable that both Murray and Lyon – two evangelists interested in the position of women and their potential 'usefulness' in the perpetuation of evangelical ideas – should share such similar views on women's education. Murray believed that girls should be educated because, as future mothers of children, they would be primarily responsible for taking the gospel to the next generation. Moreover, women teachers would be particularly useful as 'handmaidens of the kingdom [of God].'³² After publishing extracts of Fidelia Fiske's biography of Mary Lyon in *De Kerkbode* throughout 1873, Murray held a meeting on 25 June to discuss the founding of a South African Mount Holyoke in Wellington and, after his congregation had ratified his decision, wrote and posted a circular explaining his plan.³³ He stated that

The chief consideration which has given birth to this undertaking is the need for efficient Christian instruction in our land. And in addition to the general dearth of capable teachers, it is clear to us that an institution in which young girls can be trained for educational work is absolutely indispensable.³⁴

As in America, the cause of girls' education was given a purpose – the general upliftment of education in South Africa – and not instituted simply for the sake of academic study. Like Mount Holyoke, where Mary Lyon was a follower of Joseph Emerson, an evangelist preacher and teacher, the Huguenot Seminary was closely aligned with the DRC's evangelical movement in its association with Murray, who used the 1860 awakening to revitalise and reform the Church. While much of the Huguenot Seminary's popularity (it was filled to capacity from its opening, and was in constant need of extra room) was probably due to its close connection to the influential and respected Murray – as well as

many a prospective missionary was urged to pay a social call on Mary Lyon before setting out to Africa or Asia. Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 105-106.

³¹ Andrew Murray, 'The Mount of Sources,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 2.

³² J. du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa* (London, Edinburgh, and New York: Marshall Brothers, 1919), 276.

³³ Du Plessis, 274-276.

³⁴ Du Plessis, 276.

to the Hofmeyrs and Neethlings who also sent daughters to the Seminary – the values that it held must have appealed to the parents of the girls who attended the school. As M.E. Rothmann writes in her autobiography *My Beskeie Deel* (1972), part of the appeal of the new Swellendam Seminary run by a group of Mount Holyoke graduates during the 1880s was that it was founded by George Murray, Andrew Murray's younger brother.³⁵ Indeed, the school proved to be attractive to the ministers of the DRC – Abbie Ferguson commented that of the first group of pupils at the Huguenot Seminary, five were ministers' daughters and 'a number of [them were] earnest Christians.'³⁶ Shortly before the opening of the school, Ferguson and Bliss held a reception for the DRC ministers who were in Cape Town for the church's synod and 'the most cordial welcome [was] given to the strangers from America & a great interest [was] expressed in [their] work.'³⁷ Indeed, at a picnic in Stellenbosch held to conclude the synod, the two teachers 'were quite surrounded by the Wellington people, who said, "welcome, welcome," on every side,'³⁸ and were then approached by a group of young women – some of whom were prospective pupils – to 'tell them about Holyoke.'³⁹ While the school had its opponents – not least of whom was Prof. N.J. Hofmeyr (one of the two professors at the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch) who, initially, 'look[ed] upon [the Seminary] as an experiment'⁴⁰ before deciding to send one of his daughters there – it was established



³⁵ M.E. Rothmann, *My Beskeie Deel: 'n Outobiografiese Vertelling* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Tafelberg, 1972), 51-57. Grateful thanks to Hester Carstens for this source. Although she attended the Rhenish Institute, M.E. Rothmann's sister was sent to the Huguenot Seminary, and both girls received their primary education at the Swellendam Seminary. Rothmann (1875-1975), a committed proponent of Afrikaner nationalism, was a pioneering member of the *Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging* (ACVV – Afrikaans Christian Women's Organisation), and the only female member of the Carnegie Commission of enquiry into the 'poor white problem' between 1930 and 1932. She was a celebrated author and journalist, writing a regular column for *Die Burger* under the pseudonym M.E.R. For Rothmann's memories of her education at Rhenish, see *Rhenish – Our Century, 1860-1960* (Cape Town: 1960), 66-68; Elsabe Brink, 'Man-Made Women: Gender, Class and the Ideology of the *Volksmoeder*,' in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, edited by Cheryl Walker (Cape Town and London: David Philip and James Currey, 1990), 282-285; Marijke du Toit, "'Dangerous Motherhood: Maternity, Care and the Gendered Construction of Afrikaner Identity, 1904-1939,' in *Women and Children First: International Maternal and Infant Welfare 1870-1945*, edited by Valerie Fildes, Lara Marks, and Hilary Marland (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 203-205; Marijke du Toit, 'The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: *Volksmoeders* and the ACVV, 1904-1929,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (March 2003): 157.

³⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 14 January 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

³⁷ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Cape Town, 16 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

³⁸ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Cape Town, 16 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

³⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁴⁰ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 24 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

within a town and community that were remarkably enthusiastic in their support.⁴¹ How, then, were the tenets of Lyon's system received in the Cape Colony?

'we hope a number of souls were born':⁴² The Huguenot Seminary 1874-1875

The first problem dealt with by Ferguson and Bliss was the issue of domestic work.

The perturbation in reference to domestic work is often very funny. One mother said her daughter was not accustomed to standing in the water and she hoped she would not be asked to wash [linen]. The washing is done in the rivers here. The women standing knee deep in water and beat the clothes in sacks. The young ladies are anxious to know if they will have to scrub, mopping is an unknown thing. We feel something as Mary Lyon did that domestic work is to be a kind of sifting process that will give us the finest of the wheat.⁴³

During the first week of school, Ferguson explained to the girls why domestic work was an aspect of the routine at Mount Holyoke and, when asked to vote on the issue, all agreed to set aside half an hour on Wednesdays to clean the school. She added, 'I am very glad about it for it is quite a matter in this land of black servants where so many think work a kind of disgrace.'⁴⁴ The scale of this domestic work should not be underestimated – this was no light dusting of ornaments in drawing rooms. As at Mount Holyoke the girls were divided into small groups, or 'circles', responsible for a particular aspect of the work – baking, cooking, washing-up, or window cleaning – for a term. While the school employed a cook, a scullery maid, and, later, a housekeeper (who replaced Bliss as the supervisor of all things domestic in 1875), it was the girls who shouldered the chief burden of, among other things, cleaning the building, and providing bread, cake, and clean dishes.⁴⁵ This was especially onerous for the older girls during the first few years of the Seminary's existence,

⁴¹ What makes Hofmeyr's scepticism so interesting is that he was both a relative of Andrew Murray's, as well as a colleague of his brother: Prof. John Murray was also a lecturer at the Theological Seminary. The two professors wrote simultaneously to the Seminary to seek places for their daughters in March 1874. Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 3 March 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁴² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 January 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁴³ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Rondebosch, 23 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁴⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 January 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁴⁵ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 16 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606. By allowing the girls so much responsibility, the teachers at the Seminary had to resign themselves to the inevitable mistakes occurring, frequently, as a result of inexperience. In the second term of 1875 there was general relief that the new girl in charge of cake-making was more competent than the last, who 'could not learn to do well by herself.' Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 4 April 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

Two of us had to teach five hours a day, besides doing half-an-hour's domestic work, and an extra half-an-hour's scrubbing on Wednesdays; thus we could take only three or four subjects at a time. The classes were arranged so as to suit our time, either before 9 a.m. or after 4 p.m.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, Bliss commented to her mother that from February 1874, '[e]ach young lady t[oo]k hold of her duties in such pleasant kindly manner that the machinery [began] to run quite smoothly.'⁴⁷ This was probably because so many of the girls were used to doing this kind of work at home, although some of the Seminary's methods seemed unusual to them. Maria le Roux from Stellenbosch remembered,

The first scrubbing was on a Wednesday. We scrubbed in those days. The very novel way of scrubbing with hard brooms caused much excitement, for at home we had always seen our servants scrub the floors on their knees. I have never scrubbed a floor since I left the Seminary, but I must confess it did me no harm, and only opened my eyes to a new way of scrubbing.⁴⁸

Maria's comments are revealing. While the Seminary's Catalogue (or prospectus) for 1874 and 1875 states that it 'is no part of the design of this Seminary to teach young ladies domestic work' and that '[h]ome is the proper place for daughters to be taught upon this subject, and the mother the appropriate teacher', the justification offered for the girls doing domestic work is that, firstly, it provided the girls with 'the invigorating influence of [the] exercise' and, secondly, 'that this system tends to render young ladies more thoughtful or the comfort of one another, more self-helpful and self-reliant, and thus more efficient in any sphere to which they may be called.'⁴⁹ At Mount Holyoke, Lyon had argued for the place of domestic work in similar terms,⁵⁰ adding that the work was to be done 'on the principle of equality.'⁵¹ It is clear from Maria le Roux's account that domestic work at Huguenot did fulfil this egalitarian principle: all girls were obliged to assist in cleaning the school, regardless of their age, academic prowess, or social standing outside of the school. In a sense, it lowered all of the girls to the same level by making them perform the work that many of them would have seen their servants doing. Indeed, the real reason Lyon had introduced domestic work into her curriculum was to

⁴⁶ J. Malherbe, 'The First Graduating Class,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 28.

⁴⁷ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 4 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁴⁸ Maria le Roux, 'The Beginning of Things,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 37.

⁴⁹ Catalogue of the First and Second Years of the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington, South Africa, 1874 & 1875 (Cape Town: Saul Solomon & Co., 1875), 14-15, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

⁵⁰ Willystine Goodsell (editor), *Pioneers of Women's Education in the United States: Emma Willard, Catherine Beecher, Mary Lyon* (New York: AMS Press, [1931] 1970), 282.

⁵¹ Goodsell, 281.

keep the fees low so that lower middle class girls – like herself – would be able to attend a first class school.⁵² This was true for the Huguenot Seminary as well; the fees were set at £24 in 1874, but were raised to £30 after increases in the price of meat and other essentials.⁵³ Even so, the price was considered inexpensive, so much so that it became clear that it was by no means a deterrent to parents sending their daughters to the school.⁵⁴ As a result, girls of fairly limited means would have mixed with the daughters of wealthy families (it appears that the school gained some popularity among the richest families in the Transvaal)⁵⁵ and by obliging them all to work together while performing relatively menial tasks, Ferguson and Bliss would have been able more easily to foster an atmosphere of camaraderie.

Of course, especially in 1874 and 1875 with the school being so small and housed in such cramped quarters, it would have been very difficult for any pupil to refuse to join in the domestic work – the peer pressure (possibly fuelled by the *esprit du corps* fostered by the group cooking and cleaning) would simply have been too great. Moreover, in suggesting that the work would prepare girls to be independent, thus fitting them for ‘any sphere to which they may be called’, the Catalogue refers obliquely to the Seminary’s professed aim: to train young women as teachers and missionaries.⁵⁶ This connection – as well as Ferguson’s comment that the work would be a ‘sifting process’ that would give them ‘the finest of the wheat’ – elevates the role of domestic work to a position of moral,

⁵² Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 96.

⁵³ Extra was charged for washing (15s), bed linen (£3), church seats (1s 6d), music lessons (£1 16s with a master, £1 10s with a lady teacher), lessons in water colour (15s), stationary, and books. It is worth noting that Ferguson and Bliss’s salaries were £75 in August 1874, and that two of the Seminary’s pupils were offered £100 and £75 each to open a school in Beaufort West, which was considered to be an exceptionally large sum of money for two newly-graduated teachers. Eliza, the Scottish woman employed as the Seminary’s cook for 1874 and part of 1875, received £1 every four months. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 June 1874 and 25 February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Catalogue of the First and Second Years of the Huguenot Seminary, 17, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621; Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 26 August 1874, 28 May 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁵⁴ As the anonymous author of a very complimentary article on the Seminary in *The Standard and Mail* commented, ‘We believe these [subjects] are all taught and board given for the small charge of £24! This in these days is rather startling!’ ‘Examination at the Huguenot Seminary for the Education of Girls and Female Teachers, Wellington,’ *The Standard and Mail*, 8 July 1875, p. 8. Bliss and Ferguson suspected that the author had been Dr Shaw of the South African College who had attended the school’s examination. Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 2 July 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁵⁵ Bliss notes disapprovingly that one of the girls from the Transvaal was sent \$25 (or about £5) ‘to get anything she wanted with it, which for a young schoolgirl I think was quite too much.’ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 15 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁵⁶ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Kalk Bay, 12 January 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

even religious, significance, suggesting that any refusal to perform it would have had blasphemous overtones. It is not, then, surprising that the initial resistance to it quickly dissolved – and to the extent that visitors to the school were astonished at the order and cleanliness of the buildings.⁵⁷

Mount Holyoke's bell system was soon accepted by the South African girls, although, at first, '[e]very ringing of the bell would bring flocks of young ladies to the bell-ringer to know what that meant.'⁵⁸ Maria le Roux writes 'What a revelation the bells were to us...! At the ringing of the bell, every half hour, we started off, we knew not where.'⁵⁹ Surprisingly soon, less than a month after opening, Ferguson was able to say to her sister 'It is recreation day today, and as I shut up my eyes and listen to the sounds through the building I have no trouble in imagining myself at Mt. Holyoke'.⁶⁰ Annie Wells commented to her parents, shortly after her arrival in the Cape Colony at the end of 1874, 'It seems truly wonderful to me as I see how easily and smoothly things go on, and how nearly they are like M[oun]t Hol[yoke]'.⁶¹ Indeed, it would appear that the Huguenot Seminary followed a timetable almost identical to that of the American school: everyone rose between half past five and six, prayed in their rooms in the morning, had devotions and Bible classes, had thirty to forty-five minute-long lessons, ate dinner at midday, held prayer meetings in the evenings, and regularly attended Murray's church services. The following is taken from a description of a typical Monday at the Seminary in a letter by Wells in August 1875 (the timetable was altered seasonally, with everyone rising an hour later in winter),

06:00	First bell	12:30	Dinner and free time
06:30	Rising bell	14:30	Singing
07:30	Breakfast	15:00	Walking time
08:15	Quiet time (for prayer)	16:00	Mathematics: Analysis
08:45	Devotions	16:30	Mathematics: Arithmetic
09:00	Bible study	17:00	Sectional exercise (homework)
09:30	Botany	17:30	General exercise (recitation of the day's work)

⁵⁷ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 16 February and 14 March 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁵⁸ Huguenot Seminary Journal, 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 622.

⁵⁹ Maria le Roux, 'The Beginning of Things,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 37.

⁶⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 January 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁶¹ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 27 November 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

10:00	Reading and dictation	18:30	Supper
10:30	Geography	20:00	Recess meeting
11:15	Arithmetic	21:30	Bedtime
12:00	Free time – stationery shop opened	10:00	‘Tardy’ bell (after which all must be quiet)

Figure 1: Timetable at the Huguenot Seminary, August 1875

The curriculum, though, proved to be more of a problem. Besides the fact that it was ‘considered quite [a] wonderful thing for ladies to study Algebra’ by the local population,⁶² Ferguson and Bliss discovered that the pupils ‘are mostly very backward. Some hardly speaking English’. While many possessed ‘an earnest desire to learn’⁶³ the two Americans had to tailor their system to a group of girls who had, generally, had little access to formal education before arriving in Wellington. Not only was their English – the school’s medium of instruction, although the girls were encouraged to learn Dutch – frequently very poor, but their Cape Dutch, or what would now be considered to be an early form of Afrikaans, was so different from the grammatically-correct language of Holland that it seemed they could not even speak or write their mother tongue ‘correctly.’⁶⁴ Ferguson complained, ‘It is difficult to decide upon the course of study. I want to have it as high as possible, and yet not so high that we will never have any graduates.’⁶⁵ What the American teachers found the most difficult to understand at first was that the

young ladies, who are so ignorant of the common school branches [subjects], appear so well. They go into company, appear perfectly at ease, with plenty to talk about, very likely can sit down to the piano & play & sing, but are not ready to enter one of our lower grammar schools [in America].⁶⁶

This remark was occasioned by the arrival of the sixteen year-old sister of a teacher at the South African College. She informed Annie Wells – then in charge of the preparatory school – that she ‘had studied Reading and the Sciences’, but when questioned as to whether she could add, replied, “‘Add! I beg your pardon, Ma’am”...which showed she

⁶² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁶³ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 January 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁶⁴ To remedy this, the Seminary made it compulsory for all of their pupils to speak only Dutch – except for teachers – on Tuesdays and Fridays, while keeping to English otherwise. The Seminary employed a teacher from Holland – Henriette Spijker – in 1875 to teach Dutch, German, and French. Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 7 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁶⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 October 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁶⁶ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, no date, but probably February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

did not know what “adding” meant.’⁶⁷ Possibly more unsettling, wrote Bliss, was that they had ‘girls in the school who have taught two years & more, who only know how to read & write, a very little Geography, & the first four rules in Arithmetic. They could not write numbers correctly & knew nothing of fractions’.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, the school’s senior class did exceptionally well in the Teachers’ Examination at the end of the Seminary’s first year, with all ten passing, six with honours, and three taking the top positions in the Colony.⁶⁹ Even Superintendent Dale visited Huguenot and conducted the oral examination of the girls himself – and was very complimentary of the institution.⁷⁰ The teachers soon discovered that even though the girls were ‘backward’ in the sense that they knew little of astronomy, English history, or botany, they were by no means stupid and were keen to pursue their studies. As Ferguson commented at the end of 1874, ‘When we look back over the twelve months we feel that much had been accomplished study-wise. The girls do know more, and many of them have learned to study and gained a power in acquiring knowledge that is very marked.’⁷¹ It should also be kept in mind that this progress was made, frequently, in the absence of textbooks, as it would appear that the Seminary’s curriculum was both more advanced and those of the other girls’ schools in the area, as well as more extensive than the boys’ schools.⁷² Yet the desire to institute an academic programme as rigorous as Mount Holyoke’s remained steadfast, and Ferguson said that she thought it

a good thing for us occasionally to have new teachers from America or we might think our girls getting wiser that they really are. Miss Wells and Minnie [Bailey] do not seem to find anything at all

⁶⁷ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, no date, but probably February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606; Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 16 February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605. The preparatory school was run by Wells for the first half of 1875. After the completion of Murray Hall, however, it was decided that Bliss would take charge of the preparatory department, now housed in the White House, the original school building. It was felt that Wells lacked the experience necessary to be solely responsible for forty or fifty girls, and joined Ferguson and Spijker in Murray Hall. The higher department did not admit girls younger than fifteen or those who were not academically advanced enough for its three-year course of study. As a result, Bliss had under her care a mixed group of girls, ranging from twelve year-olds to a nineteen year-old who could not ‘do an example in simple multiplication.’ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 June 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 27 July 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606; Catalogue of the First and Second Years of the Huguenot Seminary, 12, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

⁶⁸ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 3 March 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁶⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 October 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁷⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 26 September 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁷¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁷² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

wonderful in girls understanding Arithmetic and Geography as our girls do. Indeed I think they find some points to criticise and this is good for us when people are telling us after listening to our classes that the amount of knowledge these girls possess is wonderful.⁷³

The Seminary seems to have had great incentive to produce well-trained teachers. In February 1874,

We have had Rev. Mr. Stegman to dine with us from Cape Town. He came to examine those of our young ladies who want to be teachers. The school will receive a certain sum from the Dutch Reformed church for every young lady who pledges herself to teach for three years, and he had come to see how much they know at the first. We have some very good material and I hope in time may send out teachers we shall not be ashamed of. I hope too they may be fitted to go out and be a blessing.⁷⁴

Between 1874 and 1884, of the 425 pupils who had boarded at the Seminary, 119 had received the Elementary Teachers' Certificate, and 180 – slightly over forty per cent – had taught, either in schools or privately, as governesses.⁷⁵ This success has to be ascribed, partly, to the skill and application of the teachers at the Seminary. However, other factors must have contributed to this as well. Besides the fact that many of the girls must have enjoyed being challenged intellectually by the tuition offered by the school, it also appears that the majority of pupils at the school were pleased to be there; Ferguson wrote that the 'girls seem very happy, and it is pleasant to hear their friends express their gratification with what they are doing',⁷⁶ Bliss adding that the girls were 'well contented'.⁷⁷ In the first years of the Seminary's existence, the closeness of the teachers and pupils – partly produced by the cramped conditions of the school buildings – allowed many of the pupils more individual attention than they had ever had before. The teachers took a personal interest in the girls, worrying if they appeared 'thin & pale' and altering the timetable to allow them more sleep.⁷⁸ One girl, Emily Cruywagen, had only three older brothers to care for her and, worried that 'their influence over her would not be good', the teachers ensured that she went to a friend's home for the holiday; significantly,

⁷³ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁷⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁷⁵ Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington, Cape of Good Hope, from January, 1874, to January, 1884 (Cape Town: W.A. Richards & Sons, 1884), 41, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

⁷⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁷⁷ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 9 September 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁷⁸ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 4 April 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

Emily ‘seemed quite pleased about it.’⁷⁹ Bliss lamented that one of the major drawbacks of having a bigger school would be that she would not be able to ‘take that individual interest in each’.⁸⁰ There were also only two girls to a room, providing the pupils with, frequently, previously unheard-of degrees of privacy.⁸¹ Their diet was varied, well cooked and ample – and the teachers made a point of cooking and serving those dishes to which the girls were accustomed at home: at breakfast and supper, the girls drank tea and coffee, ate fruit, and, instead of butter, smeared sheep fat and *moskonfyt* (syrupy grape jam) on their bread; a typical dinner would consist of soup, roasted, stewed, curried, or fried meat (usually mutton), three or four vegetables, rice, and pudding.⁸² An hour’s exercise was compulsory every day, and from the beginning of 1875 weekly gymnastics classes were held.⁸³ Under this regime, ‘[a]s a general thing the health of the girls has

⁷⁹ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 29 March 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606. Emily stayed in the school until the end of 1875. Her eldest brother (who was, according to Bliss, ‘a fast young man’) died suddenly at the beginning of 1875 – a couple months after the other brothers, along with Emily, converted during the 1874/1875 revival. Emily taught in Tulbagh between 1875 and 1879, and married a Mr Isaac Verster of the town in April 1879, with whom – by 1884 – she had had two children. Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 26 January 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606; Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, 10. DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

⁸⁰ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 14 March 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁸¹ This arrangement – of having two girls to a room instead of dormitories accommodating ten or twenty pupils, as was the norm at the other girls’ boarding schools in the Cape – was not immediately accepted by the committee planning the school. When Ferguson and Bliss explained that the comparative privacy of only two in a room would allow for quiet study, prayer, and Bible reading, Murray (and, consequently, the committee) was convinced. A.P. Ferguson, ‘Mary Lyon,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 5 (1899): 4.

⁸² Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 16 February and 28 July 1874, 15 April 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606; Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 7 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605. Butter was prohibitively expensive, so the Seminary made its own *vet* (or sheep fat) by boiling the fat from sheep tails with a little salt, allowing the mixture to cool, and then shaping it into large cubes. The American teachers were not particularly fond of *vet* and preferred butter, when they could afford it. In September 1874, though, the school bought a cow to supply milk – and by 1898, besides for a vegetable garden, a ‘large family of pigs’ and ‘200 fowls’, possessed ‘six or eight’ cows. The prevalence of mutton on the Seminary’s menu was due to a similar reason – beef was simply too expensive. Bliss said that the mutton was perfectly tolerable, as they ‘var[ie]d the mode of cooking as [they] please[d]. Stew for Saturday, cold baked meat for Sunday, curry for Monday. Other days we have chops, cutlets (they are nice fried in breadcrumbs), or in any other way.’ Ferguson was less satisfied, ‘We live on mutton here. We have had beef here once since school commenced, but every other day mutton. We have roast mutton, mutton chops, mutton cutlets, mutton broth, mutton soup, and mutton frigadelle (sic), that is mutton chopped and mixed with bread crumbs and eggs and baked. You see we manage to get some variety... Still with so much fruit we do not mind the meat so much.’ Rice – either plain or flavoured with turmeric, cinnamon, brown sugar, and raisins to make ‘yellow rice’ – was had every day because, as one girl commented, “‘Whoever heard of a dinner without rice!’” A.M. Cummings, ‘Material Growth of the Huguenot Seminary,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 19; Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 16 February and 28 July 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 March 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁸³ Bliss commented that ‘the girls here do not enjoy walking as a general thing & many would be excused every other day if I did not say “no”. One of the Doctors said to me that one reason why the young ladies

been pretty good, better than at home they say, owing...to the regular life they lead here'.⁸⁴

In a sense, the Huguenot Seminary in 1874 and 1875 was more like a well-run large family than a school.⁸⁵ At times, Bliss, Ferguson, and Wells sound more like harassed mothers than teachers,

These girls are so disposed to be careless. Like other school girls perhaps, but they certainly need a good deal of looking after. They want to run out on the wet ground with their slippers on, & just now one is sick in bed because she took a cold bath one night & washed her head (her hair is heavy & not short) when she was not well enough to do either. I think she will never do it again for she took such a cold that she has suffered a good deal & was thoroughly frightened about herself.⁸⁶

Pupils and teachers' birthdays were celebrated by everyone,⁸⁷ picnics and excursions to see the snow on the mountains were organised, goodnight kisses were distributed before bedtime,⁸⁸ and when Ferguson's eyes were so badly infected with ulcers that she could not see, the girls made sure to remove their shoes before walking upstairs so as not to disturb her.⁸⁹ For a time, a section of the Seminary was actually part of a family: during the first half of 1875, Wells and the preparatory school girls boarded with the Murrays, taking their meals with them and being treated as part of an already large family of eight

here are so sickly is that they are so averse to exercise.' The gymnastics classes were met with more enthusiasm, 'Minnie [Bailey] had her first gymnastic class yesterday afternoon. The girls were very much amused by her costume and highly delighted with their lesson.' Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 15 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁸⁴ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 26 August 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁸⁵ This sense of the (girls') school as family was not limited to the Huguenot Seminary. See, for example, Elizabeth Edwards, 'Educational Institutions or Extended Families? Women's Colleges in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,' in *Equality and Inequality in Education Policy*, edited by Liz Dawtrey, Janet Holland, and Merril Hammer (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1995), 93-109.

⁸⁶ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 26 August 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁸⁷ The girls' enthusiasm in giving gifts to their teachers was such that Ferguson 'spoke to them...about giving birthday presents, as she feared it was getting to be a tax on some'. In 1874, she had been presented with a small writing desk inlaid with mother-of-pearl, but a year later, heeding her suggestion that 'it would be better not to give expensive presents', the girls gave Ferguson a basket of fruit and flowers, notes from each pupil, a book mark, two aprons, and a paper case. Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 4 April 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁸⁸ Interestingly, in some English girls' boarding schools during the late nineteenth century, it was customary for the headmistress either to kiss, or, even, tuck in, each of her pupils before bedtime. Gillian Avery, *The Best Type of Girl: A History of Girls' Independent Schools* (London: André Deutsch, 1991), 219-220.

⁸⁹ For the first quarter of 1874, Ferguson's eyes – and, later, hands – were infected with small ulcers, requiring her to rest in a darkened room until they had healed. It seems as if her sister, Maggie Allen, had been similarly afflicted and Ferguson asked her to post her the medication she had been prescribed and which had successfully cured the infection. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 February and 25 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

children.⁹⁰ For the first few months of the Seminary in Stellenbosch – what was to become Bloemhof in November 1875 – Juliette Gilson and her pupils lodged with the thirteen-strong Neethling family and were so happy there that they were ‘quite sorry’ to leave at the end of the year when the school building was ready.⁹¹ Girls afflicted with homesickness were allowed to stay with the Murrays until they felt more settled in Wellington.⁹² Indeed, throughout their letters, Ferguson, Bliss, and Wells refer to the girls as their ‘daughters’ or ‘children’ and to the school as a ‘family’ – and the affection seems to have been reciprocated. All comment that the South African girls were ‘very kind & thoughtful’⁹³ and from time to time developed special bonds with particular pupils. When Mary Freeman – who had been orphaned at the age of twelve and then sent to live with an aunt whom she disliked – left the Seminary to marry, Ferguson wrote that the school was ‘very sorry to lose her. I have become very fond of her. She is so alone in the world and has clung to me so that it is hard for her to go and for me to let her go.’⁹⁴

Lyon encouraged a similar closeness between pupils, and pupils and teachers, at Mount Holyoke, but lent it a religious significance. Younger women and girls new to the school were allotted ‘sisters’ from among the senior classes and staff, not only to familiarise them with the Seminary’s regime, but to pray with – and for – them, in the hope that they would convert to evangelical Christianity. At this point, the pupils would be fully accepted as members of the Mount Holyoke community.⁹⁵ At the Huguenot

⁹⁰ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 16 February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁹¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 January and 26 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁹² Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 9 September 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁹³ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 9 March 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁹⁴ Mary (or Marion, as she was also called) Freeman and her brother were sent from England to the Cape Colony after the deaths of their parents to live with their mother’s sister – a Mrs Thompson – in Cape Town. Both children were unhappy with the Thompsons, and Mary was, consequently, pleased to be sent to the Seminary for a year where she flourished. Her health appears to have been very poor – she had difficulties with her lungs – and the dry Wellington air may have eased her breathing problems. Although disapproved of by her teachers, Mary married Mr W. Selwyn who was not, unlike Mary, a ‘saved’ Christian. They moved to the Eastern Cape, where they had two daughters. Mr Selwyn died in 1879. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 26 March-9 April 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, 10, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

⁹⁵ Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 50. Lyon wrote, ‘The young lady needs to feel herself a member of a large community, where the interests of others are to be sought equally with her own. She needs to learn by practice, as well as by principle, that individual accommodations and private interests are to be sacrificed for the public good; and she needs to know from experience that those who make such a sacrifice will receive an ample reward in an improvement of the community among whom they are to dwell.’ Goodsell, 301.

Seminary, the teachers ensured that ‘unsaved’ girls were given roommates who were already on ‘the Lord’s side’. In August 1875, Eliza Broadway from Cape Town arrived at the Seminary as one of the ‘three or four who [did] not yet know their Saviour’ and, instead of being ‘very much in earnest to find the right way’, she ‘commenced by making fun of religious things’.⁹⁶ Ferguson realised that she would need to room Eliza with someone like Cato Greeff – one of the Seminary’s most devout pupils – in order to persuade her to be less dismissive of the school’s religiosity, but Cato was already paired with a younger girl also in need of her influence.⁹⁷ It was eventually decided that Eliza should share with Susan Morris, ‘a young Christian’, despite Ferguson’s worries that Eliza would ‘exert an influence for evil over Susie’. The plan succeeded, and Eliza’s conduct improved.⁹⁸ Yet whether Eliza’s choice to convert was the result of her contact with Susie, or because of Ferguson’s overt personal interest in the matter, is difficult to ascertain. Before moving in with Susie, Ferguson spoke to Eliza, warning her that if she poked fun at Christianity and misbehaved – or caused Susie to be naughty – she would be asked to leave the school.⁹⁹

Amanda Porterfield has suggested that Lyon, who placed equal emphasis on the intellectual and spiritual growth of her pupils,¹⁰⁰ established Mount Holyoke as a kind of religious community in which young women were introduced to the principles by which evangelicalism believed society should be run: piety, charity, and industriousness.¹⁰¹ In establishing a community withdrawn from mainstream American society, she hoped that she could nurture an ideal which the graduates of the Seminary would take to their communities, families, and children when they rejoined the world surrounding Mount

⁹⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 3 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁹⁷ Cato – or Catherine – Greeff from Worcester attended the Seminary between 1874 and 1878 and was the first missionary sponsored by the Huguenot Missionary Society in 1878 (although after her marriage to Rev. P. Roux, it was decided that she would no longer need the Society’s financial support). She worked with her husband as a missionary in Mabies Kraal, near Rustenberg in the Transvaal. A.P. Ferguson, ‘Development of Missionary Interest,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 21; Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, 20, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

⁹⁸ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 20 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615. Eliza and Susie, who were both from Cape Town, left the Seminary at the end of 1875. Susie taught in East London between 1878 and 1881, marrying a Mr Wienand from the town in July 1881. By 1884 they had had two children. Eliza taught at the Seminary until 1882, and then moved to Worcester in 1883, where she also taught. Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, 16-17, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

⁹⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 20 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹⁰⁰ Robert, ‘Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement,’ 107.

¹⁰¹ Porterfield, 32-33.

Holyoke.¹⁰² Entry into the Seminary community was not secured through academic achievement, but, rather, via religious conversion.¹⁰³ A similar process occurred at the Huguenot Seminary. Murray wrote of Mount Holyoke,

I for the first time saw here what the value of a Boarding School could be. I had all along regarded it, as I suppose most do, as a sort of necessary evil, believing that it would be better if all children could be educated without leaving their parents' home. Mary Lyon thought differently. In her view a Boarding School might become one of God's choicest means of grace. Many well-meaning, even religious parents, for lack of training or earnest purpose, hardly know how to guide their children. Where they can be entrusted to teachers who understand what to be and to do is more than to know or to think; that the true being and doing is only to be found in the fear of God and the faith of Christ; and that there is given to them the wonderful power to mould character, and to set upon young hearts the stamp of God and eternity, the Boarding School may be a very House of God.¹⁰⁴

For girls – like Eliza – to become part of the school's 'family' they would need to confess their desire to be 'born again'.¹⁰⁵ From the second week of the first term in 1874, those who believed themselves to be Christians were asked to meet in Ferguson's room, while the others were to congregate elsewhere. Fourteen 'declared themselves on the Lord's side'.¹⁰⁶ This was met with a mixed reaction from the pupils; accustomed to meeting for prayers once a week, many of the girls found it strange to pray as frequently as four times a day and believed, perceptively, 'that it was wrong to draw lines and [that this] would certainly lead to self-deception on the part of some.'¹⁰⁷ Whatever doubts there were about the genuineness of the girls' conversions, and Ferguson admitted that they were 'impressionable, [and] easily influenced,'¹⁰⁸ were dismissed with '[o]ne is tempted to doubt and fear that some may be mistaken, but it is the Lord's own work and we can leave it in His hands.'¹⁰⁹ Meetings were held on Thursday evenings where the converted prayed with Ferguson for the conversion of the unawakened and Murray and N.J.

¹⁰² Porterfield, 33.

¹⁰³ A pupil of the Mount Holyoke Seminary between 1847 and 1848, the poet Emily Dickinson resisted that institution's attempts to instil in her a desire to convert, beginning a lifetime of scepticism towards religion. As she wrote in c.1860, "'Faith" is a fine invention / When Gentlemen can see – / But Microscopes are prudent / In an Emergency.' Dickinson left Mount Holyoke after a year, conscious of her status as an outsider of the school's community – as 'one of the lingering bad ones' who would not participate in the process of conversion. Porterfield, 50; Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy (editors), *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, fourth edition (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 1895.

¹⁰⁴ Murray, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 January 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹⁰⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹⁰⁷ Huguenot Seminary Journal, 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 622.

¹⁰⁸ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 7 September 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹⁰⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 25 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

Hofmeyr visited several times to preach to the girls about being saved until, about a month after the first Thursday meeting, they ‘gathered a united family on the Lord’s side.’¹¹⁰

Yet the emphasis on maintaining as close a relationship with God as possible – on trying to find ‘the way’ to Christ – did not relent after this first revival at the Seminary; the prayer meetings continued; periodically, the pupils were separated into groups – the converted and those desiring conversion – and urged to pray for one another; from time to time, whole days would be set aside for prayer and contemplation.¹¹¹ What the teachers encouraged was an almost constant self-examination; the girls were urged to consider to what extent they recognised their status as sinners, how close they were to God, or whether they ‘knew something of the blessedness there is in resting and trusting in Jesus’.¹¹² Importantly, this discussion and analysis was done in groups, and not privately. Meeting daily for prayer, the pupils were required to discuss their religious experience, sharing whatever doubts or certainties they had about their Christianity with their teachers and friends. It is worth quoting Ferguson’s description of such a meeting in May 1875,

At eleven I asked all those who wanted to come together to tell what the Lord had been doing for them in these last days to meet in the drawing room. About twenty came together, the others meeting at the same time in the sitting room with Miss Bliss. I met with those in the drawing room, and I think it was the pleasantest meeting I ever attended. Of course each one came prepared to speak of herself...Many of them spoke out of very full hearts, and gave most interesting testimony. Cato Greeff...said she had been getting so much that was good she did not know where to begin to tell about it. She seems all bubbling over in her bright Christian joy. One, a quiet child who finds it difficult to express herself anywhere, said after a moment’s hesitation ‘I feel as if I couldn’t pray anymore[, but] only give thanks.’ Ellie [Murray] said she knew she was being richly blessed and receiving great things from the Lord, not because she was feeling very deeply, but because she was trusting God’s promise and she knew that could not fail. Another said she had always felt when she had been doing wrong as if it were mockery to go right to God with it after so dishonoring (sic) Him

¹¹⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 25 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615. Part of the school’s success in converting all its pupils must have been the result of the age of the girls: adolescents, and young women especially, are particularly attracted to religious conversion, probably as a result of the rules, stable worldview, and sense of community that religion provides. Denise M. DeZolt and Mary Henning-Stout, ‘Adolescent Girls’ Experiences in School and Community Settings,’ in *Beyond Appearance: A New Look at Adolescent Girls*, edited by Norine G. Johnson, Michael C. Roberts, and Judith Worell (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1999), 265-267.

¹¹¹ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 16 May 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹¹² Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 30 May 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 18 October 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

but she had been learning to turn quickly with every sin to Jesus, and that her sins should drive her to praise Him instead of away from Him.¹¹³

The frequency of these meetings, as well as their intimacy, not only strengthened the closeness of the relationships between the girls and their teachers, but it also made it exceptionally difficult to resist becoming converted. It does appear, however, that, at least in 1874 and 1875, there would have been very few pupils who would not have wanted to convert – or who did not enter the Seminary as Christians. Much of the heightened religiosity within the Seminary was connected to the awaking occurring in Wellington, Worcester, Stellenbosch, and Cape Town during the period. Murray and his family were particularly involved in the revival, and he travelled widely to assist ministers overwhelmed by the numbers attending church.¹¹⁴ Especially towards the end of 1874, Ferguson commented on the ever-increasing numbers of those attending church services, and noted that that the school was in a particularly good position to benefit from the revivals. One pupil explained that she had chosen to attend the Seminary so as ‘to fit herself to work for the Lord.’¹¹⁵ On another occasion, Ferguson said, ‘As the fruit of the recent revivals there are a number offering themselves for the Lord’s work.’¹¹⁶ She admitted that ‘almost all’ of the new scholars at the beginning of 1875 came ‘from the revival last winter, and some of them came with the express desire to be filled with the Lord’s work’.¹¹⁷ Bliss was bemused when the mother of a prospective pupil informed her that she desired her daughter to learn religion, industry, obedience, and humility at the Seminary; Bliss’s bafflement seems to have stemmed from the fact that the girl was to stay at the school only for nine months, and not from the mother’s list.¹¹⁸

In this way, the school’s evangelicalism, along with its emphasis on being a family, worked in tandem to create an environment in which the pupils were prepared for lives as teachers and, preferably, missionaries. Even if the girls chose not to work after

¹¹³ Ellie – or Helen – Murray was Andrew Murray’s younger sister. She was a pupil at the Seminary for two years, both attending classes and assisting with the teaching. She became the principal of the Midland Seminary in 1876 in Graaff-Reinet, where her brother was the minister. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 15 May 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, 11, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹¹⁴ Robert Ross, *Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1993), 186-187.

¹¹⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹¹⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 October 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹¹⁷ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹¹⁸ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 13 February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

leaving the Seminary, they would inculcate their children with the institution's religious vision – and they were encouraged to speak of their new-found religiosity with family and friends who were not 'saved'.¹¹⁹ Of course, though, by the 'Lord's work' Ferguson meant teaching, and missionary work. For Murray and Ferguson, the two activities were inextricably linked – so much so that she suggested that she wanted 'all these dear ones to grow more and more Christ like and to become chosen vessels for the Master's service.'¹²⁰ Conversion, it would seem, was a prerequisite for becoming a teacher. In a special sermon to the pupils after returning from an epic fund-raising tour for the Seminary throughout the Colony, Murray

showed the importance of the education of the children being a Christian education. He said that sometimes he had felt tempted to leave the ministry and become a teacher the work was calling so loudly, and then he showed them that the influence of the teacher was stronger than that of the pastor and the relationship a closer one. He spoke so earnestly of the responsibility, the blessedness and the glory of the work that the girls were thrilled by it, and some of who[m] [who] had not felt ready for the work before, were led to look upon it as a privilege. I do so hope we may send out earnest godly teachers to care for the lambs.¹²¹

In fact, the girls' first experience of teaching was in the Sunday school established by the Seminary for the coloured children of Wellington in April 1874. Beginning with thirty pupils, the numbers swelled to over a hundred by the end of the year. Besides for lessons in reading, writing, and arithmetic, the children were taught to pray and to ask Jesus to be their saviour. This met with almost immediate results, as the pupils of the Sunday school went up to their young teachers to tell them how they prayed alone at night, or tried to convert their parents and siblings. The primary role of the teacher, then, was to be a 'winner of souls.'¹²² Outside of the classroom, the girls engaged in charity work by starting prayer groups for women and, throughout the latter half of 1874, organising entertainments for the 'navvies' (British railway workers) and their families.¹²³ As at

¹¹⁹ On one occasion, Ferguson was approached by one of the younger pupils, Annie Roux, who had received a letter from her mother asking that the Seminary would pray for her to be saved. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 7 June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹²⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 12 April 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹²¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 17 June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹²² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 May 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹²³ These 'navvies' were engaged to work on extending the railway line from Wellington to Worcester. The pupils and teachers of the Seminary took pity on these workers on their families, who lived in relatively difficult circumstances – they were encamped just outside of Wellington without proper sanitation, cooking facilities, and schools for their children. While there were coloured and black families living in similar, or worse, conditions in Wellington, it would seem that the women of the Seminary felt a particular urgency to

Mount Holyoke, on Monday evenings the pupils collected money for the missions, and missionaries regularly visited the Seminary to speak of their experiences – one missionary remarking meaningfully to the girls that, having recently lost his wife, he was seeking another.¹²⁴ The Seminary was able to despatch its first missionary, Johanna Meeuwsen, to work in the interior of the country in 1875, and, three years later, founded the Huguenot Missionary Society, which raised enough money within three months to sponsor another female missionary from the school for a whole year.¹²⁵ It is worth noting here that the Seminary also despatched its first two teachers, Johanna Greeff and Isabel Kolbe, in the middle of 1875 to found a school in Beaufort West.¹²⁶

Thus within its second year of existence, the Seminary was able to send out its first pupils to instil its values in other parts of the country – the school's evangelicalism was taken to a mission station in the Transvaal, as well as to the daughters of the white population of Beaufort West. This success can be ascribed to the speed with which Ferguson, Bliss, and Murray established a Mount Holyoke-style religious community in Wellington: with its 'supercharged spiritual atmosphere'¹²⁷ it was virtually impossible for any girl to resist becoming converted, and accepting a religiosity which would have been alien to the communities in which many of the pupils had grown up. Indeed, while the prayer meetings and discussions about finding 'the way' may have fostered a strong sense of family within the school, and this was heightened by Ferguson's request that the girls act as one another's guides and advisors, it also had the effect of alienating the

attend to these labourers, probably because they were white (although working class). For a brief discussion of the navvies in the Cape, see Worden *et al.*, 163.

¹²⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 October 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615. This missionary – a Mr Brink – found a wife in the form of the sister of the minister at Simonstown. They were married in December 1874 and it was with them that Johanna Meeuwsen went to the Transvaal to work as a teacher – along with Mrs Brink – at their mission station near Saul's Poort in the Transvaal. Meeuwsen worked at the station until 1883, when she moved to Rustenberg to teach there. She married a Mr G.H. Topper of the town in December 1883. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 25 January 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 13 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606; Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, 9, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹²⁵ Huguenot Seminary Journals for 1875 and 1876, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 622, V 11/3/1.

¹²⁶ Johanna Greeff, from Worcester, taught in Beaufort West until the end of 1876. She married a Mr. J.N. Schwabe in September 1879 and moved to Salt River. Isabel Kolbe – who grew up in Paarl – also taught in Beaufort West until 1876 and then moved to Worcester to teach at the seminary there. She does not seem to have married, and by the 1890s was living in Germany. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 June 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, 10-11, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621; 'Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 59.

¹²⁷ Robert, 'Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement,' 107.

pupils from the society around the Seminary – and the school’s regime also contributed to this. The girls worked within a domestic environment wholly different to that of their families: they – white, middle class girls – instead of black, coloured, or white working class servants, did the housework; Dana L. Robert has argued that the frequent ringing of bells removed the girls from the ‘natural’ time of the agricultural year and introduced them to modernised western concepts of time – and even if the girls were from Cape Town or one of the larger rural villages, they were plunged into a roster dedicated solely to religious and academic work while at the Seminary.¹²⁸ They were kept constantly busy from relatively early in the morning until night time, ensuring that they could not devote their energies to activities other than those occurring within the school.¹²⁹ Contact with the community around the Seminary was limited to church or charity business – the girls were discouraged from receiving visitors, and it was not permitted to leave the institution at all on Sundays.¹³⁰

In addition to this, it would seem that Murray and the teachers encouraged the girls to think of the Seminary as home, with fellow pupils becoming ‘sisters’ and the teachers being seen as surrogate mothers. As Murray suggested in his praise of the boarding school as envisaged by Lyon, he felt that parents were frequently not the best people to entrust with the education of their children. Ferguson agreed, ‘I want to write a book for mothers out of my experience with so many mothers’ children. Oh! the mothers do not know what they are doing for their children, for their weal or woe.’¹³¹ Perhaps even more revealingly, she wrote to her sister, ‘we must be distinct and separate if we would have a close fellowship [with God].’¹³² This distinction and separation was soon felt by the girls. The Seminary Journal for 1874 concludes with the remark that ‘we felt that a test time was at hand and that the vacation would be a season of temptation and trial to many who had professed to have found the Lord,’¹³³ and Bliss met and prayed

¹²⁸ Robert, ‘Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement,’ 111.

¹²⁹ This emphasis on constant activity – punctuated and directed by the regular ringing of bells – is a feature of most girls’ education and demonstrates the all-encompassing nature of the boarding school: every moment of the girls’ day is subsumed by the needs of the institution, so much so that it requires a renunciation of will to ensure that they do not break the rules. Avery, 112-113.

¹³⁰ Catalogue of the First and Second Years of the Huguenot Seminary, 15-16, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621, V 11/3/1.

¹³¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 November 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹³² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 March 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹³³ Huguenot Seminary Journal, 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div.

with a group of girls who ‘were feeling troubled about the holiday just at hand for they said they would meet so many temptations.’¹³⁴ Ferguson referred to girls saying that the return to the Seminary after visiting friends or family was often a relief.¹³⁵

This emphasis on both the exclusivity of the Seminary, as well as on the discipline and order within it, undoubtedly assisted in the creation of a close community of pupils and teachers.¹³⁶ Yet one of the key aspects of Lyon’s vision had the potential to undermine this cohesion: her self-reporting system of discipline. As at Mount Holyoke, the girls were each provided with a booklet in which they were to record whenever they broke a rule.¹³⁷ Once a week, all would gather for the ‘Reporting’ and would confess their transgressions, and then punishment would be meted out.¹³⁸ Quite clearly, this was an attempt to instil in the pupils a strong sense of self-discipline that, it was felt, they would need when working as teachers or missionaries. Ferguson explained that they ‘were told much about the untruthfulness of the children, and parents too, in this country before school commenced and that the self reporting system would never do here’.¹³⁹ It appears as though the system worked in fits and starts; all would seem to be going well, and then the girls would begin to forget to record their transgressions – until Ferguson called them all together and spoke to them about the necessity of being truthful. After this, pupils would troop into her office – frequently in tears – to apologise for having told lies or, in a few cases, having entered into correspondence with young men not their relatives. In presenting the rationale for the system to the girls, Ferguson invoked

¹³⁴ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 26 September 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

¹³⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 7 September 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹³⁶ It has been suggested that the relentlessness and intensity of the Mount Holyoke schedule was the result of Lyon’s battle against depression. Her means of coping with the violent mood swings, but especially the despair, caused by the depression was her evangelical Christianity. As a result, ‘Lyon’s concern for the conversion of her students expressed her desire to reciprocate gifts she had received and to sacrifice herself for the benefit of others...[she] required objects of benevolence as a means of furthering her own conversion.’ Hence the need for the bells, the rules, and the charity – they were all-consuming and allowed little time for depression. Nonetheless – like her sister, who was committed to an asylum in 1828 and who died there in 1832 – she did eventually succumb to mental illness. Severely traumatised by the death of one her students and a nephew’s suicide, she became feverish and agitated, talking constantly for nearly seventy-two hours, and refusing to drink a drop of water because she believed that Jesus had told her that her friends had poisoned it. She died a few days later on 28 February 1847. Porterfield, 50-54.

¹³⁷ Petronella van Heerden, *Kerssnuitsels* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1963), 117.

¹³⁸ Le Roux, 37. It is important to note, though, that the self-reporting – or ‘honour’ – system was also used at other girls’ schools where it was felt that the prefect system was tyrannical or allowed older girls too much power. Mabel Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women* (Washington, D.C.: Zenger, 1959), 116-120; Avery, 113.

¹³⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 7 June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

religious imagery, asking them to model their behaviour more closely on Christ's. Those who had confessed to having been converted were particularly harshly dealt with. Resolving a quarrel between two roommates, Ferguson remarked to the one girl that 'it seemed to me a sad thing that just as they were both coming to the Lord that they should separate because they could not agree...I wanted her love for her Saviour to show in her.'¹⁴⁰ Besides for monitoring themselves, the girls were encouraged to look out for one another. After a bout of naughtiness, she 'had a very earnest talk with them...taking for my text "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," and trying to show them how they are each other's keeper.'¹⁴¹

The obvious flaw in this disciplinary system was that it had a tendency to punish the scrupulously honest – as was true for the experience of Ella Neethling at Bloemhof. The system in Stellenbosch required that after a girl had accumulated a certain number of black marks beside her name, she would have sit on a particular chair as punishment on Friday evenings.¹⁴² Because Ella was so very truthful, she reported herself for being so much as a minute late for a lesson and, as a result, was constantly in the 'front chair' despite being one of the best behaved pupils in the school.¹⁴³ It would appear that the only means of combating the girls' abuse of the system – and their disillusionment of it – was a recourse to religion. In fact, naughtiness – breaking the school's rules – and sinfulness – breaking God's laws – were equated with each other. Those confessing to be Christians or who came from Christian homes were expected to adhere to the Seminary's rules without question. Those who broke the rules were judged not to be 'true' Christians.¹⁴⁴ Possibly as a result of this, rule-breakers were not dealt with harshly: the rationale behind the rules were explained before they were enforced, in the hope that the girls would understand why they had been made in the first place and would, thus, see no need to break them.¹⁴⁵ Wells, for example, hesitated for a couple of months before

¹⁴⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹⁴¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 7 September 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹⁴² For the first few years of the Huguenot Seminary's existence, this punishment – of being forced to sit in the front row of the class – was also used, but only the very worst transgressions (the breaking of a 'First Class' rule) were punished thus. Helen Murray, 'Reminiscences. – 1874', *The Huguenot*, no. 14 (1908): 9.

¹⁴³ P.J. Pienaar, *Ella Neethling, deur Haar Suster*, second edition (Paarl: Paarl Drukkers Maatskappy, [1927] 1928), 20.

¹⁴⁴ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 16 February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁴⁵ Le Roux, 37.

requiring the preparatory school pupils to report themselves for talking after the ‘tardy’ bell ‘lest they should wrong themselves by not reporting’.¹⁴⁶ She worried that she did not deal with her girls’ misdemeanours with the appropriate ‘firmness’ and ‘spirit of love.’¹⁴⁷ Yet within the intense religiosity of the first few years of the Seminary’s existence, the teachers had only isolated cases of naughtiness, and they were swiftly and effectively dealt with.¹⁴⁸ Within such a small number of pupils, it would have been difficult for the girls to report on one another and it appears as if this happened exceptionally rarely, if ever.

Thus, from the first the Seminary successfully implemented Lyon’s system in South Africa: the domestic work, bell system, curriculum, and, even, daily exercise were accepted by the pupils at the school, so that it was possible to compare the Huguenot Seminary to Mount Holyoke from the earliest months of the school’s existence. Murray, Ferguson, and Bliss, in their emphasis on family, on the exclusivity of the school, and on the need for each of the girls to be saved, were successful in creating a kind of religious community in which the girls were inculcated with particular notions about religion, teaching, and charity that they perpetuated after leaving the Seminary. While the self-reporting system had the potential to undermine this by allowing for an atmosphere of distrust to develop in the school, this did not occur, and largely because the girls so wholeheartedly entered into the Seminary’s evangelicalism. However, as the school entered into a new phase of development during the mid-1880s, the cohesiveness of this community came under a great deal of strain.

‘I felt there was a battle going on’:¹⁴⁹ Challenge and Change at the Huguenot Seminary, 1884-1885

As Ferguson admitted at the end of 1885, after having suspended two pupils from the Seminary for a year, ‘It has been a strange anniversary week. Outwardly everything has

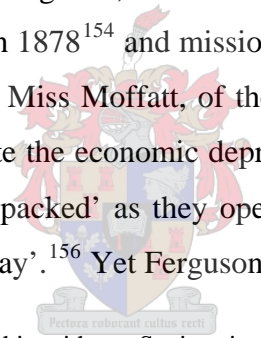
¹⁴⁶ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 16 May 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁴⁷ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 15 June 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁴⁸ As testimony to the success of the self-reporting system, Mrs de Kock of the village school ‘said that this is the only boarding school that she knows of in the Colony, where any fruit hangs on the trees when ripe, that it will disappear, no one knows where, that is no one will acknowledge that they have taken it.’ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

¹⁴⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 8 April 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

passed off well.¹⁵⁰ Ostensibly, the Huguenot Seminary had gone from strength to strength during its first decade: it was full to capacity, and employed seventeen teachers by 1884; Murray Hall was opened in July 1875, and the West Building was completed in 1881; a year later, Mount Holyoke presented the Seminary with a telescope and enough money with which to build a small observatory; in 1885, E.A. Goodnow, an American philanthropist, agreed to fund the construction of yet another school building, and Goodnow Hall was opened officially in 1886. Throughout the period, the Seminary had acquired the land and cottages surrounding it, so that by 1885 it possessed a large – and valuable – estate.¹⁵¹ Academically, the school produced its first graduates – pupils who had completed the full course of study – in 1878 and nearly every year had entered candidates for the teaching certificate examination.¹⁵² In 1877 a Mission Training Institute affiliated to the Seminary, but accepting male students, was established under the leadership of Rev. George R. Ferguson, Abbie Ferguson’s brother.¹⁵³ The Huguenot Missionary Society was founded in 1878¹⁵⁴ and missionaries continued to visit and speak to the school – one of whom was Miss Moffatt, of the missionary family, whose niece, Mary Meta, was a pupil.¹⁵⁵ Despite the economic depression in the Colony during 1884, the Seminary and Institute were ‘packed’ as they opened in February, with ‘about 225 gathering on [the] grounds every day’.¹⁵⁶ Yet Ferguson concluded 1884 with



 I feel as if I had been having a fellowship with my Saviour in suffering, during this last year, such as I never have had in the same way before, suffering through contact with sin, and now the year is well nigh ended, and my whole heart is full of thanksgiving that the Lord has been with us and delivered [us] out of so many evils¹⁵⁷

1885 was no less difficult. What Ferguson complains of is a series of disciplinary infractions which plagued the school throughout 1884 and 1885. For the first time in its

¹⁵⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 7 December 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁵¹ Cummings, 16-18.

¹⁵² A.E. Bliss, ‘Educational Growth,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 20.

¹⁵³ Clinton T. Wood, ‘Rev. George R. Ferguson,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 14-15.

¹⁵⁴ Ferguson, ‘Development of Missionary Interest,’ 21.

¹⁵⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 26 August 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁵⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 5 February 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616. Ferguson was acutely aware of the danger that the depression posed – as she wrote to her brother-in-law, ‘We are having very hard times in the Colony. Trade is in a very depressed condition, and many are hard up. The schools are feeling it a good deal. We are very fortunate in being more than full.’ Abbie Ferguson to Hermann Allen, Wellington, 19 February 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁵⁷ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 November 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

existence, the Seminary's self-reporting system almost collapsed, as a large minority of girls refused either to report themselves or their fellow pupils for breaking rules. So although the Seminary seemed to be in the best position that it had ever occupied, internally these two years were characterised by a great deal of struggle between pupils and teachers. What were the circumstances that produced this situation?

Ferguson and Bliss were upbeat about the school's prospects for its anniversary year. They had a particularly strong senior class, with Emma Bottomley being 'the best scholar [they had] ever had',¹⁵⁸ the domestic work resumed quickly and efficiently, and a tennis craze ensured that the pupils received adequate exercise.¹⁵⁹ Classes commenced and the school 'family' were on such good terms that little time had to be spent on matching up suitable roommates. Of the new girls, only six in Ferguson's school and a handful in Bliss's department confessed to not being 'saved' and prayer meetings were quickly initiated to encourage them to convert.¹⁶⁰ However, Ferguson soon began to suspect that all these conversions were not wholly sincere,

One thing is coming very clear to me. I need to find not only whether they have given themselves up to Christ, but whether they know that Christ has taken them. I fear that some are deceiving themselves thinking that if they tell the Lord they give themselves to Him it is enough without waiting for an answering token.¹⁶¹

In other words, the girls were confessing to having 'found' their Saviour, but had not entered into the introspective self-analysis that the Mount Holyoke system required. For Lyon – and Ferguson, Bliss, Wells, and others – this religiosity was not simply a system of belief, but a way of life and the girls were believed only to be 'true' Christians when they demonstrated the requisite Christian behaviour – by volunteering for charity work and speaking openly during prayer meetings about their relationship with God. Of course,

¹⁵⁸ Besides for Emma from Kimberley ('the most beautiful girl in the school'), there was Gertrude Lategan from Frankfort in the Orange Free State ('a rare jewel, such a sweet quiet, earnest, Christian girl'), Lily Scott from Swellendam ('tall and rather stately, but with a very lovely spirit'), Gertrude Roos from Paarl who had worked as a teacher for a number of years before returning to the Seminary to graduate, Maggie Wither from Somerset East ('not as quick a scholar as the others'), and Aline Mabile whose father was in charge of the mission station in Morija, Basotholand. Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 11 February 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

¹⁵⁹ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, no date, but probably the first quarter of 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

¹⁶⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 24 February 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁶¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 3 March 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

obeying the schools rules was also believed to be a manifestation of a pupil's Christianity, and it is not surprising that only a month after Ferguson began to worry about the genuineness of the girls' conversions that it became apparent that 'Satan [had] been very busy and there [had been] a very naughty spirit among some of the girls.' She interpreted their naughtiness as a sign of a spiritual 'struggle within', adding that she had 'never realized (sic) a more critical time' in their religious development.¹⁶² As a result, she called together a prayer meeting, where she and the teachers spoke to the girls. The result was very gratifying: 'One girl after another plead "Pray for me", and one after another they came to the Lord, and we felt that the Lord had indeed come down to us.' The enthusiasm was such that the older girls organised meetings for the next two evenings, during which 'two of the naughtiest girls' converted. While Ferguson acknowledged that she 'was afraid...of excitement, and the girls in charge losing control of the others', she comforted herself with the success of the prayer. To an outsider, however, these prayer meetings seem to have been quite frenzied, packed with pupils 'crying ["What shall I do[?]"'] and sometimes staying up as late as eleven or twelve o'clock to discuss their need for salvation.¹⁶³ It would appear that something of a religious hysteria took hold of the Seminary during April 1884, probably fuelled by Ferguson's fairly dramatic suggestion that Satan was responsible for the girls' rule-breaking, and then encouraged by the teachers' approval the meetings.¹⁶⁴

It is worthwhile comparing this bout of naughtiness – and it is unfortunate that neither Ferguson, Bliss, nor Wells specify what this bad behaviour was – to one that had occurred in Wells's preparatory section in 1875. In the middle of June that year she complained of what she felt 'to be almost a mutinous spirit among the children'¹⁶⁵ – that there was, generally, an 'increasing sullenness and impoliteness.'¹⁶⁶ Instead of praying or calling her pupils together to confess their sinfulness, Wells chose to let the bad behaviour pass – despite finding it difficult to bear – because she realised that it was 'to

¹⁶² The original is underlined. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 8 April 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁶³ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 8 April 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁶⁴ As Gillian Avery makes the point, excitement and hysteria spread easily through girls' schools, especially if the girls live together in close proximity and have little contact with the outside world. Avery, 301-303.

¹⁶⁵ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 15 June 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁶⁶ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 29 June 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

be accounted for partly by the fact that the end of the term [was] near.’¹⁶⁷ This decision does not seem to have caused any damage. When Bliss took over from Wells after the holiday, she remarked that the pupils were ‘not as stable or steadfast as the older ones’, but added that within a week she had them ‘more orderly, more where [she] want[ed] them to be, & more under [her] control’ as she put into place a routine considerably better organised than the one to which the girls had been used while staying with the Murray family.¹⁶⁸ Significantly, Ferguson’s disciplinary problems also occurred at the end of a term – and, considering that it was the conclusion of the first quarter of the year, meaning that for a number of girls this was the end of the first time that they had spent three months away from their family, it is not unlikely that the enthusiasm with which they entered into the prayer meetings was aided and abetted by the excitement already present in the school. When the girls returned from their holiday, their religious fervour having cooled a little, Ferguson said that it was ‘difficult to begin’ the term, as some of the girls had maintained their religiosity at home, while ‘others ha[d] suffered’.¹⁶⁹ What the comparison of Wells and Ferguson’s approaches to naughtiness reveals is the extent to which the ideas and expectations of the teachers influenced the girls’ behaviour. While Wells ignored her pupils’ naughtiness and found that it had no lasting effect, Ferguson responded immediately and dramatically to the rule-breaking, relying heavily on the girls’ religiosity to ensure that the self-reporting system functioned. As a result, once the pupils’ interest in being saved had worn off, she would have to deal with transgressions of the rules once again.

Yet why had this persistent need to reinforce the self-reporting system not been required in 1874 and 1875? In the first place, the school was considerably smaller then – around fifty pupils as opposed to the combined number of 250 scholars in both the Seminary and the Institute – and fewer subjects were being taught. In 1884, Ferguson complained that she had ‘never [been] quite so behind [in her work], or never since the second year’ and said that the ‘school ha[d] been so full, with classes so large, that a number of the teachers [had] been feeling overburdened.’¹⁷⁰ The teachers were now

¹⁶⁷ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 15 June 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁶⁸ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 17 February 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

¹⁶⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 29 April 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁷⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Berg River, 21 April 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

involved in other concerns outside of their schoolwork – Lizzie Cummings and Jean Brown assisted in the formation of a temperance society among Wellington’s coloured community,¹⁷¹ a large proportion of the teachers were members of the Association of Female Workers and attended its meetings regularly,¹⁷² they also participated in the annual Sunday School Teachers’ Conference,¹⁷³ and Ferguson was active in the Ladies’ Branch of the Christian Workers’ Union in Cape Town.¹⁷⁴ In the midst of all this activity, it is little wonder that Bliss’s fears that a bigger school would prevent each girl from receiving adequate individual attention were realised. In her, Ferguson, and Wells’s letters for 1884 and 1885, when pupils are mentioned it is because they had been naughty enough to have attracted their teachers’ notice.¹⁷⁵ Only the members of the Senior class are described in any detail, and that was as a result of their visibility in the school, as well as their popularity. Although the teachers still referred to their pupils as ‘their children’ or ‘their girls’ and birthdays were still celebrated, and picnics and festivities continued to be organised, it is difficult to believe that the same sense of family pervaded the Seminary as it had done ten years earlier.

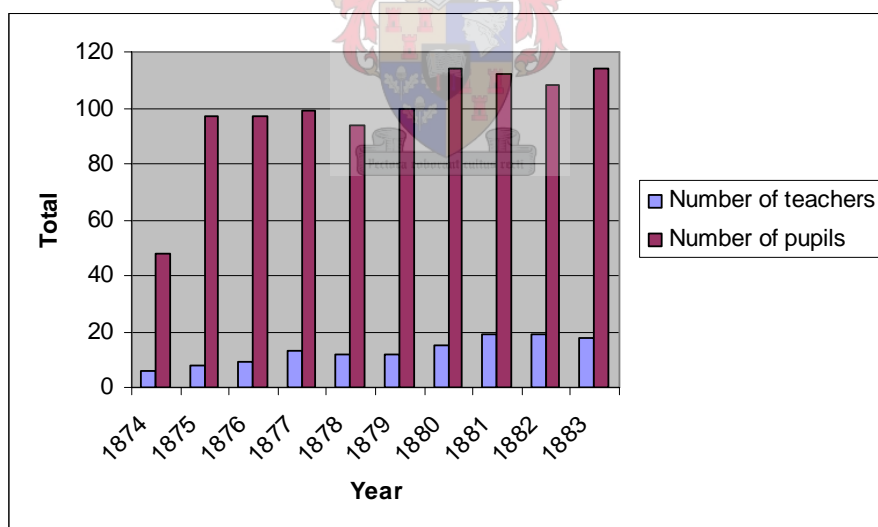


Figure 2: Teacher and Pupil Numbers at the Huguenot Seminary, 1874-1883¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 3 March 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁷² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 29 April 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁷³ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 October 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁷⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 19 November 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁷⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 7 December 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁷⁶ These numbers are taken from the Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

Another important point is that the Seminary's links to the DRC seem no longer to have been as much of an attraction to the parents who sent their daughters to the school. Although it was still the obvious choice for the daughters of ministers or the particularly devout,¹⁷⁷ it appears that many attended the Seminary because of its academic achievements.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, the school by this stage was simply one of many good institutions for girls in the Colony – Ferguson writes that of two of her naughtiest pupils, one had already been expelled from two schools,¹⁷⁹ and the other had previously been at a convent for a number of years.¹⁸⁰ In this way, the girls entering the Seminary were no longer as prepared to convert as they had been previously. It is little wonder that discipline suffered. Ferguson was acutely aware that fewer numbers of pious Christians meant infractions of the rules,

There is an unusually large number who are not Christians, and some who say that they are, [and] live very half and half lives. Often [one] would not know that they belonged to Christ unless they told you. Externally all is very prosperous. The school full, buildings extending, all work going on well, and the girls are generally very good and obedient, but we have not been satisfied with this, but have been earnestly asking that the Lord will pour out His Spirit upon us, and that all our children may be taught of Him, and that we may have the joy of seeing them all belonging to Christ, and ready for His service.¹⁸¹

This is particularly significant because Wellington, Worcester, Stellenbosch, Cape Town, and other towns in the area underwent another revival in the second half of 1884 and throughout 1885.¹⁸² Again, Murray was instrumental in encouraging and then maintaining the religious fervour sweeping the region, and he spoke to the girls in the Seminary, focussing his energies particularly on the unconverted,¹⁸³ but 'the Seminary [was] cold' in comparison to the fervour in the churches and they did not 'begin to have what the Lord want[ed] to give.'¹⁸⁴ In August of 1884, Ferguson almost despaired when groups of fewer than six girls turned up to the prayer meetings, but, nonetheless, resolved

¹⁷⁷ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 March 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁷⁸ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, April 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

¹⁷⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 8 April 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 November 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 15 September 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 10, 17, 22 June, 29 July, 19 August, 2 September 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸³ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 3 June 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 10 June 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

to continue with them in the hope that the numbers would increase.¹⁸⁵ And, indeed, the religious interest in the school did grow as the revival took hold in the Boland and friends and relatives of the pupils began to be converted – and as Murray and other ministers' visits to the Seminary increased. The Huguenot Seminary religious community reasserted itself towards the end of 1884: the evening prayer meetings resumed with the girls being eager to give testimony of their religious experience,¹⁸⁶ and Ferguson re-instituted the practice of dividing the pupils into groups – the saved, the unsaved, and those 'along the border line' – and asking them to pray for one another. The sense of family was revived, with teachers and older Christians taking the newly-saved under their wing.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, as the girls were encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about their relationship with Christ, their closeness with the other 'saved' girls grew. Ferguson records that she

asked [the converted and those wanting to be 'saved'] to speak either to give their testimony for Christ or to ask our prayers and help. Mary Ross began, testifying that she had given her heart to Christ. Some half dozen followed, two or three of our naughtiest girls asked us to pray for them. One said ['I am the naughtiest girl in the school, but I have come to Christ and I think He has taken me.'] I called for those who belonged to the Lord to stand, and for those who wanted is to pray for them. Nearly all the girls stood.¹⁸⁸

As proof of their earnestness, the girls volunteered for the Seminary's mission and charity work in the village, offering to assist in the cottage meetings with the coloured community and in teaching at the Sunday school.¹⁸⁹ By November, Ferguson was able to say, 'My girls are so good now. They are a great pleasure to me, and it hardly seems they can be the same girls they were six months ago.'¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, even though 1885 began 'very delightfully' with the girls 'very willing and obedient',¹⁹¹ there were soon problems with discipline again – and continued until the end of the year. The Christmas holiday and absence of some of the most devout girls – most of whom had graduated at the end of 1884 – appears to have altered the religious life of the school once more. Quite clearly, other means had to be found to deal with the continual rule-breaking. Ferguson felt very strongly that the only way in which to 'reform' the naughtiest girls was for them

¹⁸⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 26 August 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 26 August 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸⁷ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 September 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸⁸ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 September 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁸⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 23 September 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁹⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 25 November 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁹¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 March 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

to be ‘saved’ – she mentions two of the naughtiest girls who only succeeded in being good once ‘they put the whole matter into the Lord’s hands’ – but acknowledged that she would have to use other means to combat the bad behaviour of the least religious girls.¹⁹² With one of Bliss’s pupils, Alice Bawden (described as ‘lazy, untruthful, careless about rules, and very fond of the boys...pretty and attractive, lady like, and a sweet disposition, but so wholly spoiled’), who had been caught – for the third time – meeting boys at the bottom of the garden, Ferguson asked Alice’s teachers for reports on her character, and then called her and Bliss’s pupils to discuss the matter with them. The ‘girls plead for her’ and several of the Senior class offered to room with her, but because Alice’s behaviour did not improve, she was asked to leave the Seminary.¹⁹³

What Ferguson required as proof of the pupil’s genuine desire to remain at the school was a ‘full confession’ of her wrongs and penitence. It was for this reason that Ferguson seriously considered expelling another girl in June 1885; she had ‘been breaking rules in a reckless fashion and not repenting, ha[d] not made a full confession, and [did] not seem penitent.’ There ‘seemed...no guarantee that she would slip back at once into the old ways’.¹⁹⁴ Ferguson invokes fairly startling religious imagery to justify her decision to send the girl away, ‘I realise as I never have before the necessity of a sacrifice for sin. The judge cannot be just and let the guilty go free. God could not pardon our sin without the Sacrifice offered for sin.’¹⁹⁵ When the pupils of the Seminary compiled a petition, the matter was submitted to Murray who decided that the child should stay at the school.¹⁹⁶

At stake, it would seem, was the very existence of the religious community at the Seminary: the presence of rule-breaking girls was believed seriously to undermine ‘the

¹⁹² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 23 September 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁹³ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 6 May and 29 June 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616. Alice Bawden was an orphan and it seems as though she lived with a relative in Port Elizabeth after her expulsion. It is not known what she did after this. ‘Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 65.

¹⁹⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 9 June 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁹⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 June 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁹⁶ Unfortunately, the surname of this pupil is badly smudged in Ferguson’s letter. Her nickname seems to have been Carrie, as there is no girl listed in the Seminary’s catalogue for 1885 who bears that name, or one from which it could be derived. Girls at the school were frequently known by their second names, so it is almost impossible to guess Carrie’s identity.

moral tone of the school'.¹⁹⁷ It was for this reason that Ferguson resorted to what she called her 'revolution' in August 1884. She first asked that each girl in the school write out the Seminary's rules and then indicate which she had broken and '[a]bout half the girls reported that there were some rules they had been unfaithful about'. Those who were not suitably sorry for their infractions – or who had not been honest in reporting themselves – were 'put under the ordinary regime of a boarding school, being with a teacher most of the time'. They were not permitted to report themselves, and only when they showed that they were trustworthy were they allowed on probation for a week. Eighteen of the older girls, and thirty in the lower school, were put under supervision and, consequently, they had 'a wonderfully orderly school.' Those under supervision met especially with their teachers to discuss their troubles, and in all this discussion and self-analysis, the seeds for the revival in the school in September were sown.¹⁹⁸

This 'revolution' had reasserted Lyon's emphasis on self-control, but had, effectively, demonstrated that the teachers did not trust the girls and that, secondly, they realised that the self-reporting system was deeply flawed. In 1885, Ferguson was forced to 'show them the difference between tale bearing and a responsibility for the moral atmosphere of the school. There is a sense in which they are their sisters' keepers, and must not let wrong go on in their presence without doing what they can to prevent it.'¹⁹⁹ In a less religious atmosphere, the rationale behind self-reporting and, more importantly, behind reporting one's friends and fellow pupils, was not as clear. Additionally, the Seminary's manner of dealing with those who confessed to having done wrong would not have persuaded many to be scrupulously honest: as in the case of Alice Bawden, girls frequently had to confess their sins and repent in front of the whole school. As the girls became gradually less reliable as 1885 progressed, Ferguson resorted more and more to requiring 'naughty' pupils 'to stand [and] read what [Ferguson] had against her in the way of broken rules'. While Ferguson believed that this had the effect of 'let[ting] the school see in each case that the wrong had been acknowledged and repented up' and of

¹⁹⁷ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 9 June 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁹⁸ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 19 August 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁹⁹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 9 June 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

‘reinstating the girl in the confidence of her teachers and the school’, it is more likely that the pupils saw this as a form of public humiliation.²⁰⁰

As a result, throughout 1885 the teachers began to keep a closer watch on the girls. In December, for example, Ferguson realised that a number of them had not been recording their transgressions. However, before calling the school together and asking the naughty ones to confess their dishonesty, she made sure to know who were truly guilty – and who were suitably sorry for their actions. When two of the girls who she knew to have been naughty did not come forward, she approached them after the meeting. She accused Anna Stucki of dishonestly, and even though Anna denied it vehemently at first, Ferguson’s continuous pressure on her to tell the truth resulted in her sending Ferguson a letter in which she admitted that her ‘sins had been rising up before her like mountains’ and that ‘Satan had always got the better of [her].’²⁰¹ Regardless of this, Ferguson resolved to suspend her and her roommate for a year. While the reason for Anna’s suspension would seem to be relatively minor – on a number of occasions she was discovered in a room into which she was allowed to enter only with the permission of a teacher – the issue for Ferguson was that Anna, in her persistent lying, demonstrated an almost blasphemous indifference to sin. In order to protect what she called the ‘moral atmosphere’ of the Seminary, she felt it incumbent upon her not simply to trust that the girls would report themselves, but to keep a very beady eye on their activities so as to ensure that those who claimed to be honest were indeed so. This suspicion was the very antithesis of the trust required by the self-reporting system. Nevertheless, the Seminary did not institute a disciplinary code similar to that of other girls’ boarding schools – as late as 1910, the girls were still expected to report their own bad behaviour. Yet although the school remained a DRC concern, its pupils were no longer as religious as they had been during the first few years of its existence, as the Seminary’s main attraction to both parents and pupils became its reputation as a centre of academic excellence. Writing about her experiences at the school during the South African War (1899-1902),

²⁰⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 7 December 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

²⁰¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, on the train to Worcester, 26 December 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616. Anna Stucki – who was probably the daughter, or a relative, of the master of the boys’ school in Wellington – returned in 1887 and married a Mr W. Fraser in January 1888. They moved to Vryburg, in what was then Bechuanaland. Unfortunately, Ferguson does not name Stucki’s roommate, who was also suspended. ‘Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 66, 68.

Petronella van Heerden describes the effects of the malfunctioning self-reporting system. She writes that the school

*was gesellig...maar die plek het my in die war gebring. Ons was op 'ons eer', maar hulle loer om te sien of ons op ons eer bly en luister by ons deure om te hoor of ons gedurende studietyd praat. Mollie Conradie en ek het een aand 'n onderwyseres met haar oor teen ons sleutelgat betrap...Wat my veral gehinder het, was dat hulle so agter jou rug snuffel en jou dan skuins uitvra tot julle jou vas het...hier het ek ordentlik leer lieg – darem net vir die onderwyseresse – soos al die ander kinders. Saans het ons bymekaargekom om te sien wie die meeste reels gebreek het.*²⁰²

[was friendly...but the place confused me. We were on 'our honour', but they would be on the watch to make sure that we were honest and would listen at our doors to hear if we spoke during study time. One evening Mollie Conradie and I caught a teacher with her ear against our keyhole...What annoyed me especially was that they would pry behind your back and then slyly question you until they caught you out...here I learned how to lie properly – but really only to the teachers – like all the other children. In the evenings we would come together to see who had broken the most rules.]

Ironically, by the time that Van Heerden entered the Seminary, it would seem that self-reporting actually fostered lying and duplicity instead of discouraging them. She also discusses the revivals which took place at the school, acknowledging that during the religious fervour the pupils were '*onnatuurlik soet*'²⁰³ (unnaturally good), but pointing out that many of the conversions were the result of peer pressure or of the fear of being eternally damned. Interestingly, she dubs this religiosity '*angs*'²⁰⁴ or 'anxiety', and remembers that once this fear had subsided after a week or two, the girls would return to their previous (mis)behaviour.²⁰⁵ Thus it appears that the crisis of 1884 and 1885 had exceptionally long-lasting repercussions. The girls could not be persuaded to maintain the level of Christian self-analysis required by the Holyoke system, so the teachers resorted to spying on their pupils, and, however consciously or not, frightening them into submission with fire and brimstone sermons. It is an important point that by 1898, only fifty-one of the, roughly, one thousand pupils who had attended the Seminary had worked – or were working as – missionaries, while the number for those teaching was believed to

²⁰² Van Heerden, 117-118, 157. Van Heerden (1887-1975), whose father was prominent in the government of the Republic of the Free State during the South African War, was the first Afrikaner woman to qualify as a medical doctor – which she did in 1915 at Amsterdam University. After having practiced in Harrismith, she returned to Amsterdam, and qualified as a gynaecologist in 1923. She worked in Cape Town until 1943, when she retired to her farm in the Harrismith district.

²⁰³ Van Heerden, 121.

²⁰⁴ Van Heerden, 122.

²⁰⁵ Van Heerden lists dancing in the music rooms, midnight feasts, and nightly raids on the Seminary's apricot trees as examples of their naughtiness. Van Heerden, 122.

be much higher.²⁰⁶ In 1895, Ferguson estimated that four hundred girls had received teachers' certificates, while five hundred had taught.²⁰⁷ This represented a significant failure for the Mount Holyoke system in their terms, but, arguably, points to a success in that it contributed to the formation of a new form of white, middle class femininity which embraced the educated, independent woman.

Conclusion

If seen through the lens of the evangelical movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – and evangelicalism's particular appeal to women, and concern for the education of girls – it is by not surprising that the Huguenot Seminary was accepted so quickly by middle class Cape Colonial society. The environment in which Lyon founded Mount Holyoke in the northeastern United States in 1837 bore striking resemblances to the Cape in 1873; Ferguson and Bliss were wholeheartedly supported by the ministers and members of the DRC, and in coinciding with a particularly strong revival in 1874 and 1875, the Seminary benefited from the intense evangelical religiosity sweeping the region. The girls entering the school during these early years were particularly receptive to the institution's religiosity, and, thus, submitted more easily to the tenets of Lyon's system: domestic work was taken up happily, physical exercise was performed, they studied diligently, only a tiny minority did not convert and a large proportion of the girls became teachers, and the pupils obeyed the system of self-regulation. In the close, family-like nature of the Seminary in its early years, the teachers were able to establish a religious community where girls – removed from the potential dangers of home – could be inculcated with the school's values, and then disseminate these ideas in the outside world after graduating.

This position, however, could only be maintained if the girls were willing to be 'born again' and to conform to the school's notion of a 'saved' Christian. What the Seminary required was an active, although deeply introspective, Christianity where the pupils would demonstrate their piety through their behaviour. As larger numbers of girls did not display an interest in the school's prayer meetings, or simply refused to relinquish

²⁰⁶ Ferguson, 'Development of Missionary Interest,' 23.

²⁰⁷ A.P. Ferguson, 'Our Huguenot Seminary,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 1 (1895): 23.

the non-evangelical Christianity to which they were accustomed at home, so Lyon's system came under attack. In 1884 and 1885, the girls did their domestic work, played tennis, studied for their exams, and attended the missionary meetings, but a sizeable minority were not willing to report themselves or their friends for breaking the rules. As Ferguson admitted, this was linked directly to the absence of the religious influence that a strong group of pious girls could exert; it has also been demonstrated that Ferguson's dramatic response to the rule-breaking as a result of her belief that the girls' dishonesty could cause a kind of 'moral collapse' in the school also contributed to the pupils' behaviour. Her encouragement of the renewed religious interest in the Seminary caused, at least in the beginning of 1884, a kind of religious hysteria which evaporated fairly quickly as the girls moved beyond the boundaries of the school during the holidays. Importantly, there is no sign of them taking the Seminary's Christianity with them to their families and using their influence to encourage revivals in other parts of the Boland. Indeed, as it became increasingly apparent in 1885 that the girls would not be as willing to be 'saved' as before, Ferguson and her staff were reduced to other tactics to ensure that rule-breakers admitted to their misdemeanours: instead of simply trusting the girls to be good, they made sure to investigate who were truly honest and who were not.

As Van Heerden's memory of her time at the Seminary at the end of the nineteenth century reveals, this atmosphere of suspicion and distrust persisted after 1885, actually encouraging the girls to be dishonest and completely to lose faith in the self-reporting system. To what extent, then, was Lyon's vision successful in the Cape Colony? It was undoubtedly so during the first decade of the Seminary's existence, in its smaller numbers and more intense religiosity, but as the school's popularity caused it to grow and be attractive for its academic reputation, and not so much for its links with the DRC, one of the key factors of the Mount Holyoke system dissolved into dishonesty and underhandedness. It is interesting, though, that the Seminary did not abandon self-reporting. What the next chapter will argue is that this was because self-reporting was so intimately connected to the notions of self-control and self-discipline that were key aspects of the developing vision of ideal middle class femininity being developed in the Seminary during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER TWO

‘the right kind of ambition’*

Discourses of Femininity at Huguenot, 1895-1910¹

Introduction

The period 1895 to 1910 is a particularly useful window through which to analyse the production of white femininities in the Cape Colony. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represent a major turning point in South African history, as the country shifted from being a collection of British colonies and Boer republics to becoming a unified and, eventually, semi-independent state in 1910. This process entailed a great deal of social upheaval – which polarised around the South African War (1899-1902) in particular – in that people attempted to define themselves in relation to the massive changes underway: whites were more sharply differentiated between English- and Afrikaans-speaking groups, while both communities distanced themselves from the waves of Portuguese, Italian, East European Jewish, British working class, and Argentinean immigrants arriving in the country, drawn, predominantly, by hopes of benefiting from the South African ‘mineral revolution’.² The conclusion of hostilities in 1902, and the consequent peace negotiations, had the effect of politicising minority groups – a manifestation of this being the founding of the African Political Organisation (APO) in Cape Town in 1902 for the furtherance of middle class coloured interests – and, although it was never as much of a powerful social and political force as it was in Britain, the first signs of an interest in women’s suffrage (or simply in the predicament of women

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¹ Frieda Riebeseel, ‘Junior Aspirations,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 6 (1901): 40.

² A.M. Grundlingh, ‘Prelude to the Anglo-Boer War, 1881-1899,’ in *An Illustrated History of South Africa*, edited by Trehwella Cameron and S.B. Spies (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1986), 191-192; Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen, and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century: An Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 24-25.

and children) appeared.³ In Cape Town, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) had been founded in 1889, but developed a political wing, the Women's Enfranchisement League (WEL) in 1907.⁴ The Guild of Loyal Women, a society created to foster support for imperialism and reduce English-Afrikaans tension, began work in 1900.⁵ Similarly, the predominantly Afrikaans *Zuid-Afrikaansche Vrouwe Federatie* (South African Women's Federation) was established in 1903 and was 'preoccupied with the politics of reconciliation within the framework of empire'.⁶ A year later, the philanthropic *Zuid-Afrikaansche Christelyke Vrouwe Vereniging* (South African Christian Women's Society) was instituted. The National Council of Women emerged in 1909 to act as an umbrella body to foster women's interests, demonstrating the extent to which women's organisations in the Cape had proliferated.⁷

While much of this increased activity was stimulated by the South African War and its aftermath, a lot of it was connected to the rising levels of education among white, middle class South African women, the growing numbers of professional middle class women, as well as an awareness of the global interest in women's franchise and rights during the period – as manifested in the writing and influence of Olive Schreiner.⁸ Elaine

³ S.B. Spies, 'Reconstruction and Unification, 1902-1910,' in *An Illustrated History of South Africa*, edited by Trehwella Cameron and S.B. Spies (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1986), 219-222; Cherryl Walker, 'The Women's Suffrage Movement: The Politics of Gender, Race and Class,' in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, edited by Cherryl Walker (Cape Town and London: David Philip and James Currey, 1990), 321-322.

⁴ Cherryl Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa* (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1979), 21-25.

⁵ Bickford-Smith *et al.*, 32.

⁶ It is interesting to note that the ZAVF was founded by the Scottish born Georgina Solomon, widow of the prominent Cape Town publisher and politician Saul Solomon and first headmistress of the Good Hope Seminary. It did not survive long after the end of the South African War. Bickford-Smith *et al.*, 30-32.

⁷ The ZACVV soon became the very influential ACVV. Bickford-Smith *et al.*, 32. The history of the ACVV is the subject of Marijke du Toit's monograph, 'Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism: A Social History of the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging, c.1870-1939' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1996).

⁸ Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 19-21; 'The Women's Suffrage Movement,' 321-324. Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) is probably best known as the author of *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), but during her lifetime was equally famous for her writing on feminism, labour, and South African politics (she and her brother – Will, who became Prime Minister of the Cape in 1899 – sought to secure black enfranchisement in the years following the end of the South African War). During her extended visits to Britain, she came into contact with the concept of the 'New Woman' and is generally considered to have been one of the leading writers on the New Woman, both in South Africa and abroad. Carolyn Burdett, *Olive Schreiner and the Progress of Feminism: Evolution, Gender, Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 9-13, 87-112; Liz Stanley, *Imperialism, Labour and the New Woman: Olive Schreiner's Social Theory* (Durham: Sociology Press, 2002), 17-51; Ruth Brandon, *The New Women and the Old Men: Love, Sex and the Woman Question* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1990), 1-43.

Showalter has written about the *fin de siècle* as a significant watershed in the formation of gendered identities and relations for the twentieth century. As a period of profound global social, economic, and political transformation, much of the anxiety arising out of this change was directed towards a heightened awareness of the fluidity of notions of what was considered to be the ‘proper’ places for, particularly, middle class men and women: how should married women behave? What degree of education should a middle class girl receive? To what extent did this ‘New Woman’ (the educated, professional, independent young woman)⁹ challenge traditional modes of domesticity?¹⁰ These were questions that preoccupied writers, journalists, moralisers, and educators and, undoubtedly, came under a great deal of consideration at the Huguenot Seminary and College. Indeed, while the Seminary had drawn attention to itself during the 1870s for, what many felt to be, the eccentricity of its desire to provide as thorough an academic education as possible to young women, in the late 1890s, it was prominent for its very ‘respectability’ as an educational institution. It had become a distinguished feature of the South African educational landscape.

In 1884, the Huguenot Seminary was formally divided into junior and senior departments, with the latter consisting of middle, matriculation, collegiate, and ‘normal’ sections. In the year of its twenty-fifth anniversary, the collegiate section became the Huguenot College under the leadership of Abbie Ferguson – a place where young women, and men from the district, could study for BA degrees administered by the University of the Cape of Good Hope,¹¹ and in 1909, an act of parliament secured the

⁹ Scholarship on the New Woman in South Africa seems to be limited to Schreiner’s writing on the idea. For more general discussions of the New Woman, see Carolyn Forrey, ‘The New Woman Revisited,’ *Women’s Studies*, vol. 2, issue 1 (1974): 37-56, Elizabeth MacLeod Wells, “‘a little afraid of the women today’: The Victorian New Woman and the Rhetoric of British Modernism,’ *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 21, issue 3 (2002): 229-246, Lorelee MacPike, ‘The New Woman, Childbearing, and the Reconstruction of Gender, 1880-1900,’ *NWSA Journal*, vol. 1, issue 3 (Spring 1989): 368-397, Margaret Diane Stetz, ‘The New Woman and the British Periodical Press of the 1890s,’ *Journal of Victorian Culture*, vol. 6, issue 2 (Autumn 2001): 272-285, Teresa Mangum, review of *The Improper Feminine: The Women’s Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing*, by Lyn Pykett, *Victorian Studies*, vol. 37, issue 3 (Spring 1994): 479-480.

¹⁰ Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991), 3-5. Showalter does, though, demonstrate a fair amount of twentieth century *fin de siècle* anxiety herself.

¹¹ H.W. van Niekerk, ‘Huguenote-Kollege: Die Eerste Monument vir die Franse Hugenote,’ *Opvoeding en Kultuur* (March 1989): 22.

College's legal position as a tertiary institution.¹² The remaining department and sections were united as the Huguenot Girls' High School (although it was frequently referred to as the Seminary) in Anna Bliss's charge. The 'normal' section (which trained teachers) had been amalgamated with the local boys' school – taken over by Andrew Murray in 1881 – and M.J. Stucki's school for boys in Blaauwvlei to become the Teachers' Training College in 1895, led by James Harvie from Scotland. This institution, as well as the affiliated Mission Training Institute (presided over by George Ferguson, Abbie's brother, until his death in 1896) admitted men, while the College became an all-female concern in 1913.¹³ The Teachers' Training College was the one of the first of its kind in the country – and despite the fact that women could sit for the University of the Cape of Good Hope's BA examinations, the Huguenot College was unique in that it attempted to provide girls with a college life akin to that at a men's university. In 1890, the trustees of the Seminary acquired a ladies' seminary in Paarl,¹⁴ and by 1895 had founded Seminaries in Bethlehem, in the Orange Free State, and Greytown, in Natal.¹⁵ In 1908, it was estimated that around 4000 girls had attended the institution since 1874, and many of them had taken up prominent positions in public life.¹⁶ As it transformed into a college, to what extent was the school able to maintain its emphasis on training women to go out

¹² Calendar of the Huguenot College, Wellington, 1910 (Wellington: Huguenot College, 1909), 3-17.

¹³ Van Niekerk, 21-23.

¹⁴ The original *raison d'être* of the Paarl Seminary was to accept the most academically backward girls and then prepare them to join the more advanced pupils at the Huguenot Seminary. As the school in Wellington grew, many teachers worried that academic standards would begin to fall in response to the ever-increasing numbers of semi-educated girls entering the institution. Few girls attended preparatory schools before enrolling at Huguenot (although the Seminary did possess a preparatory school and kindergarten), resulting in classes of extremely mixed ability. By requesting those girls who required extra tuition to begin their education in Paarl, it was hoped that the Huguenot Seminary would remain academically competitive. The offer to sell the seminary had come from its proprietor, a Prof. J.S. de Villiers, who had tired of running it. The school retained its connection to Wellington until 1912, and, after independence, changed its name to the La Rochelle Girls' Primary and High School. Geo. P. Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot (Being the History of the Huguenot Institution at Wellington from the Intimate Papers of the Builders)* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1927), 68-69; Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 25 February 1890, Dutch Reformed Church Archive, Huguenot Seminary Collection (hereafter DRCA, HSC), K-Div 605; *La Rochelle, Paarl 1860-1960* (Paarl: 1960), 9-18; C.F. Booysen, 'Geskiiedenis van die La Rochelle Hoëre Skool, Paarl' (B.Ed thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1922), 5-12.

¹⁵ The Bethlehem Seminary closed as a result of the South African War. Van Niekerk, 21. For a discussion of the founding of the Seminary at Greytown, see Sylvia Vietzen, *A History of Education for European Girls in Natal with Particular Reference to the Establishment of Some Leading Schools, 1837-1902* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1973), 247-251; H. le R. 'Artium Baccalaurei Loquuntur,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901): 14; 'Our Huguenot Branch Seminaries,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 35.

¹⁶ A.P. Ferguson, 'First Impressions,' *The Huguenot*, no. 14 (1908): 7.

to convert the ‘heathen’ of South Africa? How would the College’s emphasis on professionalism – where teaching is seen as a career and not a divine calling – alter this attitude towards women’s education? And how did the girls – familiar with the ‘New Woman’ and, to a lesser extent, the American ‘College Girl’ discourses – respond to these changes?

This chapter argues that one way of examining the Huguenot Seminary and College’s response to these debates is to understand their insistence upon maintaining their self-reporting system of discipline – which can be understood in relation to Michel Foucault’s writing on Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (first published as *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison* in 1975, and translated into English in 1977). Famously, Foucault understood the Panopticon – a prison where the inmates, whose cells are arranged around a central column in which the guard is seated, effectively monitor their own behaviour – as a metaphor for (post-) Enlightenment society: a condition in which individuals, fearing the gaze of authority, control their own behaviour and, in so doing, monitor their acquiescence to power.¹⁷ For Foucault, this shift in discipline – from the state’s exercise of external force to keep subjects in submission, to subjects’ willing internalisation of control – registered the coming of modernity.¹⁸ This understanding of the workings of power in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries has come under a great deal of criticism; Arthur Marwick, among others, has shown up the methodological weaknesses in Foucault’s writing,¹⁹ and Megan Vaughan has demonstrated the dangers of applying Foucault’s, largely Eurocentric, theory to African history.²⁰ Perceptively, Alan Sinfield has labelled Foucault’s understanding of modernity an ‘entrapment model’ which, by implying that all forms of subversion are, ultimately, produced by power, refuses any notion of change

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, [1977] 1979), 200-202.

¹⁸ Foucault, 209-210.

¹⁹ Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 109-110. See also Willie Thompson, *What Happened to History?* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 153-154, as well as Ann Wordsworth, ‘Derrida and Foucault: Writing and the History of Historicity,’ in *Post-Structuralism and the Question of History*, edited by Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington, and Robert Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 117.

²⁰ Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 9-12.

being able to occur in society.²¹ Nevertheless, what *Discipline and Punish* does provide is a means of understanding the way in which power functions within institutions. As Bart Simon remarks, the question is one of using Foucauldian theory to illuminate empirical evidence pertaining, equally, to the past and present.²²

It is precisely this what Bronwyn Davies *et al.* attempt to do by arguing that white, middle class schoolgirl subjectivity is based on a complex tension between submission and mastery. While Foucault explains the willing acquiescence of the subject to authority in terms of fear (infractions of the rules leading to punishment), Davies *et al.* recognise that within the context of a school – and a girls’ school in particular – the internalisation of rules is done as much to attract the affectionate gaze of the teacher as it is to avoid chastisement.²³ In this way, it is through their mastery of themselves – their self-discipline – that schoolgirls attempt to draw attention to themselves as worthy of praise and approval. Paradoxically, this mastery of self in the form of the regulation of the body (being clean, neat, and, frequently, clad in a uniform), behaviour (being polite, obedient, and quiet), and academic work (being able to assimilate information and communicate knowledge ‘correctly’) ensures the homogeneous appearance and conduct of the group of girls – thus negating their attempts to present themselves as individuals worthy of praise by their teacher. Of course, mastery is perceived as a marker of the subject’s maturity and, ironically, again, it is mastery which maintains the subordinate position of the schoolgirl within the school’s hierarchy – it is what ensures her status as a schoolgirl, rather than simply a scholar.²⁴ In order to single herself out, the schoolgirl attempts to demonstrate her maturity and absolute adherence to the school’s rules, but, in doing so, she simply confirms her position as part of a homogenous group of pupils.

It is clear that this kind of tension between mastery and submission was a feature of the functioning of the Huguenot Seminary between 1874 and 1885: especially within

²¹ Alan Sinfield, ‘Cultural Materialism, *Othello*, and the Politics of Plausibility,’ in *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 39-40. See also Edward Said, ‘Travelling Theory,’ in *The Edward Said Reader*, edited by Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin (London: Granta, 2001), 195-217.

²² Bart Simon, ‘The Return of Panopticism: Supervision, Subjection and the New Surveillance,’ *Surveillance & Society* 3, 1 (2003): 5. Grateful thanks to Sandra Swart for this source.

²³ Bronwyn Davies *et al.*, ‘Becoming Schoolgirls: The Ambivalent Project of Subjectification,’ *Gender and Education*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2001): 172-174.

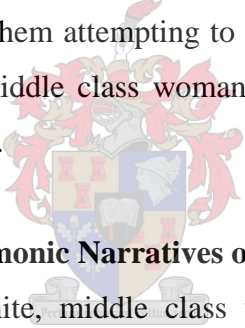
²⁴ Davies *et al.*, 170-171.

the family-like community of the school during its earliest years, the girls strove to earn their teachers' affection by being obedient, agreeing to do domestic work, learning their lessons, taking exercise, and – importantly – noting their rule-breaking. This had the effect of rendering them, as a group, more docile, but was motivated by a desire to please – both teachers (who, in many cases, were perceived, and saw themselves as, surrogate mothers) and, importantly, God. As the school grew and it became difficult to maintain this close family of teachers and pupils, this need for self-monitoring and submission fell away as girls formed closer bonds with one another, rather than with their teachers – hence their objection to reporting their friends. Indeed, as Ferguson, Bliss, and Wells's letters demonstrate, the 'naughty' girls were the ones who received the greatest attention; the particularly submissive were not as noticed.

The self-reporting system was, in itself, a highly contradictory form of control. The teachers at the Seminary believed that the girls needed to learn self-discipline in order to become effective teachers and missionaries and felt that the constant surveillance of the 'normal' girls' boarding schools simply fostered an immature, adversarial attitude towards authority. Yet the complete submission required by the Seminary's rules – which appear to have governed nearly every movement and activity of each of the girls from the 'rising' bell early in the morning to the 'tardy' late at night – prevented them from being in control of the decisions that would determine the order, nature, and outcomes of the day's activities. Like children, they were only given the option to obey or disobey the rules and their highly-structured timetable. This system came under attack because its religious underpinnings were no longer as relevant to the majority of the girls at the Seminary in the 1880s, as they had been ten years earlier: while in the 1870s, the school attracted pupils who sympathised with its religious aims, by 1884, the Seminary was one of many good girls' schools available to parents, meaning that an increasing number of pupils attended the institution for its academic – and not spiritual – credentials. Nevertheless, it is striking that there is evidence to prove that the Seminary and, later, the College, retained self-reporting as late as 1910, but, tellingly, with one important modification: a School Council of girls elected by their peers acted as prefects, enforcing

rules – like no talking after bedtime, or no dawdling on the main staircase – while simultaneously ensuring that the pupils reported their transgressions.²⁵

This chapter proposes that it is possible to understand the persistence of the self-reporting system – as a manifestation of the school’s belief in the vital importance of inculcating self-discipline in its pupils – in relation to the discourses surrounding the ideal of the educated woman that arose in the Seminary and College between 1895 and 1910. While Chapter One focussed on the letters of the teachers to explore the creation of a religious community at the institution during its first decade of existence, this chapter draws its information largely from the annuals published by the school and, crucially, edited by its pupils – although overseen by a teacher until 1902 – as it transformed into South Africa’s first women’s college.²⁶ What these annuals provide is an insight into the girls’ experiences of, and perspectives on, the education provided to them at Huguenot – and what emerges in these magazines is a number of both conflicting and complimentary discourses on femininity, each of them attempting to explain and justify the importance, place, and role of the educated middle class woman at the end of the nineteenth, and beginning of the twentieth, century.



‘good, noble and useful’:²⁷ Hegemonic Narratives of Middle Class Femininity

When analysing the place of white, middle class women within nineteenth century colonial societies, the greatest danger for the historian is to overemphasise their agency or their lack thereof – thus producing a simplistic understanding of women as ‘heroines,’ ‘victims’, or ‘villains.’²⁸ As Simon Dagut writes, ‘there is a real risk that women...will

²⁵ The Student Council was an aspect of the disciplinary system at the College from the late 1890s. It is less clear if the Seminary instituted a similar body. Etta Leipoldt, ‘Editorial Comment,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 10 (1904): 1; Editorial, *The Huguenot*, no. 11 (1905): 1. Announcement of the Huguenot College, 1906-1907 (Wellington: Huguenot College, 1906), 10.

²⁶ The Cape Town campus of the South African National Library has a full collection of the Seminary and College’s annuals, but for the purposes of this study, the annuals published between 1895 and 1910 will be considered. *The Huguenot Seminary Annual* – the institution’s first annual publication – appeared between 1895 and 1901. It changed its name to *The Huguenot Annual* in 1902, and then to *The Huguenot* in 1905. Only *The Huguenot* accepted articles in both English and Dutch. Before 1905, the annuals were entirely in English.

²⁷ Sophie le Roux, ‘Why Should Girls Go to College?’ *The Huguenot*, no. 11 (1905): 22.

²⁸ Jane Haggis, ‘Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender? Recent Women’s Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism,’ *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 13, nos. 1/2 (2001): 112-114. Two excellent sources on gender and women’s history in South Africa are Penelope Hetherington’s ‘Women in South Africa: The Historiography in English,’ *The International Journal of*

appear to be little more than the doughty “settler’s wives”, helpless “ladies” and vicious “memsahibs” of nineteenth-century imperial mythology.’²⁹ This is particularly true for the study of ‘hegemonic’ femininity. As R.W. Connell writes of masculinity, of the multitude of gendered identities available to a society, one – usually because of its association with social, economic, or political power – is considered to be dominant and is, thus, held up as an ideal worthy of emulation.³⁰ This supremacy is maintained in opposition to other, subordinate gendered identities and, in the case of masculinity and particular forms of femininity, is used to justify and bolster the patriarchal order;³¹ it is also produced within social institutions (the family, workplace, military, sports clubs, and so on). Probably one of the most potent of these is the school, of which Connell has written extensively.³² He argues that in schools, children and adolescents encounter a variety of gendered identities around which they define themselves: although, especially in ‘elite’ schools, the ethos of the institution will tend to promote a hegemonic masculinity or femininity, other gendered identities are also open to the pupils and are accepted – with varying degrees of willingness – or rejected by the school’s staff, parents, and alumni.³³ In his examination of the creation of settler masculinities in colonial Natal, Robert Morrell pays close attention to the way in which the private boys’ schools in the region assisted in inculcating the values widely connected to ‘model’ upper middle class, white, English-speaking male settler identity.³⁴

African Historical Studies, vol. 26, no. 2 (1993): 241-269 and Helen Bradford’s ‘Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and its Frontier Zone, c. 1806-70,’ *Journal of African History*, vol. 37 (1996): 351-370.

²⁹ Simon Dagut, ‘Gender, Colonial “Women’s History” and the Construction of Social Distance: Middle Class Women in Later Nineteenth-Century South Africa,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 2003): 556-557.

³⁰ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 76-78.

³¹ Connell, *Masculinities*, 82-83.

³² See for example, R.W. Connell, G.W. Dowsett, S. Kessler, D.J. Ashenden, ‘Class and Gender Dynamics in a Ruling-Class School,’ *Interchange*, vol. 12 nos. 2-3 (1981): 102-117.

³³ R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 177-178; *Masculinities*, 238-239.

³⁴ Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880-1920* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2001), 48-77; ‘Masculinity and the White Boys’ Boarding Schools of Natal, 1880-1930,’ *Perspectives in Education*, vol. 15, no. 1: 27-52. For a discussion of boys’ boarding schools in the Cape Colony that pays some attention to the construction of gendered identities, see Peter Randall, *Little England on the Veld: The English Private School System in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982), 53-71.

To speak of a ‘hegemonic’ femininity, it is necessary to recognise that it differs in its construction and maintenance from hegemonic masculinity. While the latter is associated with the exercise of power and the subjugation of other gendered identities, hegemonic femininity is described, typically, as passive, gentle, childlike, and domesticated.³⁵ The Victorian notion of the mother as the ‘Angel of the House’ or, even, the Afrikaner nationalist construction of the *Volksmoeder* (mother of the nation) are examples of this hegemonic ideal at work. It is possible to identify such a form of hegemonic femininity in the late nineteenth century Cape Colony. Edna Bradlow has suggested that the position of English-speaking, white, middle class women in the Cape was virtually analogous to their metropolitan counterparts in England and Europe – both groups subscribed to the same ‘cult of domesticity’, for example.³⁶ Yet Marijke du Toit has shown that, despite the relative paucity of sources on Afrikaner femininity during the period, there is some reason to believe that Dutch-Afrikaner women, especially in rural areas, did lead lives of relative independence and responsibility as they worked alongside their menfolk in the management of farms and cared for the smooth running of the homestead.³⁷ These women did work inside a prescribed domestic sphere, but within that area wielded a great deal of influence.³⁸ Indeed, Natasha Erlank and Kirsten McKenzie,

³⁵ Clearly, what is considered to be hegemonic is determined by the context in which this femininity is produced: as Gillian Avery demonstrates in her survey of British independent schools for girls, different schools encouraged a variety of forms of femininity (tomboyish at Rodean, opinionated at Badminton, eccentric at Downe House). Gillian Avery, *The Best Type of Girl: A History of Girls’ Independent Schools* (London: André Deutsch, 1991), 98-108. Connell shows how an elite Australian girls’ school successfully reorientated itself as a more ‘academic’ institution by celebrating a femininity which highlights independent, competitive, diligent hard work, and rejecting the previously hegemonic ‘debutante’ feminine ideal. Connell, *Gender and Power*, 178. This transformation is the subject of Connell *et al.*, ‘Class and Gender Dynamics in a Ruling-Class School.’

³⁶ Edna Bradlow, ‘Women at the Cape in the Mid-19th Century,’ *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 19 (1987): 51-67. The difficulties of middle class women’s lives in Cape Town are particularly well described in Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen, and Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town, the Making of a City: An Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), 200-206.

³⁷ For a brief discussion of gendered roles within Boer families before and during the South African War, see Helen Bradford, ‘Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner Nationalism, Gender, and Colonial Warfare in the South African War,’ in *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902*, edited by Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh, and Mary-Lynn Suttie (Athens and Cape Town: Ohio University Press and David Philip, 2002), 44-51.

³⁸ Du Toit, 21-24. See also Lou-Marie Kruger, ‘Gender, Community and Identity: Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the *Volksmoeder* Discourse of *Die Boerevrou* (1913-1931)’ (M.A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991), 103-107, Elsabe Brink, ‘Man-Made Women: Gender, Class and the Ideology of the *Volksmoeder*,’ in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, edited by Cheryl Walker (Cape Town and London: David Philip and James Currey, 1990), 273-292, and Karel Schoeman, *Olive Schreiner: A*

among others, have demonstrated nineteenth century, white, middle class women's ambivalence towards their privileged status, especially as regards the pressure on them not to enter into any form of employment outside of the home.³⁹ There were, of course, schools that promoted a kind of passive and relatively frivolous femininity. In the 1897 and 1898 annuals for the Good Hope Seminary,⁴⁰ for example, marriages of past pupils are listed before the institution's academic achievements (which were relatively limited).⁴¹ Training in feminine 'accomplishments' is given greater prominence than academic study,⁴² and an article on college education for women concludes with, 'Though the privilege of adding B.A. to one's name is envied by most, yet the exertion of reaching this is a severe strain on the whole of a girl's nature, and it is questionable whether this giddy height should be aspired to by her.'⁴³

The hegemonic femininity promoted at the Huguenot Seminary differed from the anti-intellectualism at Good Hope, but supported its understanding of women's 'proper' place being in the home. It is striking that the articles which most vigorously expound

Woman in South Africa, 1855-1881 (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1991), 209-219, for discussions of Dutch-Afrikaner femininity during the late nineteenth century.

³⁹ See, for example, Natasha Erlank, "'Thinking it Wrong to Remain Unemployed in the Pressing Times": The Experiences of Two English Settler Wives,' *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 33 (November 1995): 62-82; Kirsten McKenzie, "'My Own Mind Dying within Me": Eliza Fairbairn and the Reinvention of Colonial Middle-Class Domesticity in Cape Town,' *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 36 (May 1997): 3-23, 'Wollstonecraft's Models?: Female Honour and Sexuality in Middle-Class Settler Cape Town, 1800-1854,' *Kronos*, vol. 23 (November 1996): 57-90.

⁴⁰ The Good Hope Seminary was founded in 1873 by a group of Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) ministers who desired to establish a less denominational school for girls, as at the time the two prominent institutions for girls' education in Cape Town were Roman Catholic and Anglican concerns. Andrew Murray was on the committee originally, but resigned, probably as the result of the death of a child in his family. Unlike the Huguenot Seminary, however, Good Hope was never funded by the DRC (even though it was under the care of Rev. G.W. Stegmann) and was run by a group of teachers from England and Scotland. Its first headmistress, Georgina Thompson, was from Scotland and resigned after a year, following a quarrel with her board of governors about, apparently, their decision to use her drawing room as a dormitory. She married Saul Solomon, the prominent publisher and politician, in 1874 and became active in women's philanthropic and suffrage organisations. Anna Bliss and Abbie Ferguson visited Good Hope when it was under her care (and found it 'very pleasing'), and later took tea with her and her husband. After Miss Thompson's departure, and under the leadership of Mrs Percival from England, the Good Hope Seminary became known as the 'highpriced, fashionable school of Cape Town'. Good Hope Guild, *Annual Report* (Cape Town: Van de Sandt de Villiers and Co., 1898), 1; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 March 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 15 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁴¹ Good Hope Guild, *Annual Report* (Cape Town: Van de Sandt de Villiers and Co., 1897), 11-13, 18; Good Hope Guild, *Annual Report* (1898), 5-7. These annuals are kept by the Cape Town Campus of the South African National Library.

⁴² The Seminary had clubs for music, needlework, art, and painting. The girls were also provided with elocution classes. Good Hope Guild, *Annual Report* (1897), 1-6, 13.

⁴³ 'College Life,' in *Annual Report*, of the Good Hope Guild (1898), 11.

this understanding of femininity were written by the teachers – predominantly Ferguson and Bliss – alumnae, and winners of essay competitions, demonstrating the extent to which this was the ‘official’ feminine discourse within the Seminary and College. As the author of an article in the Paarl Seminary’s magazine wrote,

We take it for granted, of course, that a girl on going back to her home [after matriculating] will look upon it as a sacred duty and privilege to do what she can to help the mother who has done, and sacrificed, so much for her, and that she will become proficient in all that a woman should know of the art of making a home pretty and attractive, and also learn to cook, and make her own clothes.⁴⁴

Yet there was also a feeling that the educated women had a wider, spiritual duty. A possibly fictionalised account of a former pupil by Bliss serves to summarise this point of view,

Do you ask me whether this education [provided at Huguenot] is fitting our young people for their homes and for a wider and better influence over others? Let me tell you of one of our girls that I heard about to-day. She studied beyond Matriculation and Second Class Teachers’ Examination and then took a position that surprised many of her friends, as they said she might have looked for a higher place and a higher salary.

She said, ‘I think I am needed there, and that God wants me to go and do that work,’ and she went. For three years she laboured faithfully amid much that was uncongenial, and then married a farmer in the neighbourhood. Was her education thrown away? A lady, who was in her home lately, told me how she was impressed with her sweet, cultured face, and said, ‘It seemed strange in that out-of-the-way place, in an ignorant community, on a Dutch farm, to see volumes of Longfellow, Tennyson, Browning, and Ruskin lying on the table, evidently used,’ and added, ‘It was wonderful to hear the people speak of her, and of their appreciation of what she had done for them. She is raising the intellectual and moral tone of the whole community.’ May there be many such going into the waste places of Africa!⁴⁵

This passage rehearses the familiar themes of self-sacrifice and self-denial that recur in the letters of the teachers during the first decade of the Seminary’s existence. Despite her academic achievements, the subject of Bliss’s parable eschews worldly success so that she may put her skills to good work in a rural area; and it is easy to confuse her teaching activities with those of a missionary – she is called to a difficult position so that she may spread God’s work. Yet it is after her marriage – which, in itself, is implied to be an act of heroic surrender, as this ‘Dutch’ farmer is probably no more educated or sophisticated than his neighbours – that she is able to do the most good for the community: by allowing them access to works of ‘culture’ (and these authors are the usual Victorian literary favourites) she is able to raise the ‘intellectual and moral tone’ of the area. In this way,

⁴⁴ ‘A Talk to the Old Girls,’ *Magazine of the Huguenot High School, Paarl* (November 1908): 7.

⁴⁵ Anna Bliss, ‘Educational Growth,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 20-21.

the woman's education acquires a spiritual and moral function which, she realises, obliges her to assist in the upliftment of the 'waste places of Africa'. The education of women is, thus, is justified by pointing to the broader good that it will do for the (white) population of South Africa.⁴⁶ This is succinctly summarised in the final two stanzas of the prize-winning poem, 'A College Student's Advice to Mothers',

If famous the men, sure, then, famous the wives,
And the fate of our country depends on their lives;
If thoughtful the mother, then thoughtful the child,
For they through this learning grow gentle and mild.

Educate your daughters, for queens they must be:
Queens to the world, to you and to me;
If not, then allow me to make this bold stand –
You love not your daughters, you love not your land!⁴⁷

Significantly, the educated woman's power is not in her ability to lead – to take the reins of power – but in her role as a 'gentle and mild' wife and mother: she is in the position to influence her husband (whose status defines her position in relation to the world) and it is she who is responsible for the training of the next generation of leaders and decision-makers. As a result, the education of women becomes an issue which is of national interest. That this poem was written only two years before the declaration of the Union of South Africa and in the midst of the negotiations for the settlement is by no means surprising: it echoes the concerns of late eighteenth, and early nineteenth, century post-independence Americans who, desiring to propagate the ideals of the Revolution, constructed the notion of 'Republican Motherhood' which elevated women to the position of producers of, and carers for, the future leaders of the independent United States. Their political contribution was to be 'channelled...through maternity',⁴⁸ and, as a result, these nurturers of the American future would require an education that would befit

⁴⁶ This way of justifying the education of women – that what they would learn would be of immeasurable benefit to their communities – was the dominant discourse within American women's colleges until, at least, the 1890s. Considering that Ferguson and Bliss would have been steeped in this discourse while at Mount Holyoke, it is not surprising that they persist in its dissemination in the Huguenot annuals. Vickie Ricks, "'In an Atmosphere of Peril': College Women and Their Writing," in *Nineteenth-Century Women Learn to Write*, edited by Catherine Hobbs (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 65-66.

⁴⁷ P. Rossouw, 'A College Student's Advice to Mothers,' *The Huguenot*, no. 14 (1908): 13.

⁴⁸ S.J. Kleinberg, *Women in the United States, 1830-1945* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 60.

them to raise rational, intelligent, and hard-working young citizens.⁴⁹ Indeed, this linking of traditionally domestic activities – child-rearing – to wider, political aims shows up the extent to which the poem is influenced by the emergent *Volksmoeder* ideology of the period during which ‘[f]or the first time the Boer woman’s role as mother and central focus of her family was expanded to include the concept of Boer women as mothers of the nation’.⁵⁰ As the writer of a piece entitled ‘Puddings, Politics, and Poetry: A Homily on the Virtuous Woman’ argues, every woman should demonstrate an interest in politics ‘for the education of those coming warriors who are now peacefully sleeping in their cradles or playing in the school play-ground.’⁵¹

The Seminary and College argued for their importance by showing how an exceptionally ‘academic’ education could be applicable to the responsibilities that a wife and mother would have to shoulder. In an article asking that physiology become one of the subjects constituting the science BA,⁵² the author remarks that the student

will not only find herself improved physically, by her course of study, but that she will be in a position to the better preserve her own health, and that of the ones who may be under her care through the coming years, whether in the home or in the school room.⁵³

There is even an attempt to raise the drudgery of domestic life to the level of a science in an attempt to reconcile it with the fairly theoretical work done at College,

It is wonderful how fascinating cooking or dusting becomes if studied with the same ardour as botany, and astonishing how much time is saved in these and other domesticities when dealt with by a mind trained by a course of mathematics to reject all arguments which can only lead *ad absurdum*.

⁴⁹ Kleinberg, 60-61.

⁵⁰ Brink, 280.

⁵¹ M. Emma Macintosh, ‘Puddings, Politics, and Poetry: A Homily on the Virtuous Woman,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 54.

⁵² Students at the College could study for either the literary or science BA. The College course was of three years’ duration, during which the student would have to pass an Intermediate course consisting of both literary and science subjects; Latin, English, mathematics, and science (either botany or physics) were compulsory, while Greek, Dutch, German, French, history, and trigonometry were not. The student then progressed to the two-year BA course, specialising in science or literature and philosophy. The former group studied physics, botany, trigonometry, algebra, and calculus, while the latter had Latin, Greek, English, modern languages (Dutch, French, or German), and philosophy (which included logic and psychology). Classics (Latin, Greek, and philology) and mental and moral science (ethics, political science, and the history of philosophy) were also offered. Most of the science and ‘literary’ subjects were available for honours level study where the student would specialise in one discipline. Both streams took Bible history classes as well. *Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905* (Wellington: Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904), 50-54.

⁵³ E.D.W. ‘Wanted: An Additional Science Course,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901), 33.

Surely we are to blame if we allow the idea to gain ground that housekeeping is inimical to, or incompatible with, true mental culture. To be sure, we cannot spend so much time reading Greek poems if 'Mrs Beeton' or 'Hilda' claims our attention; but, after all, what *is* mental culture? Preëminantly (sic), the discipline of the faculties of the mind. A cultivated mind needs constant training, preparation of the soil wherein the graces of the spirit and the blossoms of the intellect may flourish. Who can deny that housekeeping is in itself a wonderful school for mental culture?⁵⁴

Of course, the author is writing with her tongue in her cheek, but her argument has to be taken seriously: she admits that, in her view, 'woman's peculiar sphere is the home...first in the judgement of heaven...ranks the soft brilliancy of the home-life of mother, wife, or daughter.'⁵⁵ She needs, thus, to illustrate that the best run home is one directed by an intelligent, informed woman whose education has taught her to think logically and, moreover, that her confinement to the realm of the domestic will not diminish that which she has learned at school. On the contrary, the implication is that she will be able to grow intellectually as she goes about her housekeeping. Yet, like the author of the article on physiology, she does admit that '[m]any women, of whom the number is rapidly increasing, shine also outside the home'.⁵⁶ This point is an important one, because it also hints at the reality that many women leaving the Seminary and College would not marry and would, besides running households for friends and relatives (which was, in many cases, a fulltime occupation in itself), work as teachers or, less frequently, missionaries. Of the 1222 of the pupils who left the Seminary between 1874 and 1897, 565, or slightly more than forty per cent, married.⁵⁷ How did this feminine discourse reconcile itself to the existence of these women?

Bliss describes two pupils with whom she had come into contact during 1902:

⁵⁴ Macintosh, 54. By 'Mrs Beeton' she refers to that Bible of Victorian and early twentieth century cooking and household management, Isabella Beeton's *The Book of Household Management* (1861) which was the first recipe book to include information regarding portion sizes and the cost of recipes. Roy Strong, *Feast: A History of Grand Eating* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 285-286. 'Hilda' is Hildagonda Duckitt, author of *Hilda's Where is it? Of Recipes*, published in 1892, which was roughly analogous to Mrs Beeton's book. She was a pupil of the Rhenish Institute between 1864 and 1868. *Rhenish – Our Century, 1860-1960* (Cape Town: 1960), 26.

⁵⁵ Macintosh, 53.

⁵⁶ Macintosh, 53.

⁵⁷ These figures are taken from the catalogue of pupils in the 1898 annual which lists the name, marital status, and address of each girl under the year that she left the school. 'Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4, (1898): 59-89. A similar proportion of American university-educated women also did not marry: between the 1870s and 1920s, between forty and sixty per cent of students chose not to marry during a period when only ten per cent of the whole female population remained single. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 253.

During the last holidays a tall, well-dressed woman came into the room where I was sitting and said, 'Do you remember me?' Was it eight or ten years ago that she left us? How hard it was to prepare her for and get her through the teachers' examination owing to the insufficient preparation before she came to us, but we knew she worked hard and did her best. Yet she went from us partly developed, with no one to lean upon, and knowing that others must lean upon her. I recognized the dignified, sweet, strong-faced woman, and was deeply interested in her story. She had given up a position, where she loved the work, to take another that was then not so pleasant, because no one was ready to take it and the work must be done for Christ's sake. To her the hundredfold reward had been given, and she is now the head of a very large school with several assistants, and is doing much outside work, beside caring for a helpless sister.⁵⁸

The other woman she met in the Eastern Cape. She had left the school five or six years previously and since then 'the sweetness of life, and the bitterness of death had come to her.' She had lost both her husband and children during the conflict sweeping the country. Bliss writes that the woman 'has grown upward, and the quiet dignity, sweet patience and submission, and loving helpfulness of this widowed, childless mother, as she ministered to the little ones of others, was a marvel to [her].'⁵⁹ What both women share is an absolute dedication to the welfare of others, entailing, in the process, a great deal of (willing) self-sacrifice. Their independence becomes a means of allowing them to work as missionary teachers – as God's servants – and their suffering lends them both nobility and a kind of quasi-sanctity. But, interestingly, in neither of the accounts is their agency alluded to; it is suggested that they have simply been led by God to their work – that their will has been entirely subsumed by their religion. Paradoxically, their self-reliance and autonomy has been reinterpreted as a complete submission to God. These sentiments are echoed in a short essay by a pupil at the Teachers' Training College entitled 'The Kind of Woman I Should Like to Be',

She is not very rich or very great, as this world counts richness or greatness. She lives in an obscure little corner of the world, and no one out of her own country has ever heard her name. She has never done anything especially heroic, as this world counts heroism. Her salary – well, we will not mention the sum, but everyone knows that the teacher of a Mission School in this country is not overpaid. She works every day in an unattractive schoolroom, among a number of native girls, who are not over-clean, and not 'too good to live.' Yet she is one of the happiest persons in this world...She has lived a life of such true unselfishness that she has won the love of all around her...Best of all, she feels that her life is not being spent in vain...Not only does she train her girls intellectually, but she has the joy of leading more than one into the Higher Life, which is, after all, the most important.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Anna Bliss, 'Growth,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 7.

⁵⁹ Bliss, 'Growth,' 7.

⁶⁰ Ruth Sprigg, 'The Kind of Woman I Should Like to Be,' *The Huguenot*, no. 11 (1905): 35.

Here, not marrying and producing children is replaced by a wholehearted devotion to the education – both intellectual and spiritual – of the ‘less deserving’. In order for this sort of ambition (to be independent) to be acceptable, women have to experience either discomfort or suffering and should live rather like nuns – chaste, pious, and, almost literally, wedded to their work. That this sort of existence would require a great deal of self-discipline is by no means surprising, and it is this which the authors of articles about the need to educate women tend to stress. One argues that the ‘discipline of receiving an education’ helps to ‘lay the foundations of a pure, strong and upright character, and enable[s] the student to fulfil her place in life in the worthiest manner,’⁶¹ while another admits that College graduates will eventually forget the Greek, mathematics, and botany that they have been taught, ‘but the power, the self-control and the perseverance which they have gained by trying to master these subjects remain of use to them in after life.’⁶² Even in a more humorous vein, many of the articles in the annuals show up the need to be disciplined. In ‘A Day of Misfortune’ (the winner of the second prize in the Seminary’s essay-writing competition), Margie le Roux describes, hilariously, the consequences of being too lax in controlling oneself: as a result of sleeping too late (which could have been prevented by the acquisition of an alarm clock), the protagonist breaks a cup and saucer; in her haste to get to school (the story concerns one of the Seminary’s few day girls) she collides with a street child on her bicycle, falls into a puddle, and has to return home to change, causing her to be late for class. The tale ends with the protagonist setting her sheets alight as she upsets a candle ‘looking under a bed to see if there was anyone reposing there.’⁶³ It is self-control and the ability to discipline oneself – to persist in conditions of great difficulty and to efface one’s own needs and desires in order to assist others more successfully – that validate the existence of these women. This mastery of self (which is, in many ways, a renunciation of self) – this willing assimilation of this feminine ideal – allows these women a form of freedom, but, ironically, this independence is described as an absolute submission to a higher power.

It is, perhaps, difficult to believe that such women existed. However, there is some evidence to prove that they did. In an interview entitled ‘A Seminary Girl as

⁶¹ K. Joubert, ‘Student Life at Wellington,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901), 20.

⁶² Le Roux, 22.

⁶³ Margie le Roux, ‘A Day of Misfortunes,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901), 42.

Teacher in a Mission Station’, Marie Wium transcribes a discussion with a former pupil of the Seminary about her work as a teacher at a mission station at Thabana Morena in Basutoland.⁶⁴ The teacher – a Miss Whitton – is the principal of a boarding school for Basotho girls and has thirty to forty pupils in her care during term time.⁶⁵ It is made clear that the work is strenuous; she arrived on a Friday after what was, presumably, a long and arduous journey, welcomed the girls on Monday and began work the following day; she was responsible for nailing up the blinds on the windows of the new school building – and taught in a corrugated iron shack while the building was completed.⁶⁶ She also had difficulty in learning how to teach a group of girls whose language, culture, and, indeed, worldview was so decidedly different from her own. Perhaps typically, she could not, at first, tell her pupils apart and mispronounced their names. Her inability – or refusal – to learn SeSotho (she explains that ‘the people were glad, because in that case they were obliged to speak to [her] in English’)⁶⁷ caused her earliest classes to be almost entirely disastrous (‘[she] spoke and spoke, but all the girls did was to grin, and the only answer [she] could get from them was “Yes, Miss”’).⁶⁸ Nevertheless, through hard work and dedicated persistence, she is able to train them and mould them according to a western standard of education: they learn mathematics, write compositions, do housework, and adhere to a timetable regulated by the ringing of the bell. They learn, thus, the self-discipline that Miss Whitton requires to go about her duties. There is, in fact, a sense that this system allows her comfort and consolation. The interview concludes, ‘although we were sorry to close our interview, nevertheless the sound of the “five minutes” bell was pleasant, and especially on that afternoon, because of the brisk walk we had taken in the

⁶⁴ Although intended to amuse rather than edify, an article about teaching in the rural areas of the Colony, ‘Teaching in the Achter Plaats’ by ‘an Old Huguenot,’ demonstrates the difficulties facing the single, young, female teacher in a relatively unsophisticated community: she ‘found that neither [her] qualifications nor [her] motives were regarded as above suspicion’, only elementary education was considered important for the children of the local (white) population, and she had to come to terms with the relative insularity and parochialism of the town. An Old Huguenot, ‘Teaching in the Achter Plaats,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 2 (1896): 7-8.

⁶⁵ There is no reference to any girl with the surname of Whitton in the 1898 annual’s catalogue of pupils. It is possible that she attended the Seminary after this date (the article was written in 1905, meaning that she would have had to have left the Seminary in, at least, 1903) or that the name is a pseudonym – which, of course, questions the veracity of the interview.

⁶⁶ Marie Wium, ‘A Seminary Girl as Teacher in a Mission Station: An Interview,’ *The Huguenot*, no. 11 (1905), 28-29.

⁶⁷ Wium, 29.

⁶⁸ Wium, 29.

bracing air.’⁶⁹ Considering that the walk would have taken the two women into an alien natural environment – they ramble in the *veldt* surrounding the school – re-entry into the school grounds and the tolling of the bell allow them a sense of Huguenot-like order and regulation and recalls the values connected to that self-discipline.

Another woman who expresses the hegemonic feminine ideal at Huguenot is Lizzie Gamble – who, as Elizabeth Cummings, taught at the Seminary between 1877 and 1887 before marrying Rev. Thomas Gamble and settling in the Eastern Cape.⁷⁰ On a visit to the Seminary in 1890, she wrote to her parents describing a morning’s teaching. She agreed to take the Latin class so that another of the teachers could attend a meeting in Cape Town, but added that because she had ‘dropped her [school] interests so utterly since [her] marriage...[she] was curious to see how deep the past lay, and was pleased to find that the three years’ accumulation could be so easily removed.’⁷¹ She explained that her pleasure was due largely to her ‘hope that by the time [her] children [were] ready to be educated [she would] be able to do much for them.’⁷² Her delight is channelled away from herself and put to use in a desire to educate her children more effectively. Indeed, most of Gamble’s activities outside of her home in Heidelberg were connected to philanthropic organisations. On a typical Wednesday towards the end of 1892, she attended a meeting of concerned women desiring to establish a branch of the WCTU in Heidelberg, and then returned to the parsonage to host her quarterly ‘At Home’ for the local evangelists, which lasted until late in the evening.⁷³

⁶⁹ Wium, 29.

⁷⁰ ‘Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4, (1898): 85.

⁷¹ M. Elizabeth Gamble to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 8 October 1890, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605. Elizabeth Cummings – the daughter of the Congregationalist minister in Strafford, Vermont – taught at the Seminary between 1877 and 1887. She married Rev. Thomas Gamble, the Congregationalist minister in Heidelberg, although they later moved to Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape. They had a number of children, two of whom – both girls – taught at the Huguenot Girls’ High School during the 1920s. Her sister, Anna Cummings, travelled to the Colony to take her place where, like Lizzie, she taught Latin and botany to the senior girls. It was largely Anna’s idea to enter pupils for the Matriculation examination in 1889 (it was administered by the University of the Cape of Good Hope at the time and was considered to be a relatively foolhardy decision to enter girls for an examination generally believed to be too difficult for them – her pupils passed with flying colours). She was principal of the Huguenot Girls’ High School between 1910 and 1922, dying in Wellington in 1924. Cummings Hall – the residence for the College students, which was opened in 1898 – was named after the sisters. Geo. P. Ferguson, 159-162.

⁷² Elizabeth Gamble to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 8 October 1890, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁷³ Elizabeth Gamble to friends, Heidelberg, 17 December 1892, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

Most of Gamble's activities were, thus, performed so as to be of benefit to others: her good education would cause her to be a better mother, and her free time was employment in efforts to uplift the community and assist others in their work. While it must be remembered that as the wife of a minister she was obliged to be active in local social causes, her activities outside of the home (which were justified on the basis that they were simply an extension of what middle class women were expected to be interested in) must have provided a great deal of stimulation to a woman as highly educated as Lizzie Gamble. The organisational and communication skills that she needed as a teacher would have been invaluable in her charity work – and, although she did have a nursemaid to care for her children, it was probably something of a relief to be able to leave her house for a few hours every day to discuss issues other than childrearing and housekeeping. Indeed, the same must have been true for those women who, nonetheless subscribing to the hegemonic ideal of femininity, chose (or were forced) to remain independent and work as teachers – as a means of exercising their intellect and creativity (and with the emotional security that life in a boarding school could bring) this existence had the potential to be by no means entirely unpleasant.

Of course, the vast majority of the teachers at the Huguenot Seminary and College were women who elected to teach – and to work in environments that were both foreign and, frequently, fairly unwelcoming. Yet this group of women was not a homogenous entity. The American teachers who worked at Huguenot during the 1870s and 1880s were, in most cases, only qualified by having graduated from a seminary or academy that offered teachers' training: Ferguson and Bliss did not possess formal degrees or teaching certificates. The South African women whom they employed were, more often than not, their own ex-pupils or girls who had worked as pupil-teachers in the smaller schools scattered around the country. Yet, as the College established itself at the end of the 1890s, it began to attract greater numbers of women holding degrees from single sex and coeducational universities. How, then, did this hegemonic discourse accommodate this younger generation of teachers?

‘businesslike and capable women’:⁷⁴ The Educated Woman as Professional

In August 1900, Anna Cummings wrote to Maggie Allen, Abbie Ferguson’s sister, ‘You will be amused that Dr Muir has at length appointed me as Vice-principal of the Sem[inary] but with a sort of protest, implying he wishes all teachers to have a teachers’ certificate in the Colony.’⁷⁵ Dr (later Sir) Thomas Muir was the superintendent of education in the Cape Colony between 1892 and 1915 and it is he who is usually credited with the institution of a more formalised system of education for the Cape: he ushered in compulsory education and annual school inspections; he broadened the primary school curriculum, and he created high schools providing a secondary course of education which prepared pupils for university work. It is also due to his influence that the policy of segregating schools along racial lines was accelerated.⁷⁶ However, for the teachers of the Huguenot Seminary and College, Muir’s reforming zeal was felt most strongly in terms of his desire to professionalise teaching in the Colony. From the mid-1890s onwards, Muir raised the standard of the various teaching certificates available to students and encouraged prospective teachers to attend dedicated teachers’ training colleges, rather than become pupil-teachers in elementary or, less frequently, secondary schools.⁷⁷ Of course, a result of this effort to formalise the education of teachers indicated a need for teachers – and especially those in positions of authority – to possess recognised certificates or degrees as indications of their training.⁷⁸ It is for this reason that Cummings reports, rather gleefully, that it was with some hesitation that Muir decided to

⁷⁴ Leipoldt, 1

⁷⁵ Anna Cummings to Maggie Ferguson, Huguenot Seminary, 7 August 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605. Underlining in the original.

⁷⁶ Geo. P. Ferguson, 106-107; A.L. Behr and R.G. Macmillan, *Education in South Africa*, second edition (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1971), 116, 147; Ernst G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa (1652-1922): A Critical Survey of the Development of Educational Administration in the Cape, Natal, Transvaal and the Orange Free State* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Juta, 1925), 139-147.

⁷⁷ Behr and Macmillan, 267-268.

⁷⁸ The professionalisation of teaching during the end of the nineteenth century was by no means limited to South Africa – it was, in effect, a global phenomenon. Considering that Muir had been a headmaster in Scotland before coming to the Cape, it is not surprising that he instituted measures in the Colony to reform the education system so that it more closely resembled those in Europe, England, and America. Malherbe, 139; James C. Albisetti, ‘The Feminisation of Teaching in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Perspective,’ *History of Education*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1993): 256-257; Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girls’ Education in English History* (London: Methuen, 1965), 277-283; Wendy Robinson, ‘Pupil Teachers: The Achilles Heal of Higher Grade Girls’ Schools 1882-1904?’ *History of Education*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1993): 241-245.

allow her – regardless of her lack of a formal teaching qualification – to become the deputy headmistress of the Huguenot Seminary.

Cummings was not unusual in her training as a teacher; neither Ferguson nor Bliss possessed teachers' certificates, and this was true for the majority of women who taught at the Seminary for the first three decades of its existence. Most of these teachers had either graduated from girls' institutions in America – like Mount Holyoke – which provided a consciously vocational education to prepare young women for teaching work,⁷⁹ or were South African women who had learned to teach as pupil-teachers. Yet in the Seminary and College's prospectuses for 1904-1905 and 1906-1907, the majority of staff possess under- and postgraduate degrees from a variety of universities in America and Europe: Bertha Stoneman (who taught philosophy and botany) had a D.Sc. from Cornell, while Adelaide Smith (mathematics) received her B.Sc. from Wellesley and had done postgraduate work at the Universities of Chicago, Columbia, and Göttingen.⁸⁰ The instructor in English language and literature, Florence Snell, had a Ph.B. from Oberlin and had studied at Oxford.⁸¹ Even at the Seminary, of the ten teachers listed in the prospectus, five had tertiary qualifications.⁸² It is difficult to gauge to what extent there existed a tension on a personal level between these two generations of teachers, but it is clear that as the College was founded, the whole Huguenot institution changed from being a religious, mission-based school for girls to a modern college.⁸³ In a series of letters written in 1899 by Ferguson, she demonstrates the extent to which the values on which Huguenot had been founded had to make way for the coming of a professional college,

Our teachers are not altogether one with us [Ferguson and Murray] in what seems to us the most important part of the work. They want more time for study, which seems to us to mean less time for quiet time and prayer. I know they want to put the interests of the Kingdom first, and it is not easy to see things from our standpoint with the pressure of examinations upon them. If it is wise for us to make any change I want to be willing to see it, but I feel that I want first of all to cry night and day

⁷⁹ Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 14-15.

⁸⁰ Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 47.

⁸¹ Announcement of the Huguenot College, 1906-1907, 6.

⁸² Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 85.

⁸³ A similar tension – between a discourse justifying the education of women on the basis of their nurturing role in the community to a discourse arguing that women had a right to tertiary education, regardless of what they chose to do with it – occurred within American women's colleges during the 1890s. Ricks, 66-68.

to God that we may make no mistake, may not mar His work, or do that which will jeopardise the future.⁸⁴

Ferguson was not inflexible; she acknowledged that the College had to hire staff on the basis of their qualifications and not their piety,⁸⁵ and she admitted that '[p]erhaps it is good that we should be shaken out of our traditions, and old ways of doing things, but it is hard all the same.'⁸⁶ That the shift in principles did occur is clear. By 1917, Sue Leiter – a Mount-Holyoke trained instructor in physics at the Huguenot College – wrote that '[t]he girls...are like college girls the world over. It is not a missionary institution.'⁸⁷ Perhaps the best articulation of this more 'professional' attitude towards the higher education of women is E.M. Clark's 'Abstract of a Paper on the Higher Education of Women in South Africa,' published in 1905. Elizabeth Clark was a member of staff at the Huguenot College and had studied English and German literature at Bryn Mawr College and at the Universities of Leipzig and of Zurich.⁸⁸ In her 'Abstract' she discusses the state of girls' secondary and tertiary education in South Africa before arguing why it should be extended so that more women could benefit from it, and why its standards should be raised. She cites figures indicating that the majority of teachers in the Cape Colony were women and then points out that if the enormous demand for teachers were ever to be met, young women would have to be encouraged to enrol at colleges and universities to study pedagogy.⁸⁹ She also comments that women's higher education is accepted as 'a matter of course'⁹⁰ in Europe and America, implying that for South Africa to be able to compete on an international level academically, it should concentrate on the provision of higher education to its women. Not once does she justify her stance through a recourse to religion – and, unlike Ferguson, Bliss, and the older generation of teachers, she views the university as existing solely to provide an academic, not a spiritual or

⁸⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 21 March 1899, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁸⁵ A.P. Ferguson, 'Address Given on Founder's Day, April 30, 1904,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 10 (1904): 6.

⁸⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 18 April 1899, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Dana L. Robert, 'Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement, 1874-1904,' *Missionalia*, vol. 21, no. 2 (August 1993): 122.

⁸⁸ Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 47.

⁸⁹ E.M. Clark, 'Abstract of a Paper on the Higher Education of Women in South Africa,' in *Papers on Cape Education, Read Before the British Association*, edited by W.E.C. Clarke, E.M. Clark, and W.A. Way (Cape Town: J.C. Juta, 1905), 19.

⁹⁰ Clark, 20.

moral, education to both men and women. Her argument is underpinned by a belief that it is no more unusual for a woman to enter college than it is for a man.⁹¹

It would be misleading, though, to suggest that Ferguson and Bliss's understanding of women's education disappeared completely after the 1890s. In the annuals, they retain a strong presence, and, indeed, their justification for the training of girls as teachers forms a basis for the Huguenot hegemonic femininity. In an article entitled 'Why Should Girls Go to College?' Ferguson begins by explaining that '[t]hanks to the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, woman in Christian lands has been emancipated, and is no longer a slave.'⁹² As a result, she feels that 'if all the knowledge and the wisdom [that girls learn at College] is laid at the Master's feet they will be vessels meet for the Master's use.'⁹³ Speaking for herself, she says that her 'life would have been sadly crippled if [she] had not had these years of study and Christian training at Mount Holyoke.'⁹⁴ Fundamental to the life of the teacher is, thus, her relationship with God – it is this which validates her decision to work as an independent, and single, professional. This sense of the female College graduate having to be 'useful' in order to justify her education, is powerfully expressed in a Founder's Day address by a Miss de Vos, the chairman of the Old Girls' Union,

Our country is crying out for women who not only have the interests of their people at heart, but are equipped in the best way for lifting to a higher, nobler level the lives with which they come into contact. Are we doing what lies in our power to meet that demand?⁹⁵

Indeed, it must not be forgotten that this understanding of women's obligations to their God and their community allowed these teachers to operate from a position of some respect – and influence – within the towns and villages in which they taught. Although coloured by her feminism, the description that M.E. Rothmann provides of the impact of the American teachers at the Swellendam Seminary is worth noting,

En met dit alles was onse onderwyseresse na die openbare mening net so belangrik en gesaghebbend as enige hoof van die jongetjies se skool, gelykstaande met die predikante, die magistraat, die doktor en wie ook al! Vir ons het dit duidelik geword dat 'n meisie omtrent alles

⁹¹ Clark, 18-29.

⁹² A.P. Ferguson, 'Why Should Girls Go to College?' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 9 (1903): 9.

⁹³ A.P. Ferguson, 'Why Should Girls Go to College?' 10.

⁹⁴ A.P. Ferguson, 'Why Should Girls Go to College?' 10.

⁹⁵ Miss de Vos, 'Address,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 10 (1904): 7.

*kennis moet opdoen: ons kan opgelei word om 'n ewe belangrike baan te betree as onse onderwyseresse. Die wêreld het vir ons oppgegaan.*⁹⁶

[And in addition, our teachers, according to general opinion, were just as important and authoritative as any head of the boys' school, equal to the minister, the magistrate, the doctor and whoever else! For us it became clear that a girl had to acquire nearly everything there was to learn: we could be educated to enter into as important a sphere as our teachers. The world opened for us.]

It is not surprising, then, that so many teachers chose to operate within this discourse, as their education and wholehearted dedication to their work – implied by their spinsterhood – permitted them a relatively high status within the community.

Running parallel to this discourse in the annuals was an increasingly strident discourse of professionalism which, while never articulated as such, suggests something of the friction between the new and old ways of understanding women's education. Only a few pages following Miss de Vos's impassioned plea, is a short description of life at Cornell which discusses that university's curriculum, sports, student pastimes, and disciplinary code. The only reference to religion is to substantiate a comment that the campus seems to be unusually tolerant in its willingness to enrol students of a variety of faiths.⁹⁷ The article ends innocuously, 'On the whole one feels that even four years might be spent less pleasantly, and at worse places, than in Cornell University.'⁹⁸ This is not the only evocation of life at other tertiary institutions in America and Europe, and what is striking about these accounts is their lack of religiosity – that they do not link these colleges and students to the 'higher cause' that Ferguson does. In 'A Glimpse at the College Life of American Women,' the author writes, in some detail, about the nature of the courses followed by girls at American universities, the subjects of which they are particularly fond, their interest in music, as well as the importance of the friendships formed during the years in a tertiary institution.⁹⁹ The same is true for 'A Woman's Life in a Medical College', which informs the reader of a typical day in the life of a student at

⁹⁶ M.E. Rothmann, *My Beskeie Deel: 'n Outobiografiese Vertelling* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Tafelberg, 1972), 53-54.

⁹⁷ Cornell admitted female students in 1872, making it one of the first American universities to do so. Nevertheless, while the women on campus attended the same classes as the men, they were made to lead very separate lives, having their own residences, clubs, societies, and traditions. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 41-42, 193; Smith-Rosenberg, 250-253.

⁹⁸ L. Reinicke, 'Student Life at Cornell,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 10 (1904): 10.

⁹⁹ Helen J. Clark, 'A Glimpse at the College Life of American Women,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no.1 (1895): 22-23.

the London School of Medicine for Women,¹⁰⁰ as well as for ‘Life at a Scottish University’, which details the activities of the students of Queen Margaret College at the University of Glasgow.¹⁰¹ All these pieces depict young women enjoying themselves at university or college – they are challenged by their academic work, but, nonetheless, have full and active social lives.

A similar picture is drawn by a number of articles describing life at the Huguenot College – and there is a comparable emphasis on the ‘rounded’ education of the young women in Wellington. A collection of short reports on the activities of the College’s main societies and on the doings of the girls during their free time entitled ‘Phases of Student Life’ highlights the range of their interests outside of their studies: from basketball to temperance work, and from the Kodak craze sweeping the institution to watermelon feasts on Friday evenings.¹⁰² A prize-winning essay on the daily life of the College describes how classes in the morning are balanced by the half-hour’s compulsory exercise in the afternoon, and how homework in the evening is brought to a close by girls visiting and taking tea with one another before bedtime.¹⁰³ Indeed, there is some emphasis on the need for social activities after study: ‘social functions take a very important part in our College home life, for we do not often go to outsiders, and unless we made pleasure for ourselves, our home life would not be as happy as it is.’¹⁰⁴ Considering that the annuals were written as much for parents as they were for pupils and alumni, there seems to be some awareness of parents’ worry that girls would emerge from the College determined bookworms with little or no social ability – or ‘physically fit for nothing.’¹⁰⁵ These articles can be understood, thus, as a defence against charges that higher education rendered women ‘masculine’ or physically deficient.

That the girls at the College were acutely aware of the criticism levelled at women who were determined to acquire a tertiary education is apparent from a great many of the articles in the annuals. One piece ‘Why She Went to College’ can be seen as a conscientious effort finally to nullify those arguments against the further education of

¹⁰⁰ Edith Goodison, ‘A Woman’s Life in a Medical College,’ *The Huguenot*, no. 12 (1906): 23.

¹⁰¹ Ella Sutherland, ‘Life at a Scottish University,’ *The Huguenot*, no. 11 (1905): 18-20.

¹⁰² Ethel Doidge (editor), ‘Phases of Student Life,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 10 (1904): 20-24.

¹⁰³ K. Joubert, ‘Student Life at Wellington,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901): 18-20.

¹⁰⁴ J. Retief, ‘College Home Life,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 35.

¹⁰⁵ Jessie Deas, ‘Expectations,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 10 (1904): 3.

women. The article begins with a description of what can probably be understood to be a fairly typical Seminary pupil who has recently matriculated: she is eighteen, ‘an interested and faithful student, though not brilliant’, and is the ‘youngest child of a well-to-do farmer’ who can, presumably, fund his daughter’s training without any difficulty.¹⁰⁶ During her holiday a friend has told her ‘that Intermediate and B.A. classes have been opened’ at what was to become the College, and this news has served as ‘a stimulus to her ambition’.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, she does not want to return to school to fulfil some kind of religious purpose – and not once is religion mentioned in the article – but because ‘study is to her a source of pleasure’; importantly, ‘she has come to realise her ignorance’ and wants to learn more about the world around her (she is particularly interested in botany and languages).¹⁰⁸ When she consults with her family about the matter, she receives a mixed response: her mother and father ‘express themselves as perfectly willing to incur the necessary expense, provided the step can be proved a wise one,’¹⁰⁹ but the rest of the family are less than enthusiastic: her brother (‘a somewhat conceited young man, who has recently taken his degree at the South African College’) opines that “[g]irls haven’t either the brains or the health for a college course”, and her sister – who has lately become engaged – worries that “a college training is dangerous for a girl, since it makes her unwomanly.”¹¹⁰ Uncle John says that “[a]ll that a woman needs to know is to sweep and cook and sew for her family, write a letter, do sums, and read her Bible. Any more larnin’ (sic) is a curse to her household”; Aunt Emily adds that College education is a waste of money for a girl “especially when she just marries afterwards.”¹¹¹

A little put out, the protagonist argues that she matriculated in as good health – and with equally high marks – as her brother and makes that ‘instead of filling the best

¹⁰⁶ ‘Why She Went to College,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 3 (1897), 13. The article is published anonymously and it is difficult to decide on the significance of this choice: especially in the first five years or so of the annual’s existence, about a quarter of the contributors either make use of *noms de plume*, or do not identify themselves. Although considering that the piece is fairly scathing in its criticism of adults who do not believe in girls’ higher education – and it is by no means impossible that it draws its inspiration from the author’s experience – it is, perhaps, not surprising that the writer chose to remain anonymous.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Why She Went to College,’ 13.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Why She Went to College,’ 13-14.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Why She Went to College,’ 13.

¹¹⁰ ‘Why She Went to College,’ 13.

¹¹¹ ‘Why She Went to College,’ 13.

days of her youth with aimless nothings, she will work in a systematic, scholarly way which is going to give her an increase and concentration of power that will make itself felt in all her future life.’¹¹² She demonstrates that her education will allow her to support herself financially should the need ever arise, and that, while Greek or trigonometry may not in themselves be particularly useful when she has a home of her own, the study of them ‘demands the development of one’s nature along broader lines.’¹¹³ She delivers her response with ‘that energy which is born of confidence,’ and so impresses her parents that they ‘declare themselves convinced that a college training is the best thing for their daughter.’¹¹⁴

The article presents College as a place where young women are trained to be rational and logical thinkers, whose extensive and thorough education prepares them to be more productive members of society, regardless of whether they marry or not. Yet the College also functioned as a kind of ‘academic finishing school’ where girls – in their friendships with one another, their social activities, their work in clubs, and their participation in organised sport – were prepared to take their place in the community.¹¹⁵ As a result, the annuals are at pains to show that this preparation would not render the pupils ‘masculine.’ This belief that education had the potential to transform girls into tomboys or ‘manly women’ was by no means unique to some of the parents of the students at the Huguenot Seminary and College – it was an argument that had accompanied the extension of higher education since its inception. If nineteenth century notions of ‘true’ middle class womanhood revolved around women’s ability to reproduce, educated women who did not marry or chose to delay pregnancy – or who did not have children at all – were clearly not fulfilling their ‘natural’ roles. It seemed logical, then, to assume that their training had encouraged them to think (or even behave) like men.¹¹⁶

¹¹² ‘Why She Went to College,’ 14.

¹¹³ ‘Why She Went to College,’ 14.

¹¹⁴ ‘Why She Went to College,’ 14.

¹¹⁵ This attempt to conceptualise the college as an institution preparing young women to become rational and productive members of society was by no means unusual. It was a usual practice in the American women’s colleges. For a fairly uncritical analysis of this phenomenon, see Mabel Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women* (Washington, D.C.: Zenger, 1959), 104-105, 120-125.

¹¹⁶ Smith-Rosenberg, 182-184; Lynn D. Gordon, ‘The Gibson Girl Goes to College: Popular Culture and Women’s Higher Education in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920,’ *American Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 2 (1987): 213-215; Elizabeth Edwards, ‘Educational Institutions or Extended Families? Women’s Colleges in the

Medical studies, like the hugely influential American publication *Sex in Education; or a Fair Chance for Girls* (1873) by Edward H. Clarke, stressed that women who neglected their reproductive abilities by concentrating on the exercise of their intellect (men, it was believed, being the sex whose bodies were strong enough to withstand the development of their brains) were in serious danger of either degenerating physically, or, even, becoming hermaphrodites.¹¹⁷ It is not surprising that it was a matter of some concern to teachers at schools and colleges for women that their pupils emerged from them as, albeit very highly educated, young ‘ladies’.¹¹⁸

Within the hegemonic discourse of femininity at work within the Huguenot College, there was little difficulty in reconciling the life of the female schoolteacher with that of the caring, nurturing, and self-sacrificing maternal ideal. Yet for female teachers subscribing to a more ‘professionalist’ understanding of teaching, the charge that they were ‘manly women’ was more difficult to prove wrong. In many schools and colleges, this resulted in students being required to behave and dress as ‘young ladies’ – they would dress for dinner, wear fashionable clothing, avoid romping on the sports’ fields, and would assiduously avoid contact with men deemed to be ‘unsuitable’ by their teachers.¹¹⁹ It is true that girls at Huguenot were not permitted to meet boys during

Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,’ in *Equality and Inequality in Education Policy*, edited by Liz Dawtrey, Janet Holland, and Merrill Hammer (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1995), 94-98.

¹¹⁷ Sue Zschoche, ‘Dr Clarke Revisited: Science, True Womanhood, and Female Collegiate Education,’ *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 553-555. This article provides a thorough exploration of the contents and influence of Clarke’s *Sex in Education*; for a discussion of the effects of this fear of hermaphroditism – or lesbianism – in American and British women’s colleges see, respectively, Smith-Rosenberg, 270-296 and Edwards, 103-107, and Avery, 308-310 for an analysis of homosexuality at (British) girls’ boarding schools. It would be disingenuous to claim that there were no lesbian teachers and pupils at the Huguenot Seminary and College, even though, perhaps unsurprisingly, there is little – or no – evidence to suggest that there were. It is clear that both staff and students formed strong friendships with one another, and that many of the teachers developed intense bonds that lasted throughout most of their professional lives – such as Abbie Ferguson and Emma Landfear, and Anna Cummings and Martha Cilliers. In the letters of these teachers there are accounts of activities that a twenty-first century reader may construe as homoerotic (sharing beds, or declaring eternal love) but, considering that descriptions of these acts are in letters intended for parents and friends, it is difficult to accuse them of being anything other than entirely ‘innocent’. Indeed, it must be kept in mind that Victorian and Edwardian discourses of same-sex friendship allowed for a very large degree of physical and emotional closeness. See, for example, Philippa Levine, ‘Love, Friendship, and Feminism in Later 19th-Century England,’ *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 13, nos. 1/2 (1990): 63-78.

¹¹⁸ Yet as Avery points out, the emphasis on sport and, later, the almost ubiquitous gymslip uniform, that flattened the chest and hid developing hips, had the effect of transforming adolescent young women, if not into boys, but certainly into prepubescent girls. Avery, 118-121, 292.

¹¹⁹ Sara Delamont, ‘The Contradictions in Ladies’ Education,’ in *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*, edited by Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin (London: Croom Helm, 1978),

school hours or without the permission of their teachers, but they did not lead an entirely cloistered existence: men from the area could, and did, enrol at the College,¹²⁰ older girls were allowed to correspond with young men,¹²¹ and from time to time the students from the Mission Institute would be invited to picnics.¹²² The resistance to male company was not based on a dislike of men in general, but, rather, on a desire that the girls should mix with the right ‘sort’ of boys. In the annuals, there is much description of typically ‘feminine’ behaviour – predominantly shopping, sewing, and having tea-parties – although there are no articles dedicated to these subjects. Except for sports organised by the Seminary and College,¹²³ the girls wore no uniform (which was not unusual for the period) and adorned themselves with the latest fashions.¹²⁴

Physical activity was the other means of rebutting arguments that education caused women to become more susceptible to illness. Nearly every issue of the annual has at least one article on the Seminary and College’s athletic achievements or on the

144-151; Edwards, 94-98. It is interesting to note that when Mary Lyon attended the Byfield Seminary, her roommate and teachers drew her attention to the need to appear genteel in order to be deemed socially ‘acceptable’ by ‘polite’ society (on whose funds she would rely when opening her own school). Chronically short of funds, she usually wore coarse, shapeless dresses of home-spun cotton, but, with the assistance of more affluent friends, learned to dress neatly, if not fashionably, to style her hair, and to behave in a more ‘ladylike’ manner in company. Delamont, 145; Amanda Porterfield, *Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 51.

¹²⁰ For an amusing, and frank, account of life for a boy at the overwhelmingly female Huguenot College, see J.H. Bailey, ‘Some Experiences in the Life of a Huguenot College Boy,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901): 32.

¹²¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 February 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹²² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 November 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

¹²³ The basketball teams of both the Seminary and College wore ‘[n]avy blue dresses with white stitching and pale blue ties’ to distinguish themselves from the other teams. Bloemhof, for example, wore ‘[r]ed blouses, with white collars, and dark skirts’ and the girls from the Paarl branch had ‘[r]oyal blue blouses, black skirts, and school colours for ties.’ Gladys Scott, ‘College and Seminary Athletics,’ in *Phases of Student Life*, edited by Ethel Doidge, *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 10 (1904): 20.

¹²⁴ Most girls’ schools had only a gym uniform until around the 1920s – and this was true for both Britain and South Africa. At Huguenot, the girls were requested to dress neatly and sensibly, but were otherwise free to choose what to bring with them from home. Avery, 289-295. Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 15. It is likely that one of the reasons that the teachers at Huguenot were so willing to tolerate such a variety of dress was that they liked clothes – and shopping for clothes – very much. Many of their letters are dedicated to fairly long descriptions of shopping trips and patterns to trim or alter skirts, blouses, and hats to resemble the latest fashions. Ferguson’s attitude to dress is best encapsulated in her response to Mrs Neethling of Stellenbosch’s belief in ‘plain dressing, meaning neither overskirt or trimming, and this from principle. One cannot help admiring the sort of heroism that leads people to take such a stand against the tendency of the age. For overdress is not by any means an unknown thing in this part of the world. I do not think they are right. I believe God has given us taste to exercise in dress as well as in other things, though we should be careful to let out moderation be known and I believe these perfectly plain people are in one extreme, but in the better one.’ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 23 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

importance of girls taking regular exercise. What these pieces attempt to demonstrate is that with the proper attention to exercise, a girl at the College would emerge with both a BA degree and perfect health. In fact, as the Calendar put it, ‘well regulated exercise [is] is a valuable aid to mental as well as to physical development.’¹²⁵ What the teachers at Huguenot were defying was not only popular opinion, but apparent medical evidence which ‘proved’ that women’s unsuitability for higher education was manifested in their bodies – rendering them nervous and unable to bear children.¹²⁶ As a result – like many teachers in girls’ schools and colleges in, especially, Britain and America – the women at Huguenot were quick to institute compulsory exercise in the form of tennis, basketball, hockey, and Scandinavian therapeutic exercises,¹²⁷ and imbued them with the important function of actually assisting the girls to perform better academically.¹²⁸ One article from 1897 makes the link between ‘physical well-being’ and ‘moral strength’ very clear, and goes as far as to say that the advancement of the ‘modern’ woman (who eschews the behaviour of the ‘ideal woman’ of twenty or thirty years before, who ‘was a hysterical invalid, who found her highest pleasure in gossip and novel-reading’) can be measured in terms of her physical betterment: ‘While the girl of yesterday fainted at the sight of a snake, the girl of to-day catches it by the tail and bottles it for exhibition and examination.’¹²⁹ The author compares two students at the College: one, who is a ‘great grinder’ who is ‘at her books from five in the morning until three minutes before the tardy’, and the other, who is ‘the champion sportswoman’.¹³⁰ While the former has ‘hollow eyes...drooping shoulders, flat chest, stooping and ungraceful gait’, her sporty roommate has ‘a dimpled, rosy face brimming over with fun...she runs with her shoulders well back, her chin and head raised and her whole body speaking of strength,

¹²⁵ Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 10.

¹²⁶ Paul Atkinson, ‘Fitness, Feminism and Schooling,’ in *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*, edited by Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 92-93; Zschoche, 550-555.

¹²⁷ The exceptionally popular Scandinavian exercises seem to have been similar to a less energetic form of present-day aerobics. Calendar of the Huguenot College and Seminary, 1904-1905, 10-11; Atkinson, 92-93; Smith-Rosenberg, 257-260; Avery, 266-276.

¹²⁸ For a discussion of the relationship between girls’ education and sport in the late-nineteenth century, see Kathleen E. McCrone, ‘Play Up! Play Up! and Play the Game! Sport at the Late Victorian Girls’ Public School,’ *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 106-134.

¹²⁹ Florence Lawton, ‘Our Seminary Athletics,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 3 (1897), 26.

¹³⁰ Lawton, 27.

activity and enjoyment.’¹³¹ This depiction of the two girls is no refutation of the logic that the state of the body determines the character of the individual, but, rather, demonstrates that with adequate physical activity, college life has the potential to improve the health of the student. This does, though, suggest a tacit belief that too much study is detrimental to the girl’s well-being.

Thus by demonstrating that women could remain both feminine and healthy as professionals dedicated to a life of teaching this professionalist discourse provided an alternate means of understanding the position of the educated woman that did not rely on religion or recourse to an ideal of the ‘angel of the house.’ It was probably this latter discourse’s suggestion that a woman could enjoy independence – that the ‘sacrifice’ of married life and a family was not as painful as hegemonic discourses of femininity proposed it to be – which upset notions of a woman needing to master herself in order to justify her autonomy. Indeed, there is something of an implication that this professional woman did not submit to anyone’s authority – neither God’s, nor a husband’s. For the professional teacher, the acquisition of self-discipline was useful in that it allowed her to study and work more efficiently – and, presumably, assisted her in training her body to keep up her stamina and strength. There is the same emphasis on the need for young women to be trained, but this secular mastery is expressed in terms of having a well-disciplined body,¹³² an ability to think rationally and logically, and a desire to succeed academically to secure a future career. The differences between hegemonic and professionalist discourses should not be exaggerated, though: both required that the teacher remain single during her working life, thus expecting her to devote herself to household, husband, and family after marriage. Teachers of the younger generation also had to submit to popular notions of what it meant to be ‘feminine’; wearing trousers or cropping her hair would have turned the professional teacher into an object of ridicule. Moreover, both discourses understood the girl’s period at College simply to be a phase in her development – as a means to an ends (as a missionary teacher or mother bringing ‘civilisation’ to rural areas, or as a dedicated professional teacher). As a result, the need

¹³¹ Lawton, 27.

¹³² Of course, this understanding of the female body – of it requiring containment and disciplining because of its innately ‘dirty’ and ‘irrational’ nature – fits neatly into Enlightenment discourses surrounding an increasingly mechanised view of the functioning of the body. Deborah Lupton, *Medicine as Culture: Illness, Disease and the Body in Western Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 131-142.

for girls to study for a degree was defended in terms of what they would learn that would assist them in future life. While neither group would discount the importance of a girl's enjoyment of her tertiary education, the point was that it was not a state that justified itself on its own. Yet there is evidence to suggest that a third, and possibly even more subtle, discourse is at work in the annuals: it is that of the 'College Girl', which was a celebration of a young woman's life at her university or women's college that, although an American import, seems to have found some favour among the Huguenot students.¹³³

'every hope of a South African New Woman':¹³⁴ College Girls and New Women

It is clear that the professionalist discourse was in some way connected to the phenomenon of the 'New Woman' that arose in Britain, Europe, and America during the 'rumpus and debate' of the closing decades of the nineteenth century.¹³⁵ Benefiting from the foundation of institutions dedicated to women's higher education during the mid-1900s, a generation of middle class women at the turn of the nineteenth century began to define themselves not as wives and mothers, but as working women who had the training to retain their independence for as long as they desired.¹³⁶ Characterised as intellectually sophisticated, ambitious, individualistic, and deliberately unconventional, they, typically, entered the business world as clerks, became teachers, journalists, civil servants, social workers and, less frequently, doctors and lawyers, joined political organisations, rode bicycles, often refused to wear corsets and bustles, and wore their hair short.¹³⁷ Amongst other things, a greater availability of contraceptives, and an increased willingness to discuss sex and the functioning of women's bodies in the 1890s, allowed these women to have a greater knowledge – and control – over their decisions to marry and have children;

¹³³ Grateful thanks to Sarah Carter for drawing my attention to the phenomenon of the College Girl.

¹³⁴ A.L. Geard, 'Oom Polo and Tante Griet,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 5 (1899): 48.

¹³⁵ A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Arrow Books, [2002] 2003), 440.

¹³⁶ Smith-Rosenberg, 176-178. This is a fairly broad overview of the New Woman; there were distinct phases in the development of the ideal: the first generation – educated during the 1870s and 1880s – tended to be outspoken feminists and social activists who, despite their unconventional lifestyle, were inclined to adhere to bourgeois values surrounding marriage and female sexuality. The second generation, who came into their own after World War One, were, generally, less interested in social issues and placed greater emphasis on self-fulfilment. They truly flouted and challenged dominant conceptualisations of the role of the woman, seeing themselves as equal with men and, thus, entitled to the same privileges. Due to the paucity of research on the New Woman in South Africa, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which the discourse was a feature in debates on social and political issues in this country.

¹³⁷ Smith-Rosenberg, 176-178.

and, in Europe and America, even the legal system was changing to render the position of unmarried women less precarious.¹³⁸ Of course, the label ‘New Woman’ was applicable only to the middle classes, and then only to a minority of women. In a sense, the pervasiveness of these New Women was something of a literary construct (indeed, it was the American novelist Henry James who invented the term)¹³⁹ – they appeared, portrayed both sympathetically and disparagingly, in newspapers, magazines, and novels – around which women oriented their beliefs and behaviour.¹⁴⁰

There is only one article in the Huguenot annuals that engages directly with the idea of the New Woman, and, interestingly, it was written by Maggie Ferguson, the eldest daughter of Abbie Ferguson’s brother, George.¹⁴¹ In ‘Our Place as Teachers’ Ferguson aligns herself with the values underpinning New Womanhood – she rejects the ‘very beautiful ideal of womanhood, which was to represent the hidden purity of the heart and home, and whose type was the meek submission of the Virgin Mary’ produced by chivalric discourses, on the grounds that it ‘ignored one factor, that woman was endowed

¹³⁸ There was, generally, an improvement in the legal position of women. For British married women, the 1839 Infants’ Custody Act granted non-adulterous wives the right to retain the children of broken marriages; the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 made divorce more easily obtained; the passing of the Married Women’s Property Act in 1882 allowed married women to retain their property. Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 14.

¹³⁹ In Henry James’s fiction, these were women – like Isabel Archer in *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) – whose affluence, intelligence, and, to a certain extent, youth, allowed them the means with which to reject social conventions and live as they desired. In most cases, though, James tended to demonstrate the dangers of this autonomy rather than its delights. Henry James, ‘Preface,’ in *The Wings of the Dove* (London: Mandarin, [1902] 1997), 3-6, 8-17; Smith-Rosenberg, 176.

¹⁴⁰ Cunningham, 1-16. H.G. Wells and Olive Schreiner wrote what many considered to be novels about the New Woman.

¹⁴¹ Margaret Ferguson graduated from the Huguenot Seminary in 1881, having become a pupil in 1878 after arriving in the Colony with her parents, George and Susie, younger brothers, George and Ferdie, and sister, Katy. She stayed at home for six months after leaving school – Susie Ferguson was a chronic invalid requiring a great deal of care – before travelling in Europe and America. She enrolled at Mount Holyoke in 1883 and studied there for at least two years. By 1898 she was a teacher at the Huguenot Seminary. Katie Ferguson does not seem to have been as ‘academic’ as her older sister. Born in 1873, she attended the Seminary for only a year or two, leaving in 1885. Katie married Lt. M. du Toit and moved to Pretoria after having assisted with the teaching at the Seminary from time to time. After the abortive Jameson Raid, it was Lt. du Toit who escorted the disgraced L.S. Jameson to the Natal coast and ensured that he embarked for England there. Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington, Cape of Good Hope, from January, 1874, to January, 1884 (Cape Town: W.A. Richards & Sons, 1884), 28, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621; ‘Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4, (1898): 63, 66; A.M. Wells, ‘Former Teachers,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4, (1898): 59; Anna Cummings, ‘Letter from South Africa,’ *The Monthly Record* (May 1899): 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 11 March 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 13 March 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 22 July 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 September 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

with a mind to *think*, as well as to *feel*.¹⁴² Ferguson argues that women should participate actively in life, and not vicariously through husband and father, ‘the spirit of the age has produced women who begin to think, crudely no doubt, on many questions, for she is still handicapped by her long submission; but above all has made woman no longer willing to be a mere consumer, she must also be a producer.’¹⁴³ As a result, women need to learn how to reason, and she feels that the female teacher has a duty to encourage the exercise of creative thought and individuality wherever she goes.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, she remains aware of the difficulties facing the New Woman who desires to act as independently as her male contemporaries, ‘We are still handicapped by old absurd ideas, we are paid only about a fourth for the same work as men, we are shrieked at if we venture out of certain grooves, but still it is an understood thing that we may earn our bread.’¹⁴⁵

This is certainly a considerably more spirited defence of working women than anything that appears in Abbie Ferguson’s writing. Indeed, the divergence of opinion of the two women shows up the generational differences between the old and new ways of conceptualising the educated woman: Abbie was born in 1837, making her sixty-three in 1900, while Maggie would have been around thirty-seven years old.¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Maggie’s definition of the New Woman is considerably more conservative than that in Europe or America, writing that ‘[b]y the New Woman [she] mean[s] the woman who thinks and who recognizes her responsibilities as a human being...Such a woman takes up teaching as a piece of honest labour.’¹⁴⁷ She adds that women are particularly suited to this work – and are, thus, almost obliged to take it up – because of their intuitive abilities, and their supposedly ‘natural’ love of children;¹⁴⁸ in fact, ‘there is no question that teaching lies within a woman’s sphere. Women have always been teachers; for what else is the rearing of children?’¹⁴⁹

¹⁴² M.E. Ferguson, ‘Our Place as Teachers,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no.1 (1895): 30.

¹⁴³ M.E. Ferguson, 30.

¹⁴⁴ M.E. Ferguson, 31.

¹⁴⁵ M.E. Ferguson, 30.

¹⁴⁶ Considering that the Huguenot Seminary did not enrol pupils younger than fifteen throughout the 1870s and 1880s, it is likely that Maggie was either fifteen or sixteen when she became a pupil there in 1878, meaning that she was born, probably, in 1863.

¹⁴⁷ M.E. Ferguson, 31.

¹⁴⁸ M.E. Ferguson, 31.

¹⁴⁹ M.E. Ferguson, 30.

This ambivalence about the position of educated women pervades the annuals; the few references to women's suffrage and the existence of 'bluestockings' at the Seminary and College are at once mildly supportive and faintly dismissive, even though there are articles dedicated to demonstrating the intellectual prowess of the female students. In 'An Ethereal Visit to Cummings Hall' a ghost in search of a place to rest is frightened off by the chatter of girls discussing women's suffrage,¹⁵⁰ while in another piece the author describes the relief of an elderly relative when she discovers that the girls at the College are not 'veritable "blue-stockings"'.¹⁵¹ Yet a humorous dialogue entitled 'Afternoon Tea in Hades', during which a collection of historical figures, including Samuel Johnson, Alfred Tennyson, Queen Elizabeth I, and Jane Austen, discuss Shakespeare's visit to the Huguenot College, is generally approving of the students' serious debates about *Macbeth* and their efforts in the laboratory – and, in its ridiculing of Johnson's horror of women's education, does not censure Shakespeare's reference to the Huguenot girls as bluestockings.¹⁵² A similar satire is directed against the detractors of tertiary education for women in the anonymous 'Monologue on the Higher Education of Women' in which a male BA student, probably enrolled at the College, expounds on his belief that he does not 'see how the higher education of women can make women happy in the long run'.¹⁵³ Pieces such as Pauline Sugarman's explanation of her socialist principles,¹⁵⁴ or a description of the lively debate at dinner time – where topics ranging from 'Instinct *versus* reason' to 'the question of the correct height of a man's collar' are discussed enthusiastically and with great wit – show up the intellectual sophistication and maturity of these young women.¹⁵⁵

Perhaps one way of understanding this relatively mixed response to the issues traditionally associated with the New Woman – the higher education of women, universal suffrage, women's intellectual powers in relation to men's – is to consider the extent to which the students at the College identified with the construct of the 'College Girl'. While virtually unknown in South Africa, the 'College Girl' was at once a manifestation

¹⁵⁰ Jane Earl, 'An Ethereal Visit to Cummings Hall,' *The Huguenot*, no. 14 (1908): 20.

¹⁵¹ Deas, 3.

¹⁵² G. Phillips and M. Smith, 'Afternoon Tea in Hades,' *The Huguenot*, no. 13 (1907): 8-9.

¹⁵³ 'Monologue on the Higher Education of Women,' *The Huguenot*, no. 13 (1907): 41.

¹⁵⁴ Pauline Sugarman, 'Old News Retold,' *The Huguenot*, no. 16 (1910): 4.

¹⁵⁵ 'Students at the Dinner-Table,' *The Huguenot*, no. 16 (1910): 8-9.

of, and reaction against, the New Woman in America. The pioneers of women's education between 1865 and 1890 were, in the American popular press, depicted as 'mannish' and relatively unfeminine. The College Girl, on the other hand, arose out of the illustrator Charles Dana Gibson's understanding of the 'modern woman' (or the 'Gibson Girl' as she rapidly became known): his drawings depicted her 'as tall, long-legged and graceful, with upswept hair, faintly pink cheeks, a provocative eye, and a cool detached air...unencumbered by bustles or convention.'¹⁵⁶ The College Girl retained these qualities, but added to them a liveliness and playful impudence which were intended to render her even more charming. Of course, it is clear that the College Girl – and the Gibson Girl – were intensely conservative responses to the New Woman: what defined these 'Girls' (as opposed to 'Women') was their physical attractiveness and simultaneously coy and arch attitude towards men. They were innately frivolous, self-centred, and obsessed with their looks; Gibson's illustrations are frequently accompanied by anti-suffragist captions such as 'Not Worrying about Her Rights' or 'No Time for Politics.' The concept of the College Girl, too, calmed worries that education 'spoiled' women for marriage in that it emphasised the lack of impact that the College had on the Gibson Girl: she attended classes and wrote examinations, but, otherwise, retained her fun-loving demeanour.¹⁵⁷ The Gibson Girl was a fantasy of (willingly) submissive, childlike womanhood that achieved a wide and influential following among both men and women – Gibson's illustrations appeared in magazines, fashion plates and diaries, and on calendars, crockery, and stationery.¹⁵⁸



Figure 3: Illustrations by Charles Dana Gibson, 'Not Worrying about Her Rights', 'The Wall Flower,' and 'H.R.H.', all 1909¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Gordon, 'The Gibson Girl Goes to College,' 211.

¹⁵⁷ Gordon, 'The Gibson Girl Goes to College,' 215.

¹⁵⁸ Gibson-Girls, www.gibson-girls.com. Accessed 1 September 2005.

¹⁵⁹ All are from Gibson-Girls, www.gibson-girls.com. Accessed 1 September 2005.

It would be an exaggeration to state that the girls at Huguenot identified wholeheartedly with this ‘College Girl’ understanding of female behaviour, but it is striking how many of the leisure activities of the students mentioned in the annuals coincided exactly with those ascribed to College Girls: they have fudge parties, cocoa parties, and tea parties and, consequently, possess tea sets and (very basic) cooking utensils; they indulge in schoolgirlish pranks and ‘larks’; they have picnics, shopping expeditions, and prefer basketball to study – and the gossip columns are packed with references to boys and tart remarks about classroom antics.¹⁶⁰ Of course, much of this conduct can be dismissed as being typical of a group of young women confined to a strict timetable and living in close proximity to one another over a relatively long period of time. However, in a large proportion of these articles, the students refer to themselves as ‘College Girls’ and seem to embrace a kind of ‘college culture’ that is more American than it is British.¹⁶¹ It is by no means unlikely that the Huguenot students would have come into contact with representations of College Girls: the popularity of the Gibson Girl was such that it is more than likely that she would have appeared in some form in South African periodicals, and the young, American teachers at the College would have been familiar with the College Girl, even if they did not approve of the idea; as E.M. Clark remarks, ‘in the States...girls go to college for the sake of the social life’.¹⁶² This is not an ‘official’ discourse in the annuals in that it is expressed in pieces written by members of staff or the editorial board of the magazine, but it appears in the poetry, humorous articles, gossip pages, and student doggerel that provide light relief between the arguments about women’s education or reports on achievements in the missionary field.

For example, in ‘The Day’s Journal’ – a satire on similar articles in *The Spectator* – the author provides a brief description of a typical Wednesday, during which she ‘tried a new hair effect’ and noted that she ‘look[s] best in mauve’, ‘[d]onned [a] frill’ and ‘[g]azed at the effect in the glass’, stole sweets from the pantry, met with ‘Mr X’ who ‘made an appearance with violets’ and then ‘[t]ried to solve the problem of the

¹⁶⁰ Gordon, ‘The Gibson Girl Goes to College,’ 215-219.

¹⁶¹ A ‘College Girl’ culture does not appear to have been as much a feature of British women’s colleges as it was in America. Considering that the Gibson Girl was an American construct, and it was less unusual for American women to attend tertiary institutions than it was for British girls, this does not seem surprising. Indeed, Horowitz implies that the notion of a distinct ‘college’ or ‘campus’ culture is a largely an American phenomenon. Clark, 20; Delamont, 156-160; Edwards, 94-97; Horowitz, 4-11.

¹⁶² Clark, 20.

Intermediate examination in the bunch of violets' during evening study.¹⁶³ Attending classes seems, in this article, merely an excuse to have fun during free time. A similar sentiment is present in 'A Monologue' which describes a basketball enthusiast trying – and failing – to learn her Latin grammar while simultaneously watching a match from her bedroom window. She concludes study time by carelessly '[p]itch[ing] [her] book on to a shelf and [hurrying] downstairs' to lay her table for dinner.¹⁶⁴ In 'How to Prepare for Study Hour' the author suggests ways of putting off studying as long as possible (losing one's matches to light the lamp, having drinks of water at the tap, filling one's fountain pen).¹⁶⁵ This attitude towards academic work is repeated in 'Class-Room Echoes' where a girl who has not studied the South Sea Bubble as required for her history class is persuaded by her friends that 'it was a big balloon into which people coming from the south poured South Sea water' to hilarious consequences.¹⁶⁶ Accounts of pranks of this kind do not recur frequently in the annuals, but there is some attempt to suggest the eccentricity of the students at the College: a piece on the institution's pets and animals mentions the Seminary tortoise called Ruskin, and describes the 'special funeral' of a girl's silk worm 'killed by accident' that, 'in spite of the exceeding heat of a summer day', was 'buried in state at the bottom of the garden' following a long and solemn procession through the Huguenot grounds.¹⁶⁷ An account of a physics lecture on electricity presented by one of the science BA students to raise funds for a new laboratory was 'enhanced by Miss Marais letting forth a groan whenever she accidentally gave herself an electric shock.'¹⁶⁸ A series of recipes for snacks prepared by the girls serves to illustrate their comically dogged attempts to cater for themselves regardless of the lack of proper ingredients or utensils; for 'balcony fudge' there is a tacit acknowledgement that the vital components will be missing ('[t]ake all the sugar left over from last time' and '[a]dd what milk the housekeeper can spare'), that they do not have the correct equipment (the fudge will only be able to '[b]oil if there is enough oil in the lamp' and old examination books are 'bent into box forms' to hold the scalding hot liquid), that the

¹⁶³ 'The Day's Journal,' *The Huguenot*, no. 15 (1909): 13.

¹⁶⁴ V. Bottomley, 'A Monologue,' *The Huguenot*, no. 15 (1909): 47.

¹⁶⁵ 'How to Prepare for Study Hour,' *The Huguenot*, no. 15 (1909): 11.

¹⁶⁶ Muriel Farr, 'Class-Room Echoes,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901): 15.

¹⁶⁷ Edith Brodie, 'Seminary Pets and Animals,' *The Huguenot*, no. 14 (1908): 51.

¹⁶⁸ J. Ayliff, 'The Physics Lecture,' *The Huguenot*, no. 14 (1908): 26.

cook may be lacking in experience (the author remarks that it is better to shell the nuts before adding the nuts to the mixture), and that the girls' timetable does not allow them enough free time to cook successfully ('If the warning bells rings before it is cooked enough, what is left...may be called cocoa the next morning').¹⁶⁹

Indeed, small parties of all kinds were popular in the evenings: as in America, the girls held 'fudge parties' or simply offered cocoa and tea to one another.¹⁷⁰ One girl who was particularly able at hosting tea parties was 'presented with a beautiful china tea set, by her kind friends, one of whom confessed that she hoped to receive a standing invitation to afternoon tea.'¹⁷¹ Of course, who was, and who was not, invited to these little gatherings was a matter of some interest – it is, for example, commented upon that the BA junior class made a point of not inviting male students to tea, even though the 'only three representatives...of the sterner sex generally stroll[ed] about the *campus* during this time...look[ing] longingly' up to the room where the girls met.¹⁷² Despite the fact that the gossip columns are frequently incomprehensible as a result of the students' slang or the opacity of their allusions, what emerges from them is an idea of the intricacy of the social life in the College. In one such piece, entitled 'As Others See Us' the author remarks, spitefully, '[t]hat the members of the Literary B.A. Class should restrain their too-evident love of outward adornment.'¹⁷³ This is by no means the only personal comment; one student is advised to 'endeavour to control her nervousness'¹⁷⁴ while another is criticised for submitting a poem on marriage because she 'did not [always] find everything as "merry as a marriage bell"'.¹⁷⁵ Other comments, such as 'Literary students should not have recourse to imaginary arguments in order to hide deficiency of knowledge',¹⁷⁶ and that 'some of the Intermediates can write fairly good compositions; it

¹⁶⁹ 'College Recipes,' *The Huguenot*, no. 12 (1906): 45.

¹⁷⁰ Presumably the fudge was a little more digestible than the substance described in 'College Recipes'. Mattie Muller and Maria Anderson, "'A Little Nonsense Now and Then,' *The Huguenot*, no. 12 (1906): 53; Retief, 34-35; Ethel Doidge, 'Informal Social Life,' in *Phases of Student Life*, edited by Ethel Doidge, *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 10 (1904): 21-22.

¹⁷¹ Retief, 34.

¹⁷² 'Tea Club,' *The Huguenot*, no. 11 (1905): 37.

¹⁷³ 'As Others See Us,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 5 (1899): 47.

¹⁷⁴ 'Odds and Ends,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 9 (1903): 33.

¹⁷⁵ H. le R., 15.

¹⁷⁶ 'Current Comment,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 35.

is a pity they did not contribute more to our annual this year',¹⁷⁷ not only reveal the tensions within the institution, but also the extent to which the girls were entirely absorbed by their life at the College.

There is little sense here of them preparing for a 'higher cause' or a successful professional career. They define themselves as College Girls and take pleasure in the experience itself, stressing their difference from their parents, families, and friends outside of Huguenot by describing their unconventional behaviour, providing glimpses into their apparently Byzantine social network, alluding to their slang,¹⁷⁸ and providing relatively detailed accounts of a lifestyle entirely unique to a student at a tertiary institution. This has the effect of celebrating the life of the student, and of validating it as an important phase in the life of a young woman. As a result, going to college is presented as an entirely 'normal' activity for a girl that does not require elaborate justification. (And, indeed, one poem suggests that it is a necessity for girls to gain an education, as the speaker's mother 'pack[s] [her] up' and 'send[s] her off to school' as a result of the worry that she will 'be[come] the family fool'.)¹⁷⁹ However, it also shows parents that their daughters behave like 'girls' at College – by involving themselves in student jokes, by dressing up and having boyfriends – and suggests the relative harmlessness of the well-educated woman. The students in these poems, monologues, and gossip columns come across as gently eccentric, impractical, clumsy, gossipy, and with their head in the clouds. Perhaps the best demonstration of this 'domestication' of the woman with a BA is in a poem by one of the (female) College students. It is worth quoting in full,

My College Girl

She is skilled in mathematics,
And knows more of hydrostatics
Than I learned in all my plodding years at school.
She performs experiments
With divers elements,
That would make her little brother's blood turn cool.

¹⁷⁷ 'Odds and Ends,' 33.

¹⁷⁸ In 'Oom Polo and Tante Griet' (which is, apparently, a conversation between a dog and a cat) the latter complains that '[o]nly yesterday my Katrina came home with a new English slang (sic), I know it not in Dutch, so it must be English.' Geard, 48.

¹⁷⁹ B.A., 1910, 'Away to Dear Old Huguenot,' *The Huguenot*, no. 16 (1910): 5.

She can Dutch and German speak,
 And she writes in ancient Greek,
 Getting all the various accents quite correct.
 Though she deals hard blows at Russians
 In historical discussions,
 Not a flaw in all her logic I detect.

She, although 'tis not her habit,
 Can dissect a good-sized rabbit,
 Giving you the name of each and every bone;
 And she knows each plant and tree
 On the land or in the sea,
 Slighting not meanwhile the all important stone.

Like a statue she can pose,
 And interpret learned prose
 In a way that makes my pulses wildly beat.
 She had studied poetry lyric,
 Epic also, and satiric,
 Till her diction and her style are quite complete.

More than all, the little sinner,
 She can cook as good a dinner
 As a hungry man would ever wish to spy.
 And I challenge the world over
 If two folks they can discover
 Quite so happy as my college girl and I.¹⁸⁰

This, clearly, expresses a great deal of admiration for the female student's ability to acquire what were, in effect, a kind of alternate set of 'accomplishments' while at College: her knowledge of botany, zoology, literature, history, rhetoric, languages, mathematics, chemistry and physics has the effect of not cooling her lover's advances, but of making his 'pulses wildly beat'. Her learning has not rendered her 'mannish' or in any way unattractive – instead, it has made her even more fascinating. However, this Renaissance woman is brought to earth in the final stanza, where the speaker makes the point that 'his' College Girl has not forgotten how to perform more traditionally 'feminine' tasks, such as cooking dinner for her husband and family. By referring to her as a 'little sinner' the speaker's girlfriend, and her achievements, are belittled, albeit in an attempt to suggest his affection for her. That this poem was written by a woman is

¹⁸⁰ A.W.K. 'My College Girl,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 2 (1896): 5. The author was either Alice Kayser, from Uitenhage, who was an Intermediate BA, or Annie Keet, of Humansdorp, in the senior matriculation class. 'Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,' 89. The same author submitted another poem, 'A Tennis Match' for the following year's annual, about two students at Huguenot whose equal love of, and ability at, sport causes them to fall in love on a tennis court. A.W.K. 'A Tennis Match,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 3 (1897): 5.

significant, and allows it to be interpreted in a number of ways: it could be an expression of how the girls at the College saw themselves (that, exceptionally proud of their abilities, they believed that a BA degree would enhance their attractiveness), or a rather wistful description of how these women wished men would respond to them: that they were not threatening, ‘unsexed’ creatures forever spoiled by their education, but, rather, intelligent, and also feminine, women who could balance both academic and domestic interests.

The College Girl does not have to master herself in the sense that she must learn self-discipline – and it is her lack of discipline that causes her to be so charming – but she does have to submit to a form of behaviour that demonstrates that her position at a tertiary institution does not cause her to assume an identity that in any way challenges commonly-held assumptions about the ‘correct’ mode of feminine behaviour after she graduates. In a sense, her period as a College Girl allows her the licence to indulge in relatively childish activities, to be irresponsible, and to become totally involved in the minutiae of her community. Although these South African College Girls are more academically-inclined than their American counterparts, they present an ‘acceptable face’ of women’s education to the readers of the annuals – many of whom may have been put off by notions of the ‘New Woman’ taking hold at Huguenot. It is not difficult to understand why the College Girl can be seen as a reaction to the fairly strident ideals embodied by the New Woman, but at Wellington, perhaps because the College Girl discourse is so muted or, even, as the result of marriage not being mentioned as the goal of the students, this College Girl is not quite as anti-feminist as in America: there remains an attempt to reconcile the intellectual with the domestic and, as a consequence of the pervasive self-ridicule in many of these articles, the ‘silliness’ of the Huguenot students is not presented as an ideal worth emulating, nor as a particularly desired mode of behaviour for these women after graduating.

Conclusion

It would be misleading to suggest that a single discourse of femininity emerges as dominant in the Huguenot annuals. Clearly, the hegemonic femininity to which the older generation of teachers at the Seminary and College subscribed served as the institution’s ‘official’ discourse: their belief that young women should be educated so that they could

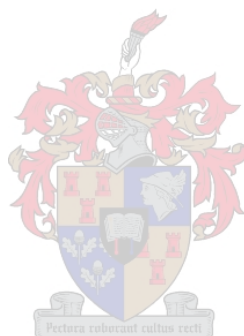
better serve their communities and fulfil their duty as Christians slotted neatly into a post-1902 understanding of womanhood as linked to the development of the South African nation. Indeed, it provided what was in all likelihood the most convincing explanation for why a girl's relatively theoretical education would not be wasted when she married and produced children. Key to this understanding of femininity, though, was an emphasis on women being able to monitor themselves to ensure that the needs and wants of others was always uppermost in their minds: their willing self-sacrifice is what validated the existence of, especially, unmarried, working women. Yet even though the 'professionalist' discourse of the younger generation of teachers – aided and abetted by the education department's drive to formalise and regularise its functioning – at Huguenot did not subscribe, to the same extent, to their forebears' evangelical Christianity, this sense of preparing girls for life after graduating is one of the values underpinning it. While it stressed that the lot of the professional teacher (who, as in the hegemonic discourse, had to remain unmarried in order to work) did not render her masculine or physically deficient, it also showed up the need for young women to acquire a mastery over their thinking, behaviour, and bodies so as to allow them to perform better as teachers. Even the few references to 'blue stockings' and the New Woman are positioned so ambivalently that it becomes difficult to distinguish a discourse that does not insist upon some form of feminine self-discipline and self-sacrifice as justification for women choosing to work, rather than marry.

It would appear, then, as if the relatively unconventional and frivolous activities of the 'imported' discourse of the College Girl would undermine this need for self-control; however, the College Girl's lack of discipline rendered her both charming and childlike, in this way diminishing whatever worry there may have been that educated women were wilful and uncontrollable. She did, though, need to master herself in that she had to be self-consciously feminine and, although willing to participate in pranks and 'larks', fully conscious of when it was expected of her to conduct herself more decorously. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the College Girl discourse to the annuals is a validation of the life of the female student as an important period in itself, and as 'normal' as it is for her brothers – unlike the hegemonic and professionalist discourses which stressed that the young woman's stay at college was simply a means to an ends.

The co-existence of these three discourses in the Seminary and College's sixteen annuals between 1895 and 1910 shows up the turmoil within South African society, as it was forced to look at itself self-consciously in the midst of the social, political, and economic upheaval of the South African War and the long years of negotiation and tension leading up to the declaration of Union. As societies examine their construction – or become aware of the extent to which their values are being challenged – focus is shifted to arguments regarding the 'proper' behaviour of men and women (as the main components of the basis of society – the family). While the annuals do not shed light onto discourses surrounding masculinity, they do show up how women of different age groups and professions attempted to negotiate places for themselves within their world. For these women this need was probably felt particularly acutely, as they had, largely, chosen a way of life frequently considered to be that of outsiders to mainstream white, middle class society – hence the willingness with which they, overtly or tacitly, acknowledged that women should either be in the home or had a special connection to the realm of the domestic. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that their position as unmarried women, dedicated – nun-like – to their work allowed them a great deal of power and influence within their communities; in this way, many young women desiring to be teachers must have realised the benefits of not expounding the values of New Womanhood within earshot of the (male) leaders of middle class society. It is not, then, surprising that the three major discourses appear beside one another so harmoniously within the same publication – they share similar beliefs regarding mastery and self-discipline – and may even indicate something of the tolerance and peacefulness of life at the Seminary and College.

This, though, was not entirely true, as Abbie Ferguson's letters from 1899 demonstrate. Of course, considering the intended audience of the annuals, their editors would have wanted to depict the Huguenot institution as a family or, at least, a community on happy and equal terms with one another. What becomes clear in a reading of letters and memoirs from the Seminary's early years right up to, and especially during, the South African War, is a tension between notions of 'Englishness' and 'Afrikaansness' that became magnified as events around Huguenot showed up a developing Afrikaner consciousness in the closing years of the nineteenth century. It is this friction –

channelled through an analysis of the First Afrikaans Language Movement depiction of the Seminary, Huguenot's response to the South African War, and its positioning in relation to South Africanism – which reveals a more profound understanding of how English and Afrikaans girls constituted their identities at the institution.



CHAPTER THREE

‘You love not your daughters, you love not your land!’¹

Nationalism and Identity at Huguenot, 1874-1910

Introduction

The first forty years of the Huguenot Seminary and College’s existence took place in the context of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the move towards the institution of a unified South African state in the aftermath of the South African War (1899-1902). The period 1874 to 1910 witnessed the growth of an Afrikaner ethnic and political consciousness, the polarisation of the Dutch-Afrikaner and English-speaking communities during the South African War, and Alfred Milner and the Kindergarten’s attempts to foster a sense of white ‘South Africanism’ in anticipation of the declaration of Union in 1910. White identity, being closely linked to the nationalisms struggling for dominance within the country, was a contested and contentious issue as both Dutch-Afrikaners and English-speakers defined their ethnic identity in relation to their political allegiances.²

Thus it is by no means surprising that three forms of femininity vied for prominence in the Huguenot Seminary and College’s annuals between 1895 and 1910. As Anne McClintock has noted, ‘[a]ll nationalisms are gendered’, arguing that ‘[n]ationalism becomes...radically constitutive of people’s identities’ so much so that ‘[a]ll nations depend on powerful constructions of identity. Despite nationalisms’ ideological investment in the idea of popular *unity*, nations have historically amounted to the

¹ P. Rossouw, ‘A College Student’s Advice to Mothers,’ *The Huguenot*, no. 14 (1908): 13.

² The connection between identity and nationalism is a global phenomenon. See, for example, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 1-7, 39-52; Anthony D. Smith, ‘Introduction: The Formation of Nationalist Movements,’ in *Nationalist Movements*, edited by Anthony D. Smith (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1976), 1-30; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 17-49; Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-13; Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions,’ in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1983] 1984), 1-14.

sanctioned institutionalisation of gender *difference*.³ This differentiation becomes particularly significant during times of uncertainty and struggle,⁴ when women, who are seen as the mothers and nurturers of the nation, become responsible for ‘preserving and imparting traditions, those of the “national” language as well as of the “national” culture’.⁵ Much of the tension arising between 1874 and 1910 was the result of an increasing division among the Dutch-Afrikaner and English-speaking communities in the Cape, partly as a result of the South African War and then heightened by post-1902 South Africanism.⁶ This widening gulf between the two sections of the South African white population had emerged, in the Cape, before 1895. In the 1870s and 1880s the Dutch-Afrikaner population began to develop an ethnic consciousness – typified by the writings and activities of the *Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners* (GRA – the Fellowship of True Afrikaners) (or the First Afrikaans Language Movement) in Paarl during the mid-1870s.⁷ As Hermann Giliomee has pointed out, the growth of Afrikaner nationalism occurred in spite of the cultural, political, and economic dominance of English-speakers during the late-nineteenth century,⁸ defining itself, hence, against an ‘Englishness’ associated with British imperialism and British political and economic interests.

Although, as was argued in Chapter One, the founders and teachers of the Huguenot Seminary attempted to maintain the school as something of a religious community until the early 1880s, an analysis of the discourses of femininity appearing in the Huguenot annuals demonstrates that the institution was by no means immune to the

³ Anne McClintock, ‘Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,’ *Feminist Review*, no. 44 (Summer 1993): 61. Italics in the original. This conceptualisation of gender and nationalism complements Geller’s broader discussion of nationalism and ethnicity which stresses the need for the nation to demonstrate its ethnic homogeneity, ‘nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state...should not separate the power-holders from the rest.’ Geller, 1.

⁴ Angelika Schaser, ‘Women in a Nation of Men: The Politics of the League of German Women’s Associations (BDF) in Imperial Germany, 1894-1914,’ translated by Pamela Selwyn, in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), 249-250.

⁵ Silke Wenk, ‘Gendered Representations of the Nation’s Past and Future,’ translated by Tom Lampert, in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), 65.

⁶ Hermann Giliomee, ‘The Development of Afrikaner Ethnicity c. 1850-c. 1915,’ presented at the conference Economic Development and Racial Domination, University of the Western Cape, 8-10 October 1984: 42-50, 57-58; Hermann Giliomee, ‘The Beginnings of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1870-1915,’ *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 19 (1987): 136-140.

⁷ Giliomee, ‘The Beginnings of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1870-1915,’ 129-130.

⁸ Giliomee, ‘The Beginnings of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1870-1915,’ 123-124.

trends and debates circulating within the community around it. Indeed, if considered in terms of the development of Afrikaner nationalism, South Africanism, and the crystallisation of the notions of ‘Englishness’ and ‘Afrikaansness’ between 1899 and 1902, the extent to which Huguenot was connected to these shifts within white society is striking. The Seminary was founded a year before the establishment of the GRA, the body that is traditionally credited as having a decisive influence on the development of Afrikaner nationalism;⁹ during the South African War, a significant proportion of the English-speaking and Dutch-Afrikaans women who participated in the pro- and anti-war campaigns were Huguenot alumni; moreover, the Huguenot annuals began publishing articles in Dutch in 1905 – the year in which Milner left South Africa and when those promoting South Africanism chose to develop the concept’s ability to embrace both English- and Dutch-Afrikaans-speakers.¹⁰

Despite being a predominantly Dutch-Afrikaans institution – and founded, specifically, to educate Dutch-Afrikaner young women – the Seminary and College did attract a sizeable proportion of English-speaking pupils.¹¹ While the Huguenot annuals project an image of a school whose pupils lived in harmony with one another, the girls at the institution did respond to the growth of these nationalisms within South Africa between 1874 and 1910 – especially because that many of them were the daughters of men who were active in local and national politics. How did English and Dutch-Afrikaner girls relate to one another during the early years of the GRA? Were they able to remain on cordial terms between 1899 and 1902? Did they subscribe to Milner’s South Africanism?

⁹ Giliomee, ‘The Beginnings of Afrikaner Nationalism,’ 121; J.C. Kannemeyer, *Letterkunde en Beweging voor 1900: Oorsig en Bloemlesing* (Pretoria and Cape Town: Academica, 1975), 11.

¹⁰ Saul Dubow, ‘Imagining the New South Africa in the Era of Reconstruction,’ in *The Impact of the South African War*, edited by David Omissi and Andrew S. Thompson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 77; Saul Dubow, ‘Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of “South Africanism”, 1902-1910,’ *History Workshop Journal*, issue 43 (Spring 1997): 57-58.

¹¹ It is almost impossible to judge the ratio of Dutch-Afrikaans to English-speaking pupils at the Seminary and College, as the teachers tended not to distinguish between the two groups of girls in their letters, and the catalogues listing the names of the pupils do not include their home language. However, a comparison of surnames from the Seminary’s Catalogue for 1874 and 1875, would suggest that of the 109 pupils for the two years, around twenty-three may have been English-speaking. Catalogue of the First and Second Years of the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington, South Africa, 1874 & 1875 (Cape Town: Saul Solomon & Co., 1875), 5-9, Dutch Reformed Church Archive, Huguenot Seminary Collection (Hereafter DRCA, HSC), K-Div 621.

This chapter explores the ways in which these South African nationalisms impacted on the Seminary and College between 1870 and 1910 by paying particular attention to three key aspects of this period: the GRA's representation of the Seminary in its poetry and the school's response (or lack thereof) to an increased sense of Afrikaner consciousness in the Cape Colony in the 1870s and early 1880s; the Seminary and College's reaction to the South African War and the women's movements that arose as a result of the conflict; and the effect that South Africanism had on Huguenot after 1902. In doing so, this chapter seeks to elucidate the relationship between nationalism and the construction of gender at the school. Thus far, it has been made clear that the school's understanding of femininity was determined by issues relating to Protestant, evangelical Christianity, as well as to late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century bourgeois society's understanding of the position of the educated woman. Yet to what extent was Huguenot's conceptualisation of femininity influenced by notions of middle class 'Englishness' or 'Afrikaansness' (or 'Dutchness')? Did the country's fraught political situation assist in influencing the institution's vision of the ideal woman?

This chapter proposes that the Huguenot Seminary and College's construction of femininity was shaped by the nationalisms developing and operating around it. The roles into which nationalisms have slotted men and women since the late eighteenth century are fairly familiar: while men are conceptualised as the active, vigorous defenders and exponents of nationalism (and whose gendered identities are normalised to the extent that the state is understood as a kind of fraternity),¹² women are kept within the realm of the domestic, caring for and nurturing the next generation of leaders.¹³ This understanding of the relationship between nationalism and the construction of gender is, clearly, something of an oversimplification: nationalisms vary to a large degree according to the circumstances in which they arise and, as a result, their implications for gendered identities are not necessarily identical for every nation and state.¹⁴ McClintock, for

¹² McClintock, 'Family Feuds,' 62, 66; Wenk, 64, 66.

¹³ For a broader discussion of gender, women, and nationalism, see Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, *Theorising Nationalism* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 108-127.

¹⁴ Ida Blom, 'Gender and Nation in International Comparison,' in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), 5-8.

example, has demonstrated that Afrikaner and African nationalisms in South Africa have had very different consequences for women (and, even though she does not discuss them, for men).¹⁵ Nevertheless, it does provide a useful framework with which to analyse the complex connections between nationalism and both femininity and masculinity. Indeed, recent research on the production of working class and bourgeois Afrikaner femininity during the late-nineteenth and early- to mid-twentieth centuries has focussed on the ways in which Afrikaans women responded to the tensions within Afrikaner nationalism as it developed before, during, and after the South African War.¹⁶ Writing on the production of white, English identities in South Africa has tended to emphasise how notions of British, imperialist femininity were adapted to suit South African conditions.¹⁷ What both these avenues of enquiry reveal is the extent to which attention to the creation of gendered identities is heightened during times of political crisis or change. Deborah Gaitskell, for example, has demonstrated that the increase in support for women's suffrage in South Africa among, predominantly, middle class English-speaking women, was closely connected to the influence of the 'Kindergarten era'.¹⁸ She also shows how bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaans women's interest in philanthropic organisations and white politics stemmed from the incipient Afrikaner nationalism arising between 1902 and

¹⁵ McClintock, 'Family Feuds,' 67-76.

¹⁶ See, for example, Lou-Marie Kruger, 'Gender, Community and Identity: Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the *Volkmoeder* Discourse of *Die Boerevrou* (1913-1931)' (M.A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991); Marijke du Toit, 'The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: *Volkmoeders* and the ACVV, 1904-1929,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (March 2003): 155-160; Louise Vincent, 'The Power Behind the Scenes: The Afrikaner Nationalist Women's Parties, 1915 to 1931,' *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 40 (May 1999): 51-54. Vincent has written extensively about Afrikaans women's involvement in nationalist politics. See 'A Cake of Soap: The *Volkmoeder* Ideology and Afrikaner Women's Campaign for the Vote,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1 (1999): 1-17, and 'Bread and Honour: White Working Class Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930s,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1 (March 2000): 61-78.

¹⁷ Simon Dagut, 'Gender, Colonial "Women's History" and the Construction of Social Distance: Middle Class Women in Later Nineteenth-Century South Africa,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 2003): 556-562; Archie Dick, 'Building a Nation of Readers? Women's Organisations and the Politics of Reading in South Africa, 1900-1914,' *Historia*, vol. 49, no. 2 (November 2004): 23-24. As Jane Mackay and Pat Thane have written about middle class Englishwomen during the late-nineteenth century, their 'role...was to contribute to the preservation, perpetuation and enhancement of the race, both physically and spiritually'. Jane Mackay and Pat Thane, 'The Englishwoman,' in *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, edited by Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (London, New York, and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 192.

¹⁸ Deborah Gaitskell, 'The Imperial Tie: Obstacle or Asset for South Africa's Women Suffragists before 1930?' *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 47 (November 2002): 8; Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen, and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century: An Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 30-32.

1914. In this way, white identities, comprising notions of ‘Englishness’, ‘Afrikaansness’, and ‘South Africanness’,¹⁹ and femininity became closely linked with one another. Hegemonic femininities, in particular, became emblematic of nationalist causes and constructed themselves around the need to protect and perpetuate this nationalism in their roles as wives and mothers, as Elsabe Brink has argued in her exploration of the *Volksmoeder* (mother of the nation).²⁰

While Huguenot did promote a hegemonic femininity that complemented nationalist understandings of the role of the woman – that education befitted young women to become better mothers and teachers of the nation’s next generation of leaders – other forms of femininity (of the educated woman as professional and of the College Girl) were present in its annuals and in the letters of the teachers that did not bear as strong a connection to nationalist constructions of the ideal woman. Yet considered in relation to the institution’s connection to the middle class Dutch-Afrikaner and, to a lesser extent, English-speaking elite of the Cape, Huguenot’s situation gains a great deal of significance: if schools can be understood as enacting and confirming the concerns of the communities which they serve,²¹ the Seminary and College’s responses to the nationalisms within South Africa show up the extent to which they endorsed or rejected

¹⁹ Much has been written about the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the construction of Afrikaner identity. Landmarks in the field would include F.A. van Jaarsveld, *The Awakening of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1868-1881* (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1961), T. Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1975), Heribert Adam and Hermann Giliomee, *The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), Irving Hexam, *The Irony of Apartheid: The Struggle for National Independence of Afrikaner Nationalism against British Imperialism* (New York: Edward Mellen Press, 1981), Dan O’Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1834-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), André du Toit and Hermann Giliomee, *Afrikaner Political Thought: Analysis and Documents*, vol. 1, 1780-1850 (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983), Dan O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948-1994* (Randburg and Athens: Ravan Press and Ohio University Press, 1996), and Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003). Less has appeared about Englishness in this country, perhaps because of the difficulty in defining a particular, homogenous white, English-speaking South African community. See Donald Denoon, *A Grand Illusion: The Failure of Imperial Policy in the Transvaal Colony During the Period of Reconstruction 1900-1905* (London: Longman, 1973), 5; Justin Sennett and Don Foster, ‘Social Identity: Comparing White, English-Speaking South African Students in 1975 and 1994,’ *South African Journal of Psychology*, vol. 26, no. 4 (1996): 203-211; and Eliree Bornman, ‘Self-Image and Ethnic Identification in South Africa,’ *The Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 139, no. 4 (1999): 411-425; Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880-1920* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2001), 3-4.

²⁰ Elsabe Brink, ‘Man-Made Women: Gender, Class and the Ideology of the *Volksmoeder*,’ in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, edited by Cheryl Walker (Cape Town and London: David Philip and James Currey, 1990), 273-292.

²¹ Morrell, 48-49.

the shifting ideological positioning of Dutch-Afrikaner bourgeois society within the Colony between 1874 and 1910. In this way, it becomes possible to understand the ways in which women – who are so frequently figured as the victims of nationalism – negotiated with the nationalisms circulating within this country during this period.

The First Afrikaans Language Movement and the Huguenot Seminary, 1875-1881

The society into which Abbie Ferguson and Anna Bliss were so warmly welcomed upon their arrival in the Cape Colony at the end of 1873 was firmly bourgeois. Of the Dutch-Afrikaners whom Ferguson and Bliss visited during their first few months in the Colony, most were relatives or friends of Andrew Murray, or members of his congregation, and formed part of the Cape's middle class and gentry. This group had risen to prominence during the 1840s – as the Colony's economy expanded due to the growth in agricultural production and the concomitant increase in demand for lawyers, doctors, teachers, accountants, land-surveyors, and shopkeepers provided employment for this well-educated segment of the population – and received a further boost with the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in the late 1860s.²² The mineral revolution propelled the Colony into an economic boom out of which the Dutch-Afrikaner gentry did exceptionally well: they filled the clerical and official posts made available by the Cape's greater prominence within the Empire, and established themselves as the elite professional class within the Colony's urban areas. This, along with the granting of Representative of Government in 1872, which permitted the Colony's population a greater role in its governance,²³ had the effect of entrenching their political and economic dominance throughout the Cape.²⁴

What distinguished bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaners, besides for their financial solvency and social upward-mobility, was their willingness to become integrated within British colonial society.²⁵ Providing their children with English-medium education (a prerequisite for careers in law, the civil service, and commerce), and coming into closer contact with an English urban culture 'which regarded [itself] as a fragment of the

²² Mordechai Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners: The Imperial Colossus and the Colonial Parish Pump* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 1996), 26-27; Robert Ross, *Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1993), 31-33, 38-40.

²³ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 213-214.

²⁴ Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 48.

²⁵ Tamarkin, 27.

imperial British nation',²⁶ middle class Dutch-Afrikaners became increasingly Anglicised. One of the main agents of this transformation was the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) which, although a largely Dutch entity, was instrumental in propagating the mid-Victorian values of its most influential ministers – like the Murrays – throughout the Colony. The DRC's concern for the conduct of Cape society connected very closely to the set of codes and practices which defined what this class determined to be 'respectable' behaviour and living.²⁷ As the DRC promoted the education of the Colony's children, so the Dutch-Afrikaner (indeed, Cape) gentry believed in the importance of education for the moulding of 'character' and for the socialisation of children into the roles which they would be required to perform as adults.²⁸ A key aspect of this preparation was ensuring that young people, and boys, in particular, were fluent in English – and Dutch. The form of the language which they dubbed 'High Dutch' was considered appropriate for their social standing, while the more creolised Dutch – now known as Afrikaans – was associated with the petit-bourgeois, working class, and *bywoner* (squatter) Dutch-Afrikaners of the Cape, who were reviled as uncouth, dirty, and backward. In this way, language became a marker of the Dutch-Afrikaner gentry's status, and was closely connected to their notions of 'respectable' conduct.²⁹

Yet, in their letters to their parents, family, and friends, Ferguson, Bliss and the other American teachers not portray these Dutch-Afrikaners as Europeans living in Africa, as many of the Anglicised Dutch-Afrikaners saw themselves,³⁰ but as 'Africanised' Europeans: they depict their hosts and the community in which they worked as a unique, and largely homogenous, group of people whose lifestyle has been shaped by their circumstances in the Cape Colony, writing that 'coming from Mt. Holyoke & the people of New England, [we] find that many allowances must be made for

²⁶ Tamarkin, 30.

²⁷ Tamarkin, 30-32.

²⁸ Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 88.

²⁹ Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony*, 57-58; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 216; Isabel Hofmeyr, 'Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902-1924,' in *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, edited by Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London and New York: Longman, 1987), 97.

³⁰ Helen Bradford, 'Regendering Afrikanerdom: The 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War,' in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), 208-209.

differences of customs and habits'.³¹ They report, thus, with some surprise (being mainly teetotalers) that their Dutch-Afrikaans hosts – adults and children – took wine with every meal,³² that the standards of housekeeping in South Africa were not up to scratch, despite the superfluity of cheap servants,³³ that people were always late,³⁴ and found the women's dress comical: their black dresses and white straw bonnets were unlike anything the Americans had seen before.³⁵ Nevertheless, they did emphasise that these Dutch-Afrikaners were different to those 'in the interior [where] one would of course find a different class of people'³⁶ and it is clear that, generally, the American women's sense of propriety and gentility coincided with that of their hosts. Bliss wrote to her mother, 'thus far I have seen quite as well regulated families & as much attention paid to "propriety" as in America.' For her, what signalled this gentility was the presence of servants in a well-run household: 'Wherever I have taken a meal there has been a servant in the room to wait on table or one has come at the tap of the bell, & all done so quietly & orderly.'³⁷ The women at the Seminary aligned themselves with the Dutch-Afrikaner middle classes, secure in the knowledge that they had 'the sympathy & support of the ministers, & better educated part of the community.'³⁸

For Murray, Ferguson, and Bliss, the education of women did not contradict a gentility which was upheld, partly, by a carefully-maintained domestic space, 'Here the great want seems to be, not the comforts & proprieties of life...but a good thorough education, which the daughters of the middle class have had no opportunity to obtain.'³⁹ There was especially in the school's first decade – when it was possible to run it rather like an oversized family of girls – a concerted effort to foster a sense of domestic 'homeliness' within the institution; some of the longest passages in Ferguson, Bliss, and Wells's letters are devoted to descriptions of housework, as well as their attempts to attempt to decorate their rooms so as to feel 'homely' – so much so that the teachers

³¹ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 16 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

³² Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 16 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

³³ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 25 January 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

³⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 25 January 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

³⁵ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 October 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

³⁶ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 30 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

³⁷ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 30 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

³⁸ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 28 June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

³⁹ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 30 November 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

hung pictures of their families in the Seminary's drawing room.⁴⁰ They also made a point of encouraging 'ladylike' behaviour in their pupils, even though the girls were not required to take classes in elocution or dancing as they were in other schools (sewing was taught, but because it was part of the school curriculum and was felt to be a skill which these young women could ill-afford not to possess).⁴¹ Ferguson wrote that they 'ha[d] young ladies so refined and lady like in [their] school as [one] would find anywhere.'⁴² It is clear that they equated 'ladylike' conduct, and good taste, with having a strong moral 'character'. One of the reasons why the teachers agreed to take in a Mrs Loos – a Dutch woman who had been left destitute after the death of her husband – was as a result of her being 'a handsome, lady-like appearing woman, [and] very nicely dressed'.⁴³ The teachers expressed their approval of one of their former pupils, Annie van der Merwe, who had started a farm school in Worcester, by remarking that she 'is a sweet Christian girl, refined and delicate in her tastes'.⁴⁴ Indeed, they measured their success not only in terms of the intellectual progress of the Seminary's pupils, but also in relation their conduct. Bliss described one such pupil, 'a careless, rough, country girl, with a large warm heart.' She writes that she 'never saw anyone improve as fast as she has, not only in scholarship but in manners. The intercourse with the other girls, who were better educated & more refined, & especially the love of Christ in her heart, has given her gentle ways, & a quiet dignity'.⁴⁵

It is significant that Bliss adds that this girl came from Middleburg, a town in the interior of the Colony, thus alluding to 'one of the sharpest divisions in the mental mapping of South Africa, that between the town and the country.'⁴⁶ Part of the purpose of the Seminary's education was to inculcate in the girls a gentility which was associated with urban bourgeois living. As a result, it was imperative for the girls to be able to speak

⁴⁰ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 17 July, 11 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁴¹ Pamela Ryan, "'College Girls Don't Faint': The Legacy of Elsewhere,' *JLS/TLW*, vol. 20, nos. 1-2 (June 2004): 31; Elizabeth Cummings to family, Wellington, 26 February 1878, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605; Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 16 February 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁴² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 5 August 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁴³ Mrs Loos, who had in her care a teenage daughter and 'a little deformed boy of eleven', befriended Miss Spijker, the Seminary's Dutch teacher, after having arrived in Wellington with 'only £1 in her pocket'. She was put in charge of the school's washing in exchange for room and board in one of the institution's cottages. Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 28 September 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁴⁴ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 3 October 1885, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁴⁵ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 28 June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁴⁶ Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony*, 88.

English and Dutch ‘correctly’ – Afrikaans, in other words, being associated with ‘country’ conduct that was considered to be neither respectable, nor, indeed, moral.⁴⁷ Out of this desire to preserve class boundaries and to ensure the girls’ gentility, the teachers insisted that, although the Seminary was English-medium,⁴⁸ at least one day a week (usually Tuesdays, and sometimes Fridays as well) the whole institution, with the exception of the Americans,⁴⁹ would speak Dutch.⁵⁰ Ferguson explained that her pupils ‘speak Dutch so badly that it makes them more careless in English and it is hard to get the verbs and prepositions right.’⁵¹ The low standard of the girls’ Dutch was made particularly clear to the teachers in the Seminary’s first examination during June 1874, ‘They have all done well in everything but Dutch, and that I think is the fault of the teacher. She is not strong in the Grammar herself, and has not known how to interest the

⁴⁷ Something that struck the American teachers most forcibly when they arrived in the Colony was the degree of bilingualism of the families of the more educated members of the gentry. This was particularly true for the Murrays and their extended family – the Murray, Neethling, and Hofmeyr children were equally adept in English and Dutch. As Robert Ross has commented, this bilingualism is typical of many colonial elites. Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 18 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605; Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony*, 58.

⁴⁸ In 1865, English was declared the medium of education in all state schools, although in 1896 it was recommended that Dutch be made available as an optional medium of instruction. As a result of the Act of Union in 1910, which placed English and Dutch on an equal footing, a Select Committee on Public Education was established to investigate language teaching in schools and, consequently, the Transvaal (in 1911), Orange Free State, and Cape (both in 1912) made the medium of instruction up to and including Standard IV the child’s mother tongue, after which all teaching would be done in English. A.L. Behr and R.G. Macmillan, *Education in South Africa*, second edition (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1971), 58-60; Ernst G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa (1652-1922): A Critical Survey of the Development of Educational Administration in the Cape, Natal, Transvaal and the Orange Free State* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Juta, 1925), 414-417. The vast majority of schools in the Cape were English-medium. One important exception was the private Paarl Gymnasium, established, at his own expense, by the conservative DRC minister, G.W.A. van der Lingen, in 1858, to provide an exclusively Christian and Dutch education to Paarl’s young men. The school ‘was a harbinger of what would later be called Christian-National education.’ Jean du Plessis, ‘Colonial Progress and Countryside Conservatism: An Essay on the Legacy of Van der Lingen of Paarl, 1831-1875’ (MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1988), 168-178, 198-207; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 205-206.

⁴⁹ Although they did have classes sporadically, the teachers were simply too busy to learn Dutch. Ferguson, though, was fluent in German and she found that this allowed her to understand Murray’s sermons. The younger teachers – whose workload was lighter than Ferguson and Bliss’s because they were burdened with less authority – made more of an effort to learn Dutch, one of whom, Anna Bumstead, chose to sit at a table seating only Dutch girls during dinner so as to improve her conversational skills in the language. Elizabeth Cummings to family, Wellington, 26 February 1878, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 23 November 1873, 28 January, 26 May, 24 June 1874, 11 February, 5 October 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615; Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 28 June 1874, 31 October 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606; Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 7 and 18 December 1874, 14 August 1875, 19 February 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁵⁰ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 14 August 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁵¹ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 26 May 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

girls.’⁵² The teacher – a Mrs de Kock who had worked at the village school before the arrival of the American teachers – was a local woman who, thus, spoke what was generally considered to be ‘proper’ Dutch, and not the ‘High Dutch’ of the Netherlands which pupils in the Colony were expected to have learned for their examinations.⁵³ There is no sense here that the girls were being taught their mother tongue, but, rather, that the Colonial form of Dutch that they spoke needed to be corrected. As Annie Wells wrote to her parents, the ‘young ladies, and indeed the people generally, speak very ungrammatical Dutch, and the special object of these [Dutch] classes is to help the young ladies in this respect.’⁵⁴ A teacher from the Netherlands was hired specifically to teach Dutch – Henriette Spijker from Amsterdam began work at the Seminary in January 1875, and was eventually succeeded by her sister, Adriana, in 1877 when she returned home due to ill health.⁵⁵

That the teachers were aware of the Anglicisation of the Dutch-Afrikaners is apparent, Ferguson explained that ‘Quite a number of the older people know enough English to understand what I say, but not enough to speak. All the young people speak English, and it seems as if in a generation or two the Dutch would pass away’ because of ‘the introduction of English into the schools.’⁵⁶ Yet they were not in favour of anglicising the girls. Wells noted that ‘if they [the girls] were to learn English exclusively, it would seem almost to separate them from their fathers and mothers and friends who speak only Dutch.’⁵⁷ The teachers took the criticism that ‘there [was not] enough attention paid to Dutch’ at the Seminary seriously, and ‘concluded [that the accusation] ha[d] some foundation from the way in which the scholars met their reviews [examinations] in Dutch, they found them so much harder than the English, but in most boarding schools it

⁵² Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 24 June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁵³ Mrs de Kock was widowed, and lost both her children, in the early 1870s. The Murray family took her in, employing her as a governess and encouraging her to assist Margaret McGill at the village school. In 1877, she married a Rev. Theron and moved to Bloemfontein. Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington, Cape of Good Hope, from January, 1874, to January, 1884 (Cape Town: W.A. Richards & Sons, 1884), 5, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Umzinto, Natal, 13 January 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁵⁴ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 7 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁵⁵ Memorandum Catalogue of the Pupils of the Huguenot Seminary, 5-6, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621; Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Wellington, 16 January 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁵⁶ Abbie Ferguson to Maggie Allen, Franschoek, 5 October 1875, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 615.

⁵⁷ Annie M. Wells to Mr and Mrs Wells, Wellington, 7 December 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

[Dutch] is not taught at all.’⁵⁸ Indeed, the Seminary’s catalogue for its first year decreed that, despite English being the school’s medium of instruction, ‘Dutch speaking pupils will be required to become familiar with the construction of this language, and it is earnestly recommended that all should study it, as it is of great importance in the Colony, both as a means of communication and usefulness.’⁵⁹ This policy was a feature of the Huguenot institution up to 1910.⁶⁰ Thus, for the Seminary, both English and Dutch were markers of respectability and the femininity promoted by the genteel Dutch-Afrikaans middle class. Their willingness to encourage the girls to speak the two languages ‘correctly’ shows up their desire to ensure the girls’ adherence to middle class values and mores.

However, this was not the only criticism levelled at the Seminary. Bliss told her mother, ‘Do not think that the school does not find enemies as well as warm friends. Some did not like the plan from the beginning, [and] thought teachers should have been sent from Holland instead of America.’ She adds, though, that the ‘only real charges we have heard brought against it [the Seminary] are just that we want to make Roman Catholics of the girls!’⁶¹ Bliss’s amusement is so great because, ironically, she, Ferguson, and Murray bore the same suspicion of Catholics, so much so that the ‘decisive motive’ for agreeing to purchase the Paarl Seminary was ‘[t]he fear lest the school should pass into the hands of Roman Catholics.’⁶² During Murray’s address to the people of Paarl at the church service held to celebrate the opening of the Paarl branch of the Huguenot Seminary in 1890, he ‘began by saying that his talk would only be an answer to some questions which had been asked him as to the starting of the school’ since – even though he had eventually offered to sell his school to Huguenot – Prof. de Villiers, the

⁵⁸ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 28 June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁵⁹ Catalogue of the First and Second Years of the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington, South Africa, 1874 & 1875 (Cape Town: Saul Solomon & Co., 1875), 14, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

⁶⁰ H.W. van Niekerk, ‘Huguenote-Kollege: Die Eerste Monument vir die Franse Hugenote,’ *Opvoeding en Kultuur* (March 1989): 22-23. It is worth noting that the present-day remnants of the Huguenot Seminary and College – the Boland College and the Huguenot High School – are Afrikaans-medium.

⁶¹ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 28 June 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

⁶² Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 25 February 1890, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605. De Villiers had originally approached the council of the DRC congregation in Paarl North in 1887 to buy the school from him for £3000, but, two years later, the council decided against the offer because of the exorbitance of the price. Murray and the trustees of the Huguenot Seminary bought the Paarl Ladies’ Seminary at a considerably reduced sum in 1889. *La Rochelle, Paarl 1860-1960* (Paarl: 1960), 7-9. For a brief discussion of the Colony’s anti-Catholicism, see Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony*, 105-106; Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 191.

principal of the Paarl Seminary for seventeen years, ‘ha[d] always been bitterly opposed, as ha[d] most of the Paarl people, to Wellington or [the] Huguenot Sem. or anything reflecting upon their own literary or spiritual condition.’⁶³ It is, then, particularly telling that the first gossip that Bliss heard about the school emanated from Paarl, ‘One of my section came to me looking very much amused & said, “Have you heard the story from the Paarl (sic) about me?” I answered “no”. Well, she said the report was that I had sent home a box of her clothing because the colours were too bright!’⁶⁴ Perhaps the greatest cause of the Paarl community’s opposition to the Seminary was the town’s history of producing individuals, such as G.W.A. van der Lingen, Arnoldus Pannevis and C.P. Hoogenhout, who were either opposed to British rule or in favour of promoting the rights of Dutch and Afrikaans-speakers,⁶⁵ as well as its close connection to the First Afrikaans Language Movement, its and the GRA – the first organisation dedicated to fostering a sense of Afrikaners being a distinct, separate community.⁶⁶

The same forces that had been so advantageous to the Dutch-Afrikaner gentry who, largely, remained loyal to British rule, were also responsible for encouraging the development of an Afrikaner ethnic consciousness.⁶⁷ Whereas before 1870, the Dutch-Afrikaans population had remained relatively politically inactive, the rise in government revenues after the discovery of diamonds and the advent of Responsible Government made involvement in Cape politics all the more attractive.⁶⁸ Anti-British sentiment grew as the Cape’s prime minister, Gordon Sprigg (appointed in 1878), formed a cabinet

⁶³ Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 25 February 1890, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

⁶⁴ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 3 March 1874, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606. In Afrikaans, Paarl is referred to as ‘*die Paarl*’ or ‘*die Pêrel*’ meaning ‘the pearl’, referring to the sight of Paarl rock glazed with water after rain, which is said to resemble a giant pearl set in the mountain.

⁶⁵ Both Arnoldus Pannevis and C.P. Hoogenhout were school teachers in the Paarl area. Pannevis, who worked as a missionary as well, saw that the Colony’s coloured population could not understand Bibles written in either English or Dutch, and wrote to the *Zuid-Afrikaan* in 1872, asking that, for their sake, the Bible be translated into Afrikaans (it was, eventually, in 1933, but for entirely different reasons). Hoogenhout made the same plea in 1873, but asked that the Bible appear in Afrikaans for the benefit of the Cape’s poor whites, who understood as little Dutch and English as their coloured counterparts. J.C. Kannemeyer, *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse Literatuur*, vol. I, second edition (Pretoria and Cape Town: Academica, 1984), 48-51; Giliomee, ‘The Development of Afrikaner Ethnicity c. 1850-c. 1915,’ 27-29; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 216-217.

⁶⁶ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 217.

⁶⁷ Kannemeyer, *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse Literatuur*, 41-44.

⁶⁸ Giliomee, ‘The Beginnings of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1870-1915,’ 129-130; Kannemeyer, *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse Literatuur*, 42-43; G.D. Scholtz, *Die Ontwikkeling van die Politieke Denke van die Afrikaner*, vol. III (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1974), 254-255.

totally excluding Dutch-Afrikaners, involved the Colony in several costly wars against the BaSotho and Xhosa, and imposed a tax on brandy producers. For Dutch-Afrikaans wine farmers, the majority of whom had been in serious financial difficulty since the mid-1860s, this final ruling was the last straw. Opposition to, what many believed to be, Sprigg's policy of supporting the interests of British imperialism at all costs, galvanised around a shared sense of 'Afrikaanderism'. The general Anglicisation of the Cape, as well as a sense of English-speakers' (and anglicised Dutch-Afrikaners') disdain for Afrikaans and Afrikaners, contributed to this increase of an Afrikaner political and ethnic consciousness.⁶⁹

The greater stratification of Dutch-Afrikaner society as a result of the economic boom created a large *bywoner* and poor white class. This ever-enlarging group of destitute small farmers (and many members of the ill-educated petit-bourgeoisie), was a cause of great anxiety for the Dutch-Afrikaner gentry, who worried that their existence was a sign of Dutch-Afrikaans cultural degeneration.⁷⁰ As the anonymous author of 'Our Agricultural Population' wrote in 1873,

I would ask the ministers of religion, the promoters of education, and the responsible rulers of this Colony, if they are satisfied with things as they are? – if they realise the fact of the children of Dutch-speaking, European parentage are growing up with less care bestowed upon them than upon the beasts of the field; – without the ability to read or write even their mother tongue; without any instruction in the knowledge of the God that made them; having at their command no language at all, but a limited vocabulary of semi-Dutch, semi-Hottentot words, and these only concerning the wants and doings of themselves and the animals which they tend?⁷¹

The 'no language at all' to which the writer refers was the 'Afrikaans' dialect spoken by the vast majority of poor and petit-bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaners, as well as the Cape's coloured population. It was this language that a group of Paarl-based ministers, teachers, and journalists attempted to promote with the formation of the GRA in 1875 under the leadership of the DRC minister, S.J. du Toit.⁷² It is their work – their newspaper *Di Afrikaanse Patriot* (founded in 1876), as well their two anthologies of poetry published in 1878 and 1906 (even though the GRA had petered out by about 1890) – which is

⁶⁹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 212-214; Giliomee, 'The Development of Afrikaner Ethnicity c. 1850-c. 1915,' 16, 23; Tamarkin 47-48; Kannermeier, *Geskiedenis van die Afrikaanse Literatuur*, 43-44; Scholtz, 251-252.

⁷⁰ Tamarkin, 27; Giliomee, 'The Development of Afrikaner Ethnicity c. 1850-c. 1915,' 24-27.

⁷¹ 'Our Agricultural Population,' *The Cape Monthly Magazine*, vol. 7 (March 1873): 130.

⁷² Hofmeyr, 96-98.

generally referred to as the First Afrikaans Language Movement.⁷³ The GRA, a manifestation of this growing sense of a distinct ‘Afrikaner’ identity, ‘embraced “Afrikaner” as a term of honour, designating an exclusive group.’ They ‘isolated three categories of Afrikaners: those with Afrikaans hearts, those with English hearts, and those with Dutch hearts. It was made clear that its mission was to build a group of Afrikaners with “Afrikaans hearts.”’⁷⁴ Those with English or Dutch ‘hearts’ came under a great deal of criticism, one of these being Murray, whose support for English in schools and willingness to allow English sermons went counter to the GRA’s ideals.⁷⁵ Indeed, the GRA’s major platform was education: in its manifesto, it expressed concern that the English-medium government schools – which frequently taught Dutch to Dutch-Afrikaans children in English – were causing Dutch-Afrikaans children to become anglicised, or to lose out on education altogether.⁷⁶

Clearly, the people who sent their daughters to the Seminary were probably not those to whom *Di Patriot* was intended: the ‘legion of dubiously certificated teachers, the clerics in poor parishes, faced with having their state stipends removed and small shopkeepers and traders.’⁷⁷ Low as the Seminary’s fees may have been, they were out of reach for this petit-bourgeois and working class readership of the GRA’s books, pamphlets, and newspapers. In other words, those who supported the founding of the school would have been the Dutch-Afrikaners whom the GRA identified as possessing Dutch or English ‘hearts’.⁷⁸ Much of the GRA’s objection to the Seminary was based on the *Pêrelspan*’s (Paarl team’s)⁷⁹ rejection of Anglicisation,⁸⁰ but it was also a critique of the ‘genteel’ femininity espoused by both the Dutch-Afrikaner middle classes as well as

⁷³ Hofmeyr’s ‘Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902-1924,’ remains the best source on the link between the Second Afrikaans Language Movement and the rise of Afrikaner nationalism after the South African War. She touches briefly on the First Language Movement.

⁷⁴ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 218.

⁷⁵ T.R.H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1966), 29-30; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 217.

⁷⁶ Interestingly, S.J. du Toit had been a pupil at the Dutch-medium Paarl Gymnasium, an institution founded on principles akin to an incipient Afrikaner nationalism. Delene Pienaar, “‘Stuur julle gedigte, kêrels!’ Die Invloed van ’n Patriargale Stelsel op die Ontwikkeling van Vroueskrywers in die Eerste en Tweede Afrikaanse Taalbeweging: ’n Historiese Oorsig’ (MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1997), 3-4.

⁷⁷ Hofmeyr, 98.

⁷⁸ Scholtz, 278-280; Giliomee, ‘The Development of Afrikaner Ethnicity c. 1850-c. 1915,’ 27.

⁷⁹ Hofmeyr, 98.

⁸⁰ Scholtz, 247-248.

the school. Delene Pienaar has argued that one of the reasons why women were excluded from the GRA – they were not even allowed to submit poetry for publication in the GRA’s pamphlets – was because of the founding of the Huguenot Seminary.⁸¹ Du Toit and his colleagues believed that this Anglophone education would have caused these young women to be the first to abandon their ‘Afrikaner values’ and could, thus, not be trusted to support and implement the GRA’s plans to galvanise an Afrikaner *volk*, united behind common ideals and goals. If anything, they were seen as being an undermining influence on the GRA’s work.⁸² It must be noted, though, that the GRA’s conception of femininity was by no means particular to it: Dutch-Afrikaner women were largely absent from the efforts to create and promote a sense of Afrikaner identity between 1870 and 1898.⁸³ When women were referred to in publications like *Di Patriot* and *Ons Tijdschrift*, they were characterised as ‘faithful wives, pretty *nooientjies* (marriageable girls) or bereaved widows.’⁸⁴

The GRA’s opposition to the Seminary is most evident in a collection of seven poems, all authored by ‘Jan wat versies maak’ (Jan who writes verse). This *nom de plume* obscured the identity of Hoogenhout, who, like Van der Lingen, rejected English on the basis that it was seen to be corrupting the values of the *volk*; in ‘his novel *Catherina* he wrote of the evil and corruption of the anglicised society of Cape Town and contrasted it with the worthiness of the patriarchal social relations typical of the rural Dutch-Afrikaners.’⁸⁵ Hoogenhout’s poems emphasise the differences between the American-

⁸¹ Pienaar, 11-13; Etienne Britz and Delene Pienaar, ‘Die Representasie van die Vrou in die Verse van die Eerste Afrikaanse Taalbeweging,’ *Stilet*, vol. 14, no. 2 (September 2002): 220-221.

⁸² Other reasons for excluding women from the business of the GRA included the relative lack of Dutch-Afrikaner women who possessed the education to allow them to contribute meaningfully to the society’s work; women were generally believed to be compulsive gossips and, thus, incapable of keeping the GRA’s secrets; the public and intellectual work of the GRA was seen to run contrary to what they felt to be women’s ‘natural’ place in the home; the religious underpinnings of the group objected to women’s entry into politics – and it was almost impossible for any woman to become politically active during the period anyway. Moreover, considering that the GRA’s intended audience was Dutch-Afrikaner petit-bourgeois and working class men, it was felt – with some justice – that women’s contributions would not assist in the mobilisation of this group. Finally, the Dutch literature on which the GRA based much of its writing and thinking was, itself, deeply misogynist. Pienaar, 9-28; Britz and Pienaar, 220-228.

⁸³ Marijke du Toit, ‘Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism: A Social History of the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging, c.1870-1939’ (D.Phil. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1996), 47-57.

⁸⁴ Marijke du Toit, ‘Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism,’ 53.

⁸⁵ Giliomee, ‘The Development of Afrikaner Ethnicity c. 1850-c. 1915,’ 29; R.H. Pheiffer, *Inleiding, in Afrikaanse Gedigte, Byeenfersameld uit wat in die Laaste 30 Jaar Ferskyn is, 1876-1906* (Paarl, 1906; facsimile reprint, Cape Town: South African Library, 1987), vi.

educated Dutch-Afrikaans young women, and those Afrikaner girls who have remained at home – usually on the farm – to help their parents. He establishes an opposition, thus, between the pupils of the Seminary who have been inculcated with an urban, middle class, anglicised gentility and the ideal Afrikaans woman, who remains proud of her rural upbringing and her Afrikaansness. In *‘Di Noitjies van di Onderfeld’* (‘The Girls of the Onderveld’) Hoogenhout describes the changes wrought in the daughters of *‘Oom Piit, hiir in di Onderfeld’* (‘Uncle Piet, from the Onderveld’), who *‘As goeie kinders gaat hul weg. / Bedorwe kom hul weer* (‘As good children went away. / Spoiled they returned’).⁸⁶ After their exceptionally expensive education, ‘Truitji’ and ‘Hanni’ return as ‘Gertrude’ and ‘Jane’, who, shocked, ask their father how he could allow a copy of *Di Patriot* to be in the house – it is *‘n sleg koerant, / Fol pure Hotnotstaal’* (‘a bad newspaper / Full of pure Hottentots language’).⁸⁷ The reason why they dislike *Di Patriot* is because *‘Di Miss waar hul het skool gegaan, / Meneer di Predikant, / Di het dit baing sleg gemaak’* (‘The Miss at their school / And his reverence, the minister / Made it seem very bad’).⁸⁸ Indeed, at that school they were taught *‘om [hul] nasie te ferag’* (‘to scorn their nation’).⁸⁹

This refusal of an Afrikaner identity is compounded by their transformation into fashion plates, who *‘Gen hande uit [hulle] mou kan steek’* (‘[Do] not roll up [their] sleeves’) to assist with the housework. He says, *‘Ons wil gen Missi of Madam, / Folstrek gen modepop; / Gen Angli- of Amerikaan’* (‘We want no Missi or Madam, / Absolutely no mannequin; No Anglo- or American’).⁹⁰ He implies that the gentility with which the girls have been inculcated actively prevents them from fulfilling the role that the ideal Afrikaner woman should: that of wife, mother, and carer for all things domestic. He asks why she should *‘foor die klafir...sit’* (‘sit at the piano’) when she *Fan huishou niks ferstaat* (When of housekeeping knows nothing).⁹¹ In an earlier poem, he describes another Seminary-educated girl who, instead of helping her parents on the farm, prefers to *‘lees of speel klaviir, / Skryf ’n brief fol bittre klagte an Miss Jane fer haar pelsiir’* (‘read or play piano / Write a letter of bitter complaint to Miss Jane for her pleasure’) and

⁸⁶ *Afrikaanse Gedigte, Byeenfersameld uit wat in die Laaste 30 Jaar Ferskyn is, 1876-1906* (Paarl, 1906; facsimile reprint, Cape Town: South African Library, 1987), 76.

⁸⁷ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 77.

⁸⁸ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 76.

⁸⁹ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 77.

⁹⁰ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 76.

⁹¹ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 76.

thinks ‘*Boerevrou, oh fie! hoe lelik! predikantsfrou, ja, dit sal / Sy tog seker nog eens worde, boere kan haar ni befal*’ (‘Farmer’s wife, oh fie! how awful! minister’s wife, yes, that / She surely will become, farmers cannot win her over’).⁹² These young women are a financial burden, as they are no longer attractive to the local men because ‘*n Slimme frou en domme man, / Dit bring nooit gen geluk*’ (‘A clever wife and stupid husband, / This never brings any good’) and ‘*Ons jonkmans fan di onderfeld, / Wil fer gen froumens buk*’ (‘Our young men of the onderveld, / Will not bow to any woman’).⁹³ Their sense of their own intellectual superiority has caused them to upset the hierarchy of traditional, patriarchal Afrikaner life – they refuse to keep their interests within the limits of the household and, instead, have trespassed into the (masculine) world of the intellect, and it is telling that their skin is described ‘*geel en rimplig*’ (‘yellow and wrinkled’) as a result of staying indoors.⁹⁴ Furthermore, they are depicted as having moved into the Dutch-Afrikaner gentry: they hope to marry ministers, rather than farmers, and are described as ‘ladies’, while the speaker writes approvingly of the ‘*noitjiis*’ of the area – the term ‘*noitjiis*’ is a diminutive form of ‘*nooi*’ or ‘young woman’. Similarly, the girls return from school bearing English names (they are ‘*Di Lizzies, Frances, Mary’s, Kate’s, / Wat tuis kom as herdoop, / En Gerty’s, Jane’s en Amy’s*’ (‘The Lizzies, Frances, Marys, Kates, / Who return rechristened, / And Gerties, Janes and Amys’)) instead of Dutch-Afrikaans ones which are also in their diminutive forms.

When ‘Lizzie, Francis, Mary & Co’ pen a response to ‘*Di Noitjies van di Onderfeld*’, explaining that, despite their Anglicisation, they attended a school where they were encouraged to communicate in Afrikaans, Jan asks,

*Waar is di skool? Al is dit duur,
Daar wil ek wel myn kinders stuur:
‘Op Wellington tog seker niit,
Ook in di Kaap ni,’ seg Oom Piit.*⁹⁵

[Where is this school? Even if expensive
I want to send my children there:
‘Definitely not in Wellington,

⁹² *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 12. The dislike of piano-playing stems from the fact that one of the signs of a ‘seminary’ education was a proficiency on the piano – an instrument seen as replacing the harmonium, which would have been found in most Afrikaner homesteads. Britz and Pienaar, 231-232.

⁹³ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 77.

⁹⁴ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 77.

⁹⁵ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 78.

Nor in Cape Town,' says Uncle Piet.]

There is no doubt that Piet's Gertie and Jane attended the Huguenot Seminary – and were spoiled there by an American education – but Lizzie, Frances, Mary & Co. went to a school '*Ni in di Kaap of Wellington*' ('Neither in Cape Town nor in Wellington').⁹⁶ Instead, they say to Jan, '*Kom in di Pêrel kyk*', and describe life at the Paarl Seminary – run by 'Mr. en Mrs de Villiers'. They write that they were taught music there, both piano and organ, singing, and theory, as well as '*Psalm en Gesange ook / Ferwaarloos ons ni hiir*' ('Psalms and Hymns too, / We do not forget them here'). They add that the '*Bybel is 'n ope boek, / En Gristus onse Heer*' ('The Bible is an open book, / And Christ is our Lord'). They learned '*Hollans*' ('Dutch'), '*skilderkuns en botani*' ('painting and botany') because '*Di oefen daar di smaak: / Di dogters waarlik opgefoed / Word sedelik bewaak*' ('They exercise one's taste: / Girls properly educated / Are morally secure').⁹⁷ They justify their education on the basis that it simply contributed to their development into modest, virtuous, Christian women. Importantly, this is an education that consists largely of feminine accomplishments – instruction in music, Dutch grammar, drawing, and botany (considered to be more appropriate for girls than biology)⁹⁸ that would not allow these young women to pass the Colony's teaching examinations.

There are similarities between the Seminary's genteel, middle class femininity and that advocated by the GRA. Speaking through this group of women, Hoogenhout – like the teachers at Huguenot – acknowledges that education does have the ability to render girls more genteel, especially in the development of their taste, and, thus, more 'moral'. However, he links his understanding of femininity to a nationalism which positioned women as the carers and nurturers of the *volk*, while Huguenot – and the Dutch-Afrikaners who sent their daughters to the institution – endorsed a form of femininity connected to class interests. That the Seminary maintained this feminine ideal despite the GRA's criticism shows up the extent to which the school was connected to the Dutch-Afrikaner gentry – that a group of Dutch-Afrikaners and their petit-bourgeois supporters opposed its existence seems to have had little or no impact on the institution. It

⁹⁶ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 80.

⁹⁷ *Afrikaanse Gedigte*, 80.

⁹⁸ Ryan, 31.

is striking that not once do the teachers allude to the GRA in their letters. Yet there was one occasion when the GRA did have a profound, although indirect, impact on the school. Between 1880 and 1881, the political crisis in the Transvaal – during which it was annexed by the British – erupted in a short war, resulting in the expulsion of the Imperial forces.⁹⁹ Du Toit and *Di Patriot* enthusiastically supported the efforts of the Transvaal burghers to resist the British occupation,¹⁰⁰ and Du Toit's zeal was rewarded when President Paul Kruger appointed him Inspector of Education in the Transvaal in 1882.¹⁰¹ Unsurprisingly, one of Du Toit's first measures was to introduce Dutch as the sole medium of instruction for government schools and made Christianity central to teaching – this was, essentially, a Christian nationalist education.¹⁰²

In 1877, two Mount Holyoke alumni – Misses Clary and Ruggles – had established the Prospect Seminary in Pretoria which, although not officially affiliated to Huguenot as a branch school, kept up close ties with Wellington. Providing an exclusively English education, it proved to be popular with the middle class population of Pretoria. Because it offered to prepare young women to write the teacher's examination, it was, effectively, a government school and, accordingly, the governor, Sir Owen Lanyon, and commanding officer of the Transvaal forces were present at Prospect's prize-giving in 1881.¹⁰³ This government support ended with the war, though: having endured the privations of the conflict (Clary and Ruggles's successors, Misses Malherbe and Harris, lived in a tent for three months), they were dismayed to find that the Prospect Seminary 'ha[d] received its mortal wound. The seed sown by Mr du Toit has, alas! sprung up very soon and brought forth bitter fruit for us.'¹⁰⁴ Their hopes that the DRC's synod would permit the school to remain English-medium – 'Mr du Toit's seed' being the decision to introduce Dutch at all government schools – were dashed. The synod 'not only said D[utch] must be made the medium, but even refused to raise the £2000 guaranteed so faithfully, only two years ago. Their excuse was, that the money was

⁹⁹ Davenport, 38-41; Tamarkin, 48; D.H. Heydenrych, 'The Boer Republics, 1852-1881,' in *An Illustrated History of South Africa*, edited by Trehwella Cameron and S.B. Spies (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1986), 157-160.

¹⁰⁰ Davenport, 40-42.

¹⁰¹ Tamarkin, 48.

¹⁰² Behr and Macmillan, 119.

¹⁰³ Johanna Malherbe to the teachers at Huguenot, Saul's Poort, 22 July 1881, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁰⁴ Johanna Malherbe to Miss Ferguson, Pretoria, December 1881, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

promised during Eng[lish] Gov[ernment] & and will not be given unless we give in to the new law.’ In addition to this, it was decided ‘that in future [the Seminary] must be a boys and girls’ boarding school’.¹⁰⁵ The parents of the girls at the school organised a meeting in protest against these measures and many withdrew their daughters from the school. In the end, though, Malherbe and Harris, loath to run a private girls’ boarding school, chose to close the Seminary, arguing that they were not in favour of ‘fighting the language’ but recognising that ‘it is no use to try & introduce the D[utch] medium for we will lose the greater number of our pupils, as the parents in town are all in favour of the Eng[lish] language. Among the hundred & twelve, we have only twelve farmer children.’¹⁰⁶

Faced with the Transvaal government’s insistence upon Dutch-medium teaching – a manifestation of its nationalism – the Prospect Seminary responded by shutting down. The Huguenot Seminary, fortunately, was never placed within a situation where it had to choose between its connection to the state and its loyalty to the parents of its pupils. Indeed, in the midst of the GRA’s attempts to disseminate an incipient Afrikaner nationalism, the Seminary went from strength to strength, attracting ever-increasing numbers of the daughters of the Cape gentry. While the femininity it espoused – which was so firmly rooted in notions of gentility – coincided in many ways with that promoted by the GRA (both linked women’s appearance, manners, and taste to their ‘moral’ character), the GRA felt Huguenot’s feminine ideal to be in excess of what was required for their notion of the Afrikaner woman: a knowledge of English, piano-playing, reading, writing letters, and having an interest in fashion were believed to detract from a young woman’s ability to become mothers of the *volk*. Indeed, the GRA rooted its construction of femininity in an Afrikaner nationalism which privileged the patriarchal family and an agrarian way of life. The Seminary, though, maintained its links to the Dutch-Afrikaner gentry advocating, thus, a class-based femininity which did not link itself to any idea of ‘Englishness’ or ‘Dutchness’. The extent to which it was able to keep up this neutrality was sorely tested during the South African War.

¹⁰⁵ Johanna Malherbe to Miss Ferguson, Pretoria, December 1881, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

¹⁰⁶ Johanna Malherbe to Miss Ferguson, Pretoria, December 1881, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 616.

The South African War and the Huguenot Seminary and College, 1899-1902

The Cape Afrikaners had for many years ‘prided themselves on being the most loyal of British subjects,’¹⁰⁷ and, as a result, many of these individuals – and especially those connected to the DRC – maintained a studied neutrality for the first year or so of the South African War, devoting their energies to campaigning for peace and alleviating the suffering of the wounded and the dispossessed.¹⁰⁸ However, the community was divided over Britain’s conduct of the War, and, especially after the declaration of martial law, an increasingly large proportion began to criticise loyalist Dutch-Afrikaners, as well as British imperialism. Essentially, the War had the effect of politicising bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaners in the Cape, and raising their sense of a common Afrikaner identity.¹⁰⁹

Significantly, the War also caused middle class Dutch-Afrikaner women to enter the political sphere. Helen Bradford has written about the way in which ‘[a] conflict threatening Boer manhood – military prowess, property, arms – spawned female household heads, female activists, and female farmers.’¹¹⁰ Both rural and middle class Dutch-Afrikaner women were mobilised by the War, and in particular after 1900 when they were galvanised by concerns about Boer prisoners of war, the farm burnings, and the concentration camps.¹¹¹ What began, at the beginning of 1900, as a collection of *Dames Comites* (Ladies’ Committees) in the Cape Colony to raise funds for Boer prisoners of war under the auspices of the DRC and the *Afrikaner Bond*,¹¹² was transformed into a series of public political meetings during which Dutch-Afrikaner women addressed

¹⁰⁷ Davenport, 226-230; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 256.

¹⁰⁸ Marijke du Toit, ‘Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism,’ 57.

¹⁰⁹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 256-259; Tamarkin, 304.

¹¹⁰ Bradford, ‘Regendering Afrikanerdom,’ 211. It is in this chapter, as well as Bradford’s ‘Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner Nationalism, Gender, and Colonial Warfare in the South African War,’ in *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902*, edited by Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh, and Mary-Lynn Suttie (Athens and Cape Town: Ohio University Press and David Philip, 2002), 37-66, that she develops an argument which proposes that the South African War caused Afrikaner nationalism to shift from being a force dominated by men, to one that was driven by the bitterness of women.

¹¹¹ Davenport, 227-228.

¹¹² The *Afrikaner Bond* was formed in 1879 by S.J. du Toit to promote the interests of Afrikaners. It was taken over by the more moderate J.H. Hofmeyr who defined ‘Afrikaners’ as (white) individuals whose primary loyalty was to Africa, regardless of whichever language they spoke – a perspective promoted by the *Bond*’s publication *De Zuid-Afrikaan*, which Hofmeyr took over in 1871 (it was founded in 1830). The *Bond* was the first Afrikaner political organisation and was a force in Cape politics during the final decades of the nineteenth century. It was instrumental in the formation of the South African Party (SAP) in 1911. Davenport, 34-40; Tamarkin, 52-59; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 208, 220-223, 268.

audiences, denouncing the War and British imperialism.¹¹³ The first women's public meeting was held after the inaugural anti-war *Volkskongress* (People's congress) was convened on 31 May 1900 in Graaff-Reinet. Inspired by the efforts of the pro-Boer South Africa Conciliation Committee in London, a group of women in Cape Town – among them Olive Schreiner, and Agnes Merriman, the wife of the Cape politician John X. Merriman – organised a protest for 9 July which was well attended by women, both English and Dutch-Afrikaans, from all over the western Cape.¹¹⁴ Between June and August 1900, fourteen such meetings took place all over the Colony and '[w]hat is especially remarkable about this...is the fact that women were soon taking the lead in the protest movement' during a time when '[t]he participation of women in public activities was...still...unusual'.¹¹⁵ In towns such as Paarl, Ceres, Cradock, Somerset East, and Wellington, Dutch-Afrikaans women gathered to express their approval for the Boer cause.

These *vrouwen vergaderings* (women's meetings) were unashamedly political. Despite the English press's disparaging portrayal of them (they were – like the British suffragettes – nicknamed the 'shrieking sisterhood') Dutch-Afrikaner women, justifying their entry into politics on the basis of their motherly concern for the plight of those in the concentration camps, rallied support for the Boer armies and, later in the war, urged their menfolk to return to battle.¹¹⁶ Importantly, they identified themselves as Afrikaner women working for the common good of Afrikaners and the Afrikaner *volk*. This, then, was the moment when Dutch-Afrikaans women become politicised and took an active interest in the construction and maintenance of the unified Afrikaner nation.¹¹⁷ However, as Marijke du Toit has pointed out, the women's meetings were the concern of middle

¹¹³ Jeffrey Butler, 'Afrikaner Women and the Creation of Ethnicity in a Small South African Town, 1902-1950,' in *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, edited by Leroy Vail (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 61-62.

¹¹⁴ Marijke du Toit, 'Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism,' 59.

¹¹⁵ Schoeman, 98; for a discussion women's political involvement in the South African War, see Paula M. Krebs, "'The Last of the Gentlemen's Wars': Women in the Boer War Concentration Camp Controversy,' *History Workshop Journal*, issue 33 (1992): 38-56. The politicisation of white South African women – of all classes and both English and Afrikaans – was, in many ways, a reflection of a global trend towards the end of the nineteenth century. See Paula Baker, 'The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920,' *The American Historical Review*, vol. 89, no. 3 (June 1984): 620-622, and Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts* (London: Penguin, [2001] 2002), 99-100.

¹¹⁶ Marijke du Toit, 'Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism,' 60-64; Bradford, 'Gentlemen and Boers,' 50-51.

¹¹⁷ Bradford, 'Regendering Afrikanerdom,' 218-219.

class Dutch-Afrikaner women – those who had experience in organising prayer groups, raising funds for charities, and teaching in Sunday Schools – as well as many of the graduates of the Huguenot Seminary. Women such as Margaretha de Beer, Magdalena Schonken, Susanna Marais, and Alida Cilliers – all alumni of the institution – were active in efforts to raise funds to support Boer prisoners of war, as well as women and children in the concentration camps.¹¹⁸ While it is difficult to ascertain how many former pupils were active in this movement (most of the women used their married names), the perception among Dutch-Afrikaners was that old ‘Huguenots’ were taking the lead in a number of the rural women’s meetings.¹¹⁹

What, then, was Huguenot’s response to the conflict? Unfortunately, many of the teachers were abroad for most of the War (Bliss, for example, was away between May 1899 and April 1900, Ferguson spent six months in Switzerland in 1901, and Cummings visited America in the middle of 1902),¹²⁰ so there is little record of their response to the conflict in their letters. There is, though, a rich source of information in a series of articles about the Seminary and College by Anna M. Cummings for an American religious magazine,¹²¹ the annuals, Petronella van Heerden’s memoir of her time at the Seminary towards the end of 1901, and in what letters that do exist for the period. There is an interesting contrast between the account provided by the school’s official publications – the annuals and Cummings’s ‘Letters from South Africa’ – and the perspective of those not writing for an audience consisting of parents, alumni, and American ‘friends’ of the institution. The reader of the Seminary and College’s annuals for the years 1899 to 1902 could be forgiven for not noticing that these magazines were published during four of the bloodiest years of South African history, and Cummings’s pieces, while by no means denying the existence of the conflict, are at pains to portray

¹¹⁸ Marijke du Toit, ‘Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism,’ 84-84.

¹¹⁹ Marijke du Toit, ‘Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism,’ 60-66; Marijke du Toit, ‘“Moedermeesteres”: Dutch-Afrikaans Women’s Entry into the Public Sphere in the Cape Colony, 1860-1896,’ in *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa*, edited by Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes, and Gary Minkley (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), 174-175.

¹²⁰ Geo. P. Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot (Being the History of the Huguenot Institution at Wellington from the Intimate Papers of the Builders)* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1927), 111.

¹²¹ Between March 1899 and January 1901, Cummings’s ‘Letter from South Africa’ appeared in the *Monthly Record*, the publication of her brother’s congregation in Thompson, Connecticut. From February 1901, though, the *Monthly Record* was forced to shut down as a result of a lack of funds and reappeared as a supplement to the American Congregational Church’s *Mission News Letter*, in which the ‘Letter from South Africa’ was published.

life at Huguenot as being harmonious and calm, in contrast to the political storm surrounding it. Like some of the teachers' letters, Van Heerden, though, shows up the tensions within the institution, demonstrating the extent to which the Seminary and College were polarised between British and Boer supporters. Why this disparity?

The War editions of the *Huguenot Seminary Annual* and *Huguenot Annual* portray a united community of intelligent, studious, and happy young women who do not seem to have been affected by the enormous social upheaval caused by the South African War. There are no references to the conflict in the editorials of the annuals – where the editors tended to voice their opinions about the school's relationship with its community, and justify its existence in relation to the good it was doing for the country – and the descriptions of life at the Seminary and College for these years do not differ significantly to those written before and after the War. One article, 'A Mischief Strangely Thwarting', set in a fictionalised Huguenot College in 1901, describes a pupil's journey home, by train, to nurse a sick sister.¹²² With martial law having been declared in large parts of the Cape – including Wellington – at the beginning of 1901 as Boer forces prepared to invade the Colony,¹²³ rail travel became increasingly difficult and dangerous; many of the tracks had been blown up, and passengers required permits to move from one district to the next.¹²⁴ It would have been almost impossible for Marjorie Bennett to respond to the 'summon[s] home because her only sister was dangerously ill' and to return to the College after only a month.¹²⁵

Indeed, it would appear as if the annuals were attempting to project something of an idealised South African society, where Dutch- and English-speaking girls co-existed amicably with one another. What mention there is of the South African War tends to come in the form of poetry, yet even here the references to the fighting are so oblique that the reader is required to place them within the context of their writing in order to understand their message. J. de Vos's 'Sonnet on Peace' from 1901, for example,

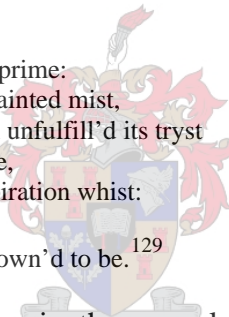
¹²² Alice E. Mackenzie, 'A Mischief Strangely Thwarting,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901): 16.

¹²³ Anna M. Cummings, 'Letter from South Africa,' *Monthly Record, Supplement to the Mission News Letter* (February 1901): 2, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621; Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (Johannesburg and London: Jonathan Ball, and Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 485-488.

¹²⁴ Davenport, 223-224; Karel Schoeman, *Only an Anguish to Live Here: Olive Schreiner and the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: Human & Rousseau, 1992), 140, 172-175.

¹²⁵ Mackenzie, 16.

describes a ‘seething chasm, ’twixt rocks when waters pour’ which is ‘boiling with the tumult far below’ and is, thus, a ‘Fit emblem of our land so dear to all’.¹²⁶ This is a country ‘Where hearts are rent with sorrow’s mournful call, / Where far and near is knolled the funeral knell’, but she councils, ‘above the suff’ring, woe and strife’ is ‘The radiant form of Him who stilled the wave’ and so, because ‘His smile enables us the storm to brave’ ‘In Him, our Peace, we are for ever blest.’¹²⁷ The sonnet’s religiosity – its attempt to seek hope and comfort in a higher power – enables it to remain steadfastly politically neutral, and this stance characterises much of the annuals’ War poetry. In ‘The New Century’ (1901) the speaker admits ‘And though we see that sin yet reigns on earth, / That sorrow shadows many lives below’, but ends ‘Yet good can never die. The “powers that make / For righteousness” can never pass away.’¹²⁸ The gently melancholic tone that pervades these poems is also present in ‘Hope’, from 1902, as, perhaps, a warning against too great a celebration at the conclusion of hostilities:


 Oh joy, that dawn’s first prime:
 Alas, its beauty but the painted mist,
 Whose promise fades, all unfulfill’d its tryst
 In noonday’s naked clime,
 Young Hope in ev’ry aspiration whist:
 While all solemn he
 Doth know himself discrown’d to be.¹²⁹

Of the direct references to the War in the annuals, one comments that ‘Our Branch Seminary at Bethlehem has been closed during the year. Now that peace has been declared we hope that it may soon be opened again and may be a power for good among the young people of the Orange River Colony’,¹³⁰ and the other appears in ‘My Experience as an Editor’ in which Johanna de Vos describes – humorously – the trials she was forced to undergo while compiling the magazine. She writes, ‘Elated at the success of the first number [printer’s proof], the editor perhaps became a little too self-confident. An urgent postcard sent to hurry on the printers brought back an elaborate apology laying the blame wholly on Martial Law. Poor Martial Law!’¹³¹ In both these

¹²⁶ J. de Vos, ‘Sonnet on Peace,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901): 33.

¹²⁷ De Vos, 33.

¹²⁸ H. le R., ‘The New Century,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 7 (1901): 20.

¹²⁹ Alfred Armour, ‘Hope,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 24.

¹³⁰ ‘Our Huguenot Branch Seminaries,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 35.

¹³¹ Johanna de Vos, ‘My Experience as an Editor,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 10.

cases, the War and its effects are shown to be nuisances, rather than serious threats to the Seminary and College's way of life. However, as Cummings's articles about the institution demonstrate, the South African War had a profound impact on the institution, its pupils, and teachers. There seems, thus, to have been a deliberate endeavour to keep all allusions to the conflict to an absolute minimum in the annuals. She comments in the 'Letter from South Africa' for November 1900 that, as teacher in charge of that year's annual publication, she collected '[s]everal graphic descriptions of travel and sightseeing' to 'add flavour to the more solid bill of fare presented in three or four strictly literary contributions.'¹³² Besides the usual articles on missionary and charity work, there was 'poetry and prose', as well as 'an account of our journey to Cape Point' and '[t]wo of the Murrays have told of the difficulties of mountain-climbing, one in Switzerland, one in South Africa.'¹³³ The same was true for the following year, when they made a point of 'offer[ing] a prize for the best articles on "One day at the Huguenot Seminary or College" and "Life in Wellington."¹³⁴ It is striking that the winning submissions contain no reference to the war at all – and that one of the reasons she decided to run the competition was because a number of American correspondents, many of whom subscribed to the annual as a way of supporting the institution financially, suggested 'that the Annual would be enjoyed quite as much if it more fully represented student work.'¹³⁵ The decision to elide whatever impact the conflict had on the girls and the school may, thus, have been partly out of a desire to convince an international audience – consisting of potential donors – of the Christian harmony of the institution.

Nevertheless, Cummings's descriptions of life in Wellington under martial law are detailed and vivid, but she downplays whatever conflict there may have been within the school, making the point that what was true for the country was not necessarily the case at Huguenot. Although she admitted in November 1899 that '[m]any of our girls are daughters of burghers or citizens of the Transvaal and much of wordy warfare has to be quieted',¹³⁶ three months later she asserted, 'In our College and Seminary there is a sweet spirit and but few hard thoughts are uttered. That is not true in our village nor in Cape

¹³² Cummings, November and December 1900, 1-2, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹³³ Cummings, October 1901, 3, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹³⁴ Cummings, October 1901, 3, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹³⁵ Cummings, October 1901, 3, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹³⁶ Cummings, November 1899, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

Town where party feeling is hot and bitter.’¹³⁷ There is no other reference to division within the school, although it is recognised that the girls’ families were involved in the conflict – even in Ferguson’s family, her niece, Katy, was ‘the wife of a lieutenant in the Transvaal army and Katie’s brother Walter is eager to enlist among the volunteers on the English side’.¹³⁸ Cummings comments, ‘Nearly every family in [the] Cape Colony has sons or brothers on both sides and, whatever the outcome be, there is desolation and anguish for many a home.’¹³⁹ Much of that distress was experienced by the pupils at the school, and especially during the second half of the War when, as a result of the guerrilla tactics of the Boer army, women and children were herded into concentration camps in an attempt to cut off the commandos’ supply lines. At the outbreak of the conflict, many parents were grateful for the security that Wellington offered their daughters,

Wellington is as safe a place as there is in South Africa in these days and we are glad to be able to care for so many daughters whose parents are scattered, the mother and little ones perhaps on lonely farms, the father and brothers at the front fighting. The hardest thing for the girls is to be able to get no news from home and to be able to send nothing, for the telegraph lines are cut and the railway handed over to the military authorities, and the Free State Boers have torn up the railroad lines for miles on their side of the border. I have had telegrams or letters from two anxious parents bidding me send their daughters home, but I have exercised my judgement in both instances and kept the daughters here, for travelling is not considered safe at present, anywhere near the borders, and I know there will come a time when the parents if still living will be grateful. For the most part we have only pleading letters from fathers or mothers asking us to comfort and care for their children.¹⁴⁰

A number of the school’s former pupils were interred in the concentration camps, one of whom put her education to good use by becoming chairwoman of the camp’s Sunday school committee, having under her charge a hundred teachers and 1400 children.¹⁴¹ Cummings relates this story with some approval, as it endorses what the teachers believed should be their response to the War: ‘Since a large number of the men, young

¹³⁷ Cummings, January 1900, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹³⁸ Cummings, November 1899, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹³⁹ Cummings, November 1899, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁴⁰ Cummings, December 1899, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁴¹ Cummings, February 1902, 2, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621. There were also a number of concentration camp schools established by the British to provide English-medium primary school education to the imprisoned Boer children. The first of these was founded in February 1901 at Norvalspoor. The idea was enthusiastically supported by Milner who saw it as an opportunity to anglicise the Boer children even before the conflict had ended. There is no evidence to suggest that Huguenot alumni worked at these schools, probably because the British had a policy of employing only English, Australian, or Canadian teachers. Paul Zietsman, ‘The Concentration Camp Schools – Beacon of Light in the Darkness,’ in *Scorched Earth*, edited by Fransjohan Pretorius (Cape Town, Pretoria, and Johannesburg: Human & Rousseau, 2001), 86-109.

and old, have been killed or made prisoners, the girls must be ready in larger proportions to become the teachers and the uplifting power in the homes.’¹⁴² She wrote, ‘It is good to know that so many of those who have gone out from here are splendidly fulfilling their vocation...This is the best solution for the present problem of racial strife and hatred’¹⁴³ (although by ‘racial strife’ Cummings meant the conflict between Britons and Boers). The education offered to the young women at Huguenot is justified, thus, by linking it to the post-War reconstruction of the country.

The teachers’ choice of this stance permitted them to refrain from declaring their allegiance to either side. In her letters to the American congregation, Cummings makes the point that it is her Christianity that prevents her from taking sides, reporting that ‘[o]ne Scotchman in business in Wellington said to me yesterday, “Things had come to such a pass that somebody had to be thrashed, there never could have been a settlement other than by war; now one side or the other must be quiet when all is done”’, admitting ‘This sentiment prevails among the business people of all classes, Dutch or English, but Christian folk of earnest spirit feel that it is a horrible affair for all concerned.’¹⁴⁴ However, when asked in America “Well, which were right, Boers or Britons?”, her response was that ‘discretion would forbid [her] answering’ that question, implying, perhaps, that she did sympathise with one of the adversaries.¹⁴⁵ Probably the best indicator of her political leanings would be a comment of Ferguson’s which she quoted in a letter to friends in 1900, ‘Miss Ferguson says her reason is with the English, her sympathies with the Dutch.’¹⁴⁶ This ambivalent positioning was, in all likelihood, influenced by Ferguson’s status as a foreigner within a country at war with itself, which placed her in precarious circumstances, both socially and politically.¹⁴⁷

The teachers at the Seminary and College did not shift their allegiances as the war progressed, choosing instead to turn to their task of training teachers and missionaries with renewed vigour. It is clear that they desired to demonstrate to the outside world –

¹⁴² Cummings, December 1900, 5, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁴³ Cummings, December 1901, 1-2, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁴⁴ Cummings, December 1899, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁴⁵ Cummings, December 1902, 3, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁴⁶ Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 7 March 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁴⁷ Eric Rosenthal alleges that ‘American public sympathy remained on the side of the Boers’, but notes that a number of Americans fought on both sides of the conflict. Eric Rosenthal, *Stars and Stripes in Africa*, revised edition (Cape Town: National Books Limited, 1968), 150-158.

both American readers, as well as parents and alumni – that the girls at Huguenot, despite their families' involvement in the conflict, remained untouched by the partisanship that characterised the country, but it would seem that they attempted to foster the same neutrality within the school. For example, Cummings wrote after the end of the siege of Mafeking,

as it has been decreed that the day after the announcement of the relief of Mafeking should be a public holiday, we had no school on May 21st. We made no attempt at any demonstrations other than personally arranged excursions. The girls went for a long walk with Miss Spencer and Miss Baldwin in the afternoon, and in the evening gave, under the supervision of Miss Nixon and Miss Margaret Ferguson, a little entertainment, consisting almost entirely of tableaux.¹⁴⁸

What is so striking about this description is the degree to which the girls were controlled and supervised by their teachers: normally, they were required to take at least half an hour's exercise each day, without a teacher looking on,¹⁴⁹ and frequently prepared and presented evening entertainments on their own, mainly on Friday evenings.¹⁵⁰ Perhaps one of the reasons why the school chose this deliberately low-key form of marking the public holiday – unusually for Huguenot, there was no church service – was the girls' reaction to the news of the relief of Ladysmith in March 1900. To begin with, both Cape Town and Wellington were charged with pro-British feeling. Even though 'in the Dutch Reformed Church, the text was, "Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt," and the thought of the discourse was submission to God's will, at whatever apparent cost to ourselves',¹⁵¹ in the 'Church of England that day were held thanksgiving services with the singing of the National Anthem.'¹⁵² In Wellington, Cummings 'warned back' a 'procession of coloured people' celebrating the relief from entering the Seminary's grounds, she 'then sent one girl who was standing with black looks, breathing out threatenings (sic) to her room, then was summoned to quiet another who was sobbing in hysterics on her bed, meanwhile others were joyfully reading the newspapers and dancing with wild delight.'¹⁵³ She added that '[a]t the College there has been a good deal of

¹⁴⁸ Cummings, July 1900, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁴⁹ Cummings, April 1899, 10, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁵⁰ J. Retief, 'College Home Life,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 35.

¹⁵¹ Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 7 March 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁵² Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 7 March 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁵³ Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 7 March 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

friction'.¹⁵⁴ That she described the pupils' very mixed response to the news in a letter intended for friends – not for publication – is significant: there is no mention of the relief of Ladysmith in Cummings's 'Letter from South Africa'. She does, though, devote a great deal of space to an appeal from the wives of local ministers which begs 'Whatever difference of opinion may exist in the apportioning of blame to the one side or the other, there can be but one opinion as to the necessity of affording relief to the innocent sufferers'.¹⁵⁵

Perhaps the best source on the Dutch-Afrikaner girls' attitude towards the conflict is to be found in Petronella van Heerden's memoir *Kerssnuitsels* (1962). The daughter of a member of the government of the Orange Free State, Van Heerden spent most of the South African War moving around the country with her family, being educated at a succession of schools, including the Huguenot Seminary.¹⁵⁶ Her stay at Wellington was not a happy one, partly because she felt that she had been abandoned there by her mother, but mainly as a result of the school's intense, evangelical Christianity that experienced something of a resurgence between 1899 and 1902, as well as the teachers' attitude towards the conflict.¹⁵⁷ While Van Heerden's overt pro-Boer sympathies must be kept in mind – as must be her strong support of Afrikaner nationalism – her portrait of the school towards the end of the War is one which shows up the tensions between both pupils and members of staff. She describes in some detail her difficult relationship with Miss Malherbe, the housemistress of her residence, the White House. At their first meeting, during dinner time, Miss Malherbe asked Van Heerden a question and when she replied, calling her 'Miss Malherbe', '*Sy slaan met haar vuist op die tafel dat die koppies wip en sê woedend: "My name is miss Mallurb!"*' ('She slammed her fist on the table so that the cups rattled and said angrily, "My name is Miss Mallurb!").¹⁵⁸ Van Heerden's shocked response to this information sums up her attitude towards the War,

¹⁵⁴ Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 7 March 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁵⁵ Cummings, December 1900, 5, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁵⁶ Petronella van Heerden, *Kerssnuitsels* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1963), 157.

¹⁵⁷ Cummings, December 1899, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁵⁸ Van Heerden, 114. Miss Johanna E. Malherbe had been a member of the Seminary's first graduating class in 1878. She taught briefly at the Prospect Seminary in Pretoria, and then returned to Huguenot as teacher of English and Dutch. For 1901 and 1902 she was in charge of the White House – the residence for the school's younger pupils – along with two other teachers, Miss Solomon and Miss Fisk. She spent most of 1903 on holiday in Switzerland and resigned in 1906. Significantly, despite desiring to be known as 'Miss Mallurb', she is listed as 'Malherbe' in the Seminary's official publications. Cummings, March 1903,

*Ek was verbysterd. Daar is Engelse, maar hulle kan dit nie help nie. Dan is daar 'n nare sort Afrikaner wat 'n National Scout is. Na dié kyk 'n mens nie en jy praat ook nie met hom nie; dan weer is daar banges wat hensop. Maar as jy 'n Boer is, wil jy tog nie, moedswillig, aspres, vir 'n Engelsman deurgaan nie.*¹⁵⁹

[I was stunned. There are English people, but they can't help it. Then there was a dreadful sort of Afrikaner who was a National Scout. You did not look at him, nor did you speak to him; then again there were the scared ones who 'hands-upped' [surrendered]. But if you were a Boer, you would not want, wilfully, intentionally, to pass for an Englishman.]

Throughout her stay at the Seminary, she fought with Malherbe, with those pupils who did not support the Boer forces, as well as with the school's English-only policy. She refused to make friends with the daughter of General Marthinus Prinsloo, the Commandant-General of the Orange Free State forces, as he *'het te gou gehensop, en sy was ook 'n ou hensoppertjie want sy het gekorrespondeer met Kanadese, en hulle en die Australiërs was erger as die Engelse'* ('surrendered too quickly, and she was also a little "hands-upper" because she corresponded with Canadians, and they and the Australians were worse than the English').¹⁶⁰ She did, though, befriend like-minded pupils, one of whom *'het vertik om Engels goed to praat'* ('refused absolutely to speak English properly').¹⁶¹ This girl – dubbed 'Johenna' by her peers, as this was the way in which Malherbe mispronounced her name (*'Miss Mallurb se Engels was maar aan die swak kant'* ('Miss Mallurb's English was on the weak side')) – made it her special duty to annoy Malherbe, responding insouciantly "I was to de tjemist [chemist]" when, late for dinner, Malherbe asked her "Johenna, Johenna, where have you been?".¹⁶² The result was that *'die hele saal, onderwyseresse en al, het geskater'* ('the whole hall, teachers and everyone, roared with laughter').¹⁶³ On her first day at the Seminary, after having been introduced to its self-reporting system, Van Heerden *'het [haar] boekie sommer vooruit op elke bladsy ingevul met Spoke Dutch'* ('simply wrote, in advance, on each page of her

2, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621; 'Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 87.

¹⁵⁹ Van Heerden, 114. The National Scouts were those Boers who collaborated with the British; the *'hendsoppers'* chose to surrender. The best source on those Boers who deserted or shifted allegiance to the British is A.M. Grundlingh's *Die 'Hendsoppers' en 'Joiners': Die Rasionaal en Verskynsel van Verraad* (Menlopark: Protea Boekhuis, 1999).

¹⁶⁰ Van Heerden, 116. Gen. Prinsloo had surrendered to Lt-Gen. Archibald Hunter on 29 July 1900, beginning the process that brought about the British occupation of the Orange Free State. Pakenham, 443-444; Grundlingh, 294-319.

¹⁶¹ Van Heerden, 116.

¹⁶² Van Heerden, 116.

¹⁶³ Van Heerden, 116.

booklet “Spoke Dutch”).¹⁶⁴ Predictably, Malherbe was *‘briesend’* (‘furious’) about it, but, interestingly, *‘miss Bliss het dit stilswygend laat verbygaan’* (‘Miss Bliss, silently, let it pass’).¹⁶⁵ Bliss responded in the same fashion when Van Heerden pinned her *‘grootste skat’* (‘greatest treasure’) – a *‘strikkie van oranje, rooi, wit en blou lint’* (‘piece of orange, red, white and blue ribbon [the colours of the Orange Free State’s flag]’) – to her chest after Susie de Waal (*‘’n pes van ’n kind, altyd iets oor die Boere te sê gehad’* (‘a pest of a child, always had something to say about the Boers’)) *‘maak...vir haar met blou en rooi potlode onder om die rand van haar voorskoot ’n ry Union Jacks’* (‘with blue and red pencils drew, on the hem of her pinafore, a row of Union Jacks’).¹⁶⁶ Malherbe ripped off Van Heerden’s ribbon the moment she saw it and, *‘byna histeries van woede’* (‘almost hysterical with rage’), Van Heerden raced to Bliss, who returned the ribbon which *‘sy aan my vasgespeld het’* (‘she pinned on me’).¹⁶⁷ From then on, she was permitted to wear the ribbon always, *‘selfs kerk toe’* (‘even to church’), and she and Susie de Waal were placed on opposite sides of the classroom.¹⁶⁸ It is worth noting that when Van Heerden was eventually expelled from the school, it was not as a result of her political sympathies, but because a rosary and books on Catholicism were discovered in her wardrobe.¹⁶⁹

What Van Heerden’s description of the school during the War reveals is that the school was certainly split between Dutch-Afrikaners who supported the Boer cause, and those – both Dutch-Afrikaans and English – who were pro-British and that, significantly, the teachers were, themselves, as divided. Bliss’s pragmatic response to Van Heerden’s behaviour suggests that her aim was to preserve the peace between the girls and the teachers without denying their, fairly obvious, political allegiances. This is confirmed by one of the most unusual sources on the tension at Huguenot during the conflict: Bliss’s account of a teacher who was confined to a Sanatorium towards the end of 1900 because it seemed that she had lost her wits. Pauline Kuster, one of the Seminary’s music

¹⁶⁴ Van Heerden, 117.

¹⁶⁵ Van Heerden, 117-118.

¹⁶⁶ Van Heerden, 115.

¹⁶⁷ Van Heerden, 116.

¹⁶⁸ Van Heerden, 116.

¹⁶⁹ Van Heerden ran away to Cape Town after her return to the Seminary in 1902. She became lost in the city and happened upon a Catholic church where the nuns cared for her over the weekend and then returned her to school on Sunday evening. They gave her the rosary and religious books, which Bliss discovered amongst Van Heerden’s things a month or two later. Van Heerden, 131-134.

teachers, went ‘out of her mind’ after Huguenot came second in a regional choir competition, after having won it for a number of years previously.¹⁷⁰ This madness became apparent when, among other things, Kuster alleged ‘that we all want to put her out because of her Dutch sympathies.’¹⁷¹ It was chiefly as a result of this that Bliss decided to ‘shut every one out of her room’, arguing ‘It is just as well not to have it talked about more than is necessary.’¹⁷²

What these sources reveal is that the teachers appear to have maintained the neutrality that the Dutch-Afrikaner gentry supported during the first year of the War – and partly because they believed that this neutrality would allow them to preserve, if not cordial, at least civil relations between a group of girls for whom they felt personally responsible as the conflict escalated. In contrast to the middle class Dutch-Afrikaner women who campaigned actively – and vocally – for the Boer cause, justifying their entry into the political sphere by identifying themselves as Afrikaner women concerned for the future of their *volk*, at Huguenot, the teachers – even if only in the Seminary and College’s official publications – espoused a femininity that was apolitical and devoted to healing and reconciling a divided nation. Much of this studied neutrality was expressed in a religious rhetoric which emphasised women’s roles as carers and nurturers – not politicians. In terms of pre-war gentility, women’s invasion of the traditionally ‘masculine’ world of politics would have been frowned upon. Ironically, though, this apolitical stance was about to become politicised in the post-War reconstructionist era.

South Africanism at Huguenot, 1902-1910

Of Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Cape and Transvaal between 1897 and 1905, Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido have written: ‘he laid the foundations for a state which not only reflected the demands of twentieth-

¹⁷⁰ Anna Bliss to Abbie Ferguson, Wellington, 11 November 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

¹⁷¹ Kuster also believed that ‘she [was] to be compelled to sing in the theatre and she [would] not, at another time that we all ha[d] a plan to make her marry Dr Walker [of Victoria College] against her will and she [would] not do it.’ Anna Bliss to Abbie Ferguson, Wellington, 11 November 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606. Dr Walker had recently married another of the Huguenot teachers, Ella Dudley.

¹⁷² Anna Bliss to Abbie Ferguson, Wellington, 11 November 1900, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606. Pauline Kuster appears to have recovered sufficiently to take up her position again in 1903.

century British imperialism but also fulfilled them.’¹⁷³ In a farewell speech to a thousand-strong audience in 1905 Milner argued that the ‘Dutch can never own a perfect allegiance merely to Great Britain’ and that the ‘British can never, without moral injury, accept allegiance to any body politic which excludes their motherland.’ The solution, thus, was for British and Dutch to ‘unite in loyal devotion to an Empire-State, in which Great Britain and South Africa would be partners, and could work cordially together for the good of South Africa as a member of that greater whole.’ He concluded, ‘And so...the true Imperialist is also the best South African.’¹⁷⁴ In a sense, this speech addresses the very essence of Milner’s work in South Africa (frequently dubbed ‘Milnerism’) after the conclusion of the South African War: in his efforts to reconstruct the country so as to secure British supremacy in South Africa, he – along with groups like the Kindergarten and, later, politicians such as Merriman, J.C. Smuts, and M.T. Steyn – sought to create a white nationalism, or ‘South Africanism’, which would ‘overcome enmities [between] Boer and Briton’¹⁷⁵ by supporting a common identity rooted in a loyalty to a South Africa ‘mould[ed]...into an efficient link in the imperial chain.’¹⁷⁶ Milner’s decision to relinquish his post in South Africa was, as Saul Dubow has argued, a recognition that his strident imperialism – and his fairly crude policy of Anglicisation – had to be softened into a South Africanism that was neither essentially British nor Dutch.¹⁷⁷ This South Africanism was an essential aspect of the process of unifying the two former Boer

¹⁷³ Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, ‘Lord Milner and the South African State,’ *History Workshop Journal*, issue 8 (Autumn 1979): 54. Grateful thanks to Albert Grundlingh for suggesting the link between Milnerism and the Huguenot annuals.

¹⁷⁴ Cecil Headlam (editor), *The Milner Papers, South Africa 1899-1905*, vol. II (London: Cassell & Company, 1933), 547.

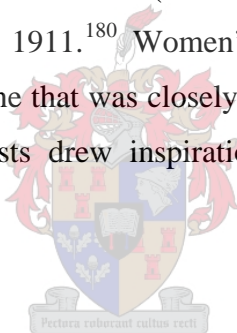
¹⁷⁵ Dubow, ‘Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of “South Africanism”, 1902-1910,’ 57. This article is a response to Marks and Trapido’s ‘Lord Milner and the South African State.’ See also, Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, ‘Lord Milner and the South African State Reconsidered,’ in *Imperialism, the State and the Third World*, edited by Michael Twaddle (London and New York: British Academic Press, 1992), 80-94.

¹⁷⁶ S.B. Spies, ‘1900-1919,’ in *South Africa in the 20th Century*, edited by B.J. Liebenberg and S.B. Spies (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1993), 32; Dubow, ‘Imagining the New South Africa in the Era of Reconstruction,’ 76-79.

¹⁷⁷ Dubow, ‘Imagining the New South Africa in the Era of Reconstruction,’ 77 and ‘Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of “South Africanism”, 1902-1910,’ 57-58. For a discussion of the shift from Milner’s policies of Anglicisation within the Kindergarten, see Peter Henshaw, ‘John Buchan from the “Borders” to the “Berg”’: Nature, Empire and White South African Identity, 1901-1910,’ *African Studies*, vol. 62, no. 1 (2003): 4-8.

Republics and British colonies into a single, semi-sovereign state in 1910 and reached its highest point between 1905 and the 1914 Boer Rebellion.¹⁷⁸

The politicisation of Dutch-Afrikaner women that had commenced during the South African War was heightened by the political tensions within the country between 1902 and 1910. The period witnessed the rise of a series of influential women's organisations representing the interests of both English and Dutch-Afrikaner women – despite the fact that women's suffrage was not an issue of major political importance between 1902 and 1910.¹⁷⁹ Although the South African branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded in 1889, established a suffrage department in 1895, the first organisation devoted explicitly to women's suffrage, the Women's Enfranchisement League (WEL), was founded in Durban, in the British Colony of Natal, in 1902. After the formation of branches in other major cities the Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union (WEAU) united a diverse collection of women's franchise committees in 1911.¹⁸⁰ Women's franchise was, by and large, an English concern, and, moreover, one that was closely linked to members' support for the Empire – South African suffragists drew inspirations from, and saw themselves as



¹⁷⁸ Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of "South Africanism", 1902-1910,' 60 and 'Imagining the New South Africa in the Era of Reconstruction,' 78. For a more thorough discussion of Milnerism and South Africanism, see Marks and Trapido, Dubow's article and chapter, as well as Spies, 31-49. Peter Merrington has written about the 'aesthetics of Union', or the construction of South Africanism in relation to the modernist movement in South Africa during the early twentieth century, in 'Pageantry and Primitivism: Dorothea Fairbridge and the "Aesthetics of Union,"' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 21, no. 4 (December 1995): 643-656, 'The State and the "Invention of Heritage" in Edwardian South Africa,' in *The Round Table: The Empire/Commonwealth and British Foreign Policy*, edited by Andrea Bosco and Alex May (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1997), 127-135, and 'Masques, Monuments and Masons: The 1910 Pageant of the Union of South Africa,' *Theatre Journal*, vol. 49 (1997): 1-14.

¹⁷⁹ Cheryl Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa* (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1979), 27.

¹⁸⁰ Pamela Scully, 'White Maternity and Black Infancy: The Rhetoric of Race in the South African Women's Suffrage Movement, 1895-1930,' in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation, and Race*, edited by Ian Christopher Fletcher, Laura E. Nym Mayhall, and Philippa Levine (London and New York: Routledge, 2000 [2002]), 73; Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 23-26. The connection between temperance organisations and women's suffrage was not unique to South Africa – it was a feature of suffrage campaigns all over the world. Kathleen D. McCarthy, 'Parallel Power Structures: Women and the Voluntary Sphere,' in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power*, edited by Kathleen D. McCarthy (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 11-15; Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 115-146.

counterparts of, similar movements within other British colonies and dominions.¹⁸¹ It is significant, thus, that a number of the leading members of both the WCTU and WEAU were alumni of the Huguenot Seminary and College. Virginia Pride, the principal of the Paarl branch of the Seminary, was the first president of the WCTU (and was succeeded in 1904 by Theresa Campbell, a teacher at Huguenot), assisted by Bliss, who was the first treasurer. Cummings and another Huguenot teacher, Ella Dudley, were in charge of the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union (YWCTU). Emily Solomon – a teacher at the institution's Training College – was national president of the WCTU between 1911 and 1919.¹⁸² The first president of the WEAU was Mrs W. Macintosh who, as Emma Bottomley, 'the most beautiful girl in the school' and 'the best scholar [they had] ever had',¹⁸³ graduated from the Huguenot Seminary in 1884.¹⁸⁴ It was through her work for the WCTU, the Guild of Loyal Women, and the Empire League that she became involved in issues surrounding women's suffrage.¹⁸⁵ Another WEAU luminary from Huguenot was Petronella van Heerden, one of the few Dutch-Afrikaner members of the organisation.¹⁸⁶

Dutch-Afrikaner women's organisations remained, seemingly, resolutely apolitical. Founded in the same year as the WCTU, the *Vrouwen Zending Bond* (VZB, Women's Missionary Society), grew out of the Huguenot Missionary Society (HMS), established in 1878 to support (unmarried) female missionaries in their work. The VZB was instituted after Ferguson returned from a long tour around South Africa, inspired to put into place an organisation that would assist female missionaries in both the Colony

¹⁸¹ Scully, 73; Cheryl Walker, 'The Women's Suffrage Movement: The Politics of Gender, Race and Class,' in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, edited by Cheryl Walker (Cape Town and London: David Philip and James Currey, 1990), 326-329; Gaitskill, 8-11.

¹⁸² Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 23; *A Brief History of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in South Africa* (Cape Town: Townshend, Taylor & Snashall, 1925), 6-7, 14, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 638; 'Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 87. For a detailed discussion of the Y's work, see Anna Cummings to friends, Huguenot Seminary, 9 March 1891, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 605.

¹⁸³ Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 11 February 1884, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

¹⁸⁴ 'Catalogue of the Boarders of the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 65.

¹⁸⁵ Walker, 'The Women's Suffrage Movement: The Politics of Gender, Race and Class,' 327; Walker, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in South Africa*, 23; Cummings, May 1902, 5, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁸⁶ Walker, 'The Women's Suffrage Movement: The Politics of Gender, Race and Class,' 328.

and beyond its borders.¹⁸⁷ The HMS created a network of alumni throughout the country, so when the VZB was organised on a national basis eleven years later, there was an enthusiastic group of women scattered all over South Africa willing to start branches of the *Bond*. By 1898, there were 48 local societies in both the two British colonies, as well as the Boer Republics.¹⁸⁸ Tellingly, though, in 1908, there were an estimated 120 branches in the Cape, and thirty in the Orange River Colony.¹⁸⁹ This threefold increase in the VSB's numbers was connected, undoubtedly, to the politicisation of Dutch-Afrikaner Women during the South African War. Even though Dutch-Afrikaner women's active involvement in politics ended with the cessation of hostilities in 1902, their interest in Afrikaner nationalism was channelled through their interest in philanthropic organisations – like the VSB and the *Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging* (ACVV) – which allowed them to assist in the upliftment of the *volk* by, for example, caring for 'poor whites' (one of the reasons the VSB was founded was the plight of the poor whites in Kimberley).¹⁹⁰ Unlike the predominantly English women's societies, though, the VSB and ACVV – run and organised by a large proportion of Huguenot alumni – did not campaign for women's suffrage and, in fact, frequently opposed it as being antithetical to, what they believed to be, women's 'proper' place in the home.¹⁹¹

Thus these two organisations, both founded, and staffed, by the Seminary and College's alumni, developed interests in politics that manifested themselves in entirely different fashions. The WCTU and WEAU campaigned actively for votes for (white) women, while the VSB worked quietly, and within the realm of the domestic, to promote the well-being of the *volk*. At Huguenot, perhaps necessarily, hegemonic femininity remained non-partisan and firmly underpinned by principles of duty, self-sacrifice, and piety. Ironically, though, this desire to foster a South African identity which was neither indebted to British imperialism, nor Afrikaner nationalism, slotted neatly into post-1905 discourses of South Africanism. It had appeared during the South African War,

¹⁸⁷ Geo. P. Ferguson, *The Builders of Huguenot*, 72-74; *Na Vyftig Jaar (1889-1939): Goue Jubileum van die Vrouesendingbond van die Kaapprovinsie* (Cape Town: Nasionale Pers, 1939), 11-13.

¹⁸⁸ Marijke du Toit, 'Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism,' 34-35; A.H. Spijker, *De Geschiedenis van den Vrouwen Zending Bond, of Wat God Gewrocht Heeft, 1889-1906* (Stellenbosch: Pro Ecclesia Drukkery, 1908), 5-7; *Na Vyftig Jaar*, 9-15.

¹⁸⁹ Spijker, 30.

¹⁹⁰ Spijker, 5.

¹⁹¹ Marijke du Toit, 'The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism,' 164-168.

Let the young people grow up together, seeking the truth in its best and highest forms, its broadest, deepest applications, making friends daily and learning more and more to appreciate the worth of the individual among those differing from themselves in birth and training, in political and religious creed, then we shall have a united South Africa that will be a power in the world no less than in this great dark continent.¹⁹²

That the women at Huguenot were aware of Milnerism is clear – in November 1901 Cummings commented, ‘I believe plans are being matured for the development of the whole land educationally and socially, which will be ready to be put into execution as soon as peace is established.’¹⁹³ In the Huguenot annuals, this South Africanism appears most frequently in articles justifying the extension of higher education to women. Echoing the sentiments of the poet who declares ‘You love not your daughters, you love not your land!’¹⁹⁴ the author of ‘The Education of Colonial Girls’ writes in 1896,

A great future has been predicted for our country, but what that future will be depends largely on the women of to-day...No matter whether we are to be teachers or not, in some way we must exert considerable influence over the coming generation, and it behoves us for their sakes, if not for our own, to secure the best education to be had. Our country is coming to the fore, and it is necessary that her sons and daughters should join earnestly in the work of progress...we feel that the time has come when Colonial girls themselves should be fitted to carry out the work. There is already an awakening among the women of the land...and it is with joy [that] we look forward to the time when South Africa shall possess a College for women.¹⁹⁵

There are, though, pieces that describe, or support, South Africanism without linking it to women’s education. A poem entitled ‘Sunny Africa’ from 1896 asserts the magnificence of Africa’s natural beauty in preference to Europe’s (she writes ‘O other lands may older be / In history’s records grey, / But none more fair than Africa / Look up to heaven to-day’), although it seems to be more of a celebration of Wellington and the Boland (the speaker refers to ‘our vineclad plain’) than an evocation of the continent.¹⁹⁶ A. Hofmeyr’s 1909 article ‘Some South African Heroes’ describes an incident during the Matabele War in which a division of British soldiers, under the leadership of a Major Wilson, were overwhelmed by Lobengula’s army and, despite being greatly outnumbered, fought to the death, all the while singing hymns. She concludes, ‘Should

¹⁹² Cummings, December 1901, 2, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁹³ Cummings, November 1901, 2, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

¹⁹⁴ Rossouw, 13.

¹⁹⁵ ‘The Education of Colonial Girls,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 2 (1896): 6.

¹⁹⁶ M.H. ‘Sunny Africa,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 2 (1896): 6. This poem is fairly typical of pieces dedicated to the description of the (South) African landscape. D.L. Theron’s ‘Sneeuw Kop’ exalts ‘Thou towering mass! Man’s voice is dumb / Before thy crest bedecked with snow, / A type of glory yet to come / As of the glory long ago’, *The Huguenot*, no. 11 (1905): 34.

we not be proud that our countrymen could die praising God for his blessings, which were to them, at that time, assegais and bullets?’¹⁹⁷ This transformation of a group of British soldiers fighting in 1893 into national heroes – in an article written by a pupil whose mother tongue was probably Dutch-Afrikaans – shows up the extent to which the annuals’ South Africanism was, paradoxically, resolutely apolitical: it is a celebration of an idea of ‘South Africanness’ closely linked to the country’s landscape and to a set of ‘universal’ morals and values (piety, courage, and loyalty).

However, one of the most striking features of the annuals, both before and after the South African War, is their exceptionally negative portrayal of rural Dutch-Afrikaners – recalling the Cape gentry’s efforts to distinguish itself from a group usually thought of as being uncouth and narrow-minded. It is telling that Anna Bliss implies that an ex-student’s decision to marry a Dutch farmer from an ‘out-of-the-way’ and ‘ignorant community’¹⁹⁸ is one of heroic self-sacrifice, and this is borne out by an article about ‘Teaching in the Achter Plaats’ in which the author, albeit affectionately, describes her Dutch-Afrikaans neighbours as parochial (they ‘do not trouble themselves about anything so remote as the rights and wrongs of political prisoners at Pretoria’),¹⁹⁹ unsophisticated (the highest ambition of her pupils is to pass the Elementary Examination), backward (she admits that she ‘sallied gaily forth to combat the prejudices and aims of two hundred years ago’ still prevalent in the area),²⁰⁰ and almost childlike, (if the author were to forget to congratulate the parents of a child who had passed the examination, she would risk a ‘blow’ to her school, as the ‘school is much too handy a vehicle for the conveyance of personal spite’).²⁰¹ In ‘Sayings from Vrededorp’ the author remarks that the ‘Dutch’ inhabitants of the suburb ‘though earning good wages, do not follow in the ways of the proverbial Scotch, so that the children, though never in actual want, very often appear neglected and uncared for.’²⁰² Another piece describing a journey through the Karoo

¹⁹⁷ A. Hoymeyr, ‘Some South African Heroes,’ *The Huguenot*, no. 15 (1909): 46.

¹⁹⁸ Anna Bliss, ‘Educational Growth,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 21.

¹⁹⁹ An Old Huguenot, ‘Teaching in the Achter Plaats,’ *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 2 (1896): 8.

²⁰⁰ An Old Huguenot, 7.

²⁰¹ An Old Huguenot, 8.

²⁰² H.S. ‘Sayings from Vrededorp,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 9 (1903): 14. Not all descriptions of predominantly Dutch-Afrikaans towns are disparaging, though. One article on Potchefstroom describes the town as ‘altogether...pretty and well arranged.’ Josephine Naude, ‘Potchefstroom,’ *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 9 (1903): 23.

depicts the rural Dutch-Afrikaners with whom the author comes into contact as filthy ('so thickly did the flies buzz around the kitchen' that '[i]t was hardly safe to open one's mouth to speak'), incompetent parents (a 'bare-footed baby sister with tearstained face and clayey hands' was the 'next martyr' to be washed in the dirty washing-up water), and aggressively rude ('one and then another big slouching son...ask[ed]...the same questions – "Where have you come from? How long have you been on the road?").²⁰³ Indeed, this description of the Dutch-Afrikaner family echoes other nineteenth century characterisations of Africans as innately dirty, irrational, and sexually threatening.²⁰⁴ Before 1905 (when pieces written in Dutch were included in the annuals), only one article makes extensive use of Dutch, and it is one which reports the conversation between two of the Seminary's pets, Polo (a dog), and Griet (probably a cat).²⁰⁵

In fact, the treatment of Dutch-Afrikaners in the annuals is far more critical and unflattering than that of Africans. Throughout the annuals there are descriptions of the lives of 'natives' characterised by a kind of anthropological interest in the ways in which Swazis, Basothos, or Pygmies build their homes, cook their food, or raise their children. In 'The Swazi Kafirs', the author comments that the 'kafirs live on kafir corn, mealies and monkey-nuts, and occasionally meat. Their chief drink is kafir beer...They also smoke a certain kind of weed, known as "daga," which is very harmful, producing violent fits of coughing.'²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, there is a feeling that indigenous peoples need to be studied and understood not as freakish curiosities, but for their own sake: 'The Little People of this Big Continent' concludes,

This strange race – so little and so little known is only now becoming familiar to the other peoples of this continent. Should it not be recognised that these pygmies have a claim upon our interest and sympathy, a claim in *inverse ratio* to their size and numbers. Surely among the noteworthy features of this big continent, its little people shall not be counted last or least.²⁰⁷

An article on the Basothos begins 'In thinking of the Basutos, we are apt to look down on them. If, however, we examine their ideas and principles we find that they are not inferior

²⁰³ Amy Geard, 'A Journey in the Karoo,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 4 (1898): 57.

²⁰⁴ Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 13, 15-16, 28-29; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 220-221, 224-226.

²⁰⁵ A.L. Geard, 'Oom Polo and Tante Griet,' *The Huguenot Seminary Annual*, no. 5 (1899): 48-49.

²⁰⁶ H. Pet, 'The Swazi Kafirs,' *The Huguenot*, no. 14 (1908): 28.

²⁰⁷ Dolly Deas, 'The Little People of this Big Continent,' *The Huguenot Annual*, no. 8 (1902): 34.

to ours.’²⁰⁸ While this is not a perspective that allows for Basothos, Swazis, or Pygmies to be equal with people emanating for Europe, and does not permit them to be representatives of ‘South Africanness’ – the fact that they are seen as worthy of being studied, rather than as potential fellow students, establishes a hierarchy between the authors of the articles and their subjects – it is a considerably less racist portrayal of Africans than one could expect for the period.

What makes this treatment of race so interesting is that the majority of the girls at the Huguenot Seminary and College were Dutch-Afrikaans. Perhaps one of the reasons obviously poor and rural Dutch-Afrikaners are portrayed so disparagingly in the annuals is class bias: as Bradford has argued, Dutch-Afrikaner society around the turn of the nineteenth century was divided between those dubbed ‘Boers’ (petit-bourgeois farmers) and ‘Afrikaners’ (urban, middle class, professionals and businessmen).²⁰⁹ If understood from this perspective, the negativity of the depictions of Dutch-Afrikaners in these articles is the result of a form of snobbery whereby mainly ‘Afrikaner’ girls (who would have emanated from bourgeois, professional homes) present ‘Boer’ families as backward and almost animal-like.

If seen in relation to the annuals’ South Africanism, it could also be interpreted as a kind of rejection of an essentialised, purely Dutch-Afrikaner identity. While the annuals did not accept submissions written in Afrikaans, from 1905 onwards, articles were published in Dutch. In the same year, the magazine was renamed *The Huguenot*, which could, one supposes, be more easily translated into a Dutch equivalent. This was not the first time that the Seminary and College’s annual publication had changed its title: between 1895 and 1901 it had been the *Huguenot Seminary Annual*, and then, in an effort to include the College and the other affiliated institutes, *The Huguenot Annual* from 1902 to 1904. However, neither of these changes had been accompanied by any significant

²⁰⁸ Jeannie Hofmeyr, ‘The Basutos,’ *The Huguenot*, no. 15 (1909): 20. A similar respect is evinced in another article which retells traditional African stories. Maggie Marais, ‘Folk Lore,’ *The Huguenot*, no. 15 (1909): 47. The women at Huguenot seem to have had a particular affection for the Basotho – perhaps because so many of their pupils were the daughters of the missionaries at Morijah. On a visit to Morijah, Cummings passed a ‘procession of women...walking, as is their custom, in single file, and carrying all sorts of things on their heads. One had a black iron pot, its three legs just fitting over her skull; in front of her walked a woman with the lid of the aforesaid kettle on her head. Tall and straight and lithe, these women represent poetry of motion, surely.’ Cummings, March 1899, 8, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 621.

²⁰⁹ Bradford, ‘Gentlemen and Boers,’ 37.

alteration of the annuals' content. It is also remarkable that this decision is not commented upon in the editorial, nor in any of the articles written by the editor and her assistants.²¹⁰ Indeed, a cursory reading of the annuals published before 1905 would not reveal that the young women attending the Huguenot Seminary and College were predominantly Dutch-Afrikaans.²¹¹ Even the announcement of the formation of a society to study Dutch literature in 1906 does not concede that the majority of the members of the club would have been mainly Dutch-Afrikaans,

In a bilingual land like ours it will be necessary for everyone – and for the college student especially – to be able to express himself equally well in both languages. Since we intend to be equal to the demand, a large number of our students have banded themselves together for the study of good Dutch literature, and are making a desperate effort to cure themselves of the national disease of speaking a 'mixed language.' Our Society calls itself 'Excelsior,' and the results of the past six months have given us every reason to hope that it is going to live up to its name.²¹²

Here the suggestion is that the girls have an 'unfortunate' tendency to mix their languages, but it is not explained that one of the reasons for this was probably because they were more comfortable speaking Dutch-Afrikaans. It is telling that, in the same issue, more space is devoted to an article on Esperanto than to bilingualism.²¹³

Of course, the Huguenot Seminary and College was English-medium, but it is conspicuous that not once is it mentioned that, although it was compulsory for the girls to speak English,²¹⁴ the majority of them would have been communicating in their second language. If this can be seen as an attempt to elide the linguistic – and cultural – differences between the pupils, it is not difficult to link this trend to the annuals' South

²¹⁰ The editorial confines itself to brief remarks about 'loyalty towards our Alma Mater', the Huguenot system of self-government, the differences between the Intermediate, Junior, and Senior classes at the College, and the difficulties involved in writing the annual. What these topics have in common is a celebration of the uniqueness of the life of the Huguenot College student. 'Editorial,' *The Huguenot*, no. 11 (1905): 7.

²¹¹ This is true for the teachers' letters as well. It is not immediately apparent that there were English-speaking girls at the Seminary alongside Dutch-Afrikaners. It is for this reason that the following comment made by Bliss is so unusual, 'I've been in the kitchen superintending the making of the cake. The girls have made three kinds this morning. We have a very successful cake & pudding circle this term – two bright English girls who prefer their domestic work to their books, an unusual thing for the English girls. They are excellent readers, & have much general information but are lacking in many of the elementary studies, especially arithmetic.' Anna Bliss to E.L. Bliss, Wellington, 25 December 1873, DRCA, HSC, K-Div 606.

²¹² N. Holzhausen, 'Editorial Notes,' *The Huguenot*, no. 12 (1906): 8.

²¹³ Isabelle du Toit, 'Esperanto,' *The Huguenot*, no. 12 (1906): 49. The article makes the point that the inventor of Esperanto, Louis Zamenhof, believed that the animosity between the different ethnic groups in the town in which he grew up was the result of the region's 'diversity of tongues'.

²¹⁴ Geard, 48.

Africanism. While it is important to note that the magazines appear to take a stance that is almost deliberately apolitical, they do promote the idea of a unified, prosperous (white) South Africa. Huguenot's notion of South Africanness, thus, involved a disregard for politics, and the adoption of English as the best means of communication – Dutch-Afrikaans being, frequently, associated with backwardness and parochialism. When Dutch was allowed in the annuals, it was (what was considered to be) the more 'sophisticated' 'High Dutch' of the Netherlands.

Conclusion

It is possible to trace the trajectory of the Huguenot Seminary and College's attitude towards the South African nationalisms at work within the country between 1870 and 1910. It was founded at the same time as the first attempts were made to create and promote a unique sense of an 'Afrikaner' identity within the Cape Colony. This Afrikaansness was based on a conception of the Afrikaner as fundamentally rural, agrarian, pious, and closely linked to the patriarchal family. As a result, for the First Afrikaans Language Movement, and, more specifically, for the GRA, Afrikaner femininity was rooted in women's allegiance to the *volk*. The GRA's representation of the Huguenot Seminary in its poetry – and especially in the work of Hoogenhout – emphasises that women's Anglicisation and the 'genteel' values and morals of the Cape gentry actively prevents them from becoming 'proper' Afrikaner wives and mothers. Nevertheless, as the teachers' letters demonstrate, the Seminary – in keeping with its close connections with the Cape's middle class Dutch-Afrikaner community – was at pains to improve the pupils' Dutch. People like Murray and his family maintained cordial relations with the British, and desired to maintain their 'gentility', as well as differentiate themselves from the increasingly impoverished, Afrikaans-speaking, petit-bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaners – the GRA's target audience – by insisting on the need to communicate in 'High Dutch'. The femininity promoted at the school was not linked to any notion of 'Afrikaansness', 'Dutchness', or 'Englishness', but to a collection of middle class values connected to notions of respectability and gentility that transcended linguistic and cultural barriers.

However, as both male and female Cape Dutch-Afrikaners become politicised during the South African War, Huguenot – faced with having to keep almost three hundred young women with differing, yet strongly-held, political affiliations in a state where they could live and study together – maintained its political neutrality. In its official publications it went further than simply attempting to smooth over differences between the pupils: the authors of articles and poems in the magazines, and Cummings in her ‘Letters from South Africa’ depict community of young women co-existing happily and peacefully with one-another – and, indeed, it seems that they tried to foster the same neutrality within the school. However, it is clear – and especially so in Van Heerden’s memoir – that the Seminary and College were fraught with tension during the War, with both teachers and pupils taking sides. Yet in contrast to the middle class Dutch-Afrikaner women – many of them alumni of the school – who became involved in meetings where they publicly denounced the Empire and declared their undying devotion to the Boer cause, the teachers at the institution, on the other hand, channelled their energies into educating a generation of girls who would have to become bread-winners in homes where fathers and brothers had been killed or imprisoned, and who would – in the eyes of Ferguson, Bliss, and others – have the responsibility for rebuilding a united (white) South Africa. Throughout the War, the feminine ideal promoted by Huguenot remained that which they had endorsed before 1899 – apolitical, religious, dutiful, and self-sacrificing.

Interestingly, this neutrality – and this support for a South Africanism which embraced a kind of white identity that was not Dutch, Afrikaans, or British, but was rooted in a common love of, and loyalty to, the country – slotted neatly into post-1905 South Africanism. For the school’s alumni who were active in the WEAU and the VZB, ideas of a common South African identity were frequently dismissed in favour of a whole-hearted support of, respectively, Empire or nascent Afrikaner nationalism. Nevertheless, Huguenot’s South Africanism was not as unproblematic as Cummings’s celebration of South African unity would suggest: it was resolutely white – although the annuals’ representation of Africans is considerably less racist than one could expect from this era – and, for the most part, expressed in English. It is striking that the most overtly ‘racist’ depiction of any group of people is of Afrikaners and that when Dutch was introduced in the 1905 edition – coinciding with Milner’s decision to leave South Africa

and heralding, thus, a shift to a more inclusive, less Empire-oriented, South Africanism – it went uncommented upon. The South Africanism that it advocated paid little heed to politics, but was rooted in English and, to a lesser extent, Dutch and elided the cultural linguistic differences within the school.

What this sweeping overview of the period 1874 to 1910 reveals is the extent to which the Huguenot Seminary and College was able to maintain a particular understanding of femininity as the country around it transformed into a unified state before and after the South African War. It was able to do this because of the extent to which this femininity coincided with middle class Dutch-Afrikaner thinking before the War, and with Milner and the Kindergarten's South Africanism afterwards. However, it is clear that this was the Seminary and College's official discourse and that, consequently, not all of its pupils agreed with it: between 1899 and 1902, the girls – and teachers – within the institution openly displayed their political allegiances, and a large proportion of them became active in women's organisations, some of them political, after having left Huguenot. While the school did advocate women's independence in terms of their training of teachers and missionaries, it did not support women's entry into politics. In terms of nationalism, then, the school's femininity resisted attempts to yoke a particular understanding of the Afrikaner (or Empire-supporting) women's 'proper' place to a feminine ideal, but – because of the degree to which it complimented post-1905 South Africanism – it, perhaps unwittingly, linked itself to the first nationalism of the twentieth century to be created in the country.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed the production of particular forms of femininity at the Huguenot Seminary and College from three overlapping perspectives: Abbie Ferguson and Anna Bliss's attempts to position the Seminary as a kind of religious community and their pupils' response to these efforts between 1874 and 1885; the connection between the institution's emphasis on the need to acquire a 'mastery of self' and the discourses of femininity appearing in the Huguenot annuals between 1895 and 1910; and the extent to which the rise of nationalisms in South Africa from 1874 to 1910 impacted on the Seminary and College's understanding of 'femininity'. What these perspectives reveal is that the teachers and pupils at Huguenot were actively involved in constructing, disseminating, or resisting particular notions of 'femininity' available to them during this period of profound social and political change.

Chapter One discussed the reception of the so-called Mount Holyoke 'model' of girls' education in the Cape Colony. For Abbie Ferguson and Anna Bliss, educated, middle class women's independence – indeed, the teachers' ('anti-feminine') choice to travel to South Africa, thus forfeiting any chance they had of marriage and children – was justified by their belief in the need for the teacher-missionary to be useful in the service of others. In order to inculcate this thinking in their South African pupils, they put into place a system of education designed to ensure that these girls would graduate desiring to dedicate themselves to the education, both spiritual and intellectual, of the country's children and African population. That Mary Lyon's vision was so well accepted in the Colony in the mid-1870s is not surprising, as the circumstances in which Andrew Murray founded the Seminary closely resembled those of Lyon in Connecticut in 1837. The evangelicalism sweeping both regions was, as in other parts of the world, accompanied by a heightened awareness of the need to educate young women, and the Cape's religious revival of 1874-1875 served only to reinforce Ferguson and Bliss's attempts to establish a 'South African Mount Holyoke'. Thus they found themselves in a community that, partly

through the influence of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), was willing to send its daughters to be trained as teachers and missionaries. The first group of young women who enrolled at the Seminary were, as a result, relatively religious and keen to acquire an education to be of service to their community. Their enthusiasm, along with the familial atmosphere of the school during these early years, contributed to the successful implementation of Lyon's principles: the pupils were quick to take up domestic work, pursue their studies, and, significantly, admit to a need to be 'reborn'. Of course, the peer pressure to conform was such that it would have been difficult for any girl to have rebelled against the teachers' expressed desire that they convert to evangelical Christianity. Moreover, the school's roster, insistence upon domestic work, and religiosity plunged the pupils into an environment wholly different to that of their parents or friends fostering a sense of their distinction and difference from their community.

However, as the Seminary's reputation for thorough and reasonably-priced education began to grow, greater numbers of parents sent their daughters to the institution for academic, rather than religious, reasons. With greater numbers of pupils – many of whom were reluctant to participate in the school's religious activities – and considerably busier teachers, the school's family-like atmosphere began to dissipate. The ethos within the Seminary changed: the religious community had to be enforced and not encouraged, and, consequently, the pupils were less willing to report themselves for their own, and their friends', misdemeanours. Using the self-reporting system as something of a test of the girls' religious devotion, it is not surprising that less devout pupils would not understand or agree with – or feel compelled to comply with – self-reporting. For Ferguson and Bliss, ensuring that their pupils did not break the school's rules was not the main object of self-reporting. What they wanted was to instil in their pupils an awareness of the sinfulness of lying and it was for this reason that Ferguson responded so dramatically to the spate of rule-breaking in 1884 and 1885. Offences such as being in an out-of-bounds room without a teacher's permission may seem to be fairly petty, but for Ferguson, the pupils' refusal to acknowledge that they had broken rules demonstrated that they had 'strayed' from God. Her suggestion that it was Satan's presence that was causing the misbehaviour encouraged something of a wave of religious hysteria in the school. This piety was difficult to maintain when the girls went home for the holidays –

demonstrating the extent to which the Seminary relied on its isolation from the community around it to ensure that the girls remained ‘born again’ Christians – hence Ferguson’s decision to suspend self-reporting for those who had abused the system in August 1884. But self-reporting changed irrevocably after this: the teachers became increasingly suspicious of the girls and introduced a quasi-prefect system during the 1890s.

Why this insistence upon retaining self-reporting? One reason can be found in Huguenot’s desire to ensure that its pupils understood the need to be self-disciplined. In many ways self-reporting brings to mind Michel Foucault’s interpretation of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon, demonstrating that discipline within the Seminary and College was a matter of pupils internalising the rules. It also shows up the situation within girls’ schools whereby the pupils attempt to draw attention to themselves by demonstrating their ability to master themselves. Their acquiescence to the rules and their conformism are what, paradoxically, permit them to be singled out for good behaviour – and it was precisely this which occurred at the Seminary and College.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the ability to master oneself was key to at least two of the discourses of femininity arising in the Huguenot annuals between 1895 and 1910. Coinciding with the social and political upheaval before during and after the South African War (1899-1902) – which partly gave rise to the first manifestations of an interest in the predicament of women and children in South Africa – the annuals evince an awareness of the period’s anxiety about the construction of middle class gendered identities. Nevertheless, the annuals’ ‘official’ discourse coincides with narratives of ‘hegemonic’ femininity – that feminine mode promoted as being the ideal according to which women should model themselves. This was probably the best means of insuring the acceptance of the concept of the educated woman by the pupils’ parents, for whom the annuals were, partly, intended. Not only do the articles by many of the Huguenot teachers, alumnae, and essay competition winners illustrate that an education actually prepares women to be better wives and mothers, but they show that the independent women who chooses to work as a teacher or missionary fulfils her apparently ‘God-given’ role to care and nurture. For this reason, these women need to learn to discipline

themselves for lives of relative difficulty, loneliness, and absolute dedication to the welfare of others.

As the institution developed into a college, though, a younger generation of teachers who, frequently, possessed degrees from universities in Europe and America were attracted to Huguenot – reflecting the global professionalisation of teaching during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. While the first generation of teachers had worked to show that girls' education did not contradict middle class Dutch-Afrikaners' notions of women's place being in the home, the second generation of professionals pointed out that education did not render young women 'manly' or physically deficient. They did this while arguing that the purpose of education was academic and not spiritual, and that women had as much right to tertiary education as had men. The articles in the annuals penned by those teachers and a number of pupils emphasise that the girls lead active and full lives at Huguenot that permit them to emerge from the institution as young ladies possessing degrees and perfect health. Self-discipline for this 'professionalist' discourse requires that young women learn to master themselves academically and physically, thus producing teachers able to think and work rationally and logically. There are obvious similarities between the hegemonic and professionalist discourses, one of them being that both justify a girls' education in relation to its outcome, viewing the College as a means to an ends.

One discourse that celebrated young women's experience of college as a phase that was important in itself was that of the 'College Girl'. Clearly, the professionalist discourse had much in common with the concept of the New Woman, although at Huguenot it would seem that its understanding of the New Woman, which emphasised that women's roles were still, fundamentally, linked to their supposedly natural predilection for caring and nurturing, was considerably more conservative than its British or American counterparts. The College Girl was a conservative reinterpretation of the New Woman, which, drawing on the concept of the 'Gibson Girl', promoted an image of the female student as frivolous, lively, interested in boys, and with her head in the clouds. Expressed in the articles providing light relief in the annuals, the Huguenot version of the College Girl indulged in the same pranks, parties, and preening as her American counterpart, all the while self-consciously aware of her status as a College Girl. Within

the South African discourse, though, there remained an effort to reconcile the intellectual with the domestic and because of the articles' pervasive self-ridicule, this remains a fairly muted discourse and not one that represents an ideal worth emulating after graduating. What the idea of the College Girl allowed the young women at Huguenot was a celebration of their position within a unique phase of life, permitting them, thus, the licence to behave relatively childishly and irresponsibly and to become totally immersed in the minutiae of the College. As a result, they did not need to master themselves to any great degree at College, but it was expected of them to adhere to a set of norms prescribing feminine behaviour, and to know when to perform in a more decorous manner.

That these three discourses were able to co-exist within the same series of magazines would appear to suggest the relative harmony of the relations between teachers and pupils. Chapter Three argues that the various nationalist movements arising between 1874 and 1910 not only had the effect of politicising the femininities associated with Huguenot, but also caused a great deal of division within the institution. During the 1870s, the Seminary's notion of hegemonic femininity coincided with that of the Dutch-Afrikaner middle class – indeed Cape gentry – at whose daughters the school was, largely, aimed. This femininity was connected closely to an understanding of white bourgeois identity that, while frequently Dutch-Afrikaans, was strongly Anglophile and oriented towards distinguishing itself from the Afrikaans-speaking petit-bourgeoisie and working class. It is not surprising, then, that the Seminary praised those girls who possessed what they considered to be good taste and good manners, and insisted that the pupils speak 'proper' Dutch, as markers of their gentility. For the members of the *Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners* (GRA), Afrikaner femininity was inextricably intertwined with the incipient Afrikaner nationalism that they promoted. The 'true' Afrikaner women embraced a kind of rural Afrikaansness rooted in the patriarchal family and embraced her position as the cultural and moral keeper of her *volk*. The poetry of the GRA attacked the femininity promoted at the Seminary for actively bringing about the collapse of the *volk* by encouraging Dutch-Afrikaner young women to disdain their 'Afrikaansness'. However, because of the strength of its allegiance to the Dutch-

Afrikaner gentry, the Seminary was not forced to accommodate the complaints of the GRA in any way – and, in fact, went from strength to strength throughout this period.

It would be misleading to label this femininity apolitical, as it was an expression of the bourgeois Cape Dutch-Afrikaners' allegiance to British rule at the Colony. Yet as this group became politicised during the South African War, especially as a result of the controversy over the concentration camps, the Seminary and College's hegemonic femininity maintained what was, at the time, an emphatically apolitical stance: despite – or, perhaps, because – the evident tensions between teachers and pupils within the institution, the staff emphasised the need for Huguenot to prepare a generation of girls to assist with the post-war reconstruction of the country. This sense of a duty to the future welfare of the country was rooted in an intense religiosity, which is particularly evident in the poetry published in the annuals for 1899-1902. The annuals' obvious silence about the conflict suggests something of the teachers' efforts to persuade parents, alumnae, and an international audience consisting of potential donors that the ideal of a group of girls subscribing to a feminine identity which denied all political allegiances in favour of a Christian dedication to the welfare of its community was possible. This was in spite of the radically increased level of middle class Dutch-Afrikaner women's political involvement in the *vrouwen vergaderings* (women's meetings) held in support of the Boer cause – many of whose speakers and organisers were Huguenot alumnae.

This interest in the public sphere was carried into the number of women's philanthropic organisations, which blossomed after 1902. Both the *Vrouwen Zending Bond* (VZB, Women's Missionary Society) and Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) were founded at Huguenot in 1889 and stepped up their activities in the post-war period of reconstruction. While the WCTU became active in the women's franchise movement, the VZB remained firmly apolitical, but what both these organisations had in common was the preponderance of old Huguenots in their leadership, demonstrating that the education that the girls received at the Seminary and College permitted them to take an active interest in the public, and political, spheres, regardless of the institution's apoliticism during the South African War. However, the Huguenot refusal to take sides in the War became politicised by the South Africanism promoted by Alfred Milner and the Kindergarten. A celebration of a unique 'South Africanness' is evident in the annuals

from 1903 to 1910. Tellingly, when Milner left the country in 1905, allowing South Africanism, by loosening its ties to British imperialism, to become more inclusive in its vision of a white South African identity, the Huguenot annuals included articles written in Dutch. This decision was accompanied by a portrayal of rural, working class Afrikaners as dirty, parochial, childlike, and intellectually backward. In this way, Huguenot South Africanism was a class-based concept that maintained its insistence upon a white identity closely connected to languages emanating from Europe. Because of this it required a fairly crude ‘othering’ of Afrikaners. Interestingly, although depicted as the inferior of their white authors, articles on Africans tend towards the paternalist, rather than the racist, possibly as a result of South Africanness being understood as a distinctly white, middle class, English and Dutch phenomenon that needed to be defined in relation to other, competing notions of ‘whiteness’. Unwittingly, the Seminary and College aligned itself with the first nationalism to emerge in South Africa in the twentieth century.

This study, while addressing an absence in South African historiography, has pointed to a number of other lacunae within research into the country’s past. There are two subjects that require attention: in the first place, little has been written about the evangelical movement that swept the Cape during the mid- and late-nineteenth centuries. That which has appeared has dated and is written from a relatively religious point of view. The social, political, and economic circumstances of the revivals need to be investigated. Secondly, that which has been written about the New Woman in South Africa has been limited to Olive Schreiner, her novels and essays, and influence. A broader study of the phenomenon has the potential to reveal much about the production of, particularly, English-speaking white identities during the early-twentieth century. Indeed, although the amount of work on the construction of white femininities in nineteenth and twentieth century South Africa has increased over the past two decades, there remains much to research, especially as regards the position of young women within Cape gentry society.

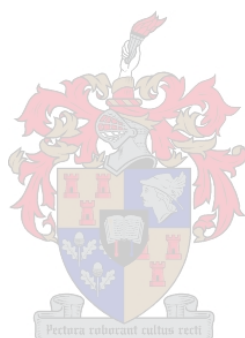
Yet what this analysis of the Huguenot Seminary and College reveals is the ways in which women and girls responded to the social and political tensions and changes within

the community around the school. Although respected members of this middle class community, and active politically during the South African War, these women did not possess the social, fiscal, or political power and influence that their male counterparts did. However, this was a group of women that did not portray itself as a victim of masculine domination. It is clear that Huguenot negotiated a place for a small number of femininities, all fairly similar, within Dutch-Afrikaner society – and that it produced a group of alumnae who extended Huguenot’s influence in their teaching and mission work, and activities in women’s franchise and philanthropic organisations. Importantly, though, this points to the involvement of young women and girls in the production of ‘femininities’. As schools present their pupils with a number of gendered identities around which to define themselves – and as an elite school, Huguenot promoted a hegemonic femininity that, largely, complied with that of the Cape gentry – so pupils are in the position to choose the ideal to which they desire to align themselves. Schools treat these identities with varying degrees of acceptance and attempt to mould the majority of their pupils according to a particular gendered identity.

At Huguenot, Ferguson, Bliss, and the staff espoused a hegemonic femininity that did not change substantially between 1874 and 1910, suggesting that it was a discourse that bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaans parents considered to be suitable for their daughters, and that it was one with which the majority of pupils at the school could identify. Yet, throughout these forty years, the girls and younger teachers either challenged this discourse, or suggested alternatives to it. In 1884 and 1885, the pupils at the Seminary refused to follow the self-reporting system, thus rejecting the self-discipline that underpinned Huguenot’s hegemonic ideal. The annuals for 1895 to 1910 provide two alternate discourses – one ‘professionalist’ the other the ‘College Girl’ – to the pupils. During the South African War, the girls within the school displayed their political allegiances, regardless of the staff’s studied neutrality, and some of the alumnae became active politically. This was continued after 1902, when old Huguenots worked within the women’s franchise movement.

As, especially, elite schools work to perpetuate political perceptions, cultural beliefs, and social attitudes from one generation to the next, so Huguenot consistently promoted a feminine ideal that complied with bourgeois Dutch-Afrikaners’

understanding that women's place was within the home, but justified the education of girls and the position of the independent, educated woman. In this way, the Seminary and College were active in preserving class and racial boundaries, and in ensuring that girls were educated in such a way as to conform to notions of bourgeois 'gentility'. Yet the girls and young women at the institution contributed their own understandings of 'femininity', showing up their willingness to engage with the construction of gendered identities at Huguenot. Thus this investigation demonstrates that youth and gender were not a barrier preventing middle class Dutch-Afrikaner girls and women from involving themselves in the debates surrounding femininity within the Seminary and College during these years. As a result, the school is not seen as simply a means of imposing identities onto young women, but as permitting them the means and the education to engage with these identities critically.



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This bibliography has been divided into:

- I. Manuscript Sources
- II. Published Primary Sources
- III. Secondary Sources
 1. Selected books
 2. Selected chapters in books
 3. Selected articles and conference papers
 4. Theses and dissertations
 5. Pamphlets and commemorative annuals
 6. Websites



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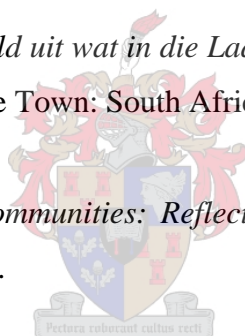
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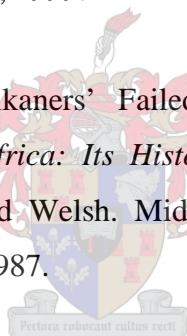
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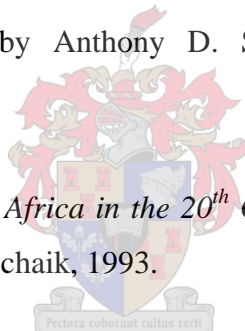
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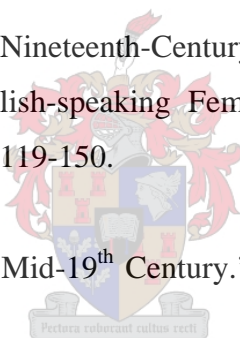
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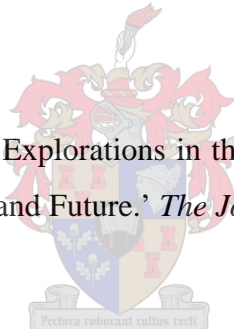
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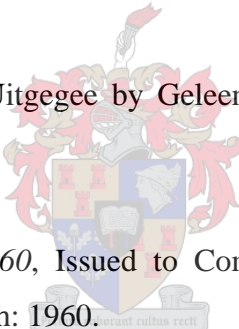
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