

Educating Emotions in Natal and Western Australia, 1854–65

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Abstract

This article argues that schools acted as important “emotional frontiers” in colonial contexts. As places where missionaries, government and Indigenous people met, colonial schools could connect, disconnect and recreate emotional ties. Drawing on two cases from the mid-nineteenth century, one from Natal and the other from Western Australia, the article highlights the centrality of affect—positive and negative—in histories of colonial schooling. Concerns about the vulnerability of Indigenous children shaped these affective exchanges. The examination of education and schools can provide an important way into thinking about the ambiguities of colonial entanglements and exchange.

In Natal, South Africa, in 1856, Anglican Bishop John William Colenso opened the Ekukhanyeni (Place of Light) Institution for the education of sons of chiefs. As the first intake of nineteen scholars arrived at the school in Bishopstowe, near Pietermaritzburg, their mothers refused to leave Ekukhanyeni, sitting on the hills around the school, weeping for the loss of their children.¹ Focusing on Ekukhanyeni, and Anne Camfield’s school in Albany, Western Australia, this article argues that schools acted as important “emotional frontiers” in colonial contexts.² Examining colonial education, uniquely positioned as it was at the interface between domestic worlds and broader imperial projects and ideas, provides an important way into thinking about emotional encounters and exchanges in colonial contexts. When discussing education, colonial governments, missionaries and Indigenous people were often explicit about the nature of colonial projects. In describing what education should do, and how an ideal system would function, they engaged with important questions about childhood, citizenship, race, and what function education could serve in society.

In using the concept of the “emotional frontier” this article draws on recent work in the history of childhood and emotions, arguing that we must take seriously these “spaces and places... where cultural friction and transfer take place.”³ Educational institutions in colonial contexts could act as formative emotional frontiers. As recent work on historical frontiers has shown, frontiers could be intimate, gendered and urban.⁴ Emotional frontiers, therefore, could encompass a broad spectrum of affective exchange. The boundaries schools both reinforced and challenged were not only of space, cultures and civilisations, as many missionaries and teachers argued, but also emotional boundaries. These emotional boundaries raised questions of identity and belonging—which kinds of emotions would be recognised, and who had the authority to record and comment on these emotional exchanges. “Emotional frontiers” emerged in relation to and overlapped with political and missionary frontiers. As settler colonial expansion in both colonies intensified, geographic frontiers pushed further into sovereign territories of indigenous peoples. The schools discussed in this paper were nested in this political context, in which missionaries, settlers and colonial officials were in the process of expanding territory, civilisation and domination across both geographic and cultural domains. In themselves, the material nature of these “emotional frontiers” worked to produce distinctions between adults and children, marking off particular institutions as spaces for the transformation of (savage) children into potentially civilised adults.

The emerging scholarship on connections between childhood and imperial projects shows that “young people were often at the heart of social anxieties and debates about the future of nations and empires.”⁵ This was because children were believed to be particularly vulnerable and permeable and therefore open to moral corruption. Childhood, therefore, provided an important moment when interventions could be made. Born without any specific religious belief, children were particularly civilisable, unlike their heathen parents who had adopted “un-Christian” religious and cultural practices. Educational efforts were therefore attended to with great zeal—if children could be caught and civilised before they were corrupted by heathen influences, they could be the seeds from which reformed (Christian) families could grow. However, while carrying hope for the redemption of their people, children were also easily corrupted.⁶ Examining relationships between parents, children, teachers and pupils is an important way into “understanding configurations of colonial power and identity.”⁷

Children's education, both formal and affective, had important implications for colonial projects more broadly. Civilisation could be learnt, and schools were important "microgeographies" for this education.⁸ Civilisation involved expressing emotions in socially and culturally acceptable ways, according to particular raced and gendered norms.⁹ The social and cultural construction of Indigenous children as "other," but as "civilisable," occurred within colonially constructed school spaces. Schools worked to mark off particular kinds of people from each other: in this case, children, who could learn and be reformed, from adults, and racialised "other" children from White children.¹⁰ This article shows that children's perceived vulnerability also allowed for particular forms of intimacy to emerge that were less possible between adults in colonial contexts.

Issues of education, colonialism and emotion have most often been considered in the context of child removal, particularly in Australia and Canada.¹¹ The idea that children were particularly civilisable was used to justify removing children from corrupting families, in order to provide them with a proper model of domestic life and "familial love."¹² Indeed, as Esme Cleall has argued, for missionary families, the ideas of "'home' and 'family' were imbued with an emotional value that missionary discourse couldn't allow indigenous families to possess."¹³ Because South Africa did not follow a residential schooling model, the place of affect within educational institutions in that context is often overlooked. This does not mean that schools were not a significant site of emotional encounter and entanglement in South Africa as well. As Sarah Duff's work on childhood in the Cape shows, there were particular concerns about the preservation of racial identities that emerged in relation to life stage in South Africa.¹⁴ By taking a comparative approach, the article shows that schools were central to the construction and destruction of affective ties in both places, often in unexpected ways.

Historians of childhood have long noted that finding children in written archives poses a particular set of challenges, not least because children's voices are generally filtered through adult writing and interpretation.¹⁵ We know relatively little about how children experienced colonial encounters and exchanges, beyond that which is recorded by missionaries, colonial officials and others. The cases that the article draws on are part of a larger project relating to the education of Indigenous children in the British

settler colonies during the nineteenth century.¹⁶ The cases are unique in that they describe the emotional worlds of young people in great detail, and they include some material created by young people themselves. Research on the history of emotions makes the distinction between “emotion” and “affect”: the former residing in the mind, the latter as a performative and intersubjective set of relations.¹⁷ However, this article, following the work of Sara Ahmed, is interested in how emotionality “involves an interweaving of the personal with the social and the affective with the mediated.”¹⁸ In other words, I am interested in both the performance and experience of emotion and affect. The intensity of descriptions of Indigenous children’s (imagined or perceived) emotions, and commentary on their affect, shows how these young bodies were considered important sites for the creation of new colonial subjects. The paper therefore focuses both on the experiences of these youths, but also on the representation of their emotional experiences.

Schools were points of contact between missionaries, children and the state, and were saturated with feeling—anxieties about conversion and race mixing, loneliness and homesickness, and also joy and love between teachers and pupils. As Ballantyne and Burton point out, studies of intimacy and empire have often focused on conjugality. Indeed, as Ballantyne points out, “we must not equate or reduce intimacy to sex.”¹⁹ While this article concurs with the view that education was used to promote deeply traumatic processes, it also shows that there were a number of other kinds of intimacy—gendered, raced and generational—that were highlighted, commented upon and sometimes altered in the context of educational endeavours. An awareness of the sometimes-positive affective ties between pupils and teachers does not negate the inequalities of power between these groups. A focus on emotional ties between parents and children, and teachers and pupils, shifts the perspective from conceptions of love and intimacy as sexual, to a concept that was simultaneously tied to reproduction (of a “civilised” race), while also disturbing authoritative relationships between adults and children. As the discussion below shows, the close bonds between adults and children formed and broken at schools had as much effect on teachers and parents as they did on scholars themselves.

This article makes two contributions to the existing literature on colonialism, education and emotions. Firstly, it extends discussion of emotions to relationships between adults and children; and secondly, it highlights the centrality of schooling and education as sites for the examination of unfolding emotional ties. I draw on two cases, one of the negotiations for a boy to enter school in Natal, and one of a young woman leaving school in Western Australia. Both cases highlight the centrality of affect—positive and negative—in the examination of schooling. These cases show that examination of education and schools can provide an important way into thinking about colonial entanglements and exchange. Schools were sites of connection and disconnection amongst pupils, teachers, missionaries and families. Examining the affective and emotional ties that education could create, destroy or alter highlights the centrality of these institutions as spaces of affective encounter. As “highly specialized environments, which (temporarily) isolate and segregate children from wider social and spatial contexts, in order that they might be simultaneously protected from, and prepared for, adult life,” schools provide important sites from which to explore colonial encounters and exchanges.²⁰ I consider the way in which scholars and their parents reacted to and interacted with this changing affective context. Placing affective relationships at the centre of this discussion gives a new perspective on colonial education that takes seriously the “emotional frontiers” of education and schooling.

Colenso, Mpande and Mkhungo: Ekukhanyeni, 1856

The British formally annexed Natal in 1843, taking over the Boer republic of Natalia. To the north of the colony, the independent Zulu kingdom Zululand continued to resist colonial expansion. John William Colenso, a university educated missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), was appointed as the first Bishop of Natal in 1855.²¹ Colenso toured the colony in 1854, before his official appointment. This tour was central in shaping his ideas about the need for a school for training sons of chiefs. His published journal detailing his journey through the colony, *Ten Weeks in Natal*, laid out his plans for an educational institution, to be supported by the government and contributions from the SPG. Colenso planned Ekukhanyeni as an important connection between the heathen masses in Natal, and the civilising effects of Christianity and mission education. He imagined “one strong, central training Institution” where adults and children could live under the pastoral care of a missionary Bishop.²² Students would learn trades, “cultivate the soil, and learn the value of land,

and adopt the habits of civilized life.”²³ Natal was, at this point, a relatively young colony, starved of labour and failing to attract British settlers. Colenso’s school sought to create both labourers and literate converts.

Colenso believed education should take advantage of the fact that Zulu people were not “at all wanting, as a race in intelligence,” and therefore, pupils were taught arithmetic, the older boys from Colenso’s own Euclid, languages, science and geography, as well as practical skills.²⁴ The institution, as a “contact zone of empire,”²⁵ could recreate the way of life of local Africans: not only to evangelise but also to refashion patterns of work and play, reform gender roles and promote intergenerational transfer of these new ways of living.²⁶ Successful education of children could, in the eyes of those involved with Ekukhanyeni, “[prove] the high capability of the Zulu race when the process of culture is undertaken at a plastic and early age.”²⁷ Therefore, there was more at stake than simply educating the boys in the school. Their success (or failure) could be used to indicate the potential of the entire race. This experiment was best carried out during childhood, on the “as yet imperfectly moulded mind”—any later and the “plasticity” of their youth would be lost, and their culture would be fixed.²⁸

Ekukhanyeni opened in 1856, with nineteen pupils. The school was situated next to the Colensos’ farm, Bishopstowe. Colenso’s wife, Sarah Frances, and their daughters taught in the school.²⁹ Unlike many other mission families, Colenso’s children were not repatriated for their education.³⁰ Guy argues that the Colenso children “spent their formative years sharing in colonial life, but also apart from it,” “closer in many ways to the Africans on the mission station than they were to their white contemporaries.”³¹ Like other mission families, the Colensos saw themselves as “moral and behavioural exemplars” to the children living at the station.³² The institution’s staff was told to give “their kind parental attention to the domestic comforts, and personal health and happiness of the boys, by which so much was done towards making them contented with their new circumstances, though every thing, at first, was strange around them.”³³ The school, therefore, was intended to operate as much as a domestic space as a pedagogic one. Teaching the children how to live this version of domestic life, as modelled by the missionary’s family, was as useful as their formal schooling. The school would operate as a site for the remoulding of affective ties—modelling particular kinds of emotional relationships on this emotional frontier.

Although Colenso initially argued that schools should not try to remove children “whether by purchase or persuasion, for educational proceedings,” there were some cases in which he felt it would be politically expedient for children to be educated in a boarding school, away from their families.³⁴ These were generally in strategically important cases where the children of chiefs were, in Colenso’s mind, to be won over to the Christian cause and to become political allies of the local colonial government. Colenso’s correspondence highlighted the success of the institution in removing children from “their wild heathen habits, & from any close contact with their tribes.” He claimed that boys’ relatives were permitted to visit the institution whenever they liked, but after a few months were “so thoroughly satisfied that the children are properly cared for, that they only come to the Station occasionally....”³⁵ Colenso feared that if children went home they would return “to the native mode of life, to lay aside their books, to forget their lessons, to throw off their clothing, and fall back into the idle habits and the vicious practices of heathenism.”³⁶ Colenso’s argument drew on ideas about the plasticity of childhood: when removed from their families’ heathen influences, they would learn “civilisation” over “heathenism.” The “pedagogical project of civilizing emotions” assumed that certain forms of emotional encounter and relationship were civilized, and that these could be taught to children.³⁷ Colenso’s approach to teaching in his institution sought to inculcate these forms of emotional bonds: steadfast, reliable and steady young men could be relied upon to support the missionary’s future projects in the colony.

However, in spite of Colenso’s assertions that the children were voluntarily surrendered to his mission, an edition of *The Natal Journal*, a periodical published in 1857 and 1858 by the Church of England in Natal, told a different story. In fact, it pointed to the difficulties involved with removing children from their families and homes, especially given that most of the scholars were between seven and eight years old. According to the *Journal*, the children, “with tearful eyes,” watched their parents leave Ekukhanyeni. “They were now left alone with strangers, and all these white people,” apart from two male and one female attendant who were “well known to the two chiefs, to wait upon the children for a time, and break the sudden change from savage to civilized life.”³⁸ These glimpses into the experiences of children who were left at the institution give a sense of far more disruption to lives and families than

Colenso's initial descriptions mentioned. Moreover, parents worried about what the school was designed to do: "All the prejudices of the people were against us: they feared the government, lest the children be packed off to England: they feared the Church, lest the effect of our teaching should be to rend the children from their affections, and altogether deprive them of their services."³⁹ These descriptions, even from those invested in the project, indicate that the school was not operating free from political, emotional and cultural constraints. The parents' "fear," their worry about their children being removed to England, reveals how educational projects could be positioned at the interface of domestic and political concerns. Education could damage emotional ties between children and their parents not just once, but twice. Firstly, children could be literally removed from their family contexts, and secondly, they could be culturally removed from their families, disrupting affection in future. The school's location on a political frontier was central to the way that parents reacted to it: the emotional impact of their children's education could have significant domestic and political effects.

Anne Mackenzie, who taught briefly at Ekukhanyeni, mentioned how the connection and disconnection between parents and children impacted on her pupils. When the children were sent home for the Christmas holidays, it was unsettling. On returning to school, they "keenly felt the loss of their mothers, and of the indulgences of their homes."⁴⁰ The pupils began to question Anne about the purpose of their education, the conditions that they lived under, and race relations in the colony more broadly. Colenso warned Anne not to engage in "such discussions with them at all" and eventually an older African pupil, Ndiyane (Udiane), had to stop this line of questioning. He told the young children that

it was good and right that they should love their homes, and their mothers—good and right to enjoy the holidays that had been given them—but now it was good and right that they should return to school... how good the teaching is, and how by means of it, they may be able one day, to help their own people as they never could do if untaught.⁴¹

This assertion—that particular kinds of emotional ties were "good and right"—affirmed particular types of emotional bonds between mothers and children. However, Ndiyane was also privileging particular types of ties over others: the broader sense that the students had a responsibility to their "own people" that they should eagerly prepare for

came before their own emotional contentment. This is indicative not only of the kinds of values being taught at the school but also of the particular version of masculine identity that the school sought to inculcate, in which boys, like their counterparts in English boarding schools, should be responsible, independent and moral. They needed to think of their “private” and domestic worlds, and also to play a role for the public good of their people.⁴² Their gendered emotional development was modeled on and discursively related to the production of upper class (white) men in British public schools. Their emotional education within the institution could, as Sarah de Leeuw has noted of the Canadian context, “ameliorate the childlike qualities of Indigenous subjects, which in turn would result in a civilized (grown-up) Indigenous population.”⁴³

While Colenso claimed that parents were eagerly seeking places for their sons at Ekukhanyeni, there were certainly times that this was not the case. Mkhungo, son of Zulu King Mpande, was amongst the first intake of scholars at the school. Colenso and others at Ekukhanyeni were eager to secure Mkhungo’s presence at the school: he was believed to be next in line for the throne, and was therefore a useful ally for the Church of England missionaries.⁴⁴ Etherington argues that Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs, used Mkhungo as a “hostage” to secure peace in Zululand. He believed that Mpande would not attack Natal if his son was based at the mission there.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the words of Mkhungo himself do not survive in the archives: his voice is mediated through Colenso’s writings. Although I focus on the personal meeting between Mpande and Colenso below, it is worth highlighting that this engagement touched on both domestic and political issues: Mkhungo’s education would not only remove him from his mother’s care, but could have implications for the political context of Zululand as well. Thus, the emotional frontier overlapped with the political here: the remoulding of Mkhungo’s affections and loyalties would ease a politically tense situation on another frontier of European settlement.

Colenso’s *First Steps of the Zulu Mission* described the negotiation about Mkhungo’s education in great detail. This text was a published account of Colenso’s tour of Zululand, accompanied by three senior pupils from Ekukhanyeni: Magema Fuze, Ndiyane and William Ngidi.⁴⁶ Colenso emphasised Mpande’s humanity in their discussions regarding his son’s education. He also aimed to portray loving familial relationships, to draw sympathy from his British readership, like in other mission texts

produced at the time.⁴⁷ Colenso's visit to Mpande had two purposes: firstly, to attain chiefly support for his mission, and secondly to see if Mpande could urge parents to send their children to Colenso's school. Mpande was wary of telling all of his people to send their children to school, saying he "could not give *orders* on that point; it must be talked over with the fathers and mothers."⁴⁸ In this case, we can see the reliance of the missionary on an Indigenous member of the elite in order to promote his mission. As Tony Ballantyne's recent work on New Zealand has shown, "entanglements" between Indigenous people and missionaries were foundational in this form of colonial encounter.⁴⁹ In this example, a missionary and a member of the Zulu political elite were negotiating about the familial bonds between parents and children. The missionary frontier, in which the relocation of children literally and spiritually was fundamental, relied on and overlapped with the political frontier. At the core of this overlap was a central concern over the hearts and minds of adults and children.

By this stage, Mkhungo had been sent to the mission. Colenso described Mpande longing for his son, looking at Magema "being of the size and shape of Umkungo" with tears in his eyes.⁵⁰ Colenso brought with him a picture of Mkhungo at school, one which Monase, one of Mpande's wives, had forbidden Colenso from showing Mpande, lest it "excite for you painful emotion."⁵¹ Colenso also discussed the possibility—never fulfilled—of Mkhungo being sent to England to continue his education. Mpande was reluctant to part with his son, raising the concern that Mkhungo's mother would not assent to her son being sent away. Colenso quoted Mpande saying, "I am afraid. What would his mother do without him? What will she do with herself?" Colenso said that he had spoken to Monase, and had hoped to gain Mpande's assent first. William Ngidi, who was travelling with Colenso, and was party to the conversation, argued that Colenso was aware that "women would cry over it; but he thought that the father would see that it was good for the child, and would consent to it; and after that the women would be reconciled to it, and come to see the good of it also." Mpande's response showed a competing conception of the nuclear family, in which the mother's authority over her son was as important as the man's as head of the household. "'Ah!' said Panda, 'this is a woman's business, not a man's: the child is young, and is the only son of his mother. If *she* consents to it, I shall not object; but still, for my part, I am afraid.'" ⁵²

This passage in Colenso's account of the meeting with Mpande was concluded with a reflection on the king's approach to his family. Colenso commented on the king's "tender feelings as husband and father", arguing that while others had described the king as "selfish, peevish, and stupid" this was not true.⁵³ What was most admirable in Mpande, according to Colenso, was his desire for his son to "learn all the learning of the white man." In Colenso's report, Mpande even urged him to return to ask about the possibility of sending Mkhungo to England, saying that travelling would help him to "acquire manhood and wisdom." Mpande concluded that "he is not my child now: he is yours, and you must do the best you can with him."⁵⁴ Colenso's description of Mpande as a loving husband and father entrenched Colenso's own significance as missionary intermediary, trusted with this emotional exchange. Colenso carefully positioned himself in relation to this emotional frontier—it was important that he was able to interpret and adjudicate this account.

This account marks an important departure from a dominant narrative of Zulu people and Zulu family life as particularly degrading and demoralising to "innocent" children. Reams of mission and government correspondence detailed the inevitable damage of polygamy on children, and of the lack of care of children in Zulu homesteads.⁵⁵ As Vallgård, Alexander and Olsen argue, in settler societies, arguments about the damaging nature of Indigenous families were used to justify child removal policies. Moreover, the idea that these families were not sites of "love" appropriately expressed, "was widely expressed by white reformers and settler states, as was the belief that Indigenous families were unwilling or unable to provide the material and affective conditions for childhood innocence."⁵⁶ Colenso's reading and retelling of this event also spoke to the inherent civilisability of Zulu people: their recognisable and sympathetic emotional worlds could indeed be transformed with a dose of Christian thinking. As Martens notes, in Natal, White settlers and missionaries dismissed African traditional marriage practices as "uncivilised," and "repugnant to mid-Victorian ideals of domesticity."⁵⁷ Women and children were seen as victims of harsh labour conditions, used by husbands and fathers to do "men's work." African women were subjected to a barbarous system of polygamy in which they had little control over family life. Colenso's counter here, noting Mpande's family relations as familiar to mid-Victorian British families, constructed the family as universal, and therefore more sympathetic to metropolitan readers. Moreover, this description in his published

account of his travels fitted with a particular trope in missionary and broader humanitarian writing, where individual Indigenous people might be singled out to provide “ocular proof” of the ability of humanitarian efforts to “civilise” and reform Indigenous subjectivities.⁵⁸

In contrast to the Western Australian case I discuss below, we do not have records to find out what Mkhungo thought about his education. Hlonipha Mokoena has written about Magma Fuze, another of Colenso’s early pupils, who she argues “[expressed] no nostalgia for his home, no regret at having left his parents and no sense of cognitive dissonance at having transferred his filial loyalty from his biological father to Colenso.”⁵⁹ Colenso acted, Mokoena argues, as a “mentor and surrogate father” to Fuze from the time that he enrolled in school at Ekukhanyeni in the 1850s.⁶⁰ At other times, however, Fuze recognised his mother’s loss of her son, and his own “conflicted feelings about leaving her.”⁶¹ It is difficult to tell given the paucity of sources produced by the children themselves what they made of their removal from their families. However, some letters, reprinted by the Church of England in Natal, to prove the success of their education program, give some clues about the pupils’ experiences. In a letter from Ndiyane, then aged fourteen, to his father, Chief Zatshuke, he told his father that

We live altogether happily. We are not injured by anything whatsoever. For, at the time we went, you know, the hearts of some people were sorrowful, as if we were taken by force from them, because they did not know how pleasantly we are living now. In good truth there is nothing here to trouble us.⁶²

A further letter from Mankenjane, son of Sontyenge, then aged eleven, gives a different picture. The letter denounced Black people as unskilled, lazy and violent, concluding that “[t]he white men are good...”⁶³ Although the boy was not asking to be taken away from the institution, the turning away from his own family, in this letter written to his father, must have had emotional effects on both father and son. It is important to note that letters like these were printed to indicate the children’s successful education: they were proof that the children were now able to write, and therefore that the mission project was worthwhile. That they had this affective content gives a sense of the immense emotional disruption that leaving home for school had on these pupils.

Ekukhanyeni closed in 1861 due to rumours that Cetshwayo kaMpande, Mkhungo's half brother, was going to attack the school. Colonial officials believed that Cetshwayo wanted to challenge Mkhungo's right of succession. Although there was no attack, the scholars were all removed from the school and Ekukhanyeni did not open again as the central training institution.⁶⁴

The discussion above has pointed to the centrality of families and parenting in education experiences. The emotional ties between Mpande and Mkhungo were highlighted to show that Zulu families were not uniformly uncivilisable, but rather, had some common features with British families. At Ekukhanyeni, teachers aimed to instil particular values and to create independent scholars who had a sense of duty to their people, sometimes at the expense of intimate affective relationships. The school, situated as it was on a political frontier, also operated as an emotional frontier. This was a site for emotional exchange, where certain kinds of affective relationships were recognised and promoted, and others were overlooked. In the section that follows, I focus on a close relationship between a teacher and student in Western Australia. This example, in contrast to the one above, while also dealing with homesickness, points to some of the ways that schools could remake home more successfully.

Bessy Flower and Anne Camfield: Western Australia, 1852–65

The Annesfield School, in what is present-day Albany, Western Australia, operated between 1852 and 1871. The records of the school are remarkably diverse and detailed. Significantly, given the limited records of Indigenous pupils' views of their education, they include some letters between Anne Camfield and an Aboriginal pupil, Bessy Flower. These provide a rare glimpse of the teacher-pupil relationship.⁶⁵ Camfield, herself an orphan, had come to the colony as a governess and servant to the Mitchell missionary family.⁶⁶ Camfield's background as a governess made her more qualified than many male missionaries in the settler colonies to work as a teacher. She married Henry Camfield, an early settler in the colony, in 1840. He took a number of government positions during that decade, leading to his employment as government resident at Albany in 1848. Although they did not have biological children, during the 1840s Anne worked in the Fremantle Native school, and brought up two mixed-race children in her home.⁶⁷ Anne's Evangelical Christian beliefs underpinned her desire to

work with Aboriginal people. Although not a missionary herself, Camfield's school was sponsored by a government grant and a grant from the SPG. Camfield took up the position of teacher, and taught the children in her home. Henry acted as the institution's superintendent.

Annesfield School catered for Aboriginal children and children of mixed-racial parentage.⁶⁸ Like Colenso, Camfield believed that childhood was the best time for educational interventions to take place: she reported to the colonial secretary that she would not take pupils older than four or five into the school, as by then there was “too much of the Native in them to allow them to partake of the same degree of civilization as the younger ones do attain to.”⁶⁹ Camfield believed child removal was necessary for the civilisation of Aboriginal children. It was, she argued, a “greater cruelty” to enforce British laws that Aboriginal people were incapable of comprehending than to educate their children where they could be “taught their duty to God and their neighbour, and, by the grace of God, accept the salvation purchased for them by our Lord Jesus Christ, and where the parents and friends see them whenever they choose....”⁷⁰ Camfield's emphasis on the fact that parents were entitled to visit their children attempted to put a humanitarian gloss on her support of child removal—like Colenso, she claimed that the boundaries of the school were porous and that family connections were welcome. The children's potential civilisation, however, was geographically located:⁷¹ their removal from the corrupting influences of home and family and relocation in the civilised school would transform them individually, and had the potential to reform the race collectively. Moreover, the maintenance of a specific and isolated space for children and youths entrenched the differences between the states of childhood and adulthood, the former associated with innocence and plasticity, the latter with savagery and fixity.⁷²

Camfield was particularly close to one pupil in her school, Bessy Flower. This is interesting when read in the context of Camfield's broader beliefs about Aboriginal women. She wrote that there was “not in nature, I think, a more filthy, loathesome (*sic*), revolting creature, than a native woman in her wild state. Every animal has something to recommend it, but a native woman is altogether unlovable.”⁷³ However, she had conflicted feelings about the children in her care. Camfield described Flower as “very simple-minded, but quite equal in knowledge and intelligence to an English

girl, who has not had greater advantages.”⁷⁴ Janet Millett, a contemporary of Camfield’s who lived in Western Australia between 1863 and 1869, claimed in her memoir that Camfield was affectionate with her pupils. She believed Camfield “really loves the natives, and treats their children in all respects like those of white persons as to their clothing, diet, and lodging.”⁷⁵ Camfield was invested in Flower’s successful education. Flower, who had started school aged seven or eight in 1858, could prove that Aboriginal people were capable of civilisation. Flower’s aptitude in music and writing, and her conversion, could prove the positive outcomes of policies of protection, Anglicisation and civilisation. Attwood argues that Flower “was transfigured into a symbol of Aboriginal ‘progress’—a useful subject of missionary propaganda.”⁷⁶ As a young adolescent, her development into an “advanced and civilized” adult could be seen as a chance to “advance the status of the race.”⁷⁷ After her education and conversion at Annesfield, Flower was sent to a model school in Sydney, where she studied from 1864 to 1866. Returning to Albany in 1866, she worked as assistant teacher at Annesfield, and showcased her skills as an organist in the Anglican Church.⁷⁸ In 1867, Camfield sent Flower and four other female pupils to Ramahyuck in Victoria.⁷⁹ Flower worked as a teacher at the mission school there from 1867 to 1874. Flower’s story indicates some of the pressures faced by educated Indigenous people, and women in particular.

In examining the relationship between Flower and Camfield, the level of intimacy and affection between them is striking. Paying attention to the strong affective ties between pupil and teacher, who took on familial roles at Annesfield, affirms Lynn Zastoupil’s assertion that “colonialism had no universal essence, but was instead made and remade over time by men and women on both sides of the imperial divide bearing diverse worldviews and pursuing various agendas.”⁸⁰ The complex emotional relationship between Camfield and Flower highlights the multiplicity and complication of colonial interactions: relationships and interactions could have multiple political and emotional meanings. The correspondence between Camfield and Flower is a useful example of strong emotional connections between a maternal figure or teacher and a pupil, but also of the disruption and trauma that education could bring both to Indigenous communities and individuals. It shows how the emotional frontiers created at mission schools operated at the border between domestic life and far broader political agendas.

Flower's letters to Camfield from her new home in Victoria speak to her heartbreak and genuine attachment to Camfield. Flower wrote to Camfield that she would "be your right hand always."⁸¹ She referred to Camfield as "dearest more than mother."⁸² Attwood describes Flower as "shy, anxious and homesick" in Victoria.⁸³ Flower wrote, "I wish I were at home. Never mind I must work hard & then it will be all the sweeter when I come home to help you..."⁸⁴ She described herself and her companions imagining their excitement if Camfield were to visit them at Ramahyuck.⁸⁵ Flower was also concerned about her teacher worrying about her. "When I read your letter", she wrote, "I could not help crying to think of you lying awake half the night."⁸⁶ Camfield's relationship with Flower indicates that the school space could be transformative of emotional worlds for teachers as well: their interactions with pupils, through teaching and the performance of domestic roles, could alter their beliefs about individual pupils and forge emotional ties across perceived racial or emotional boundaries.

What is notable in this case, in contrast to Colenso's above, is that Camfield does not mention Flower's parents. Although her parents worked for the Camfields, and her sister Matilda was part of the first intake of scholars, it seems that their position was not recognised by Camfield. Although Bessy did ask Anne to send her love to her mother, this was a rare recognition of her biological mother's parental status.⁸⁷ Missionaries often saw themselves as "mother and father figures, and treated all Aboriginal people as their figurative children, to be tutored and preached to, chastised and rewarded, as their missionary parents saw fit."⁸⁸ Camfield's failure to recognise the status of Flower's biological parents reinforced the separation between Flower's original home and the home she now found herself in. Camfield's role as parent here was central to Flower's understanding of her, and was also indicative of a wider relationship between missionaries (in this case a teacher) and Indigenous people in which missionaries performed a parenting role, guiding colonised peoples into new roles in colonial societies.⁸⁹

There was another way in which the school operated as an emotional frontier, and this had to do with the regulation of sexual relationships.⁹⁰ Initially Annesfield's pupils were exclusively female, but because Camfield was concerned about finding

suitable husbands for educated girls, it later opened to boys as well. Camfield hoped that Flower, a successful example of Aboriginal educability, would marry a Moravian missionary at Ramahyuck, a plan that did not come to fruition.⁹¹ Flower ended up marrying a mixed-race man, Donald Cameron, which, according to Attwood, made her less popular with the missionaries on the station, as he was not her educational equal.⁹² As Kenny has argued of the Moravian mission, “Marriage became the ground where the traditional fought the mission hardest.”⁹³ For Aboriginal people, marriage extended the surveillance of their emotional relationships. Education shaped intimate relationships, both between teachers and pupils, and between sexual partners. It operated on the frontier of the mind, reforming and shifting affective ties, and changing ways of thinking. Indeed, as Katherine Ellinghaus and Joanna Cruickshank highlighted, marriage practices were a source of concern in Native institutions in different parts of Australia, and indeed, in other parts of the British Empire.⁹⁴ Institutions ran on the belief that if boys and girls were educated according to the correct gender roles for a European household, the availability of the right sort of marriage partners would “create the foundation for the permanent transformation of Indigenous people.”⁹⁵ The schools would nurture “devout Christian adolescents” who were intended to marry one another, spreading Christianity and civilisation.⁹⁶ The discussions about who would make a suitable husband for Flower touched on these issues. The role of schools in reforming emotions went far beyond the exchanges that occurred within the walls of the institutions. The discourses about education, race, and affect that were nurtured in schools played out in sexual and romantic intimate relationships as well.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that schools were central sites of encounter and exchange in colonial contexts. As places where families, missionaries, children and governments came together, schools were formative in creating and recreating emotional experiences. They acted as “emotional frontiers”: not only were schools implicated in connecting and severing emotional ties, they were also involved with recreating particular patterns of affect, including emotional intimacies. Schools must be taken seriously as important sites for reading colonial encounters, and particularly for thinking about the emotional implications of colonialism on families and children. While this discussion is reliant on an archive created and curated by adults, the paper

shows that we should take emotional encounters, particularly those involving children, seriously to gain a nuanced perspective on the remoulding of children in colonial contexts.

In the cases discussed in this article, we see how the bonds forged in educational institutions were based on a model of civilised familial relationships as well as particular raced and gendered conceptions of emotional life. The boys at Ekukhanyeni were told that loving their mothers was “good and right,” and parental affection was recognised as a counter to dominant narratives about Zulu people’s emotional state. For Bessy Flower and the other pupils at Annesfield, the creation of Christian, heterosexual, child-bearing relationships was central to their performance of the correct standards of love and care. As the nineteenth century progressed, emotions and race were increasingly bound together in the explanatory logic of missionaries, scientists and doctors, who increasingly thought about race not only in terms of physical traits but also in terms of temperament.⁹⁷ The mid-nineteenth century provided a moment at which interventions into children’s lives were made with relative optimism: their malleability meant they could have their social and emotional worlds reformed and remodelled to reproduce Christian, gendered families and households. Although there were many differences in educational experiences and institutions in Natal and Western Australia, there were a common set of perceptions about the relationship between race, emotion and childhood that underpinned educational endeavours in both spaces.

Schools are important sites of study because they allowed for particular types of intimacies between educators—often acting *in loco parentis*—and their pupils. In colonial contexts where the relationship between coloniser and colonised was so often represented as a paternalistic or parental relationship, the presence of children could challenge these emotional divides. In other words, in schools there was a clear boundary between who was in a position of authority and who was not—by virtue of age children were more vulnerable and inherently seen as less powerful than their teachers. This legible distinction between adults and children allowed a particular kind of emotional space to flourish in which an intimacy modelled on the metaphor of the nuclear family could develop, and the immediate implications of race which organised adult relationships could momentarily be overlooked. The examination of schools as “emotional frontiers” can provide a way into thinking about the messiness and

ambiguity of colonial encounters. Relationships that emerged between teachers, pupils and parents highlight how schools were important sites for encounter between different people and groups, and how the geographically separate place of the school could function as a space for emotional bonds between people of different generations to be made and broken.

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Notes

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