Dominion: architecture as a symbol of authority in the Eastern Cape Colonial Frontier

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By

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ABSTRACT

My mini thesis is an exploration of architecture as part of the landscape of Grahamstown and how ideas of dominion and subordination of the non- white citizens of this town were asserted or communicated through space. I concur with theories about architectural buildings as objects that express power and reinforce power relations in any given society. Markus (1993) goes into great lengths to explain how buildings are primarily about power and town planning is a means of control. The area under consideration is very rich in history especially during the period that interested me which is the nineteenth century as this was a period of the establishment of Grahamstown, firstly, as a military establishment and then as a small town serving as a residential area for the British Settlers who arrived in 1820. Throughout the mini thesis I have unpacked the nature of power itself by referring to Njoh (2009) who refers to different categories of the use and especially the abuse or demonstration of power.

It wouldn't do justice to an area as rich in history as the area which is now referred to as the Albany to not dwell into some of the events that were played out here, some of which had consequences and implications for the rest of South Africa. After 1820, the town developed as more buildings of domestic houses, churches, houses of officials, prisons and schools were built. In the thesis I unpack the different architectural styles like the Georgian, Victorian and Cape Dutch styles that formed a significant part of this small town. I draw attention to the ideas of dominion that Njoh elucidates, which were played out in the building of the town architectural structures.

Architecture demonstrated British might and power through the imposition of British and European architectural styles on an African landscape. The sheer magnitude of the buildings, I argue, was carefully planned and the use of durable materials, often stones that were imported from abroad, was a carefully orchestrated move to demonstrate British wealth and power through intimidation and seduction.

Thomas Baines was one of the artists who spent some time in Grahamstown and made a series of the landscape of this town. My interest in Baines for purposes of this thesis is the manner in which he represented Grahamstown and how he was propagator of British imperialism under the guise of 'spreading civilisation' among the 'back ward' inhabitants of this continent. My painting practice is influenced by and responds to the vacant land theory especially Baines' works which were executed to present a Grahamstown as a purely British town 'emptying' it of all traces of non- British non- European dwellings or citizens. My practice brings back the layers of history that I have witnessed and the painting surface is slowly built up with water metaphorically destroying the solid structures that were built in the nineteenth century in Grahamstown. As a person who has lived through apartheid and a new dispensation in South Africa, this is reflected in my paintings with a tension between aesthetically pleasing painting styles and disturbing rough surface textures. Anselm Kiefer is the artist who has influenced my work in the manner of working he prefers and also in his tendency to look back at past periods in history.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all sources that I have used have been acknowledged by complete references. This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for Master of Fine Art at Rhodes University. I declare that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at another university.

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INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this mini thesis is power and dominion and how these are symbolised in our architecture and the representations of architecture and the landscape. I will discuss and unpack theories around power with reference to writers like Njoh (2009) who have delved deep into the nature of power and how power is expressed in architectural spaces and representations of such. Markus (1993) states that buildings are not neutral but political. They 'are primarily about power and that to best understand buildings one has to study society and its power structures' (1993: 343).Mitchell in *Landscape and Power* (1994: 1) deals with the notions of the fashioning of the landscape that is enacted by the construction of buildings among other things, into instruments and vehicle of power and a 'process by which social and subjective identities are formed'. My focus will be Grahamstown as part the Eastern Cape Colonial Frontier which was a place where numerous wars were fought and one of the first towns in South Africa that the British changed into 'little Englands'. Markus (1993) argues that architecture was used as 'vehicles to communicate political ambitions of absolute power and control' in Britain and in British colonies. I will explore how architecture and urban planning was used as an imperial strategy to 'conquer, occupy and colonise' that Britain carried out with precision (Ibid: 2).The thesis is an exploration of dominion and how this was expressed in architectural structures and their representation in the Eastern Cape Colonial Frontier. The name 'Colonial Frontier' is used interchangeably with the word Grahamstown or Makana/ Albany District for purposes of clarity and avoiding confusion with regard to the area under discussion which assumed different names in different periods in history.

Markus (1993: 34) argues that buildings carry messages of power and political control. He extrapolates that architectural buildings are not merely art works or objects of investments but they are primarily about power and that a study of buildings is a better way of understanding society. He further propositions that 'buildings reinforce the structures of power in society'. The period that Markus looks at is that of 1750 – 1850 which opened with Enlightenment and ended with the first Industrial Revolution. This period saw the 'emergence of modern building types' (Markus: 1993).This was also the time by which British imperialism and colonialism were most radical[1]. Buildings in Britain and in British colonies became vehicles to communicate political ambitions of absolute power and control (Ibid).Markus (1993: 343) propositions that the study of architecture is a way of understanding society and also the study of architecture can better make us able to understand society. He elucidates by saying that buildings in a society pre-occupied with power will inevitably demonstrate or communicate such power. Through buildings 'our inner and the material worlds are reconciled' and ideas made concrete (ibid). According to Robson and Orange (2012: 1):

> British colonial expansion in the Eastern Cape of Southern Africa offers a unique insight into the British method of colonisation, land acquisition and consolidation.

The basis for a hasty construction of permanent buildings in the Albany district was to act on the belief the British settlers had that they had land rights on the grounds that there was no

[1] 'Colonialism, in a very general sense, entails the establishment of political, military, economic and /or religious control by one society over another' (Reid et al, 2010: 370).

permanent Black settlement when they arrived in this area (Carruthers 1995: 131). Carruthers further states:

> Settlement, in the Western sense, meant the erection of permanent dwellings, permanency being measured by the labour involved in building and the types of structures established in the proximity of one another to establish a community (ibid).

British colonial authorities followed a philosophy of racial segregation and subordination of 'other' racial groups believed to be inferior and a threat to their policy of expansionism. These ideas were expressed physically in colonial spaces (Njoh 2007: 579). Urban planning was used to control the movement of citizens in the colonial frontier as white citizens were restricted to Grahamstown and surrounding farms and the Khoekhoe and Xhosa townships were out of bounds to them (Mocke, Wallis & Gunning, 1996). Njoh (2009: 302) expounds more on power in the built environment. He presents two categories of the exercising or abuse of power: namely 'power to' and 'power over'. 'Power to' refers basically to the absolute power wielded by state authorities to make citizens do as they desire. Dovey in Njoh (2009) ascertains five forms of 'power over' citizens that are relevant to the built environment; force, coercion, seduction, manipulation and segregation. In the following paragraphs I explain how these forms of dominion took place in Grahamstown.

Force as a form of 'power over' or dominion entails architectural systems designed to confine those considered by the state to be real or perceived threat within specific space. We see this in colonial Africa with the use of town planning as a tool for racial segregation (Njoh 2007: 581). This meant building of townships for Black people far from the towns for the whites. In Grahamstown there was a river separating the two dwelling places and curfews were imposed on movement of black people (Marshall 2009:55). Within towns themselves, 'servant's quarters' or twentieth century hostels in South African towns were 'enframed' behind high walls or demarcated behind employer's houses to ensure complete obscurity (Ibid).

Coercion was used through the construction of gigantic monuments and buildings of huge scale that are intimidating as a form of displaying the state's (in this case Europe) resourcefulness and technological might. These structures were built to secure compliance and to undermine and belittle African structures (Njoh 2009). In Grahamstown many such buildings exist, the highest of which is the Saint Georges Cathedral.

Seduction is the use of media and other resources to promote European standards alongside condescending treatment of African traditional construction practices and materials, thereby expanding markets for European goods. Manipulation is a form of coercion exemplified by the building of servants quarters in white- only residential areas as a means to make domestic servants feel favoured by Europeans when in actual fact the presence of their dwellings in towns was meant to make their masters enjoy 'round- the- clock domestic services from their domestic servants' (Njoh, 2009: 303). There are such servants' quarters in most Grahamstown homes.

Lastly, segregation is acted out in the built environment by the construction of boundaries which are designed to separate individuals of different races, cultures or classes. This is a deliberate act that is designed 'to create privileged enclaves of access' (Ibid). Before the 1820s AmaXhosa mainly stayed in their own environment beyond the Fish River and because they were subsistent there was very little inducement for them to cross the boundary to work as labourers in Grahamstown. AmaXhosa built beehive huts made of grass and reeds.

There were four major groups at the Eastern Cape Colonial Frontier during the beginning of the nineteenth century, a period that my thesis deals mainly with. These were the British, Khoekhoe, AmaXhosa and the Dutch or Afrikaner (I use the term Afrikaner because the group was later to adopt this name because they were not purely Dutch made up of different nationalities like French, Portuguese, Dutch and others that worked for the Dutch East India Company [Thompson 1985]). AmaXhosa lived mainly in the area between the Keiskamma River and the Great Kei River according to Peires (1977: 1). The place of origin of the AmaXhosa is much contested as Mocke, Wallis and Gunning (1996: 94) claim that the AmaXhoasa and other Nguni groups like AmaZulu, AmaSwazi gradually moved southwards from the Great Lakes of Africa searching for grazing land and landed at the area around the Fish River exactly at the same time that the Dutch and British settlers were going beyond the borders of the Cape Colony. This theory supports the 'Vacant Land' theory that I critique in this thesis.

There were wars fought between the Dutch and AmaXhosa over a number of years most of which were fought during the nineteenth century and these were known as Frontier Wars. In 1820 the British government which had taken over administration of the Cape decided to import British citizens to occupy the land between the Fish River and Algoa Bay to serve as a human wall of protection to check the movements of AmaXhosa. This move was well funded and groups of British citizens arrived in Algoa Bay and settled in farms around Grahamstown. Farming here was problematic. As a result most of the settlers ended up taking residence in Grahamstown which soon changed from a military village built to accommodate British soldiers to a residential village that assumed a British character in the layout of streets and also in British architectural styles. British imperial conquests and British interest in the Cape Colony as a strategic colony for the ongoing trade with India led to Britain occupying the Cape in 1806 for the second time and now permanently (Mocke, Wallis & Gunning 19996: 142). One of the strategies of the British imperialists was to build permanent architectural structures on British colonies which demonstrated British permanent presence on these lands. Afrikaners also fled from the Cape which was now under British control in what became known as the Great Trek. They also built houses along the way but the houses were lone farm houses built in the Cape Dutch architectural style but for purposes of this thesis I look at the British architectural structures which were more permanent and built to assert British authority and to demonstrate the might and wealth of this empire. Carruthers (1995: 132) concludes that the British constructed towns with houses built in Georgian and Victorian styles in all territories occupied as a ploy to mark these territories as belonging to the British as the houses , churches and administration buildings were built of the most durable building

materials like stone, marble and plaster. Western aesthetic values, technology and religion were imposed on the land with building materials imported from Europe (Ibid).

Chapter one focuses on the following themes: Very little is written on the non-white inhabitants of Grahamstown but Marshall (2008) recounts how large groups of refugees and recently emancipated slaves took residence in Grahamstown. The largest single group to arrive in Grahamstown was the AmaMfengu who were captured by the British soldiers in the war of 1834- 35 (Marshall 2008: 90). A township that had 1700 people in 1847 which became known as Fingo Village was built. The living conditions were ghastly as these inhabitants of Grahamstown were marginalised 'poor and destitute' (Ibid: 57). Njoh (2007: 579) writes that British colonial authorities enforced a policy of racial segregation targeted at the subordination of 'other' race groups they believed to be inferior and a threat to their policy of expansionism. He explains how the best amenities and large tracks of land were allocated to the white inhabitants in British colonized territories. The most densely populated areas were those of blacks. Fanon in Njoh (2007: 595), a psychiatrist, concludes that racial segregation of living spaces and the building of large buildings on British towns was a calculated move to demonstrate power and to 'belittle' and assert the inferiority status of the non-white populations in British colonised territories in an effort to stifle resistance and to ensure compliance and fear of British authorities.

Chapter two of my thesis dwells on Thomas Baines and how his ideas of the legitimacy of British imperialist and colonialist ideas were expressed in his representations of Grahamstown's landscape and its architecture. Baines subscribed to the British ideologies of being the legitimate 'owners' of the Cape Colony on the basis that when they arrived here there were no permanent African dwellings and the presence of durable, permanent buildings denoted permanent occupation of the land. In the absence of such structures the colonizers deemed this land 'vacant' that means 'open to occupation and belonging to no- one'. The Khoekhoe, which was the group the British claimed was present at the Cape when the Dutch arrived in 1652, were nomads who could therefore claim no possession of the land. Baines, in his paintings of Grahamstown, only represented town house and empty hills around it although when he arrived in 1848 there were already more than 1700 Fingos living at Fingo Village let alone the Khoekhoe who had been citizens of the town for even longer (Marshall 2008).

Chapter three of my thesis is a discussion of what influenced my own work and the artists that inspired the work that I produced for the final exhibition. I narrate the story of how growing up in Cathcart and Stutterheim cultivated my appreciation of the landscape. However, it was only later on in my life five years after graduating with a BFA degree that events following the death of my sister and best friend propelled me to the landscape. My lecturers who were landscape painters also played such a big role in my development as a landscape painter. My work in this exhibition centres on the idea of 'Dominion' or authority and how this is expressed in colonial spaces especially with regards to architecture and its symbolism. Grahamstown is one of the towns in the Eastern Cape that are rich in British history and as the town that the 1820 settlers first settled in is one that has a character of a

typtical British space. This influenced my study of this town as architecture reflects the ideas of dominion that were prevalent during the colonial period of the nineteenth century when these architectural structures were built. Anselm Kiefer is one of the painters that have influenced my work. He was born on the last days of the massacre of the Jews by German army called the Holocaust and he lived to see the end of that era. I too have lived through the last years of Apartheid which was a form of dominion with atrocities committed in attempts to maintain that unjust system of government.

CHAPTER ONE

WHITE SETTLEMENT AND ASSERTION OF AUTHORITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE COLONIAL FRONTIER

EARLY TOWNSHIP HOUSES

The largest group of refugees to arrive in Grahamstown were the 'AmaMfengu' who were captured and rescued from serving as slaves for Gcaleka Xhosa by the colonial forces in the war of 1834- 35 (Marshall 2008: 90). They transferred their allegiance quickly from Gcaleka to the colony and many declared a disposition to adopt colonial values and institutions and subsequently converted to Christianity and sent their children to colonial schools (ibid: 92). Unlike AmaXhosa labourers who began entering the colony in greater numbers during the 1830s (as a result of the intensification of conflict and land loss), the AmaMfengu had no desire or inclination to leave as they had nowhere to go. They started building houses at what later became known as Fingo Village and in 1847 this village had 1 700 people living in it (ibid).

The official recognition of Fingo Village marked the beginning of efforts by the colonists to maintain closer control over the town's black residents. Square houses were built on right angled streets intended to conform to the appearance of the rest of the town (Hunt in Marshall 2008). As Marshall (2008: 92) writes:

> The construction of African housing in such a way as to conform to European standards was frequently seen in the colonial context as an important step in 'civilising' Africans and rendering their difference less threatening to settlers.

The irony was that the new township dwellers had neither the means nor inclination to construct their own dwellings according to European standards, and the colonists were also not prepared to invest in the infrastructure of the township. Grahamstown soon developed into a town of contrasts as slum conditions of the township negated the colonists' vision of an English community (Marshall 2008). Clearly, two world views clashed as settlers witnessed Africans and Khoekhoe walking naked through the streets of Grahamstown and undermining the British Settlers idea of creating a 'little England'. Eventually, Africans were forced to wear European clothes in 1845 (Ibid: 57). 'AmaMfengu, AmaXhosa and Khoekhoe made a large and economically vital segment of Grahamstown's population in the 1840s, but remained marginalised, poor and destitute' (ibid). For the first time there was a surplus of potential labour in Grahamstown. Marshall (2008: 159) observes that the British settlers tried to recreate an environment as close as possible to that of Britain. Everyday activities of the British settlers replicated this yearning and English clothing was worn, English books were read and English food was eaten as nearly as possible. However, this endeavour to create an 'English in miniature' as Marshall (2008) articulates, was a failure as Grahamstown's population became noticeably diversified, gaining a significant African population by the mid-1840s. Moreover, those Africans who were allowed to settle in the town were not granted equal status as citizens that whites enjoyed. The majority of them lived in impoverished townships (ibid: 160).

COLONISATION OF THE CAPE, CONFLICT ON THE EASTERN FRONTIER AND THE FOUNDING OF GRAHAMSTOWN

Jan van Riebeeck was the leader of the first group of Europeans to settle in South Africa in the seventeenth century. He was sent to start a supply station for ships by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) which was formed by a combination of all small Dutch companies (Mocke, Wallis & Gunning 1996: 84). The DEIC was an enormous trading company, with colonies in the East and the Cape became their colony and not a colony of the Dutch government. They governed the Cape Colony without any interference from the Dutch Government. This company sent ships to the East to buy spices, sugar, milk etc. These products were brought to Europe and sold at good prices. As the voyage from the Netherlands took many months, sailors were often ill on the way as a result of consuming stale food and water. There was a dire need for a supply station halfway to the East and the Cape was the ideal spot for this venture.

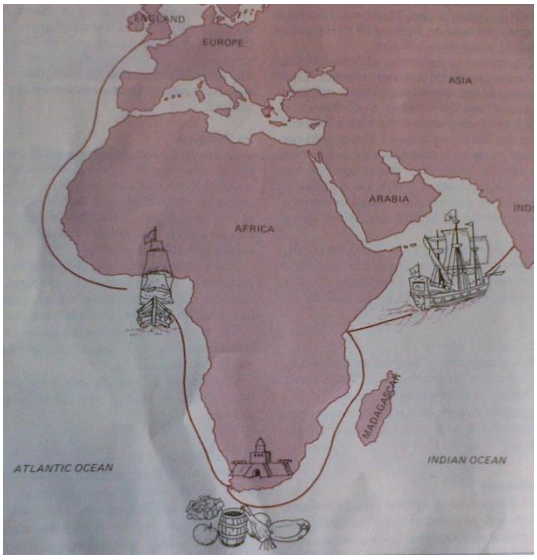

Fig. 1: The sea route from the Netherlands to India (Source: Mocke et. al, 1996)

Political events that played out in Europe had implications for the Cape Colony. For example, the French Revolution which led to people in European countries overthrowing their kings led to the first British occupation of the Cape. This occupation was a calculated move to protect the Cape Colony from the French. Thus we see the first establishment of British institutions of governance at the Cape and the first influx of the British to the Cape that made it easier for Britain to annex the Cape for the second time permanently. During the French Revolution the powers were taken away from the king and the people of France were free and decided to help other countries to gain freedom (Mocke, Wallis & Gunning 1996: 1330). The people of the Netherlands were also discontented with their King. France decided to help the Dutch by invading the Netherlands and the Prince of Orange fled to Britain. The Prince of Orange asked Britain to defend the Cape from the French by taking it over temporarily until he returned to

the Netherlands. Sluysken, who was the Governor of the Cape at this time, chose to defend the Cape from the British and fought back but was defeated in 1789 and a peace treaty was signed and the DEIC surrendered the Cape to the British albeit temporarily. Subsequently, General Craig was made Governor of the Cape.

The Peace of Amiens was signed in 1802 and the war between France and Britain came to an end temporarily[2]. One of the terms of this treaty was that the Cape Colony be given back to the Dutch and the Cape therefore became a colony of the Batavian Republic (as Holland or the Netherlands was then called). J.A. de Mist was appointed Commissioner General of the Cape to make laws for the Colony and J.W. Janssens became Governor of the Cape. The Batavian rule of the Cape lasted until 1806 when the British invaded the Cape for the second time after realising they needed it as a refreshment station as it expanded its trade with the East (Mocke, Wallis & Gunning 1996: 142).

The DEIC at first tried to control the movement of Dutch stock farmers at the Cape by setting boundaries so that everybody was kept close to Cape Town. W.A. van Der Stel, who became governor of the Cape in 1699, gave farmers permits to keep cattle and trade with the Khoekhoe. The farmers soon had large heards and began searching for grazing land. Families of farmers began slowly moving from one place to another in search of new grazing land. This movement continued until they reached the Fish River in 1778 where they met AmaXhosa who were moving in a southerly direction, also in search of grazing land for their cattle. Although in 1779 the Fish River was declared a boundary of the Cape Colony, and Dutch farmers finally settled down to work their farms and till the land, there were clashes with the AmaXhosa over grazing land and also cattle thieving and cattle raids became a common occurrence (Ibid: 104) The British intervened in 1811 and sent troops to the Eastern Frontier to deal with the AmaXhosa chiefs (Omer- Cooper 1987: 44 in Holshausen, 1999) and to make a buffer zone between AmaXhosa and the Dutch farmers. Even after this the cattle thieving continued and Sir John Cradock, who was Governor of the Cape at the time, decided to establish a military headquarters on the frontier (Holshausen 1999:11).

In January, 1812, Sir John Cradock informed the Colonial Secretary of his intention to put in place measures to contain the local inhabitants within their own territory - that is beyond the Fish River (Thomson, n.d). 'To effect this policy of restraint…' Thomson (n.d: 3) relates, 'Lt. Col. John Graham, who had played a prominent part in clearing the indigenous inhabitants from the Zuurveld was commissioned to find a suitable spot for the military post with permanent barracks'. To accomplish this task, Col. Graham was accompanied by 2nd Lieutenant Stockenstroom, who had chased the AmaXhosa out of the colony after riding all the way from Graaff- Reinet with his burghers (ibid). They first chose an abandoned farm called Noutoe which was later known as Table Farm about seven miles from the centre of today's Grahamstown but Stockenstroom did not favour this place and they carried on with their journey on horseback. They were looking for a place that had adequate water supply,

[2] This was an agreement that was signed at Amiens on 27 March 1802 by France, Britain, Spain and the Batavian Republic during the Napoleonic wars.

was naturally protected and where communication with the vantage points overlooking the Fish River could be carried out at all times without fail (ibid). Thomson (n.d: 3) writes:

> Under a large mimosa tree standing in stately solitude midway between two water courses, Graham and Stockenstroom stopped to enjoy their final deliberations. Whether it was the spell cast by the mimosa on that blazing hot day, or the sight of a burnt- out wattle and daub farmhouse not one hundred yards away acting as a grim reminder of the urgency of the situation, or whether it was purely strategic necessity which influenced the decision will never be known, but when Col. Graham rose to his feet and removed his sword and pistol belt from an overhanging branch, where had carelessly slung it after his exhausting ride, the decision had been taken. The farm of De Rietfontein, a lone place farm abandoned by Lucas Meyer in April, 1810 became the military headquarters of the Zuurveld…

On 14 August 1812 Grahamstown was founded named after Colonel Graham (Collier 1961 in Holshausen 1999). Sir John Cradock named the post after Col. Graham in recognition of his efforts in driving the local inhabitants out of the area (Ibid). Two years later the area around Grahamstown formerly known as the Zuurveld[3] was given the name Albany which originated from the city of Albany in New York State, USA '…as the father of Colonel Cuyler had been mayor of that city '(Thomson, n.d: 4). The Mimosa tree stood in the centre of what became the main street in Grahamstown until it was uprooted and had to be removed after a violent wind (Ibid). At the time of the arrival of Colonel Graham, the area now called Grahamstown, had one house belonging to an Afrikaner farmer called Lucas Meyer. Temporary huts made of wattle and daub were built near the abandoned Meyer house, which was re-roofed to serve as a military office situated on what is now Cathedral Square (Greig 1971: 121). The house had a thatched roof, huge windows, thick mud walls, a homely stoep and a Flemish gable (Sherfield 1912: 163). In 1815 the military moved to what is today known as Fort England where military barracks were built. Major Dundas, who was the first Resident Magistrate of Grahamstown laid out the first streets starting with High Street (Ibid: 164). The Gaol, the oldest building in Grahamstown, was then built in 1813 (Vos 1968: 11). The first houses built by the military were cottages with hipped roofs or ridged roofs ending with gables (Reynolds 1974: 21). The roofing material was grass. They also used limestone and clay bricks (ibid). A small settlement grew up around the barracks but in 1819 AmaXhosa chief Makana attacked Grahamstown and the entire outpost was nearly wiped out in a bloody battle. The various practices of colonialism were meant to change physical spaces by erecting Western architectural structures on the African landscape, thus simultaneously eliminating the old and producing new spaces modelled on European values and symbolising political, cultural and economic domination of the British subjects (Bester in Stevenson 1999: 137). This was a creation of the very first racially segregated architectural structures with buildings at Fort England representing British values and culture and also triumph of British imperialism (Njoh 2007: 580). These further validated the erroneous belief on the part of Europeans (the British

[3] This was a coastal stretch of approximately 150 kilometres between the Fish and Sundays rivers.

and the Germans in particular) that theirs was a superior race. The architecture and living conditions of the inhabitants of Grahamstown was far superior to that of the township dwellers the Khoekhoe and AmaXhosa (Ibid). Buildings changed the landscape permanently and this symbolised the permanent colonisation and occupation of the land. Western aesthetic values were imposed and power relations between the white and black races were clearly spelled out (Carruthers 1995:132). The British had come to occupy the African soil on their own terms.

Fig.2: A cottage in Beaufort Street drawn by Frederick I' Ons in 1834 (Source: Reynolds 1974)

Fig.3: A settler's home with a hipped roof as drawn by a military officer (Source: Reynolds 1974: 23)

THE ARRIVAL OF THE 1820 SETTLERS IN GRAHAMSTOWN

The British Government decided to populate Grahamstown with settler- farmers that came from England in 1820. These would serve as a human buffer on the frontier to stabilise the region and prevent Xhosa migration to the Cape (Butler 1970: 2). Following the Napoleonic Wars England faced massive unemployment and the Governor of the Cape Colony Lord Charles Somerset appealed to British citizens who wished to reside in the Eastern Frontier to apply and 90 000 responded to this government sponsored relocation scheme. More than 4000 English, Irish, Scots and Welsh nationals sailed from the United Kingdom to the Eastern Frontier (Butler 1970). In the winter of 1819/20 twenty- one ships left Great Britain and Ireland for the Cape.

On board were 5 000 men, women and children (Butler 1968: 1). This included artisans, shopkeepers, soldiers, sailors and professional men (Ibid). They arrived in Algoa Bay on 10 April 1820. They were issued with tools, ploughs and other farm implements on arrival in today's Port Elizabeth, which was then known as Fort Frederick (Burchell, n.d). On 18 April 500 persons in 96 wagons left Fort Frederick for the Albany District (Butler 1970: 3). They were settled in the land between the Bushmans and Fish Rivers by Colonel Cuyler. They built tents and later made wattle and daub huts but floods made life in such huts miserable and they built brick and stone cottages some of which are still standing today (Butler 1970:5).

The settler- farmers arrived from England with little knowledge of farming and difficulties set in which included lack of food, wild animals, drought, floods rust, crop failure and the uncomfortable reality of finding themselves on a wild terrain (Collie 1961 in Holshausen). By 1823 it was clear that the agricultural settlement had failed and the 'settlers' were allowed to seek work in the towns. Some of these settlers stayed in Grahamstown to start businesses and some went to Cape Town and others to Natal (Butler 1970). Those who remained (on their farms and in Grahamstown) suffered as a result of a succession of frontier wars, the last of which occurred in 1877.

When the settlers arrived there were about 12 houses in Grahamstown which was a little village (Seymour 1976: 201). The military continued to be an important aspect of Grahamstown. During the 1810s when the earliest house were built, some soldiers were builders. The soldiers lived in dilapidated grass huts until 1815 when the new barracks were constructed called the "East Barracks" and later renamed Fort England. The military headquarters were on the border of the town (Marshall 2008: 46). An attempt to move the troops to the centre of the town with the construction of Scott's barracks on High Street in 1823 failed when the badly built houses had to be abandoned and the troops returned to Fort England. Subsequently, the military was allocated the space at the top of High Street developing an extensive infrastructure (Ibid). Troops frequently made their presence felt in the town by marching through the streets and army bands provided entertainment. The time was marked by a canon from Fort Selwyn (a fort on the hill built for surveillance). Founded as a military outpost, Grahamstown was subjected to numerous attacks from AmaXhosa fighting four devastating frontier wars between 1834 and 1877 (Unknown, n.d). In spite of all the wars, the town continued to develop and expand. In chapter 3 of this thesis I will compare

the attacks posed against the town of Grahamstown especially its well- preserved colonial monuments and 19th century architecture with attacks this town faced from the local inhabitants during the frontier wars.

EARLY PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN GRAHAMSTOWN

Before 1820 Grahamstown consisted of only a few houses. In 1812 the Deputy Landrost, Major Fraser and the military commander, Colonel Lyster, were instructed to establish buildings suitable for civilian administration (Marshall 2009). Among these was a prison (built in 1814), a messenger's house and a house for the deputy Landrost (Ibid). Building of these structures was slow due to shortage of skilled workers and before they were even completed steps were made to allocate plots to civilians to build their own homes. The area around Church Square consisted mainly of military buildings with most civilian housing standing in High and New Streets(Ibid:18).

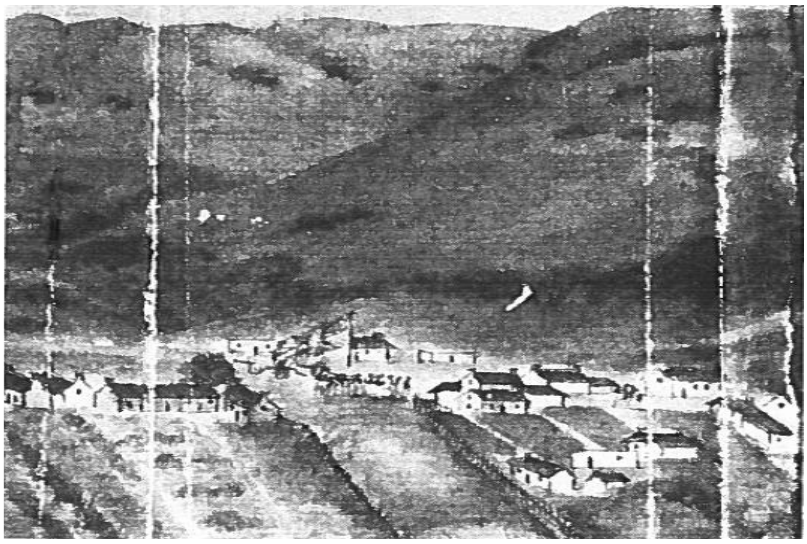

Fig.4: Church Square in 1822 from a painting by F. Ross (Source: Reynolds 1974: 25)

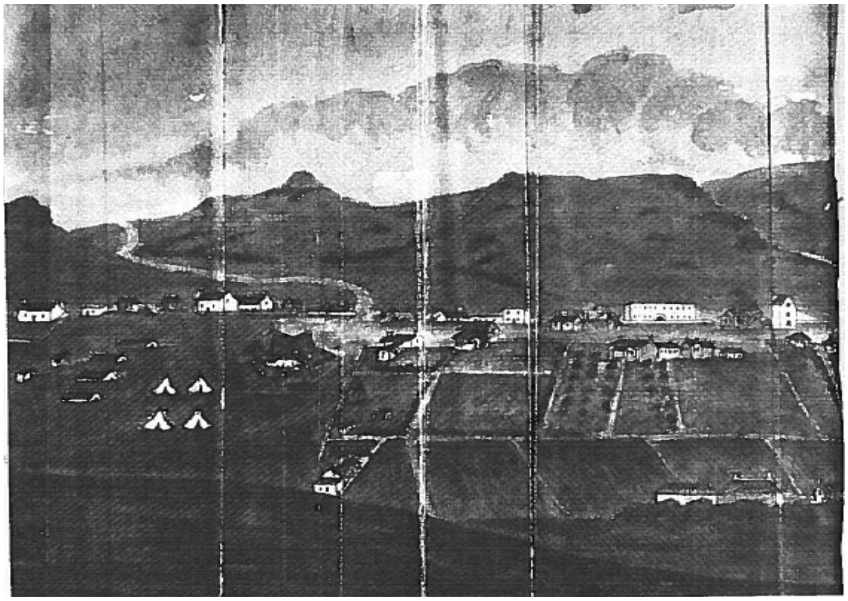

Fig.5: A painting by F. Ross showing tents and a few house built by the militaryin 1822-3 the messenger's house, Retief's house, Scotts Barracks (Fort England) and gaol (Source : Reynolds 1974)

In the next decade the town was to experience rapid growth as its population rose in the wake of the 1820 settlement scheme, and its base was considerably diversified (Marshall 2009: 18). As has been alluded to previously, the British settlers first lived in tents on their arrival in the Albany District but later built wattle and daub houses as they tried to settle down in their farms. After a massive flood they built cottages using more durable materials like stone and bricks. They were also brought Christianity and their first services were held in open air in the woods felled trees as benches.

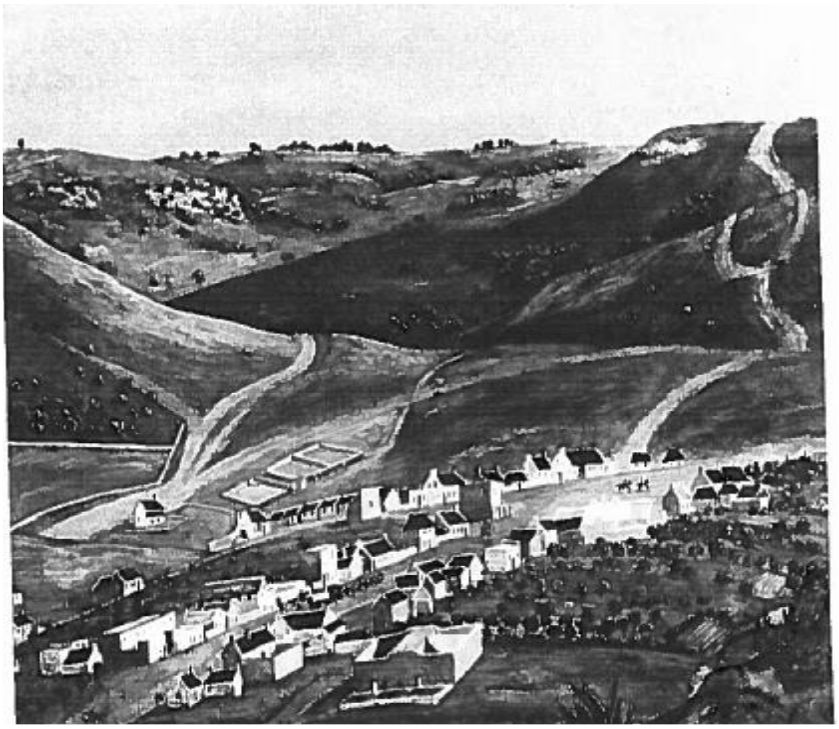

Fig.6: A painting by an unknown artist showing Grahamstown in 1823 (Source: Reynolds 1974: 30)

The first proper church building was built in November 1822 east of the Sundays River which was followed by another in Salem a month later. In 1824 work on the St Georges Cathedral in Grahamstown and the Commemoration Church started (ibid). 'The Settlers were then becoming tradesmen, upholsterers, chemists, watchmakers and photographers and painters like I'ons and Thomas Baines made their homes in the town' (Burchell, n.d: 15). Houses were built very fast and Grahamstown was then second in size only to Cape Town (Ibid). The population of the town grew rapidly from one hundred white settlers and a few Khoekhoe in 1819 to over 5000 in the 1840s and approximately a third of Albany's population were living in the town (Scott 1987: 14 & Marshall 2009: 62). The 1820 settlers brought to the town a variety of skills which propelled the growing town forward economically and opened job opportunities for Khoekhoe and AmaXhosa who were employed as labourers. Grahamstown had by now: builders, blacksmiths, shoemakers, wheelwrights, jewellers, bell- ringers and artisans. Trading with AmaXhosa continued as well as farming by those who couldn't make their living as town merchants. Grahamstown had by this time been established as a civilian as well as a military settlement. Economic opportunities were presented by the presence of the military (Ibid: 63). The military formed an important presence in the town. Some of the earliest houses were constructed by soldiers. Thus, Grahamstown became both a civilian and a military settlement. Town planning was based on military considerations and spaces within this town were punctuated with military buildings. Moreover, as King (2014) asserts, there were major buildings across the town dedicated to surveillance of the Black people and also Grahamstown's own citizens were constantly under the gaze of authorities. Craise and Clifton

further explain how the messages carried across were those that Africans needed constant surveillance as they were 'creatures of uncontrolled volition' (1991).

URBAN PLANNING, POWER AND GOVERNMENT OF CITIZENS

The arrival of the 1820 settlers saw the mushrooming of new buildings in Grahamstown as the population also increased dramatically. The architecture of this period until after the 9th Frontier war resembled fortresses especially in the farms. Additionally, military style buildings were built in the town (Vos 1968: 10- 11).

Fig.7: The Drodsty House (Source: Vos 1968)

There were three major styles of architecture that flourished at this stage: the Georgian, Victorian and Dutch architectural styles. The Georgian style was a name given to the set of architectural styles between 1720 and 1830 in English speaking countries or British colonies. It was derived from the first four British monarchs of the House of Hanover: George I, George II, George III, and George IV who reigned in continuous succession from August 1714 to June 1830. In different parts of the world this style was revived even at different periods in history. It was characterised by strict symmetry, simplicity and regularity of detail. The houses had a centred entrance with windows carefully aligned horizontally and vertically. These houses were the furthest one could get from the African style of architecture in their strict symmetry and orderliness. These buildings denote a complete colonisation and transformation of the African landscape especially considering that the dominant style of architecture in Southern Africa was that of building round organically shaped houses with round windows and asymmetrical doorways which were often arched (Reid et al, 2010: 385).

Fig.8: No. 21 West Street: a good example of pure Georgian style with little or no influence in its design (Source: Vos 1968)

The Victorian architectural style was a style of architecture which became popular in the British Empire during the reign of Queen Victoria between 1837 and 1901. This style was also revived at different times within the British Empire. The features of Victorian Style houses consisted of bay windows. There were also intricately carved mouldings called dentils, around these houses with rectangular holes in them. These houses also had round or square columns holding up the roof. One also had a special window known as a dormer that sticks out of the roof and had a roof of its own. There were also gables formed at opposite ends of sloping roofs and these gables were triangular in shape. These structures propagated the wealth and might of the British and were built across the British Empire.

Fig.9: No.34 Somerset Street: elegant example of Victorian style (Source: Vos 1968)

Fig.10: Victorian Architecture on High Street in Grahamstown.

The Cape Dutch architectural style is a style found mostly in the Western Cape of South Africa. It was popular in the early days of the Cape Colony. It was called Dutch because the early inhabitants of the Cape Colony were Dutch people. It is made of influences from medieval Netherlands, Germany, France and Indonesia. Houses in this style had ornately rounded gables. They are usually H- shaped. The walls are whitewashed and the roofs thatched. When Jan Van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape, he built a refreshment station which consisted of a fort and a hospital at what is now Cape Town. Before this time there were few permanent buildings in Cape Town because the Khoekhoe were a wandering nation. Van Riebeeck and his crew decided to build permanent shelters for themselves and their animals using the natural materials they found like stone, mud, shells, reeds and timber from the forests. Using only their memory of rural buildings they left behind in Flanders, Germany and the

Netherlands they developed by trial and error a style that became later known as the Cape Dutch architectural style (Greig 1971: 21). They were narrow barnlike buildings with thatched pitch roofs. Triangular gables protected the two opposite ends of bundles. There was a centrally placed doorway flanked by two small windows. A simple partition divided the house into a living room and a bedroom. The living room had a kitchen with a hearth and a huge pot- bellied sculptural stone or whitewashed chimney. Along the front of these houses was a raised platform which was called a stoep. The walls of these houses were made of clay, mud bricks, undressed stone and were plastered with ant- heap earth (Greig 1971: 23).

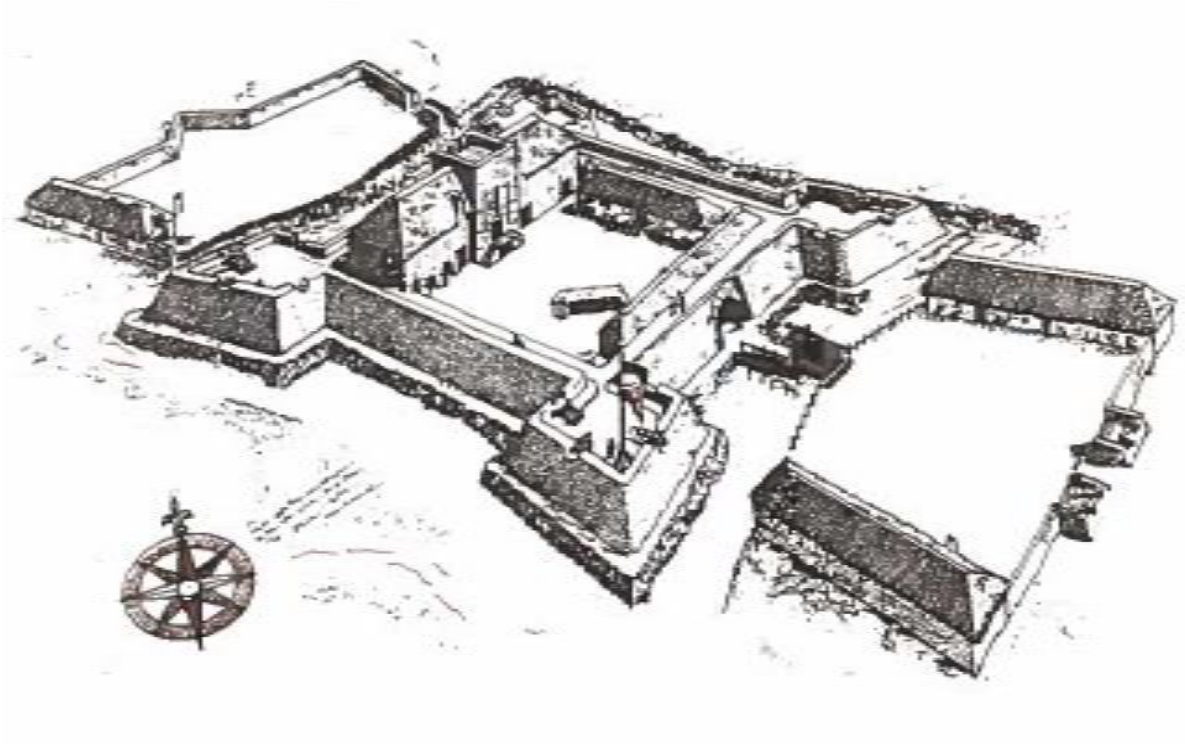

Fig.11: A ground plan of Jan van Riebeeck's fort (Source: Mocke et.al 1996: 86)

Fig.12: Cape Dutch cottage in Cape Town (Source: Greig 1971: 21)

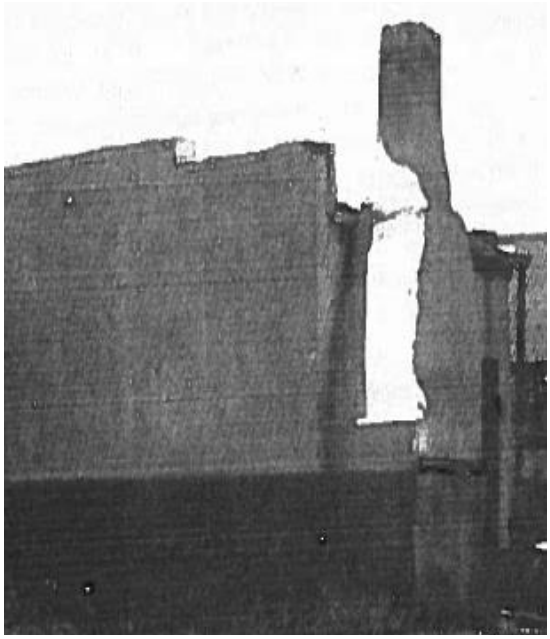

Fig.13: Traditional chimney attached to a Dutch cottage (Source: Greig 1971: 22)

These houses were built by farmers, fishermen and tradesmen. During the second part of the 18th century , the Dutch people at the Cape began to prosper and a new sophisticated building emerged which became known as the Cape Dutch house with a central embellished gable with a window in the loft to provide light. This kind of house was imported to the Eastern Cape by the Dutch who travelled and settled in this region. In Grahamstown Dutch farmers like Piet Retief started building contractors and the Cape Dutch style was combined with the British style to form a new style that was South African (Ibid: 33).

Fig. 14: Influenced by Baroque style this was built between 1775- 1800 (Source: Simmons 2000: 11)

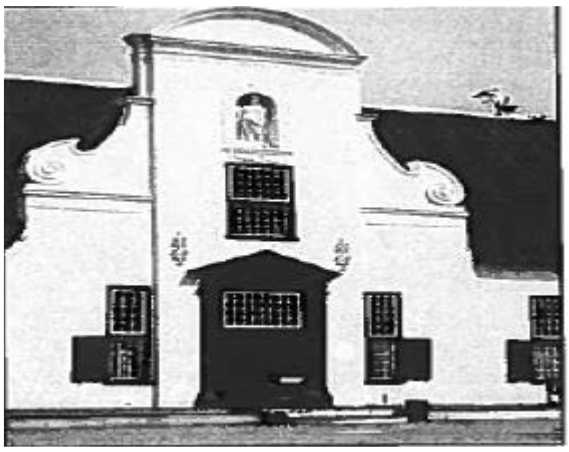

Fig. 15: A lofty lodge in the grand Peninsular style (Source: Simmons 2000: 11)

Fig. 16: Inland gable- is of the period 1750- 75. Here the mouldings curve forward onto the gable face (Source: Simmons 2000: 11)

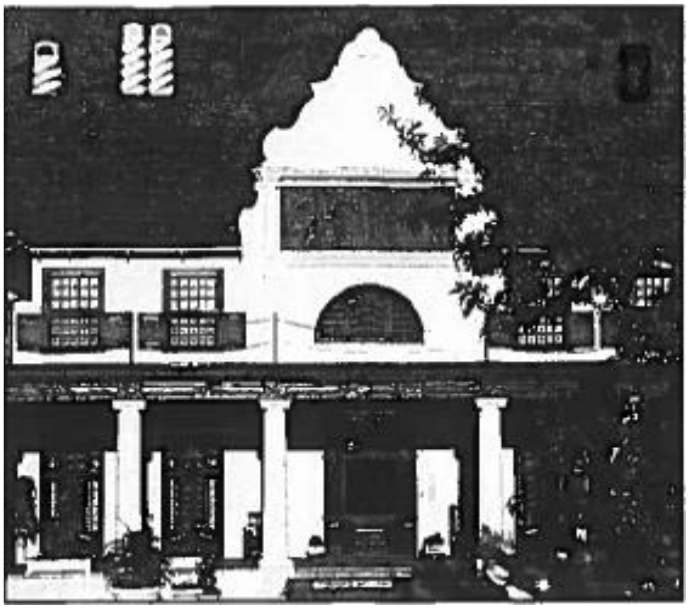

Fig.17: Cape Dutch architectural style at Groote Schuur in 1896 also similar to Albany Science Museum in Grahamstown (Source: Simmons 2000: 13)

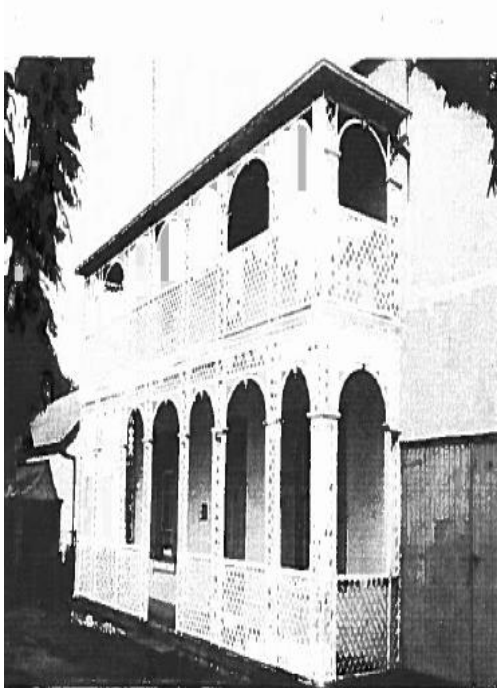

Fig. 18 Grahamstown house showing the fusion of Cape Dutch and English (Georgian) styles of architecture (Source: Greig 1971: 34)

From the discovery and naming of Grahamstown as a military village there was a concerted effort to make this town a 'little England'. Everything about it was British such that Khoisan and AmaXhoa peoples were even not allowed to walk on the streets of this new town without adorning western as their culture dictated but were forced to wear British Victorian style clothing. The Observatory Museum in Grahamstown houses examples of British furniture, other house utensils like cutlery and crockery, and British style clothes which illustrate the extent to which the town was turned into a miniature England. The schools were also designed along British lines and English was the medium of instruction. Mitchell agrees and points out that there is a Dutch saying that states 'God created the world, but the Dutch created Holland' (1994: 40).The same can be said about Grahamstown as this town was transformed in an attempt to reproduce a 'typical England'. The buildings that were constructed were made of European materials and local African architectural styles were belittled. This was a British strategy to impose British tastes and values on Africans as an attempt to make Africans feel inadequate and in need of civilization. The next chapter will unpack how one British artist who travelled in Southern Africa and at one stage took residence in Grahamstown, was convinced Africans needed civilization by whatever means necessary and he delighted at the growing British towns in the Eastern Cape. He celebrated British attainments in his landscape painting that represented only the European architectural styles in the towns that he visited.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROPAGATION OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM IN THE WORKS OF THOMAS BAINES

One of the very well-known South African painters of British origin, Thomas Baines, was very instrumental in the development of landscape painting in Southern Africa in the 19th century. He is known as ethnographer, cartographer, an artist, a scientist and an explorer. He was not a passive observer but an active participant in the struggles and achievements of the settlers and their descendants (Bradlow 1975: 1).Baines recorded in the writings of his journals and paintings, the newly built architectural structures in new English towns in the Cape Colony like Grahamstown, King Williams Town and Fort Beaufort and other towns boasting when he did this about the success of 'spreading civilisation' (ibid). He was a landscape painter and also an illustrator whose studies of plant and animal species were used by natural historians, scientists as well as art historians. He also painted as ethnographer AmaXhosa and Khoekhoe in detailed paintings that revealed their anatomical features – showing exaggerated buttocks, thick lips, flat noses and ruffled hair. He was always conscious of the need for scientific accuracy in his images of plants but looked at local inhabitants through political eyes (Stevenson 1999: 24).

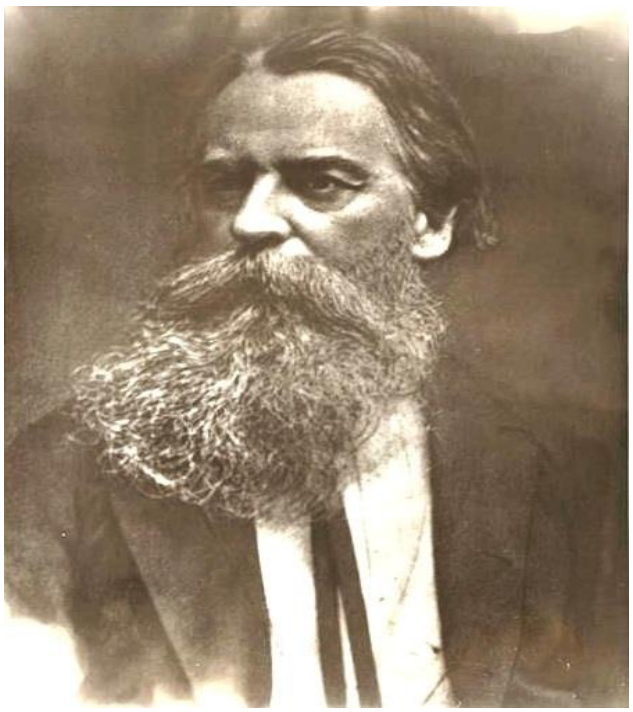

Fig. 19: *Portrait of Thomas Baines*, ca 1860's; 37 x 29.4 cm.
(Source: National Library of Australia)

As an explorer, Baines travelled a lot and biographical literature concerning him is fairly extensive. He was a character who was of interest to scientists, anthropologists, historians

and art historians.[4] So many who wrote of Baines, did this from their own perspectives, interests and disciplines . While reading about him I came across writings about his travels with a prominent missionary by the name of David Livingston who is known to have 'discovered' and named Victoria Falls in present day Zimbabwe which was then known as Rhodesia (Carruthers 1990). Some writers, such as Frank Bradlow (1975), praise him for his contribution to a diverse range of learning disciplines. Professor Guy Butler, one of the well known English writers and poets who lived in the Albany district during the 20th century and promoted English culture, praised Baines for his 'closeness to events to reconstruct them from description' (Bradlow 1975:1). As Carruthers writes:

> The literature concerning Baines is invariably complementary and some of it verges on the hagiographic.Bradlow's considered opinion is that Baines was was 'one of the most coloureful,fascinating, exciting and loveable characters, in all of South African history…'The allure of Baines as a 'lovable' and prodigious figure' has led to biographers concentrating on his personality and experiences and in this way Baines is often seen in isolation and not placed in the context of his political and cultural milieu…(Carruthers 1990: 19)

In order to fully understand Baines one has to understand the period in which he lived which was the early and mid Victorian era, and British expansionism and chauvinism were rampant and very aggressive. This was a period when independence of AmaXhosa was undermined and when Southern Africa's northern areas were still being explored (Ibid).

Fig. 20: Baines's self-portrait (Source: Carruthers 1995)

[4] Because his interests and abilities were so wide- ranging- he was inter alia, an artist, botanist, cartographer, diarist, ethnologist, explorer, geographer, geologist, linguist, naturalist and writer (Stevenson 1999).

Western racism and imperialism were also intensified during the 19th century as this period saw the collusion of scientists and Anthropologists asserting authoritatively that humans could be classified into "superior Caucasoids, intermediate Mongoloids, and inferior Negroids" (Gobineau 1853/1967 in Njoh 2007: 580).

Baines was born in 1820 in England at a time that co-incided with the arrival of British settlers in the Cape Colony . His adult life covered the early and mid Victorian era in Britain, which was characterised by Britain's aggressive imperialism. He lived in Southern Africa at a critical period when Britain was still exploring the northern parts of this region (Carruthers 1990: 19). This was a time when Britain was demonstrating presence and asserting authority with the construction of buildings (Carmen 2011). In this chapter, I will interogate the representation of architecture in Baines' works and argue that he was a part of Victorian ideological trends at the time. He was not aloof as some who romanticise him would believe. He was a willing participant in Britain's imperialist and colonial conquests and accepted these values without question. Carruthers writes that Baines was 'an ardent imperialist and also a colonialist who emigrated from Britain to start a new life in South Africa' (1995: 12). He confronted the issue of ownership of land and identified with the white settler theory that the Cape Colony was a empty land when the Europeans arrived. In his paintings of settler vilages, he was carefull to eliminate all forms of black habitation and when Black people appear in his paintings, they are depicted on the way leaving the colony with goods bought at settler markets.

THE BRITISH MYTHOLOGY OF THE VACANT LAND

Crais and Clifton's critique of Thompson's *Political Mythology of Apartheid* is that it fails to explore British contribution to South Africa's racist past(Crais & Clifton 1991: 2). While admiting the importance of the political mythology that led to justifications for apartheid later in the twentieth century in South Africa, I also recognise one of the most dominant historical myths shared by many Afrikaners and English speakers alike under colonialism and apartheid: the myth of the Vacant Land. This myth was perpetuated and kept alive for purposes of justifying the conquering and occupation of the land between Cape Town and the Fish River by Afrikaner farmers and British settlers who argued that this part of South Africa was unoccupied or vacant when they arrived as 'the Bantu speakers lived beyond the Fish River when the Afrikaner and British settlers arrived later at the beginning of the nineteenth century' (Carruthers & Arnold 1996: 131).

Carruthers further explains the vacant land theory when discussing the work of Thomas Baines. She says that there existed a theory among white settlers in South Africa in the nineteenth century that the Cape Colony had a small number of Khoisan (and no Bantu speakers or Blacks) when the Europeans arrived which meant the land was empty and thus available for occupation. In the Eastern Frontier the land between the Eastern border of the Cape Colony and the Fish River was also claimed as having been 'empty' when the white settlers arrived because of the absence of permanent architectural structures when the

settlers arrived . This view was further justified by the notion of the Souther African peoples as being nomadic and therefore could not lay claim to a particular piece of land (Ibid).

This was one myth that Thomas Baines cherished for the rest of his life and helped espouse as suggested in his paintings. For example Figure 21 shows a group of AmaXhosa 'returning home from the Cape'. Baines also painted growing British towns and he depicts absence of all African dwellings and figures in such paintings , such as Figure 22. Delmont and Dubow interpretes the depiction of empty landscapes by Baines as a space 'where everything is still to be won' …All this lends different tenor to the idea of colony as contested terrain'(Delmont & Dubow 1995: 11).From the 1820's the British were determined to conquer the African inhabitants insisting that the 'vacant land' be filled with houses and fields of settlers and seeing this as a moral responsibility. Church ministers used the Old Testament as justification for the heinous acts that followed (Crais & Clifton 1991: 5). Landscape paintings become 'barren rather than bountiful' and ' infinitely fixed rather than bounded'(Rich 1984: 51). Thomas Baines painted a picture in the 1840s titled ' Valley of Macanzana ' in which a seated horseman points his fellow colonists to the interior and a barely visible herd of cattle (Ibid). Africans and their communities fade into the background in these paintings. When they are represented at all, they are confined to the sides of paintings.

Fig. 21: Thomas Baines. *Kafirs* (sic) *having made their fortunes leaving the Cape Colony*. (1848).Oil. 47 x 65, 4 cm. Here the idea of AmaXhosa as visitors to the Cape going back to their 'own territory is communicated. (Source: MUSEUM AFRICA COLLECTION).

Fig. 22: Thomas Baines, *Church Square Grahamstown.* (1849).
Oil 49 x 75 cm (Source: Albany Museum, Grahamstown)

Fig. 23: A photograph of St Philip's church in 1867 and a mud house close to Lobengula's grave in the foreground (Source: O'Meara 1995: 86)

The myth of the Vacant Land according to Crais and Clifton ' posits that Europeans "settled" South Africa at roughly the same time Bantu- speaking Africans entered the region' (1991: 3). The South African government that ruled during the apartheid maintained that 'blacks started settling into the northern part of the country more or less at the same time as the first white people began settling at the southern tip of the country during the 17th century' (Thompson,

1985: 199). Thompson relates that the so- called Nationalist government claimed that 'the clash of the races began along the eastern frontier during the eighteenth century as the Xhosa began their intrusion into the area' (ibid). In additiona, Crais and Clifton (1991) observe that in a South African atlas of South African history written by Jan Visagie and Jan Berg[5], two thick black arrows are drawn representing the movement or incursion of the Bantu speakers aggressively from the present day Zimbabwe along the East coast to the eastern frontier but in the area between Cape Town and Grahamstown no such arrows exist, presenting a picture of an invading Bantu group on a 'settled' colonial community. This is further proof of how writers, academics and historians rallied together to spread the propaganda of the vacant land theory even though archaeological and historical research has proved that the Cape was occupied by agriculturalists as early as the fourth century A.D, and over a period of thousand years before the arrival of colonists in the Eastern Cape.

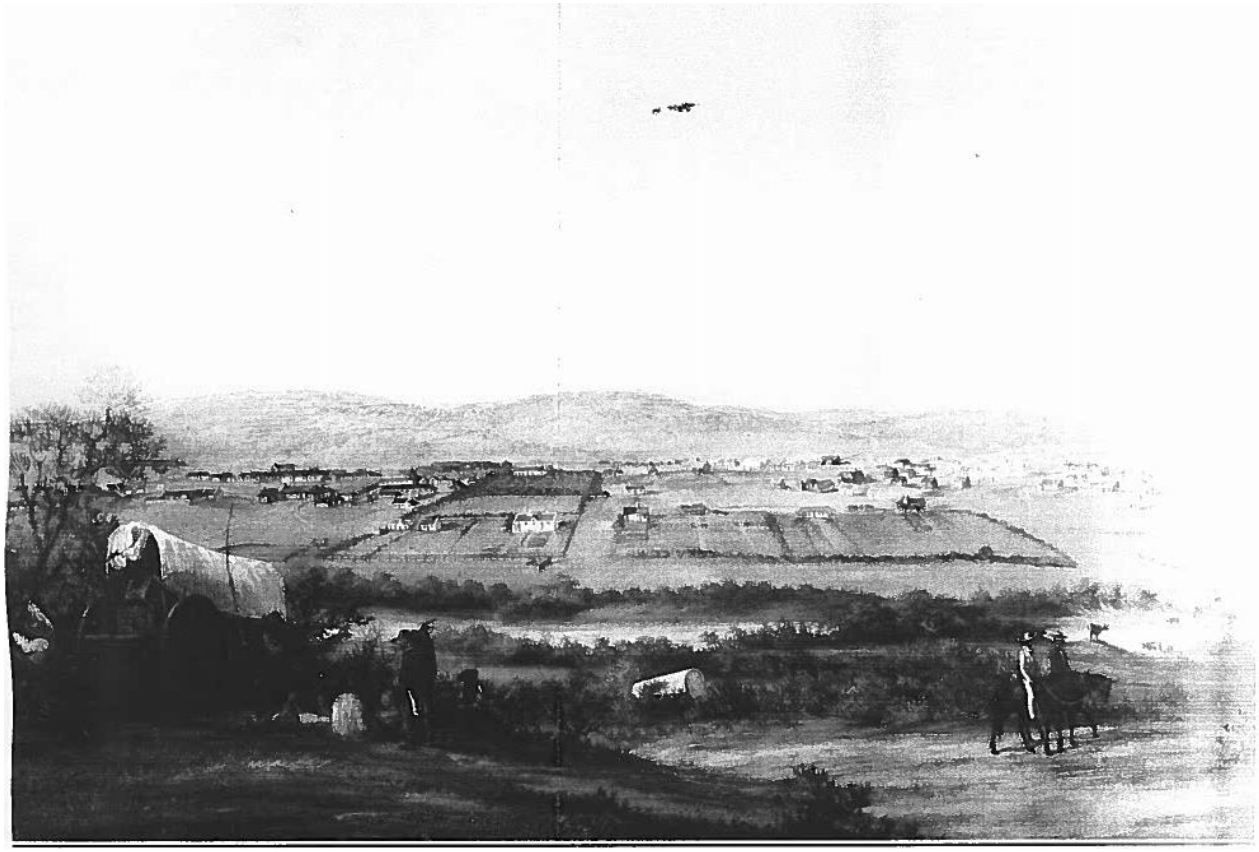

Fig. 24: Thomas Baines*, King Williams Town and the Buffalo River* (1850). Oil. 47x 65cm. (Source: Albany Museum, Grahamstown)

The *Grahamstown Journal* under Robert Godlonton, a newspaper that was founded in 1831, advocated British expansion and annexation of Xhosa land by reporting negatively on

[5] Jan Visagie and Jan Berg, *The Eastern Cape Frontier Zone*: 1660- 1980 (Durban, 1985); Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd edition (New York, 1970).

AmaXhosa or events involving AmaXhosa. This newspaper argued that AmaXhosa had taken the land between Kei and Fish Rivers from the Khoekhoe by force and therefore the British were justified in taking it from them. The newspaper recalled how AmaXhosa used Khoekhoe place names 'proving that AmaXhosa had just arrived in the region' (Crais & Clifton 1991: 9). The discovery of hunter- gatherer rock paintings in the interior and the absence of Bantu permanent settlement structures was used as 'proof' by the Journal writer/s to substantiate these claims (Ibid).

Other writers like Wilmot and Chase were influential in the popularization of the Vacant Land myth or theory. But one writer who had tremendous influence and whose history books were even prescribed for Free State school children was George McCall Theal. He is acknowledged as the 'grandfather of South African History'. Theal was a very prolific historian who produced among other books, an eleven volume History of South Africa series (Crais & Clifton 1991).He traced Bantu speakers back to North Africa in his books and claimed to have found evidence that Bantu speakers arrived in South Africa relatively late (Ibid).

Fig. 25*:* Thomas Baines, *Potter's Row, Hill Street, Grahamstown* (1848). Oil. 81 x 120 cm. (Albany Museum, Grahamstown, Grahamstown).

Thomas Baines was thus born into this state of affairs and he participated in three important phases of colonization; travel, settlement and exploitation (Carruthers 1995; 21). He was born at King's Lynn in England on 27 November 1820. (Ibid; 18). Carruthers observes that there were two strong traditions in his family background; working at the sea and painting (1990: 19). Baines' father was a seafarer and hobby painter while his younger brother, Henry, was a professional artist and art teacher. Baines' maternal grandfather was a painter of modest talent (Ibid). Carruthers describes Thomas's mother as a 'strong- willed' woman who had a

lasting influence on Thomas's life and choice of painting as a career. It is said that, she resented the long absences of Thomas's father due to his travels working at sea and was determined that her son would become a painter 'rather than go to the sea'. Thomas was very close to his mother who assumed the task of publicizing his works and he was also a close companion to his sister, Emma and he died without ever getting married or having a child (Ibid: 20).

Baines was apprenticed to a William Carr who was a coach decorator and accomplished draughtman to learn the trade of coach decoration (Bradlow 1975: 4). Carruthers has surmised that Baines became a wagon decorator in Cape Town, having left England on 8 August 1842 in search of work opportunities[6] in the Cape Colony (2000: 18- 19). In 1845 he ventured out to work as a self – employed marine and portrait painter. Carruthers describes how after meeting a traveller and painter by the name of Frederick Angas, and after he 'reread the hunting adventures of a William Cornwall Harris… Baines was fired with enthusiasm to explore the southern African interior' (1990: 20). Determined to follow in these men's footsteps, he set out by sea for the Eastern Cape in February 1848. Baines reached Algoa Bay on the 20th of the same month. He left Port Elizabeth for Grahamstown on March 1st, where he stayed at Mr Potter's Hotel at the corner of Hill and New Streets.

Baines and other artists like fellow nineteenth-century Eastern Cape artists like Thornley Smith (1842- 47), Thomas Bowler (1813 - 1869), William Burchell (1781 - 1869), George Angas (1822 – 1886 and others presented Grahamstown as 'an orderly and neat settlement' in their paintings, drawings and lithographs of the town. Grahamstown was often represented with a conspicuous omission of the township which was already established near the burial ground at the time (Marshall 2009: 59). Baines, who was known to champion the 'taming and ordering of the African landscape and its people' according to Marshall (2009), also omits the location in his paintings of Grahamstown (2009: 59). In the painting titled *Grahamstown from Selwn's Battery* (FIGURE 26*),* for example, Baines shows us a glimpse of the fort on the far-right in the painting with a panoramic view of Grahamstown spread out below. This works pictorially but when we compare the painting with a photograph taken at a similar position, the accuracy of the recording becomes questionable.

One has to stand in front of the fort to be able to see the town as Figure 27 illustrates and that it is impossible to have the fort, even a part of, in the same picture as underlying Grahamstown buildings. Baines has shifted the town houses to where the township was and now is as shown in Figure 28 (Cosser 1992: 124). Marion Arnold (1995) observes how Baines' work has been considered mostly for its documentary or historical value and overlooked as art that reflects the artist's world view, and stresses how the artist selects carefully what to depict, making choices on matters of scale and other composition elements a reflection of his judgements and his own values as well as those of the British Empire – which was his political and philosophical home (Carruthers 1990: 15). Beyond the town buildings in the painting of *Fort Selwyn,* we see the emptiness of the land and landscape. Crais (1991: 257) argues that the 'emptying ' of the landscape of non- white peoples and their dwellings was a recurring

[6] Bradlow (1975: 4) asserts that 'What prompted this emigration we do not know. His imagination may have been fired by tales his father had told him of his Cape experiences'.

and common feature of colonial artworks in South Africa designed to validate the colonial desire for conquest, settlement of the conquered territories and ultimately domination of the inhabitants. Carruthers adds that Baines represents the landscape as empty spacious terrain in an effort to justify Africa's availability as a virgin territory for colonial especially British occupation and exploitation (1995: 92).

Fig. 26: Thomas Baines, *Grahamstown from Selwyn's Battery (1850)*, Oil , (Source: Albany Museum, Grahamstown, Grahamstown)

Fig. 27: Photo, *View of Grahamstownjrom behind Fort Selwyn* (Source: Cosser 1992: 124)

Fig. 28: Photo, *View of Grahamstown from the front of Fort Selwyn,* (Source: Cosser, 1992: 124)

Further proof that Grahamstown had a significant non- white population from its inception is provided by Marshall as he observes that 'the Khoekhoe population of the town was about 800 in 1820' and this number was increased by the arrival of settlers who were not allowed to own slaves and opted to recruit Khoekhoe as servants (2009: 85). The influx of AmaXhosa was very slow due to their independent way of life but the war of 1834- 35 changed the situation as about 17 000 so called 'Fingos' were brought into Grahamstown in what was known as a ' rescuing' of these people from slavery under AmaXhosa.Some scholars like Julian Cobbin (1988) and Alan Webster (1991) argue that the 'Mfengu' identity was a cover- up to legitimise the capturing of these Xhosa labourers (Marshall 2009: 91). Marshall elucidates that Mfengu, AmaXhosa and Khoekhoe 'formed a large and economically vital section of Grahamstown's population in the 1840s' (Ibid: 92). Some of the Fingos who arrived in 1835 left the colony and by 1847 there were at least 1 700 Fingos in a village known as 'Fingo Village' and Marshall remarks that this was ' a significant number in a small town' (Ibid).[7]

Fig. 29: Thomas Baines, *Wagon crossing a Drift, Natal* (1873), Oil, 505 x 650 mm (Source: Iziko Art Collection, Cape Town

[7] One of the reasons for the movement of Fingos was that they realised that 'after being rescued 'from the AmaXhosa they were still incorporated into the colony as subordinates and impoverished underclass. The abolishing of food rations also increased their impoverishment and strife (Webster 1991)

Fig. 30: Photo courtesy of the Brenthurst Library Johannesburg (Source: Iziko Museum, Cape Town)

Baines was firmly convinced, Carruthers argues, that as a member of a superior race he was required to bring civilization to Africa by whatever means necessary (1995: 21- 22). Baines' adult life was lived at a time when a dominant ideology that prevailed in England was the creation of of a British Empire which was designed to 'make England international' in the words of Rich (1978: 25) by 'fashioning the world after England's example'. Britain was the most powerful and wealthiest country in the world at this time despite its small size being a society which was the first to undergo industrial revolution. The painting (in Figure 29) above is a revealing example as Hayden Proud (2008) observes, of the colonial mindset at work. *Wagon crossing a Drift,Natal* (1873), was painted by Baines using the photograph (in Figure 30) as a basis but the artist has changed the harsh landscape and vegetation to make it look more like a British landscape. The use of the wagon as crossing a river, Hayde argues, symbolises the conquering and claiming of a new territory (Proud, 2008: 20). Baines also 'emptyied' the landscape of all traces of non- White dwelling places by substiting the African huts in the rifght hand corner of the photograph by painting settler buildings with white walls and 'neatly – tendered garden' (Ibid). Carruthers (1995:29) discerns that Baines, in his work, classified African people, their beliefs and architectural styles negatively in order to position Europeans positively (1995:146). So their landscape, dwellings , religion and culture would always be inferior and awaiting replacement with European beliefs, institutions and architectural styles.

Carruthers observes that Baines was a traveller but identified with the settler theory that the Cape Colony was 'empty' of Africans except for a scant Khoekhoe population when the Europeans arrived which was used to legitimise occupation of the land. Baines was very outspoken concerning his attitude to the non-white inhabitants of the Cape and this is revealed in his journals. For an example when he met the San, Carruthers records that, Baines

described their language as ‘debased’ and of the ‘very lowest’ and Baines found having to sit next to an African in a coach ‘an extremely unpleasant experience’ (1995: 29). He is known to have declared that the name ‘Kaffir’ (sic) given to AmaXhosa was derived from two Arabic words ‘Cafara’ meaning to lie and Kafr meaning a waste (Ibid). Baines’ ‘emptying’ of the landscape of all things non-white was almost always coupled with and complemented by the replacing of these with European models. For an example in the painting of Bloemfontein in Figure 31, Baines painted the few European buildings that were there in Bloemfontein when he visited the town in 1851 but also added a few buildings in the painting that were planned but not yet built (Stevenson & Viljoen, 2000: 4).

Fig. 31: Thomas Baines, Bloemfontein*, the Capital of Orange River Sovereignty the burial place of Major Hogg* (1854)*,* Oil, *37, 5* x 60 cm, (Source: Carruthers 1995)

In many of Baines landscape painting as in Figure 33 , except for a few settler buildings that he placed strategically as a document that the land had been successfully conquered and now belongs to the British, the landscape consists of empty spaces inviting the viewer who was explorer and colonizer at that time, to travel and take possession of the land (Ibid). The representation of settler permanent architectural structures in Baines’ paintings was crucial as he arrived in the Eastern Cape at a time when the British were fighting with AmaXhosa over land rights with the former claiming sole custody of the land citing the absence of permanent black settlements at this part of the colony (Ibid: 131). It was precisely for the above reason that I argue in the first chapter of this essay that the hasty construction of massive and permanent structures to form villages and towns across the Eastern Frontier was a strategy used by the British to occupy, dominate and perpetuate the myth of the ‘vacant land’.

Fig. 32: Thomas Baines, *Shooting Wildebeeste near the Brandt Spruit* (1848), Oil, 45 x 66 cm, (Source: Museum Africa, Johannesburg)

Non- white peoples were always represented by Baines in their 'own territories' outside the Cape Colony or leaving the Cape Colony (Figure 21). In Figure 33 below we also see how Baines always represented Black people in subservient positions. The abandoned telescope, tea, a gun and the presence of a Black servant together with the British houses and a background that denotes the vastness of the African land all props of power in a colonised territory (Dubow, 1995).

Fig. 33: Thomas Baines, *View of Durban from Currie's Residence* (1843), Oil. 44x 60 cm. (Source: Local History Museum, Durban)

Baines was influenced by and openly supported these European and specifically British notions of the existence of different racial groups which formed the basis and rationale for the exploitation of all lands belonging to the 'inferior and backwards racial groups' and this done in the name of 'spreading civilisation' (Ibid: 21). Carruthers goes further to say that she observed that the work of Baines demonstrates his firm belief that he belonged to a superior race and was required to bring civilisation to Africa by any means necessary (Ibid). In his paintings Baines focussed on colonial architectural structures in the Cape Colony especially administrative buildings and churches which were symbols of Western civilisation. Baines subscribed to the white settler theory that when the Europeans arrived at the Cape Colony, the land was vacant as there were no African permanent settlement structures (Ibid: 131). Non- white peoples were always represented by Baines in their 'own territories' outside the Cape Colony or leaving the Cape Colony (Figure 21).

Much has been written on Thomas Baines who was a prolific painter of British origin who immigrated to South Africa early in his adult life. Baines was a part of the Victorian era which was characterised by British expansionism and chauvinism, values which he accepted without question (Carruthers 1995: 1). This was a time when Britain aggressively embarked on a quest to spread English culture by bringing English law, order and notions of civilisation to the so called 'backward nations' and in the words of Paul Rich (1987: 21) 'to make England international'. My next chapter is an account of how my ideas around Dominion developed

in relation to artists such as Baines and the politics of landscape representation. I provide a brief overview of the personal events that influenced my life as a painter and the choice of landscape as my predominant genre. I analyse briefly the ideas around the artist who has a lasting influence on my painting and who inspired my choice of colours, painting technique and subject matter. That artist is Anselm Kiefer who was a German citizen born towards the end of Second World War and the end of the persecution of Jews in Germany.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'DOMINION'

This chapter explores ideas and events that have influenced my own works which are titled *Dominion.* I endeavour to explain what Dominion means to me and my own development as a painter and the development of my ideas in the two years of executing the body of work that I present in the exhibition titled *Dominion.* I will attempt to analyse the works of Anselm Kiefer who has influenced this exhibition *Dominion* in both his techniques, approach to subject matter and political ideas expressed.

Many artists have influenced my own painting, some of whom are South African while others are of European origin. I started painting in the early 1980s although such works were more like drawings with dark outlines and bits of colour without blending and mixing of colours as I never had art training by then. Drawing was my favourite medium using pens and pencils. The 1980s was a time of major fights in boxing which was my favourite sport. This was a time when there was a lot of excitement about the American heavyweight boxer, Big John Tate an African American, who defeated an Afrikaner boxer at Loftus Versfeld stadium in Pretoria at the height of apartheid. The Black American was hailed as a hero by black South Africans and appeared on many adverts targeting the black population and on the cover of certain food items. We used to make drawings of this boxer. I was also drawn to soccer stars like Shaka Ngcobo and Teenage Dladla of Kaizer Chiefs as they were a leading National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) team at the time. We also drew cartoon characters, making small comic books. My first drawing projects were thus figure drawing exercises and I carried on in this genre well into my high school days in King Williams Town. Landscape painting was very well developed at the time I was growing up and it was very challenging for me to match the high technical standards set by artists of European origin that had mastered this genre. It was during my first year at University of Fort Hare that I attempted landscape drawing and painting.

Art was not taught at black schools during the Apartheid years and I faced a predicament when I was in high school. As much as I had the talent and my teachers often praised me for the drawing ability they also advised me against doing art at University level as this profession was dominated by white people who did art classes in their primary and high schools. I applied for a BFA degree at the University of Fort Hare which was the only tertiary institution in South Africa that didn't require a portfolio or art at high school as one of the requirements for admission to a Fine Arts degree or diploma at the time. It was at Fort Hare that I had my very first formal art classes. This was my first opportunity to use graphic and painting and printmaking media as well. I focused on the human figure for my entire study at the Fort Hare art school. Although two of my lecturers Professor Michael Hallier and Mr Hilary Graham were accomplished landscape painters, I never felt drawn to the landscape and when representing landscape, it was just a backdrop to my figure drawings.

Nevertheless, it was while at Fort Hare that I developed a deep appreciation for drawing and painting of the landscape but was pulled away from it because there was an established

school of 'Romantic Landscape Painters' called the Grahamstown Alice and Port Elizabeth Group, who were working on this genre exclusively, most of whom were products of Rhodes University's Fine Art Department. It included Professor Robert Brooks, Noel Hodnett and our own lecturers Hillary Graham and Professor Michael Hallier. Landscape was not a popular subject with painters only in fact graphic artists like Professor Dominic Thorburn and Warren Ralls also worked exclusively on the landscape genre. My love of the landscape was cultivated by Professor Hallier who produced large scale oil paintings which were exclusively landscapes and Mr Hillary Graham who also produced landscapes but also taught us life drawing taking us out often to draw the Alice and Hogsburg beautiful landscapes.

After my graduation at Fort Hare, I worked for five years on the human figure as a subject but in 1999 this all changed when both my sister and best friend died. This was a difficult time for me and I sought something outside myself as solace and the landscape provide 'food' for my soul. I grew up in Cathcart and had fond memories of the grassy hills of the farms we grew up in as young boys. I went there in the early 2000s only to discover that the place was overgrown and unkempt with plantations planted by timber companies on hills where we used to play as children. The deaths of my closest sister and friend made me realise the transitory nature of life, especially human relationships. It made me realise that all relationships unfortunately come to a tragic and sad end in our lives. Nature and especially the landscape had deep therapeutic value for me and my human figures were overshadowed by the landscape. The landscape became a prominent feature in my works with only a solitary figure in some paintings and over the years architectural buildings have taken the place of the human figure but even they are now deconstructed in my quest for truly permanent elements of our landscape.

Anselm Kiefer is one of the painters who have influenced my painting by both his fascination with representations of the marks of traumatic historic events on the landscape through his paintings of the aftermath of the Holocaust and in his bold but monochromatic brush strokes. What drew me to the paintings of Kiefer is firstly the sheer expressive power, their large scale and their expressive energy. His energetic brush marks and use of texture left an indelible impression on me. Kiefer is not concerned about beauty in the superficial aesthetic sense but rather stretches the paint medium to the limits to reveal the inherent and unique qualities of the paint medium. Kiefer is concerned about what it means to be a German living in post- war and post- holocaust Germany (Saltman 1999: 1). Historical trauma shapes the very act of creating his monumental paintings. His work represent history in an unconventional form that is unlike traditional history painting. It reflects the 1950s German society's inability to mourn the losses and traumatic events of Second World War. He faces a dilemma of representing history and its legacy in a society where it was taboo to relate the sad past – much like what happened in my case. With the advent of the New South Africa there was much public talk of reconciliation and putting the past behind us, ' forgive and forget' and anyone who dared bring up the past was frowned upon and that very act of dwelling on past traumatic events almost amounted to acts of un-patriotism. Kiefer's work thematises the traces of traumatic historical memory in painting. Figure 36 which is titled *Varus* is one example of the traces of blood on the landscape on the floor of a forest in Germany known

as Teut oburg. Here history metaphorically leaves traces of blood upon the German soil (Ibid: 81).

Fig. 34: Anselm Kiefer. *Varus.* Oil and acrylic on burlap. 220 x 270 cm. 1976. (Source: Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands)

Saltzman concludes that Kiefer's work locates itself in a liminal realm between repression and acknowledgement of the German 'historical trauma' (1999: 2). Much like my own work, Kiefer's representation of the German history is veiled as he negotiates aesthetically the act of mourning. Thus he erodes the seductive qualities of the medium of oil paint in an attempt to present an aesthetic object that expresses wounding and entire destruction (ibid: 81). Kiefer literally represented the history of destruction by actually 'destroying' a series of canvasses by burning them and then binding them as a book (Figure 36). He used ash as an integral material in creating rough and densely textural aesthetic surfaces. In my own work, the rough textures come about as a result of my slowly building layers of paint on canvas.

Like Kiefer after working many years as a graphic artist focusing mainly on drawing using coloured pastels, I have become more interested in revealing the inherent quality of the oil paint medium in my works rather than the execution of a 'beautiful' painting. This was cultivated by my former painting lecturer who taught me painting in my first and second years at Fort Hare, Professor Michael Hallier. Hallier discouraged us from adding foreign objects like sand or paper on canvas or board as he believed the oil paint is capable of simulating all

textures on any surface. John Gilmour writes that Anselm Kiefer was born in Donaueschingen, Germany on 8 March 1945 (1990: 3). It was just a few months before the end of World War Two and memories of the Holocaust or the genocide of six million Jews, some who were accused of collaborating with the Allied Forces and disabled children and adults.[8]

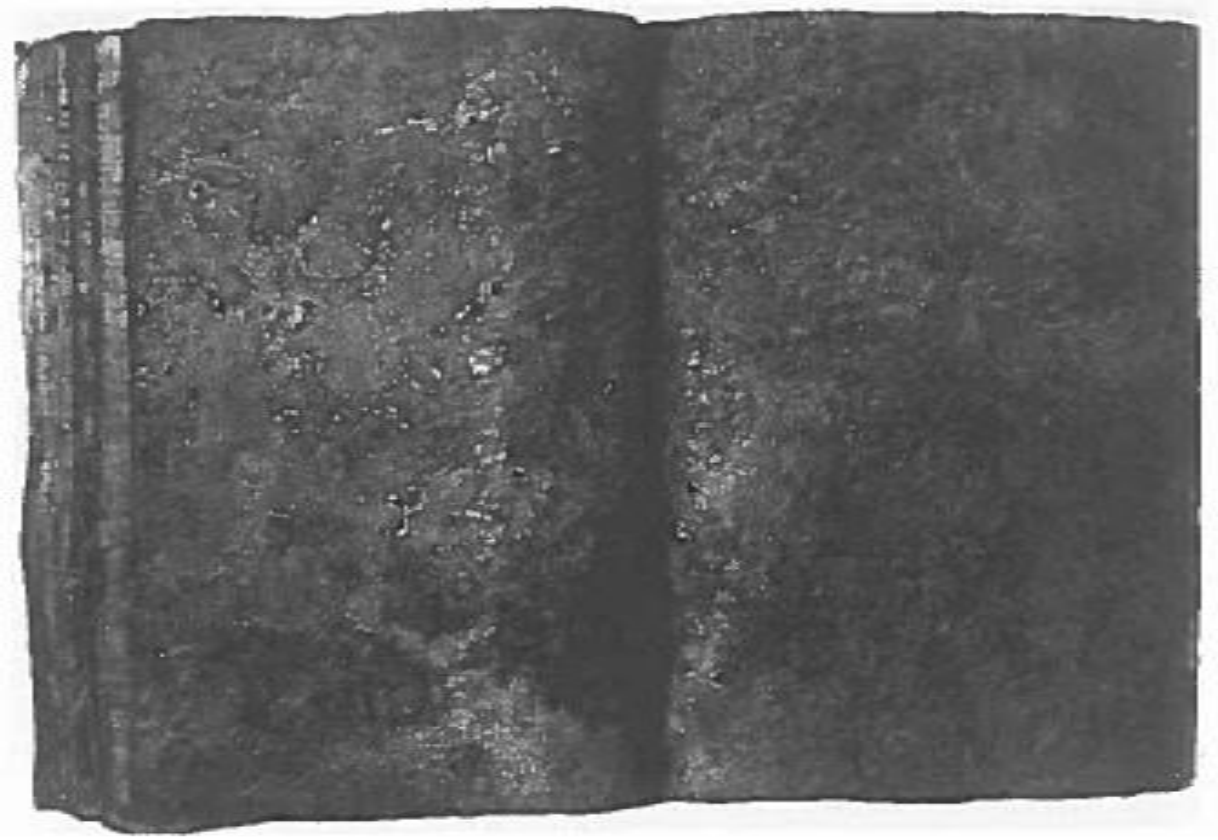

Fig. 35: Anselm Kiefer. *Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen.* Fragments of original photographs with ferrous oxide and linseed oil. 61x 42 x 8 cm. 1975. Private collection. (Source: Marian Goodman Gallery, New York)

In a manner similar to my trajectory, Kiefer first studied law at university before abandoning it to study art – I also applied for a BA degree in journalism and BFA was my second choice at University of Fort Hare but was admitted to BFA because the journalism course was full. While not aware of Kiefer's circumstances which led him to study law, in my own case art was viewed as a 'luxury' in the black community that I grew up in. My high school guidance

[8] The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims - six million were murdered. Roma (Gypsies), physically and mentally disabled people and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny

teacher, while recognizing my talent, discouraged me from studying art citing that 'there is no money in art, you only get some money when you have an exhibition' her exact words. I was fortunate to study in a good school and our school principal arranged aptitude tests for us standard 10s in June of our final year in high school. I ended up doing a BFA because the journalism course for which my parents and my high school teachers hoped I would register for was full.

Fig. 36: The artist Anselm Kiefer, subject of the documentary '*Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow.'*(Source: Alive Mind Cinema)

I grew up in Cathcart which is a small town outside Queenstown on the N6.Like Grahamstown this small town was originally built as a military post during the Eighth Frontier War in 1858 and was named after Sir George Cathcart who was governor of the Cape of Good Hope from 1852 to 1853. It was here that I spent many hours in the veld with friends and also here that the landscape and the inner contemplative life that results from watching the majestic nature started to leave a mark on my life. But as a young boy then I never believed it was possible to reproduce in art the beauty I saw around me. Cathcart is mainly grassland with few trees that appear intermittently. As a result one is able to get a view of a long stretch of landscape at once. In 1976 we relocated to Stutterheim, a timber- producing small town in the Eastern Cape that has pine tree plantations and thick forests. This town was named after a Major General and head of the British German Legion named Richard Ludwig Wilhelm Julius von Stutterheim. It was as a young boy here when I was in grade 1 or Sub A that I was first made aware of the inequalities with regard to different races in South Africa and I was 7 years at the time.

I recall one day when it was raining and I was sent to buy a few food items at a shop owned by a white farmer. When we arrived there I was struck by a voice of a child my own age who was bitterly crying. My cousin asked why the child was crying and the parent said she was crying because she was not taken to school on that day as the rain was falling heavily. I couldn't believe my ears on hearing this because we used to cry because we hated school and

were forced to go to school. This event opened my eyes to the inequalities in education systems that existed at the time of Apartheid. The second event that made me more politically conscious was when we were in King Williams Town and I was visiting that town for the first time at the age of 9. I was struck by the large buildings and beauty of the town which was a bit more developed than the two small and shabby towns, Cathcart and Stutterheim, that I was used to. I asked my cousin who was travelling with me who lived there and he explained to me in a language fitting for a nine year old that 'white people get paid for being white that is why they can afford to live in luxurious buildings in town'. Up to this stage I believed in the goodness of humankind and always expected good and morally upright behaviour from people. It really changed my perception of humankind especially to see such injustices going on for years and legislated into law. The architecture and its symbolism started to fascinate me at this point.

We all grew up in our small village with aspirations to live in town one day. Architecture as it has been used to symbolise or demonstrate the might of the 'oppressor' or colonist is a gist of my thesis and exhibition. I witnessed the Apartheid years and can attest that South Africa has changed significantly but there are still architectural structures and other monuments of the colonial period that are still with us. On my arrival in Grahamstown I was struck by the old buildings that form part of this town. In my practice I look at these structures and the landscape of this small town trying to draw in paint the scars left that are not visible to the naked eye that attest to the violent and tragic history that played out in this small town. Through thick paint on canvas that is applied in several layers I respond to the paintings of nineteenth century artists especially Thomas Baines whose interest was to promote British imperialism in his representations of the Grahamstown landscape as alluded to in the second chapter of this mini-thesis. The paint surface on my paintings is broken to such an extent that when one looks at my paintings very close through a magnifying glass the violent brush marks become very prominent threatening to break into pieces the objects represented. The breaking of the paint surface simultaneously projects the underlying ugly scars of a past that was traumatic and attempts to build over the cracks a new dispensation which has not been easy as I have witnessed all twenty years of the growth of our democracy in South Africa.

In my work there are layers of multiple histories. I do not intend to make history paintings but evoke on my paintings some of the aspects of our past that were repressed by colonial painters like Baines. My use of monotone is an attempt to play around the idea of timelessness in art and I try to make paintings that can well fit in the mould of nineteenth century painting as reproduced in books. Through the medium of paint I also come to terms with the reality of our society and the impermanence of even the rigid architectural structures built of stone 200 years ago that are now under threat as students at Rhodes University and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) are questioning the existence of all monuments associated with our traumatic colonial past. I do this or rather attempt to do this with the use of fluid paint and water that pervades my compositions threatening like a flood to erode all traces of human 'progress or civilization' as Baines so proudly termed it. Some of my paintings like Figure 37 demonstrate that nothing is permanent as our own Grahamstown land was at one stage submerged in water as part of a lagoon as Emily O'meara writes in her book *Grahamstown Reflected* (1995: 12).

The past is a reality for me as one of South African citizens who were victims of the apartheid and the whole legacy of colonialism. In my works I try to escape being trapped in the past by 'recreating' my world. I do this in an attempt to demonstrate the power of art and painting in particular to heal or work therapeutically. Water is a constant feature in my paintings and I have been intrigued by how calm this substance can be deceptively in that it can destroy whole communities in floods and break the hardest of rocks. The water level changes all the time around the sea which also alludes to the change in power structures that I have witnessed over the years. My argument through my works is that the intoxicating nature of power knows no colour or nationality. Simply put, I demonstrate or rather open a conversation about the potency of power which is able, like the forces of nature that turn calm water into raging floods, to turn any individual or group to monsters.

Interestingly, when I began brainstorming about the topic of my thesis and practice which is 'Dominion', I had a Christian perspective view of Dominion as found in the Bible in the book of Genesis chapter 1 verse 26 which reads:

> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (King James Version).

I was ready to question this idea of dominion and I am convinced that humankind has failed in all areas where they had exercised complete dominion. *Dominion no, 1,* in Figure 37, was one of my early paintings when I was coming to terms with living in Grahamstown and constantly viewing the St Georges cathedral which is situated at roughly the centre of this small town. My painting technique was a bit smooth but developing more towards expressive brush marks and simplifying of forms in a cubic style manner reminiscent of Pierneef. At this stage no theoretical basis existed for my adoption of his style except like him I was faced and had to deal with unifying a composition that consisted of geometric architectural forms and organic plant forms. This was a problem that I faced when I started and it is not an easy task to bring about cohesion in such a composition. One has to either make the buildings more organic (which was what I later attempted) or transform the organic forms like trees into geometric forms and risk losing their natural appearance. This painting was the first where I used big brushes and these brushes dictated the loose handling of paint without concerning myself with tiny details. The reflections on the ground in front of the cathedral in this painting led to the idea of the use of water in my paintings as a metaphor for the opposition movements that challenge the existence of colonial architectural structures in a democratic dispensation in South Africa. The *City of Tombs* in Figure 38 is a painting that was one of the very first I made using different shades of grey. The idea is the concealment of the ugly realities of the Albany district. When I first arrived in Grahamstown there was a process of digging of unmarked graves in Fingo village. Kiefer's influence of the wounded land is more apparent in this painting although I didn't use the blood as a symbol of the trauma that Kiefer used.

Fig. 37: Desmond Mnyila. *Dominion no, 1.* Oil on canvas. 2 x 1 m . 2014

Fig. 38: Desmond Mnyila. *City of Tombs.* Oil on canvas. 30,5 x 23cm. 2014

From Grahamstown East I proceeded to interrogate the clock tower building of Rhodes University which was the house of a district magistrate in the nineteenth century. In *Across the river* (Figure 39), I respond to the idea of town planning that ensured the location of all non- white citizens on the eastern side of the Matyana River. This is one of the last paintings that I painted in the black and white small scale series before venturing into larger scale works. The clock tower is represented as it was in the nineteenth century to emphasise its significance as a building that was built by the colonists although it was later transferred to Rhodes University. In later works the use of water in the representation of violent and calm yet potent water takes on a more prominent role. One of these works is the painting entitled *Transitory* in Figure 40 below. Here the idea was a subversion of the nineteenth century town planning laws of segregation by imposing restrictions on who has access to certain areas of Grahamstown, who is allowed to build and controls on what building materials are conventional on the town itself. I attempted to achieve this by placing township style houses on the town side of the border between town and township which was a river that I have painted below. This is an influence from Johannes Phokela who is a South African black artist who copies Dutch paintings of the period called the Enlightenment in Europe, a period complicit with the colonisation of South Africa. Phokela replaces white characters in these paintings with black characters as in *Tender, Loving care* in Figure 41 below. Phokela has interesting ideas and is a skilled painter but his technique is very different to mine as he copies

nineteenth century Dutch paintings working in the Dutch style of the period. His subject matter is not what I was interested in at the moment of producing the body of work for this particular exhibition. I was drawn more towards the paintings of Anselm Kiefer especially in his use of monochromatic colour and rough textures which I respond to in my following painting in Figure 42 entitled *Occupied*. This is a painting that was partly inspired by Kiefer's 'paintings' in which he literalized the destructive actions of the Nazi government by producing a series of works that were canvases burnt or cabornized and then bound in the form of a book as in Figure 35. In my painting a Cape Dutch style farm house is represented occupying a rugged, thorny and burnt out landscape. I am responding in part and expressing the senselessness of bringing civilization to an African piece of land 'at any cost' as Baines is known to have said (Carruthers 1995).The following painting was a departure from the rough textures to a more fluid and refined application of paint and brush mark.

Figure 43 entitled *Questioned solidity* is a painting that subverts the notion of permanence upon which the architectural structures were built in Grahamstown with a motive to justify the Vacant Land theory and negate AmaXhosa claims to the land (Carruthers 1995: 132). The Rhodes University clock tower here is portrayed as a detached architectural structure from other buildings as it was in the nineteenth century. It is surrounded by taller trees the scale of which have been exaggerated and elongated as a destabilisation of the ideas that inspired its construction as a tall, massive building like the cathedral that can be viewed from any position in Grahamstown as a result of its height. At first glance the painting appears deceptively realistic but on closer observation one discovers the expressive brushstrokes that attempt to destabilise the repose and gracious appearance of this historical building. The clouds look unsettled and this is reflected in the treatment of the hedge and tarred road in front of this building. The brushstrokes from this moment become more violent and fluid which would lead to the emergence of my waterscape painting later on in the year whereas the building would be totally obliterated such that the act of painting itself become a form of erasure.

Figure 44 is a perfect example of the idea of erasure and the total obliteration of the architectural structures leaving a 'sea' of brush marks. The idea behind this painting which I entitled *Pre-historic* is one demonstration of my wrestling with history as a person who has witnessed different periods in the history of South Africa. The ephemeral nature of power is challenged in this painting as water metaphorically represents the opposition to the colonial monuments. It eradicates and flattens all such monuments in its wake leaving the Grahamstown landscape as it was in pre-colonial times. O'Meara (1995: 12) alludes to the presence of a lagoon covering Grahamstown some 360 million years ago. The later paintings in this series seem to resolve the relationship between traumatic historical memory and painting. History and its legacy seems to stop scarring my aesthetic object and the very act of destroying as a necessary act of creating has come to a halt as the legacy of historical trauma no longer shapes the act of creating. …and the aesthetic act of mourning is over. This painting which is entitled *Nightscape 1,* is one in a series of large paintings where the grey tones have been abandoned and replaced by more warm grey tones or introduction of brighter colours

like blues, greens and yellow ochres as an indication of a move to a representation of the ideas that inspired Dominion in a more optimistic light.

Fig. 39: Desmond Mnyila. “Across the river”. Oil on canvas. 2014

Fig. 40: Desmond Mnyila. *Transitory.* Oil on canvas. 25 x 25,5 cm. 2014

. Fig. 41: Johannes Phokela. Oil on canvas. (Source: Phokela 2009)

Fig. 42: Desmond Mnyila. *Occupied.* Oil on canvas. 23 x 30,5 cm. 2014

Fig. 43: Desmond Mnyila. *Questioned solidity.* Oil on canvas. 25, 5 x 25, 5 cm. 2014

Fig. 44: Desmond Mnyila. *Pre-colonial*… Oil on canvas. 150cm x 150cm. 2014

Fig. 45: D.Mnyila. *Nightscape no, 1.* Oil on canvas. 1, 5 x 1, 5 m. 2015

CONCLUSION

In this mini thesis I have unpacked the notion of authority and power and how this finds its expression in architectural structures built in Grahamstown in the nineteenth century most of which are still standing today. In chapter one, I have discussed the ideas and theories of dominion as expressed in the writings of Markus (1993) and Njoh (2009). Markus concludes that buildings carry political messages and are therefore not neutral but are political. He argues that they are primarily about power and that to best understand architecture one has to study society and its power structures. He argues that buildings carry messages of power and political control and observes that the major architectural styles in Britain were developed at a time when British imperialism and colonialism were most radical. Buildings in Britain and in British colonies became vehicles to communicate political ambitions of absolute power, control and exhibition of wealth (Markus 1993).

Njoh (2009) goes into detail in describing the nature of power over the colonised territories that the British colonists exercised. He mentions five different forms of power: coercion, seduction, manipulation, force and segregation. Coercion was used through the construction of architectural structures that were bigger, taller and stronger than those of the local citizens. The size was carefully planned to demonstrate British wealth and power as well as to undermine local architectural tastes and styles. Churches like the St Georges cathedral in Grahamstown and the clock tower at Rhodes University are some of the examples of these structures. Then there was seduction, which was expressed through the use of media and other resources to promote European standards alongside condescending treatment of African traditional construction practices and materials. Moreover, there is a subtle means of demonstration of power through manipulation which was expressed with the seemingly preferential treatment of some of the local African citizens by building servants quarters in town designed to make them feel favoured when in fact they were located there to provide round the clock domestic services to their employers. He also describes a less subtle means of power which was force. Force was used in the design of architectural systems and town planning strategies whose main aim was to confine those citizens (in this case Africans) who were considered by the authorities to be a threat within specific space. This meant building of townships for blacks far from the towns and imposing curfews to restrict the movement of black people (Marshall 2009: 55). The last category was the segregation practices that were acted out in the built environment. This was accomplished by the construction of boundaries which were designed to separate individuals of different races, cultures or classes.

Throughout the thesis, I have explored ideas around authority or abuse of power and how this was expressed in architectural structures and their representation focussing on Grahamstown which was part of the Eastern Cape Colonial Frontier. Grahamstown is a small town that is very rich in history and that has some of the oldest building in South Africa that were built by the British settlers. I chose to focus on this town because of the architectural buildings that are well preserved here from a period in history that I cover in my thesis which was the nineteenth century. This was a period complicit with the arrival of British settlers in 1820 at Algoa Bay which is now Port Elizabeth and they moved to Grahamstown area as they

were needed here by colonial authorities to serve as a human buffer to prevent AmaXhosa from migrating to the Cape. Grahamstown was founded in 1812 by Colonel Graham as a military post with permanent barracks in order to contain AmaXhosa within 'their own territory'- that is beyond the Fish River.

In 1815 the military moved to what is today known as Fort England to build military barracks using more durable materials like stone. A small settlement grew around the barracks and Grahamstown started to grow as a small village but the wars with the AmaXhosa that were known as Fronier Wars which were fought over boundaries and cattle theft and raids carried on inspite of the presence of soldiers within close proximity of the Fish River. The most devastating war was the war fought in Grahamstown when Makana attacked the inhabitants of the small town in1819. There was a lot of blood that was shed and Makana, who was the chief of AmaXhosa was defeated. This was led to a major decision on the part of the British government which was in control of the Cape Colony at this time. The decision had far-reaching consequences for South Africa as a whole and affected the lives of British citizens and African local inhabitants.

Grahamstown was subjected to colonisation by the British and Western, British architectural styles and tastes were imposed on its land. The various practices carried out by colonisers were meant to change physical space by erecting Western style architectural structures on the landscape, thus simultaneously eliminating the old and producing new spaces modelled on European values which symbolised political, cultural and economic domination of the citizens of this colonised territory. Buildings changed the landscape permanently and this symbolised the permanent colonisation and occupation of the land. As a result, this translated to a development of power relations along material and aesthetic lines.

In chapter two of my thesis I analysed one of the exponents of British imperialism and colonialism who was Thomas Baines. He was born in England but relocated to the Cape Colony early in his adult life. Baines was a landscape painter and illustrator. My concern is with his paintings of Grahamstown. I analyse the ideas around the 'vacant land' that he subscribed to. The theory of the vacant land was a belief by settlers that when they arrived in the Cape there were no permanent architectural structures which rendered the land 'vacant' in the Western sense open to occupation. I unpack some ideas to explain and argue that the 'vacant land' theory was a myth. I do this with the help of writings by Crais & Clifton (1991), Thompson (1995) and Carruthers & Arnold (1995). Crais & Clifton writes that the 'vacant land 'theory suggests that Europeans settled South Africa at roughly the same time that Bantu – speaking Africans entered the region, and thus had implications for claims to ownerships over land and space.

I then concluded my research by describing my own work and the artists that have influenced it. It is a long journey wherein I narrate events that influenced my consciousness of what it is to live as a Black person at the height of Apartheid in South Africa. Growing up in an unjust society meant that I was deprived of a primary and high school art formal education but it never discouraged me. At the University of Fort Hare where I registered for a Bachelor in Fine Arts degree in 1990, I was afforded an opportunity for the first time to learn about art in a

formal educational setting. I delved into different media and genres ending up focussing my attention on representation of the human figure. I admired landscape painting and also was inspired by the mainly white staff members of the Fine Art Department of Fort Hare who were landscape painters. After graduating I carried on working using graphic media and later changed to painting media like oil pastels, acrylics and oil colours. Traumatic events in my life propelled me to seek solace in the landscape and I started focussing on this genre exclusively. Anselm Kiefer is one of the artists that have influenced my body of work for the exhibition titled *Dominion* in both his tendency to represent metaphorically historic trauma's scars left on the landscape in Germany and also in his use of large scale and monochromatic colour.

Kiefer was born in Germany during the persecution of the Jews and I was born in South Africa too at the height of apartheid. While Kiefer uses chemical processes and other objects to create rough texture to represent trauma, I use oil paints painted in different layers. I represent multiple histories in my own works which are slowly built in thick rough layers alluding to the traumatic events I witnessed. There are elements of mourning in Kiefer's work similar to my own works which express the traumatic past experiences of our country and later develop metaphorically to represent the water of the sea as an instrument of destruction. My work responds to the work of Baines too in their absences by including elements of the landscape like ruggedness that were absent in Baines' paintings of Grahamstown. History and its legacy is central to my work. I navigate between different aesthetic styles and the very act of creating paintings is shaped by mourning a past in my own life that I wasn't afforded the opportunity to mourn.

This last chapter also deals with my own development as an artist and a landscape painter, a genre and medium that had colonial associations. These and ideas that directly had a bearing on my own choices are enunciated here in detail. I conclude my discussion of Dominion by stressing that power is an intoxicating phenomenon that is open to abuse by anyone who happens to possess it. I also discuss and analyse my own painting and painting technique and how these were developed and what influences were at play during the two years I spent creating paintings for this exhibition.

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