Abstract:

Anonymity and the Zulu Policeman: An Economy of Portraiture

Although it is not surprising to find that the colonial archive is replete with pictures of Africans who were employed as policemen, soldiers and mercenaries, it is more surprising to find these types of photographs in private family albums or on sale as postcards. What these two archives have in common is that in both, the "Native" or "Zulu" policeman is an anonymous subject. This paper is an attempt to give meaning to this anonymity. It is situated at the intersection of the visual record of conquest and colonial expansion and the aesthetic cultures, desires and curiosities that accompanied the arrival of the camera in southern Africa. It will explore the possibility that although labeled by the nondescript "Zulu Policeman", many of these subjects posed for the photographs in ways that suggest that they wanted to assert their individuality. For the Zulu Policeman the boundary between the visible and the invisible was demarcated by the supposed authority conferred on them by their state-issued uniform in a social context where the same uniform marked them as the nemesis of the educated and urban Africans whom they were meant to survey. By being positioned in this way the Zulu Policeman was meant to visibly embody the power of the state while also implicitly signifying the allure of Zulu masculinity that was now being harnessed for policing rather than the defunct regimental discipline. The paper will thus question the oft-repeated assumption that it was only the mission – and its ideology of "respectability" – that forced or tempted Africans towards sartorial correctness and innovation. The image and career of the Zulu Policeman suggests that the state, or at least its military and policing apparatuses, participated in an economy of clothing consumption and thereby gave value to the uniforms it issued to its African employees. This economy of consumption, it will argued, had the unintended consequence of producing a more spectacular and sometimes brightly coloured economy of portraiture in which tourists, travellers and settlers purchased, sold and posted pictures of Zulu policemen.

Introduction

In September of 1901, a Zulu Policeman going by the name of "Cash" walked into the office of the then Superintendent of Native Affairs in the Transvaal and complained about his pay. He and his men were not receiving the pay and rations they had been promised. The Superintendent, J.S. Marwick, then wrote a letter to Captain de Bertadano stating that he had heard the complaint and was requesting remedy on behalf of these policemen [slide]. This Superintendent will be introduced later, but it is important to point out that the letter was written during the Anglo-Boer War, which lasted from 1899-1902. In the 1906 "Rules and Regulations" for the Natal Police, there is a list of the clothing that is provided for all ranks and units of the police [slide]. For the "Native Police (Mounted)", the list includes such items as: great coat, ankle boots, putties, forage cap and belt (1906, 18). These two examples, the first about pay and the second about clothing, are what is meant in the title by "economy". The Zulu policeman was an item of expenditure on the colonial and government balance sheet. If this however were the only reason for writing about these men, then it wouldn't be an interesting one. The list of items issued to the "Native Policeman" is distinctive because it also specifies how long the said item can be used before a new one is requested. This rate of depreciation was racialized since from the list it seems that only "Native" and "Indian" police were prescribed periods of "wear and tear", the white officers were not. This is the other meaning of "economy": although the state expended on uniforms for all police and soldiers, a distinction was often made in the "valuation" of these uniforms. This paper will suggest some of the ways in which colonial governments attempted to fix the value of uniforms but ultimately couldn't since factors outside of the military and policing establishments often determined the "going rate" of military and other uniforms.

Work and Dress

The Zulu Policeman was not the only Zulu to dress for work. A very rough sketch of the history of dress among Zulu men would position the Zulu policeman somewhere between the "Zulu Dandy" and the "Zulu Ricksha". The first category, like the "Zulu Policeman", was almost exclusively the creation of photographers. The "Zulu Dandy" was strongly associated with spectacular hairstyles worn by young Zulu men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries [slide]. Although both the Zulu Dandy and Zulu Rickshaw have been written about, the literature – as with the literature on the Zulu policeman – has focussed on the type of labour that each of these groups of men was engaged in. Thus, in writing about the upsurge in migrant labour in Durban in the 1870s, Michael Mahoney, provides the following description:

> **The largest groups of workers on more extended contracts were rickshaw pullers, policemen, and largest of all, domestic servants. In stark contrast to the present situation, the vast majority of domestic servants in colonial Durban were young men, mainly because there were so few African women living there at the time. (Mahoney 2012, 119)**

Policing, even when it is counted with domestic servitude and richshaw pulling, is difficult to categorize as a form of labour – it involves being both a "government servant" and an "independent agent" since police are rewarded for apprehending criminals in the

act of committing crimes. Moreover, unlike the Zulu rickshaw whose uniform began as a simple "kitchen suit" [slide] and then was added to and extravagantly accessorised, the Zulu Policeman was prohibited – according to the 1906 regulations – from wearing accessories with his uniform. These two instances suggest that clothing and social class were coterminous but not causal. In other words, there wasn't a functional relationship between the clothes worn and the level of subservience required in the worker. There is a historical reason why work did not determine clothing or vice versa.

Proclamations, ordinances and bylaws regarding clothing began to be issued from the 1850s onwards. Thus, in a proclamation dated June 19th 1850, the Lieutenant Governor Benjamin Pine, declared that,

> **…any Native residing in, visiting, or passing through, either the towns of Pietermaritzburg, Durban, or Ladysmith, not being clothed with some garment from the shoulder to the knee, shall, after having been first cautioned, be punished by fine or imprisonment, as provided by the laws already existing in the District on that head. (Natal and Cadiz 1891, 1492)**

Such proclamations were framed in culturalist terms and the Lt. Governor in this case emphasised the supposition that the settlers and government had tolerated the African lack of clothing on account of their "peculiar conditions and barbarian habits" (Natal and Cadiz, 1491). However, one of the other suppositions contained in the proclamation is that Natal's Africans were now wage labourers, or at least receiving payment for their labour and goods, and that therefore what should logically follow from wage labour is the purchase of clothing. As Atkins shows, these Natal Africans responded to such bylaws in varied ways and varied styles of dress. Thus, ship passengers and new arrivals disembarking at Durban's harbour were greeted with scenes of "black men "arbitrarily" arrayed – in tattered trousers, top hats, or red woollen nightcaps; or knee breeches, or old gray soldier's coats loaded down with shiny trinkets and other cheap gewgaws" (Atkins 1993, 142). These improvised outfits thus defined these Zulu men's entrance into the colonial economy while also at the same time showing that what constituted appropriate and proper dress was not a universal value or a logical conclusion of the imposition of dress codes.

The Cape Antecedents: The Loyal Fingoes

Beyond his place in the history of migrant labour, the Zulu policeman has another pedigree. His designation as a "Native Policeman" [slide] exists almost solely in the photographic archive. Secondly, the "Zulu Policeman" is preceded in history by a rabble of levies, regiments and mercenaries [slide]. This latter history is most emblematically represented in a painting by Thomas Baines – South Africa's father of landscape painting. Baines (1820–1875) was born in on November 27, 1820, in King's Lynn, Norfolk, England. In 1842, he traveled steerage to Cape Town where he began to practice his art commercially. In 1848, he joined an ox trek north to the Orange River and gained his first experience of travel into the interior, sketching and painting. In 1851 he enlisted as an artist with the British army in the "Kaffir War" (Cape Frontier War) of 1850–1853, before returning to England. The painting is titled "The Loyal Fingo" and it depicts African levies in motion. There are many things to be noted about this depiction but first, it is important to briefly describe who the "Fingoes" [colonial name] or *amaMfengu* were.

The identity of the *amaMfengu* is linked to the controversy over the meaning of the "mfecane" (the social and political upheaval caused by the rise of Shaka Zulu). Like many other ethnic identities in southern Africa, the *amaMfengu* enter the scene of colonial conflict and encroachment as "refugees from Shaka's wars". In 1835 they supposedly signed an alliance treaty with Britain and in exchange for land and Christian education and evangelization, they agreed to be the allies of the British against the Xhosa as the former extended the Cape Colony into the eastern Cape. This painting depicts a Mfengu levy with a rifle slung over the shoulder and multiple objects of adornment and practical use on his person. For our purposes it's not the details that matter but the very arbitrary and meddled quality of his attire. Without the rifle, there is nothing particularly militaristic about his attire – the feathers in the hat, the genet tail and horn hanging from his waist etc. all suggest sartorial choice rather than military regulation. This painting is pleasing to the eye because of its irregular combination of rugged practicality and spectacular dandyism. From the perspective of postcolonial theory and the general criticism of colonial representation, this painting is not real. It has become the accepted position to read such paintings as fantastical, that is, they are partly based on reality but are mostly the products of the imagination of the painter who is often depicted as eager to "exoticize" his subjects while presenting the landscape as an idyll ready to be conquered and subjugated to Western industry and cultivation. Baines fits into this stereotype of the colonial "amateur" ethnographer because not only did he paint and sketch scenes from his expeditions but in 1854 via his contacts in the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) he joined an expedition to Northern Australia as artist and storekeeper. He returned once again to the Cape in 1868, this time as "exploring superintendent and geographer" for the South African Goldfields Exploration Company, with prospecting sights on Matabeleland (Stone 2007). "The Loyal Fingo" can therefore not be read as a reflection of the "liberty" enjoyed by African levies and mercenaries. Yet, for our purposes it is a starting point for a different kind of enquiry. If we accept the argument that these kinds of paintings are not an accurate depiction of reality then the question that logically follows is, what happens when the camera is introduced and colonial armies and police units are captured through the lens? This transition is at the core of the argument of this paper since as James Ryan argues in *Picturing Empire*, then and now photographs are treated as the "eye of history". He goes on to state that the assumed "exactitude of the camera" could not have emerged "without the pictorial conventions of perspectival realism that it inherited via landscape painting" (1997, 16-17). In the case of the Zulu Policeman, the point is not to only demonstrate this shift from painting to photography, but also to enumerate the pictorial conventions that have created this archive of photographs and allow us now to reconstruct elements of the "collective colonial memory" (1997, 12) that continues to animate these representations.

While Baines was painting Mfengu levies, a complementary war literature was taking shaping as soldiers and officers wrote about their "frontier" experiences. A different picture of who the Mfengu were emerges. For the purpose of connecting these levies with the "Zulu Policeman", a supposition needs to be made and that is that the Zulu policeman as a type is a direct descendant of the African levies that were used by the Cape colonial government to fight "frontier wars" in the nineteenth century. Thus, in his description of the events that precipitated the War of Mlanjeni (1850-1853), Peires

makes a passing observation about the African "collaborators" who defected and rebelled against the British and joined the Xhosa in the fighting. He writes,

> **Meanwhile the 'Kaffir Police', a paramilitary body of trained collaborators, rebelled against their white officers, and the Khoi settlers of the Kat River Valley discarded their traditional alliance with the Colony to join the Xhosa in an all-out war against white domination in South Africa. (Peires 1989, 11-12)**

The existence of these "Kaffir Police" hints at the use of collaborators of all kinds and the memoirs of the white officers who fought in this war attest to the presence of African auxiliaries. Since what we are concerned with is not the act of collaboration but the clothing of the collaborators,[1] it is apt to turn to a description of the dress style of the Mfengu levies found in the war journal of William Ross King. From his description, we are given the impression that on receiving their pay, Mfengu levies would spend time and money purchasing clothing. He paid particular attention to the varied and spectacular quality of their choices:

> **In town the young men get themselves up in the most extraordinary style, with smart ear-rings in their ears, and school-boys' caps stuck on the top of their heads, with red and blue velvet tassels; and you daily see them at the stores, laying out their pay in second-hand European clothes,-blue coats with brass buttons, tight fitting surtouts, and fashionable pantaloons; an accompanying party of friends assisting and advising with the greatest gravity. Some showed a strong military turn, stitching broad red stripes down their trowsers, or with an old Cape Corps jacket, swaggering about with a rusty sword and spurs. But in the field, this attire is laid aside, and the same fellows pass you on the line of march, at the double, with a "Hi Charlie[2]",-their dirty blanket, and raw beef tied on their backs, and no other clothing than a checked cotton shirt. (King 1853, 101-102)**

The use of the word "swagger" points to the fact that for these Mfengu levies being dressed in European clothing – especially the "military" styles – led to a particular sway and shifting of the body which is in direct contrast to how they walked and were attired when they were in battle. When they were doing battle, the levies also seemed to prefer European rifles, muskets and flintlocks rather than what would be expected to be their preferred "traditional weapons". The contrast is starkly drawn in the following two excerpts:

> **Just as the regiment was assembling for service in the centre of the camp, on Sunday morning, we were startled by hideous yelling and cries from the Fingoe camp, whereby the service was delayed for some time. For seeing the Commandant of the garrison galloping over, followed by other officers, one and all bolted after them to see what was going on, and found the Fingoes fighting about the division of rations. There were several hundreds of them struggling like demons, in clouds of dust, yelling out their war-cry, and challenging each other. All were perfectly naked, the blood running down the black faces and breasts of many from the blows of "knobkerries," or clubs, which they applied to each other's heads with such astounding force that the very report was enough to give one a headache. (King, 42)**

> **Johnny[3] Fingo, in his haste to shoot these poor devils, whom we had stealthily crept upon (having seen their camp-fire a long way off), forgot to put a cap on his rifle, and as the gun only snapped fire as he pulled the trigger, some three or four feet from the head of one of the**

> **disputing marauders, he received in return a lounge from an assegai through his thigh. The rest jumped suddenly up, and an indiscriminate *mêlée* took place. Poor Dix received a fearful crack on the skull from a *knobkerrie* (he was never perfectly right afterwards); Johnny Fingo got another stab in the legs, and, what affected him still more, his beautiful "Westley-Richards" double-barrelled rifle, which he had obtained, Heaven knows how, was irretrievably damaged. (Lakeman 1880, 74)**

Johnny Fingo – as his hybrid name implies, was a Mfengu, who earlier in the text is described as the "chief" of the levies – functions in the second excerpt as the perfect embodiment of the African auxiliary. His singular concern for his "Westley-Richards" despite his injuries and despite his witnessing the use of the knobkerrie on his fellow soldier, shows that even as early in the nineteenth century as the 1850s, African levies did not as a matter of practice only use knobkerries either for fighting or even for symbolic display. Johnny Fingo saw his power and authority as resting on his rifle and as reported by Lakeman, "although badly wounded and unable to stand, was bemoaning his broken rifle as it lay across his knees…he repeatedly asked me as to the possibility of getting the indented barrels of his rifle rebent to their original shape." (Lakeman, 75)

If Johnny Fingo and other African levies valued their rifles so much why are their successors, the "Zulu Policemen", photographed holding knobkerries? One possible way to answer this question is by posing another. In writing about the end of the 6th frontier war of 1836, Storey, in his book *Guns, Race, and Power in Colonial South Africa*, makes the following observation about Sir Harry Smith's famous address to the Xhosa chiefs:

> **The establishment of civilization through commercialization and also through the undermining of the chiefs became established "native policy" of the Cape Colony. The overall policy remained in place for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Yet where did guns fit in? Were they commodities that, if exchanged and used, would tend to increase civilization? Or were they objects that would be turned against the project of civilization? (Storey 2008, 77)**

There is also a direct answer to the question of whether guns were commodities and that is that as the nineteenth century ended and African men acquired more guns, especially from working on the Kimberley diamond fields, successive colonial governments began to impose restrictions or even ban their ownership by Africans. Another answer to the question is found in the testimonies collected in *The James Stuart Archive*. Here the connection between government, the military and money is made explicit and slightly anachronistic.

The government's army is money

Although he was intending to collect stories about the past, James Stuart[4] often prompted his informants to talk about their current predicaments and he labelled these as "grievances". One of these informants, Mbovu ka Ndengezi, gave a pointed disquisition on the meaning of money and its connection to government. It is worth quoting at length:

> **Was it not right to keep money from natives? Money was brought by Europeans. We had none. Natives should not have been given money because they do not know its use. They should be paid in clothing and cattle. But coolies, Arabs, and Chinese understand money.**

> **Let contracts exist between them. What is wanted from us is money. After we have worked, the money we earn is taken from us in every way. Our needs are increased and we are pressed in every way. We then go out to work and wages are reduced. We have our own necessities to meet. We would be content without money. We will also work for *hoes*. Let *pieces of paper* be with Europeans…**
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> **Money causes crime, thefts etc. If there was no money with us nothing would be wanted of us. Our people cannot work; they have not been taught. The great thing wanted of us is money. Although natives cannot [work], are not used to work, they should work as far as they are able.**
>
> **The Government *built the country* with money. Without money we would have become cannibals…**
>
> ***Government is expanding*, every few years. The Government resembles Tshaka, for he never got tired. *Its army is money*.**
>
> **'Natives will *become criminals*.' (Webb and Wright 1982, 29)**

The anachronistic link between the colonial government and the reign of Shaka, suggests a seamless transition from the military strategies and ambitions of the founder of the Zulu kingdom and the colonial government. However, other "ambitions" are attributed to the state, namely, expansion and the spending of money. In Mbovu's mind these are all connected to the fact that money, like an army, marches tirelessly in the name of its commanders. These statements could be dismissed as figurative but they could also be taken seriously as pointing to the basic fact that colonial governments did spend money on both the expansion of state power and the expansion of military capacity. Moreover, Mbovu insightfully connects policing with the presence of money; he observes that without money there would be no crime and therefore no criminalization of Africans. From his perspective, the "Zulu Policeman" is exactly a functionary of the state because he is the army that is constituted with money.

This consumptive function of the state can also be discerned in the history of policing in Natal – where most of the photographs of Zulu policemen were taken. On the establishment of policing as a profession, one of the most thorough sources is H.P. Holt's *The Mounted Police of Natal*[5]. The value of this book is that not only does it detail the history of Natal's first police force but it is also dedicated and prefaced by Major-General Sir. J.G. Dartnell, K.C.B the founder of the policing corps. An excerpt from his preface gives us a sense of what considerations, compromises and exigencies influenced the creation of a colonial police unit. Thus, on the character and quality of colonists available for recruitment Major Dartnell wrote [slide]:

> **I wanted to send home for men, but this the Government would not sanction, so I had to start recruiting amongst the flotsam and jetsam of the colony, and a very rough lot they proved to be, being principally old soldiers and sailors, transport riders, and social failures from home, etc. (Holt 2009, viii)**

This corps of mounted police was established in 1873 and one of the first obstacles to overcome was the question of clothing and uniforms. Thus, Major Dartnell again wrote [slide]:

> **The clothing was at first the same as that worn by the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, viz., brown corduroy jacket and breeches, black leather boots coming nearly to the knee and**

> **buckled down the side, and a leather peaked cap with a white cover. It was a stinking uniform, however, which caused the men to be nicknamed "The Snuffs,"[6] but anything in the shape of uniform was hard to get in the colony at the time. Afterwards, as more suitable uniform was obtained, the men began to put on a little "side" when walking out, and the then Governor said to me one day: "Your men swagger too much. We don't want swashbucklers." To that I replied: "If you knew the difficulty I have had to make them forget the name of 'Snuffs' and instil a little swagger into them, you wouldn't wish to see it reduced."**
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> **A little later on another Governor said, with reference to his orderly at Government House: "I wish you wouldn't send a prince in disguise as my orderly, for he looks so spick and span that I am almost ashamed of my own get-up whenever I pass him." (Holt, viii)**

These two quotes point to the obvious relationship that exists between a uniform and behaviour – the "flotsam and jetsam" of the colony is transformed into princely countenance by an appropriate and socially accepted uniform. Beyond this obvious "functionalization"[7] of the uniforms, as Roland Barthes would put it, the statement also tells us something about the pedigree of the Corps – it borrowed its uniform from the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police and in his preface the Major-General describes how when he was appointed to his position he had requested permission to travel to the Cape Colony to "learn something of police work, for they had had a mounted police force there for some few years" (Holt, xi-xii). This lineage of one colonial force copying or learning from another has important implications for understanding how notions of proper dress travelled from place to place. Or, expressed differently, Mbovu's assertions that the government's army is money are embodied in the "swagger" that officers would put on once they were dressed in their uniforms. Thus, the uniform can be understood as the embodiment of the government's ability to create and spend money.

The economic imperative of recruiting, clothing and paying policemen took on a different meaning with the large-scale urbanization of the African population [slide]. From this perspective, these photographs could be understood to be in fact complements to another kind of archive – namely, the archive of military despatches and letters that actually defined why and how Zulu men were specifically recruited for military and policing service. Thus we return to "Cash", the policeman. In this letter [slide] stamped 30 November 1900 the same J. S. Marwick we met earlier bemoans the fact that only 20 Africans are employed in policing the "locations" of Pretoria. The letter is addressed to the Military Governor and states:

> **Having regard to the fact that there are, - including Government labourers, about 7000 working Natives alone in Pretoria, - not to speak of the families in the Locations – I think the number of Native Police employed is not in excess of present requirements.**
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> **Native Constables, – provided they be without local interests – are much more useful in policing people of their own colour than European police could be. In addition to keeping the Native population under proper control they have means of obtaining information which are not afforded to European Police.**
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> **The proposal to fix the strength of Native Police for Pretoria at 20 only should not be approved. Even in time of peace sixty, at the very least, would be required.**

This letter shifts the attention away from the uniforms and dress of African policemen towards the "function" they were meant to serve while in uniform. This letter clearly distinguishes the "Native Police" from the "European Police" by suggesting that the Native policeman has skills of investigation and interrogation that are not available to the European. Moreover, Marwick accidentally points to one of the characteristics that was necessary for the making of the appropriate "Native Constable": he was to "be without local interests", meaning that he could not be from the urban location itself. He had to be from elsewhere. As the photographic archive attests, this elsewhere was Natal or Zululand. Marwick is a central figure in the history of Africans working on the Rand for another reason. Not only is he remembered as the organizer and leader of an 1899 march of approximately 7,000 Zulu men who were fleeing the onset of the Anglo-Boer War, he became an expert on what he termed "Natives in the Larger Towns" – the title of a talk he gave on August 7, 1918 (Mahoney 2012, 145-149). The three main themes of Marwick's talk were clothing, housing and work and he advocated for various methods by which Africans could be introduced to all three. On the subject of "improvidence" for example, he observed:

> **…the authorities constantly receive appeals from the relatives of Natives asking that they may be prevailed upon to recognise their obligations to their families or that they may be induced to return to their homes. It is stated with regard to the negroes of Jamaica and Demerara that the "motive which was most relied on for inducing them to work as their love of fine clothes and personal ornaments." It cannot be said, however, that extravagance goes hand in hand with industry among the South African Natives. Usually the most thriftless are those of the idle and vicious class, who never want to work. (Marwick and Rich 1993, 34)**

The crime of not wanting to work appears repeatedly in colonial literature and so does the accusation of "idleness". In Marwick's version of the colonial economy, Africans could be induced through the appropriate by-laws to offer their labour and their be turned into industrious and tax-paying subjects. However, an unexpected instance of "idleness" and punishment is the example of Fayedwa, the ventriloquist whose story appears in H.P. Holt's *The Mounted Police of Natal*. Holt begins with the generalization that:

> **The average Zulu distinctly objects to work, and, when he can, he lives by his wits, though he rarely knows how to do that properly. There is one notable exception in the person of Fayedwa.**
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> **Nobody who ever had anything to do with this individual will forget him. He is in prison now, and he has been in prison a dozen times before, but he is one of the most remarkable ventriloquists breathing. Every Zulu has a way of making himself heard at a distance. This is due to the formation of the Zulu words, and the native's clear enunciation, although many people living in the country to-day ascribe it to a form of ventriloquism.**
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> **This faculty was strongly developed in Fayedwa, and in his early youth he travelled about with a circus, doing an ordinary "boy's" work. A ventriloquist who was amongst the performers interested him greatly, and Fayedwa studied at his feet, eventually becoming far more expert than his master. Perhaps he would have been a good Zulu all the days of his life had he not picked up the trick of ventriloquism, but it ruined him socially and morally; for he is a wily mortal, and soon saw that he could earn a lot of money by frightening his simple, superstitious fellow-beings. (Holt 2009, 299-300)**

Although the fuller story of Fayedwa's arrest, trials, appeals and imprisonment cannot be detailed here, the reason why it's relevant is that although he was committing a "trick" which he had been taught while working for Europeans, "native constables" were sent to

arrest him. He thus stands in sharp contrast to Africans who engaged in diamond theft and smuggling in Kimberley and other diamond mining towns. For now, it is important to note that ventriloquism is not and was not a crime, but as Holt points out Fayedwa was prosecuted for earning a lot of money by performing tricks on the gullible. He eluded capture in the same way:

> **Improbable though this sounds, for the average music-hall ventriloquist could not deceive any one in the same way, it is officially recorded at the C.I.D. that for years Fayedwa kept the native police from laying hands on him by means of ventriloquism. They looked upon him as something sacred. (Holt 2009, 301)**

If Fayedwa represents one kind of "criminality" which the "Zulu Policeman" was meant to check and failed to do so, then the policing of urban areas is another function which these policemen were tasked with and often failed to execute. This is clearly expressed in Marwick's 1900 letter about Pretoria in which the function being defined is that of "proper control" – the Native policeman is not patrolling Pretoria's urban locations in order to "keep the peace" or ensure the safety of the denizens. He is there to keep the "population under proper control". This placed the policeman in direct confrontation with urbanized Africans, especially the urban elite who chafed against the constant supervision and surveillance represented by policemen. In 1911 Sol Plaatje [slide; brief explanation & pause] published an article in the *Pretoria News* titled 'The Amalaita Bands: Some Criticism of the Native Police' in which he painted a different portrait of the character and behaviour of the Native Police [slide]:

> **For a picture of the average Zulu policeman at Johannesburg I would depict this; A creature, giant-like and large as to proportions, ferocious and forbidding of aspect, most callously brutal of action, and irredeemably ignorant. The knowledge that it is but necessary to call attention of the higher police officials to this matter to obtain remedy, and that there is no more kindly, courteous and humane gentleman anywhere than is Major Douglass, Deputy Commissioner, induces me to devote a short chapter to this subject in the sincere belief and hope that it will not be in vain. (Plaatje 1976, 59)**

This caricature of the boorish and ignorant Zulu Policeman points to a literary history of these servicemen. The fact that Plaatje – a member of the nineteenth-century black elite and a man of letters – dedicated an article to the problem of urban criminal gangs (the Amalaita) and the ineffectual policing by African policemen, suggests that there were many more such complaints. From Plaatje's perspective the "Native policeman" was not actually keeping the black population under control (as defined by the 1900 letter) but was in fact negligent in their duty since they did not prevent or arrest the growth and violence of the Amalaita gangs. Beyond this grievance however is another relationship that is being defined here – Plaatje, and by implication other educated Africans – saw the Zulu Policemen not as a compatriot or civil servant but as a nemesis. This antagonistic relationship between educated Africans and the ignoble Zulu policeman contradicts the swaggering image depicted by the founder of Natal's police force. As a literary theme this antagonistic relationship offers us the opportunity to define the position of African policemen in the emerging class structure of urban South Africa. Moreover, it seems that the police force or forces also published their own journal or magazine from 1907 onwards (Natal 1907, Police et al. 1915). This publication was originally called *Nongqai*

– the Zulu word for a "night watchman" or security guard – and was then changed in 1979 to the Latin name *Servamus* (meaning "to serve"). The fact that police officers founded their own journal, which wasn't originally concerned with policing and security issues but was a literary and "human interest" magazine, hints at a possible comparative approach. That is, it is possible to argue that while the educated Africans had their own views and complaints about the police; the police in turn evolved their own literary response to the public's contempt.[8]

Conclusion

Although it is not surprising to find that the colonial archive is replete with pictures of Africans who were employed as policemen, soldiers and mercenaries, it is more surprising to find these types of photographs in private family albums or on sale as postcards [slide]. What these two archives have in common is that in both, the "Native" or "Zulu" policeman is an anonymous subject. This paper has attempted to give meaning to this anonymity. It traced the origins of the "Zulu Policeman" back to the "frontier wars" of the nineteenth century and situated the image of the "Loyal Fingo", as a predecessor, at the intersection of the visual record of conquest and colonial expansion and, the aesthetic cultures, desires and curiosities that accompanied the arrival of the camera in southern Africa. It asserted that although they were labelled by the nondescript "Zulu Policeman", many of these subjects, with the Mfengu as their example, could assert their individuality. The evidence was the textual trace of testimonies found in *The James Stuart Archive*. Visually, the boundary between the visible and the invisible was demarcated by the supposed authority conferred on policemen by their state-issued uniform. Textually, the "Zulu Policeman" was fixed in a social context where the same uniform marked him as the nemesis of the educated and urban Africans whom they were meant to survey. By being positioned in this way, the Zulu Policeman was meant to visibly embody the power of the state while also implicitly signifying the allure of Zulu masculinity that was now being harnessed for policing rather than the defunct regimental discipline. The paper thus questioned the oft-repeated assumption that it was only the mission – and its ideology of "respectability" – that forced or tempted Africans towards sartorial correctness and innovation. The image and career of the Zulu Policeman suggests that the state, or at least its military and policing apparatuses, participated in an economy of clothing consumption and thereby gave value to the uniforms it issued to its African employees. This economy of consumption had the unintended consequence of producing a more spectacular and sometimes brightly coloured economy of portraiture in which tourists, travellers and settlers purchased, sold and posted pictures of Zulu policemen.

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[1] Although I have read Peires' *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7*, it was only after reading James Whyle's *The Book of War* (2012) that I truly apprehended the sartorial language that suffused the memoirs of the British soldiers who fought in colonial "frontier wars".

[2] One of the definitions of the word "Charlie" as given by the OED is: "The name formerly given to a night-watchman. [The origin is unknown: some have conjectured 'because Charles I in 1640 extended and improved the watch system in the metropolis'.]" ("Charley | Charlie, n.". *OED Online*. September 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30754?redirectedFrom=Charlie (accessed November 06, 2012)).

[3] The OED gives the following definition of Johnny: "…*slang*. A policeman. Also Johnny Darby, Johnny Hop." ("Johnny | Johnnie, n.". *OED Online*. September 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/101516?redirectedFrom=Johnny (accessed November 06, 2012)).

[4] James Stuart was born in 1868 in Pietermaritzburg. In 1881, he was sent to England, for his education. He returned to Natal in 1886, and after working in the post office in Pietermaritzburg, he was appointed clerk to the resident magistrate of Eshowe in the recently annexed British colony of Zululand in 1888. Stuart became a magistrate in Zululand in 1895, and subsequently at various centres in Natal. In 1909 he was appointed Assistant Secretary for Native Affairs, the second highest post in the colony's Native Affairs Department. In 1912, for reasons that are not clear, he retired at the age of 44, and returned to Natal. In 1922, for reasons which again are not clear, he left Natal and settled in London where he lived and died in 1942. (Wright 1996, 334)

[5] Holt, H. P. 2009. *The Mounted Police of Natal*. London: Bibliolife [John Murray]. Original edition, 1913.

[6] One of the meanings of the word snuff is: "To detect, perceive, or anticipate, by inhaling the odour of" (OED). The pun being made here is that the uniform was so smelly that the police could be snuffed from a distance.

[7] In his influential and seminal book *The Language of Fashion*, Roland Barthes makes the following observation about clothing: 'outside of the leisured classes, dress is never linked to the work experienced by the wearer: the whole problem of how clothes are functionalized is ignored' (Barthes 2006, 5).

[8] For examples of some of the article published in *Nongqai* see: http://www.esaach.org.za/index.php?title=Zulu_Literature