

HISTORY IN THE LITERARY IMAGINATION:
THE TELLING OF NONGOAWUSE AND THE XHOSA CATTLE-KILLING IN
SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE (1891–1937)

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SUMMARY

This thesis takes as its subject the millenarian movement of 1856–7, commonly known as the Xhosa Cattle-Killing. My project examines a range of literary representations of this seminal moment in South African history: novels, plays, and short stories in English or English translation. The period under consideration encompasses the earliest literary responses to the Cattle-Killing and includes critical historical-political moments such as: the incorporation of the last independent black territory into the Cape Colony, the creation of the Union of South Africa, the passing of the Land Act, the enfranchisement of white women and the enactment of Hertzog's 'native bills'. The project consists of close, contextual readings, and the approach is cross-cultural and interdisciplinary.

In this dissertation I examine the meaning that has accrued to the Cattle-Killing, and the role that literary accounts have played in interpreting and defining this pivotal event in the historical consciousness of their sometimes considerable audiences. In some cases, these creative works have anticipated trends in formal historiography and suggested new ways to interrogate the evidence. But the accounts do more than creatively reconstruct the past. They are also implicated in their respective presents and use the Cattle-Killing to 'write out' contemporaneous concerns: be it female emancipation, 'native education' or Black Nationalism. The various manifestations of the Cattle-Killing story chart not only the shifting 'truth' of the event but also the ways in which it has been made relevant and useable for different communities at various points in South Africa's history. To read these accounts of the Cattle-Killing, I argue, is to 'read' the history of this period.

While taking as its subject an event from 150 years ago, and literary responses from shortly after, my project contributes to wider, on-going conversations relating to history as a field of argument and literature as a social and historical force. A related aim is to contribute to the revaluation of early South African literature, which has been neglected or homogenized in recent years. My dissertation seeks to recuperate and complicate by representing a variety of subject positions and resuscitating voices discarded or forgotten.

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PREFACE

This dissertation is my own work and contains nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration with others, except as specified in the text and Acknowledgements. It does not exceed the regulation length, including footnotes and appendix, but excluding the bibliography.

The photo-engravings from *Pambaniso* (figs 1–10) and figures 11–15 are reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. Permission to reproduce Dowsley's 'Black Larry' photograph (fig. 16) was obtained from Conal and Heather Turner.

NOTES

There have been various spellings of proper nouns, and derivatives, over the years. Sarhili, in earlier years, for example, was referred to as Kreli or Sarili, and Nongqawuse as Nongqause, Nonkose, Nonquassi (to name just a few). I have used the modern spellings, except when quoting.

There is some controversy surrounding the term 'Cattle-Killing'. Jeff Guy (in 'A Landmark, not a Breakthrough', 229), argues that it 'conflates, distorts and over-simplifies the events to which it refers' and should be abandoned. Helen Bradford has recently reanimated the debate in 'Akukho Ntaka Inokubhabha Ngephiko Elinye'. While acknowledging the term to be a misnomer, I have nonetheless decided to retain it (without inverted commas). Not only is it already widely established and generally understood, but no more precise term been suggested.

INTRODUCTION

AFTERLIVES AND USES OF THE XHOSA CATTLE-KILLING

Yes, I know that historians and writers will condemn Nongqawuse as a fool, a traitor, devil-possessed witch. But is that everything that can be said about this? I hope to God not. No, I will not believe, I cannot believe that the tragedy, which is now upon us, can be explained in that way only. There must be something deeper. I believe that in the distant future someone will catch the proper spirit and get the real meaning of this incident and write about it. Who knows?

H. I. E. Dhlomo, *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, 20

The mid-nineteenth century millenarian movement, instigated by the prophetess Nongqawuse and now commonly known as the Xhosa Cattle-Killing, occupies a central place in South African history.¹ Not only were its immediate consequences severe and wide-reaching, so too were its long-term effects. The movement resulted in a significant loss of life, the proletarianisation of a large section of Xhosa society and the appropriation of land by the colonial government. Ultimately it led to the demise of Xhosa autonomy and the expansion and entrenchment of white rule in the eastern-Cape region of southern Africa.

From the outset, attention was drawn to the fantastical character and narrative potential of the movement, with a correspondent for the London *Times* describing the circumstances of the Cattle-Killing as 'so extraordinary as to appear when related rather the imagination of a subtle dealer in fictitious narrative than a plain matter of fact'.² W. W. Gqoba's 1888 description, constructed from interviews with survivors and arguably the earliest published account in Xhosa, is said to 'read like a folk story or a fantastic tale of the imagination'.³ For nineteenth-century historian George McCall Theal, the Cattle-Killing both evoked and seemed to exceed the bounds of even fictional forms: it was 'an event more astounding than anything in the pages

¹ This is not to suggest that the term 'Cattle-Killing' is used exclusively or that it is unproblematic. Guy – recently supported by Bradford – argues that it 'conflates, distorts and over-simplifies the events to which it refers' and should be abandoned ('A Landmark', 229 and 'Akukho Ntaka'). While acknowledging the appellation to be a misnomer, I have retained it for the reason that it is already widely established and no more precise designation has been suggested.

² 'The Caffres', *Times*, 11 January 1858, 9.

³ Peires, 'Central Beliefs', 43.

of the wildest romance'.⁴ Given its apparent susceptibility to such associations, it is perhaps unsurprising that over the years this very real catastrophe has captured and held the South African literary imagination. But whether writers are drawn by the narrative eventfulness and 'extraordinary' aspects of the movement (prophecies, visions, a faith that defies 'rational' explanation); the 'literary' components such as those usually associated with classical Greek tragedy (fatal miscalculation, abrupt reversal of situation, emotional impact, universal signification)⁵; the political and historical ramifications (with, as Dhlomo recognised, the opportunity to set the record of 'historians and other writers' straight); or the gaps in the archive (providing tantalising possibilities for imaginative reconstruction), the Cattle-Killing has proved fertile ground for storytellers. Even a cursory overview of the approximately sixty creative accounts, written over the course of more than a century, discloses interpretations from a broad range of subject positions and ideological perspectives. The numerous versions of the Cattle-Killing reflect not only the country's polyglot and divided nature, but the event's continued resonance since 1857.

This dissertation takes as its focus only a modest sample of these accounts: narrative descriptions in English or English translation, produced between 1891 and 1937 – the dates of the first deliberately imaginative, literary treatment of the Cattle-Killing (to my knowledge), and that of the last before the Afrikaner Nationalist Party took power.⁶ As such, it does not consider a number of works in Afrikaans, Xhosa, German and Zulu. Nor does it extend to apartheid tellings (including a quartet of unpublished plays, a banned short story and three Afrikaans novels); and an even greater number of representations (a comic book and two international dramatic collaborations amongst them) composed between 1990 and the present.⁷ Despite the formal limitations of the project, however, the considerable heterogeneity in evidence across the sum of creative accounts is nevertheless reflected. The texts examined here traverse divisions of form and genre as well as those of race, gender, class and ideology. They range from popular fiction and educational drama, to the short stories of woman suffragist Sanni Metelerkamp; from the ethnographic imperialist novel of Thomas Ross Beattie, to the anti-colonial adventure story of Rev. W. G. Dowsley; from the first play in Xhosa to be produced by a white writer – Mary Waterton Waters, daughter and granddaughter of Xhosa missionaries – to the first play in English to be published by a black author, H. I. E. Dhlomo.

⁴ Theal, *South Africa*, 277.

⁵ I am drawing on Aristotle's theory of Tragedy expounded in his *Poetics* (Butcher, *Aristotle*, 1–111).

⁶ A final pre-apartheid account – which is as much visual as it is literary – is Schauder's short film *Nonquassi* (1939). This film is briefly discussed in the Conclusion and in more depth in Boniface Davies, *'Nongquassi'*.

⁷ For a compilation of creative representations of the movement from 1891 to the present, see the Appendix.

These, and subsequent works on the subject, do more than creatively re/imagine a past event, however. They are also deeply implicated in their respective presents and use the Cattle-Killing to address and respond to contemporaneous concerns – be it the threat of Nazi Germany on the eve of World War Two, black collaboration with the apartheid government, or (more recently) the transition to democracy and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The period I have selected is significant for a number of reasons. Not only does it contain the earliest semi-fictional descriptions of this historical episode (key figures in the movement were still alive when the first account was published), it was also during this time that the first original works by black writers in book form were published.⁸ In addition to this, it was in the course of this period that the subordinate status of the black population, hastened as a direct consequence of the Cattle-Killing, was formalized and cemented in law. Critical historical-political moments from this time include the incorporation of the last independent black territory into the Cape Colony, the creation of the Union of South Africa, the passing of the Land Act, the enfranchisement of *white* women, and the enactment of Hertzog's insidious 'native bills'.

This dissertation charts the shifting truths of the Cattle-Killing – the claims made for and through the events as writers endeavoured to '*catch the proper spirit and get the real meaning of this incident*' both for the past as well as for their presents. In so doing, I seek to understand the perceived significance and use of this event for a range of different communities at specific points in South Africa's early history. By considering these accounts alongside one another, furthermore, this dissertation traces how racial identities were imagined and produced – how race relations were managed – during this formative period. To read these Cattle-Killing accounts, thus, is one way to 'read' the history of this time.

CATTLE-KILLING HISTORIOGRAPHY

While this dissertation is expressly concerned with the multiple stories that encircle the Cattle-Killing, and interested in complicating the idea of a single authoritative or Grand narrative, the movement remains largely unknown outside South Africa and, for this reason, a brief account of the events is offered below. This is followed by a survey of Cattle-Killing historiography.

Between 1856 and 1857 tens of thousands of Xhosa in British and Independent Kaffraria, on the eastern border of the Cape Colony, died of starvation as a result of the visions and prophecies of a teenage girl, Nongqawuse. Skirmishes between the British and Xhosa, and pervasive cultural

⁸ The relationship between literacy and the telling of the Cattle-Killing is explored in some detail in Wenzel's *Bulletproof*, Chapter 1.

and material pressures (including the loss of territory, the introduction of Christianity, a drought and an outbreak of the fatal animal lung-sickness) formed the larger context for this tragedy. In an already incendiary situation, Nongqawuse's prophecies for national salvation were like a match to a bonfire. The girl claimed to be acting on behalf of the spirits of the Xhosa ancestors, who, she averred, appeared to her one day as she chased birds from the cornfields. Supported by her uncle, Mhlakaza, Nongqawuse declared that if the Xhosa renounced witchcraft, and killed all their cattle and destroyed their grain as an act of purification, a pristine and glorious future would result.⁹ On the promised day, which was to be marked by a blood red sun that would rise and set in the East, multitudes of healthy animals would replace the slaughtered beasts, choice corn would fill the storage pits to overflowing and the ancestors would rise from the dead. All who did not obey the spirits' injunctions, both black and white, would be obliterated in an apocalyptic storm that was to usher in the millennium. Nongqawuse's prophecies were taken on faith by the Xhosa majority and received the backing of the Paramount Chief, Sarhili. Fields were left fallow and the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of cattle commenced – sometimes at such a rate that the country stank of their rotting flesh; even the vultures were sated.¹⁰ There were sightings of ancestors, risen from the dead, 'reviewing on the sea, others sailing in umbrellas', and reports of a black Russian tribe on its way to help the Xhosa drive the white man back into the sea from which he had come.¹¹ Rumours of cattle, heard bellowing and stamping beneath the ground, were accompanied by an increased trade in spades at the port of East London as people hurried to dig new storage pits and enlarge old ones.¹² There was, however, a sizeable group of unbelievers, the *amagogotya* or the Unyielding, who rejected the ancestors' orders and were uncowed by warnings that a chief named Grey, 'otherwise known as Satan', was waiting to claim them as his subjects.¹³ The tension between *amagogotya* and *amathamba* (the Submissive ones) rent the nation, destroying families and destabilizing the traditional structures and polity of Xhosa society. After two failed predictions, which were blamed on the *amagogotya*'s stubbornness, Nongqawuse announced a new date for the millennium: full moon in mid-February. The sun rose on that fateful morning, as usual. And set again, that evening in the West, as usual. As hope for the fulfilment of the prophecies faded, thousands of Xhosa made their way to mission stations, farms and frontier towns and villages to

⁹ Only one full-length historical monograph on the Xhosa Cattle-Killing – Jeff Peires' *The Dead Will Arise* (1989) – has been written. While my account is largely in line with Peires', I attribute more agency to Nongqawuse than Peires does – as do Gqoba's and Bradford's interpretations ('Gender and Colonialism'). Until such a time as better evidence is produced, I also reject Peires' Mhlakaza/Goliath thesis.

¹⁰ Waters to Gray, 10 January 1857, USPG.

¹¹ Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 133 and Scully, *History*, 280. For the Russians, see Cyrus to Southey, 4 August 1856 (LG 396, NACT). Bradford argues that this rumour (persistently repeated up to Peires, *The Dead* 1989:96–7) resulted from a mistranslation. ('Akukho Ntaka', 222).

¹² *Eastern Province Herald*, 9 September 1856, 3.

¹³ Gqoba, 'Folktale', 175.

seek help.¹⁴ Many died along the way; others were too weak to begin the journey. An old man – hopeful to the last – perished with his head overhanging his empty corn pit. Starving people gnawed on the bark of mimosa trees and accounts circulated of cannibalism and of children deserted or exchanged for food.¹⁵ Settlers were paid a half-crown for every corpse found and buried.¹⁶ And for those who survived but had no means of subsistence, there was little choice but to enter into the employ of the colonists. Some were sold off for a few pounds to farmers eager for labourers.¹⁷

The result of the Cattle-Killing was succinctly and candidly summed up by Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape Colony at the time. Just a month after the Final Disappointment, Grey wrote to Henry Labouchere, Secretary of State for the Colonies, in London:

I have the honour to report that matters continue to progress favourably in this province [...] The tribes continue to break up, the destitute abandoning their chiefs, and scattering themselves wherever they can obtain food. Numbers of persons are still sent into the Cape Colony to be indentured as servants [...] The supply of labour which will thus be placed at the disposal of the farmers will tend greatly to develop the resources of the colony, and to promote the wealth and prosperity of its inhabitants; whilst the removal of such large numbers of persons from this country renders it much easier to deal firmly and decisively with the remainder, and to coerce chiefs whose power appears to melt away from them [...] I feel quite satisfied that [the chiefs'] late conduct has irretrievably destroyed that portion of their influence which was still left to them, and that henceforth we may govern the country ourselves, the chiefs being mere dependents upon us.¹⁸

For the Xhosa, the outcome of this tragedy would have been viewed somewhat differently. They had been involved in no less than eight Frontier Wars against the colonists prior to 1856. The Cattle-Killing finally broke the back of Xhosa resistance to Colonial rule and marked the end of their independence and self-government.¹⁹

¹⁴ Many colonists responded generously and compassionately. Waters, the principal missionary in Independent Kaffraria at the time, claims to have 'relieved six thousand souls', and an estimated 30,000 were fed in British Kaffraria, partly from private donations and partly by the Government. The purported benevolence of the Colonial government, praised by early historians such as Wilmot & Chase, is, however, vehemently disputed by Peires ('Sir George Grey').

¹⁵ See, for example, *GTJ*, 21 February 1857, 3; *Times*, 10 December 1857, 12, Goldswain, 190–5 and Mostert, 1217.

¹⁶ Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 137.

¹⁷ Mostert, 1218.

¹⁸ Cape of Good Hope, 'Further Papers', X, 84.

¹⁹ This view was expressed at the time (see, for example, the *Times*, 11 March 1858, 8) and was subsequently reiterated by the likes of Chalmers, *Soga*, 128; Cory, *The Rise*, 22; Majeke, *Missionaries in Conquest*, 74; Ashforth, 'Cattle Killing', 581 and Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:340–1. Although there was a ninth, and final war (1877–8), Sarhili was by this stage already in exile, and there was no real possibility of victory.

That the 'true meaning' of the Cattle-Killing has been the subject of some dispute, is apparent from the range of terms used to describe it. Over the years it has been labelled a 'holocaust', a 'delusion', a 'national suicide', a 'genocide', an 'outstanding instance of a people's faith', a 'suicidal infatuation', a 'millenarian movement', 'something of a blessing in disguise', a 'pagan reaction', an 'unnatural act', a 'resistance movement', 'a logical and rational response', and a 'clash of divine inspiration and material reality'.²⁰ Various theories, too, have been put forward to account for the movement. All concur, however, that a large number of Xhosa responded to the demands of the ancestors because of a spontaneous, sincere and strongly held belief – Mhlakaza himself died of starvation along with most of his family.²¹ In the immediate wake of the Cattle-Killing two theories, both of which reflect a 'Great Man' approach to history, were developed.

The Chiefs' Plot hypothesis was taken up by the settler press at the time of the Cattle-Killing and was adopted by the colonial government soon after.²² It maintains that the movement was an attempt on the part of the Xhosa chiefs to force their subjects into such a state of desperation that they would enter into war against the British. A variation on this theme was that Moshoeshoe, the Sotho Paramount, either in conjunction with the Xhosa chiefs or acting alone, instigated the event in order to distract British attention from his own skirmishes with the Boers – and to prevent them from intervening. This was the dominant white interpretation during the period under consideration in this dissertation.²³ While logical, given previous prophetic involvement in colonial-Xhosa conflict, this plot also served to justify the governor's subsequent actions. Grey 'confiscated the lands of the other chiefs who had tried to drive their people to war [...] and began to plant the confiscated reserves with the German Legionaries', explained one eminent historian.²⁴ The Chief's Plot theory has subsequently been refuted. Peires states that much of Grey's 'evidence' was falsified and that he obtained 'fraudulent confessions under duress',²⁵ and even Charles Brownlee, who was magistrate to Chief Sandile at the time, came to discard it: 'I, like others, was quite of this view while the thing was being

²⁰ Metrowich, *Frontier Flames*, 237; Chalmers, 101; Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, 237; Mostert, 1207; Peires, 'Suicide or Genocide?', Shepherd, *Lovedale*, 135; *Times*, 17 December 1857, 6; Keller & Bradford, 'Gender and Colonialism', 360; Cory, *The Rise*, 37; Majeke, 64; Wilson & Thompson, *Oxford History*, 260; Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:12; Ashforth, 'Cattle Killing', 582.

²¹ Peires, 2003:298 and Waters, E4, 261 USPG. Peires has recently expressed reservations about Mhlakaza's reported death ('Cry Havoc').

²² See, for example, *GTJ*, 12 August 1856; *Eastern Province Monthly*, 1:1 (September 1856), 54; *Eastern Province Herald*, 3 February 1857, 3.

²³ E.g. Ayliff, 'A Page'; Wilmot & Chase, 495–6; Theal, *Compendium*, 285; Chalmers, *Soga*, 122, Walker, *History*, 298; Cory, *The Rise*, 21–2;

²⁴ Walker, 299.

²⁵ Peires, 'Suicide or Genocide?', 49. See too *The Dead* 2003, Chapter 7.

enacted, but since then, and after thirty years, I do not feel quite so certain that there was this plot'.²⁶

Grey's Plot, in contrast, lays the blame squarely at the feet of the Governor. Proponents of this theory narrate the tragedy as a trick masterminded by Grey to induce the Xhosa to destroy themselves, thereby opening the way for British appropriation of their land without open warfare, and creating a labour reserve for white settlers.²⁷ Nongqawuse, it is said, was either deceived or bribed by Grey – some even claim it was the governor himself who hid in the bushes and appeared as one of the ancestral messengers.²⁸ Historians, including Wilson and Thompson, have rebutted these notions. They stress that while there is no doubt Grey reaped benefits from this movement, he did not initiate it.²⁹ Despite this, belief in a colonial conspiracy has persisted. Xhosa historians such as Mqhayi, *Imbongi Yesizwe* (Bard of the Nation) believed it – as did Chief Bhotomane, 'in his time the leading Xhosa oral historian and himself the son of one of Sarhili's close advisers'.³⁰ It is a theory still widely held today and has recently been conscripted to argue for moral redress and pecuniary recompense.³¹ In 1999, the Xhosa Royal Council accused the British of 'direct complicity' in the Cattle-Killing and asked Prince Charles to make amends and apologise for the part played by Grey and the British Colonial administration.³²

A third explanation, recently designated the 'Cauldron of Witchcraft Interpretation' by Peires, identifies Xhosa superstition (when their beliefs are deemed 'false') or religious faith as the origin of the Cattle-Killing.³³ While some proponents of this faith-based explanation, including the Xhosa headman interviewed in 1910 and the author Scully, attribute the tragedy solely to the Xhosas' absolute belief in the ancestral spirits, most (including J. H. Soga and Hunter/Wilson) acknowledge colonial and/or material concerns as contributing – if secondary – factors.³⁴ Ultimately, however, for Peires who rejects the idea of 'revealed religion', an interpretation that emphasises the supernatural aspect of the movement 'has at its core the conviction that the innermost truth of the Cattle-Killing is to be found somewhere in Xhosa

²⁶ Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 142.

²⁷ See Stapleton, *Maqoma*, 169 and Mnguni, *Three Hundred Years*, 87–8.

²⁸ Majeke, 73.

²⁹ See Roux *Longer than Rope* 41–2; Wilson & Thompson, *Oxford History*, 259; and Peires, 'Suicide or Genocide?' 50.

³⁰ Peires, *The Dead*, 1989:317.

³¹ Brown, 'Questionnaire'; Peires, 'Suicide or Genocide', 50.

³² Dickson, 'Prince Charles'. Comaroff discusses similar reparation cases in 'The End?', 134.

³³ Peires, 'Cry Havoc', 248–50.

³⁴ Berning, 128. Scully, 279. See too Burton, *Sparks*, 1–97 and Miller, 95–7. Soga also draws attention to Sarhili's desire to emancipate his people and the devastating effect of the lung-sickness (*South-Eastern Bantu*, 241–7). Hunter likewise suggests that the Cattle-Killing, while an expression of religious belief, was a reaction to European menace (*Reaction to Conquest*, 561). See too Wilson & Thompson, 256–60.

culture'.³⁵ It implies, in his view, that there is something inherently wrong with, or irrational in, Xhosa society. 'Merely to talk of 'superstition' and 'delusion' explains nothing at all,' writes Peires. 'We have to try and understand why beliefs which seem to us – and to all Xhosa now living – patently absurd and impossible seemed logical and plausible to the Xhosa of 1856'.³⁶ That these traditional beliefs can be dismissed as 'plausible' only to the mid-nineteenth century Xhosa is a point contested by Ashforth – and attested to by the irate response of a correspondent to a local newspaper. Poised on the threshold of the twenty-first century, she writes:

I was astonished to read Mary Taylor's letter ('Nongqawuse should teach us a lesson') [...] She is undermining the fact that Xhosa people believe in ancestors and that Xhosas praise and worship *amagqira* (because that is what Nongqawuse was) [...] No one has the right to call another nation's history a 'cock-and-bull' story, to undermine other people's beliefs or to write about things they do not know or understand.³⁷

As with Grey's Plot, a faith-based analysis of the Cattle-Killing not only retains kudos in the present-day but is invoked to lay claim to the event. Further, it is used to affirm a traditional system of beliefs distinct from, but equal to, that of the '[other] nation'. Within this interpretative framework, the failure of the prophecies has been attributed to their misinterpretation and/or the disobedience of the *amagogoty*. Some claimed the prophecies were yet to be fulfilled (as Theal and Beattie noted towards the end of the nineteenth century), others have posited that they were finally realised with Mandela's release and the dismantling of apartheid.³⁸

While evidently a key component, the Xhosa traditional belief system is not the only religion implicated in the movement. Indeed, for many (mostly) nineteenth-century Christians, the Christian God was at the centre of the tragedy, with the Cattle-Killing regarded as a form of divine judgement – even direct intervention: 'It is by terrible things,' wrote Tiyo Soga, 'that God sometimes accomplishes his purposes. In the present calamities, I think I see the future salvation of my people... There is nothing that softens the hardest heart so much as affliction; and I trust that this affliction will, in the providence of God, be productive of much spiritual

³⁵ *House of Phalo*, 2 and 'Cry Havoc', 249.

³⁶ *The Dead*, 1989:123

³⁷ Ashforth, 'Cattle Killing' 585 & 588. Ashforth discusses the spirit world and 'invisible forces' in contemporary South Africa in depth in his book *Witchcraft, Violence and Democracy*. Zimemo, *Daily Dispatch*, 16 November 1999.

³⁸ Theal, *Compendium*, 1877:56; Beattie, *Pambaniso*, 227. For latter-day fulfilment – an hypothesis which does not find expression in formal histories – see Mda's novel, *Heart of Redness*; Buchanan's graphic novelette, *The Prophecy*, and a local newspaper article, Engler: 'A Prophecy?'.

benefit to the Kafirs'.³⁹ For Dora Taylor, writing under the pseudonym Nosipho Majeke in 1952, however, the blame lay not with the Deity per se but with his acolytes, to whom the Xhosa, contrary to Soga, had paid too much attention. Taylor's work, which was intended as a counter to the triumphal white settler history being proclaimed as part of the 1952 Jan van Riebeeck celebrations,⁴⁰ asserted that European Christian missionaries joined the colonial government as 'agents of conquest' in their endeavour to 'divide and rule'. The Cattle-Killing was 'directly due' to their teachings. Taylor maintained that the Xhosa adopted eschatological Christian concepts as a means (in the manner of sympathetic magic) of defence against unrelenting colonial aggression. And it was these foreign elements – rather than the traditional recourse to 'magic rite' to which they were yoked – that were responsible for the catastrophe.

The impact of the White man's religion was capable of producing just such an act of blind faith as the Nongqause Cattle-Killing involved. Here was an appeal to the supernatural to which the people were all too ready to respond. Before the unknown forces of nature, the tribalist's only weapon is the magic rite; and confronted with the military force of an unknown civilization, he would seize upon those elements in the Christian gospel which seemed most likely to offer him protection: the belief in miracles, the resurrection of the dead, the promise of peace and plenty after tribulation and sorrow. It is in this sense that we say the Nongqause Cattle-Killing was missionary-inspired.⁴¹

The influence of Christianity, as indeed evinced in the content of Nongqawuse's revelations, is also taken up in Peires' seminal work *The Dead Will Arise*, where it is given substance in the person of Wilhelm Goliath. Peires argues that Mhlakaza and Goliath, who worked for the Archdeacon of Grahamstown and was the first Xhosa to be confirmed in the Anglican Church, were one and the same. The alleged relationship between Mhlakaza and the archdeacon, according to Peires, changed 'the whole course of South African history' and established a firm context for the origins of the Christian components in the prophecies.⁴² The Goliath-Mhlakaza thesis, while by no means the only factor in Peires' reading of the event, is clearly an important one. Indeed, the historian maintains that it 'sets the seal' on his interpretation.⁴³

³⁹ Soga quoted in Chalmers, 140. See too footnote 23, Chapter 3.

⁴⁰ Majeke, 'Introduction'. Saunders contends that the anonymity provided by the pseudonym protected the author from 'censure or retribution and also depersonalised authorship' ('Mnguni', 77). See too Witz, 171–5.

⁴¹ Majeke, 73–4. The idea that the missionaries were to blame for the catastrophe was reasserted by Sirayi who labelled it the 'Africanist Perspective', 45. The polemical tone of these writers is offset by the likes of Comaroff and Comaroff in 'Christianity and Colonialism'.

⁴² Peires, *The Dead*, 1989:34.

⁴³ Peires, 'Cry Havoc', 252.

The emphasis of Peires' *The Dead Will Arise*, the most rigorous and detailed account of the movement to date, rests on the material situation of the Xhosa prior to the prophecies, with the Cattle-Killing explained as the appalling reaction of a desperate people.⁴⁴ The historian cites, for example, the spread of the fatal lung-sickness as a key factor in the Xhosas' decision to slaughter – showing that cattle-killing was particularly marked in those areas most affected by the disease. 'The mass killing of cattle,' he writes, 'stemmed directly from the lungsickness epidemic, but soon acquired wider symbolic significance'.⁴⁵ The catastrophe was, he concludes, a spontaneous millenarian movement – a 'logical ... perhaps even an inevitable response' to intolerable pressure – which Grey manipulated and exacerbated but for which the Xhosa, too, need to take responsibility. One of the many benefits of *The Dead* is the vigorous and long-overdue scholarship and debate that it has generated. Lewis points out that material conditions (less land, fewer cattle) had begun to undermine traditional Xhosa societal structures, and argues that chiefs, including Sarhili (without whose support the movement could never have gone ahead), saw the Cattle-Killing as an opportunity to re-establish authority and unify the Xhosa people.⁴⁶ Stapleton, similarly informed by class theory, suggests the Cattle-Killing was, in part, a peasant uprising.⁴⁷ Bradford provides a necessary feminist corrective, emphasising the importance of women's agricultural labour and the implications of the ancestors' call to leave the fields uncultivated. She also stresses the importance of *lobola*, where women are exchanged for cattle in marriage, noting the impact that lung-sickness and the slaughter of cattle would have had on the regulation of sexuality. With not enough cattle to secure the necessary bridewealth, she argues, incidents of adultery and incest (which were linked to witchcraft) increased. Bradford implies that the prophecy's emphasis on rejecting witchcraft could have been deliberately inserted as a means of protecting women – she even suggests that Nongqawuse might herself have been the victim of sexual abuse.⁴⁸ With her most recent work, Bradford has ventured into another, equally important and, till now, neglected area – examining the first vernacular accounts by black intellectuals, *not* as historical sources but as instances of 'revisionist scholarship'. Her earlier mission to undermine the primacy of androcentric readings has shifted to the task of deposing the 'conceptual maps of nineteenth-century Englishmen' upon which they are founded.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Peires' emphasis on the person and actions of individual men – most notably Grey and Mhlakaza – does, however, set his monograph on the outskirts of the materialist tradition with which he has recently aligned it.

⁴⁵ Peires, *The Dead*, 128. In a recent paper Andreas ('A Necessary Cause?') argued that the connection between the outbreak of the disease and the Cattle-Killing has been over-emphasised.

⁴⁶ Lewis, 'Materialism and Idealism', 244–68.

⁴⁷ Stapleton, *Maqoma*, 179–80.

⁴⁸ Bradford, 'Gender and Colonialism'. A gendered analysis was first suggested by Guy in 'Landmark'. For Peires' response to subsequent scholarship, see his 'Afterword' in *The Dead* (2003).

⁴⁹ Bradford, 'Akukho Ntaka', 219; 228.

While most responses to *The Dead* have taken the form of interpretative, rather than factual, criticism, Peires' startling and far-reaching claim that Mhlakaza and Goliat were the same person has been the subject of some scepticism.⁵⁰ In 2006 I came across evidence that proved Goliat was still alive more than a year after Mhlakaza's reported death. Confronted with the precariousness of a thesis so strongly asserted, and unquestioningly taken up by a number of academic and popular writers to become part of the official narrative of the Cattle-Killing, I was led to consider the 'constructedness' of historical narrative. In 'Raising the Dead' (2007), I used the new evidence as a springboard to reflect upon the limitations of historiography, the provisionality of its assertions and possible explanations for Peires' (and others') investment in his thesis. One of the purposes in 'Raising the Dead' was to suggest that the full truth or resonance of the event cannot be contained in a single reconstruction, nor that it can reside solely in professional historiography. Another was to make an argument for a different sort of historical project – one that focused not on the particularities of the actual events, but on the *wider* Cattle-Killing as imagined and represented through its textual afterlives: on the truths that have been ascribed to the Cattle-Killing and the causes to which it has been conscripted, specifically in fictional (or, more accurately, semi-fictional) literature. This dissertation is a part of that project.

Peires' reaction to 'Raising the Dead' and the new evidence was to re-imagine Mhlakaza's biography, while leaving his Goliat-Mhlakaza conflation intact. In a 'viable' (albeit unverified) explanation, Peires proposed that Nongqawuse's uncle did *not*, after all, die in the immediate wake of the Cattle-Killing – that reports of his death were fabricated in order to protect him and/or Sarhili. Nor was Peires' response confined to the person of Mhlakaza. The historian also tackled, and took exception to, my deliberations regarding representations of the past in history and other discourses.⁵¹ He suggested that I 'subscrib[ed] to a historical relativism so extreme that it entirely forsakes any criterion of historical truth', that (furthermore) I committed an ethical and professional breach by implying (according to Peires) that 'any interpretation will do'. 'The seal is broken,' he wrote, 'the door is opened and the other interpretations, long locked up in disgrace, come rushing out barking, indeed barking mad'.⁵² Of equal concern to Peires as the containment of these 'barking mad' interpretations, is the status of historiography. He categorically rejects a position that, as he sees it, 'collaps[es] the distinction between history and fiction' and which proposes that, when it comes to representing the past,

⁵⁰ See Guy; Tisani; Bradford, 'Gender and Colonialism'; Vigne.

⁵¹ For Peires' full response, see 'Cry Havoc'.

⁵² Ibid, 245–6 & 252. Peires' response extends into a second article, 'Entrance to Science', which is a denunciation of deconstructionism in South African historiography in general.

'histories written in the empirical tradition are not ontologically privileged above other kinds of narrative, including fiction'.⁵³

Peires' comments may, in part, have been due to a misunderstanding regarding the nature of this project. It is not, after all, my intention to make proclamations about what 'really happened' but to explore what people believe or say happened – sometimes in the face of controverting or no evidence. Nor is it my concern to evaluate the creative accounts in terms of their faithfulness to the archive ('checkable by history (as a child's schoolwork is checked by a schoolmistress)' as Coetzee wrote with some disdain⁵⁴). Finally, it need hardly be said that examining works that subscribe to often-discredited theories, or that are founded on the very conceptual maps Bradford argues should be replaced, does not equate to an endorsement of them. These points aside, Peires' comments nevertheless serve as a useful ingress to some of the issues that underpin this dissertation – issues relating to the problems/possibility of accessing and representing the past accurately and truthfully; the natures and interrelation of different kinds of narrative that take the past as their subject; and the interaction between past and present.

PINNING THE TRUTH OF THE PAST DOWN

Unlike Theal who, at the turn of the twentieth century, claimed in true Rankean tradition that he wrote 'without fear, favour, or prejudice' and that his history of South Africa was a 'true and absolutely unbiased narrative', most historians (including Peires) now acknowledge that absolute objectivity is unattainable and that it is impossible to recover and present the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.⁵⁵ The challenge of the historian's task lies not only in the object of investigation – something which no longer exists except in the form of previous accounts and historical evidence (whose fragmentary and sometimes arbitrary nature and uncertain value is encapsulated in Peires' phrase 'the debris of the past').⁵⁶ It is also complicated by a dependence on language and the narrative form – a point brought into high relief by the 'linguistic turn' of the 1960s-70s. Some of the difficulty of representing reality through language, and the necessarily artificial and creative act that it entails, is neatly illustrated by two comments made in reference to the Cattle-Killing. 'Such a state of things has hitherto been quite unknown in the country,' observed Sir George Grey, 'so much so that *new terms have been invented* to describe many of the events which are daily passing'.⁵⁷ And yet, even with this bespoke vocabulary, it has been argued that 'The true meaning of the cattle killing to a Xhosa can never be described, even

⁵³ Peires, 'Entrance to Science', 68.

⁵⁴ Coetzee, 'Novel Today', 3.

⁵⁵ Theal. *History since 1795*, v. This much-invoked aphorism is, of course, Ranke's (*History of Latin*, 21).

⁵⁶ Peires, 'Entrance to Science', 69.

⁵⁷ Grey to Labouchere, 12 March 1857 in Cape of Good Hope, 'Further Papers', X, 69. Italics added.

by a participant. It is precisely the non-verbal, non-rational aspects which have the greatest impact'.⁵⁸ The limitations that language imposes on knowing and representing are, of course, applicable for all situations, not merely those of an apparently exceptional nature like the Cattle-Killing. And it is these limitations, together with the inescapable disjuncture between referent and sign (from the level of vocabulary right up to the narratives produced in order to make sense of and represent the reality of the past), that have called into question the idea of an exclusionary history-fiction duality where history is aligned with the pursuit of knowledge and the real, and fiction with invention and the realm of the imagination.⁵⁹ Indeed, a compelling case for the *proximity* of the two discourses – based on their shared linguistic and literary form – has long been argued.⁶⁰

Proponents of the literary, rather than scientific, status of historiography stress the unknowability of the past and maintain that history (accounts that are written, *not* the past itself)⁶¹ is as much created as found. The means used to communicate information about the past (language and the narrative mode), they argue, is not incidental but integral to meaning-making and the production of historical knowledge. In underscoring the fictive nature of historical discourse, Hayden White points to the culturally-specific chronological codes that are employed to order events into temporal units; the 'emplotment' of these events, and the formulation of an explanation – the latter of which is tied not only to the past events but, significantly, to the imposed emplotment and the social theories that inflect it (be it neo-Marxism, feminism, etc.). White concludes that none of these strategies, all of which are inherent to the construction of historical discourse, is neutral or proceeds naturally from archival evidence (which, in any case, is similarly constructed).⁶² Chambers accounts for the destabilisation of the fictional-factual dichotomy, and the widespread assumption that the authority to interpret 'the real' lies with academic history, in these terms:

Out of the presumed division between imaginary and realistic accounts of the world emerge the modern disciplines of 'literature' and 'history'. Both disciplines are nevertheless bound to an underlying matrix that limits the epistemological pretensions of 'history' to explain 'what happened'. Both proffer accounts of the world in the world. Both are sustained and verified in language, where language is not merely the technical

⁵⁸ Zarwan, 9–10.

⁵⁹ In 'Entrance to Science', Peires refers to the 'fantasy world of aesthetics and literature' (66).

⁶⁰ Perhaps the best-known proponent of the 'deconstructionist' position is Hayden White. Others include Ankersmit, Jenkins, Megill, Munslow and Schama – the latter puts theory to practical effect in his work *Dead Certainties* (1991). A definition of the deconstructionist position (and its constructionist and reconstructionist counterparts) is found in Jenkins & Munslow, 'Introduction'.

⁶¹ Derrida's assertion that there is no reality beyond language – a critical point of contention for Stone ('History and Post-Modernism') and Peires – is not widely held by deconstructionists.

⁶² For a précis and defence of White's positions see *Figural Realism*, 9. *Metahistory* offers a comprehensive exposition.

support of linguistics and print culture but the ontological sustenance of making sense. That history is considered the bedrock of explanation and literature its imaginary embroidery, is itself a form of narration, a social articulation, that speaks of the history of a particular cultural formation.⁶³

To admit the socially-constructed and imaginative act that is historiography, and to argue – as I do – that history and literature exist on a continuum is not, however, to ‘collapse the distinction between history and fiction’, nor is it to deny the validity of the particular type of knowledge or truths that historiography produces.⁶⁴ The two discourses, certainly in their current institutionalised forms, while contiguous, are not the same.⁶⁵ Partner points to historical protocol – ‘the rules or constraints accepted by an author who writes history’ – that sets modern historiography apart from fictional literature.⁶⁶ Narratologists, coming from another angle, draw a similar conclusion. They note that the differences between the two discourses are primarily to be found in Genette’s categories of Mode (the distance and perspective from which a story is told) and Voice (the positioning of the narrator and their relationship to the author). These differences, however, are entirely due to the commitment of factual narrative to the ‘referential level’ and, therefore, to verifiable historical sources.⁶⁷ Cohn argues that this commitment, to which fictional writers are not beholden, ‘has survived even the most radical dismantling of the history/fiction distinction’.⁶⁸ The modern historian’s obligation to answer, at every point, the question ‘How do you know?’ and the presence of validating indices – such as the ‘perigraphic apparatus’ of footnotes, introductions and lists of references – is, of course, no guarantee of Truth. The former does, however according to Genette, indicate ‘the serious commitment of the author with regard to his narrative assertions’, while the latter provides ‘a readable code of extratextual reference and inductive reasoning whose category meaning is: verification’.⁶⁹ It is these relatively recent disciplinary conventions and the ‘continuous scrutiny’ and debate to which factual works are subject,⁷⁰ that account for History’s reputation for

⁶³ Chambers, *Culture After Humanism*, 14.

⁶⁴ In Peires’ *The Dead* the creative act is not restricted to the more intrinsic imaginative aspects, but extends to the explicit use of fictional strategies and forms. See Boniface Davies, ‘Raising the Dead’, 37–8.

⁶⁵ For an account of the relatively recent break from history and literature, and the changing relationship between the two, see Gossman, ‘Reproduction’.

⁶⁶ Partner, 33 & 247. Incidentally, Partner deliberately chooses the term ‘protocol’ over ‘methodology’ in order to distance history from the model of the physical sciences. She also discusses the widespread and frequent employment of deliberate invention (in the form of dialogue, fabricated speeches, private actions etc.) in early historiography.

⁶⁷ Genette, ‘Fictional Narrative’ and Cohn, ‘Signposts of Fictionality’.

⁶⁸ Cohn, ‘Signposts’, 779. Cohn’s introduction of the ‘referential level’ expands narratology’s traditional bi-level model (story and discourse) into a tri-level one.

⁶⁹ Genette, ‘Fictional Narrative’, 770 and Partner, 23. These protocols were certainly in place during the period under consideration in this dissertation. Theal’s frequent dalliances with these conventions – his neglecting to cite sources, for example – were roundly criticised by contemporaries. Smith, 39.

⁷⁰ Peires, ‘Entrance to Science’, 68.

accuracy and reliability (even given the knowledge that any account can only ever be partial and partisan) – as well as its privileged standing amongst those persuaded of the primacy of evidence and empiricism.

There are, however, 'different ways of storying the past', to use Ashforth's phrase, which challenge professional History's sole authority to make claims and ascribe meaning to it. Those, for example, that employ mythology and invention, embrace different views of temporality and/or inhabit a 'different ontological space'.⁷¹ Sensitive, but ultimately impervious, to the anticipated incredulous response of his readers, Credo Mutwa precedes his apparently implausible and melodramatic narrative of the Cattle-Killing with the categorical assertion that: 'Many will find it hard to believe much of what I have revealed in this book, but I am not in the least concerned, because whether I am believed or not, everything I write here is *true*'. If Mutwa asserts an alternative truth to Peires, it is in part because he draws his authority from elsewhere – the ancestors, the oral tradition, and his own position as 'custodian of the relics of our tribe and guardian of our tribe's history'.⁷² For Brett Bailey (a proponent of ritualistic theatre and author of the 1999 Cattle-Killing play, *The Prophet*), the physical setting and source of the prophecies was also ultimately decisive. It was in the vicinity of Nongqawuse's supernatural visitations, surrounded by the living kin of those who had suffered in the nineteenth century and the living presence of the Xhosa ancestors who directed then and now, that he sought 'to establish the *actual truth* beneath the many accounts of the story'.⁷³ And it was through his ritual-drama that Bailey hoped 'spiritual forces might be propitiated'.⁷⁴

In their efforts to narrate a truthful and meaningful past, Mutwa and Bailey deliberately reject Historical explanation, logic and procedure. But even when, as is the case for the 'creative' authors under consideration in this dissertation, western notions of rationality *are* assumed, and the importance of the archives and a confidence in western historical practice *is* acknowledged, accredited History is nevertheless contested. What is more, the value of, and truths enabled by the deliberate use of the imagination and invention in recreating the past, are asserted. Partner, an historian who warns against the infiltration of fictional freedoms in the practice of modern

⁷¹ Ashforth, 'Cattle Killing', 588.

⁷² Mutwa, *My People*, ix & xii – also 111. While a detailed examination of the oral history tradition falls outside the purview of this thesis, the tradition with its mixture of myth, fact and fiction clearly resonates with discussions over the truth and representation of the past. For general studies, see White et al, *African Words*; Hofmeyr, 'Wailing' and Scheub, *The Tongue*. With regard to the Cattle-Killing; while Peires acknowledges the 'non-verifiable truths' of the predominant oral account he nevertheless refutes its, 'historical truth' – attributing the 'problem' to the structure of Xhosa historical knowledge ('Suicide or Genocide', 53–4 & *The Dead*, 386–7). Ashforth, Bradford and Crais seem more committed to grappling with the logistics of including indigenous historical representations on their own terms ('Cattle Killing'; 'Akukho Ntaka' and 'Peires and the Past').

⁷³ *Daily Dispatch*, 18 May 1999. Italics added. Bailey was familiar with Peires' work and satirises the historian's opinion of the authority of History in an earlier play, *iMumbo Jumbo* (*Plays*, 117).

⁷⁴ Bailey, *Plays*, 156.

historiography, nevertheless accedes that fiction's 'imaginative push through the impermeable membrane of other minds and lost actions will always be a movement towards truth, not fantasy'.⁷⁵ White goes even further. 'One can produce an imaginary discourse about real events' he writes, 'that may not be less "true" for being imaginary. It all depends upon how one construes the function of the faculty of the imagination in human nature'.⁷⁶

The literary accounts that constitute the bulk of this dissertation underscore the always-already entangled relationship between fact and fiction, History and Literature. Certainly, when it comes to these early narratives, Peires' proclamation that creative accounts, unlike historical ones, 'have no element of pastness within themselves', that 'they exist entirely in the heads of fictionists, critics and postmodernists' is misleading.⁷⁷ These works are in fact embedded in the past, with their authors not merely referring (or alluding) to secondary factual literature on the subject of the Cattle-Killing but, more significantly, in all but one case, consulting primary sources and/or obtaining original evidence. Metelkamp worked in the archives and Waters (who studied History at tertiary level) had access to her grandfather's journals as well as Xhosa oral testimonies. Beattie and Dowsley, too, conducted their own research. In *Pambaniso* Beattie quotes from a personal interview held with Sarhili and reproduces, for the very first time, the only known photographic image of Nongqawuse. Long before Majeke's 1952 intervention, Dowsley speaks of missionary complicity, claiming that he had 'procured documentary evidence... that the germ of the tragedy was a plot to invade – probably suggested by the millenarian teachings of certain missionaries'.⁷⁸ The author also pre-emptively Peires' interest in Mhlakaza's life prior to the Cattle-Killing, suggesting that the man had 'lived in the Zuurveld in service to a white man and [...] been treated badly'.⁷⁹ This remark is of particular interest given that it is the only reference to an alleged close relationship between Mhlakaza and the colonists – outside *The Dead* with its handful of original sources.

Indeed, it was precisely because of a respect for historical data that some of these writers were able to challenge accepted factual versions of the past and promote the legitimacy of their own. Arguing from the basis of their respective investigations, Beattie dismissed the Chiefs' Plot against mainstream Historical opinion, while Dowsley, more than forty years later, promoted it – again, against received wisdom, which had shifted by this point. And yet, despite a regard for the referential level, it was more often than not with regard to the elusive 'proper spirit' and

⁷⁵ Partner, 28. See too White, *Figural Realism*, 22.

⁷⁶ White, *Content of the Form*, 57.

⁷⁷ Peires, 'Entrance to Science', 68.

⁷⁸ 'To Publisher's Reader' (DP) and *Long Horns*, 178, 217, 220–1.

⁷⁹ Dowsley, *Long Horns*, 177.

'real meaning' of the events, imaginatively explored and elaborated upon - rather than the 'facts' acquired through active research – that these authors staked their claims to the Cattle-Killing and (presumably) presented their fictionalised versions as correctives. Beattie, Metelerkamp, Waters, Dhlomo and Dowsley all took full advantage of the unfettered access to characters and situations not granted in modern historiography. Their works penetrate the imagined psyches of historical figures, effect shifts across points of view, take up the 'what-if' stories that hover around the edges of what is known to have happened, and draw direct contemporary relevance from past events.⁸⁰ It is through the manufactured person of the prophetess, and the fabricated romantic liaison in which she is implicated, that Metelerkamp draws attention to issues of gender and sexuality. And it is here that the author locates meaning. In so doing, incidentally, the proto-feminist Metelerkamp also anticipates historiographical trends by nearly a century. Central to Dowsley's interpretation of the Cattle-Killing is the wider context of British imperialism and anti-colonial resistance, which is made possible in his novel by the imaginary link that he draws to the 1848 Irish Rising. For Waters, the 'true meaning' of the movement is to be found in religion, with divine revelation and intervention playing a decisive role in her recounting of the events. That employing fiction in the narration of history is not incompatible with telling truths rooted in reality, or with creating a meaningful account of the past, is something forcefully and explicitly asserted by Dhlomo. Not only does his reading, like Metelerkamp's, rest upon a radically re-imagined Nongqawuse, but the playwright's role as enlightened interpreter of the past is foretold by one of his own characters: 'I believe that in the distant future someone will catch the proper spirit and get the real meaning of this incident and write about it'.⁸¹ Nor was Dhlomo alone in recognising the value and validity of his fictionalised account. Frank Brownlee, who was well acquainted with the Cattle-Killing, declared that while *The Girl* was 'not quite in accordance with generally accepted fact', he nevertheless saw 'no reason why the present interpretation of [Nongqawuse's] actions should not be accepted'.⁸²

THE CONTESTED TERRAIN OF THE PAST

The Cattle-Killing is conceived, then, and my discussion of its creative literary afterlives situated, within the idea of history as a field of argument and, as such, is part of a larger conversation that has drawn scholars for more than a decade. The contested terrain of the South African past has been tackled in projects such as Hofmeyr's *We Spend Our Years as a Tale*

⁸⁰ Of course, historians do this too but, as per an Historical protocol that disdains presentism, it is usually done in a very understated way. A case for the contemporary relevance of Peires' *The Dead* is made in 'Raising the Dead'.

⁸¹ Dhlomo in Visser & Couzens, 20. Schauder continues this trend by appearing in person in *Nonquassi*.

⁸² Dhlomo, *The Girl*, 1936:v.

That is Told, 1993 (which examines the siege at Makapansgat, or the story of the cave of Gwaša, as related in Afrikaner historical and Sesotho oral traditions respectively) and Witz's *Apartheid's Festival* (2003), where the State's conscription of Jan van Riebeeck in narratives of settlement and civilization for white nationalist purposes are set against Marxist counter-histories of dispossession and suppression. It has also been taken up more radically in Lalu's *The Deaths of Hintsa* (2008) where the claims of Nicholas Gcaleka – one who 'did not make the cut of history' when the skull he 'recovered' of Chief Hintsa turned out to be fake – are juxtaposed against those of academic historians. Implicit in this contest over the past are issues of ownership and the exercise of power. Whose history is it? Who should be allowed to speak? And how should they speak? Which mode of representation is most valid – which form considered most able to reflect events 'accurately' and 'truthfully'? Lalu demonstrates how the colonial archive predetermines, or at least constrains, 'what can be said' – how it '[regulates] even those statements that do not initially seem to belong to it'.⁸³ Witz highlights the State's attempts to propagate self-affirming representations of historical events and figures through public memorials and commemorative festivals. Hofmeyr claims gender as the decisive factor in oral historical traditions, which proclaim factual narratives to be the domain of men. For some, race is deemed imperative in determining historical authenticity. In an article published on the 'African view' of the Cattle-Killing the author applauds African (by which he means black) artists 'for the effective manner in which they, as the *legitimate and acknowledged mouthpiece* of the African nation, have advanced the African perspective of the movement'.⁸⁴ And of course, there are those who promote 'factual' narratives over semi-fictional ones, arguing that 'works of creative fiction inhabit a different order of reality' to those of historians.⁸⁵

In their recent collection, Peterson and Macola document a movement in African historiography away from a focus on the archives to one that pays more attention to 'homespun histories' - indigenous representations of the past that exist alongside, and often precede, the work of professional scholars. These informal histories, the authors argue, reveal a broader field of interpretation that repositions (or *should* reposition) the work of historians.⁸⁶ My own project aims to draw attention to the broader field of argument and interpretation within which the Cattle-Killing, specifically, exists. Also integral to this dissertation is the premise that the past has always been, and is everywhere being taken up and refashioned to serve political, moral and social causes in the present. A further aim, then, is to come to a better understanding of the

⁸³ Lalu, 267.

⁸⁴ Sirayi, 'African Perspective', 45. Sirayi's assertion is ironically undermined by the fact that he unwittingly includes Majeke (aka Dora Taylor, a white woman) amongst those deemed 'legitimate mouthpieces'.

⁸⁵ Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:289.

⁸⁶ Peterson and Macola, *Recasting the Past*, Introduction.

politics at play in laying claim to an historical event such as the Xhosa Cattle-Killing. In other words, to consider the larger social, political and historical work that the literary afterlives of this episode have performed and continue to perform, and to chart how meaning has accrued to the movement.

THE POLITICS OF LITERATURE

By and large, the early creative Cattle-Killing narratives extend beyond the events themselves; sometimes into the present and in Waters' *The Light*, even further. The authors of these accounts, then, were engaged not only with the past but, in their attempts to capture the 'true spirit' of Cattle-Killing, with the bearing of the past on the present and with how the past might be made into a 'usable past' – one that Brooks, in a different context, explained as being 'at the service of the future'.⁸⁷ And it is this concern that gives these semi-fictional historical accounts immediacy and a social function. For Clingman, literature's entanglement with its presents, lends it wider historical significance too.

In suggesting that historians might profitably turn their attention to the work of creative writers, Clingman argues that literature is 'deeply historical', that it 'offers not historical shadow, but *substance*' – 'a specific kind of evidence within a domain of cultural history'.⁸⁸ This 'evidence' relates to the consciousness, the inner workings – not simply of an individual but, because literature fulfils a social need, of larger groupings and communities as they confront and respond to social realities. Through their work, creative authors 'write out' contemporaneous concerns: the annexation of Pondoland (in the case of Beattie), female emancipation (Metelerkamp), the purpose and nature of 'native' education (Waters), black nationalism and racial equality (Dhlomo) and anti-colonialism (Dowsley). Entwined with insights afforded into these particular socio-political moments (which are elaborated in the following chapters) is also 'evidence', however, of longer, ongoing deliberations relating to the forging of identities (colonial, national, racial, ethnographic, gendered, transnational) and the managing of relations. 'Representations of the past', notes Ashforth, 'are inextricably linked to the politics of identity among social groups in the present'. He continues:

⁸⁷ Brooks, 'Creating a Usable Past', 340. This presentism is exacerbated by the fact that many of the authors literally insert themselves into their works, thereby becoming a part of the events they describe and in so doing making their own involvement in the histories they create explicit. Beattie is present in his interview with Sarhili and clearly aligns himself with his narrator; Dowsley draws his Irish uncle into his narrative and Waters' missionary grandfather – who was caught up in the actual events – has a central role in her play. Dhlomo, as we have seen, is alluded to by one of his own characters.

⁸⁸ Clingman, 'Literature and History', 147.

In the case of South Africa, the meaning of words such as 'Xhosa' are subject to intense political struggle on all levels. No answer to the question, 'who are the ... people?' (whether the missing qualifier be 'Xhosa', 'Zulu', 'Jewish', or 'we, the people of South Africa') can be answered without representation of a putative collective past. This is especially so when people are still oppressed as a result of the events at issue.⁸⁹

The Cattle-Killing is not merely a heartbreaking tale about the destruction of a people, brought to their end by their own frailty or error. It is a story replete with political and social irony – instead of resurrection, there is death; instead of the anticipated new world of plenty for the Xhosa, there are material benefits for the colonists; instead of securing their independence, the Xhosa are subjugated. A final irony: despite the resultant devastation, early writers fashion the tragedy into narratives of Progress. The Cattle-Killing is, at base, a political narrative with appalling and far-reaching consequences, and a central issue in the reconstruction of the event is the way in which the Xhosa (and often, by extension and contrast, the colonist) is produced and described. For while other issues of identity certainly come into play – such as those between men and women, believers and non-believers, and different colonial factions – race is the underlying preoccupation. Another key theme in these narratives is establishing the terms upon which black and white might interact and coexist. More often than not, these processes are complicated by ambivalence: subjects and relations are positioned then repositioned; discontinuities revealed. And yet, for all this, the ramifications of these semi-fictional narratives for the shaping of identities, societal values and institutions are certain. Wenzel writes that we ought to 'work against the containment and neutralisation of the imagination and the literary... [and] recognise their worldliness'.⁹⁰

My project finds resonance in a number of recent critical literary studies - not least of which is Wenzel's *Bulletproof* (2009) - that take single texts (Hofmeyr, 2004; Meer, 2005), an historical individual (Wylie, 2000) or events (Mokadi, 2003; Chakravarty, 2005) as their focus. Implicit in all these projects is the idea, propagated by Tompkins, of literary texts 'as agents of cultural formation rather than as objects of interpretation and appraisal' – as significant social and historical forces.⁹¹ Each of these studies, in different ways and to different degrees, underscores the symbiotic relationship between literature and society: exploring how the literary afterlives of formative texts/people/episodes both shape and are shaped by contemporaneous concerns and processes – and how the originary subjects are *themselves* transformed and amass meaning in the process. The works of Hofmeyr and Meer are particularly wide-ranging in scope;

⁸⁹ Ashforth, 'Cattle Killing', 587.

⁹⁰ Wenzel, 'Problem of Metaphor', 154.

⁹¹ Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, xvii.

respectively tracing the movement and metamorphosis of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as they travelled transnationally, were adapted to other genres and media, and moulded for different audiences. Chakravarty's analysis of the novelistic treatments of the so-called Indian Mutiny, while more limited and rooted (he concentrates solely on representations by English novelists and does not explore the literary and historical repercussions of the movement beyond the borders of India and Britain),⁹² effectively highlights the inseparability of the Mutiny novels from 'the regimes and practices... that drove the British machinery in India'.⁹³ Wylie's work on the white myths of Shaka goes beyond Chakravarty's in terms of his consideration of the wider historical uses of his subject, but similarly demonstrates how these myths, which reflect 'underlying social and psychological attitudes and fears', were implicated in upholding white hegemony.⁹⁴ Like Chakravarty, too, Wylie's focus is on white writers' projection of black subjectivity – and on a repetitiveness across texts. While Mokadi presents a more positive angle, through her analysis of black self-representation in the 1976 Soweto novels, the impression is once again of an homogenous group of writers who collectively empowered their readers and inspired a 'commitment' to 'confront the Afrikaner State'.⁹⁵ Wenzel, in her recently published (and equally optimistic) book, *Bulletproof*, might be more discriminating than Mokadi, but ultimately also promotes a certain uniformity.

In *Bulletproof*, Wenzel explores the apparent paradox of 'failed' anti-colonial millenarian movements whose prophetic visions of regeneration and liberation nevertheless demonstrate a resistance and resilience – a certain 'bulletproofness'.⁹⁶ Taking the Xhosa Cattle-Killing as her case study, Wenzel examines how the literary examination and re-imaging of the movement (and images associated with it) inform multiple presents, and argues that these textual afterlives are 'sites where unrealised visions of anticolonial projects continue to assert their power'.⁹⁷ Wenzel's emphasis on the continuity between past and present, and the open-ended nature of history resonates with my own. We also both value socio-historical context and close reading – and cover a few of the same primary texts. The scope of Wenzel's project, however, is somewhat broader than mine: incorporating, as it does, 'factual' as well as 'creative' writing and extending from 1888 through to 2000. Her work differs from mine in other respects too. In the

⁹² An examination of the way in which the Mutiny resonated with the almost concurrent Cattle-Killing, would make for a fascinating study. While the Mutiny served to encourage continued Xhosa resistance to colonial rule, the 'hopeful state of affairs' brought about by the resolution of the Cattle-Killing was also tendered as reassuring evidence of the continued supremacy of British rule and as a means of bolstering the somewhat shaken confidence of the Empire. Williams, 'Indian Mutiny: Part 2' & *London Times*, 11/1/1858, 9.

⁹³ Chakravarty, 13.

⁹⁴ Wylie, 3–4.

⁹⁵ Mokadi, 143.

⁹⁶ Wenzel's almost exclusive focus on the Cattle-Killing belies the transnational imbrications and scope suggested by her sub-title: 'Afterlives of Anticolonial Prophecy in South Africa and Beyond'.

⁹⁷ Wenzel, *Bulletproof*, 5.

course of her philosophical and theoretically invigorating study, for example, Wenzel grapples with the intricate nature and workings of millenarian dreaming, and promotes the use of metaphor as an interpretive strategy for reading the literary afterlives of the Cattle-Killing. A significant point of departure, moreover, is that, while Wenzel acknowledges those narratives that undermine or obstruct anti-colonial objectives, these are de-emphasised. Instead, she pointedly promotes the Cattle-Killing as a story of anti-colonial resistance. Indeed, Wenzel so internalises this triumphalist (and ultimately utopianist) position that her work becomes one of the very afterlives that she celebrates for 'help[ing] to imagine – and [beginning] to realize – a world in which things will have been set right'.⁹⁸ What is problematic about this stance is that it conceives of the inspiration that begat the Cattle-Killing, and the aspirations of the movement, as 'right', or morally and politically irreproachable.

If my project departs from Chakravarty's, Wylie's and Mokadi's in their emphasis on continuities in portrayal and effect across their primary texts, it departs from Wenzel's in her promotion of a single interpretation. This dissertation has been informed by a weariness of Master narratives and imagined like-minded communities which tend to silence and distort. So while I acknowledge the wider Progress Narrative framework within which these early accounts are situated, in the chapters that follow I tease out the differences and stress the heterogeneity of the early Cattle-Killing texts. By representing a multiplicity of subject positions and by resuscitating voices discarded or forgotten, I aim to recuperate and complicate.

THE UN'LITERARY', THE UNAVAILABLE AND THE UNPOPULAR

If, as Wylie maintains, critical studies of 'Shakan' literature 'are, if anything, even more scarce than commentaries on the histories', then those on the Cattle-Killing are virtually non-existent.⁹⁹ Despite Gérard's 1978 observation that 'there is certainly room for a thorough investigation of the Nongqause motif in the Bantu literature of South Africa', such a project (whether limited to 'Bantu literature' or extended to literature more generally) has not been taken up, until recently.¹⁰⁰ This study is one of only two (Wenzel's *Bulletproof* being the first) to assemble and give extended consideration to several creative accounts of the Cattle-Killing.¹⁰¹ No general surveys or bibliographies of the event exist, and a considerable amount of time was spent compiling the list of semi-fictional accounts of the Cattle-Killing which now appears in the Appendix.

⁹⁸ Wenzel, *Bulletproof*, 237.

⁹⁹ Wylie, 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Four African Literatures*, 225.

¹⁰¹ A cursory discussion of various Cattle-Killing narratives also features in Midgley, Chapter 5.

Despite the magnitude of the movement and the extent and reach of the creative response, then, the 'literary afterlives' of the Cattle-Killing have garnered little interest from either historians or literary critics. For most historians (Bradford is an exception) these 'fictional' narratives belong solely to the realm of the imagination and cannot, as such, be considered as significant, or legitimate, interpretative interventions.¹⁰² For literary scholars, the subject of the Cattle-Killing is usually arrived at incidentally, through analyses of the occasional accounts (usually contemporary) that have issued from the pens of established writers. Of the primary texts chosen for this thesis, only two (Dhlomo's *The Girl* and Waters' *U-Nongqause* – purely by association) have previously received serious scholarly attention.¹⁰³ Current critical work is concentrated on recent novels by Magona (*Mother to Mother*, 1998) and Mda (*The Heart of Redness*, 2000).¹⁰⁴

Various reasons might be put forward to account for the neglect of the early Cattle-Killing narratives in scholarly literary circles. There can be little question that while Beattie et al took their historical and social responsibilities seriously, they also entertained aesthetic aspirations. All make conscious use of literary forms, rhetorical devices and strategies. Many of the writers, too, explicitly aligned themselves with specific literary traditions and figures: Dowsley with the Irish literary revivalists – as well as novelists Robert Louis Stevenson and George Borrow; Dhlomo with modern playwrights, particularly Shaw. Even Waters – whose moralistic bent induced her to perform a brutal expurgation of Shakespeare's *Midsummer's Night's Dream* because the original 'was full of sexual suggestion'¹⁰⁵ – drew inspiration from the allegorical figures and structure of the Morality plays as well as from elements of Xhosa oral literary traditions. And yet, despite the authors' concern with aesthetic polish and a familiarity with matters literary, they garnered (at best) only modest critical attention. Indeed, none of these accounts was considered by contemporary reviewers to have significant or lasting literary value. While works aimed primarily at school audiences (such as Waters' plays) and the so-called popular market (Beattie and Dowsley's novels) were automatically excluded from the category of 'serious' literature – and, consequently, from serious consideration – the situation was not

¹⁰² Bradford has ventured in this direction, drawing on Dhlomo's *The Girl* in 'Women, Gender and Colonialism' (361) and reviewing Bailey's *The Prophetess* ('Review'). Most significant, in this respect, is her analysis of Nongqawuse's photo-engraving in Beattie's *Pambaniso* and elsewhere ('Framing African Women').

¹⁰³ See Chapters 3 & 4 of this dissertation. The renewed interest in Dhlomo is directly due to the publication of Visser and Couzens' edition of his *Collected Works* in 1985, and Couzens' biography of the same year.

¹⁰⁴ For example, Lloyd; Jacobs; Samuelson, Chapter 2; Schatteman; Offenburger; Samin and van der Vlies, 162–70.

¹⁰⁵ Ewan-Way-Jones interview, Waters file, NELM; 1.

helped by a generic indeterminacy, which caused impatience and, indeed, some confusion.¹⁰⁶ A contemporaneous critic, for example, concluded that Beattie's *Pambaniso* 'would have been more successful as a story if there had been more romance in it, and less historical and sociological information'. Another excluded Dowsley's novel from a discussion of creative literature on the assumption that it was a factual, rather than (largely) fictional, work.¹⁰⁷ Drawing the harshest criticism, Waters' *U-Nongqause* was derided for 'never ris[ing] above the level of a jejune, uninspired chronicle'. It was, furthermore, suggested that the play be consigned 'to the obscurity of things best forgotten'.¹⁰⁸ Were it not for the subsequent shift in focus from literature's 'aesthetic value' to its social and historical significances, and from canonical to non-canonical works, Waters' reviewer might well have had his way.¹⁰⁹ As it is, 'literary', in this dissertation, is understood not in the narrow canonical sense of works that are widely acknowledged to possess (apparently) intrinsic aesthetic worth, but in the broader sense of written compositions, inventive in character and by design.

Nevertheless, an inevitable consequence of the exclusion of these works from the South African literary canon, and probably one of the reasons for the dearth of contemporary critical attention, is their transience and, therefore, inaccessibility. None of the works examined here is still in print. It is relatively easy to get hold of the version of Dhlomo's play published in his *Collected Works* (1985), but there are only a handful of Beattie's and Dowsley's novels in libraries worldwide. Copies of all Waters' works are hard to come by, and an English translation of *U-Nongqause* is yet to be published. Metelerkamp's short stories appeared in periodicals long since discontinued. That I was unable to track down the full manuscript of Cecil Lewis's play, *Engaba: A Place of Refuge* is further evidence of the ephemerality of such works.¹¹⁰ This Cattle-Killing drama would have been particularly interesting for a comparative reading with the plays of Lewis' immediate contemporary, Mary Waters. Like Waters', Lewis' play was written for, and first performed by, black students at rural Anglican mission stations in the Eastern Cape.

Perhaps the most important reason for the neglect of these works, however, is suggested by the dismissal of Dhlomo's drama by critics as 'a piece of mission literature',¹¹¹ and is tied to what van Wyk Smith has identified as a 'colonial cringe' – an allusion, presumably, to the phrase

¹⁰⁶ Gender might well also have played a part for some of these writers. In her introduction to the first bibliography of early Southern African women writers, Letcher alludes to the neglect of women writers and the 'long-held preconceptions and misconceptions' regarding their historical and literary role. 'Bibliography', 122.

¹⁰⁷ Anon, *The Academy*, 322–3; Snyman, 170.

¹⁰⁸ Hoernlé, 225–6.

¹⁰⁹ In arguing for this shift in her influential work *Sensational Designs*, Tompkins also (like Widdowson, 'Introduction') exposes the processes by which the canon is formed.

¹¹⁰ A single scene was published in Thompson's *South African Reader*.

¹¹¹ Visser & Couzens, *Collected Works*, xii.

coined by Phillips in the 1950s in response to the field of Australian literature.¹¹² While Phillips' 'cultural cringe' referred to the apparently pervasive and deferential attitude of the dominion to metropolitan cultural opinion and products, however, van Wyk Smith's definition of South Africa's 'very own version of a "colonial cringe"' denotes a paradoxical double action: an initial denial of early South African literature on the basis of its assumed inferiority – its *distance* from the British exemplar – followed by a shrinking away on account of its *proximity* to the now-former colonial power. Van Wyk Smith writes:

A critical discourse of abjuration and abjection in which the almost total neglect of South African writing in English (especially of the earlier period) up to about 1970 was rapidly replaced by hostile postcolonial epistemologies of deconstruction and dismantlement which almost instantly rendered most of our colonial writing irredeemably suspect.¹¹³

While I would argue that postcolonial projects have not entirely replaced the 'neglect' of early South African literature – that their sometimes dismissive judgments in fact contribute to it – the notion of a 'colonial cringe' is nonetheless valid. The original 'cringe' is confirmed and (not entirely successfully) challenged by both Slater's 1925 apology for 'dominion verse' and Snyman's later defence of the early South African novel.¹¹⁴ Van Wyk Smith's focus rests, however, on the latter 'cringe', which emerged largely in opposition to South Africa's colonial history of racial inequality and subjugation – and, by extension, apartheid. The effect of this 'cringe' has been to merge all colonial voices into one; to assume a single, coherent, monologic and paternalist ideology; to situate all early writing within self-congratulatory and self-justificatory discourses of exploitation and 'civilisation'. Nor is this 'discourse of embarrassment' restricted to nineteenth-century writing. It extends, van Wyk Smith argues, 'well into the twentieth century'.

Van Wyk Smith's attempt, in 'Origins Revisited', to confront and problematise this binarist and reductive approach to colonial writing should not be read as one that disregards the very real sociomaterial inequalities of colonialism, nor as one that entails a simple substitution – 'the vaporizing of conflict in colonial situations by those preoccupied with uncovering agonistic relations rather than antagonistic ones' that Parry rightly laments.¹¹⁵ Rather, it is one that recognises the agonised *within* the antagonised. His work, furthermore, gives substance to

¹¹² Phillips, 'Cultural Cringe'.

¹¹³ Van Wyk Smith, 'Origins Revisited', 13.

¹¹⁴ Slater, particularly xi and Snyman, 181–4.

¹¹⁵ Parry, 'Institutionalization', 76.

Boehmer's observation 'that initiatives which we now call postcolonial first began to emerge *before* the time of formal independence, and therefore formed a part of colonial literature'.¹¹⁶

This project joins with van Wyk Smith's endeavour to recuperate 'the full (but often cacophonous) chorus of early colonial voices' – and later ones which might nevertheless still be dismissed as 'colonial'.¹¹⁷ Although most of the Cattle-Killing accounts spanning the period of 1891–1937 serve the broad category of what I call 'Progress Narratives' – stories that present the catastrophe as a necessary stage in the civilization of the 'native' – a closer look reveals interesting divergences, instances of protest (or 'postcolonial initiatives'), and an heterogeneous range of applications.

It is important to point out, too, that despite their inability to secure the interest of literary critics and historians, the influence of the works under discussion in this dissertation was not insubstantial. Most of these semi-fictional narratives reached larger and more diverse audiences than contemporary historical accounts – indeed, for many, presumably, their primary introduction to the Cattle-Killing would have come by way of semi-fictional representations.¹¹⁸ Beattie's novel – published in London and South Africa concurrently – purportedly 'enjoyed a large sale' and its ethnographic portrayal of the Xhosa was widely and unquestioningly accepted (as was Dowsley's, by both his Irish and South African reviewers).¹¹⁹ Waters' knowledge and depiction of the Xhosa was similarly praised but, in her case, by black as well as white. It is also safe to assume (although without publishing figures, it is impossible to be more specific) that her accounts, many having secured a position in the 'native' educational market, reached a more extensive audience than other contemporary descriptions of the Cattle-Killing.¹²⁰ Her plays (like Dhlomo's) had the added advantage of being accessible to a non-literate audience. The role that Waters' works played in defining the position of the 'native' in the Union and interpreting the Cattle-Killing in the historical consciousness of generations of school children (which is not to say her perspective was always passively adopted, nor that it was unchallenged by alternative narratives) is considered in Chapter 3. The influence of Waters' plays is also apparent in J. H. Soga's 'factual' monograph and later dramas on the same subject – Somhlahlo's *Nongqause* (1969) draws briefly on *The Light*, and Dhlomo's *The Girl* (as Orkin has

¹¹⁶ Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial*, 4–5.

¹¹⁷ As discussed by Chapman, 147–8; Walder, 156; van der Vlies, 3–6.

¹¹⁸ The best example from this early period is Schauder's short film *Nonqaussi*, which played in London and South Africa (and quite probably elsewhere in the Empire) and whose audience figures I conservatively estimate to be in the tens of thousands.

¹¹⁹ See Anon, 'Obituaries' and Chapters 1 and 5 of this dissertation.

¹²⁰ South African publication statistics, pre-1959, are non-existent (Galloway, 113).

effectively argued) was, in all likelihood, written as a counter to *U-Nongqause*.¹²¹ While Metelkamp's short story reached only a narrow, (mostly) white literary audience (albeit twice over), the novelty of her repositioning and rendering of the prophetess nevertheless persists in Dhlomo's later depiction of Nongqawuse – and beyond. The network of literary influences evident in *The Girl* (Chapter 2) is particularly significant, for despite the fact that it 'failed to impress' contemporaneous theatre-goers and was 'received by a limited African and white audience',¹²² Dhlomo's play has received by far the most critical attention of the early accounts, and is also the only work still widely available.

LITERARY AFTERLIVES

To facilitate the type of 'complex and polyphonic' analyses van Wyk Smith promotes, and to demonstrate how these early texts speak for and into their time, it is essential that they are not read backwards from apartheid or post-apartheid, but from within the contexts of their conception, creation and reception. The approach I have adopted, therefore, is interdisciplinary and consists of close, contextual readings. Situating these narratives within their wider socio-political and historical settings required research across a variety of areas from Victorian anthropology (Chapter 1) to the under-explored field of white women's enfranchisement in South Africa with its connection, via Olive Schreiner, to the radical British intellectual community (Chapter 2). 'Native education' and the black missionary elite form the wider context for Chapters 3 and 4, and Chapter 5 is situated within a framework of Irish nationalism and the Celtic Revival. I have drawn upon the following archival resources in England and South Africa: the USPG missionary archives at Rhodes House, Oxford (particularly for Rev. H. T. Waters' accounts of the Cattle-Killing and his 'native' missionary and educational work at St Mark's, 1856-60); the Rare Books, Official Publications, Periodicals and Royal Commonwealth Society Collections at Cambridge University Library (for Government Blue Books, editions of nineteenth-century illustrated popular boys' fiction, including *Pambaniso*, missionary publications, etc.); author collections at the National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown (which include unpublished works, personal correspondence and reviews); the Cory Library, Grahamstown (for local nineteenth- and early twentieth-century periodicals and papers relating to the Grahamstown Training College and 'native education'); the Women's Enfranchisement League Collection, R. V. Selope Thema Papers, and the Church of England in South Africa Collections (at William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg); The Zonnebloem Training College Papers in the University of Cape Town Archives; and the Cape

¹²¹ Orkin, 'Contesting Discourse'; Somhlahllo, 2–6 (see Waters, *The Light*, 4–6); Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, 243.

¹²² Mahlasela, *General Survey*, 11; Coplan, *Township Tonight!*, 126; Steadman, 214.

Women's Enfranchisement League historical pamphlets, the Sir George Grey Collection and Visual Collection of the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town repository). As biographical details were often hard to come by, I also accessed estate papers and birth and death records held in the South African National Archives. During the course of my research I consulted unpublished manuscripts by Dhlomo (at the Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban) as well as his original script and musical score for *The Girl* (Cory Library, Grahamstown). In addition, I was able to gain access to Dowsley's personal papers in Port Elizabeth – and remain the only scholar to have done so. This uncatalogued collection (which includes the original illustrations for *Long Horns*, correspondence with Dowsley's publisher, reviews of his work, published articles and unpublished manuscripts) proved invaluable not only for information pertaining to the author and his work, but for the insight it provided into the Irish emigrant community in Grahamstown at the turn of the twentieth century. While setting great store by material such as this and while asserting that all texts are products and producers of their time, I nonetheless accept Peires' caveat regarding disjuncture: that an author's political agenda might be 'out of sync' with her intellectual (or aesthetic) agenda – that, as Clingman puts it, the relationship of a work to its wider context rather than being 'fully expressive and coherent' might be asymmetrical and symptomatic.¹²³

This dissertation is loosely arranged by chronology and author. The existence of several works by individual writers, however, combined with delays between the performance/writing and publication of some texts, and comparisons across accounts, ensure that chapters intersect with one another and overlap chronologically. Chapter 1, thus, is assigned to the earliest semi-fictional account of the Cattle-Killing in English, Beattie's novel *Pambaniso* (1891). This is followed, in Chapter 2, by an examination of both manifestations of Metelekamp's short story – 'Namjikwa' (1907) and 'The Prophetess' (1935). Waters' plays (*U-Nongqause*, 1914 and *The Light*, 1925), her short story ('The Story of the Native Doctor', 1926) and her History Reader, *Great Men and Great Deeds* (c.1931) are considered in Chapter 3. The final two chapters are respectively devoted to H. I. E. Dhlomo's play, *The Girl Who Killed to Save* (1936), and Dowsley's novel, *Long Horns* (1937).

Beattie's novel, while aligned with the tradition of popular boys' fiction, also emerges from the science of Xhosa ethnography, and fits most securely of all the early accounts into the legitimising, racist discourse associated with the 'colonial cringe'. In Chapter 1 I explore how Beattie's depiction of the Xhosa is shaped and validated by contemporaneous scientific thought, how it secures the Xhosas' apparent inferiority by way of the Cattle-Killing 'delusion',

¹²³ Peires, 'Cry Havoc', 245; Clingman, 148.

and how Beattie's scientific framework is allied with an imperialist progressivism which is manifested in the legitimization of the imperial project in Kaffraria and further afield. Yet even in the midst of this unlikely context, I argue for occasional complicating moments that trouble *Pambaniso's* often unreflective and jingoist propaganda.

In stark contrast to Beattie's novel, Metelerkamp's short stories – the subjects of Chapter 2 – highlight the universal resonance of the tragedy. Equally striking is that unlike later accounts which similarly tend in this direction, Metelerkamp's focus is not on race, but gender. Indeed 'Namjikwa' largely (and uniquely for these early tellings) avoids issues of race by employing an entirely black cast and by drawing the narrative to a conclusion *before* the Final Day and the subjugation of the Xhosa. While the reader is alerted to Xhosa 'otherness', Metelerkamp prefers to develop, through the character of her radically re-imagined prophetess, the concept of a pan-racial sisterhood founded on a common biological condition and experience.

For Waters, the narrative of the Cattle-Killing was primarily of pedagogical value, with three of her four accounts written for use in 'native' schools. The various strategies employed by the educationalist, across her accounts and over twenty years, to contain and elucidate the lessons of the Cattle-Killing, however, make for very different narrative products. Together they reflect the increasing professionalization and secularisation of education in South Africa and, as I suggest in Chapter 3, also mark a shift in the way black subjectivity was imagined, inscribed and prescribed. Waters' concern for religious identity, although never undercut, is increasingly subordinated to the imperatives of constructing a black national identity. Waters' view of black South Africans is of a people in progress, and the Cattle-Killing as instrumental in accelerating this process. I argue that this schema is unsettled, and the extent of Waters' (and other white liberals') ambivalence towards the so-called Bantu revealed, through a fourth account that presents the event entirely from a 'raw' Xhosa perspective.

In Chapter 4 I explore Dhlomo's attempt to enlist the Cattle-Killing into a wider history of African progress and, ultimately, to present the event as a universal narrative – 'the tragedy of [...] Nongqause' he wrote, 'is the tragedy of all countries, all times, all races'.¹²⁴ Although his play, on the whole, reflects an assimilationist position, by pointing toward the ultimately good and 'civilising' effect of the Cattle-Killing, for Dhlomo – I maintain – black assimilation is not considered an act of submission but one of liberation. The dramatist's end goal is not merely incorporation into a white-ruled South African society, but rather, full integration into a non-racial and 'civilised' world-community. An unpublished (and until now, unexamined) review of

¹²⁴ Dhlomo, 'Drama and the African', 235.

Shaw's *Saint Joan* by Dhlomo, and various allusions to the French and Xhosa visionaries suggest, too, that his response to the Cattle-Killing soon took on a more cynical and assertive Black Nationalist tone.

Dhlomo's insistence upon the wider resonance of the Cattle-Killing and the role of Nongqawuse, however, was by no means unanimous. Beattie, for example, not only averred that the event was unprecedented, but that it was intrinsically primitive and inexplicable – 'beyond the range of civilised thought'.¹²⁵ Dowsley's *Long Horns*, the focus of the final chapter, is particularly interesting in this regard. For while its protagonist shares Beattie's opinion regarding 'savage' psychology, he actively participates in the event alongside the Xhosa. In this telling, the author focuses on a common experience of oppression and parallel acts of anti-colonial rebellion, linking the Xhosa and Irish, the Cattle-Killing and the 1848 Rising. In so doing, Dowsley acknowledges the actions of the Xhosa to be part of a legitimate and international reaction to British imperialism, and also draws attention to a common humanity. Ultimately, however, for Dowsley the Cattle-Killing itself acts to underscore the difference between 'savage' Xhosa and 'civilized' Irish. With the disavowal of racial equality, his extraordinary analogy is never fully realised, and its liberating potential dispelled.

Even within this small selection of semi-fictional reconstructions of the Cattle-Killing, the range of uses and meanings is significant. Unlike some later representations, however, none ventures outside a teleological framework; and few explicitly (and none comprehensively) challenge white supremacy or the apparently benevolent aims of British imperialism. And yet, if we dismiss these early Cattle-Killing accounts because they buttress racist ideologies, serve discredited models of history, are not 'good' literature, or because they promote 'barking mad' interpretations of the Cattle-Killing, we miss the extent of their social, political and historical work. Also denied would be the role that these narratives have played in interpreting, defining and prescribing this highly fraught political moment in the minds of their varied, and sometimes considerable, audiences.

¹²⁵ Beattie, *Pambaniso*, 186.

CHAPTER 1

THE CATTLE-KILLING AS ANTHROPOLOGICAL FICTION

Pambaniso: A Kaffir Hero: or, Scenes from Savage Life. An Historical Kaffir Tale (1891) follows the adventures of a fictional Xhosa outlaw chief. Thomas Ross Beattie's novel also contains perhaps the earliest written, creative account of the Cattle-Killing in English, and includes the most detailed descriptions of Xhosa culture to be found in a work of fiction. Indeed, the full title and the protagonist's name – which stems from the verb 'pambanisa' meaning: 'to reverse; to pervert; to turn upside down'¹ – forecast the generic indeterminacy of the work, and the tension between fact and fiction that mark it as a whole. *Pambaniso* emerges from the science of Xhosa ethnography, and is aligned with the tradition of what Street has termed 'anthropological fiction'. What sets Beattie's work apart from this popular 'exotic literature', and ultimately undermines its romance credentials, however, is its plethora of ethnographic information, reinforced by the highly unusual inclusion of photo-engravings. Beattie presents the Xhosa and the Cattle-Killing within a socio-cultural evolutionary frame consistent with contemporaneous scientific thought. But for Beattie, this framework is also allied with an imperialist progressivism which is manifested in *Pambaniso's* legitimization of the imperial project in Kaffraria. When read alongside the author's factual booklet, *A Ride Through the Transkei* (from the same year), the novel can in fact also be seen to lend support for further British expansion; most immediately for the annexation of Pondoland – the last of the independent black territories to be incorporated into the Cape Colony.

Pambaniso's endorsement for, and defence of, British Imperialism is established from the outset.

Kaffraria! Home of the Kaffir, the proudest of his race! Often has the war-cry resounded through thy valleys, creating fear and despair in the homes of the white settlers. On thy hill-tops thousands of sable warriors have gathered, all armed with assegais, and all animated with the determination to drive back the British soldiers who had crossed the sea to protect the weak and to open up the path of civilisation, which, in those early and savage times, could only be done by the rattle of the grape-shot and the whiz of the bullet. What cared those hardy tribesmen for the teaching of the white men! They had been cradled in barbarism; their whole surroundings were of the most barbarous

¹ Döhne, *Zulu-Kafir Dictionary*, 265–6.

conception, and they lived only for themselves on the principle that might was right... If those hills could speak, they could relate tales of horror that would make our blood run cold – enough almost to make us blush for our species to think that the perpetrators of such cruel deeds bore its outward form. Thank God! the days of superstition have now nearly run their course in this part of the Dark Continent. The stern authority of civilisation is an impassable barrier for the savage to carry out any act of cruelty or blind vengeance. The proud chieftain and his descendants have now no power to destroy the lives of the common people – justice rears its head over all the land – the justice of the white man which treats all races alike... The terrible tales of torture by fire and starvation, and the burying of men and women alive for the ants and worms to eat, still linger in the memories of some, and will be handed down to posterity as traditional history of the dark days of Kaffraria. What a comparison there is between the past and the present! And the great change has been brought about by the force of British arms and British influence for good. Evidences of civilisation and progress can now be seen on every side.²

For *Pambaniso*'s narrator, justification for British actions is founded on racial difference, a fixed idea of Progress and meliorism – and is asserted through contrasts drawn between British and 'Kaffir', past and present. The comparisons (as the references to 'sable' skins, 'dark days', 'Dark Continent' remind us) are literally as stark as black versus white. Although the 'Kaffir' appears to belong to the same 'species', this monogenic position is immediately disturbed by the qualification that he merely bears 'its outward form'. If not avowedly polygenic, common ancestry is apparently so far removed in time that the two peoples might as well have different origins. For in every respect, the 'Kaffir' are Other – a distinct 'race'. Their inferiority is highlighted by the descriptions, 'tribesmen' and 'warriors', with their allusions to antiquity and primitiveness. Indeed, whereas the British 'soldiers' use guns, the 'Kaffirs' brandish assegais. But the apparently advanced state of the colonisers is not merely limited to modern technology and the professionalisation of warfare. Whereas the British are governed by democratic principles (synonymous, here, with 'justice'), the Xhosa chiefs are despots. British mentality and morality, too, in the narrator's reckoning, are clearly superior. In contrast to the barbarous, cruel and superstitious 'Kaffir' whose only contribution to humanity appears to be 'torture', 'fear' and 'despair', the British bring 'protection', 'justice', 'civilisation', and 'progress'. Furthermore, unlike the former whose only concern is their immediate context and response, the British recognise their duty towards mankind at large and voluntarily cross the sea (which would otherwise keep them at a safe remove from the 'Darkness') in order to defend those beyond their borders and

² Beattie, *Pambaniso*, v–vii.

introduce civilization. Perhaps most significantly, while the British 'open up', the Xhosa 'drive back'. They vigorously defy change and progress, but their resistance is futile. They need to be 'taught', and the British have the 'authority' to teach them.

The central preoccupations of Beattie's Prologue – to demonstrate the essential difference of the 'Kaffir' and to describe how they, trapped in the past, have been brought into the clear light of the present by exertion and example – are taken up in expanded form in *Pambaniso* as a whole. Beattie's work subscribes to a unilinear scheme of development, charting the history of the Xhosa as a story of progress, from barbarism to civilisation, Darkness to Light. In Beattie's scheme, the Cattle-Killing, which has commonly been cited as the event that spelt the final demise of Xhosa independence, is portrayed as a seminal moment in their civilization – the final hour before the break of dawn.³ This idea of the Cattle-Killing as a narrative of progress (as subsequent chapters will demonstrate) remained the predominant framework for reading the event, well into the twentieth century. To his original audience and contemporary scholars, too, Beattie's depiction of the Xhosa and his vision of their history would have been (and are) unremarkable and, indeed, expected.

Racial stereotypes and myths – such as those associating black skin with evil, indolence, excessive sexuality, proximity to nature – had a long and well-established tradition in both scholarly contexts and popular forms including melodrama, cartoons, ethnographic shows, pictorial albums and museum exhibitions.⁴ The institutionalisation of Anthropology in the second half of the century set the pattern for the meticulous documentation and analysis of 'race', the fixing of racial stereotypes and the intellectualisation of this racial prejudice. Stocking argues that:

Darwinian evolution, evolutionary ethnology, and polygenist race thus interacted to support a raciocultural hierarchy in terms of which civilized men, the highest products of social evolution, were large-brained white men... The assumption of white superiority was certainly not original with Victorian evolutionists; yet the interrelation of the theories of cultural and organic evolution with their implicit hierarchy of race, gave it a new rationale.⁵

And, indeed, it was from within this context that *Pambaniso* arose. For Beattie was not only responding to popular demand ('Everything African,' noted a contemporary in *Blackwood's*

³ Chalmers, *Soga*, 128; Cory, *The Rise*, 22; Majeke, *Missionaries in Conquest*, 74; Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:340–1.

⁴ See, for example, Lively, *Masks*, particularly Chapter 1; Lindfors, *Africans on Stage* and Ryan, *Picturing Empire*.

⁵ Stocking, 'Dark-Skinned Savage', 122. See too Kuper, *Among the Anthropologists*, 59–78. Both try to contain the excessive influence often attributed to Darwin.

Magazine, 'is nowadays of interest'),⁶ but to a scholarly impulse. While fleeting and crude, his early references in the Prologue to the language of categorisation ('race' and 'species'), the socio-cultural evolutionary trajectory of his Xhosa history, the assumed racial hierarchy and an emphasis on comparison, all reveal the influence of this human science. The author's anthropological perspective is underscored, as we shall see, by the almost obsessive attention to ethnographic detail that dominates the rest of his work. *Pambaniso's* political agenda also finds resonance here.

Victorian evolutionary thinking not only helped to shed light (through analogies with 'primitive' societies) on a distant European past as well as on contemporaneous domestic 'others' such as the Irish and the English lower classes; it could also be used to explain and assure European supremacy in the present, and to support imperialism.⁷ Although capable of advancement, some maintained that 'backward' races did not have the capacity to raise themselves out of their barbarous circumstances, but that progress could be made, and savagery eradicated, if their 'hereditary incapacity' was modified through the judicious and altruistic promptings of European Civilization. Brantlinger has taken this further by arguing that scientific theories of race were deliberately used to maintain European dominance and extend her reach.

Evolutionary thought seems almost calculated to legitimize imperialism. The theory that man evolved through distinct social stages – from savagery to barbarism to civilization – led to a self-congratulatory anthropology that actively promoted belief in the inferiority – indeed, the bestiality – of the African.⁸

While there can be no denying that many used these theories to justify imperialism and, in extreme cases, the 'extinguishing' of 'inferior' races,⁹ the situation was, of course, more complex than Brantlinger lets on. Schmidt, having described the 1970s exposé of anthropology's political role, concludes that the discipline was not simply 'crudely exploitative', but rather that it acted within an 'accepted structure prescribed by general patterns of relationships between the metropolitan West and the peripheries'.¹⁰ Stocking reminds us, too, that 'whatever its adequacy as historical generalization', the scheme suggested by the likes of Brantlinger – which Stocking extends to include how ethnography was put to service by colonial rulers, to ease and maintain their dominant position – does not make allowance for the plurality

⁶ Bodley, 'A Ride in Kaffirland', 231. See too Snyman, 171.

⁷ Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, particularly Chapter 6.

⁸ Brantlinger, 'Victorians and Africans', 184.

⁹ Bridges' 1894 essay, 'Darwinism in Politics', describes how Darwin's work was crudely adopted to serve various agenda including the emancipation of women and the 'extinguishing' of Oriental and African nations. *Illustrations of Positivism*, 4.

¹⁰ Schmidt, *Creating Order*, 4.

and variety of 'colonial situations', the 'ambivalent motives' (as he argues elsewhere), of those in the field.¹¹

DOCUMENTING THE XHOSA

By the time Beattie came to write *Pambaniso*, the Xhosa were well-known in Britain. From 1806, when she assumed, for the second and final time, control of the Cape Colony, the 'Old Country' was brought into frequent contact with the 'Kaffirs' on the eastern border. The arrival of 4,000 British settlers to the region in 1820 intensified this contact, making it more immediate, more personal. Judging by the numerous articles in the London *Times* and the *Illustrated London News*, the costly and almost decadal frontier wars, the Cattle-Killing, and the eventual annexation of what remained of Independent Kaffraria, kept the Xhosa in the news and the public imagination. Details of the 'savage' inhabitants of this remote territory were supplemented by the impressions of travellers, missionaries, amateur scholars and government officials.

Although there was still little in the way of 'scientific study' or 'intensive work' by the end of the century, a modest amateur tradition of documenting the Xhosa was established early on.¹² The often sensationalist sketches provided by early travellers, whose interaction with the Xhosa was mostly fleeting and superficial and tended to focus on things observable, were soon replaced by more informed descriptions that reflected an increasing familiarity with the Xhosa language and included details of indigenous laws and beliefs. Amongst those responsible for these descriptions were the 'native missionaries' whose impressions of the country and her people were contained in reports and letters sent back to missionary headquarters in Europe and, occasionally, in book form.¹³ But the information they supplied was not used solely to garner support for their evangelistic work. Their observations regarding indigenous culture, together with their linguistic work in founding, and later fixing, a Xhosa grammar and orthography, began to inform and even direct European knowledge.¹⁴ Scientists, Thornton notes, were reliant on 'men on the spot' such as travelers and missionaries who, in addition to providing a moral framework for their work, supplied a 'specialised vocabulary' and helped to identify and describe some 'essential organising concepts (such as "tribe" and "language")'.¹⁵

¹¹ Stocking, *Colonial Situations*, 3–6 and *Victorian Anthropology*, 187.

¹² Anon, 'Review: Dudley Kidd', 482. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, 148 and Rivers (1913) quoted in Thornton, 'Narrative Ethnography in Africa', 516.

¹³ For example Fleming's *Kaffraria* (1853) and *Southern Africa* (1856).

¹⁴ For the work of missionary-linguists John and William Govan Bennie, see Opland, *Xhosa Poets*, Chapter 13. For the role of linguistics in upholding colonialism in southern Africa, see Gilmour, *Grammars*.

¹⁵ Thornton, 'Narrative Ethnography', 503.

As the century advanced, the Xhosa and other indigenous groups increasingly became the subjects of more systematic and specific enquiries, such as those initiated in the 1860s into indigenous folklore.¹⁶ The authors of these projects demonstrated an awareness of the debates, methodologies and developments in science, and emphasised the importance of first-hand knowledge. This spirit of scientific enquiry was in large part inspired by the new governor of the Cape Colony, Sir George Grey, who arrived fresh from New Zealand in 1854. Grey, a friend of Darwin's, was an ethnographer in his own right whose research on the Australian aborigines and the Maori was highly regarded. Once in the Cape, he actively encouraged the collection of ethnographic material and the work of philologist, Wilhelm Bleek.¹⁷ It was Grey's 'native' civilizing policy, however, that was the catalyst for the most thorough investigation into, and documentation of, the Xhosa to that date, John Maclean's *A Compendium of Kafir Laws & Customs* (1858).

Grey's grand 'native' civilising scheme, which he elucidated in his opening speech to the Cape Parliament, was informed by his belief in the duties and responsibilities of the Advanced Race towards their 'uncivilised' neighbours – a foreshadowing of Kipling's 'The White Man's Burden' (1899) of the New Imperialism. One of Grey's measures for introducing civilisation was the magistrate system. This involved granting the Xhosa chiefs a salary and assigning a European officer to each, to assist in the judging of legal cases. Although ostensibly conceived for their good, the scheme was, in actuality, intended to undermine the power of the leaders and render them little more than glorified government employees.¹⁸ The Chief Commissioner of British Kaffraria, Colonel Maclean, for one, did not support the plan. Realising, however, that the governor was intent on its implementation and recognising that 'without some insight into the nature of Kafir law, the newly appointed Magistrates might feel some difficulty in forming an opinion on the cases brought before them', he set about compiling a manual to assist them. Unlike government men such as Barrow (1804) and, particularly, Alberti (1810) who had committed their observations on the Xhosa to writing many years earlier, Maclean did not rely on his own limited experience.¹⁹ Instead, he approached a handful of men whose knowledge of the Xhosa was extensive and who were familiar with their language, asking for information on indigenous institutions, beliefs and practices. He requested that material be presented in their reports under specified headings. By comparing the accounts, he hoped to be able to provide 'a

¹⁶ Bleek, *Reynard the Fox* (1864); Callaway, *Nursery Tales* (1868); Theal, *Kaffir Folk-lore* (1882). A number of items relating to indigenous folklore also appeared during this time in the *Cape Monthly Magazine* and the short-lived *Folk-Lore Journal*.

¹⁷ Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 81–6; Peires, *The Dead*, 1989:45; Bleek, *Reynard the Fox* (1864), xi.

¹⁸ Cape of Good Hope 'Further Papers relative to Kaffir Tribes', 353. Peires, *The Dead*, 1989:313.

¹⁹ Alberti's work, described as the 'first substantial and first-hand ethnographic account of the Xhosa', only appeared in English translation in 1968. Fehr, *Ludwig Alberti's Account*, ix. Barrow, *Travels into the Interior*.

general and correct view of Kafir jurisprudence'.²⁰ Also included were descriptions of the country, notes on Xhosa subsistence, brief biographies of leaders, and a genealogical table.

Individual *Compendium* contributors, notably, saw their reports as part of a scientific tradition. Dugmore cites the work of English ethnographer, James Prichard, and betrays a more-than-passing knowledge of proto-anthropological discourse. Warner, as Chidester notes, places Xhosa beliefs and practices within a 'comparative framework that was international in scope' and provides a 'functionalist analysis' that aligned them with other religious systems. In addition to insisting that the Xhosa have a comprehensive system of beliefs, Warner takes the unusual step of 'us[ing] the term *religion*' to describe it.²¹ For all this, the influence of Christianity and the authority of the Bible is still apparent: Warner describes the Xhosa priests as being, 'to a considerable extent, self-deceived, as well as the deceivers of others; and ... to a certain extent, under satanic influence'.²² The Xhosa may have a religion, but their 'Satanic system' (as it was later described)²³ of ancestor worship was in opposition to civilised belief.

For half a century Maclean's volume was considered the authoritative source for information on the Xhosa. It was a foundational text for the governmental enquiry into 'Native Affairs' in the Colony that resulted in the 1883 *Report on Native Laws and Customs*, and was later described as essential reading for those hoping to 'interact effectively with the native'.²⁴ The *Compendium*'s continued importance was reaffirmed by its reissue in 1906. It was also a work with which Beattie was familiar, for he quotes from and endorses Warner's revolted response to *Intonjane* (the Xhosa female initiation rite) in *Pambaniso*.²⁵ In Beattie's depiction of Xhosa 'superstition', Warner's influence is also evident – a point to which I will return later.

If, prior to the Cattle-Killing, the Xhosa were routinely declared to have no religion and to be ruled by despotism alone, by 1858 they were acknowledged to have recognisable and effective (if inferior) systems of government and beliefs. These and other apparently universal human phenomena were increasingly examined with a comparative framework, allowing scholars to plot the Xhosa's position on the evolutionary scale. Xhosa religion was placed between 'the "idol worship" of India and the "fetish worship" of the West Coast of Africa' and, in the aforementioned 1883 *Report*, the relative superiority of European customs was repeatedly asserted and the conclusion arrived at that 'Kafir' law was comparable to that of 'our Saxon

²⁰ MacLean, *Compendium*, 58.

²¹ Chidester, *Savage Systems*, 104–6.

²² Maclean, *Compendium*, 84.

²³ Chidester, 109.

²⁴ Kidd, *Essential Kafir*, 425; Mendelssohn, 960.

²⁵ *Pambaniso*, 104; Maclean, *Compendium*, 105.

ancestors in the early days of civilization'.²⁶ While Theal does not venture the precise position of the Xhosa in the scheme, his study of *Kaffir Folk-lore* was likewise bound to evolutionary theories while formally circumscribed by the comparative method.

Of late years a great deal of interest has been taken in the folklore of uncivilized tribes by those who have made it their business to study mankind. It has been found that a knowledge of the traditionary tales of a people is a key to their ideas and a standard of their powers of thought [...] They are evidences that the same ideas are common to every branch of the human family at the same stage of progress.²⁷

This extract from Theal's Preface also points to two other related issues: the idea of mental evolution (the progressively developing function, and possibly structure, of the human brain), and the importance of allowing the 'native' voice to be heard. While emphasis continued to be placed on 'native expertise', simply knowing the details of Xhosa life was no longer deemed sufficient; the native himself needed (at least cursorily) to be consulted – to be encouraged to speak for himself. This would lend authenticity and authority, but would also allow him to be known from within. Yet despite efforts at black participation, it was inevitably circumscribed. Although more than half the witnesses interviewed by the 1883 Commission were Xhosa men, unlike the white experts, they were hardly ever interviewed individually, were not questioned in the same depth, and their advice was not as frequently sought. And even when, as Erlank shows, these witnesses expressly 'refuted suggestions of cultural inferiority', there is no indication that they affected a reassessment of the Commission's racial assumptions and prejudices.²⁸ Xhosa presence was similarly proscribed in Theal's *Kaffir Folk-lore* – and this despite the lengths he went to, to minimise European interference (he claims the stories were narrated, revised and transcribed by 'natives'). For even when the Xhosa told his stories in 'his own words', he could not, apparently, be understood without the assistance of a European expert. Theal, having presented his 'Kaffir' credentials, provides 'copious' explanatory notes and a long introduction.²⁹

By 1891, when *Pambaniso* was published, the Xhosa were firmly established as anthropological beings: objects for scientific study, to be described, classified, analysed and explained by white men familiar with their peculiar ways and nature. Their bodies had been measured, their laws codified, their customs scrutinised, their language dissected. And throughout it all, the

²⁶ Chidester, *Savage Systems*, 110; Cape Colony, *Report and Proceedings*, 15.

²⁷ Theal, *Kaffir Folk-lore*, v–vi.

²⁸ Erlank, 'Gendering Commonality', 937–53.

²⁹ Theal, *Kaffir Folk-lore*, viii–ix.

description of the Xhosa remained consistently informed by the belief in a racial hierarchy within a unilineal progressive evolutionist scheme.

A SCOTSMAN, HIS NOVEL AND HIS ETHNOGRAPHIC ASPIRATIONS

Although neither Beattie nor his omniscient, third-person narrator make any specific claim to authenticity, or overtly state their 'Kaffir' credentials in *Pambansio*, the work has a 'factual' foundation. While biographical details are hard to come by, we know the author was *not* 'a trader who introduced the silkworm in the Elliotdale district in 1886', as Seary alleges. Rather, Beattie was a journalist by profession, who was born in Aberdeen (Scotland), appositely at the height of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing. At some point he emigrated to the Eastern Cape and by 1890 had lived there long enough to become familiar with two local languages: he was the author of a collection of short stories in Afrikaans and spoke serviceable Xhosa.³⁰ Beattie served in the capacity of sub-editor for the *Kaffrarian Watchman* in King William's Town, before assuming the editorship of the *Kokstad Advertiser* in September 1892. He died its proprietor in 1908.³¹

It was while employed by the *Watchman* that Beattie undertook a six-week tour of the Transkei and Pondoland, which resulted in a series of letters that were published, first as instalments in the newspaper, and later in an eighty-five page pamphlet entitled *A Ride Through the Transkei* (1891). During the course of his trip Beattie entered into conversation with, and solicited the opinion of, 'natives' – both chiefs and commoners – on a variety of issues including historical events, the proposed new railway scheme, 'smelling-out' and torture. He spent a night at Nqwiiso's Great Place ('it was with a feeling of supreme delight that I looked outside and saw my horse nearby, for I had then the satisfaction of knowing that I would soon be far away from such a horrible place. Faugh!'), observed 'Kafir' customs ('I was charmed by listening to the grunting sounds from their throats intended as music to accompany the dancers, and the more grotesque attitudes of some of the dancers almost made my horse laugh') and inspected the 'fantastic attire of a Kafir witchdoctor'.³² Despite the condescending and racist tenor of his remarks, Beattie was nonetheless assiduous about recording ethnographic detail. In the extended description of the *Abakweta*, for example, minutiae of the *ukutshila* dance that he witnessed augment material from Warner's *Compendium* report.³³ This information, and more garnered on the trip, subsequently found its way into *Pambaniso*, which appeared shortly after

³⁰ Seary, *Bibliographical Record*, 3; Beattie, *A Ride*, 39. I have been unable to track down a copy of Beattie's anthology, *Verhale uit die Kaffer Oorloë* (n.s., n.d.).

³¹ Seary, 3. The silkworm enthusiast was, in fact, W. Beattie, probably a relative of T. R., whom he visited during his tour. *A Ride*, 73–4. Beattie's Death Notice records his age as 51 years, which sets his birth between 1856 and 1857.

³² *A Ride*, 40, 16, 60.

³³ Beattie does not acknowledge the *Compendium*, but his borrowing is exposed by his adoption of Warner's phrase 'as old as Methuselah'. *Compendium*, 100–3; *A Ride*, 72–3, *Pambaniso*, 215–7.

but might well have been conceived and written concurrently. It is apparent from *A Ride* that the author aligns himself with the narrator of *Pambaniso*. Not only are their perspectives identical, but Beattie's opinions and descriptions are often duplicated in the novel. Indeed, *Pambansio's* narrator admits this union when he refers to 'the writer's' interview with Sarhili the previous year. This meeting with the Xhosa paramount, now exiled in Bomvanaland, was the highlight of Beattie's Transkeian tour.

[Kreli] is, I daresay, the only chief still alive of any great historical fame within colonial possessions. His life is one well worth studying. There are memories that gather around him even in his isolated position and keep up the link, as it were, between present and past generations, when he played such a prominent part in wars and in the great delusion of 1856–57. His place is about twenty miles from here but I shall gladly ride that distance to see such a famous personage – a man who though only a Kafir, a rude barbarian, has shown so much cunning and diplomacy as to outwit even British Governors and Generals.³⁴

Sarhili was not only the link between the past and the present – he was also Beattie's key to the Cattle-Killing. While the author's letters cement his credentials generally as someone who has insider knowledge of the natives and the country ('There is nothing,' he concludes his final missive, 'like one being on the spot for the purpose of acquiring information for oneself'),³⁵ his meeting with the Paramount serves to establish his access and proximity to the event itself – as well as to support Beattie's reading of the Cattle-Killing. When the Scotsman finally meets the chief, he urges him to speak plainly, adding that he will publish his words faithfully 'so that when people read them they would know that they came from his own lips, and those who knew him would think that they saw Sarili standing before them'. In *Pambaniso* Beattie invokes the paramount's presence as key witness in defence of his interpretation of the Cattle-Killing.

Beattie's novel, as is suggested by its full title, *Pambaniso; A Kaffir Hero: Or, Scenes from Savage Life. An Historical Kaffir Tale*, is a crude juxtaposition of genres: travelogue, history, ethnography and fiction. The protagonist and other invented characters share the stage with historical figures; fictionalised events sit alongside the factual. Indeed the narrative of the hero is frequently interrupted with political commentary and long descriptions of battles actually fought. In addition, there is a mass of meticulously recorded ethnographic material that further suspends *Pambaniso* and his cast mid-flight. Genealogies are expounded and physiognomy, dress and indigenous customs are described in detail. Beattie underscores his anthropological

³⁴ *A Ride*, 59–60.

³⁵ *A Ride*, 85.

aspirations with the liberal use of Xhosa words and the inclusion of photo-engravings (to which I will return in due course). The most explicit ethnographic disruption takes place when the narrator inserts an entire chapter on 'Witchcraft and Witch-doctors', self-consciously introduced with the words: 'It is necessary before going further, to enlighten the reader about witchcraft'. This nine-page section, which enlarges upon the outline offered in Beattie's *A Ride*,³⁶ proceeds with an account of the initiation process, followed by a detailed inventory of the 'seven classes of doctors or priests'. Beattie's list expands upon Warner's *Compendium* report, which notes only three, but is otherwise proximate. Like Warner, Beattie presents Xhosa beliefs (founded on ancestral spirits) as a functional, highly structured and established system of superstition, whose influence is absolute and comprehensive. Both authors recognise the sway of Satan, but while Warner argues that the priests, in addition to deceiving the populace, are themselves deluded, Beattie summarily dismisses 'all these "doctors" [as] great impostors'; their activities as 'acting'.³⁷ For both, the obliteration of this diabolical system is essential if progress is to be made among the 'Kaffir'. Not all the ethnographic material is kept separate: anthropological issues are also woven into the historico-fictitious narrative.

The narrative, such as it is, follows the adventures of Pambaniso, a fearless and upstanding character, who chooses the life of an outlaw rather than the dubious honour of being put to death in order that his skull might be used in the treatment of Chief Sandile's withered leg.³⁸ Pambaniso is joined, in the narrative, by a loyal group of followers who, like him, have been forced into exile – in their case, to escape false accusations of witchcraft. Together with his Doomed Band, the hero takes refuge in the Amatole Mountain heights, making forays into the lowlands usually in order to avenge misdeeds or rescue people (including two beautiful women, whom he promptly claims as his wives). The rather skeletal story of Pambaniso's exploits is superimposed on, and often dominated by, a metanarrative of Xhosa-settler tension and the gradual adoption of civilisation by the 'Kaffirs'. The novel opens on events (both imagined and real) leading to the War of the Axe (1846) and ends, via Mhlanjeni's War (1851–3), with the Cattle-Killing twelve years later. That this tragedy is considered the focal point of Beattie's work and a defining moment in Xhosa history, is suggested by the positioning of the event, and the space assigned to it. The Cattle-Killing receives a disproportionate amount of attention in *Pambaniso*, making up roughly a quarter of the book and claiming its final two chapters.

³⁶ *A Ride*, 61; *Pambaniso*, 14–23.

³⁷ *Pambaniso*, 23, 19.

³⁸ Pambaniso also appears in a short paragraph in Grimm's novel, *Kaffernland*, 11. As the passage is an almost verbatim translation from Beattie's book, we can, however, assume that *Pambaniso* was Grimm's source.

With its extended historical and ethnographic passages, *Pambaniso* was clearly intended to edify a white, English-speaking audience – both at home and at Home.³⁹ At the same time, the presence of the larger-than-life fictional hero and his daring exploits, Beattie's graphic descriptions of mutilation and murder, and his popular style were designed to entertain. In all probability, the work was aimed at the eager (and substantial) community of Haggard-Henty readers – the boy-men, would-be adventurers who had already demonstrated their capacity and craving for fast-moving tales set in foreign locations with exotic natives. Beattie was surely familiar with the stories of his contemporaries, Ballantyne, Henty, Mitford and Haggard – all of whom had, at some point, set their adventures in South Africa and some of whom had featured the Xhosa.⁴⁰ Mitford had also, as recently as 1888, lived in the Cape Colony and some of Henty's novels were released by Beattie's London publisher.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL FICTION

These popular nineteenth-century adventure stories inevitably propagated the ideologies of empire (although not always unproblematically as Lieven, for example, has shown with regard to Mitford).⁴¹ They also, as Street maintains in *The Savage in Literature*, facilitated the popularisation and circulation of contemporary scientific racial theories – in easily-digestible form.⁴² Street argues that the portrayal of the 'Savage' in these 'mass-produced stories of far-off lands and their inhabitants, so popular during this period [1870–1920] in England',⁴³ while built upon pre-existing notions of 'primitive' man, also reflected nineteenth-century scientific ideas.⁴⁴ In *Pambaniso* this is manifested, as we have seen from the Prologue, in the depiction of the Xhosa as different and inferior and, of course, in the idea of socio-cultural evolution. Beattie also touches on the issue of interracial mixing and the notion, wrongly derived from Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' hypothesis, that in every species there are individuals who are more 'advanced' than the rest. The warped nature of these racial theories, together with the exigencies of the popular genre, Street writes, resulted in distorted portraits of societies

³⁹ Two identical editions appeared concurrently: one by Juta in South Africa and the other, a co-publication between Juta and Sampson Low Marston in London. A notice announcing *Pambaniso*'s publication appears in the *London Times*, 25 January 1892, 8.

⁴⁰ E.g. Ballantyne's *The Settler and the Savage* (1877), Henty's *The Curse of Carne's Hold* (1889), Mitford's *A Romance of the Cape Frontier* (1891) and *Tween Snow and Fire* (1892). Killam, followed by Street (*Savage in Literature*, 6) and Green (*Dreams of Adventure*, 233), claim Henty's first Ashanti novel, *The March to Coomassie* (1874), as the first 'ethnographic novel'.

⁴¹ Green, *Dreams of Adventure*; Katz, *Rider Haggard and Empire*; Bristow, *Empire Boys*; Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature*; Lieven, 'Imperial Adventure Story'.

⁴² Henkin in *Darwinism in the English Novel* does similar work, but takes a thematic approach and does not focus on popular fiction.

⁴³ Street, *Savage in Literature*, 4.

⁴⁴ The same point was made, regarding British writing about Africa generally, by Hammond and Jablow in *Africa That Never Was*, 96–8.

comprised solely of extraordinary happenings and overstated characters – a position apparently borne out by the following contemporary review of Beattie's novel.

The incident with which this story opens, which is nothing less than a cold-blooded murder, is but the fitting prelude to even still more tragic events; indeed, the narrative throughout is only a succession of thrilling experiences. Incidentally, considerable light is thrown on Kaffir ways & customs which seem, at the period we speak of, to have been horrible enough.⁴⁵

Clearly these distorted pictures were uncritically received – at least by some.

In the world of *Pambaniso*, 'primitive' life consists of backward people governed by superstition, tyrants and incomprehensible customs. The comparison drawn between British and 'Kaffir' in the Prologue never falters. The white colonists are described as industrious, hardy – and entirely innocent of any action that might precipitate frontier unrest. In fact, the land seems almost to have invited them – not only are they alone able to appreciate its aesthetic beauty, they alone can recognise and develop its material potential.⁴⁶ In contrast to the settlers, who are merely fulfilling their God-given duty to make the earth fruitful and to liberate the heathen, the Xhosa are war-like by nature and continually itching for a fight. The narrator is contemptuous of almost every aspect of Xhosa life, treating each as facile measurements to prove the inferiority of the indigenes. Throughout, European culture is held up as the unseen yardstick against which they are evaluated. Xhosa food is 'cooked in the rudest manner', their music is described as 'confused noise', their dancing as 'contortions', their customs as 'superstitious and barbarous'.⁴⁷ There are also frequent references to 'perfectly naked bodies', the absence of clothing clearly intended to reflect an inner moral lack. Native mentality is naturally inferior too: 'the savage mind seldom looks beyond the present' and the Xhosa 'have no second thoughts, but act on the impulse of the moment'.⁴⁸ When it comes to religion, the 'heathens' are again the polar opposite of the Europeans. While they clearly have a system of religion, it is false. In fact Beattie goes even further, repeatedly describing the Xhosa in satanic terms: they appear 'like demons, broke loose from hell', they derive 'demon-like pleasure' from torturing their victims, their rulers govern them 'like princes of darkness'.⁴⁹ Even Pambaniso's own Band enjoys torture 'with that demon-like pleasure characteristic of the barbarians' and are frustrated when their leader

⁴⁵ Anon, 'Reviews... Sampson Low, Marston', 107.

⁴⁶ *A Ride* 17 and *Pambaniso*, ix.

⁴⁷ *Pambaniso*, 137, 28.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 10 & 187.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 27, 72 & 43.

constrains their blood lust.⁵⁰ The Xhosa are the antithesis of the British, their culture the negation of British culture.

Although Beattie does not feature the white protagonist so familiar to the imperial adventure stories, the brief appearance of Edward Marshall and his sister Susan fulfils the same generic function: to underscore the difference between savage and civilised and, importantly, to demonstrate the incompatibility of racial intermixing. Edward can respect Pambaniso because he is noble and relatively enlightened. He can even imagine himself in love with the hero's sister because she is beautiful, from good stock and – telling – because Edward finds himself in unusual circumstances: 'Who could refrain from admiring such a picture of primeval womanly beauty? Young Edward Marshall might well be excused for his warmth of feeling towards Nontombi. He had seen but few white women in his lifetime, living as he did in such an isolated part of the country'.⁵¹ But there is no possibility of him consummating his love and thereby bridging the racial divide.

Issues of race-mixing were particularly topical in the wake of the Cattle-Killing as Xhosa entered the Colony in unprecedented numbers. Even before Mhlakaza's death was reported, *The Eastern Province Monthly Magazine* published an article on the 'Ethnographic Effects' of this 'Kafir Immigration'.⁵² Although the writer predicts inevitable – even necessary – racial mixing ('To the existing generation, this is an idea suggestive of little else than incredulous disgust') he notes the degenerative effect of 'too much of the Negro'. He concludes that the desire to keep the (Anglo-Saxon) 'race pure and effective' be put to good use by containing mixing, hoping for the gradual 'improvement' of the Xhosa, and by countering black immigration with 'a corresponding white influx'. To the ever-increasing band of later nineteenth-century eugenicists who, led by Galton, were concerned with the genetic improvement of racial character, the notion of inter-breeding with an apparently inferior race was anathema. Polygenists in particular argued that it would lead to physical, mental and/or moral deterioration.⁵³

While Beattie is not explicit about the alleged biological hazards of amalgamation, his concern for racial purity is undeniable. In the tradition of other anthropological fiction, when interracial love threatens, death conveniently intervenes to honourably relieve the white hero of his moral predicament. Unlike (to cite just two examples) Haggard in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and Mitford in *The Sign of the Spider* (1896) who exterminate the black love-interest, however,

⁵⁰ Ibid, 72 & 39.

⁵¹ *Pambaniso*, 91.

⁵² Glanville, 'Kaffir Immigration', 133–5.

⁵³ Stocking, *Race, and Evolution*, 47–9. Provine, 'Genetics and Race-Crossing', 790–2.

Beattie has his young Scottish character murdered. This is the price, one must assume, for entertaining such an apparently noxious notion: for 'pursuing such a love', for disregarding 'his own self-respect' and for not giving 'much thought to the propriety of falling in love with a heathen girl'.⁵⁴ Nontombi's response to Edward's declaration of love is interesting in its ambivalence – 'she only smiled pleasantly, and seemed to take no notice of the earnestness with which he made the declaration'. Either she does not understand Edward or, like Haggard's Foulata recognises better than her beau the impossibility of a union.⁵⁵ Whichever it is, it is Edward, not Nontombi, who is held accountable. He should have known better. That interbreeding is widely considered demeaning – even when the intellectual arguments are unknown – is highlighted in the conversation that takes place between Bill and Charlie, two British soldiers. In the novel's single moment of light relief, the pair express in broad cockney, their admiration for the beautiful Xhosa women, immediately followed by their disgust at the prospect of physical, let alone conjugal, relations.

"Surely," asked the other man, "[Edward] does not mean to marry her?"

"I don't know; but I suppose if he does make her his wife he will clear to some place far away and live under a consumed name!"

"Ah, well, it's immatral to me what he does, but I don't admire his taste! I would never marry any black woman though she be as beautiful as a hangel of the first magnitood."

"Nor I neither," said Bill, "for my feelings of self-respect would not allow me. There is no black woman that would ever fascination me. Faugh! They are all so dirty that you want a good moustache as a nose-wiper before you can kiss them." [sic]⁵⁶

This comic moment and the laughter it seeks to invoke reinforce the measured and philosophical objections of Beattie's narrator. Indeed, both parties cite 'self-respect' in their defence. At the same time, by highlighting the ignorance of these two, presumably lower class, European characters with their absurd prejudices (black skin equals dirt), questionable grammar and malapropisms, it could be argued that the author is drawing attention to the irony of the situation. Analogies between the lower classes and 'savages' were not, after all, unheard of.⁵⁷ Either way, Edward's unrequited love provides an example of the conflict that Street notes arises in anthropological fiction when 'the writer finds the literary tradition at variance with his scientific knowledge or philosophical conviction'.⁵⁸ While racial purity is calculatingly upheld in

⁵⁴ Pambaniso, 92 & 159.

⁵⁵ Pambaniso, 93. Foulata's dying words are: 'I am glad to die because I know that he cannot cumber his life with such as I am, for the sun may not mate with the darkness, nor the white with the black' (*King Solomon's Mines*, 168–9).

⁵⁶ Pambaniso, 156.

⁵⁷ Mitford, *Expiation of Wynne Palliser*, 174; Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 213.

⁵⁸ Street, 127.

Pambaniso, the narrator nonetheless expresses pity when Edward dies ('Poor Edward! His dream of love was now over').⁵⁹

The charms and irreproachable behaviour of the black 'hangel' point to another feature which aligns Beattie's novel with Street's 'anthropological fiction': the influence of the Noble Savage and the chivalric tradition. Not all the 'Kaffirs' in *Pambaniso* are bad. The 'distortion' considered earlier is applied to the admirable as well as the barbaric. Poised on the opposite end of the scale to the mass of 'bestial' 'Kaffirs' are a handful of black characters including a loyal servant, three beautiful and appropriately submissive women, a few 'thoughtful and intelligent' men and, of course, the protagonist.⁶⁰ Of them, Pambaniso is the only one to receive more than cursory attention. Beattie's hero is indeed a fine example of Rousseau's creation: a true 'gentleman of nature', a product of 'lovely' Kaffraria's picturesque landscape complete with sylvan glades and fertile soil.⁶¹ Pambaniso is blessed with moral courage, a magnificent physique – and unusual intellect: 'He was a man of far superior intelligence and shrewdness to the average Kaffir'.⁶² Indeed, Pambaniso can do little wrong. Even when he takes a second wife, his polygamy is sanitised by the fact that his spouses 'took to one another as sisters'.⁶³ Most importantly, Pambaniso, who is described as 'the flower of Kaffir chivalry – the Robin Hood of Kaffraria' – is familiar with European etiquette and assigned honorary (albeit primitive) European status.⁶⁴ Gesturing to the chivalric tradition, a medieval-type tournament, at which Pambaniso naturally excels, is conjured up in order to reassert his ambivalent status in relation to the Xhosa generally.⁶⁵ While his barbaric brothers and sisters grovel at the foot of the evolutionary ladder, Pambaniso is raised to the level of a fourteenth-century European hero. His distance from the rest of his 'bestial' society is reinforced by his fugitive status, but it is also self-imposed, as is seen in his soliloquy condemning witchcraft.

Who gave the right to a few to sit in judgment on thousands of their equals and, by means of evil and infernal practices, profess, through their witch-doctors, to find out the guilty? Think ye that when a man dies or receives hurt, there is something in the breast of another who may be his friend that tells him plotting and witchcraft have been at work? There is no witchcraft. No man can harm another by means of buried charms or medicines. Oh! what fools the Kaffirs are to believe in such things.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ *Pambaniso*, 164.

⁶⁰ *Pambaniso*, 195.

⁶¹ *Pambaniso*, ix.

⁶² *Ibid*, 47.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 147.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 40–1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 114.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 72.

In this speech, Pambaniso not only disassociates himself from witchcraft and superstition, but from his people, deriding 'their witch-doctors' and denouncing the foolishness of 'the Kaffirs'. He also proclaims egalitarianism, thereby renouncing the entrenched Xhosa social hierarchy. No account is given in the text for Pambaniso's enlightened position, but his familiarity with 'Civilised' ways and his allegiance to the British (he refuses to join Sandile in battle against them, refers to Victoria as the 'Great white Queen', and warns the settlers of an imminent massacre), suggest prior and positive interaction with the colonists. Even though the hero is set apart and above, however, he is never completely free of the shadow that envelops his 'race'. Indeed there is some irony in the fact that his hideout is located on the Mountain of Darkness. As one reviewer observed:

Pambaniso may be a hero as Kaffirs are or have been. He is quite equal to any number of treasons, stratagems, and spoils, and is by no means a monogamist. He is also, however, quite capable of doing savagely chivalrous things, such as running away with – and marrying – maidens in distress.⁶⁷

The hero's heroism is clearly circumscribed by his 'race', his chivalry qualified by savagery. Indeed, if the critic's reference to *The Merchant of Venice* is taken to its original conclusion, Pambaniso, is not to be trusted.⁶⁸ The reviewer's flippant 'are or have been', furthermore, suggests the status of the 'Kaffir' is fixed. Pambaniso might be comparatively enlightened, but he does not, and never could, equal a true, white hero.

Nor are the readers afforded much opportunity to identify or engage with Pambaniso – let alone the rest of Xhosa society. While black characters and, even more unusually, a black protagonist dominate Beattie's novel (a reflection of the author's anthropological aspirations), this is not to say that Beattie succeeds in capturing native subjectivity.⁶⁹ The 'Kaffir' is not allowed to 'speak' freely, nor is there any internal dialogue – only external physical expression. Even the pro-British Pambaniso remains a stock character. Our knowledge of him is drawn not from interiority – the narrator, while omniscient, never gets inside the characters' heads – but from his actions and occasional homilies. Even then, all the reader sees is a superficial reflection of an English gentleman. An attempt is occasionally made to present an anti-imperialist Xhosa perspective, such as when Sandile, referring to the British as 'invaders', incites his men to war: "My children, the time has now come for us to check the impudence of the white men who come from the other side of the sea to try and drive us out of our country... We have been their

⁶⁷ Anon, 'New Literature', 322–3.

⁶⁸ Shakespeare, *Merchant*, V:i:85–8.

⁶⁹ Haggard (*Nada the Lily*, 1892), Mitford (in his tetralogy beginning with *The King's Assegai*, 1894–1902) and Davis (*Umbandine*, 1898) do a little better in their novels, which feature black protagonists, but it should be noted that all of these were published after *Pambaniso*.

sport too long. Let us now be the masters of the chase!""⁷⁰ These moments, however, are easily outweighed and undermined by the narrator's proclamations: Sandile is 'weak-minded' and 'not a brave man'.⁷¹ When Maqoma and Dota briefly challenge the white governor to his face, they are respectively dismissed as 'drunk' and 'impudent'.⁷² Beattie's containment of his Xhosa subjects extends not only to presumptuous acts of equality, but to expressions of familiarity too. During the course of Beattie's interview with Sarhili, as reported in *A Ride*, the leader '[put] his hands on my shoulders'. In *Pambaniso* this intimate, earnest, almost fatherly, gesture is excised from the exchange.⁷³ Like his predecessors on the 1883 Commission and the folklore scholars, then, while Beattie is eager for 'Kaffir' participation, he keeps it firmly under control.

The 'advancement' of the Xhosa race is similarly regulated and prescribed – although there is a hint of contradiction here. Beattie repeatedly asserts that for the Xhosa, apparently stuck in the past and wedded to 'primitive' practices, progress can only be affected through force and example; purposive movement only initiated with 'the subjugation of the Kaffir race to the British Crown'.⁷⁴ While it is noted that the *Ukuxentsa* dance has modified over time, judging by the narrator's description – which is devoid of analysis – the changes are not really signs of progress, so much as simple mutations of the same crude culture.⁷⁵ More interesting (and troubling for Beattie's defence of British interference), is the matter of the chivalric tournament, *Idabi*. This contest, after all, not only suggests forward motion, but independent innovation. We are told that this unprecedented event originated with a Xhosa counsellor as a diplomatic solution to selecting a husband for 'the lovely' Tyumbu.

The idea of a tournament was quite novel to the barbarians ... a great many of those who were on the way to it did not fully realise what it really meant. The young men appealed to the old for information, but they could only reply that the thing was new to them. Although the barbarian life of the people in those early days was synonymous with continual warfare among themselves, they had never before had the idea suggested to them of having organised combats for amusement. Their primitive social customs and fierce natures, no doubt, prevented the least sentiment of chivalry from springing up in their minds. When they fought they did so for the sake of plunder, or to redress real or imaginary grievances. There were some amongst them who were not so

⁷⁰ *Pambaniso*, 47–8.

⁷¹ *Pambaniso*, 192, 175.

⁷² *Ibid*, 152.

⁷³ *A Ride*, 71; *Pambaniso*, 191.

⁷⁴ *Pambaniso*, vi.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 25–6.

cruel as others, and who displayed traits in their character that were promptings of a better nature than their surroundings seemed to warrant.⁷⁶

According to the narrator, heredity and environment (both social and physical) have combined to ensure the Xhosa's savage state. In his view, too, socio-cultural progress is tied up with mental evolution. The Xhosa majority apparently need ideas to be 'suggested to them', and even then, are perplexed by the concept of a tournament. There are, nevertheless, some whose thinking has advanced beyond the instinctive, reflexive stage – who are capable of abstraction, creativity, providence. That the contest is analogous to medieval European tournaments suggests (within a comparative framework) the stage of development of the more enlightened Xhosa characters. Incidentally, in the context of an apparently autocratic society, the democratic nature of the *Idabi* – 'all clans and all classes would be allowed to compete' – is further confirmation of 'improvement'.⁷⁷ And this 'improvement', according to the laws of science, will inevitably pass on to successive generations. What makes a reading of this event more complicated is that the *Idabi*, with its suggestion of independent progress, is a product of Beattie's imagination – probably suggested by the Pondo love duels of which he heard on his tour.⁷⁸

'AN EXTRAORDINARY DELUSION'

If *Pambaniso* admits the mental superiority of a few enlightened individuals, it is with the primitive state of the 'Kafir' race as a whole that the novel is primarily concerned, and upon which its political work rests. This is nowhere more evident than in the Cattle-Killing. Like the tournament, this episode is presented as unprecedented. But in this case, the tragedy reinforces the need for intervention. Towards the beginning of his account of the event, Beattie writes:

It is almost beyond the range of civilised thought to contemplate such an extraordinary belief in the supernatural by human beings. Ages of barbarism, and the darkest superstition, had passed over the Kaffirs, yet there was nothing in their history or traditions to show that they had at any time previously conceived or attempted to carry out anything approaching such a preposterous prophecy or delusion; and their conduct on this occasion was all the more wonderful when it is considered that for twenty years they had gradually been forced within the borders of civilisation; still, with all the knowledge they had acquired, and all the lessons taught them, they actually became the agents for their own destruction. They lived, as it were, in a fairyland of their own,

⁷⁶ Ibid, 114 & 122.

⁷⁷ *Pambaniso*, 113.

⁷⁸ *A Ride*, 43.

and their faith in the fables told them was as strong as that of little children when witnessing a pantomime with fairies skipping about the stage. Those who tried to reason with them as to their great error were looked upon as evil geniuses, and were told that there would be no paradise for them, as none but the faithful were to enjoy the fruits of the great resurrection. It was, therefore, impossible to dissuade the Kaffirs from indulging in their fond dreams; so the cattle-killing and the destruction of everything necessary for the sustaining of life went on from day to day.

What a terrible thing is the superstition begotten of barbarism! It goes on headlong with an irresistible force and must run its course. The barbarians, it would seem, have no second thoughts, but act on the impulse of the moment.⁷⁹

The tragedy, which in Beattie's reading has Xhosa credulity juxtaposed against the pinnacle of enlightenment, 'civilised thought', provides further evidence of the apparent backwardness of the Xhosa. Indeed, by revealing the sheer extent of their superstition, the Cattle-Killing corroborates the analysis of, and conclusions about, the Xhosa religious system described earlier in the work. While their faith in the ancestors and the 'preposterous prophecy' 'is almost beyond conception', Beattie with his knowledge of 'Kaffir' witchcraft is in a position to elucidate: to make explicable that which appears inexplicable. A key to understanding this event, unsurprisingly lies in the 'Kaffirs'' mental capacity. The apparently incongruous references to fairies, fables and pantomime allude to the prevalent notion held by nineteenth-century anthropologists (and subsequent scholars) that the mental development of primitive man is arrested at puberty and that his capacity is equal to that of a 'civilised' child's.⁸⁰ They also bring to mind Beattie's earlier remark about the witchdoctors 'who play upon the superstition and credulity of their fellow-creatures'.⁸¹ Through their 'extraordinary belief', the Xhosa show themselves to be gullible, improvident and irrational. That their superstition has survived decades of civilising influence suggests the primacy of heredity over environment. And while Beattie, unlike Dhlomo in his play forty years later, does not explicitly link the event to the 'survival of the fittest' hypothesis, his comment regarding an 'irresistible force' that 'must run its course', seems to invite speculation about natural selection.⁸² Regardless, Xhosa progress must, from the evidence of Beattie's Cattle-Killing, be attributed not only to British influence but a combination of this and natural processes. Beattie, incidentally, stays clear of Warner's Universalist observation in the *Compendium*, that 'the mind of man demands something of a

⁷⁹ Pambaniso, 186–7.

⁸⁰ Stocking, 'Dark-Skinned Savage', 126. This hypothesis was still 'generally accepted' in 1917. Loram, *Education*, 14.

⁸¹ Pambaniso, 23.

⁸² Dhlomo, *Girl*, 18.

supernatural nature on which to rest, and in which to trust'.⁸³ The irony that Christianity might itself be described as an 'extraordinary belief in the supernatural' is evaded.

Something else that is evaded is British complicity – even culpability. Beattie remarks that, despite 'ages of barbarism', nothing approximating this delusion is recorded in Xhosa 'history or traditions'. The obvious conclusion, that the event is linked to British imperialism – to the 'civilisation' and 'lessons' that have been 'forced' upon the evidently resistant Xhosa – is, perhaps unsurprisingly, left unarticulated. Beattie might describe the Xhosas' role in the Cattle-Killing as 'agents in their own destruction', but, by the inference of his text, it is simultaneously that of active opponents of an invading force. It might be argued that continued Xhosa resistance is seen in the stubborn persistence of superstition. The author concludes his account of the Cattle-Killing by noting that there are not only those who believe the prophecies were genuine, but still others who assert that they are yet to be fulfilled.⁸⁴

Despite this rogue savage element, the narrative ultimately remains one of progress. Beattie absolves the British of blame (it was 'impossible to dissuade the Kaffirs'), and notes how many Xhosa lives were saved by the charity of the Europeans.⁸⁵ Nor does their philanthropy go unrewarded. The Cattle-Killing is shown to be of benefit to *both* parties. This 'terrible delusion' was not without its wholesome lessons; for it forced people to work in order to obtain a living. It helped the cause of civilisation by thus drawing the Kaffirs into closer contact with the Europeans, whom they began to like as masters. They were thus taught to become more subdued, and to think less of driving the invader from their shores.⁸⁶

The progress of the Xhosa – temporarily halted by the prophecies – is resumed and, indeed, reinforced by the tragedy. But the event also signals a seismic shift in British-Xhosa relations: the latter are no longer independent and troublesome neighbours; they have been reduced to mendicants. Compelled into a master-servant relationship with the British, they are now defined solely in terms of labour. (Indeed, it was largely upon this basis, modern historians argue, that charitable aid was given and the Xhosa allowed into the colony.)⁸⁷ As such, the narrative becomes one of material progress for the British. They fortuitously secure a vital source of labour as well as more land. The question that concludes the Prologue – 'It had to be decided whether Kaffraria should remain the sole possession of the untutored and

⁸³ Maclean, 80–1.

⁸⁴ *Pambaniso*, 227.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 56.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 228.

⁸⁷ Peires, 'Sir George Grey', 145–69.

unprogressive Kaffirs, or become the home of those who would make use of the rich bounties Nature has so lavishly bestowed upon this fair land' – had been settled in favour of the British.⁸⁸

While Bradford's description of the novel as 'fictionalized history' is generally correct, it ignores the fact that Beattie's historical material is, for the most part, in line with early histories – although his narrative is told in a (slightly) more dramatic and less objective fashion.⁸⁹ The propinquity of Beattie's description of the Cattle-Killing 'Delusion' and Theal's 1874 version suggest, in fact, that the latter was the Scotsman's primary source. (Theal, ironically, also seems to anticipate *Pambaniso* by describing the Cattle-Killing as 'an event more astounding than anything in the pages of the wildest romance'.)⁹⁰ Like Beattie, Theal portrays the movement as entirely unique, uses the metaphor of the Xhosa being like children in their attempt to make sense of the world, and draws on the same language – the repeated use of 'mad', for example. Theal likewise stresses the necessity for progress amongst the Xhosa and even that in their new status as labourers 'they lost that antipathy to Europeans which was so strongly felt before'.⁹¹ The one notable difference between *Pambaniso* and early white histories, however, is Beattie's rejection of the so-called 'Chiefs' Plot'.⁹² By discarding the explanation that the prophecies were part of a political scheme orchestrated by the chiefs to force their famished subjects into war with the colonists, the author asserts that 'everything was done through a sublime submission to the prophecy or message from the spirit-world'.⁹³ It was an entirely superstitious, albeit sincere, response. Beattie substantiates his claim by drawing on his interview with Sarhili. When asked about the cause of the Cattle-Killing,

The old chief, after looking fixedly at the questioner for a brief space, as if surprised, said, "You don't know what you will die from," and continued – "none of us know how and when we shall die; and at the time of the cattle killing those that died did so by fate; it was sent by God to let them fall!"⁹⁴

While it could be argued that the Paramount was deliberately misleading Beattie – even more radically, that he (a 'heathen') was holding the British and their Christian God responsible for the tragedy, this is not how Beattie reads it. Sarhili's answer is seen to corroborate his conclusion. The chiefs, like their people, were blinded by their false beliefs. Indeed, the

⁸⁸ *Pambaniso*, ix.

⁸⁹ Bradford, 'Framing African Women', 83.

⁹⁰ Theal, *South Africa*, 277.

⁹¹ Theal, *Compendium*, 283–8.

⁹² See Wilmot & Chase, *History of the Colony*, Chalmers, *Soga* and Theal, *Compendium*. It does, however, align him with the revised views of Charles Brownlee who had died the previous year. *Reminiscences*, 142.

⁹³ *Pambaniso*, 189–9.

⁹⁴ *Pambaniso*, 190; *A Ride*, 71.

Paramount is described as 'one of the most superstitious men of the time'.⁹⁵ According to Peires, such an interpretation 'has at its core the conviction that the innermost truth of the Cattle-Killing is to be found somewhere in Xhosa culture'.⁹⁶ For Beattie this culture is unquestionably defective and the 'truth of the Cattle-Killing' is to be found in the fundamentally flawed nature of the Xhosa people.

One of the few Xhosa in the novel who is free from the shackles of superstition is, of course, Pambaniso. During the horrors of the Cattle-Killing, he chooses the side of the more 'progressive' *amagogoty*, trying to dissuade the believers from their destruction, and even going so far as to threaten to murder Mhlakaza on two separate occasions. But despite the Doomed Chief's typically gallant gestures, the fictional story is almost entirely arrested at this point. The hero becomes a peripheral character, hardly featuring in the fifty pages that it takes to describe the event. His marginalisation, and the literary turn from swashbuckling romance to descriptive history, in fact, perfectly underscores Beattie's conviction that Xhosa 'agency' played no part in this national act of self-annihilation. Significantly, it is from the time of the Cattle-Killing that Beattie's seemingly invincible protagonist seems to lose his authority. The threats aimed at Mhlakaza are empty; Pambaniso never even gets within striking distance. What is more, while his first warning inspires unease and anger amongst the *amathamba*, the second merely elicits laughter.⁹⁷ Pambaniso even paradoxically becomes an agent of the 'irresistible force' of superstition when some of his efforts to stem the slaughter actually exacerbate it. When 'one of the most ardent believers', Xoxo, 'heard the advice and threats of Pambaniso he became very angry, and ordered his clansmen to delay no longer in killing their cattle and destroying their grain. He threatened to kill all those who disobeyed'.⁹⁸ In fact, a closer look reveals that the protagonist never really had any power to begin with. Despite his relative restraint when it comes to bloodletting, even his followers cannot 'appreciate [his] sentiments'.⁹⁹ And in spite of being highly critical of witchcraft, the hero only manages to collect the occasional new convert, never influencing the 'Kaffir' nation as a whole. Pambaniso is ultimately ineffectual. He cannot rescue that which is apparently destined to oblivion. With the onset of the Cattle-Killing the fable, and Pambaniso with it, disintegrate only to be briefly resurrected in the Conclusion with a single sentence describing the hero's unremarkable outcome. The potential of this Noble Savage, suggested at the beginning of the novel, has gradually diminished to the point that he fades into respectability and impotence without a

⁹⁵ *Pambaniso*, 185.

⁹⁶ Peires, 'Cry Havoc!', 249.

⁹⁷ *Pambaniso*, 198–9; 212.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 201.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 39.

whimper – to live ‘in peace ever afterwards’, a ‘leading man’ amongst the remnants of a cowed but still-superstitious people.¹⁰⁰

But while the hero might disappear, Beattie does not allow his fixation with ethnographic detail – even during this dramatic period – to dim. In the final chapter he finds time amidst all the suffering to squeeze in an extended essay on the *abakweta* and circumcision. This is followed by a description of Xhosa death rites, with a transcription of the *Ukukuza* prayer for the bereaved in both Xhosa and English translation. Beattie also continues to introduce Xhosa words into the text, most notably *amathamba* and *amagogyta*. While giving the illusion of expertise, however, their usefulness is limited. His translation (simply ‘believers’ and ‘unbelievers’), while generally correct, does not explain the subtle economic and social implications of these terms – an insight that might, ironically, have led him to reject the ‘superstition/national suicide’ theory.¹⁰¹ Nor is there, as with his previous ethnographic interludes, any attempt to understand the symbolic or religious significance of the rituals described in terms of Xhosa culture as a whole (rather than merely in opposition to European ‘civilisation’). By restricting explanation largely to ‘superstition’, Beattie ultimately rejects any notion of valid religious expression. Because no meaning is given, none is presumed to exist.

THE SLIPPAGE BETWEEN ROMANCE AND REALITY

‘A major concern,’ writes Street of anthropological fiction, ‘is the conflict between “romance” and “reality”’.¹⁰² On an aesthetic level, this conflict often results in slippages or contradictions in the text. The tensions between the love sub-plot and interracial mixing, and between the Noble Savage and the scientifically-described ‘native’, have already been touched on. Another example is that between primitivism and progress. Street cites the case of Haggard, who praises the purity of primal culture but cannot relinquish the path of progress (and science) that will inevitably obliterate all that he admires. For Beattie, this is not a problem. Unlike Haggard, he sees little to esteem in the primitive way of life. His admiration for the Xhosa lingers only on the physical beauty of their land and some of their finer specimens. There is certainly no question about the necessity of progress. Nonetheless, in these tussles between ‘romance’ and ‘reality’ the conflict is usually resolved in favour of the ‘real’. When it comes to the work as a whole, however, the fictional necessarily dominates.

¹⁰⁰ Pambaniso, 228.

¹⁰¹ Pambaniso, 193. According to Peires, ‘the division between *amathamba* and *amagogyta* ran much deeper than the division between belief and unbelief, and the Xhosa, in conferring these names, seem to have recognized the fact.’ ‘“Soft” Believers and “Hard” Unbelievers’, 461.

¹⁰² Street, 11.

Street does not discuss formal, or generic, conflicts, perhaps because in the more traditional and 'successful' ethnographic stories that he examines, the 'real' is inevitably subsumed in the 'romance', the anthropological contained within the fictional. This is succinctly captured in the introduction to *King Solomon's Mines*, where Haggard's protagonist-narrator, Alan Quartermain, expresses his fascination with aspects of indigenous Kakuana folklore and customs, local dialects and military organisation. He is mindful, however, of the judicious use and proper place of ethnographic material, and so, despite his desire to dwell on these subjects, he resolves to 'tell my story in a plain, straightforward manner, and to leave these matters to be dealt with subsequently in whatever way ultimately may appear to be desirable'.¹⁰³

While *Pambaniso's* narrator is clearly aware of the drawbacks of including such information – anticipating and half-heartedly apologising, at one point, for 'wearying the reader by deviating from the tale'¹⁰⁴ – he apparently considers the importance of his information, and the 'enlightenment' of his reader, to override any objections. That Beattie's work missed the mark as far as pure entertainment was concerned is confirmed by contemporary and more recent reviewers who recognised where the true substance of the work lay.

Pambaniso would have been more successful as a story if there had been more romance in it, and less historical and sociological information [...] *Pambaniso* contains a great deal that is interesting about the murderous and licentious rites of Kaffirland, and altogether it will be found a useful book by the scientific student of anthropology.¹⁰⁵

Beattie's text, then, does not merely slip into the gully separating reality and romance, but gets well and truly stuck. The continual intrusion of a mass of ethnographic description entirely destabilises Beattie's fictional creation and sets *Pambaniso* apart from other popular anthropological novels. The ambiguous generic status of Beattie's work is once and for all sealed by the inclusion of thirteen black and white photo-engravings.

'A SIMPLE RECORDING TRUTH-REVEALING MECHANISM'¹⁰⁶

In *The Portable Bunyan*, Hofmeyr describes two African editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* that were produced in the 1920s. Unlike their many precursors, which made use of a variety of techniques and media to illustrate the narrative, these were unique in employing photography. Hofmeyr points out that photography and fiction were 'deemed mutually exclusive', and that whereas the combination would be 'unthinkable' in Europe, when the 'the text travelled to

¹⁰³ Haggard, *King Solomon*, 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Pambaniso*, 14 and 109.

¹⁰⁵ *The Academy*, 322–3. See too Mendelssohn, *South African Bibliography*, 100 and Snyman, *South African Novel*, 33.

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography*, 4.

Africa, photographic illustration became possible'.¹⁰⁷ One of the factors she attributes this to, and undoubtedly the primary one, was the long tradition of ethnographic photography.

Because of its immediacy and accuracy, photography's application for documentary purposes had been widely regarded from its inception. It is hardly surprising, then, that the invention was to play a collaborative role in the equally youthful field of anthropology.¹⁰⁸ It followed that, as the African assumed the status of a scientific subject, so too did he require scientific documentation and representation. And in an age where photography was viewed 'largely as a simple recording truth-revealing mechanism',¹⁰⁹ photographs provided that scientific evidence, objective and precise. 'The photographic camera', anthropologists maintained, dealt in 'facts about which there can be no question'.¹¹⁰ Various government projects, which involved photographing 'primitive' races in the colonies, were consequently commissioned for scientific research.¹¹¹ Together, anthropology and photography – in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense – threw light on the unfamiliar.

The use of a 'scientific' medium to illustrate fiction – even when it came to African subjects – was, however, highly unusual. In fact, judging by a statement made in the preface to Beattie's travelogue, *A Ride Through the Transkei*, which was also accompanied by photographs, it would appear that the use of this medium generally was still uncommon in South Africa. 'It is certainly,' wrote the editor, 'the first book of the kind that has been printed with illustrations in these parts'.¹¹² When it came to anthropological fiction, Beattie's use of photo-engravings was unique. Although the novels of Henty, Mitford and especially Haggard are awash with illustrations by the likes of Gordon Browne, Stanley L. Wood (regular contributors to *Boy's Own Paper*) and Charles Kerr, not one features photographs, let alone anything approximating 'realism' (figs 11 and 12). Even Davis' novel, *Umbandine: A Romance of Swaziland* (1898), which followed *Pambaniso* by seven years and most closely approximates it in terms of degree of ethnographic content, reproduces a handful of amateurish paintings. Indeed, Beattie's novel probably contains the largest, most widely available collection of ethnological illustrations of the Xhosa at the time. Their 'importance' was noted in a 1903 catalogue of publications concerning the 'native races'.¹¹³ (Incidentally, no photographer is credited in the novel, and the

¹⁰⁷ Hofmeyr, *Portable Bunyan*, 41 & 183–5.

¹⁰⁸ Photography was invented in 1837. For the anthropological uses to which photography was put, see Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography*. The contemporary fields of photography and anthropology, and their developments in relation to one another have been described by Spinney in 'Parallel Histories', 74–95.

¹⁰⁹ Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography*, 4.

¹¹⁰ Garson and Read, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, 87.

¹¹¹ Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, particularly 140–167.

¹¹² Beattie, 'Preface', *A Ride*.

¹¹³ Bud-M'Belle, 161.

signature on the plates, 'Swain S.c.', indicates the London engraver Joseph Swain or one of his assistants. The provenance of only one of the images is certain: that of the prophetesses – taken by Michael Durney).

The juxtaposition of photographs and a fictional text is an uneasy one and when, as is the case with *Pambaniso*, the relationship between 'fact' and 'fiction' is already tenuous, this unease is inevitably heightened. Certainly most of the photographs in this novel seem to have been included as scientific evidence, rather than to enhance Beattie's fictional tale. While key historical figures are represented, portraits of the fictional characters are conspicuous by their absence. Only in two instances – the title-page image of a warrior (presumably Pambaniso) threatening a prostrate man, and the picture of Umdubuko's torture (fig 3) – do they specifically illustrate scenes from the story. Even the photograph that accompanies the description of the enchanting and imaginary Tyumbu (fig. 8) is simply and generically labelled 'A Kaffir girl dressed for a party' – thereby reducing her to a type. For the most part, the photographs (all of which feature people posed individually or grouped *in situ*) contain scenes of anthropological interest: a witchdoctor, a feast, the *abakweta*, a combat, various dances (figs 1–6).

Ryan has argued that despite its early reputation as a 'truth-revealing mechanism', photography often merely fixed the myth of the Dark Continent:

As a technology based on the natural power of light the camera seemed particularly suited to the task of illuminating the secrets of the continent. However, through their supposed power to reveal the unknown and the geographical truth, photographs made by British explorers in Africa tended to reinforce the established image of the African interior as a place of disease, death and barbarism.¹¹⁴

While Beattie's text actively supports this myth, however, the impression one gets from the photographs – in the context of this fiction – is quite different. If anything, the black and white images that silence and freeze their subjects mid-movement call into question the veracity of Beattie's melodramatic descriptions. The photographs, which are supposed to illustrate 'bestial' savages, merely show what Beattie might well have described as 'fine specimens' in (mostly) innocuous poses. Because they are proffered with no apparent authorial interference, furthermore, the photographs give the impression – in stark contrast to the narrative – of being entirely objective. The carefully posed photograph of the *Ukuxentsa* dance (the 'dance of death') is a case in point (fig. 2). It is an image far removed from the 'hideous and disgusting' spectacle of the text:

¹¹⁴ Ryan, 30.

As the dance proceeded, the excitement increased. The dancers put their bodies into all conceivable shapes... their tongues rolled in their mouth as they hummed some words in a grunting sort of tone; all shook their heads from side to side, but their eyes never relaxed their fixed stare in front. Altogether the spectacle was hideous and disgusting [...] the exertion they went through was really extraordinary. It was a hot day and the perspiration glistened on their black bodies. At last the excitement became so intense that they loosened their karosses and danced perfectly naked, their antics becoming wilder and more unearthly. The women also threw their robes aside, and joined the maddening throng.

What a terrible spectacle was presented by those savages all twisting their naked bodies about in such a hideous manner! They appeared like demons, broke loose from hell, and the way their rings and other ornaments worn on their arms and around their necks clashed as they moved about seemed to confirm the belief that there had been a stampede from the abode of the Evil One.¹¹⁵

With the casting off of their karosses in the text, the essential savagery of the Xhosa is apparently revealed. The maintenance of 'respectable' relations between men and women is likewise hastily discarded as the latter join in the dance with abandon and all loss of modesty. Any attempt at order or self-restraint is futile as their very bodies become possessed by malevolent forces, 'confirming the belief' and prejudice of the ever-present, presumably civilised, observer-narrator. In the photograph, ironically, the actual presence of the photographer is ignored and the relative 'virtue' of the Xhosa (as evidenced by their semi-clothed state and the absence of women) is still intact. In fact there is nothing in the picture to testify to the Xhosas' imminent metamorphosis. The dancers, far from becoming 'unearthly', are very much grounded, permanently fixed for observation. At their feet sit a group of decorous and apparently impassive men. The primitive soundtrack of 'grunting' and the violent clashing of accessories so vividly conveyed by the text, is absent – indeed is almost impossible to imagine against the apparently peaceful, sunlit, pastoral backdrop. The barbaric 'contortions' of the perspiring and 'twisting bodies', have been carefully choreographed into a single co-ordinated dance step that belies the raw energy of the written account. Where the text attempts to produce a dramatic atmosphere and to sweep the reader up, the visual image is concerned with conveying information and engendering considered examination.

The sensory indicators so integral to this textual portrait are similarly lost in the photographic conversion of Beattie's witchdoctor. We find him quietly seated on a chair in a studio, a slightly

¹¹⁵ *Pambaniso*, 26–7.

bemused expression on his face (fig. 7). Although the image was probably considered menacing and mysterious enough for the day's audiences (one reviewer remarked upon the novel's 'capital illustrations'),¹¹⁶ the fictional tale would have been better served by an image such as that which accompanied Waters' *U-Nongqause* more than twenty years later (fig. 13). Certainly this picture is more in keeping with the highly romanticised illustrative style favoured by other popular anthropological novelists. The portraits of Sarhili and the prophetesses Nongqawuse and Nonkosi contribute to the sobering effect and further undermine the technicolored melodrama of the text (figs 9 and 10). The Paramount looks like a harmless and emaciated old man, wrapped in a fur stole to keep out the cold, and the prophetesses appear subdued and docile – perhaps, in Nongqawuse's case, a little surly – but certainly not savage. This impression is underscored by the fact that in this photograph, the girls are dressed not in the attire of 'red Kaffirs' but in a strange assortment of European textiles and Xhosa artefacts. This is the only known photograph of the prophetesses, and although it was taken thirty years earlier, was almost certainly first published in Beattie's novel. It is ironic, not only that the single extant image of these 'real' figures should initially appear in a fictional context, but that it should expose Beattie's lack of real knowledge about the Xhosa. For not only do the photographic images subvert the fictional aspect of *Pambaniso*, but their own factual indices are also ultimately called into question.

Were Beattie more familiar with Xhosa customs, he would have noticed the irregularity of Nongqawuse's costume. It is quite likely, as Bradford points out, that Mrs Gawler adorned her charge, the prophetess, with 'traditional' accessories in order to make her appear more the part, not suspecting that the pieces were totally inappropriate for her status, and incorrectly worn. It was a case of a partially-informed European producing the native for European consumption.¹¹⁷ If the vast majority of Beattie's audience were ignorant of the 'untruthful' staging of the Prophetess picture, they would have been similarly oblivious to the intervention of the engravers who, in the process of converting the photographs into a medium that enabled cheap, mass reproduction, inevitably retouched the images. While Bradford details (and perhaps overstates) alterations made to the Prophetesses photo-engraving, a more explicit departure can be seen in the picture of the Witchdoctor. In *Pambaniso*, the trousers worn by the subject in the original (taken around 1870) have been replaced with a blanket – thereby underscoring the difference and 'primitive' nature of this 'race' and pandering to audience expectation.¹¹⁸ Whether Beattie was privy to this deception is unknown, but he was certainly

¹¹⁶ Anon, *Publishers' Circular*, 102.

¹¹⁷ Bradford, 'Framing African Women', 70–93. In tracing the history of the 'Prophetesses photograph' from its origin through various contortions over the years, Bradford powerfully argues for the 'untruthful' nature of the image.

¹¹⁸ Stevenson and Graham-Stewart, *Surviving the Lens*, 110–1.

aware that some of the pictures ostensibly portraying mid-nineteenth-century subjects were taken decades later. The collapsing of historical and contemporary time, with its attendant suggestion of an unchanging, fixed people is, however, disturbed by an anachronistic oversight: in the *Ukuxentsa* picture, one of the men wears a European felt hat. Finally, one should recall the slow shutter speed of early photographic equipment that required subjects to remain immobile, and thereby exacerbated the already artificial 're-presentations of reality and thus performance' of the *in situ* pictures.¹¹⁹ These aspects considered, it is hard to disagree with Bradford's wry comment that an 'untruthful' image was 'appropriate' for 'a settler fiction called *Pambaniso – Turning Upside-Down*'.¹²⁰

If the audiences of Beattie's day were unaccustomed to interrogating the truth-claims of photographic images, this tendency has persisted to the present day. Authors of subsequent Cattle-Killing accounts (historical and fictional) continued to employ photographs uncritically, as indicators of the historical veracity of their work, and presumably expected them to be received in this spirit. Grimm's novel, *Kaffernland* (1911–5), contains photographs as well as woodcuts and paintings. Although no images appear in Dowsley's *Long Horns* (1937), about a dozen illustrations (of which at least 7 were photographs) were submitted to the publisher along with the manuscript. Amongst these was the Prophetesses picture. This image reappeared most recently on the inside back cover of Mda's novel, *The Heart of Redness* (2000).¹²¹ None comment on the irregularities in the image.

PAMBANISO IN THE SERVICE OF IMPERIALISM

In Beattie's text, the Xhosa are portrayed as wild and unruly and in need of saving. The photo-engravings, on the other hand, present the image of a people post-subjugation – a people who can be manipulated, posed, organised, governed. As Landau remarks regarding colonial photography, it 'created a buffering illusion of control, and therefore facilitated the "administration," of those tribes'.¹²² Both this illusion and the image of the self-destructing Savage of the Cattle-Killing proved useful. For *Pambaniso*, I believe, fed into a very real contemporaneous concern. Although ostensibly a Xhosa story, it was almost certainly intended to contribute to Beattie's petition for the annexation of Pondoland.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, 'Photography and Performance', 27.

¹²⁰ Bradford, 85.

¹²¹ Historical works include Peires' *The Dead* and Mostert's *Frontiers*.

¹²² Landau, 'Empires of the Visual', 161.

At the time of writing, Pondoland was an independent territory. Indeed, it was the only black territory in the eastern frontier region still outside Colonial control – Sarhili's country, along with Bomvanaland and Thembuland, had been incorporated into the Cape in 1885. It was also, as Beattie details in *A Ride Through the Transkei*, and reiterates in *Pambaniso*, a region apparently rife with atrocities such as 'smelling-out' and murder.¹²³ Throughout his tour, the 'Pondoland Question' (how to respond to this degenerate neighbour) was a frequent topic of conversation, and increasingly came to dominate Beattie's letters. Promoting his position – that it was Britain's duty to interfere, and that fast and firm action was required – became a primary concern. 'I trust,' he wrote, 'that what I have written regarding Pondoland during this tour will have the effect of quickening the impulses for good in the breasts of our rulers and men of influence and action'.¹²⁴

Beattie is cognisant that his position will be countered with charges of 'land-grabbing', 'oppressing the poor natives' and 'seeking a quarrel with an independent people'. These considerations are, however, briskly dismissed: 'for really in this case they require to be protected against themselves'.¹²⁵ Beattie's arrogant assertion and the impression given that he is guided by what Stocking calls 'uplifting philanthropic meliorism', however, only partially succeeds in cloaking more material concerns. 'What a glorious country lies smiling before the gaze of the traveller,' he eulogises, 'supplied with everything that nature can give and only waiting the hand of industry to open it up'. Under white control, the land's material potential will be developed – presumably with the labour of the Pondo, who will become 'law-abiding and industrious'.¹²⁶ And once Pondoland is incorporated (as it was, three years later)? 'When the British flag is dominant from Lake L'Agulhas to the Zambesi and British settlements established all over, with all the natives at peace,' writes Beattie, 'what a glorious future will be before the Dark Continent'.¹²⁷ That the Scotsman's sentiments found a receptive audience is evident from the numerous subscribers that *A Ride* attracted, despite the high reproduction costs.¹²⁸

The link between *Pambaniso* and *A Ride* has already been detailed. The point that needs to be made here is that on occasion when material is repeated across the texts (for example, descriptions of torture and the influence of the chiefs), whereas in *A Ride* it relates to the present-day Pondo, in *Pambaniso* it is applied to the Xhosa of 1856.¹²⁹ An implicit analogy is

¹²³ *Pambaniso*, 23.

¹²⁴ *A Ride*, 24, 54–5.

¹²⁵ *A Ride*, 24.

¹²⁶ Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 237; *A Ride*, 24, 57, 40 & 17.

¹²⁷ *A Ride*, 81.

¹²⁸ 'Preface', *A Ride*.

¹²⁹ *Pambaniso*, 30–1 & 43; *A Ride*, 44–5 & 55–6.

thus established between two 'tribes', apparently at the same stage of progress, albeit in different periods. The author makes this analogy explicit in *A Ride*, commenting that the state of Pondoland 'brings us back to the dark days of Kaffraria, some fifty or sixty years ago'.¹³⁰ Beattie also draws upon this comparison when he uses the alleged success of British influence on the Xhosa, to argue for its extension to the Pondo.

Is it not a cold-blooded policy to look quietly on while scenes of terrible cruelty are being carried out, and merely shrug our shoulders and say, "We have no right to interfere?" the dictates of humanity and Christianity alone give the right to rescue a land from rapine and murder and make it a land of peace and security. If we look back upon the history of the Cape Colony what do we find? Britain sent her soldiers to subdue the country of the Kafirs, to break up their institutions of barbarism, and to accomplish this much blood was shed and millions of pounds were spent, but the path of civilisation has always been opened up with the sword in the one hand and the bible in the other... What state would the Cape Colony and other countries be in to-day if such nice considerations had swayed the great civilising powers of Europe?¹³¹

Britain, Beattie continues, cannot look on as the Pondo, 'a nation of barbarians destroy[s] themselves'. The history of the Colony, the 'breaking up of barbaric institutions' and the subjugation of a self-destructing people is, of course, the subject matter of Beattie's novel, *Pambaniso*, which appeared only months later. In this work we find contained in dramatic, expanded and popular form a 'real' example of barbarism described and redeemed. With its extended and graphic descriptions of Xhosa traditions (so proximate to those of the contemporary Pondo), and the eventual introduction of civilisation, *Pambaniso* adds historic and ethnographic evidential support to Beattie's case for the annexation of Pondoland. The future of the Pondo may not be raised in the work itself, but the novel concludes in the present, thereby dovetailing into *A Ride* and positioning itself as an appendix to the Pondoland Question. *Pambaniso* provides not only confirmation of the need for 'interference', but a reassuring analysis of the 'natives' who would have to be incorporated into the body of the Cape Colony once their territory had been appropriated. Beattie's assertion that the Cattle-Killing originated solely from a delusion suggests that the Xhosa had given up on military strategies and no longer posed a physical threat to the colonists. Their superstition also confirms the underdeveloped state of their mental and socio-cultural development. Beattie's view of the 'native' is comforting in its containment: although the indigenes have 'progressed' (or could with much effort) to within a few steps of the white settlers, there is no evidence to suggest that they are able to

¹³⁰ *A Ride*, 26–7.

¹³¹ *A Ride*, 24.

ascend to the top of the evolutionary scale and thereby challenge the dominance of their European masters.¹³² They can, however, be taught to be industrious, subdued and, like Pambaniso, to be loyal and peaceable subjects of the Crown.

¹³² A thesis supported, incidentally, by Theal: 'Most of these people seem unable to rise to the European level of civilisation, though not a few individuals have shown themselves possessed of mental power equal to that of white men'. *South Africa*, 5. See too Stocking 'Dark-Skinned Savage', 119.



Fig. 1 'Intonjane Dance'. *Pambaniso*, frontispiece.



Fig. 2 'The Ukuxentsa Dance'. *Pambaniso*, 25.



Fig. 3 'Tormenting Umdubuko'. *Pambaniso*, 29.



Fig. 4 'A Combat'. *Pambaniso*, 133.



Fig. 5 'A Kaffir Feast'. *Pambaniso*, 136.



Fig. 6 'The Abakweta at Home'. *Pambaniso*, 216.



Fig. 7 'A Kaffir Witch-Doctor'.
Pambaniso, 16.

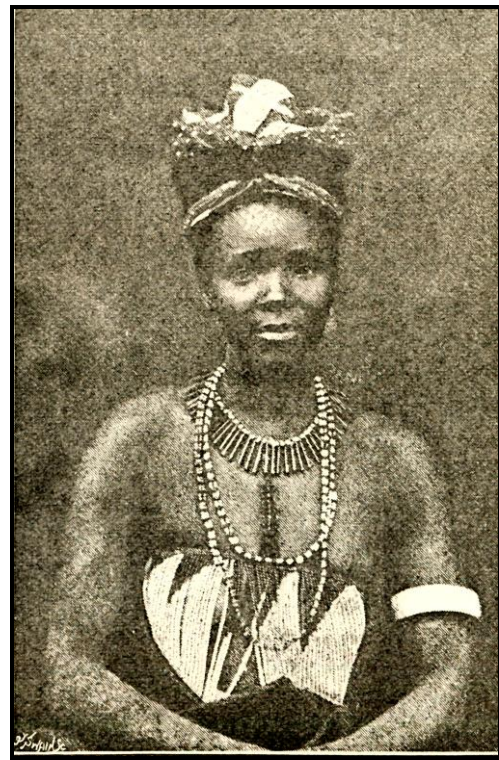


Fig. 8 'A Kaffir Woman Dressed For a Party'.
Pambaniso, 102.



Fig. 9 'Sarili (1891)'. *Pambaniso, 191.*



Fig. 10 'Nongqause and Nonkosi, the two Prophetesses'.
Pambaniso, 225.



Fig. 11 Charles Kerr illustration in Haggard's *Nada the Lily* (1892).

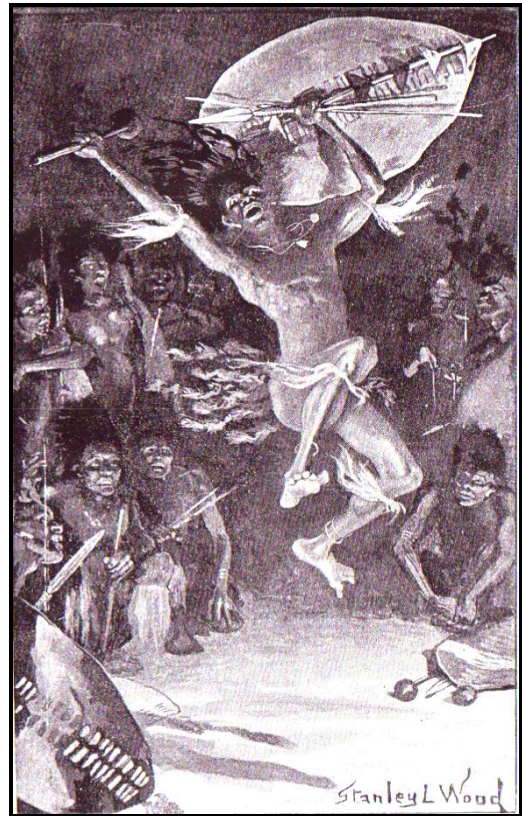


Fig. 12 Stanley Wood illustration in Mitford's *The King's Assegai* (1894), frontispiece.

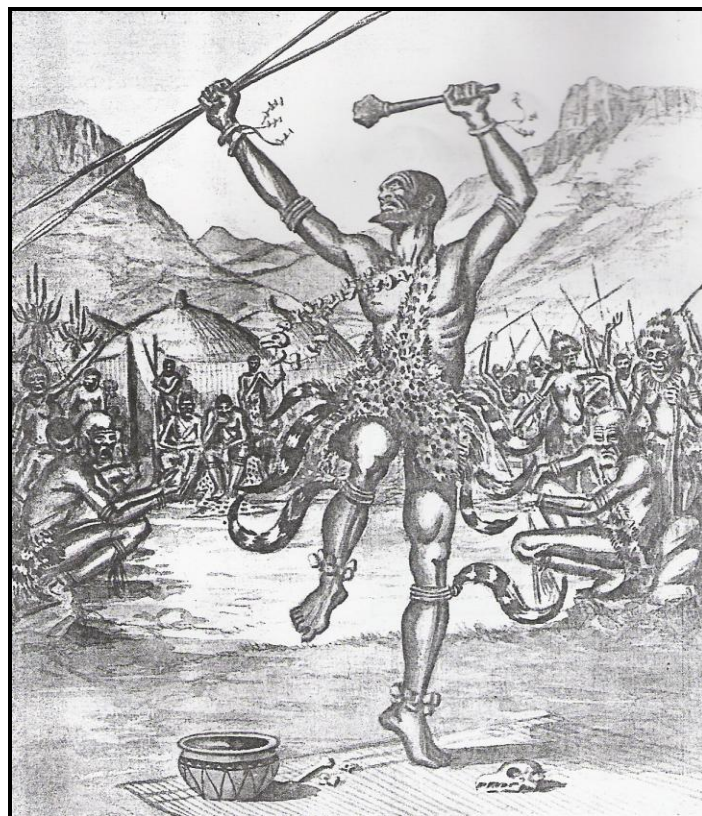


Fig. 13 'Umhlakaza'. Will. A. Ogilvy illustration, from Waters', *U-Nongqawuse* (1924), frontispiece.

CHAPTER 2

'TO DIE LIKE NAMJIKWA...': THE PROPHETESS' REINVENTION AND METAMORPHOSIS

Sanni Metelerkamp's short story on the subject of the Cattle-Killing was published twice, almost in identical form, almost thirty years apart. In the period between its two appearances, not only had a Union been sutured together from four previously independent colonies, but significant shifts had taken place amongst the politically marginalised in South Africa. The publication of 'Namjikwa: A Tale of the Cattle-Slaying of 1858' (1907) coincided with the founding of the Cape Women's Enfranchisement League (WEL) and the quashing of a motion in the Cape parliament to extend the vote to women. It reappeared, as 'The Prophetess: A Tale of Cattle-Slaying 1857' (1935), five years after the franchise had finally been extended to white women in South Africa and just one before the Cape Native Franchise was abolished.¹ While, on the one hand, then, the stories span the ultimately successful history of the enfranchisement of white women, they also mark the erosion of the 'native' franchise to a point where any hope of the vote for the black population – male as well as female – could only be described as tenuous.

In a radical departure from other early English accounts of the Cattle-Killing (historical and fictional), Metelerkamp's short story brings the conventionally mute and unhinged prophetess to the fore, bestowing on her agency and voice. Undoubtedly influenced by the struggle for women's liberation, the author's feminist revisionist interpretation is asserted and secured on a number of levels: from the positioning and portrayal of her protagonist, to the manipulation of History. Equally interesting is the way in which the narrative becomes a site for the tentative, yet affirmative, intersection of gender and race. Although still circumscribed by conventional notions of these categories, Metelerkamp demonstrates an enlightened stance for her time by affirming a pan-racial sisterhood. More than this, I will argue that the prophetess's blackness in fact allows Metelerkamp to articulate and celebrate a universal female sexuality that would have been more problematic had she been white.

SANNI, HER CIRCLE AND 'THE SUFFRAGE SIMPLIFIED'

Described as 'keenly interested in the history, ethnology and politics of South Africa', Sanni (Susan) Metelerkamp was for many years on the editorial staff of the *Cape Argus* and was the

¹ The Women's Enfranchisement Bill passed into law in South Africa on 10 May 1930. The Natives' Representation Act of 7 April 1936 removed qualifying 'non-European' males in the Cape from the parliamentary roll.

first woman parliamentary reporter in South Africa.² She was evidently an enquiring and exuberant woman, who enthusiastically espoused various liberal causes. The irreverent and, by her own admission, 'not political at all' author, Pauline Smith, who met Metelerkamp briefly on two occasions during a visit to South Africa in 1914, snidely attributed the latter's reformist affiliations to her desire to distance herself from her provincial origins:

She always spoke of it [Knysna] with a sort of pity, first for the place and then for the years she had wasted in it, as a 'little coast village' that nobody would know anything of. She gave me the impression of having plunged wildly into vegetarianism and suffragism and politics in a sort of spite against this little unknown village.³

Even if Metelerkamp's involvement with the women's movement was partly inspired by cosmopolitan aspirations, however, it was no mere flirtation. By the time Smith met the 'intense vegetarian Miss Metelerkamp', and listened with condescending amusement as she and an unnamed English artist: 'congratulat[ed] one another on the marvellous uplifting among women. The *pride* in the sex and I don't know what more...'⁴ Metelerkamp had been involved with the suffrage movement for at least seven years – not merely on the periphery, but as a founding member of the Cape WEL. Together with Edith Woods, another unmarried journalist with whom she was living at the time of the Smith encounters, Metelerkamp held the position of Honorary Secretary in 1908. As such, she was at the hub of the early movement and would have come into close and frequent contact with other committed feminists, including the indomitable Olive Schreiner who held the position of Vice-President from 1907–10. Already internationally renowned for her novel, *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), and her controversial views on women and race (amongst other things), there can be little doubt that Schreiner informed Metelerkamp's political views. Certainly, she was a dominant and inspiring presence at the early Cape WEL meetings.⁵ Another significant influence was Edith Woods who appears to have mentored – even initiated – her friend into the intricacies of women's issues:

Miss Metelerkamp told how the enlightenment had come to *her* from 'Woodsie'. How when Woodsie first spoke of pre-natal conditions, etc., Miss M. used to *faint*. But how glorious she thought it all now, and how last time she went back to that same little

² Lewis, *Women of South Africa*, 184. Metelerkamp (1866–1945) wrote a number of fictional and non-fictional works in both English and Afrikaans. Her last, *George Rex of Knysna* (1946) was published posthumously and took as its subject Metelerkamp's great-grandfather, the alleged illegitimate son and true heir of King George III.

³ Scheub, *Secret Fire*, 11 and 256. In fact Metelerkamp and Woods were two of many feminist vegetarians and vegetarian sympathisers, including Olive Schreiner. The ideological link between vegetarianism and other socio-political reform movements including socialism, pacifism, the 'simple life', the freethinkers, anti-vivisectionism and feminism in the late nineteenth-early twentieth century is examined in Twigg's PhD thesis, 'The Vegetarian Movement in England, 1847–1981'. More recently and polemically, Adams (*Sexual Politics of Meat*) has argued forcefully for a connection between eating meat and sexual oppression.

⁴ Scheub, *Secret Fire*, 259.

⁵ First and Scott, *Olive Schreiner*, 261. None have discussed, more than in passing, Schreiner's involvement in the South African women's movement. I *believe* it is the subject of Stanley's 'Views Don't Make Any Difference'.

nameless coast village she had given a lecture on woman's suffrage!⁶

In fact, it was Metelerkamp's 'Woodsie' who was later to stage the most public and 'radical' protest in South African woman's suffrage history by refusing to pay income tax on the grounds that 'taxation without representation... is tyranny'.⁷ Long before this, however, both the hypocrisy of an unrepresentative representative government and Schreiner's contention that 'The whole question [of the women's vote] seems to me not one of sex but of common human duty and right',⁸ found expression in Metelerkamp's pamphlet, 'The Suffrage Simplified' (1908). Written in the early years of the Cape WEL, and in her official capacity as Honorary Secretary, this 8-page tract was only one of a number of interventions made by committee members to raise the profile of their League and to mobilise people around the cause of the women's campaign.⁹ Both tasks were key in the first eighteen months, for the Cape WEL emerged at a critical juncture in South Africa's history.

The years between the close of the second Anglo-Boer war (1899–1902) and the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 saw a jostling for power and privilege and the setting up of political apparatus and forums to ease the transition and to lay the necessary foundations for Union. The most important of these was the National Convention of 1908–9, which was held to thrash out the practicalities of uniting the various South African territories, to decide upon the structure that the new 'South Africa' would take, and to draft her constitution. One of the major issues to be tackled by the Convention concerned the franchise. While 'native' political representation had long been a point of concern and debate, that of women had received little exposure. However, with more access to educational opportunities, increasing urbanisation and the shift towards an industrial economy, which resulted in more women entering the formal workplace, the disparity between women's new economic standing and their non-existent political status was becoming harder to ignore.¹⁰ The Cape WEL was launched the year before the Convention, and her members dived straight into concerted lobbying – hoping, no doubt, that the political shifts might bring the necessary momentum for change. But even in the

⁶ Scheub, *Secret Fire*, 259. Biographical information on Metelerkamp is scant. Smith's journals offer the only published personal descriptions of the author (to my knowledge).

⁷ Walker, *Women and Gender*, 328. This took place in 1923. It is tempting to speculate on Metelerkamp's apparent absence from this protest, especially in light of her passionate nature, commitment to the women's movement and her relationship with Woods. Although it cannot be asserted that Metelerkamp still enjoyed a close relationship with Woods, there's no reason to believe otherwise. We do know that she 'became disabled by appendicitis' two days after Woods' court case ('Illiquid case appeal Susan Metelerkamp and Railway', NACT).

⁸ Schreiner to Molteno, 20 April 1907, in Clayton, *Olive Schreiner*, 124.

⁹ Other pieces by early Cape Committee members include Woods' 'The Home-keeper's Vote'; Macfadyen's, 'The Cape Parliament' and 'The Woman's Vote'; Schreiner's 'Letter on Women's Suffrage' and Brown's 'A Claim for the Enfranchisement' and 'Woman's Vote and Social Evil'.

¹⁰ Walker points to the clear 'relationship between women's economic independence and their commitment to women's rights issues'. For a detailed examination of the history of women's suffrage movement in South Africa, see Walker, 'Women's Suffrage' and *Woman's Suffrage Movement*.

immediate local context of the Cape Colony, the signs were not encouraging. In a debate held in the Cape parliament on Woman's Suffrage only a few months after the founding of the Cape League, it was soon clear to the suffragists who eagerly filled the public gallery that despite 'magnificent' speeches in favour of the extension of the franchise, they were up against a majority who still believed that the time had not arrived for 'conferring upon women the privilege of voting'.¹¹ Indeed, a speech opposing the motion by John X. Merriman (son of Bishop Merriman of Grahamstown, soon-to-be Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and 'bitter opponent' of the vote for women) delighted many in the House, who responded with laughter and applause.¹²

But condescension and ridicule were not the only sentiments evoked by the Women's Question. Some responded with hostility, others, including the Afrikaans barrister-poet C. J. Langenhoven, dismissed the idea of women's suffrage out of hand. Underlying much of the opposition was the widely held conviction that the role and position of women was biologically and/or divinely determined and, therefore, indisputable.¹³ Langenhoven, who was later to pen the lyrics for South Africa's first national anthem, explained that 'In a highly organised community, efficiency is secured by division of labour according to fitness'. 'Nature', he continued, had provided the country with three classes: European males, 'natives' and women. The first were the brains – destined to 'direct', 'organise' and 'govern'. The second, 'endowed with the physical strength to perform physical labour', were the brawn. And what of women?

The duties of the hands and the duties of the brains have been assigned. There remain the duties of the hearts. We shall want a class to watch over the cradles of our young, to nurse our aged and sick, to brighten our homes with cheer and lighten our burdens with sympathy... to this, the divinest duty of all, we shall call our women... Is she prepared to sell this birthright for the mess of pottage of the hustings?¹⁴

Claiming that he did not hold with the notion of 'indiscriminate superiority', he nonetheless had little compunction about deferring to the 'class tests as nature has provided'. Completely disregarding the reality of an increasing number of women who, by choice or necessity, were operating outside the home, and buttressing his scientific argument with theological rhetoric, Langenhoven manages simultaneously to proclaim the value of woman while reasserting her

¹¹ Schreiner to Ellis in Cronwright-Schreiner, *Letters*, 272. Macfadyen, who also attended the debate on 4 July 1907, had her response to Merriman's speech published in 'The Cape Parliament'.

¹² Merriman, according to Schreiner, 'wouldn't even talk of the woman's movement without getting into a rage'. Quoted in Buchanan-Gould, *Not Without Honour*, 224.

¹³ This conviction drew upon a well-established nineteenth-century tradition that turned to contemporary science to 'prove' that a woman's traditional role and nature was rooted in her sexual physiology. See, for example, Smith-Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 'Female Animal', 334–48.

¹⁴ Langenhoven, 'Female Franchise', 64–5.

apparently preordained subordinate status. Chastising her for a lack of gratitude regarding concessions already granted, he is indignant at the thought of the 'peaceful and happy' world created by 'white man's intellectual ascendancy' being disturbed on 'merely theoretical grounds'. He also, by omission, underscores the paradox of the black woman's position: while apparently a nonentity, she is yet indispensable; ignored, but presumably expected to submit to the double bind of labouring for her white master *and* serving her own husband-family. Ultimately, Langenhoven's belief in white man's 'natural' authority is inextricably tied to his dread of losing it:

The prophetic vision of a Cabinet composed of women, with their husbands and favourites as under secretaries, of courts of law presided over by Zulu chiefs, with their wives in the jury box and white men in the dock, fills me with a shuddering horror compared with which my historic vision of the worst darknesses through which in the past human civilisation has struggled upwards is a picture of heavenly light.¹⁵

It was against such bigotry that the women of the Enfranchisement Leagues had to contend. And yet, unlike their English suffragette sisters, the South African campaigners took a purely constitutional and decorous route. The ideological basis for their claim was also, as Walker and Scully have noted, conservative: often founded upon the very picture of motherhood and domesticity that Langenhoven had evoked.¹⁶ This was even the case when, somewhat disingenuously, the position was assumed by unmarried, professional women such as Woods (in 'The Home-Keeper's Vote', 1907) and Metelerkamp.¹⁷ 'The Suffrage Simplified' is addressed to 'the fathers and mothers of to-morrow' and draws upon the metaphor of a (transformed) home to describe the (future gender-equal) State. There is also no doubt that according to her suffrage pamphlet, Metelerkamp's response to Langenhoven's closing challenge would have been an unequivocal 'No' – a 'true woman,' she writes, would never abandon what she refers to as her 'sacred duties'. Although Metelerkamp does not oppose the ideal of womanhood so deified by Langenhoven, however, she *does* strongly contest the idea that having the suffrage is inimical to fulfilling one's domestic obligations. In fact Metelerkamp asserts that it is 'part of [a woman's] duty' to 'strive to have a voice' in all that affects her.¹⁸ Neither is her leaflet free from internal contradictions.¹⁹ While the author seems to defend the primacy of a woman's vocation

¹⁵ Langenhoven, 'Female Franchise', 63.

¹⁶ Walker, 'Women's Suffrage', 337–40 and Scully 'White Maternity', 75–6.

¹⁷ Single women were in the minority in the Enfranchisement Leagues both among the regular members (Solly, 'Enfranchisement of Women', 193) and the leadership (Walker, *Woman's Suffrage Movement*, 102–3). In 1908 Metelerkamp was 42 years old, single and had long been financially independent.

¹⁸ Metelerkamp, 'Suffrage', 4 & 6.

¹⁹ This might indicate a number of things: an unfulfilled desire, perhaps, for such a role; a discrepancy between Metelerkamp's personal position and that of the League's which she was representing; and/or the fine line that needed to be trod in an attempt to persuade rather than alienate an audience already indoctrinated in traditional

as mother and homemaker, she does not confine her to these traditional roles, nor limit her influence to the domestic sphere. Metelerkamp's pamphlet points to worlds outside the home that she believes women can/do/should inhabit. It also alludes to concerns beyond the securing of the franchise. Underlying her piece are the premises that although women are 'constitutionally weaker', they are capable of thought and work equal to that of men, that there should be equal opportunity for the sexes in every sphere and that women should be free to choose to occupy these spaces. The women's movement, she writes, is working for a 'better' and more 'equitable' society, but:

This can never be till men and women labour side by side in the factory, the office, the lecture-room, the laboratory, the home, and the State, on a footing of absolute equality; and this, again, can never be until woman is recognised by law as the political equal of man.²⁰

It is telling that in her inventory of sites in need of transformation, Metelerkamp does not neglect the more intimate sphere of 'the home'. Although she (probably wisely) does not specifically explore issues relating to the division of labour within the household, or a father's paternal responsibilities, she *does* elaborate on the matter of the relationship between wife and husband. While eager to reassure her audience that an emancipated woman is not 'the competitor of man', she is equally determined to remind them that neither should she be his 'playmate' – almost certainly an allusion to women's ornamental and sexual 'functions'. For Metelerkamp, as for Schreiner (whom she later quotes), a transformed understanding between man and woman is crucial, the ideal relationship being one of comradeship and collaboration, 'mutually respecting, counselling, helping each other'.²¹

If her opinion on the relationship between the sexes is clear, what of that between women of different races? Deep divisions still existed in the white population between 'Briton and Boer', and the women's movement (at least to begin with) was predominantly supported by English-speakers. Metelerkamp, however, was unusual in that she was not only bilingual, but actively involved in the promotion of the Afrikaans language.²² One might assume, therefore, that she held some sympathy for her white Afrikaner sisters. That her pamphlet, like the rest of the franchise-literature, is unselfconsciously written from the subject position of *white* women, however, raises the question of black-white relations in the movement.

gender roles.

²⁰ Metelerkamp, 'Suffrage', 7.

²¹ Metelerkamp, 'Suffrage', 8. The Schreiner quote is from 'Three Dreams in a Desert', 20. Schreiner later coined the term 'sex parasite' to describe the position of many modern married women.

²² Metelerkamp wrote at least one Afrikaans play and was awarded the Jan Hofmeyr Medal for Dutch Translation. She was also a member of the Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond, a society that promoted the Dutch language (Lewis, *Women of South Africa*, 184). See, too, Walker, *Woman's Suffrage Movement*, 97.

'ONE CANNOT REFUSE A KAFIR WOMAN WHAT SHE IS ENTITLED TO AS A WOMAN'²³

In Langenhoven's article 'The Female Franchise and the Native Franchise', he sardonically points out that while South African suffragists and black political rights activists were well aware of the proximity of their campaigns, they did not make common cause because they:

are shrewd enough to see that it is impolitic to double a superstructure upon foundations whose security for the support of the single fabric is already questionable. Besides, the doubling at once involves trebling. Admit the woman and the native, and no advocates are needed for the native woman. One cannot refuse a Kafir woman what she is entitled to as a woman and not disentitled to as a Kafir. So far any agitation on behalf of the political Kafir woman has escaped my observation.²⁴

Certainly no 'agitation' would be forthcoming from Langenhoven who, as we have seen, had ignored the 'Kafir woman' in his three-tiered model society. All the same, his observation is pertinent. Even within the relatively moderate political environment of the Cape Colony, from which he was writing, there was very little petitioning specifically on behalf of black women.²⁵ Certainly there were no 'non-European' WEL members.

The official policy of the Cape WEL was simple, unambiguous and liberal, their founding 'Object': 'To promote an intelligent interest in the question of the political enfranchisement of women in Cape Colony, and advocate the granting of the vote to them on the same terms as men'.²⁶ (In the context of the Cape, and in direct contrast to the three northern territories, 'on the same terms as men' meant a qualified, non-racial franchise.) In practice, however, the position of the Cape WEL towards their disempowered black sisters was far more complicated. For a society socialised in the belief of white racial superiority and obsessed with safeguarding white minority rule, the question of native political rights was fraught. It is hardly surprising, then, that some suffragists addressed the non-racial element of the WEL declaration solely in order to assuage widespread fears of a flood of black voters overwhelming white. WEL President, Irenë Macfadyen, used statistics to reassure her readers that despite the additional 'non-European' votes that a non-racial, qualified woman's franchise would introduce, the

²³ Langenhoven, 'Female Franchise', 58

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ That black women were not themselves petitioning for the vote is hardly surprising considering the far more pressing and far-ranging discriminatory issues that were then confronting the black population as a whole – which is certainly not to imply that gender discrimination within this context was not a problem. See Walker, 'Women's Suffrage', 314–5. Wells chastises Walker for her 'disappointment' at 'the failure of these movements to tackle gender oppression'. *We Now Demand!*, 1.

²⁶ Metelkamp, 'Suffrage', 8.

proportionally higher percentage of white women's votes would in fact help to 'reinforce' the white vote against the black.²⁷ Others used the alleged inferiority of black people to argue for their own right to the vote. Woman's suffrage in South Africa was 'deeply entangled with the colonial condition',²⁸ as Pamela Scully reminds us, and rather than fighting for sisterly solidarity across race:

Suffragists helped construct notions of womanhood through a discourse of racial difference and racial responsibility. They demanded the vote for women in part on the basis of a complicated linkage of ideas concerning maternity, infancy, race, and civilization.²⁹

All the same, it would be misleading to suggest that none recognised the basic moral issue at stake and that racial prejudice precluded them from explicitly affirming the political rights of *all* eligible peoples. For Metelerkamp's friend, Edith Woods, a (qualified) 'coloured' women's vote was 'desirable' – 'for one cannot without danger to the safety of the State withhold citizenship from any qualified to exercise it'.³⁰ Metelerkamp, like her colleagues, operated within an ideology founded on a racial hierarchy, and expressed the 'indignity' suffered by (white) South African woman who has to 'stand aside for her own servants, must be a mere helpless onlooker while her gardener or coachman votes jubilantly – for the wrong man!' Like Woods, however, she clearly believed in the potential of black people to be 'civilised' and recognised the political rights of those among them who were 'educated':

One acknowledges there are numbers of coloured people and even natives who deserve the right to vote and who exercise it intelligently. The wrong and injustice lie not in the fact of their having it, but in the fact of women with the same – and, in most instances, far higher qualifications – being excluded.³¹

Later, Metelerkamp juxtaposes 'uneducated natives' and 'poor whites' indicating that the issue of voter eligibility was, for her, not so much one of race, but of class.³² Although the author doesn't specifically address the question of black women as candidates for the vote, by defending the political rights of qualified 'natives' generally, she – by extension, as in Langenhoven's reckoning – champions their rights too. At a time when not even the most radical voices were calling for an unqualified universal suffrage, Metelerkamp's position was

²⁷ Macfadyen, 'The Woman's Vote', 39. Scully, 'White Maternity, Black Infancy', 68–83.

²⁸ Scully, 'White Maternity, Black Infancy', 68. Scully's article explores how some suffragists, including Woods, argued for the extension of the franchise (in part) on the basis that, in the context of a multiracial society, white women were best positioned to represent the needs of the 'natives'.

²⁹ Scully, 'White Maternity, Black Infancy', 75.

³⁰ Woods, 'Home-Keeper's Vote', 3.

³¹ Metelerkamp, 'Suffrage', 3.

³² Ibid. Walker, 'Women's Suffrage', 315.

undoubtedly liberal.³³

Of course, being a political tract, 'The Suffrage Simplified' had a specific nature and purpose. With its pragmatic tone, orderly and intelligent argument and its appeal to reason and justice, it was an appropriate propagandising tool for the political emancipation of women. In order to give utterance to more intimate female concerns and aspirations, to reflect upon the nature of womanhood and to confront the need for woman's *internal* emancipation, Metelerkamp took a very different approach. 'Namjikwa' is an emotionally and romantically charged short story, revealing something of the author's 'ecstatic' and 'intense' nature that was later to strike Smith. Although proximate in length to her pamphlet and sharing its feminist theme, Metelerkamp's story is more concerned with the private than the public. What is more, whereas white women are the assumed subject of her tract, in 'Namjikwa' it is a black protagonist that is entrusted with her message of female affirmation.

THE ABSENT PROPHETESS AND HER RECUPERATION

At just over 3,500 words in length, Metelerkamp's tale is brief and, in the interests of economy, opens *in medias res* with a meeting between Umhlakaza and Kreli. From the conversation between the 'witch-doctor' and Paramount, the reader learns that the Cattle-Killing is underway, that its success apparently rests on the conversion of the unbelieving chief, Umgani, and that Namjikwa, in her role as seer, is to persuade him to conform. During the course of this scene the prophetess herself arrives, thereby completing Metelerkamp's ensemble of principal characters. The omniscient narrator goes to some lengths in this, the first (and longer) of the two sections that make up this story, to describe the trio and their somewhat wary and manipulative dealings with one another. The pace picks up considerably in the second half. Having returned from her visit to Umgani, Namjikwa reflects upon the events that have brought her to this place: the mysterious sounds that resulted in Umhlakaza hailing her as prophetess, her burgeoning reputation among the Xhosa, Umgani's disdain for her message, and their budding romance. Having established the context for the subsequent action, it takes the author just three pages to accelerate through the crisis point to the story's somewhat unexpected and precipitous resolution. Metelerkamp's tale of 1907 is repeated, for the most part, word-for-word in 1935. Aside from a small but significant addition, which will be discussed in more detail in due course, other changes involve the correcting of historical inaccuracies (the heroine is re-named

³³ Schreiner, *A Closer Union*, 49 – first published in the *Transvaal Leader*, 22 December 1908. See, too, Solly, 'Enfranchisement of Women', 190. By the end of 1912 Schreiner's position had taken a more radical turn. 'I am for adult suffrage for all,' she wrote, 'free homogenous suffrage where it means that every adult in that country will get a vote.' Quoted in Stanley, 'Shadows Lying Across Her Pages', 260.

Nongkause and the date given for the event is amended), the insertion of a parenthetical, historical note on the Cattle-Killing before the story (probably for the benefit of the now more diverse audience), and minor textual adjustments such as when 'Thou' is updated to 'you'.³⁴

Like Beattie's *Pambaniso*, Metelerkamp's short story/ies reflects an ethnographic interest in the 'native'. Xhosa expressions pepper the narrative and Xhosa terms are used to describe 'alien' elements such as Umhlakaza's witchdoctoring tools and indigenous plants.³⁵ Like the Scotsman, too, the author draws upon the same stock of 'primitive' features to describe her characters.³⁶ Umhlakaza's propinquity to the animal kingdom is apparent in his physiognomy, habits and habitat: he has 'lynx eyes', 'fawning deference' and heightened senses; he surrounds himself with 'weird-looking, claw-like objects and pungent-smelling roots' and his hut, like a fox's lair, is dark and 'evil-smelling'.³⁷ Even Kreli, 'a fine specimen of an admittedly fine race' with 'an unconscious air of authority', when aroused is transformed into a creature who pants and bares his teeth.³⁸ In a reference to the theory of heredity the author draws attention to the 'feeling of awe inborn in the native, for those whom they regard as endowed with supernatural qualities' – and, later, to the apparently widely accepted belief that 'The blood of the native runs strong and the primal passions are very near the surface'.³⁹

But the portrayal of the Xhosa as anthropological beings, with the author assuming the role of 'interpreter of the native', is not, as we have seen, particularly novel. What is new is Metelerkamp's depiction of the prophetess not only as the protagonist, but as a heroine within this framework. Although she does not escape the 'primitive' classification (Namjikwa, like all 'these children of the wilds', has a natural and beautiful posture, graceful movements and a 'simple mind'),⁴⁰ she becomes the prototype of a 'New woman': confident, secure in her sexuality, able, independent and courageous. In order to construct her Nongqawuse, Metelerkamp had to rely largely on her imagination. For when it comes to the prophetess, there is very little information to be gleaned from the archives.

³⁴ *The African Observer*, unlike *The African Monthly* (the local-content, Grahamstown-based magazine in which the story first appeared), was continental in scope and appealed to an international audience, most of whom would have been ignorant of the Cattle-Killing. Incidentally, despite its appeal to History, this note is riddled with errors: it reaffirms the myth that 'only one chief refused to participate', mistakenly declares Kreli to be chief of the Zulu and grossly exaggerates the mortality figures.

³⁵ In 'Namjikwa' (1907) these are translated, for the benefit of the English-speaking audience, in footnotes. Although footnotes do not appear in the 1935 version, most of the foreign terms remain.

³⁶ This hierarchy is set out in Metelerkamp's later collection, *Outa Karel's Stories*, where the 'Bushmen' are positioned below the 'Hottentots' who, in turn, take their place beneath the 'powerful Bantu' – all of whom are superseded by the 'terrifying palefaced tribes from over the seas'. The 'Bushman' storyteller, an 'ancient and muscular gorilla in man's clothes... walking uncertainly on its hind legs', is apparently only marginally above the primates (3–7).

³⁷ Metelerkamp, 'Namjikwa', 479–80.

³⁸ 'Namjikwa', 479.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 481 & 483.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 482.

Nongqawuse is hardly mentioned in early colonial English-language newspaper and government reports that tend to refer only to Mhlakaza, or the 'prophet'. On the occasion when she *does* feature, she is generically referred to as a 'Kafir girl' or Mhlakaza's niece.⁴¹ In fact, when Bishop Cotterill made his 1857 visitation tour in the wake of the tragedy, he remarked: 'In reference to the false prophet, I find, what I was not aware of before, that it is a young girl (and not a man) from whom these prophecies proceed'.⁴² Early historians, who usually explain the event as a failed attempt by Sarhili, in collusion with Mhlakaza, to induce the Xhosa to enter into war against the colonisers, also tend to focus exclusively on Mhlakaza's role.⁴³ They seem singularly uninterested in the prophetess, whose visions are interpreted and circulated by her uncle, by all accounts the principal of the two figures. Once the circumstances of her visions have been discussed, she is dismissed in a descriptive sentence or two that catalogue her age, gender and relationship to Mhlakaza. Her role within the movement is described but never explored: at least one early source refers to her in passing as a 'prophesying medium' – favoured, it is true, but an empty vessel none the less. Others dismiss Nongqawuse as a ventriloquist, suggesting that her importance lay in a clever skill for vocal illusion and mimicry, that her visions were mere trickery, used by or with Mhlakaza to deliberately deceive her people.⁴⁴ Sometimes, but not always, the prophetess is briefly reinvoked at the end of an account, in order to point to her culpability and describe her fate. Vernacular accounts are no more complimentary. Feminist historian Helen Bradford notes that 'In all, representations [of Nongqawuse]', from the contemporaneous to the present, 'are overwhelming negative'. 'Most narratives,' she continues, 'have focused on ahistorical biological attributes, and gendered characteristics conventionally assigned to the subordinate sex (silliness, deceit, and so forth)'.⁴⁵

This unflattering model persists in creative representations of the prophetess. In *Pambaniso*,

⁴¹ See, for example, the *Eastern Province Herald* 12 August 1856 and Grey to Labouchere, 25 March 1857, 'Further Papers', XL, 74.

⁴² Cotterill, 'Journal of 1857', 31.

⁴³ In fact, the first published history of the Cape, Wilmot and Chase's *History of the Colony* does not even mention her (495–502). For a discussion of the andocentric bias of much historiography (current and past) on the Cattle-Killing, see Bradford, 'Women, Gender and Colonialism'. For Peires' response, see his 'Afterword', *The Dead*, 2003:372–9.

⁴⁴ Chalmers, *Soga*, 103. Although ventriloquism had been considered a form of 'superhuman utterance' during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by the mid-nineteenth century it was well established across Europe as a form of trickery and popular entertainment. Connor, *Dumbstruck*.
For references to Nongqawuse as ventriloquist, see Mullin's 17 October 1856 entry in Nicholls and Charton, *Robert Mullins*, 106; the *Eastern Province Herald* January 27, 1857, 3; Cotterill, 'Journal', 31; Ayliff, 'Page in History', 523 and Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 126. This explanation was still being propounded in 1915 by Scully, *History of South Africa*, 279.

⁴⁵ Bradford, 'Not a Nongqawuse Story', 48. Bradford argues that, while Nongqawuse's sex is important in all these accounts, over time 'the focus has shifted from fertility, to sexuality, to childishness.' This article, and the praise poems cited therein, suggest that – derogatory tone aside – Metelerkamp's portrayal might intersect more closely with vernacular, rather than English, accounts. These narratives fall outside the remit of this thesis, but this is an avenue that requires further investigation.

'Namjikwa's' fictional predecessor, Beattie similarly highlights Nongqawuse's peripheral role. When the ancestors first appear, although the prophetess is the only one to see them, it is Mhlakaza who actually communicates with them.⁴⁶ According to this novel, Nongqawuse is Mhlakaza's pawn – coerced and easily replaced. While she is considered nonessential, she is nonetheless held partly responsible for the catastrophe. Beattie's portrait also brings the apparently pathological nature of the prophetess' behaviour to the fore – her hysteria and delusional tendencies implicitly tied, according to the science of the day, to her gender and age.⁴⁷

Occasionally Mhlakaza would make his daughter, Nongqause, go into the river to listen to the commands of the spirits. The girl, whose imagination was now worked up to the highest pitch, would declare before the excited beings on the bank, that the spirits of their ancestors were speaking to her, and urging them to kill their stock and destroy their grain without delay. The girl frequently became sick through the great strain on her nervous system, and when she was unable to go to the river, Mhlakaza selected another girl named Nombanda as a substitute, to carry out his mad ideas.⁴⁸

In stark contrast to these earlier (and most later) portrayals of the prophetess, Metelerkamp's Nongqawuse ('Namjikwa' in her original account and 'Nongkause' in the revised version) is positively depicted and assigned a position of prominence. Indeed, the author's rendering of the prophetess is the crux of her story. In reinventing her, Metelerkamp restores her voice, creates a body, confers agency and reveals an interior life. As a result of this new interiority, the reader is privy to Namjikwa's thoughts and emotions, her anti-imperialist politics and, later, her doubts about the validity of the prophecies. In this telling, the prophetess is a nationalist figure who relishes the idea of being responsible for the liberation of her people, and is 'filled with a frenzy of patriotic fervour'.⁴⁹ But despite this, the centrality of Namjikwa in Metelerkamp's story – her importance – does not lie in her role as prophetess in the Cattle-Killing movement. The author does not challenge nor enhance Namjikwa's traditional role by proclaiming an unusual spiritual gift or granting her primacy over Umhlakaza. Although the 'strange noises' that she hears are never contested, neither is the idea that it was the witchdoctor who recognised and interpreted these 'mysterious sounds' as prophecies. Nor is it the influence that Namjikwa wields as prophetess that interests Metelerkamp. Although she has authority as a result of her position in the movement, it is a borrowed power, conferred upon her and (like the content of the

⁴⁶ Beattie, *Pambaniso*, 181.

⁴⁷ See Rosenberg, 'Female Animal', 332–56 and Smith-Rosenberg, 'Hysterical Woman'. Smith-Rosenberg argues that hysteria was a way for women to 'consciously or subconsciously... [opt] out of her traditional roles', 672.

⁴⁸ Beattie, *Pambaniso*, 193.

⁴⁹ Metelerkamp, 'Namjikwa', 484.

prophecies) controlled by her uncle. In this extraordinary reading of the Cattle-Killing, in fact, the national catastrophe is apparently passed over in favour of a love story. Namjikwa's purpose is no longer to liberate the Xhosa people, but to save the life of her lover, the unbeliever Umgani. Indeed, the secondary importance of the event itself is highlighted by the prophetess's untimely death, which brings the narrative to an abrupt end long before the movement's tragic conclusion and effectively nullifies her public role. 'It was not... as a prophetess they greeted her, but as a criminal and an enemy.'⁵⁰

Crucially, it is Namjikwa's status, influence and experience as a *woman* against the backdrop of a deeply patriarchal society that accounts for her foregrounding in Metelerkamp's story. Her importance is rooted in the profoundly personal and yet is intrinsically linked to larger feminist concerns. This is ultimately a universal story of women's liberation, acted out through Namjikwa's individual transformation from pawn to 'separate entity'. And it is on the issue of her sexuality that the narrative pivots.

The reader is alerted to the importance of the protagonist's sexual status even before the alluring heroine crosses the threshold of Umhlakaza's hut for the first time. The ancestors' orders, the canny witchdoctor tells his chief, are "'spoken through Namjikwa that men should the more readily hear them.'" If any double meaning were attached to his words, it was not apparent in his voice'.⁵¹ In Metelerkamp's narrative, Umhlakaza uses Namjikwa as a medium for the prophecies not because she is naïve and easy to manipulate, but because of her feminine charms. Whereas most English accounts tend to imply that the prophetess (who is aged between thirteen and sixteen) is prepubescent, in this short story she is explicitly portrayed as a sexual being, 'a girl in the first blush of womanhood', with a 'full bosom', who inspires the jealousy of the paramount, Kreli, who means to take her as his wife. In fact Metelerkamp's story of female liberation centres, literally and figuratively, around a description of Namjikwa's sexual metamorphosis. In this scene, Sarhili questions the prophetess about the means she will employ to win Umgani to the side of the believers.

"Tell me, girl," he commanded suddenly, "how wilt thou make him obey?"

"I will tell him what the spirits have spoken."

"Ho! So thou saidist last journey, but he heard and he obeyed not. How should it now be different?"

"I have *ubuntu* [medicine] in my *awa* skin [bag]," she said simply.

"That, too, has not always worked. This journey must thou take with thee remedies

⁵⁰ 'Namjikwa', 488.

⁵¹ 'Namjikwa', 480.

which will *not* fail.”

“Such have I also with me.”

“What are they?” asked the chief eagerly, and even Umhlakaza regarded her with interest.

She made no answer.

“I command thee to tell me what new *ubuntu* thou has found.”

Still she did not speak, but the men watching her saw an indefinable change pass over her. A smile – sudden, inscrutable, utterly at variance with her soft youthfulness – spread slowly over her face. It was the visible expression, as it were, of the accumulated knowledge of her sex that in the armoury at their disposal are weapons which, combined with the weakness of men, make victory for them an almost foregone conclusion – the knowledge also that she possessed these and could use them.

One moment she was only a graceful, deferent receptacle for the chief’s commands; the next, she was a separate entity, revelling in her sense of power, her very attitude seeming to say: Why ask me more, O fools? I am a woman and young, and therefore, if I choose, I can bend Umgani or any other man to my will.”

Her strange smile seemed to illumine the spot where she stood and sent a ray of light to the minds of her companions as surely as if she had uttered the words.

“O *Usodumangashe!*” ejaculated her uncle in amaze, “where has the child learned *this* witchcraft?”⁵²

A number of things are striking about this passage. Before this point in the narrative, Namjikwa’s borrowed influence had set her apart – she is given her own hut and had her physical person protected. She is also brought into direct contact with influential men. Now, Namjikwa’s sexuality provides her with an even more privileged space: a place where, articulated through her body language, she can suggest contempt (‘O fools’) which she would never have dared express in person, and to ‘speak’ the unspeakable. The eloquence of her body language renders speech redundant and in so doing overturns traditional relations between king and commoner, man and woman, old and young. Namjikwa, furthermore, considers her sexuality to be more powerful than her magic potions and even than the message of the ancestors. In fact, it ‘cannot fail’. That it is described in nouns – ‘armoury’ and ‘weapons’ – usually associated with warfare and men, is a sign that she has infiltrated, and has the capacity to compete in, the masculine domain. The strength of her newfound power is attested to by her normally imperturbable uncle who not only recognises it, but is startled by its potency. That he,

⁵² ‘Namjikwa’, 483.

a witchdoctor, refers to it as '*this* witchcraft' emphasises the fact that her *ubuntu* is not 'regular' witchcraft. That he should wonder where she has 'learnt' it, testifies to the fact that it lies outside his sphere of influence – even that it is beyond his understanding. Namjikwa's awakened sexuality enables her to discover an inner freedom and power, which unlike her public authority, is independent of men. While her physical transformation from girl to woman renders her a 'separate entity', it also initiates her into a pan-racial, universal sisterhood. Significantly, if only for a brief moment, Namjikwa is described not in the context of her race, but in relation to her *gender* – in opposition to the 'weakness of men'. The contention is that women are inherently and fundamentally the same, their anatomical 'difference' binding them together, producing shared impulses and providing the tools necessary to confront patriarchy.

In a context where women differed not only in opinion over their relationship to women of different races and colour, but in the nature and place of their sexuality, Metelerkamp's short story asserts a common sisterhood and becomes a vehicle for celebrating feminine sexuality – not merely as a 'weapon' for 'bending' men to the will of women, but for its own sake too. In the early years of the twentieth century, there still lingered among feminists and non-feminists alike the notion that respectable (white) women did not have sexual needs or desire sexual gratification, that the sexual impulse (if it *did* exist) was weaker amongst women than men. Havelock Ellis, English sexologist and friend of Olive Schreiner, categorically denied that such was the case, that this fabrication had in fact only originated in the nineteenth century. He conceded, however, that 'By many, sexual anesthesia is considered natural in women, some even declaring that any other opinion would be degrading to women; even by those who do not hold this opinion it is believed that there is an unnatural prevalence of sexual frigidity among civilised women'.⁵³ That these assumptions were 'prescriptive', rather than 'descriptive' – 'an ideology seeking to be established [rather] than the prevalent view or practice of even middle-class women', as Degler shows – did not remove their potency.⁵⁴ And it was against these prescribed sexual 'norms', with their attendant and restricting ramifications for the way women ought to behave and be, that Metelerkamp's story stands. In 'Namjikwa', the author writes frankly and positively about the prophetess's awakening sexuality, and there is no questioning the strength of her sexual impulse – nor the pleasure it affords her. The heroine, we are told, 'hugged herself with delight at the thought of [Umangani's] strength and his masterfulness'.⁵⁵ In her 1935 version the author underscores the sexual inference with the addition of 'his virility' to Umangani's other assets. Metelerkamp's narrative also touches on the widespread debate over

⁵³ Ellis, 'Sexual Impulse in Women', 315.

⁵⁴ Degler, 'What Ought to Be and What Was', 1471. For a discussion about the debates surrounding women's sexuality in late nineteenth-century London, see First and Scott, *Olive Schreiner*, Chapters 4 and 7.

⁵⁵ 'Namjikwa', 485.

the purpose of sexual intercourse. According to many at the time, sex should be solely for reproduction. Although Metelerkamp's heroine anticipates Umgani as her husband, thereby bringing her sexual response to him within the accepted bounds of marriage, her desire is nonetheless driven not by maternal instinct but unbridled desire.⁵⁶

Despite Metelerkamp's appeal to a universal womanhood founded on a common biological condition and experience,⁵⁷ it is nonetheless significant that Namjikwa is black. It is *because* she is black, and therefore 'primitive', that Metelerkamp has more licence to describe – and celebrate – female sexuality than she would, if her prophetess were white. Black women, unlike their apparently frigid white sisters, had long been considered highly sexed and lascivious, their alleged proximity to nature accounting for their spontaneous and excessive physicality, the lack of clothing a marker, apparently, of lax morality.⁵⁸ There was also a lengthy history, facilitated by this absence of clothing, of detailed – and often titillating – descriptions of their naked or semi-naked bodies. There is no denying, as we have seen, that Metelerkamp herself subscribes to racial stereotypes. The prophetess' closeness to nature is in fact emphasised in an erotically suggestive passage that describes Namjikwa eavesdropping on a secret meeting. Having removed her beaded girdle and ornaments, so as not to be heard, the heroine flattens her naked body on the ground:

her supple, soft body pressed against the grass and tangle of the undergrowth, with waves of burning indignation and freezing fear alternately surging over her [...] until she was stiff and sore.⁵⁹

But in spite of this, there is no hint in Metelerkamp's narrative of the much-vaunted and pervasive equation of blackness with sexual transgression, deviancy or disease.⁶⁰ Nor is her portrayal of the prophetess, as Namjikwa's subsequent actions demonstrate, constructed solely upon the protagonist's sexuality. On the contrary, Namjikwa's depiction is both nuanced and unmistakably positive. All the same, the tradition of 'native' concupiscence and unabashed nakedness is useful. It allows Metelerkamp to give her readers not merely a tantalising glimpse of an ankle from beneath the long skirts of a petticoated, begloved and corseted Edwardian

⁵⁶ Schreiner expressed her support for sex for its own sake in a letter to Ellis (Cronwright-Schreiner, *Letters*, 303). In the colonies, sex for reproduction was tied to the notion that, as agents of civilisation and 'morality', women were responsible for keeping the race pure. Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable', 355–8. See too Levine, 'Sexuality, Gender and Empire'.

⁵⁷ In recent years the idea of a universal womanhood that centres on sexuality and takes no account of formative aspects such as class, has been the subject of much criticism. See, for example, the discussion in McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 7.

⁵⁸ Stoler in 'Making Empire Respectable', 345, writes that the tropics were the 'site of pornographic fantasies'. Levine draws attention to the contradiction inherent in colonial attempts to repress 'native' sexuality when they were in fact intrigued by – and availed themselves of – it.

⁵⁹ 'Namjikwa', 487.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Gilman's 'Black Bodies, White Bodies'.

lady, but an intimate view of a woman's body – 'nude save for the heavy bead-fringed girdle at her waist'.⁶¹ Nor is it a view furtively or proprietorially taken by a male, but one freely and unselfconsciously presented by a woman. Through Namjikwa, positioned as she crucially is within a racially inclusive feminine community, Metelerkamp is able to 'argue' for the (partial) liberation of the female body – to present Woman not only as unashamed of her body, but luxuriating in her sexuality. What is more, she is seen to exercise ownership over both.

Considering that the prophetess was poised on the brink of sexual maturity when the prophecies were first articulated, it is significant that in this story the ancestors' foremost command should be: 'Until the day of victory let no man touch Namjikwa'. In fact, this decree does not appear in any historical accounts, although reference was made in the prophecies to men's sexual transgressions generally.⁶² In relation to this latter warning, historian Helen Bradford (who assumes that the prophetess rather than her uncle exercised control over the content of the prophecies) argues that it was issued by Nongqawuse in order to protect vulnerable women, including herself, from wanton men.⁶³ In Metelerkamp's telling, the prophetess alone is shielded from unwanted attention. That Umhlakaza is responsible for the enunciation of the message in this story does not change the fact that Namjikwa recognises the protection it offers and is able to exploit it: teasing Kreli to arousal in the full knowledge that he is forbidden to – and will not – touch her. If Bradford is surely pushing it much too far when she speculates that Nongqawuse was a marriageable single girl resistant to the sexual norms of promiscuous Xhosa men', then so too was Metelerkamp nearly a century before her.⁶⁴ In fact, Metelerkamp's heroine goes even further. Namjikwa uses the window of opportunity created by the spirits' injunction to ward off unwanted sexual advances, but also to offer her body to the man she loves. It is essential for Metelerkamp's feminist position that Namjikwa eschews her traditional role and Xhosa social practices not only by selecting her own husband, but also by rejecting the Xhosa king in favour of the unbelieving Umgani – a 'better lord' despite his lesser status and questionable loyalty. Because the story is set in an authoritarian patriarchal society, where the chief is paramount, marriage is arranged by men, and women are treated as commodities – chattel to be bought and sold with cattle – the extent of the prophetess's 'rebellion' is particularly forcibly felt.

In Metelerkamp's narrative, Namjikwa's challenge to this social order is validated through the person of Umgani. Tellingly, unlike Kreli, this obviously libidinous, 'dare-devil' chief is not bound

⁶¹ 'Namjikwa', 482.

⁶² 'Namjikwa', 484. Peires, *The Dead*, 1988:227. Both Peires and Bradford use Gqoba as their source.

⁶³ Bradford, 'Women, Gender and Colonialism', 363–5.

⁶⁴ Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:376.

by superstition and the spirits' injunction not to touch Namjikwa.

No spirits however mighty, would hold him back when *he* wanted his woman... There was a man! ⁶⁵

Umgani is, in fact, the *only* unbelieving chief. By shunning the prophecies, he shows himself to be more enlightened than the 'Great Chief' and all the other chiefs combined. Indeed, his scepticism sets him higher on the civilisation ladder than *all* his fellow 'natives' with their 'inborn' primitive beliefs. His position is such that it even makes the prophetess begin to doubt the validity of the prophecies. Although there is not enough information to proclaim Umgani a 'new' man, someone who considers Namjikwa his equal, his uniquely enlightened status makes him the worthy object of Namjikwa's rebellion, affection and – ultimately – her death.

'A HEN'S NECK IS SOON TWISTED': NAMJIKWA'S REDEMPTION

Unlike Beattie's historically dependent account of the Cattle-Killing, Metelerkamp's short story is only loosely based on historical evidence. That the author should rely so heavily on her imagination to create Namjikwa is, as I have shown, hardly surprising: there simply isn't enough information to sustain a developed, central character on documentary evidence alone. As such, much of Metelerkamp's characterisation (Nongqawsue's appearance, sexual status, non-propheysing activities etc.)⁶⁶ falls within what Rosenstone terms 'true invention' – an imaginative device that nevertheless 'engages the discourse of history' and does not dispense with established 'fact'.⁶⁷ But in the construction of her heroine and her tale, Metelerkamp is not merely content to fill in historical 'gaps'. She spurns historical 'fact'. Most noteworthy and startlingly, her short story closes with the dramatic and fabricated murder of Namjikwa at the hands of the Xhosa, prior to the day of Promise.

While historical 'accuracy' for its own sake is not my concern here, the relationship of a fictionalised account to 'History' becomes important when, as is the case with Metelerkamp, the author sets some store by it. That she, despite being 'keenly interested in the history... of South Africa', and despite being 'the first South African woman... to make systematic

⁶⁵ 'Namjikwa', 485.

⁶⁶ According to Peires there are only two records that describe Nongqawuse's appearance. Not only do they contradict one another, they provide little information. Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:378 and 110; and Gqoba in Jordan, *African Literature*, 72. The photograph of Nongqause that appeared in *Pambaniso*, which Metelerkamp might have seen, is not inconsistent with Metelerkamp's portrayal. As for her sexual status, modern historians have reached no consensus. While Peires claims Nongqawuse was 'still a child', a 'young girl' (2003:367) Bradford, using oral sources, describes her as 'a sexual being, an *intombi*'; 'an adolescent of marriageable age' ('Women, Gender and Colonialism', 361). See too Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:375–6.

⁶⁷ Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past*, 72.

researches in the archives', should digress from historical 'fact' to such a degree is significant.⁶⁸ It is unlikely that Metelerkamp was unaware of Nongqawuse's real outcome: that she survived the tragedy, was captured, questioned, and apparently lived till old age.⁶⁹ Not only had the prophetess's fate been outlined in *Pambaniso* (which the author could have read), it was described by the historian, Theal, whose account she almost certainly did read.⁷⁰ Why, then, does Metelerkamp choose to forego the right for her story 'to be considered "historical" by opting for 'false invention'?⁷¹ It is my contention that she deliberately fictionalised history because her assertion of female worth and independence was more important to her than historical accuracy.⁷²

It is *because* the author breaks with history by having Namjikwa killed, that she is able to transform a woman who, according to conventional wisdom, was instrumental in a nation's disintegration, into a heroine. Metelerkamp completes the prophetess's makeover by literally re-writing history. 'In after days,' she claims "'to die like Namjikwa' meant to die heroically".⁷³ In fact the idiom usually associated with Nongqawuse is rather different. The Xhosa writer, W. W. Gqoba, ends *his* account of the event as follows: 'Thus it was that whenever thereafter a person said an unbelievable thing, those who heard him said, "You are telling a Nongqause tale"'.⁷⁴ If Namjikwa's premature demise exonerates her, in her public role of prophetess, from blame relating to the Cattle-Killing movement, it is important for other reasons too.

Indeed, her death says something about the response of 'traditional' man to 'new' woman. In a narrative infused with psychological tension, innuendo and power games, Namjikwa shows herself able to compete on a level with two influential men. Kreli and Umhlakaza's reaction to her initial show of independence is disbelief and anger, followed quickly by death threats. 'With my own hands would I kill thee here and now,' warned Kreli, 'if I thought thou wouldst play me false... in Umgani's kraal'. Umhlakaza, too, believes that the only way to contain the wayward heroine is by eliminating her: 'a woman! a girl!... A hen's neck is soon twisted, and then it

⁶⁸ Lewis, *Women of South Africa*, 184 and Seary, *Bibliographical Record*, 40.

⁶⁹ Theal, *Compendium*, 56 – and in subsequent publications. Nongqawuse's deposition (false or not) was published in the Cape Parliamentary Papers (G36 of 1858). By the time 'The Prophetess' appeared, Cory's account of Nongqause's post-Cattle-Killing history had also been published ('Cattle Killing Delusion', 2028). For a detailed account of her fate, see Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:355–6.

⁷⁰ Although the story draws on historical details regarding Sarhili's uncle and Gxabagxaba that are related by both Theal and Brownlee, the manner of the telling suggests Theal was her source. That Metelerkamp cites Theal in the 1935 version seems to support this view.

⁷¹ Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past*, 72.

⁷² That the ending remains unchanged in her later version, despite the correction of other historical details, seems to bear this out.

⁷³ 'Namjikwa', 488.

⁷⁴ Jordan, 'Folktale', 176.

cackles no more'.⁷⁵ There is certainly no question of them countenancing her independence with its disregard of patriarchal authority. When they realise, too late, that they have underestimated and lost control of Namjikwa, the only way they can reassert their authority is by resorting to brute force. Xhosa warriors kill the prophetess on her return from warning Umgani of the councillors' scheme to murder him. Although she is killed as an 'enemy' (presumably for compromising national security), it is not unreasonable to suggest that the actual reason behind Namjikwa's assassination is the violation of her traditional role and, with it, her betrayal of Kreli's 'fierce desire'.

Ultimately, however, it is the role that Namjikwa's death (and her actions immediately preceding it) plays in the heroine's personal transformation into womanhood that is most crucial. If a defining moment in the prophetess's metamorphosis is the recognition of her sexuality and the power and independence that it affords, another is when she exercises that independence by alerting Umgani, even when the consequence of her action is almost certain death. By demonstrating a willingness to sacrifice herself, Namjikwa is shown to have moved beyond what Schreiner referred to as 'the desire of chase and possession'.⁷⁶ She is not just a sexual being, but one with a moral conscience and authority.

Metelerkamp clearly considers Namjikwa's action, which begins with her rescue mission to her lover's kraal and ends with her death, to fall within what she later referred to as the 'true woman's' 'sacred duties'.⁷⁷ As such, in terms of Namjikwa's coming-of-age, her death is the ultimate moment of validation. Although the protagonist still holds out hope for the fulfilment of the prophecies and is returning to take her place alongside her people when she meets her assassins, she faces 'the hurtling assegais – bravely, confidently, unflinchingly' knowing that:

Her purpose was accomplished – Umgani was safe; beside this, nothing mattered. So she laughed Death in the face and fell rejoicing, giving her life freely because her love was great.

And to a woman love means sacrifice.⁷⁸

While Metelerkamp distanced herself from the notion that women were biologically conditioned for certain professions, like many of her suffragist colleagues she clearly subscribed to the belief that sacrifice was a peculiarly – and 'natural' – female phenomenon. Writing about the 'those dear [franchise] women' in London, for example, Schreiner sympathetically remarked

⁷⁵ 'Namjikwa', 483 & 487.

⁷⁶ Cronwright-Schreiner, *Letters*, 286.

⁷⁷ Metelerkamp, 'Suffrage', 4.

⁷⁸ 'Namjikwa', 488.

that:

Only a woman knows how hard it is for a woman to fight or seem to fight for herself. Because deep in our nature is something that makes us feel as if we should always fight for others.⁷⁹

Indeed it would seem that, far from being freed from this burden of self-sacrifice and service, women's liberation went hand-in-hand with suffering and renunciation. As Burdett explains regarding Schreiner's New Woman protagonist in 'In a Far-Off World': 'She has to understand, and to bear, the demands of this new passion if she is to accede to a reformed world; she has to submit to the painful process of a new self-fashioning which must accompany changes'.⁸⁰ As Schreiner's heroine offers a blood sacrifice to ensure that the man she 'holds nearer than anything' might have 'that which is most good for him', so Namjikwa becomes a blood sacrifice for the good of her man.⁸¹ As Schreiner's heart-broken New Woman is still able to assert 'I am contented', as she watches her lover leave her forever, so Namjikwa can die 'rejoicing' knowing that 'Umgani was safe'.

In Metelerkamp's story, there is an unresolved ambivalence regarding the degree to which this apparently inherited trait affects independent action. There is also the implication, founded on Namjikwa's murder, that to sacrifice is not merely a feminine tendency but a necessity. Despite this, for the author there is emancipation in sacrifice. The prophetess's death is in fact portrayed as her final act of independence: even as men are taking her life, she retains psychological control over it – she '[gives] it 'freely'. Because she is effectively choosing to die, even as her body is broken on the orders of men, Namjikwa is beyond their control. It is significant, too, that by electing to return to her people rather than fleeing with her lover to safety, Namjikwa is established as a 'separate entity' – independent not only from 'traditional' man, but *all* men. Even Umgani.

Namjikwa's fate, then, is not only the result of 'traditional' men's inability to accept 'new' women, but because sacrifice (even to the death) is apparently the lot of women – emancipated or otherwise. In presenting sacrifice as an innate female trait that transcends race, Metelerkamp evokes, for the second time in her short story, the notion of a universal sisterhood. In addition to a shared corporeal experience, all women are allied by a serving-self-sacrificing instinct. By allowing her black heroine to die a noble death for a commonly held ideal, Metelerkamp not only offers further evidence of Namjikwa's claim (even in her 'primitive condition') to the same

⁷⁹ Cronwright-Schreiner, *Letters*, 263.

⁸⁰ Burdett, *Olive Schreiner*, 80.

⁸¹ Schreiner, 'In a Far-Off World', *Dreams*, 14–5.

womanhood as her white sisters, but she presents the prophetess as an exemplar. For Metelerkamp, Namjikwa is a woman, *before* she is a 'native'.

THE DAWN OF THE UNION, AND THE CHANGING FORTUNES OF THE UNENFRANCHISED

At the time of 'Namjikwa's publication in 1907, it seemed that the black male population might stand a greater chance of obtaining the franchise than women. The Women's Question, after all, would effectively be laughed out of the Cape House of the Assembly in July 1907 while the possibility of a national black franchise was still being touted.⁸² However, shortly after the appearance of both 'Namjikwa' and 'The Suffrage Simplified', a severe blow was dealt to the enfranchisement hopes of both groups.⁸³

At the National Convention of 1908–9, the issue of a women's vote received only cursory attention. While the political rights of the 'native' population was the subject of far more debate, the result was equally discouraging. Three of the four provinces that were to constitute the new Union refused to follow the Cape's lead by adopting her policy of a qualified, non-racial male franchise. Because the Cape would not relinquish her own more liberal stance with regard to those in her 'trust', a compromise was reached whereby the existing franchise laws would stand: the non-racial franchise would be preserved in the Cape Province, and the colour bar would remain intact elsewhere.⁸⁴ Within months, the proposed constitution was ratified by the British parliament in the Act of Union (1909), despite a last-minute attempt by W. P. Schreiner and a delegation to Britain, 'to get the blots removed from the Act, which makes it no Act of Union, but rather an Act of Separation between the minority and the majority of the peoples of South Africa'.⁸⁵

All this had a direct bearing upon the women of South Africa, not only because the Act of Union left them unenfranchised, but because the refusal to extend the vote to 'natives' outside the Cape had obvious implications for the status of 'native' women. When the first national suffrage movement was inaugurated a year after the Union's formation, there was much talk of the potential of the vote to unify the women of South Africa.

⁸² Walker, *Woman's Suffrage Movement*, 27 and Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu!*, 114–5 & 122–3.

⁸³ Suffragettes from Natal and the Cape petitioned the National Convention for citizenship on an equal basis with men (Scully, 'White Maternity, Black Infancy', 74) and Macfadyen's pamphlet 'The Woman's Vote' was 'laid before the Convention' (Solly, 1909, 190). For details on the issue of the Women's Question at the Convention, see Walker, *Woman's Suffrage Movement*, 27–8. The Cape WEL, endorsed by the Transvaal League, later petitioned unsuccessfully against clauses in the Draft Act of Union (Minutes from General Meeting, 7 April 1909, WCWE, A133). For discussions surrounding a non-racial franchise, see Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu*.

⁸⁴ Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu!* 126–34.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 115 & 216.

We believe that the enfranchisement of women in South Africa will play an important part, *not* in the undoing, but in the building up of the nation. It will bring to women, as nothing else can, that blessed sense of comradeship irrespective of race or creed.⁸⁶

Despite the rhetoric, however, the Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union (WEAU) never intended to fight for the political rights of *all* the women of South Africa, 'irrespective of race or creed'. Indeed, by adopting the franchise compromise set out in the Act of Union it explicitly neglected the large majority.⁸⁷ The sisterhood evoked clearly only concerned 'the women of this land, Dutch and British alike'.⁸⁸ For the large majority of South African suffragists, as Walker notes, 'Sex loyalty stopped at the heavily guarded boundaries of white privilege'.⁸⁹

Indeed, long before the reappearance of Metelerkamp's short story in 1935, even the non-racial commitment of the Cape League (who initially declined from joining the WEAU in order to retain 'complete freedom of policy and action') wavered and was later irreparably undermined when pragmatism took precedence over the idealism of a few.⁹⁰ By the time a women's franchise bill was finally tabled in 1930, amongst those celebrating were many from the Cape, even though the bill explicitly excluded 'non-Europeans'. Six former Cape WEL committee members signed a public letter of protest, and Schreiner's husband formally distanced his late wife's name from the celebrations, but these dissenting voices were easily outweighed.⁹¹ Chastising her disgruntled sisters, Mrs Lyon, Parliamentary Secretary of the WEAU, argued that they were only 'giving a weapon to the enemy of suffrage'. 'Never,' she continued, 'have the prospects of suffrage been rosier; do not let colour blindness obscure the enjoyment of the dawn!'⁹² While some consoled themselves that they could now fight more effectively on behalf of black women, this sentiment was nothing less than naïve. The political rights of the black

⁸⁶ Kerr Cross, 'Women's Movement', 307.

⁸⁷ While the ultimately racist foundation of the WEAU angered a relatively small number of liberal women, the fact that the Association initially included 'non-European' Cape women in their fight ostracised an even larger group: white Afrikaner women. See Vincent, 'A Cake of Soap'. Vincent argues, against Walker's contention that the movement was largely comprised of English-speaking, middle-class, urban women, for the significant role played by Afrikaans women in the suffrage campaign.

⁸⁸ Kerr Cross, 'Women's Movement', 306.

⁸⁹ Walker, *Women and Gender*, 314.

⁹⁰ In 1910 Schreiner resigned the position of Vice-President and left the Cape League in protest when the province's commitment to secure a non-racial vote wavered. See Stanley, 'Shadows Lying Across Her Pages', 25–6. The Cape League's decision to remain independent was not 'owing to some technical point' as was claimed (Kerr Cross, 'The Women's Movement', 306) but for a far more fundamental reason: 'We would welcome,' the President Mrs Murray explained, 'a Union that held us in common sympathy with women all over the world, but we feel that that link would be all the stronger because of the individual freedom of each separate League which must necessarily have its own special ideals and responsibilities expressed in the differing franchises of our four provinces of the Union.' 'Women's Enfranchisement League', *The Cape Argus*, 1911, n.p.

⁹¹ Walker, 'Women's Suffrage', 355. Letter to the *Cape Times*, 5 March 1930, 15 and Cronwright-Schreiner letter, *The Flashlight* (July 1930), 47. For Cape WEAU Vice-President, Lady de Villiers' reaction to the protest letter see *The Flashlight* (April 1930), 6.

⁹² 'Opinions on the Bill', *The Flashlight* (April 1930), 8.

population had long been headed into the realms of the unrecoverable. By the time 'The Prophetess' was published, the Union's Prime Minister, Barry Hertzog, was only months away from seeing his ambition to abolish the Cape Native Franchise realised. With it went any prospect of a black women's vote.

Although Metelerkamp's name does not appear on the letter of protest, there is a small but significant addition to the 1935 version of her story, which speaks volumes. If the final sentence of 'Namjikwa' – 'to a woman love means sacrifice' – was already a statement of feminine inclusivity, then the revised sentence of 1935 not only reiterates but accentuates it. Metelerkamp's final version reads: 'For all the world over *black skin or white*, to a woman love means sacrifice'.⁹³ In light of the abject status of black women in South Africa at the time, the author's insertion of 'black skin or white' cannot be read as anything other than an explicit statement (and reminder?) of pan-racial sisterly solidarity. In 1935 as in 1907 the emancipation of women was clearly a cause in need of championing, albeit for different reasons.

With Metelerkamp's acceptance of black women into the hallowed halls of sisterhood, she shows herself to be ahead of many of her peers in the relatively liberally inclined South African suffragist circles. While 'Namjikwa'/'The Prophetess' does not advance the cause of the political emancipation of black women – and, in fact the protagonist's death in 1935 might be seen to represent the extinguishing of hope for a 'native' women's franchise – it *does* point to the necessity of their personal emancipation. The latter, unlike the vote, cannot be conferred or withheld on the whims of men. Indeed, in drawing attention to the commonality between black and white women, and in emphasising a woman's private as opposed to her public or political emancipation generally, Metelerkamp might be seen to echo Schreiner's impatience with those blinkeredly fighting for 'their little franchise', while apparently oblivious to the larger issue at stake – their 'spiritual' freedom.⁹⁴

Metelerkamp concludes 'The Suffrage Simplified' with a vision from Schreiner's *Dreams*, which describes a time when women and men will live in perfect companionship:

I dreamed I saw a land. And on the hills walked brave women and brave men, hand in hand. And they looked into each other's eyes, and they were not afraid.

Her short story, perhaps, aspires to Schreiner's picture of womanly solidarity that follows immediately on from the above excerpt.

⁹³ Italics added. Metelerkamp, 'The Prophetess', 73.

⁹⁴ Schreiner to Smith, 27 June 1908, in Cronwright-Schreiner, *Letters*, 280–1.

And I saw the women also hold each other's hands.

And I said to him beside me, 'What place is this?'

And he said, 'This is heaven.'

And I said, 'Where is it?'

And he answered, 'On earth.'

And I said, 'When shall these things be?'

And he answered, 'IN THE FUTURE.'⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Schreiner, 'Three Dreams in a Desert', in Jay, *Dreams*, 21.

CHAPTER 3

LESSONS FROM THE CATTLE-KILLING

Olive Schreiner, whose influence upon Sanni Metelerkamp (I have argued) found indirect expression in a radically re-imagined Nongqawuse, also acts as a point of contact for another author who tackled the subject of the Cattle-Killing. Of those who accompanied Schreiner's coffin to its final resting place on Buffelskop's 'bleak' summit in 1921, wrote the South African poet Guy Butler,

Only two had the interests which contemporary Schreiner admirers would expect to find: pro-'native', liberal, literary, and women's lib: my father's sister, Mary Butler, who wrote the report for her father's newspaper, *The Midland News*; and Mary Waters.¹

In fact Mary Waters and Olive Schreiner shared more than the attributes ascribed by Butler above. Both were missionaries' daughters who grew up on isolated stations in the Cape Colony.² For both, too, the Cattle-Killing was more than an extraordinary but remote historical episode; it was part of their immediate family histories. Schreiner, the elder by nearly three decades, was a year old when Nongqawuse first encountered the ancestors and she fondly recalled in later life how the Governor, Sir George Grey, had carried her on his shoulders during a tour of the frontier shortly after the failed resurrection.³ Waters' link to the movement, although not as immediate, was more substantial. Her grandfather, Henry Tempest Waters, was the only missionary working in 'Krili's Country' (Independent Kaffraria) at the time of the movement. Although Mary was born after H.T. Waters' death and could not, therefore, have heard of the tragedy directly from him, she would have read his journal with its harrowing details of starvation and death: families scratching for roots to eat, Sarhili himself coming to beg for food, wagons crammed full of women and children too weak to walk, vultures picking on the bones of an old lady who had perished on the roadside, scores of children left at the

¹ Butler, 'Mary Waters', 7. Schreiner was re-interred (the year after her death) in the north-eastern Cape district of Cradock. At this time Waters was working at the local Training College. Biographical details for Waters are sketchy, to say the least. Butler, who spent perhaps the most time researching the author, was exasperated by the seeming non-existence of material or people that could shed light on her childhood and early education (NELM 2004.19.8.5.22 & 23). Even some of what he *did* uncover (such as details of her postgraduate degree) is erroneous. To complicate matters, Butler's files on Waters, which he entrusted to the Rhodes' Faculty of Education, appear to have been lost. Morton's reminiscences (CL, MS 18 814) should also not be taken at face value: not only did he get her age wrong, but his statement that 'she was not much of a success with the students' is at odds with that of Jeff Butler's ('I think we all, in the UED class of 1945, loved her') who was in fact one of her students (CL Correspondence).

² Schreiner was born in 1855 at the Wittebergen Mission, Cradock. Mary Waters was born on 5 December 1886 at St. Albans, Engcobo and died on 15 October 1961 in Jamestown, St. Helena.

³ Cronwright-Schreiner, *Life of Schreiner*, 62.

mission station by parents unable to care for them... Nearly seven months after the Great Disappointment, an entry in her grandfather's diary captures the devastation and his despair:

Sept 9. At Krili's kraal – found all the huts empty – nothing but a few dying dogs to be seen – Off-saddled & told Busack to find an old hut, and to call to anyone who might be near – but no one came or called.

How changed the kraal – the dancing and shoutings – the cattle and crowds of people – all gone. My noble schools of Captains and Councillors – the work over which I have toiled in sickness and in health – but always in hope. May my prayers return unto mine own bosom.

*On my way home saw vultures eating a dead man.*⁴

Mary Waters was also undoubtedly familiar with her father's version of the Cattle-Killing. Although a little older than Schreiner, like her, he was probably too young to recall the event in detail. As a missionary who spent his life working amongst the Xhosa, however, Canon Harry Waters was personally acquainted with many who did. He was, furthermore, a charismatic raconteur who loved to regale family and friends with stories:

*He had wonderful gifts, but that of telling yarns was the most excellent. He would close his eyes and begin, going on and on, holding us enthralled with stories of battle, hunting, animals, nature, chiefs, witchcrafts and wars. Old Kreli and Sandili were made to live again. There was nothing egotistical or pompous in these 'Tales of a Grandfather.' Of wit and sarcasm there was plenty. An amusing climax would raise a chuckle from the narrator. The Arabian Nights were nothing to Canon Waters' stories! Of his work, his great Church, his schools, let others write.*⁵

Unlike Schreiner, who never wrote about the Cattle-Killing, Mary Waters tackled it in at least four different contexts: in two plays (*U-Nongqause* and *The Light-Ukukanya* from 1914 and 1925 respectively), a short story ('The Story of the Native Doctor', 1926) and a textbook (*Great Men and Great Deeds*, 1931–3).⁶ Perhaps surprisingly, considering her personal connection to the Cattle-Killing, in none of these did she explicitly harness the event for biographical purposes. Nor, despite her 'women's lib' sympathies, did she use the opportunity to provide a feminist reading of the movement or its prophetess, along the lines of Metelerkamp. For Waters, the

⁴ Waters' journals have unfortunately been lost. Strik, *Southwell Settlers*, lists the diaries as being held by the Settlers Museum, Grahamstown. This museum has subsequently been incorporated into the Albany Museum and the current curator can find no record of them. All that remains are extracts that Waters sent along with his yearly mission reports to the SPG in London, and some letters (USPG).

⁵ A. M. G. 'Canon Waters: A Sketch', *The Church Chronicle*, 1 November 1923, 339.

⁶ Waters' plays were later also included in her anthology, *AmaGali Neziganeko Zokulinganiswa Zasemaphandleni Ezilungele Izikolo Ezikhulu* (1953).

narrative of the Cattle-Killing appears primarily to have been of pedagogical value – in the broadest sense. Three of her four accounts were intended for use in ‘native’ schools – not only as part of a history syllabus or to develop specific skills, but to impart moral and social lessons. Waters’ fourth account is somewhat different: in marked contrast to the others, it is told from a ‘raw’ black perspective and is aimed primarily at a white audience. Nonetheless, it too, is didactic. Appearing in a collection of indigenous folklore, it joined an established tradition whose underlying purpose was to contribute to the scientific study of the ‘native’.

The various strategies employed by Waters, across these accounts and over twenty years, to contain, contextualise and elucidate the lessons of the Cattle-Killing, make for very different narrative products. Together, they reflect the increasing professionalization and secularisation of education in South Africa with its proclivity for the ‘new sciences’. The accounts also mark a shift in the way black subjectivity was imagined and inscribed. In Waters’ negotiation and construction of her black subject, furthermore, she reveals something of the ambiguity of her own position – poised somewhere between white and black, educational expert and missionary, pragmatist and idealist, radical and conservative. This chapter will explore Waters’ tellings in the context of ‘native education’ in South Africa, and will touch on some of the issues and debates with which it was entangled: mounting segregationism, the historical role of missionaries and the so-called Native Problem.

HENRY TEMPEST WATERS AND THE HAND OF GOD

In South Africa, where almost every early effort at educating the indigenous peoples was initiated and administered by missionaries, the role of evangelist more often than not extended to teaching the three Rs. While some found this additional responsibility a burden, Mary Waters’ grandfather (and later her father, too) took an active interest in the nature and spread of education among those they ministered to.

Henry Tempest Waters was sent to the Cape in 1848, with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel’s (SPG) first small group of missionaries. From the outset, the work of this ‘most genial and self-denying of men’⁷ was tied up with educating his aboriginal parishioners. Indeed his founding of a school for ‘native’ children in the rural parish of Southwell, to which he had been stationed, was applauded by the original Bishop of Cape Town, Bishop Gray, as ‘our first direct attempt at missionary work’.⁸ Perhaps inspired by this contact, Waters offered himself in

⁷ Callaway, *Shepherd*, xiv.

⁸ Gray, *Journals of 1848 and 1850*, 127.

1855 as a missionary to the Xhosa in Independent Kaffraria. On land granted by the Paramount Chief Sarhili, Waters founded St Mark's mission in a 'thickly peopled' area, just an hour's ride from Hohita, the chief's Great Place.⁹ He came, he told them, as *umfundisi* – their 'teacher'.¹⁰ The ambiguity of the term was fitting, for it encompassed both his efforts to impart the Christian doctrine and (in order to facilitate Xhosa conversion) more conventional instruction in the form of literacy and numeracy. Only two weeks after fording the Kei River, which acted as the boundary between the Cape Colony and Independent Kaffraria, Waters noted in his diary: 'We have twenty girls & eight boys in the native school this week'.¹¹ While attendance 'languished' in the summer months 'owing to young crops, circumcision, & continuous dancing', by the end of 1856 he was able to report that between the eight schools contained within his Mission's bounds, average school attendance numbered 463.¹² By the time of H. T. Waters' death in 1883, St Mark's had 48 satellite out-stations, to each of which was affiliated at least one school.

Nor did his educational influence end with his demise. Mary's father, Canon Harry Waters, took up his father's lifework from his base at All Saints' Mission (one of the out-stations H. T. Waters had founded). From here, he too established numerous 'native' schools, 'far from the settlement of the white man, on the mountain tops, in the plains, in the valleys and near the great forests'. Canon Waters, 'believed that schools were the first essential to the advancement of the amaXhosa, and all his available money was spent in building more schools'.¹³ That he has been described as 'a pioneer in African education in the Transkei', is clear testimony to the reach and influence of his work in the area of 'native' education.

Mary Waters apparently inherited her grandfather and father's life-long commitment to education – in addition to their Cattle-Killing narratives, their legendary zeal and their Christian faith. By the age of twenty-two she had undergone three years of general teachers' training as well as an additional two years for a specialist Kindergarten qualification. While she remained a committed member of the teaching profession for a further 50 years, however, she was also a missionary in the truest sense: relentlessly spreading her version of the Gospel message and championing the role of Christian missionaries at every opportunity. Her religious beliefs infiltrated and directed her work in the classroom – and well beyond: into the homes and

⁹ For Waters' description of St. Mark's see Gray, *Journal of 1856*, 47–9. For the founding of the mission see Varley & Matthew, 218–25.

¹⁰ Varley & Matthew, 222.

¹¹ Journal extract in letter to Bishop of Grahamstown, 4 October 1855 (USPG).

¹² Journal extract in letter to Bishop Gray, 21 January 1856 (WCCE).

¹³ Broster, *Red Blanket Valley*, 193–4. See too Leadley Brown, 'All Saints', 8–10.

communities of her students, in whose social welfare she took an active interest. According to a teaching colleague, Waters 'felt her pupils were her mission'.¹⁴ Another recalled her as follows:

Miss Waters' sincere religious convictions were quite free from any trace of sentimentality towards her pupils, her work or her contemporaries; she was forthright, militant and emphatic in holding truth and right in her unending efforts to realise Christ's kingdom on earth... It was entirely in keeping with her nature that she should die in harness.¹⁵

Waters' 'sincere religious convictions' and her "'shameless" missionary approach to history & education'¹⁶ naturally permeated her writing too, and is perhaps nowhere more evident than in her earliest published work, *U-Nongqause: Isiganeko Sokuxhelwa Kweenkomo Ngowe – 1857* (*Nongqause: A Drama of the Cattle Killing of 1857*). Written in 1914 and performed by student teachers at Nyanga, the Native Training School at All Saints' Mission where Waters and her sisters taught 'for years', this is her most in-depth exploration of the Cattle-Killing.¹⁷ In her Foreword, Waters' emphasised the educational merits of the play, writing that it 'allowed the students to witness the story of their grandparents, and at the same time [it] was educational and of help to their studies'. While the production of *U-Nongqause* undoubtedly fed into the examinable subjects of Recitation, Vernacular and particularly History, the way in which the story is told highlights an 'extracurricular' concern.¹⁸ In *U-Nongqause*, the historical event of the Cattle-Killing is presented and explained through the person of the Reverend, in words taken directly from the Bible. In fact, undiluted Scripture accounts for a quarter of the work.

U-Nongqause is ultimately history in the service of God. But, despite Waters' apparently deliberate negation of the personal in her Cattle-Killing narratives, a familial influence *can* be discerned behind the religious bias of *U-Nongqause*: that of her grandfather, 'The founder of the Church in Kaffraria'.¹⁹ Of all Waters' accounts, this play is the only one to reveal anything of her family's tie to the event. Although it was only published in 1924, it was first performed ten years earlier – in the same year that a memorial window was dedicated to her grandfather in Umtata Cathedral, and that her brother (yet another Henry Waters and USPG missionary) 'moved a resolution to synod that the archdeacon's diaries should be published, or his life appear in book form'.²⁰ While neither of his suggestions was taken up, Mary's play might well be considered a

¹⁴ Ewan interview with Way-Jones (Waters, NELM), 2.

¹⁵ Morton, 'Mary W. Waters'.

¹⁶ Butler to Rainer, 14 January 2001 (NELM 2004.19.8.5.23).

¹⁷ Elder, *Teacher on Trek*, 10.

¹⁸ Religious and moral instruction was not, at that time, taught at Training Colleges in the Cape – nor was it an examinable subject in elementary schools. Loram, *Education*, 281.

¹⁹ Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years*, 316.

²⁰ Lewis and Edwards, 'Kaffraria: Biography – Waters' (WCLE, AB 184, 1934).

literary tribute, of a different sort, to her grandfather. Although the character of the Reverend – who dominates this play – is never named, it was clearly inspired by H. T. Waters. His journey to Sarhili to request permission to plant his mission is referred to on the first page, and his home (a hut on the banks of the Kei River, just a short ride from Hohita) ties in with the location of St Mark's. But his influence, I believe, extends beyond the ubiquitous principal character. It is evident in the methodology and content that give the work its didactic thrust, as well as the religious explanation offered for the tragedy.

In the wake of the failed resurrection Bishop Cotterill of Grahamstown, together with H. T. Waters, confronted Sarhili on the matter of the Cattle-Killing.

I told him it was not God's work, but that of an evil spirit, whom he and his people had followed; that God let the evil spirit deceive them, because they had broken his laws, and had not received his word by Mr. Waters. I spoke warmly, as the interpreter left the impression on my mind that Kreli wished to throw the blame on God: this, probably, he did not intend. Mr Waters overheard him say to the interpreter that he had not given his words. He confessed that it was for their own sin that they had been deceived by Umhlakaza, and that God had justly punished them; that God had left them in the hands of Umhlakaza, and so it was God's work. I then, at Mr. Waters' suggestion, asked him whether he now disbelieved Umhlakaza, and acknowledged that all his prophecies were false. He said, "This is all over now; there is nothing more of this." [...] I pressed him to acknowledge now that he was sorry he had not believed the word of God by Mr. Waters, which he did very distinctly.²¹

While it is impossible to assert that Sarhili's 'confessions' were sincere, or that he was persuaded by the Bishop's explanation of man's free will within the context of God's omnipotence,²² there is no reason to doubt that Mary's grandfather shared Cotterill's analysis. Indeed, the notion that the Cattle-Killing was a form of divine judgement was the predominant one among contemporaneous Christians²³ – and, from the evidence of Mary Waters' *U-Nongqause*, it was one carried into the new century too. In her play, the Cattle-Killing is presented as the inevitable consequence of the Xhosas' stubborn rejection of the Christian God. 'Personally,' declares the Reverend in summing up the tragedy, 'I say it is the hand of God'.²⁴

²¹ Cotterill, *Journal of 1857*, 21–2.

²² While Peires does not question the sincerity of the king's sentiments, he also declares him 'fiercely anti-Christian' (Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:180, 300 & 161).

²³ See, for example, Ayliff, 'Page in History', 524; Warner in Maclean, *Compendium*, 112; Calderwood, *Caffres and Caffre Missions*, 214 & 220 and Soga in Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, 140. Also Whiteside, *Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 235.

²⁴ Waters, *U-Nongqause*, 25.

But Mary Waters' 'missionary' approach to history is not merely confined to her reading of the historical event, it is apparent in the *manner* in which the story of the Cattle-Killing is narrated – its message unfolded and taught. And for this, a brief look at the teaching provided by her grandfather at St Mark's is instructive.

Although there are no details regarding the philosophy, methods and material content (apart from a reference to music theory lessons!)²⁵ employed at the St Mark's mission schools before the arrival of Bishop Cotterill in 1857, H. T. Waters had evidently given them some deliberation – and found them lacking. 'The school at Krili's,' he admitted, 'is larger than ever & very spirited – but not much progress'.²⁶ Fortunately, the new Bishop was ready with advice. Waters later recounted:

On the arrival of the present Bishop of Grahamstown, I proposed an entirely different system of teaching the natives to what was previously in force on our missions. His Lordship at once sketched out a system entirely based upon the "Book of Common Prayer", refusing his sanction to the use of any 'unauthorized' forms of prayer, and gave me much valuable advice, based on his former experience in India. The introduction of Catechising, which he strongly recommended, has been wonderfully successful in our daily chapel services. And I think more progress in our mission work has been made during the past three months than in the previous twenty one. Many can now talk of God's law, of Jesus and His love to men [...]

Every soul capable of receiving instruction in the nation is under it – the younger portion in the day schools, the adults in the evening schools. Several boys have made progress and read Kafir. All can repeat several psalms & hymns, and begin to sing tolerably. The most of them know the Creed, the Lord's Prayer & the Ten Commandments.²⁷

While Cotterill's system, with its disavowal of 'unauthorized forms of prayer', expressed his commitment to Church-sanctioned liturgy and was a means by which he could keep the more liberally-inclined clergy in his diocese in hand,²⁸ his primary goal was spiritual. With all teaching at St Mark's founded upon the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) which, in turn, boasted nothing but 'the very pure Word of God, the holy Scriptures, or that which is agreeable to the same',²⁹ there was nothing to differentiate the material content of the school teaching from the purely religious instruction that took place in the church services. Indeed, Waters makes no distinction

²⁵ Journal extract, 5 August 1856 (USPG). For this, Waters used a manual by John Hullah.

²⁶ Waters to Gray, 10 March 1857 (USPG). Cotterill was installed as second Bishop of Grahamstown in May 1857, replacing John Armstrong who had died unexpectedly the previous year.

²⁷ Waters to Gray, 30 September 1857 (USPG).

²⁸ It might also have been intended to reassure the Tractarian Bishop Gray (who regarded Cotterill as an 'extreme Evangelical') of his respect for the authority of the BCP. Kearns, *Church of England*, 23–4.

²⁹ 'Concerning the Service of the Church', *Book of Common Prayer*, vii.

in his letter between 'spiritual' and 'scholarly' teaching – it was all 'mission work'. The schools and services were clearly serving a single purpose, each underscoring and reiterating the lessons of the other, together aiming to fix the Word of God in Xhosa hearts and minds. But Cotterill's programme was almost certainly also driven by pragmatic considerations. Waters' still imperfect grasp of Xhosa could, to a degree, be compensated for by the *BCP*, parts of which had already been translated into Xhosa.³⁰ The relative informality of catechising as opposed to preaching would have helped in this regard too – as well as in making 'mission work' more engaging. Catechising, according to its proponents, was a far more effective method of instruction than sermonizing, for in addition to providing a sound doctrinal foundation, it actively engaged the congregation, encouraging them to think and reason, so 'that they shall not only see *bits* of a discourse, but be able to sum up the whole'.³¹ So effective was this method considered by Waters, that it was immediately adopted in the schools too.³² Classes in the set Church catechism, whose expressed intention was to prepare the unconverted for baptism, were initiated soon after.³³ The teaching model that H. T. Waters enthusiastically came to adopt, then, held a knowledge of Christ at its centre and Christian conversion as its principal aim. It ensured complete immersion in the Word of God through its determinedly Bible-based content, and emphasised interactive oral instruction in the vernacular.

All of these elements find resonance in Waters' granddaughter's first play. What is more, they would have been familiar to *U-Nongqause's* original audience, which comprised both Mary Waters' students and the larger mission-based community at All Saints. Six of the 25 pages that make up the work are readings taken directly from Scripture – texts, which mission congregants would have heard at least once or twice every year during the course of Daily Prayer, and portions of which they might well have memorised.³⁴ The form of the play, which, as we shall see, is constructed as an interchange between Christian and heathen, during the course of which a lesson is unfolded, is reminiscent of the catechising which Mary's grandfather and then father set so much store by. In this context, too, the ultimate conviction and conversion of unbelievers would have been anticipated. Finally, there is Waters' use of the vernacular and a dramatic form. In the Cape Province, while instruction in Xhosa was not compulsory in schools (and many parents apparently railed against it), training in the vernacular was 'insisted upon' for

³⁰ Sections of the *BCP* had been translated into Xhosa as early as 1845. The first full translation appeared in 1865 and Mary Waters' uncle, Bishop Key, was involved in the 1906 revised edition. Griffiths, *Bibliography*, 193:5. The first Xhosa translation of the New Testament was published in 1846 and the full Bible in 1859.

³¹ Bather, *Hints on Catechising*, 1848:xiv & 13–4.

³² *Mission Field*, iii, 114.

³³ Waters to Gray, 31 December 1857, and 'St. Mark's Mission', *SPG Quarterly Paper*, February 1871, 4. Gray, on examining one of the outstation schools remarked: 'In the Church Catechism, arithmetic, music, and writing, all the children showed a fair proficiency'.

³⁴ *BCP*, x. The passages quoted are, by order of appearance, 1 Chronicles 16:7–36, 1 Samuel 28:3–19, Isaiah 13:1–20, Isaiah 61:1–6, Isaiah 34:1–4, Matthew 24:29–30 and Revelation 21:1–7.

trainee teachers. When considered in light of the official recommendation that, regardless of the medium of instruction, all religious and moral teaching be conducted in the vernacular, the situation appears (slightly) less paradoxical.³⁵ It was clearly felt that in the teaching of a subject that held eternal significance but contained many 'foreign' concepts, nothing must be left to chance. The use of an unfamiliar language might interfere with the pupils' understanding. Waters' choice of Xhosa might thus be similarly understood. Considering the low literacy levels of Waters' wider rural audience, in addition to their unfamiliarity with English, her choice of genre and language was clearly pertinent. It was also unprecedented. *U-Nongqause* was not only the first play to be published on the subject of the Cattle-Killing, but the first to be published in Xhosa – leading Guy Butler to hail Mary Waters as the 'unacknowledged pioneer in Xhosa literature and South African drama' and *U-Nongqause* as the 'most influential' of her works.³⁶

While Waters' play is important for these reasons (and others, which will become apparent during the course of this chapter), that it has failed to infiltrate the South African literary canon is not entirely surprising. *U-Nongqause* is overwhelmingly moralistic and, for the most part, unengaging. It is modest in length and scope and is formulated as a simple binary – a dialogue played out on stage between two disparate groups, two epistemologies: Christian and heathen, 'European' and Xhosa, 'civilised' and 'uncivilised'. For each white character, there is a black counterpart: the Reverend is offset by the witchdoctor Mhlakaza, the Governor by the Chiefs Sarili and Sandile, and the colonial Magistrate by the Councillors. Incidentally, it might well be that Waters' support for 'women's lib' only developed later, for *U-Nongqause* is indisputably the domain of men. In contrast to Metelerkamp's prophetess, and despite the title of Waters' play and the sketch of a nubile young woman that graces its cover, Waters' Nongqawuse is not the subject of the work. Indeed, she is assigned a minor role, speaking only once – and then in her sleep.³⁷ Waters' grandmother, the Reverend's Wife, has a few lines in the first scene, and reappears in the last, but does not elicit a mention in the list of *Dramatis Personae*.

³⁵ Loram, *Education*, 139, 227, 230–1, 286.

³⁶ Butler, 'Mary Waters' and Butler to Maskew Miller, 11 January 2000 (NELM). Candlish Koti appears to have been involved with the play, either in the role of translator (Opland, *Xhosa Poets*, 229) or collaborator (Mahlasela, *General Survey*, 11). Neither Opland nor Mahlasela (who was responsible for the translation of the play into the new orthography) substantiates his claim and there is no evidence of an 'original' English script. It is worth pointing out that Waters was almost certainly fluent in Xhosa, having been raised on a rural mission station by a father who was renowned for his command of the language. Broster, *Red Blanket*, 193. I am working from a rough translation by Nathi Mkosi, Zanele Mkosi and Peter Midgley – with Biblical passages taken from the *King James Version*.

³⁷ The title does not, as is commonly assumed, refer to the prophetess, but rather to the period of the event. In *Great Men*, Waters speaks of 'the terrible event known as "Nongqause"' (36). This was common usage amongst the Xhosa (Soga, *AmaXhosa*, 420).

On the whole, Waters' characterisation is uninspired and pragmatic. Indeed there is no evidence of development and little of interiority. Interplay between the characters in the form of action or dialogue is limited, with the script consisting for the most part of long 'set' texts: Biblical passages and Xhosa oral poems. Although something of the personalities of the two Xhosa chiefs (who have only a dozen lines between them) is conveyed through the performance of their praises, almost nothing is learnt of the Reverend. While he has, by far, the biggest role, his part consists primarily of reading from Scripture, which gives little insight into him as an individual. What we see is a prophetic character who 'speaks' on God's behalf and who is situated in direct spiritual lineage with the Old Testament prophets and God's own son. Through the Reverend, however, much *is* revealed about the character and nature of God – the actual, if unseen, lead role in *U-Nongqause*.

In this dramatised spiritual battle for a nation's soul, Waters' characters are eclipsed by the Christian God, and their individuality subsumed in the larger figurative roles that they are made to represent. Although early local audiences would probably have assumed the identity of Waters' grandfather in the play, the missionary character is simply and anonymously identified as the 'Reverend'.³⁸ The 'Magistrate', who can be none other than Charles Brownlee, for he enacts a scene from his own *Reminiscences* in Act IV,³⁹ receives the same generic treatment. The 'Governor', Sir George Grey, is the single white character to be named, and then only in a stage direction. Despite his identification and the fact that his role is bolstered and personalised by his (fictional) presence on Waters' journey to Sarhili in 1855,⁴⁰ however, his part in *U-Nongqause* remains symbolic. The impression created by the absence of proper names – and underscored by the coming together of the three in the play's (again fictional) dénouement – is of stock characters. Waters' Reverend, Magistrate and Governor personify the religious, civic, and political elements of 'civilisation', all of which are ultimately seen to be working towards the establishment of God's kingdom.

In contrast to Waters' 'European' characters, and in a noteworthy inversion of countless colonial texts (fiction, ethnography and travel writing) wherein whites are specified and blacks homogenised, in this play, all six Xhosa characters (Mhlakaza, Nongquase, chiefs Sarili and Sandile and their two councillors, Gxabagxaba and Tyala) *are* named. But this act of naming,

³⁸ Of course later audiences in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth (where the play was performed in 1933, 1944 and 1945) would not have made the connection. I would like to thank Jeff Opland for drawing my attention to these performances and supplying copies of the following reviews: 'Advertisement for the Bantu Dramatic Society' (7 October 1933), 'U "Nongqause" e Bhai' (19 August 1944), 'Umdialo ka "Nongqause"' (29 September 1945) and 'Umdialo ka "Nongqause" e Bhai' (13 October 1945) all in *Umteteli wa Bantu*.

³⁹ Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 151.

⁴⁰ It was, in fact, Archdeacon Merriman who accompanied Waters on this journey.

rather than empowering the Xhosa, fixes them in time and space, containing their influence to a single historical moment. While their more fluid white counterparts appear as representatives of eternally significant and universal principles and institutions, the Xhosa are portrayed as merely human, their influence fleeting. 'Yes, O Chief,' agrees the Reverend, 'your kingdom is great! But there will come a time for you to die, when your powers will be gone; when you will go to a place unaccompanied by your wives, and your warriors, and your cattle and your fields [...] It is because of that kingdom that I am here'.⁴¹ It should be noted, however, that despite Waters' (rather unsurprising) equating of the European race with an advanced state of being, the permanence of this equation is not assumed. That the roles of the white characters in this drama were performed by black actors, suggests that the ideas and entities represented by these characters are not racially exclusive; that Waters is in fact gesturing to the potential of black people to assume positions of responsibility in the 'civilised' world.

For all this, a formal binary persists, and the differences between the two groups in the play is further emphasised by the unremitting exchange that takes place between them, on several other levels. The narrative of *U-Nongqause* plays out over eight short acts, with the action alternating between the Reverend's home and a Xhosa setting: inside Mhlakaza's hut, at Sarhili's Great Place, Hohita; or at Sandile's homestead at Qolonci. There is no mention of costumes and very little in the way of props or stage direction. (With regard to the latter, it might be argued that the author was expecting, even relying upon, her pupil-performers to improvise the details. Certainly Waters draws attention to 'the Native's ability to act' in her Foreword.)⁴² While authorial direction is kept to a minimum, the contrasting domestic arrangements and cultural traditions of European and Xhosa life are nonetheless clearly depicted. Although the Reverend is of modest means (his house has a goat-pellet floor and hand-made furnishings), evidence of 'civilisation' can nevertheless be seen in the drinking of coffee, the reference to the hour – 'What time is it?' – and the furniture (albeit rudimentary). The latter, 'made by the reverend', is a sign too of the Reverend's thrift and protestant work ethic. The only other 'European' prop, and the most important in this play, is the ever-present Bible – again, a symbol of 'civilisation', and one that denotes both the Christian religion and the written word. Mhlakaza's hut, on the other hand, is furnished with prostrate bodies, an open fireplace and a pot containing a suspicious brew. While props are entirely absent from the courtyards of the two chiefs (at least in the published script), traditional Xhosa life is evoked through stage directions that indicate, for example, festive celebrations, Xhosa leaders sitting on the ground

⁴¹ Waters, *U-Nongqause*, 10.

⁴² Waters, Foreword, *U-Nongqause*. This notion was reiterated and expounded upon by James Henderson in his Preface to Waters' *The Light*.

'snuffing tobacco' and Mhlakaza wielding a spear on the Day of the Resurrection. Whereas the Reverend reads and speaks with the Governor in refined 'soft tones', the praises of the Xhosa chiefs are loudly declaimed and a councillor whistles to attract the people's attention.

In his critique of *U-Nongqause*, Markin Orkin argues that

The culture across the frontier [that of the Xhosa], is presented, in accordance with colonialist and assimilationist discourse, in terms of absence – apart from a token praise song, no attempt is made to invest the non-colonised world with any authenticity.⁴³

Far from Orkin's 'absence', however, Waters' play is brimming full of 'authentic' detail – particularly in its use of traditional performing arts: dancing, singing and oral poetry. The song 'umQolo we Namba' is specified and the three lengthy oral praise poems (*izibongo*), if not original, certainly demonstrate a thorough grasp of the genre's idiom, form and content.⁴⁴ While the details of native life are not on the same scale as in Beattie's *Pambaniso*, there was certainly enough to attract the attention of Alfred Hoernlé – Head of the Bantu Studies Department at the University of the Witwatersrand. In his decidedly uncomplimentary review of the production of Waters' play by the Bantu Dramatic Society, specific mention is made of these features and the author's authentic (if unimaginative) treatment of them.

Probably, the best scene in the play is the one in which the witch-doctor seeks to awaken his daughter... This glimpse of Native customs, and other glimpses of a less striking kind (e.g. samples of tribal praise songs; the calabash filled with Native beer circulating among the councillors and so on) are among the liveliest bits in a drearily-moving story, and even they are too long drawn out. Very likely, after the Native manner, they are actually even more drawn out in real life, but, none the less, this sort of photographic truth makes poor art on the stage. The very players seemed to get tired of their parts.⁴⁵

Others, including a reviewer for the Xhosa newspaper *Imvo zabantsundu*, were more complimentary. Although the writer's support for *U-Nongqause* and Waters' reading of the Cattle-Killing probably indicates a position incommensurate with the 'authenticity' that Orkin sought, his review nonetheless draws attention to the plays' 'excellent Xosa... particularly, the poetic outbursts' and notes that 'The drama is made especially impressive by the dignity of

⁴³ Orkin, *Drama*, 30.

⁴⁴ The *Umteteli* advertisement for the 1933 performance also refers to 'Enchanting Bantu Music'. It is possible that these oral poems, like the Biblical passages in *U-Nongqause*, were borrowed from an uncited source.

⁴⁵ Hoernlé, 'Bantu Dramatic Society', 226. Hoernlé was also the President of the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg, Chairman of the Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Natives and, from 1934, President of the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Sarili, Sandile and the contrasted councillors Gxabagxaba and Tyala'. The journalist further remarks upon Waters' sensitive treatment of the event, which 'pays due regard to the tender susceptibilities' of her Xhosa audience.⁴⁶ Even J. H. Soga, who describes the Cattle-Killing as a nationalist movement and steers well clear of theories of divine intervention, acknowledges Waters' 'realistic interpretation' of the prophetess and precedes an extended quotation from *U-Nongqause* with: 'The pith of the messages of Nongqause and Mhlakaza may be put in words extracted from a book by M. W. Waters'.⁴⁷ Indeed, of all the authors of literary Cattle-Killing accounts examined in this dissertation, Mary Waters could lay greatest claim both to the event and to an understanding of traditional Xhosa life. That she had the credentials (which included her family's and her own long acquaintance with the Xhosa and her familiarity with their language and traditions) to tackle 'native' subjects was repeatedly affirmed by prominent 'native authorities' – both white and black. W. G. Bennie, James Henderson, J. H. Dugard and D. D. T. Jabavu all supplied prefaces or introductions to her work.⁴⁸

'THEY SHALL BE HIS PEOPLE, AND GOD HIMSELF SHALL BE THEIR GOD'⁴⁹

While Waters' portrayal of Xhosa life was deemed accurate, and reviews testify to the audiences' interest in this sort of ethnographic detail, it was not enough – according at least to Hoernlé – to save the play from its author's proselytising. 'The authoress complicates her tale,' he writes, 'by trying to point a moral through contrasting the superstition-ridden heathens with the Bible-reading missionary'. It was as if, Hoernlé continues, Waters was 'trying to advertise the Bible, through the medium of the stage, to Native audiences'. But Hoernlé had missed the point. For Waters, it was not a case of 'complicating' or appending a moral lesson onto the tragedy of the Cattle-Killing. For her, the moral lesson was intrinsic to the event. Rather than a 'story of mass-hysteria' that provided good dramatic material for a play,⁵⁰ the Cattle-Killing was a seminal event in the preordained, God-directed, spiritual enlightenment of the Xhosa. As such, the Bible, far from being marketed, was an integral component of *U-Nongqause*. Not only does it symbolise God's presence and his hand in the event, it provides doctrinal grounds for

⁴⁶ 'Reviews', *Imvo zabantsundu*, 10 February 1925, 5. *Imvo* was aimed at the educated black elite and tended to espouse the views of the white liberals that funded it. Opland, *Xhosa Poets*, 242–251.

⁴⁷ Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, 243.

⁴⁸ Bennie was a Chief Inspector of Native Education; Henderson, the Principal of Lovedale from 1906–30 and Dugard, Inspector of Schools, Engcobo. Jabavu (amongst other things) was the first black Professor at Fort Hare University and founder of the Black Teachers' Association. See their forewords in *U-Nongqause*, *The Light* and *Amaḡali*. Reference is also made to Waters' knowledge of the 'native' in the reviews of *Cameos* and *Fairy Tales* in *The South African Outlook*, January 1927, 20 and August 1927, 160.

⁴⁹ Revelation 21:3 in Waters, *U-Nongqause*, 25.

⁵⁰ Hoernlé, 'Bantu Dramatic Society', 226.

Waters' reading of the tragedy.⁵¹ Despite its prominence and ultimate authority, however, the Bible does not go uncontested in her play.

As the location and action shift between the ordered, quiet and 'civilised' indoor space inhabited by the Christians, to the predominantly outdoor areas of the heathen, animated by singing and dancing; so too does the narrative jump between the set textual pieces of the 'Europeans' and the oral ones of the natives. The Reverend's Scriptural 'harangues' are countered by the Xhosas' praises and prophecies, the written word of God is set against the orally transmitted words of the ancestors. This verbal interchange between heathen and Christian in *U-Nongqause*, as I have already suggested, brings to mind the pedagogical method of catechising. But while, like catechising, the play is predicated upon a call and response pattern that is ultimately directed towards the unfolding and teaching of a specific lesson, it is not merely a mechanical exercise in repetition and memorisation. Rather, it is a process that allows for (and expects) 'wrong' answers – even dissent.

U-Nongqause opens in Act One with an unexpected visit by the Governor to the Reverend's mission station. Over dinner they discuss the Xhosas' belief in the ancestors: how it prevents them from becoming 'a great nation' (in the words of Grey) and inhibits 'the work of Christ' (which is the Reverend's concern). The greater part of the act, however, is taken up with the reading of a long Biblical passage, which sets Waters' 'catechising' in motion. 1 Chronicles 16:7–36 contains the psalm of thanksgiving sung by King David on the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem. The Ark, which contains the Ten Commandments, symbolises God's holy law, his very presence. In the song which the Reverend narrates, David asserts God's supremacy, exhorts the Israelites to 'seek [God's] face continually' and to remember His promises: that they are 'chosen' and have an inheritance. The psalmist reminds the people of God's faithfulness to their ancestors and urges them to 'Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations'. As with all subsequent Biblical passages this one is replete with contemporaneous significance. The Reverend, in narrating this passage, assumes the role and words of David for himself – proclaiming not only the establishment of God and His law in Kaffraria; but endorsing his own presence among the Xhosa, his missionary work and its inevitable triumph. The reading also contains an implicit challenge to the pagan 'natives': 'Here is the true God – will you accept Him?'

⁵¹ Waters' play, and particularly her use of the Bible, *may* have been intended as a counter to the notion that Nongqawuse's prophecies were not only compatible with Christianity but corroborated by the Bible. This was a view held by some of the *amathamba* at the time of the Cattle-Killing. Peires, 'Central Beliefs', 60–3.

The Xhosa response to the Reverend's opening gambit is immediate and issues directly from his spiritual counterpart, Mhlakaza. He, too, is seen invoking supernatural powers, but, unlike the Reverend, it is not to the Christian God that he appeals, but the spirits of his ancestors. Alarmed by the incursion of the white colonisers and the precarious state of the Xhosa nation, Mhlakaza forces Nongqawuse to drink a potion that will rouse the spirits. Speaking through the girl's sleeping form, the ancestors describe 'a land of death', of a scattered people and destruction. But there is hope, too – 'when the winter has passed, spring succeeds; when death has passed, the resurrection comes'.⁵² The spirits promise that from this devastation, a new Xhosa nation will arise to fill the replenished and fertile land; that their enemies will be driven into the sea. Mhlakaza's 'answer', then, is unequivocal: the Xhosa don't need your God, the spirits of our ancestors have seen 'the oppression of our people by the Whites' and will 'save the nation from destruction'. With that, the audience is abruptly transported back to the Reverend's house where he is found, alone this time, reading from the Bible.

In his treatise on religious catechising, Bather asserts that a good catechist should be able to 'turn to account the blunders which the pupils make in their answers'.⁵³ And in selecting 1 Samuel 28:3–19 as a response to Mhlakaza, the Reverend seeks to do just this. In a passage that echoes the scene in the witchdoctor's hut, the Reverend reads of King Saul, anxious and alone on the eve of battle. The prophet Samuel, to whom he would usually turn, is dead, and in desperation Saul violates God's law by appealing to the Witch of Endor to summon Samuel's spirit. Samuel's ghost duly appears and admonishes Saul, prophesying that because of his disobedience, his kingship will be torn from his hand and he and his sons killed. In choosing this passage, the Reverend demonstrates the folly of Mhlakaza's response. More than this, he prophesies that the witchdoctor's occult practices, like Saul's, will provoke the wrath of God and that their fate will be the same: he and his progeny (which in this telling is his 'daughter', Nongqawuse) will die. What is striking, is that, having set Samuel's ghost alongside those of the Xhosa ancestors, Waters is not denying the presence of the spirits (unlike all the other early accounts) – nor even that their words and visions are false (in fact, their prophecies resonate with those later narrated from the Book of Revelation). Rather, she infers that the deception lies with those who consult and worship the dead, rather than God.

In Acts III and IV, the spiritual destiny of the Xhosa is taken to the courts of the Paramount Chief. In the Third, the Reverend once again poses his challenge: announcing the Good News and urging the Xhosa to put their faith not in transitory earthly powers, but in the eternal power

⁵² *U-Nongause*, 5–6.

⁵³ Bather, *Hints on Catechising*, 1852:61.

of God. In the Fourth, Mhlakaza parries with the good news of the ancestors and the imminent demise of the 'Europeans'. The ball is now firmly in the Xhosas' court and, as if to emphasise the significance of their decision and to elicit the 'correct' reply, the Reverend closes Act IV with the prophetic words of Isaiah, warning of God's terrible judgment to those who do not fear him. But the Reverend's Scriptural prompting is to no avail. When he and Mhlakaza's messenger return to the Great Place in Act 5, the latter's tidings are delivered and eagerly taken up, while the missionary is unceremoniously dismissed. Alone, once again, we find the Reverend reading a passage, almost certainly intended to rebuke and reassure his obdurate catechumens. It is the very text that Jesus recited in the Nazarean synagogue before he was driven from the city.⁵⁴ In it, the divine office of the Old Testament prophet – and by association that of Jesus Christ and the Reverend himself – is described and affirmed. The passage also proclaims the rebirth of a devastated people, and a future jubilee.

In catechising, the lesson is 'unfolded' by fits and starts, until the 'right' conclusion is reached. Similarly, in Waters' play, despite two unsatisfactory attempts at conversion, the spiritual obstinacy of the Xhosa is broached yet again. This time, in an ever-widening arc of reach, the action is taken, in Act 6, across the Kei River to Sandile in the British Protectorate of British Kaffraria. In a scene that mirrors the Reverend's and Mhlakaza's visits to Sarhili, the vacillating chief is forced to choose between the ancestors and God. Despite his closer proximity to the 'civilising' influence of the colonists, he too is finally persuaded by the prophecies. The Reverend's response – in the form of Matthew 24:29–30 – is succinct and devastating. Sandile might have evaded the wrath of his ancestors, but he will not be able to escape the true judge, the Son of God, whose return is imminent.⁵⁵

The Day of Resurrection finally dawns in the penultimate Act, but as time passes with no sign of the ancestors, festivity and anticipation is supplanted by anger and despair. The failure of the prophecies is confirmed when Mhlakaza, now denounced as a 'deceiver', flees. If *U-Nongqause* begins with a 'question' posed by the Reverend – 'Here is the true God. Will you accept Him?' – it ends, after many incorrect 'answers', Scriptural prompting from the Reverend and – ultimately – the tragic example of the Cattle-Killing, with the 'correct' Christian response. The Xhosa have been 'shown their errors... and [been] led, bit by bit, to set themselves right'.⁵⁶ Towards the end of this act the councillor, Tyali, exhorts the Xhosa to acknowledge God's

⁵⁴ Isaiah 61:1–6 and Luke 4:16–24.

⁵⁵ *U-Nongqause*, 20. The Reverend is once again placed in a spiritual lineage with Jesus, who recited this passage shortly after he prophesied the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and warned of the coming judgment.

⁵⁶ Bather, *Hints on Catechising*, 1852:68.

sovereignty. 'Let us raise our voices till the cliffs tear up,' he entreats, 'Let us plead for mercy from the Creator.'⁵⁷

Just as the recitation of the Catechism was a prerequisite for Christian baptism, so too does the conceded 'correct' response signal the readiness of the Xhosa for new life. And it is significant in this context that the role of evangelist has passed from white to black. Now it is Tyali, not the Reverend, who calls upon the Xhosa to turn to God. Nongqawuse and Mhlakaza appear briefly before dropping down dead: a dramatic, if fictional, symbol of the final demise of ancestral influence and the fulfilment of the Reverend's 'prophecy' of Act 2. And, lest further proof of God's sovereignty be required, the tragedy is attributed to his divine intervention:

The indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.⁵⁸

U-Nongqause concludes in Act 8 with a meeting between the Reverend, Governor and Magistrate. The distraught Governor decries the futility of his efforts to save the Xhosa (although not the responsibility – 'these people' he says 'are like children').⁵⁹ The Reverend, however, absolves him with the proclamation that the tragedy was 'the hand of God', and reiterates the inevitability of God's final victory with the statement: 'The power of the witchdoctor has been broken forever. It shall become a new country, a country of Christianity'. His optimism is underscored and affirmed by God himself, who is given the final word.

"I am making everything new! [...] It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son."⁶⁰

With this closing image, the failed millenarian message of the ancestors is effectively supplanted with a victorious Christian one; a promise of material regeneration in the present, with a spiritual covenant and a future, heavenly inheritance. When this final Bible reading is considered in conjunction with the play's opening scripture, this spiritual 'progression' is underscored. Whereas in the first act the tabernacle of God is described as dwelling exclusively

⁵⁷ Waters, *U-Nongqause*, 23.

⁵⁸ Isaiah 34:2–3 in *U-Nongqause*, 23–4.

⁵⁹ Waters, *U-Nongqause*, 25.

⁶⁰ Revelation 21:5–7 in *U-Nongqause*, 25.

with his 'chosen ones' in Jerusalem, in this concluding passage God's covenant is extended to *all* believers, regardless of nation; His tabernacle resides with them in a 'new Jerusalem'.

LESSONS FROM THE CATTLE-KILLING

While *U-Nongqause* emphasises the distinctiveness of Xhosa culture, the picture Waters paints of it (unlike that of Beattie in *Pambaniso*) is not merely barbaric or 'primitive'.⁶¹ Indeed, while the 'simple juxtaposition' of the parallel worlds of the Xhosa and 'Europeans' *might* have been intended to expose the primitive state of the 'superstition-ridden heathens' in contrast to that of the civilised 'Bible-reading missionary',⁶² it (perhaps inadvertently) also reveals points of contact. The oral poetry seems in no way inferior to the Biblical texts alongside which it appears. Indeed, the praises of Sarhili and Sandile not only invest the black chiefs with a substance and animation conspicuously lacking in Waters' insipid white characters, they force the similarity between them and David's psalm into relief. Despite the Reverend's undoubtedly more restrained delivery, the psalm, like the *izibongo*, is an oral praise poem intended for public use. And although it takes a divine rather than a secular ruler as its focus, like the Xhosa poetry, it describes its subject's character, deeds and influence in a proclamatory style, replete with historical allusion and hyperbole. As for the Biblical prophecies, concepts and images described therein – new worlds of plenty, nature responding to divine authority, judgement, resurrection... – all find resonance in the ancestors' words. That Waters allows the Xhosa responses to be so 'drawn out' (Hoernlé, again), furthermore, demonstrates a respect – an appreciation, even – for traditional 'native' oral culture.

But despite the continual exchange between the parallel worlds of Christian and heathen, and the appearance of equal space and consideration being assigned to each group (at least at the beginning of the play), the distribution is not equitable. The Reverend (or, rather, the Bible) gets the last word in all but one act, and although Xhosa poetry initially balances out the Scriptural readings, this ultimately breaks down. As the Xhosa take up the prophecies, the poetry stops and the Biblical passages, although they get shorter, become more frequent. God's word continues relentlessly until its final, preordained, victory. While Waters' play, like catechising, then, gives the appearance of an intellectual-religious discovery, it is in fact a carefully constructed, highly controlled process with a predetermined end goal. And the end goal – the lesson to be learnt – is none other than the supremacy of the Christian God.

⁶¹ Butcher, 'Dhlomo in Perspective', 53 and Kruger, *Drama of South Africa*, 56.

⁶² Which is how it is read by Orkin (*Drama*, 6), Hoernlé ('Bantu Dramatic Society', 226) and Kruger (*Drama of South Africa*, 56).

But religious catechising is a socialising process too. Certainly, in terms of the lives of Christians on earth, their place in society and their 'duty towards their Neighbour', the Church catechism is explicit, the Christian convert is called:

To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters: To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters [...] To learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me.⁶³

While moral instruction, then, is *U-Nongqause's* principal undertaking, there can be no doubt that when placed in the broader contexts for which it was intended ('native education') and from which it was created (a country marked by racial inequality and segregation), the play can be seen to function in other ways. On the few occasions that *U-Nongqause* has received the attention of literary critics, it has been discussed, and almost immediately dismissed, in relation to H. I. E. Dhlomo's play on the same subject, *The Girl Who Killed to Save* (1936). These comparative readings, led by Martin Orkin's, focus on the degree to which the works contest the State and the prevailing discourses of the dominant classes.⁶⁴ Unlike *The Girl*, which provides evidence of dissent on a number of fronts and comes close to 'disidentification' and 'an alternative discourse', *U-Nongqause* is said to endorse and draw upon 'colonialist discourse'. Occasional moments of 'counteridentification' in Waters' play are said to be 'deliberately trivialised' and to have been admitted primarily in order to render them harmless.⁶⁵

While Orkin's reading is compelling, his over-insistence on the material element requires some response. *U-Nongqause* certainly touches on issues of land and resistance, but this is *not* its emphasis – as the sheer predominance and positioning of the Biblical texts as well as the full significance of the Reverend character demonstrate. For Waters, this is a spiritual rather than a material struggle, with Xhosa resistance directed first and foremost against God – not the State. It is God's word that is rejected, God's wrath that is roused and God's victory that is assured. And while the outcome is the same, the emphasis for Waters is not so much the futility of Xhosa resistance, but rather the inevitable accomplishment of God's divine plan. It is a subtle, but I think important, distinction. It is also worth rebuffing Orkin's assertion that 'The fact that the missionary might be an agent of the civil authority is something of which the text is not

⁶³ 'A Catechism', *BCP*, 273–4. Being a staunch Anglican, this is the catechism with which Waters would have been familiar.

⁶⁴ The idea of a comparative reading was first suggested by Gérard in *Four African Literatures*, 78. Orkin's initial reading of the two plays appears in a 1987 unpublished conference paper, 'Contesting Prevailing Discourse'. A revised and extended version appears in *Drama and State*, 26–32. Butcher ('Herbert Dhlomo', 53–4) and Kruger (*Drama of South Africa*, 56) rely heavily on Orkin's reading for their discussion of *U-Nongqause*. Dhlomo's play is the subject of Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

⁶⁵ Orkin, *Drama*, 36, 30–1.

ashamed'.⁶⁶ This is simply not supported by the play – nor, incidentally, would it have been endorsed by H. T. Waters himself. Despite his obvious admiration for George Grey, Waters made his feelings on the matter clear when he complained that 'The horrible suspicion that I am a government agent annoys me at every step'. If anything, the civil authority in *U-Nongqause* is shown to be under God's: when, in the final act, the governor bemoans his inability to rescue the Xhosa, the reverend reminds him that it is God, not man, who is in control.⁶⁷

For all this, it is hard to contest Orkin's statements that Waters presents a benevolent view of the ruling white classes, that 'the images of family, civil power and Christianity' in the first and final acts appear to 'set the seal on the legitimacy of the dominant order'⁶⁸ and that Xhosa resistance is depicted as useless. There is also the undeniable and unpalatable fact that despite the Xhosa's newly enlightened state, the extension of God's covenant to them and the promise of an inheritance, established hegemonic social formations on the ground *are* left unchallenged and, therefore, perpetuated by *U-Nongqause*. The play's final speech, which might be read as promoting racial equality and assimilation in the present, is more likely a statement of spiritual equality alone, with full equality to be realised only in eternity. Certainly, by directing her audience's attention to a future spiritual inheritance, Waters negates uncomfortable material and political realities, both contemporaneous and past. The Xhosas' spiritual enlightenment in the play takes place at the cost of their land and independence; in 1914, *U-Nongqause*'s Xhosa actors and audiences were largely unenfranchised and caught up in 'one of the most important segregation laws of the century' – the infamous Land Act, passed only a year before the play's production.⁶⁹ The upshot is that the story of the Cattle-Killing as it appears in *U-Nongqause* projects and thereby promotes the image of a now submissive Xhosa people, unlikely to question their apparently God-ordained 'state of life', which in the context of the Union of South Africa meant accepting the white colonisers as their 'masters', their 'betters'. And, should Waters' Xhosa subjects exhibit signs of worldly discontent, the historical perspective provided by this play lends support to the view that it is the Xhosa themselves who are responsible for their impoverished economic and political state in the present. For many white South Africans, anxious to define and establish the 'proper' role of blacks in society, to assert their own authority and to manage and contain interracial interaction, these intimations would have met

⁶⁶ Orkin, *Drama*, 29.

⁶⁷ Waters to Gray, 7 April 1856 (USPG). It might be argued that Orkin's comments in relation to *U-Nongqause*, are more pertinent to *The Light*. Indeed, Orkin's reading might have been influenced by the fact that he writes under the impression that *U-Nongqause* was written after *The Light*, not a decade earlier.

⁶⁸ Orkin, *Drama*, 29.

⁶⁹ Feinberg, 'The 1913 Natives Land Act', 65–109. The Land Act legislated territorial segregation, and reserved 80 percent of land for white use and ownership. Initially, the black population in the Cape (owing to the Cape Native franchise) was largely exempted from, and thus least affected by, this legislation. They were nonetheless very much embroiled in the issue, as detailed by Plaatje in *Native Life*. Black opposition to the Act was intense, but ultimately futile.

with approval. 'Native' education, as we shall see, was directly implicated in these political machinations and it is perhaps unsurprising that the usefulness of Waters' work in this respect was particularly noted by educationalists.

U-Nongqause's published incarnation of 1924 features an endorsement from W. G. Bennie – a friend of Waters' father and Chief Inspector of Native Schools in the Cape Province.⁷⁰ It also prominently displays Bennie's and the author's academic qualifications on the title page and was clearly intended to emphasise the educational nature and merits of Waters' play. And yet, in his short letter of support, Bennie draws attention not to the scholarly aspects of *U-Nongqause*, but rather to its socio-political implications:

By your endeavours you have made a big contribution to the Bantu nation, especially the school-going group. Hopefully this play will encourage them to treasure the stories of their nation, and that *they will read them with a spirit of acceptance, especially those who do not have this spirit.*⁷¹

He goes on to urge Waters and others to produce more historical dramas. While Bennie's note acknowledges the link between education and society, it also alludes to the paradoxical role that 'native education' sought to play in South Africa: both to uplift and contain. On the one hand, Bennie's emphasis on the value of narrating the 'national stories' from 'Bantu' history, his acknowledgment of their worth ('treasure') and their significance for nation-building ('contribution') is constructive and affirmative. On the other, the history presented is intended to subdue, to make the 'Bantu' 'accept' (the implicit subject being their present position), and thereby works towards maintaining the status quo. But if Bennie's stance on 'native education' is only obliquely touched upon here, it is fully and explicitly articulated in a presidential address given at the Annual Meeting of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science only two months earlier. In his paper entitled 'The Education of the Native', Bennie describes the precise nature of the education advocated for the black population, and stresses its topicality:

There was probably never a time when the Native question required more careful study and thought [...] Decisions taken now may be fruitful in helping to raise the Native to an enlightened and useful citizenship, or may lead to racial strife and untold trouble [...] If the Native question is approached in a sympathetic spirit and handled with informed judgment there is no reason why the Native people should not attain their place among

⁷⁰ Bennie was the first to hold this position and did so from 1920–8. He was also a third-generation Xhosa linguist who later compiled and edited *The Stewart Xhosa Readers* (1934–5) and *A Grammar of Xhosa for the Xhosa-Speaking* (1939).

⁷¹ Bennie, 'Izwi Le-Ntsusa', *U-Nongqause*. Italics added.

the civilised races of the world, not in opposition to, but in alliance with the White man, preserving their nationality and respecting the nationality of others.⁷²

Bennie was writing during a time of widespread racial unease, a period marked by an increase in discriminatory legislation as well as in expressions of black nationalism and opposition. The latter, which was in part a response to racist laws and liberal paternalism, and directly linked to the social upheavals of industrialisation, in turn institutionalised segregation as the hegemonic ideology.⁷³ In the Inspector's estimation, education had a crucial role to play in resolving this tension and, once again, the convoluted nature of its task is evident. Bennie's answer to the so-called Native Question (or racial adjustment) was to advance the indigenous population, while preserving their essential 'native' identity, in order that they might assume 'their place' as functional citizens in a segregated Union of South Africa. And 'their place', which as we shall see was clearly delineated by the type of education being promoted, was that of subordinates.

The notion that education could be used to ease 'racial strife' and produce a 'useful' 'native' people ready to meet the needs of the white ruling class had an historical precedent. When Grey assumed the governorship at the Cape in 1855, his declared aim was to make the 'ignorant barbarians' across the border 'a part of ourselves, with a common faith and common interests, useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue; in short, a source of strength and wealth for this colony, such as Providence designed them to be'.⁷⁴ The 'complete settlement of the frontier question' would be achieved, in part, through 'native' education. And the unrest triggered by Nongqawuse's prophecies in 1856, as it turned out, would give impetus to the implementation of Grey's scheme. In the midst of the Cattle-Killing, H. T. Waters received a letter from the Bishop, informing him of Sir George's support for the educational work at St Mark's and explaining that 'Politically at this time, I think [Sir George] feels it to be desirable that great exertions should be made amongst the Galekas'.⁷⁵ The governor offered, to this end, to sponsor five schoolmasters and up to six Xhosa teaching assistants (and a horse) to spur on the mission's general educational programme. Further funds were specifically earmarked for the promotion of industrial training, for Grey was quite clear about the type of education required. Missionary schooling was too 'bookish', it needed to be more practically orientated and to equip the black population for a future in 'agriculture and in simple arts'. While Sir George's grants injected much needed financial aid into the schools at St Mark's and elsewhere, however, his project was a 'comparative failure': apart from the prohibitive costs,

⁷² Bennie, 'Education of the Native', 108–19; 108 & 116.

⁷³ See Dubow, *Racial Segregation*, 39–43 and Walshe, *Black Nationalism*, 12–24. For a rundown of segregationist legislation introduced by the Botha-Smuts governments (1910–24), see Davenport, *South Africa*, 234.

⁷⁴ Cape of Good Hope, XXXVIII, 1854–5, 56–9.

⁷⁵ Grey to Waters, 25 August 1856 (WCCE).

there was resistance from both black and white. Bishop Cotterill felt that industrial training had been 'imposed' at St Mark's at the expense of the Missionaries' 'proper duties'. While H. T. Waters was more sympathetic towards Grey's scheme and encouraged manual work and the teaching of trades, his primary concern was his pupils' souls, and a 'book' education aimed at teaching the law of Christ remained the focus of his schools. Industrial training was also regarded with suspicion by many black parents and students who equated it with an inferior education.⁷⁶ Despite this, the idea of vocational, rather than purely scholarly, education for black children was never abandoned and continued to be vigorously defended.⁷⁷

By the time Bennie delivered his speech in 1924, in fact, a strong practical component had become entrenched in 'native' educational policy. In addition to this, there was a new interest and emphasis on the 'native' himself. 'The main principles underlying the new curriculum' in the Cape Colony, Bennie explained, were:

i) that the education of the child should be built upon such knowledge as he already possesses; (ii) that it should be closely related to his daily life and experience; (iii) that it should be such as to fit him for his future career; (iv) that for educational, as well as economic, reasons, manual and industrial training should be specially emphasised; (v) that in view of the fact that 90 per cent. of the Native population live on the land, and should be encouraged to do so, special attention should be devoted to agricultural subjects.⁷⁸

These principles, which Bennie clearly subscribed to and which it was his job to implement, were largely due to proposals set out in Charles T. Loram's influential work, *The Education of the South African Native* (1917) – as, indeed, was Bennie's own post of Chief Inspector.⁷⁹ The opinions of this 'leading authority on African education', which were widely accepted by the mid-1920s, came with the weight of the specialised, scientifically conceived and now established educational profession behind them. Much of their influence was derived from modern pedagogical theory – most notably that of 'adaptive' education.⁸⁰ The argument was that 'native' education would be more effective if, rather than imitating European models, it

⁷⁶ Cotterill, *Journal 1862*, 13; Molteno, 'Historical Foundations', 53–4 and Dodd, *Native Vocational Training*, 11 & 133.

⁷⁷ See, for example, Theal's evidence to the Cape Colony Education Commission of 1892 in Rose and Tunmer, *Documents in Education*, 212–3.

⁷⁸ Bennie, 'Education of the Native', 112.

⁷⁹ Loram, *Education*, 93, & 234, 266–9. For Loram's educational philosophy, which was influenced by training received at Teachers' College, Columbia as well as by the African-American educational model as practised (most notably) by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee, see Hunt Davis, 'The American Model', 108–26 and Fleisch, 'Teachers College', 275 and Chapter 3. For Loram's influence in the Cape, see Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, 309.

⁸⁰ Hunt Davis, 'The American Model', 120. This assessment is borne out by Fleish, 'Teachers' College', 154 and the Phelps-Stokes Commission, *Education in East Africa*, xxi. For the authority derived from the profession, see Fleisch, 20–1. The influence exerted by 'secular experts' during the 1930s is the subject of Krige's 'Segregation, Science and Commissions', 491–506.

was tailored to the specific experiences, needs, capacity and 'probable destiny of the race'.⁸¹ In so doing, black history, social institutions, culture and language were utilised and acknowledged, and Bennie's 'preservation of nationality' (or what Loram referred to as 'encouraging pride of race'), thereby advanced. But the ultimately segregationist and racially differentiated bias of the 'native education' project is unmistakable. The 'future career', for which education was to prepare the 'natives' (or at least the vast majority), as evinced by principles 4 and 5 above, was a somewhat attenuated one: one that effectively removed the black population both geographically and economically from the white preserves of urban areas and professionalised labour.⁸² Even the minority who 'prove[d] their fitness... for higher work' was to toil 'among their [own] people'. As a race, their advancement would be gradual; for while both Loram and Bennie agreed that 'native' intellectual capacity was not inherently inferior, it was nonetheless deemed to have been impeded by their low level of 'civilisation'.⁸³ The appropriateness and continuance of white rule was assumed. Although proponents of 'adaptive' education were more than often liberal and well-intentioned, driven both by moral impulses and modern 'scientific' principles and practices, then, there can be little doubt that 'the theory of adapted education served to legitimize and perpetuate "backward people's" subordinate position in colonial societies'.⁸⁴

As someone personally acquainted with leading figures in 'native' education in the Cape, whose own educational practices (certainly from the 1920s onward) were aligned with that of the experts, and as one who produced teaching materials for 'native' schools, Mary Waters was very much implicated in the 'native' education project and its questionable goals.⁸⁵ In the decade between the writing of *U-Nongqause* and her second play, *The Light – Ukukanya*, Waters continued to establish herself in the teaching profession. She underwent further formal education, completing the Lady's Licentiate in Arts (L.L.A.) with an Honours in History from the University of St Andrew's, Scotland in 1924. A number of years spent on the staff at the Cradock Training College, which included a spell as Vice-Principal, added to her practical experience.⁸⁶ While the College catered exclusively to white students, Waters was never far from the pulse of 'native' affairs – both generally as well as in respect to education. During this time she delivered a speech on 'Social Reform in the [native] Location' (which concluded with a 'spirited exchange'

⁸¹ Loram, *Education*, 1.

⁸² This principle was in line with recent legislation, in the form of the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923, which radically curtailed black urbanization. Bennie, 'Education of the Native', 114.

⁸³ Bennie, 'Education of the Native', 117–8 and Loram, *Education*, 224–5.

⁸⁴ Fleish, 'Teachers' College', 20.

⁸⁵ Incidentally, Waters' brother-in-law, Hector Anderson, was a school inspector who edited volumes including *English Poems Selected for Reading in South African Schools* (1911).

⁸⁶ The L.L.A. was equivalent to a Masters degree. Waters subjects were Biblical History & Literature, English, Comparative Religion, Geography, Physiology and Honours History (first class). Private correspondence from Rachel Hart (Muniments Archivist, St. Andrews University), 15 March 2006.

between the author and the mayor of Cradock),⁸⁷ prepared two 'native' school plays for publication and was clearly conversant with, if not engaged in, debates surrounding black schooling. Certainly, evidence of her familiarity and concern abound in *The Light*. This play, unlike its predecessor *U-Nongqause*, directly addresses the position of contemporary black South Africans, their future, and the role and nature of their education. In its secular leaning, use of 'local' poetry and choice of language – as well as in its encouragement of 'pride of race', the promotion of agricultural training and a return to the 'native' reserves, Waters reflects the pedagogical principles and practices advocated by her sponsor, Bennie and the expert, Loram.

HARNESSING THE LIGHT

Like *U-Nongqause*, *The Light* was intended for 'higher Native schools and institutions', but would also presumably have reached a wider general audience. Like *U-Nongqause*, too, Waters' second play is unashamedly didactic, 'develops' and 'utilises' the 'Native dramatic gift, or instinct', and draws upon black history for its subject matter.⁸⁸ But the history itself, the use to which it is put and the way in which it is taught, is ultimately quite different. While the world that informs, and is described in, Waters' *U-Nongqause* is that of her grandfather, *The Light* is firmly rooted in her own: one marked by increasing industrialisation and urbanisation. One in which the Xhosa no longer occupy the position of an independent nation, but that of a subject people, and where they were more often considered not as distinct group but as part of a larger black collective. It was a world, too, in which a secular, scientifically-conceived approach to education had replaced a Bible-based one, and where social advancement and function in the present had supplanted future salvation as the primary goal of 'native' education. In Waters' world, a highly pragmatic approach to the instruction of History was recommended: courses were to include an 'outline of the rights and duties of Natives' and to give 'special reference to past and present history and condition of Natives'.⁸⁹ Indeed, according to Loram's formulation, History was a fundamental component of the curriculum. 'If we are to develop pride of race in the Natives,' he wrote, 'not only as a preventative for miscegenation with the Whites, but as a basis for the responsibilities of self-government, we cannot afford to omit from our course of study an account of the history and institutions of the races of South Africa'.⁹⁰ In Waters' *The Light*, the stated goals (to foster black self-worth, advancement and racial separation) and guidelines for the teaching of History are explicitly and studiously addressed. In so doing, the author takes a very different approach to black history than that of her earlier play. *The Light* is

⁸⁷ Jeff Butler to his brother Guy, 13 December 1991 (CL Correspondence). *Midland News*, 16, 18, 22 and 25 August 1924.

⁸⁸ Henderson, 'Preface', *The Light*.

⁸⁹ Loram, *Education*, 280–1 & 285.

⁹⁰ Loram, *Education*, 38 & 99.

distinguished by a more secular emphasis, the incorporation of the present and an expanded reach.

The scope of *The Light* is far more ambitious than *U-Nongqause*, which takes as its subject a single people and event. Indeed, this play's subtitle declares it to be nothing less than '*A Drama of the History of the Bantus, 1600–1924*'. Presiding over this four-act play and its 300-odd year history is the allegorical, 'shrouded' figure of 'Civilization'. She begins her odyssey with the Xhosa on the banks of the Kei River prior to the arrival of the Europeans, before moving on to the Zulu in Act II, the Basuto and Bechuana (Act III) and, in Act IV, completing the circle by ending back with the Xhosa in the present day. Despite the play's circular form and sometimes chronologically-challenged narrative, its model of history (like that of *U-Nongqause*) is predictably linear.

This 'Drama of Light' embodies the story of the incoming of Christianity and of Christian civilization among the southern Bantu, presenting their tribal struggles, after the manner of Greek tragedy, as the outcome of an omnipotent purpose directing human destinies to its own end.⁹¹

Throughout, it is 'Civilization' who comments upon and charts the coming of the Light while occasionally interacting with the historical characters. By the time she returns to the Xhosa in the final act, they have been enlightened – transformed from savage to 'Civilised'.

In its portrayal of a collective 'Bantu' nation, Waters' second play acknowledges and attempts to harness the spirit of black nationalism – and sometimes separatism – that had for a while been manifesting itself in the establishment of independent churches and schools (such as those under the Ethiopian and Wellington movements), a country-wide trade union and political organisations (most notably Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union and the South African Native National Congress). White liberals including Waters' uncle and brother considered such expressions of national assertion to be positive evidence of 'race pride' that simply needed to be channelled by sympathetic whites in order to avert radicalisation.⁹² And *The Light*, in its construction of a 'Bantu' nation – complete with a purpose-made progressive national history, approved cultural forms (both traditional and Christianised), black heroes and, above all, an appropriate and hopeful future – might well be read as part of this project.

⁹¹ Henderson, 'Preface'.

⁹² For the Ethiopian movement, in which Waters' uncle, Bishop Key 'took a deep interest' and with whom her brother worked at St Albans, see Callaway, *Shepherd*, 175–9. For Wellington's Garveyite-inspired movement, see Edgar, 'African Educational Protest', 184–91. See too Walshe, *Black Nationalism*, 19–20. Naturally, less liberally inclined whites viewed such movements with trepidation.

In Waters' presentist rendering of history, the past is used to construct an ultimately affirmative vision of the South African 'Native' and his role in the Union. It is a history of progress that promotes 'native' self-respect and (partial) self-sufficiency in contrasting past racial antagonisms with calls for co-operation and respect between the races in the present day, and by setting the three 'native' evils of 'Ignorance, Idleness and Superstition' against recently-acquired knowledge, industry and Christian faith.⁹³ In a Preface that recalls Bennie's earlier letter of recommendation for *U-Nongqause*, James Henderson (then-Principal of Lovedale, the most respected secondary institute for black education at the time) writes: 'To the people in their present phase of gloom and discontent [*The Light*] offers timeous encouragement, for it strikes notes of hope and courage, and gives ground to them for faith in their future'. In the context of the brutal quashing of a black municipal workers' strike in Port Elizabeth, the Bulhoek massacre and the passing of the Native Urban Areas Act (to name just a few reasons for the 'gloom and discontent'), Waters' vision for the South African native would have been encouraging – at least to some.

While the Cattle-Killing (which is to be found in Act I, Scenes XI–XIII) helps to usher in this apparently positive state of affairs, it is unlikely that it would, in and of itself, have inspired 'pride of race'. Occupying only six pages, the tragedy accounts for a relatively small portion of the play and consists largely of sections quoted verbatim from *U-Nongqause*. There are, however, crucial omissions (as we shall see), which together with the new context – the event's placement within the framework of a longer collective black history – results in a substantial reinterpretation. While re-imagining the Cattle-Killing as part of a Black National story confers upon the event a broader significance, it also strips it of much of its impact. Rather than being the sole event effecting transformation, in *The Light* the Cattle-Killing is only one of a number of moments portrayed in the 'Bantus' collective subjugation – or, as Waters would have it, their collective civilisation.⁹⁴ The tragedy of the Cattle-Killing is both subsumed in the metanarrative of the inexorable and violent coming of the Light, and soon forgotten in the details of Piet Retief's murder and the Battle of Blood River that immediately follow. Even as Civilization recounts her interpretation of the event to George Grey, her eyes are focused elsewhere:

The land has been ploughed; it is fair, the hand of suffering has fertilised it. Sow the seeds of civilization, weed out the tares, laziness, ignorance and superstition. Their roots are no longer deep; the light will wither them up. Call the missionary, the

⁹³ Waters, *The Light*, 20.

⁹⁴ Somhlahllo clearly drew upon *The Light* (4–6) for a section of his own play *Nongqause* (1969), 2–4. In contrast to Waters, however, he describes the event as 'a sacrifice' (13) and alludes to colonial culpability.

torchbearer in this dark land, and all will be well. Prosper in thy work. I go north to feed the dying flames.⁹⁵

Civilization's extended agricultural metaphor, and her description of the land as 'fair', is ironic and distasteful in the context of the denuded and devastated Kaffrarian landscape in which she stands. But it is with the missionary, the one who carries the light that will both enable the 'seeds' to grow and cause the 'weeds' to 'wither', that I am concerned. Civilization's remark points to perhaps the most important omission in this re-telling of the tragedy – that of the missionary. In stark contrast to *U-Nongqause*, the Reverend is conspicuously absent from this Cattle-Killing story, gone, too, are the Biblical texts and catechising that so dominated Waters' earlier play. Whereas in *U-Nongqause* the missionary (and, by extension, God) is entangled and implicated in the events, here he is summoned in the aftermath, with Civilization urging Grey to 'Call the missionary'. While *The Light* shares *U-Nongqause's* overall interpretation of history as pre-ordained, the Cattle-Killing itself does not here retain the religious significance conferred upon it by *U-Nongqause*. Indeed, with the hand of God missing from this particular moment, the Cattle-Killing is no longer a coming-of-faith story. Nor is the missionary the only character to suffer from the shift in focus. With Nongqawuse's prophesying scene expunged from Waters' second account, the ancestors are undermined and Mhlakaza's part curtailed. In fact, their attenuated roles and Waters' new emphasis is signalled from the outset, when a group of young men, stirred by tales of previous wars against the colonists, approach the paramount.

BOYS	We come, O Great One, to ask for war, war to drive out our conquerors.
SARHILI	The white man is strong. It is only by the power of the Witch Doctor that we can do it [...] Call Umhlakaza, the Witch Doctor. <i>(Umhlakaza Enters).</i> O wizard, you are wise and cunning, ask our ancestors for a plan to lead us to victory.
UMHLAKAZA	My daughter, Nongqause, tells me that strangers have brought her messages from our ancestors. They call us to war and promise us victory [...] The order is to destroy the cattle, empty the corn pits, and then the ancestors Hintsa and Makana will lead us to victory.
SARHILI	Thou has spoken. The order will be given to drive the white man to the sea. And the black man will be great again as in the days of Zwide. ⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *The Light*, 20.

⁹⁶ *The Light*, 16–7.

Now, instead of the movement being initiated by a spiritual figure and attributed to dreams and prophecies, it is instigated by disgruntled young men who petition their king 'to drive out our conquerors'. It is noteworthy, too, that here it is Sarhili who approaches the witchdoctor, not the other way around. That the chief refers to Mhlakaza as 'wise and cunning' in the same breath that he asks him to appeal to the ancestors, suggests there is deception in his spiritual dealings – that the ancestors, rather than being consulted in earnestness, are merely expedient and can be exploited for their popular repute. The 'power', after all, according to Sahili resides not with the spirits but in the figure of the witchdoctor. This is corroborated by the Paramount's decisive 'Thou' (not the ancestors) 'has spoken'.

If Waters' move from the spiritual is evident in the opening scene of the Cattle-Killing section, it is also to be found in its conclusion. Whereas in *U-Nongqause* Tyali's closing exhortation to the Xhosa is to turn to God, in this play, the councillor advises the people that: 'Whatever may befall thee,/Let the white man be thy friend'.⁹⁷ In Waters' second play, then, the Cattle-Killing is no longer a spiritual battle which concludes with the triumphant religious conversion of the Xhosa. Instead, it is an example of a failed resistance movement that, in highlighting 'native' superstition and irrationality, makes a case for the advancement of Western Civilisation.

The shift from a sacred to a more secular reading of history, so evident in Waters' retelling of the Cattle-Killing, infuses the rest of *The Light* too. Although missionary figures, assertions of Christian brotherhood and moments of Christian conversion are still to be found in Waters' second play (now, more appropriately, in the courts of Moshesh and Khama who, unlike the Xhosa paramount Sareli, were avowed Christians),⁹⁸ this is more a social history than a religious one. The secular effect, which reflects the move in education generally away from religion, is secured not only through a plethora of secular characters and details of material realities and worldly concerns, but on the level of the text itself. Although *The Light* is still a didactic drama, in place of *U-Nongqause's* catechising there is the influence of the allegorical morality tradition, and while this later work is not devoid of imported texts (this material accounts for nearly a quarter of the play), it comes not by Word of God, but in the words of secular poets. Waters includes no less than three of the liberal humanist, Thomas Pringle's, poems: 'Song of the Wild Bushman', 'The Caffre' and 'Makanna's Gathering'.⁹⁹ She also incorporates Xhosa texts (in English translation) in the form of two praise poems (one of which is an abridged version of

⁹⁷ Ibid, 20–1.

⁹⁸ *The Light*, 29, 31 & 33.

⁹⁹ Pringle's poems in Waters' play (5, 10 & 12) are untitled and incorrectly attributed to Francis Carey Slater. A fourth poem (again ascribed to Slater) is an anonymous work entitled 'The Lament of Tyala' that appears in Brownlee's *Reminiscences* (399–403) under the pseudonym 'Diamond Digger'.

Sarhili's praises from *U-Nongqause*) and Ntsikana's 'Great Hymn'. Waters' use of local poetry ('open-air poetry' as Slater, alluding to the propinquity of South African verse to the 'outdoors', described it)¹⁰⁰ with its familiar imagery, subject matter and (in the case of the *izibongo*) its form, draws on the 'existing knowledge and experience' of her pupils, as recommended in modern pedagogical practice. The inclusion of indigenous pieces was no doubt also intended to contribute to the building of national pride. Most interesting, however, is the way in which some of this imported material contributes to a counterplot of black resistance.

That Waters' play is not unsympathetic to opposition to 'the Light' is in large part due to Pringle's poems. All three of his works contained in the play take aboriginal subjects as their focus and engage directly with issues of racial hostility, colonial oppression and injustice, and 'Christian' hypocrisy. Through them, the poet attempts to articulate antipathy to colonial incursion from a black perspective, and to challenge the settlers' image of the indigenes. The prophet Makana (Nxele), railing against the ravages of colonialism, commands his people to 'Remember—and revenge!', while the poet's 'Bushman' protagonist defiantly refuses:

To crouch beneath the Christian's hand,
And kennel with his hounds:
To be a hound, and watch the flocks,
For the cruel White Man's gain—

Perhaps the most stinging rebuke, however, is aimed directly at the settlers in Pringle's sonnet, 'The Caffer':

He is a Robber? True; it is a strife
Between the black skinned bandit and the white.
A Savage?—Yes; though loth to aim at life,
Evil for evil fierce he doth requite.
A Heathen?—Teach him, then, thy better creed,
Christian! if thou deserv'st that name indeed.

The author allows for even more moments of 'counteridentification' in *The Light* than in *U-Nongqause*. But while the play, in confronting the colonists' duplicity and their sometimes iniquitous treatment of the indigenous peoples, acknowledges black discontent and admits some grounds for it, any sympathy is ultimately undermined. Just as Pringle's positive portrayal of the Xhosa in his poetry is partially unsettled when read in conjunction with his prose narrative and in light of his historical context (as Shum, in a recent attempt to offer 'a more circumscribed

¹⁰⁰ Slater, *Book of Verse*, x.

view' of the poet, has argued), so too does it lose some of its power and its 'undifferentiated identification with the cause of the Xhosa', in the context of Waters play.¹⁰¹

In the anonymous 'Tyala's Lament', which once again assumes the voice of a black man, the subject implores his people *not* to engage in further conflict with the settlers (going so far as to describe its contemplation as 'treason'), and advocates interracial alliance. The final text to be imported into *The Light*, this time the actual testimony of an historical Xhosa figure, is: 'the poem of Ntsikana, the great Gaika Christian'. In this hymn, composed by the nineteenth-century Christian convert and prophet, God's sovereignty is declared, His summons to the Xhosa acknowledged ('The trumpet calls – for us it calls') and their affirmative response asserted ('For thine own place we call'). This piece is of particular interest, because of the significance with which both it and the author were invested at the time. Not only is this the single explicitly religious text in the play, it also has strong black nationalist associations. Indeed, at a time when 'Christianity [was considered by many blacks] as an integrating force in developing a supra-ethnic African nationalism,' argues Hodgson, 'Ntsikana became a saint for all Africans' and 'the singing of Ntsikana's *Great Hymn* became an emotive symbol of cultural nationalism'.¹⁰² Many have commented on the prophet's Africanization of mission Christianity, and the distinctly African idiom of the hymn's music and lyrics.¹⁰³ In Ntsikana, Waters locates an appropriate hero and ideology for a contemporary black nation: Christian, but distinctly African, one that eschews ancestor worship but nonetheless retains black cultural integrity. One associated, furthermore, with the spread of literacy among the Xhosa.¹⁰⁴ Waters' invocation of Ntsikana implicitly challenges militant resistance as a valid response to European domination. In her play, Ntsikana supplants his contemporary, the war-mongering traditional prophet, Makana (whose millenarian proclamations heralded Nongqawuse's); his hymn of praise displacing the latter's war cry. Ultimately, *The Light*, in Orkin's words, 'discourage[s] any concern with the possibility of present-day resistance'.¹⁰⁵ Instead, it offers an alternative response; one which is underscored by Waters' choice of language and explicitly outlined in the two contemporary scenes that make up the play's fourth and final act.

The use of English in this play, the lingua franca of black nationalism in South Africa, underscores the collective nature of Waters' narrative and, presumably, the diversity of her intended audiences. Her decision to use English rather than Xhosa, however, also needs to be

¹⁰¹ Shum, 'Pringle and the Xhosa', 1–28; 24.

¹⁰² Hodgson, 'Battle for Sacred Power', 87 & 83.

¹⁰³ See, for example, Chapman, *Southern African Literatures*, 105; Coplan, *Township Tonight!*, 45–8 and Dargie, 'Music of Ntsikana', 7–28.

¹⁰⁴ Jordan, *Towards an African Literature*, 51.

¹⁰⁵ Orkin, *Drama*, 9.

read in the context of educational policy. While the 1924 *Imvo* review of *U-Nongqause* links the use of Xhosa to 'progressive' teaching, pedagogical opinion at the time (even amongst those such as Bennie who wanted to preserve the vernacular) was that although more attention should be given to instruction in indigenous languages in primary education, in Secondary and Training schools, the 'ultimate supremacy' of English or Dutch was to be advocated. At the same time, devotional and religious studies continued to be regarded as 'a subject for the vernacular'.¹⁰⁶ Considered 'the language of commerce and industry', proficiency in English was deemed essential if the 'native' was to operate more effectively in the modern world.¹⁰⁷ By replacing the personal, religious language of *U-Nongqause* with English, then, Waters' play can be said to inscribe her black subjects not as spiritual beings, but economic entities – as useful. The precise nature of their contribution is outlined in the play's final act, where Waters lays claim to, and defines, a place for the 'native' in the Union.

In these concluding pages, the author introduces a gamut of contemporary 'natives': a migrant worker, a rural traditionalist and educated future leaders; and avails herself of each in order to communicate a few choice morals. In Scene 1, Waters promotes self-reliance by countering the labourer's declaration that the 'black man is but a child, he must lean to the white man', with the affirming (if patronising) assertion that 'the black man must learn to reason for himself. He must learn that he carries this light within himself'.¹⁰⁸ When the miner reminisces about the 'olden days' of independence and plenty, Civilization interrupts his nostalgia by reminding him of the 'barbarism and terror' of the 'days of tyranny'. Finally, Waters advocates a return to the 'native' reserves and to agriculture as the principal means of livelihood by drawing a contrast between life on the mines ('a place of wickedness', 'vice', 'sweat', 'underground') and that at the 'kraal' ('a land of peace and prosperity', 'happiness and security', where the black man works for himself on 'his [own] land'). While the play admits the occasional necessary foray into (white) urban areas – a tacit acknowledgement of the need for cheap black labour and of the fact that the land assigned to the 'natives' could not support them – there is no question that the reserves are considered the most suitable and natural place for the permanent settlement of the black population.

The second half of the act involves a conversation between 'Graduates' of Fort Hare (the only institution, at the time, for black higher education) and an elderly, 'Raw Xosa'. From the Graduates' references to 'dry farming' and 'animal doctors', it is clear that they have been

¹⁰⁶ Bennie, 'Native Education', 113–4 and Doke, 'Vernacular Text-Books', 186–7 & 189. *The Light* was later translated into Xhosa by B.A. Bangeni for inclusion in Waters' *AmaBali*.

¹⁰⁷ Bennie, 'Native Education', 114.

¹⁰⁸ Waters, *The Light*, 29 & 34.

trained in agriculture.¹⁰⁹ Despite their education, however, they too receive a caution. During the course of their exchange, the old man reminds the students that knowledge without application is useless, and admonishes them not to become arrogant or acculturated: they need, above all, to take pride in their own abilities and attributes. 'We are not white men, do not let us therefore imitate them, but let us show them those great qualities that will win their respect. Those qualities that are in us and that no book can teach'. The idea that the students have a social responsibility – are not to be isolated from, but contributing members of, the community and society at large – is reiterated by Civilization who enters soon after. Having greeted the 'Raw Xosa' as 'wise one', she launches into her final speech, a homily on the Graduates' role as leaders of their people, on interracial co-operation and respect.

Tell your ignorant brethren what that lights means [...] Teach them that the black and the white men were both emigrants in this land [...] Teach them that the land belongs to both. Make that which Civilization has brought you, live, so that each nation may respect the other. Teach your ignorant brethren to abandon witchcraft, magic and evil spirits. Show them that those qualities that make a nation are thrift and honour – so may this country be a land for the white men and the black. Do not think that education alone can make a nation. Farewell, young South Africa, the future bids fair, and it is in your hands, you the forerunners. Be worthy of that trust. Remember the wise words of Solomon: 'Righteousness exalteth a nation'.¹¹⁰

In this passage, which is reminiscent of the New Testament epistles with their closing instructions to congregants, Waters makes effective use of the repeated imperative – 'Tell', 'Teach', 'Teach', 'Make', 'Teach' 'Show', 'do not Think', 'Farewell', 'Be worthy', 'Remember'. This rhetorical strategy, with its emphasis on action and its driving and optimistic rhythm, underscores Waters' purpose: to persuade and motivate. For the author's vision of the future – a Union characterised by peace, co-operation and respect between the races (although always and everywhere 'within the folds of the white man's flag') – makes no allowance for interracial confrontation or civilisational backsliding, and requires a concerted effort.¹¹¹ The sequence of imperatives is also significant. The recurrence of the verb 'Teach' highlights the Graduates' primary responsibility, while the interspersed other demonstrative verbs suggests they should lead by practical example. With the subject of Civilization's commands being the enlightened 'forerunners', and the object of their actions their 'ignorant brethren', a clear hierarchy of instruction is established with Civilization at its head. That being said, Waters deems the 'Bantu' adequately equipped to take up the responsibility of their race's

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 35.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 36.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 34.

development. And while the Graduates are to be the 'forerunners', everyone has a part to play in the making of the nation – whether it is to labour, to maintain unspecified good 'native' traditions and traits, or to lead the people wisely. Education, furthermore, is declared insufficient, in and of itself, for the task at hand – indeed, the presence of the only prohibitive in this passage ('Do not think') apparently warns against this conceit. While the rhythm of the speech intensifies with the unremitting injunctions, a climax is reached at the point where Civilization, having issued her orders, takes her leave. With the final sentences encouraging self-reflection rather than outward action, the pace gradually decreases until the piece comes to its conclusion – this time, aptly, with a declarative. Having evaded the Bible throughout her play, Waters as evangelist, grants it the crucial, final sentence: 'Righteousness exalteth a nation'. Her closing lesson is that without moral exertion, the nation cannot thrive.

'NATIVE' EDUCATION AND THE 'NEW SCIENCES'

While Waters never entirely relinquished the role of apostle, the wholesale proselytizing of *U-Nongqause* was never to be repeated in her professional writing. Waters' final account of the Cattle-Killing, which is contained in the textbook *Great Men and Great Deeds for Bantu Children, Standards V & VI*, continues along the more secular trajectory embarked upon in *The Light*. It also takes on a new form that reflects the professionalization and formalisation of 'native' education, and an approach that is undergirded by 'progressive' educational principles. In a lecture given by Waters in 1929, in her capacity as Organising Instructress in the Native Education Department of Southern Rhodesia, she clearly states her educational philosophy:

To-day the aim of education is – a preparation for complete living. We in Rhodesia are as trustees to these primitive people, and we must give them an education or training to assist them to realise their full capacities as human beings. I may add in this respect we are applying mental tests, in order to try and discover the mental content of the Native mind, so that we may be guided in right methods and matter for instruction.¹¹²

(Incidentally, there is no reason to believe that Waters' view of the South African 'native' was any different to that of the Rhodesian. Certainly both are delineated by 'Ignorance, Idleness and Superstition'.)¹¹³ Waters' emphasis on the whole person, 'complete living' and realising the pupil's 'full capacity' – as well as her reference to 'primitive people' with its allusion to evolution – show the influence of the so-called new sciences of psychology and anthropology. Of course, her advocacy of mental testing and the notion that 'the native [could be raised] to a higher state of civilization and mental development' through an education that drew on indigenous culture

¹¹² Waters, 'Native Women', 97.

¹¹³ Waters, 'Native Women', 97; *U-Nongqause*, 2; *The Light*, 20. This *leitmotif* resurfaces in *Great Men*, 41.

and conditions, and was based upon an apparently distinctive 'native psychology', were not new – as Loram's work of 1917 testifies.¹¹⁴ Krige has argued, however, that the 'new sciences' became especially important in discussions on 'native' education during the 1930s when they were used by educational 'experts' 'to bolster and hone earlier notions of "adapted education"', and to undermine the authority of 'amateur' mission educators.¹¹⁵ While the gulf between secular experts and Protestant missionaries was perhaps not as stark as Krige suggests, there is little doubt that Waters had chosen the route of professionalization with its more secular ethos and that her commitment to a scientific approach was explicitly asserted during this period.

In the early 1930s, Waters spent some time at Teachers' College, Columbia (the *alma mater* of Loram and many other early South African educationalists) where she studied New Psychology and visited John Dewey's experimental school in New York.¹¹⁶ Dewey, who was Professor of Philosophy at the College, was, by this stage, world-renowned as a progressive educator. For him, education, which was to begin with the individual and an insight into the child's psychology, was 'the art of giving shape to human powers and adapting them to social service'.¹¹⁷ The practical outworking of his philosophy can be seen in his holistic approach to education which – in contrast to the traditional model of passive and desk-bound pupils, an authoritarian teacher, the strict division of subjects in the curriculum and the acquisition of facts – was interdisciplinary, activity-centred, encouraged student participation and interaction, positioned the teacher in the role of facilitator and guide, and was concerned with problem-solving, stimulating creativity, initiative and critical thinking.

Waters was evidently impressed by what she witnessed at Dewey's school for on her return to South Africa, where she was now employed as instructress of Educational Method at the 'Coloured' Training School at Zonnebloem College, she set about trying 'to adopt its underlying principles (but not to copy its methods slavishly) to South African conditions'.¹¹⁸ She began weekly demonstration classes and, by 1937, had acquired a reputation for being 'very enthusiastic about modern methods of education and of experimental teaching with the new methods'.¹¹⁹ What may seem curious, however, is that at the same time that Waters was

¹¹⁴ Waters, 'Teaching Home Economics', 1 and 'Native Women', 114. For mental testing see Rich, *Hope and Despair*, 22–32. Waters' views were at odds with the likes of Edgar Brooks who (in *Native Education in South Africa*) tended towards assimilation and were skeptical about the influence of the 'new sciences' on 'native' education. Hoernlé discusses the two positions, and the resultant 'intensely tangled situation', in 'Native Education at the Cross-Roads'.

¹¹⁵ Krige, 'Segregation, Science and Commissions', 1.

¹¹⁶ Butler, 'Mary Waters', 7 and Anon, 'A New Method in Education', 24 April 1937 (UCTZC, BC 636 D4.4). Fleisch describes the College as an 'education Mecca' for South African students. 'Teachers' College', 58.

¹¹⁷ Dewey, 'Pedagogic Creed', 80.

¹¹⁸ 'New Method in Education'.

¹¹⁹ Anon, 'School of the Ages'.

training 'Coloured' teachers in 'modern methods', she was contributing to a more traditional (although no less specialised) educational approach by writing textbooks for 'native' schools.¹²⁰ It might be argued that Waters was simply being pragmatic. Liberal pedagogical practices, after all, have seldom, since the nineteenth century, displaced the primacy of textbooks in the classroom. While Waters probably *was* being pragmatic, it is likely that the key to this apparent incongruity lay less in international trends, than in the specific circumstances of black education in South Africa – circumstances which, incidentally, seem to have confounded Dewey himself.

In 1934, Dewey visited the country as a guest speaker for the International Conference of the New Education Fellowship.¹²¹ Shortly after his arrival, he pithily captured the state of 'native education', commenting: 'On paper some of the educational plans for [the Negroes] are fine, but actually with the exception of a few places, it is a mess'. Nine days later he elaborated.

I have been going to meetings considerably – mostly to those on native education wh [sic] are really interesting [...] I have learned a lot tho [sic] it is all so complex I haven't made up mind on anything – except that the schools are being starved by politicians who find it good policy to play on race prejudice and the fear of the natives – who outnumber in the whole union the whites two to one – and of course not only prejudice but economic greed for their land, and desire for low priced labor.¹²²

It was the widely criticised financial 'starving' of black schools, I believe, that more than anything, made it impossible to implement Dewey's progressive methods.¹²³ His educational practices and ideals necessitated well-equipped classrooms, small classes with high pupil-teacher ratios and highly-trained teachers – requirements that were totally incommensurate with the reality of black education at the time. In 1936, the Welsh Commission reported:

That the Native children are taught by teachers who on an average do not possess a general education much beyond the level of a European Standard VI is a fact. It is all to their credit that they achieve what they do achieve in spite of the crowded condition of the classrooms, the deficiency of books and didactic equipment, the malnutrition of the pupils, the social lag in an entirely non-literary environment – and other handicaps.¹²⁴

Among these additional 'handicaps' was the transference of the medium of instruction from the vernacular to English or Afrikaans in late Primary school – languages in which the teachers were

¹²⁰ In addition to *Great Men*, Waters also produced *Stories from History for Bantu Children: Standards III & IV* and two books in a series entitled *Our Native Land. For Use in Bantu High Schools and Colleges*.

¹²¹ Waters probably attended the Cape Town leg of this conference. Dewey's trip is briefly discussed in Martin's *Education of John Dewey*, 406–7.

¹²² Dewey to McGraw, 2 & 11 July 1934, in Hickman, *Correspondence*.

¹²³ While 'Coloured' education was certainly at a financial disadvantage in comparison to 'European' education, it was nevertheless in a relatively privileged position when compared to that of blacks.

¹²⁴ Rose and Tunmer, *Documents*, 235. See too van der Poel, 'Native Education in South Africa'.

not usually fluent. The call for textbooks considered suitable for black scholars, which was strongly articulated from the late 1920s, was made not only in response to the principles of 'adapted' education, but to some of these practical considerations.¹²⁵ Textbooks were relatively economical and could compensate for inexperienced and ill-equipped teachers. African textbooks, advised Ward (herself the author of a history course book) should be 'self-contained, leaving nothing to be explained out of the teachers' general knowledge, and leaving no room for doubt as to the right manner of using them'.¹²⁶ The History Reader, the form chosen by Waters for *Great Men and Great Deeds*, was considered 'the most useful type of history book for class work' in African schools, largely for these reasons.¹²⁷ As per Ward's guidelines, Waters' textbook is 'self-contained': it incorporates maps, illustrations and even primary source material; its content is wide-ranging and its structure and framing narrative self-explanatory. That it ran to four editions and was still in print more than twenty-five years later, indicates that it was deemed successful.¹²⁸ It is important to note, however, that while a reliance on textbooks was at odds with Dewey's more experimental methods – and he would almost certainly have objected to *Great Men* if used in the manner intended (which made no allowance for student participation) – Waters' approach to history, in this Reader, would have met with his approval.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE CATTLE-KILLING

Waters' final account of the Cattle-Killing not only takes a very different form from her earlier tellings, it also takes a very different approach to the past. As the title of her textbook suggests, Waters' history is about individuals and consists, for the most part, of chapters devoted to the biographies of prominent men. The view that history was the domain of Great Men, and the study of History the examination of these personages in relation to their time and society, was a well-established one. It was also one deemed particularly appropriate for instruction in schools because the biographical emphasis rendered unfamiliar material more interesting and accessible. For Dewey, this approach was valuable for an additional reason:

Dewey believed the use of biography, while conveying a sense of immediacy, had other, less obvious advantages as well. By studying the lives of men of action and heroes, students grasped the 'transition from the individual to the general life'. The events involved are never treated as simply historical happenings but as men and women anxious to do certain things and living in relations to other men and women who have

¹²⁵ See Brackett & Wrong, 'Text-Books in Africa', 202 and Elder, *Teacher on Trek*, 26.

¹²⁶ Ward, 'History Text-Books', 192–3 & 194.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 194.

¹²⁸ It was originally published between 1931–3. This timeframe is based on the fact that Waters cites Soga's *South Eastern Bantu* in *Great Men* and that Brackett & Wrong review the first edition of the textbook in 1934.

wants also. In this way, there is a gradual passage from the single hero to the people who want and act together.¹²⁹

This model, then, was useful as a form of social training – one that celebrated the individual and individual endeavour, while never losing sight of the social. The 'Great Man' approach was particularly pertinent for the context into which Waters was writing, and the fifteen to seventeen years olds at whom it was directed. Unlike her plays, which were aimed at both the learner-performers and a larger general audience – almost certainly including many without a formal education – Waters' textbook was written for a more exclusive group. By a generous estimate, only 5 per cent of black children who began school (already less than a quarter of the total black youth population) reached Standard VI.¹³⁰ As such, Waters' textbook picks up where *The Light* left off – addressing 'Civilization's forerunners': the future leaders, possibly even the future 'Great Men', of the 'Bantu' nation. The model of history presented to these students is enabling, optimistic and liberal. Black role models are set alongside white heroes (Waters has four of each race in her section on South Africa), rulers alongside missionaries and women alongside men, in a move that suggests the universal nature of 'greatness'.¹³¹ What is particularly interesting, however, is the emphasis placed on human agency. And it is this emphasis that represents a considerable departure from the author's earlier models of history. The divine intervention of *U-Nongqause* and the supernaturally preordained history of *The Light* are superseded here by the idea that it is people, not God, who direct the process of history. In this implicitly secular approach, even a religious figure like Tiyo Soga is presented like any other man – significant in his own right. Endowed with a name, credentials and independent action, Soga is far removed from the anonymous mouthpiece of *U-Nongqause's* Reverend, or the generic missionaries in *The Light*. Of course, the nature of black agency is still determined, and its efficacy contained, by racial prejudice and policy (as is apparent throughout this 'Bantu' Reader), but black people are nevertheless seen to assert themselves on local, national and international levels.

If *U-Nongqause* is focused on an isolated and local episode from the 'native' past, and the purview is expanded in *The Light* to encompass a black national history, in *Great Men* we find Waters once again responding to pedagogical trends by taking this incremental process even further. There is a 'growing recognition,' noted African educational specialists, 'of the need for a course which will help the African to understand the place of his country in the modern

¹²⁹ Dewey quoted in Provenzo, 'History as Experiment', 378.

¹³⁰ Dodd, *Vocational Training*, 132 and Van der Poel, 'Native Education', 319. These pupils would have been on average 2–3 years older than white pupils in the same standards (Rose & Tunmer, *Documents*, 236).

¹³¹ Waters slips Florence Nightingale and Queen Victoria in amongst her 'Great Men'.

world'.¹³² And so it is that in Waters' textbook, 'native' history appears within the context of South African history (Part I) which, in turn, is incorporated into 'European History' (Part II). Both of these parts, which are ordered chronologically, conclude in the present. The final section, 'Seeds of Peace' (Part III) deals with the benefits of international collaboration in relation to advances made in medical science. The effect of Waters' syllabus is to draw the South African 'native' into the global community, but also into the world of 'to-day' – a world of science, modern warfare, new forms of government. But while the 'native' is shown to be engaged in this world (a chapter is devoted to the South African Native Labour Contingent that served in Europe during the Great War), it is on the fringes, in the role of apprentice. And this applies to his position in the Union too. In Part I of *Great Men*, the vision of future black leadership and possibility that concludes *The Light* takes on concrete form in 'The Bunga', which Waters somewhat misleadingly describes as 'the Native Government'. In fact the Bunga was not a national institution; it had limited powers, played a purely advisory role to the (white) South African Government and was presided over by a white Chief Magistrate. Nonetheless, it was an elected body of black representatives and, as such, held considerable symbolic value. It was seen to 'embod[y] the principle that the Transkei and its citizens were to be regarded as part of South Africa'.¹³³ It was also considered proof of the 'natives'' capacity for (limited and local) self-government along 'modern' lines. By using this chapter to close the section on South African History, Waters presents 'The Bunga' as the pinnacle of black progress, an appropriate model for interracial interaction and the end result of the civilising efforts of the white settlers. Now, rather than resorting to force or superstition as they had during the Frontier Wars and the Cattle-Killing, the 'Natives', under the guidance of their white rulers, are seen to embrace modern, collaborative and constitutional means.

As the contexts for Waters' 'native' histories expand and are increasingly weighted towards the present and future, the space assigned to the Cattle-Killing naturally shrinks. While *U-Nongquase* was entirely occupied with the event and it was one of several addressed in *The Light*, in *Great Men* it is reduced even further. Here, the Cattle-Killing accounts for only a few paragraphs in three separate but consecutive chapters. That its significance apparently diminishes in tandem is suggested by its exclusion from the list of 'Important Dates' that appears at the end of the Reader. In light of Waters' depiction of the 'Bantu' as citizens of a progressive, modern world it is perhaps unsurprising that the author does not draw undue attention to an episode that centred around 'witchcraft'. But if support for Waters' project of

¹³² Brackett & Wrong, 'Text-Books in Africa', 201.

¹³³ Mandela, 'Transkei Revisited', 63. See too Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race*, Chapter 5.

black habilitation can be seen in the downplaying of the Cattle-Killing, it is also apparent in its narration.

The Cattle-Killing is contained within the biographies of three very different men – Rev. Tiyo Soga, Sir George Grey and Chief Sarhili – and, as such, is presented from three different perspectives. These perspectives, however (particularly if read in the sequence intended) are compatible, and their combined effect cumulative. Each provides a little more detail until a full (and somewhat familiar) picture of the event is revealed. The religious rationalisation, so central to *U-Nongause* and still apparent in *The Light*, is given first. Soga returns from abroad to find his people a 'scattered nation' in the aftermath of the Cattle-Killing. The Reverend's reaction, which he recorded in a letter soon after, is reproduced in Waters' textbook.

It is by terrible things that God sometimes accomplishes his purposes. In the present calamity, I think I see the future salvation of my people. The destruction of the cattle will make them cultivate the ground. The suffering will soften their hearts, and they will listen to the message of the missionaries, and wars will cease.¹³⁴

Although Mhlakaza is credited with having 'deceived' the Xhosa people, for Soga the outcome is divinely ordained and has spiritual and material benefits. In Grey's chapter, which succeeds Soga's, the event is again attributed to Mhlakaza, although this time more information is offered. Whereas no reason was previously given for the witchdoctor's trickery, here it is linked to an imminent 'rising' against the colonists. The 'wise measures' introduced by the Governor to encourage 'progress' among the 'Bantu', are shown to be powerless against Mhlakaza's 'folly' and the Xhosas' gullibility. Paternal and compassionate, Grey's only recourse is to stockpile food for the deluded people, in anticipation of the tragic outcome.¹³⁵ Finally, the movement is explained from the viewpoint of Sarhili. While it is again Mhlakaza's 'work to deceive the people' in this chapter, the instigator of the Cattle-Killing is revealed to be none other than the Paramount. Although a footnote acknowledges that 'some' believed the chief might himself have been 'deluded', or that the Cattle-Killing was orchestrated by Moshesh, the body text declares Sarhili to have 'used' Mhlakaza for his own purposes. And yes, despite the catastrophic outcome of his scheme, Waters' portrayal (which draws heavily on J. H. Soga's work), is decidedly sympathetic. She describes the leader as 'one of the noblest and kindest of the Xhosa chiefs', 'beloved' by his people.¹³⁶ Part of the reason for his continued good reputation – and presumably also for his 'Great Man' status – resides in his motivation. The Paramount, Waters

¹³⁴ Waters, *Great Men*, 36–7.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 43.

¹³⁶ Waters, *Great Men*, 45–6. Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, 239–40. By citing his work, Waters returns the compliment paid to her by the author (Tiyo Soga's son) when he quoted from *U-Nongause* in the same book.

writes, 'lived at a difficult time; his plan was to keep his tribes united, and thus save them from being scattered'. Sarhili's strategy for defeating the British (who murdered his father and were encroaching on Xhosa land and his authority), was to induce the people to 'fight by a united action... and so free themselves'.¹³⁷ Although this scheme necessitated methods that were clearly flawed, as the leader of a beleaguered people his impulse to resist and his goal of national unity are seen as explicable, even noble.

Each of the perspectives presented in *Great Men* had already found expression in Waters' plays, although they take on more prominence, and generate more sympathy (particularly in Sarhili's case), in their newly separated out and biographically-contextualised form. One perspective *not* represented is that of the majority: those who believed the prophecies (the *amathamba*) – even after the event. This absence is noteworthy considering that Waters had recorded and published an account of the Cattle-Killing from a believer's perspective, in *Cameos from the Kraal*. It is doubly significant given the importance attached to the use of indigenous accounts in the teaching of history by contemporary educationalists:

If history is to be taught as scientifically in Africa as in Europe, this local historical material must be made available for use [...] The traditions must be gathered and collated; discrepancies must be pointed out [...] The task of combining conflicting (and often fragmentary) traditions into one impartial narrative is difficult, but it must be accomplished.¹³⁸

The Cattle-Killing, however, with its prophecies and visions, required careful handling. Incorporating the *amathamba* tradition into the mix would not merely have introduced factual 'discrepancies', but an entirely different worldview. While Waters' trifurcated approach to the Cattle-Killing creates the impression of an 'impartial narrative', these strands nevertheless fit into a single 'rational' and 'progressive' schema that could not comfortably have accommodated a believer's perspective. The disruption of Waters' metanarrative aside, there were pedagogical grounds for its exclusion. It would almost certainly have necessitated drawing on 'the teachers' general knowledge' for further explanation – something that Ward had specifically warned against. There was, furthermore, no real *need* for the *amathamba* tradition. The past, after all, was widely considered to have no educative value if it did not help students cope with the present,¹³⁹ and in Waters' 'civilised' and 'modern' society there was no place for credulity and 'witchcraft'. What was required, and what Waters provided, was a narrative that

¹³⁷ Waters, *Great Men*, 45.

¹³⁸ Ward, 'History Text-Books', 192.

¹³⁹ Provenzo, 'History as Experiment', 381 and Ward, 'History Text-Books', 193.

offered a logical explanation, that acted as an inducement to further progress, and that distanced itself from 'primitive' practices and beliefs. Of course the centrality of ancestor worship and the *amathamba* can never be erased from the event, but in *Great Men* (as in *The Light*) Waters dismisses the believers' perspective before it can be articulated and steers clear of acknowledging the reality and validity of a traditional African religious system. Repeated references to Mhlakaza's 'deceit' put pay to the possibility of genuine spiritual experience (along the lines of Joan of Arc's, whose 'voices' Waters does not, incidentally, question),¹⁴⁰ as does the story of a man hiding in the bushes imitating the lowing of cattle, and the summary dismissal (without comment) of the theory that Sarhili might himself have been motivated by belief.

The importance of creating a distance from the *amathamba* tradition, both for the progress of the black nation and the Union, may be observed from a very brief comparison with Cecil Lewis' History Reader for white Fifth Form students, *Founders and Builders*. Lewis concludes her account of the Cattle-Killing, as follows:

The Kaffirs were ruined. They say that they have never made peace with the English; either because the spirits deceived them for some reason, or because some among them were unfaithful in the matter of killing the cattle, choosing rather to take the advice of the white men, or for some other reason, the spirits have forsaken them, and for a time at least their land is no longer their own. That is how they try to explain it.¹⁴¹

The difference between the two authors' is immediately apparent. In contrast to Waters', Lewis' register is casual and her tone patronising. In this paragraph, Lewis shifts between a third person (apparently) objective and third person subjective position, but also between a declarative and inferential mood. While the lengthy middle sentence appears to report 'the Kaffirs' perspective, doubt is cast on its validity by the short framing sentences: the author's categorical pronouncement (they 'were ruined'), which contradicts the Xhosas' 'for a time at least', and her disparaging conclusion. The Xhosa perspective is further undermined by the author's careless indifference to their rationale ('for some reason'). Unlike Waters, Lewis *only* offers the views of believers. What is more, in contrast to Waters who relegates the event and its 'witchcraft' to the past, Lewis' use of the present tense highlights unresolved racial tension, acknowledges the continuance of ancestor worship and hints at the possibility of black retaliation in the future. It is a fear-filled vision that, buttressed by the unashamedly bigoted textbook in which it appears, fixes the 'Kaffir' as irredeemably superstitious, untrustworthy and

¹⁴⁰ Waters, 'The Maid of France', *Stories from History*.

¹⁴¹ Lewis, *Founders and Builders*, 156. Her students would have been of an equivalent age to Waters'. Lewis also wrote a play on the Cattle-Killing, *Engaba – A Place of Refuge*. Only a single scene (III) survives in Thompson, *South African Reader*, 116–26.

seems intent on keeping them in a position of servitude. Waters – by sidestepping this view, acknowledging black heroes and asserting their position in the Union as well as their contribution to the global community – paints a very different picture. While her denial of full racial equality in the present is clearly problematic, *Great Men* is nonetheless sympathetic and (moderately) empowering, aiming to ‘inspire the Bantu children to serve South Africa as worthy citizens’.¹⁴² In *Great Men* we see black people realising their ‘potential to become [the] great nation’ first glimpsed in *U-Nongqause*,¹⁴³ and living in peace with their fellow white citizens.

STEP-SIBLINGS AND AMBIVALENCE

It might be argued that whereas Waters considered an *amathamba* account unsuitable for impressionable Xhosa scholars – and their teachers – it was fair game for an educated, primarily ‘European’ audience who understood not only the indigenous folkloric tradition from which it emerged but how the material should be read. Its value, after all, was seen to lie not in historical accuracy or ‘truth’ but in the anthropological and psychological insights it afforded into the ‘native’ subject. In ‘The Story of the Native Doctor’ from Waters’ first collection of Xhosa folktales (*Cameos from the Kraal*), the reader is presented with what appears to be a genuine oral account of the Cattle-Killing. This concise 512-word narrative (which is embedded in the 3-page story) is a complete inversion of Waters’ other tellings. In this a-historical account, there is no mention of white colonisers, Christianity or material and political struggles. The spirits of the ancestors simply appear to Nongqawuse and promise a world of plenty, ‘life and immortality’. Here, their prophecies remain unfulfilled *not* because they are false, but because there are some who fail to obey the commands. Ironically, the only thing in common with Waters’ earlier accounts is that the tragedy is attributed to the Xhosas’ lack of faith.

And lo, when the spirits saw this, they were grieved, and said – ‘Alas, the Ama-Xosa are not worthy to be a great nation, they are not worthy of the gift of immortality,’ and in grief and sorrow they returned to the land of the departed, to the land of the blest; but a great famine fell upon that land, and the Ama-Xosa, because of their hardness of heart, perished by their own hand. Would they had listened to the voice of Nongqause the seer.¹⁴⁴

Whereas this account of the Cattle-Killing might, in a different context, have been read as a cautionary tale, a warning against the neglect of the ancestral spirits and of setting the individual above the collective; within the folkloric tradition, it would have been treated as a key

¹⁴² Waters, *Great Men*, iii.

¹⁴³ *U-Nongqause*, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Waters, *Cameos*, 43.

to penetrating the Xhosa mind. *Cameos* was certainly received in this light: 'A much needed service in these days of swiftly altering Native life,' remarked the reviewer for *The South African Outlook*, 'is the collection of native folklore, legend and history'. That Waters was aware of the scientific aspect and resonances of her project is also clear. 'I have visited [native] homes,' she later recounted, 'to collect their wonderful myths and folklore, which interpret for them the secrets of nature, the mysteries of life and death'.¹⁴⁵ Whereas her other works attempt to educate the black population about, and draw them into, white 'civilisation', then, here the author presents and endeavours to give her 'European' audience insight into the 'Native'. And yet this collection falls far short of 'science'. Rather than assuming the position of an objective observer, in *Cameos* Waters reveals a very personal engagement with her subject.

In the tradition of the pioneering indigenous folklorists, Waters makes an explicit claim in *Cameos from the Kraal* for the authenticity of her tales as well as her own authority. Unlike those such as Theal and Callaway who precede their collections with extended prefaces detailing their credentials and the purpose and nature of their work, however, Waters takes a less scientific approach. The author opens *Cameos* as follows:

My home lies in the heart of Kaffraria, and I have lived among the Native people for many years. Last week I took a walk along the banks of the Xuka River [a tributary near All Saints' Mission]... My path led me down the hill to a heathen kraal which nestled in the valley... What a romantic scene it was; the hut with its savage fittings, and that great savage actor, telling me the stories of the child races.¹⁴⁶

The idealised and nostalgic tenor of this autobiographical preamble hints at the character of the work to follow. Incidentally, despite her reference to 'last week', Waters' choice of the noun 'Kaffraria' rather than the 'Transkei' of contemporary usage evokes the colonial period of her childhood rather than that of the present. This introduction also serves to highlight the propinquity, indeed the imbrication, of author and subject. Waters situates herself not only in the midst of the predominantly black territory, but dwells 'among', not merely 'alongside', the 'Native'. As the author takes her solitary walk and enters the 'heathen kraal' alone, we see someone totally at ease in her environment, familiar with its inhabitants. Indeed, a paternal relationship between white and black is indicated by Waters' use of the term 'child races', and reinforced by her dedication, which reads:

¹⁴⁵ Waters, 'Native Women', 98 and 'Review', *The South African Outlook*, 57, 20.

¹⁴⁶ Introduction, *Cameos*, 19. Callaway, *Nursery Tales*, and Theal. *Kaffir Folk-lore*.

TO MY FATHER,
WHO LOVED THE NATIVES
AS HIS CHILDREN.

In fact Waters' relationship with the Xhosa appears to be more complicated than the one described above. The author may have inherited a position of superiority by virtue of her race – and secured, in this context, by her role as author – but the text suggests otherwise. Indeed, if the familial relationship alluded to in the dedication is extended to Waters herself, the Xhosa (who apparently felt like 'orphans' after her father's death)¹⁴⁷ become the author's step-siblings: resulting in a relationship of near equivalency. This upending of social convention is confirmed soon after, when the reader is confronted with the image of Waters seeking out the 'powerful Xunu', 'pleading' with the 'the great Xosa story-teller' to tell her stories and taking her place, among his children, to hear and be rendered 'spell-bound' by his words. In *Cameos* the author assumes the role of pupil and child.

This unexpected turn is underlined in Part II, 'The Tales of Makulu – The Grandmother', in which the narrative of the Cattle-Killing appears. This section is distinguished not only by its length (it is the longest of the three Parts that comprise the collection), but by the extended descriptive passages that precede each tale. What is more, instead of the stories being narrated directly to the author/collector (whose presence is occasionally evoked in Part III, 'O child of the White man', and in the introduction to Part I), they are channelled through 'Maria – the White Girl', a conspicuous presence and participant. (Incidentally, the collapsing of the distance between observed and observer might account for the reviewer's remark that it was 'the least successful portion of the book').¹⁴⁸ As the narrator evokes her past – "'Makulu, Makulu," we children would call as we, Black and White, gathered round her, "Intsomi, intsomi" (a tale, a tale)... – a simple and humane world of communal living and interracial relations emerges. At one point the reader is presented with the tender image of the white child-narrator 'nestling' up to her black 'grandmother' and weeping over her song of death.¹⁴⁹ As for Makulu's stories, Maria listens innocently and uncritically – enraptured and complicit. Her sentiments are caught up with Makulu's and when she narrates the story of the Cattle-Killing, Makulu's sorrow at the dissolution of Nongqawuse's vision, is palpable. The scenes and experiences described by Maria (children peeling mealie cobs together, gathering around a fire at night, a summer lightning storm, the first terrifying sight of a 'witchdoctor' in full regalia) are almost certainly drawn from Waters' own childhood. And it is not beyond the realms of possibility that 'Maria' the narrator, is

¹⁴⁷ Leadley Brown, 'Canon Waters', 348.

¹⁴⁸ 'Review', 20.

¹⁴⁹ Waters, *Cameos*, 33 & 38.

none other than 'Mary', the author. While details of Waters' childhood on the mission are scant, her lifestyle was not as far removed from that of her black neighbours as might be assumed (unable to afford an oven, for example, her mother cooked outside over an open fire). Waters and her family, furthermore, apparently 'knew and loved [her father's] flock *from the inside* as it were' and were 'loved and trusted' in return.¹⁵⁰ In *Cameos*, the most personally revealing of the works considered in this chapter, Waters' past is seen to be intertwined with that of her black subjects; her efforts to gather and preserve authentic 'native' data, entangled with reminiscing.

While *Cameos* does not undermine the 'Narratives of Progress' that dominate Waters' work for 'native' students, it does problematise them. Most notably, the ancestral tradition and 'witchcraft', apparently displaced in *U-Nongqause*, *The Light* and *Great Men*, is shown to be very much alive in the present (the 'witchdoctor' is described as 'all powerful').¹⁵¹ *Cameos* also highlights an ambivalence towards the Xhosa. There is a development of Waters' black subjects across the 'native' accounts, from Christian converts in *U-Nongqause*, to functional and contributing beings in *The Light*, to leaders and fellow citizens in *Great Men* – complete with political and social aspirations appropriate to their station in the Union of South Africa. But whereas Waters' plays and textbook for 'native' schools, present black people as a people in progress, and the Cattle-Killing as instrumental in accelerating this state, in *Cameos*, Waters' purpose is to preserve the 'raw Xhosa' (with the *amathamba* account a part of this) in the face of this progress. In fact, Waters' collection does more than preserve. It reveals a nostalgia for the 'raw' Xhosa state: the lifestyle, the traditions and (despite the author's segregationist tendencies on display elsewhere) the interracial interaction – even intimacy. Part of Waters' reluctance to relinquish the Xhosa past, I would argue, is because her own past (for which she seemingly longs) is contained within it. As an adult, Waters was a loner and a scatterling – never belonging, and apparently choosing not to integrate herself or to settle. She moved frequently, clashed with local authorities and gave short shrift to social niceties. Colleagues remembered her as "dishevelled" in appearance, smoking endlessly and not caring what people thought of her'.¹⁵² Waters seems never to have achieved, in the modern, secular and professionalised world that she promoted in her work and writing, a state of belonging approximating that of her childhood in 'Kaffraria'.

¹⁵⁰ Elder, *Teacher on Trek*, 10. Italics added.

¹⁵¹ Waters, *Cameos*, 41.

¹⁵² Ewan, 'Interview'.

WATERS' DUBIOUS LEGACY

Waters' educational accounts of the Cattle-Killing reached a considerable, and often captive, black audience. In addition to their separate publications, *U-Nongqause* and *The Light* appeared in Waters' 1953 anthology for Xhosa students, and the fourth edition (revised and enlarged) of *Great Men* was still in print in 1959. Not only was the reach of these, and other, white-imagined histories for black schools, wide, their influence was profound, sometimes insidious. Peires recounts, for example, how Nongqawuse's own great-niece, when asked about her infamous relative and the Cattle-Killing, glibly recited an account in English from a primary school reader.¹⁵³ While these works helped to define the historical consciousness of their audiences, however, their effect was not always as anticipated. Waters' histories, while tentatively sympathetic and affirming, nonetheless tendered a justification for colonialism and encouraged her students to accept their position as subject peoples. They were not, however, the only narratives in circulation – nor were they necessarily the most convincing.¹⁵⁴ 'When my father taught me history,' recalled Winnie Mandela, 'I began to understand'.

I remember distinctly, for instance, how he taught us about the nine Xhosa wars. Of course we had textbooks, naturally written by white men, and they had *their* interpretation, why there were nine 'Kaffir' wars. Then he would put the textbook aside and say; 'Now, this is what the book says, but the truth is: these white people invaded our country and stole the land from our grandfathers. The clashes between white and black were originally the result of cattle thefts. The whites took the cattle and the blacks would go and fetch them back.' That's how he taught us our history [...] So I became aware at an early age that the whites felt superior to us. And I could see how shabby my father looked in comparison to the white teachers. That hurts your pride when you are a child; you tell yourself: 'If they failed in those nine Xhosa wars, I am one of them and I will start from where those Xhosas left off and get my land back.' Every tribal child felt that way. That was the result of my father's lessons in the classroom.

There is an anger that wakes up in you when you are a child and it builds up and determines the political consciousness of the black man.¹⁵⁵

In this passage, the 'authorised', textbook account of South African history is literally and symbolically set aside; the oral supersedes the written, the narrative of black defeat and submission is replaced with one that inspires resistance, and the triumphant coming of The

¹⁵³ Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:356.

¹⁵⁴ See Bradford's 'Akukho Ntaka', for late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century black vernacular written accounts that challenge official white histories.

¹⁵⁵ Mandela, *Part of My Soul*, 47–8.

Light is re-described as a dishonest enterprise motivated by greed. Mandela's statement highlights the fluidity of the past, the constructed and artificial nature of historical narratives, the politics that undergird history's representations and their espousal, and their ongoing and significant effect on the present. This juxtaposition of colonised-pupil and coloniser-teacher versions of history is repeated elsewhere, specifically in relation to the Cattle-Killing. Matshoba, in 'Call Me Not a Man' (1979), describes his teacher's tale of Nongqawuse as 'hard to believe', before providing his own revised account. Mandisa's grandfather in Magona's novel, *Mother to Mother* (1998), responds in like manner when confronted with the school-taught explanation that the Xhosa followed Nongqawuse 'because they were superstitious and ignorant'.¹⁵⁶ But these voices belong to a later, more militant and disillusioned generation. A contemporaneous black response, Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save* and the subject of the following chapter, takes a more circumspect approach, seeking to challenge standard colonial interpretations from within.

¹⁵⁶ Matshoba, 164–79 and Magona, 175–6.

CHAPTER 4

NEW AFRICANS AND THE AFRICAN SAINT JOAN

Of all the accounts of the Cattle-Killing considered in this project, H. I. E. Dhlomo's dramatic interpretation of the event, *The Girl who Killed to Save: Nongqause the Liberator* (1936), has received by far the most critical attention. Some of this is due to the fact that it was the first play in English to be published by a black South African. Interest was renewed, more recently, with the issuing of Dhlomo's *Collected Works* (1985) – the vast majority of which had never been published before. This publication resulted in the re-evaluation of both the author's standing in the field of South African literature, and of this, his earliest play.¹ It is by now a well-rehearsed assertion that since the appearance of these later works, much of which are characterised by a strident black nationalism, the reception of *The Girl* has shifted. Whereas the drama used (for the most part) to be interpreted as straight-forwardly complicit or accepting of 'missionary', assimilationist ideology,² critics now tend to seek out and expose moments of 'contestation', 'counteridentification', 'incipient nationalism', 'political ambiguity' and 'ambivalence'.³ This chapter focuses on one of the aspects often cited in support of these readings – the portrayal of Nongqawuse – and proceeds from the premise that while the assimilationist bias in his play cannot be denied, for Dhlomo, the purpose of assimilation is not submission, but liberation. Rather than regret this 'attempt to appropriate the discourse of assimilationism', as Orkin does, for falling short of a 'more subversive position' that would advance 'appropriate resistance', I view this reflection of the playwright's idealism more positively.⁴ This chapter aligns itself with the aims of de Kock who, in his essay on the black South African elite of the early twentieth century, offers 'an alternative to the by now ritualized invocation of oppositionality, evidence of *desired identification* with the colonizing culture as an *act of affirmation*, a kind of publicly declared "struggle" that does not oppose the terms of a colonial culture but insists on a more pure version of its originating legitimization'.⁵

My examination of Dhlomo's Nongqawuse will demonstrate how the author affiliates with, and holds to account, Western 'civilization'. As with Metelerkamp's earlier short-story, the most

¹ Visser & Couzens, *Collected Works*.

² See, for example, G.G. "'Cattle Killing"; Gérard, *Four African Literatures*, 226–7 and Graham-White, *Drama of Black Africa*, 78–9.

³ Orkin, *Drama*, 32–6; Peterson, *Monarchs*, 195–201 and Wenzel, 'Voices', 51–73. Even Visser & Couzens, who classify the play as 'mission literature' note that it is 'a somewhat unusual example of the type' (*Collected Works*, xii).

⁴ Orkin, *Drama*, 33 and 36.

⁵ de Kock, 'Sitting for the Civilization Test', 392.

striking element of *The Girl* is the figure of the re-imagined prophetess. This time, however, Nongqawuse is not primarily harnessed for feminist purposes. Here, she is portrayed as an 'African Genius' – someone who, despite her misguided methods, desired and 'visualised fuller life' for her race. With this portrayal, the playwright sets himself apart not only from colonial white historians, but some New Africans too. In order to construct his Nongqawuse, as I will show, Dhlomo both writes 'aside' texts (such as Waters' *U-Nongqause* and various factual accounts) and 'alongside' others, most notably Metelerkamp's 'Namjikwa' and Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1923).⁶

THE NEW AFRICANS

Tim Couzens' biography of H. I. E. Dhlomo opens with an analysis of the so-called 'New Africans', a small but influential group of mission-educated graduates, to which Dhlomo belonged.⁷ This 'enlightened' black elite, under the influence of Christian education and encouraged by white liberal sentiment and support, fervently believed in their own 'improvability' and the possibility of a multi-racial South African society in which they could play an equal part. Although they had internalised the idea of evolution and the 'native's' 'primitive' status on the racial hierarchy, they believed that they could progress to the level of civilization required, both as individuals and a nation, by rejecting anything that was deemed backward, and cultivating all that was 'progressive' – integrating, essentially, into European society.⁸ Couzens uses, as a springboard for his description, *The African Yearly Register* (1931), a publication that was intended as a corrective to the portrayal of Africans as 'savages prone to witchcraft, cannibalism and other vices credited to barbarians'.⁹ Containing biographies of leading black individuals (both past and present), the *Register*, he writes, 'was almost formulaic':

words, phrases or patterns of phraseology recur frequently [...] these repetitions clearly indicate what are regarded as positive values. At least eight formulae emerge: the words 'progressive', 'hard worker', 'good speaker', 'gentleman' and 'true Christian', or their minor variants appear frequently, as do the ideas of taking a keen interest in the social, political, educational and religious welfare of his people, having concern for the education of either his own children or that of his people, and finally, that a man is a

⁶ Peterson (*Monarchs*, 192) highlights Dhlomo's 'attempt to write aside, to displace, white accounts of black experience'. More recently, Wenzel ('Voices', 66) has argued that the playwright 'writes *alongside*' various 'textual predecessors', both factual and fictional.

⁷ Couzens. *New African*, especially 1–37.

⁸ See, for example, the autoethnographic-historical works of the New Africans: Molema's *Bantu Past and Present* (1920) and Soga's *South-Eastern Bantu* (1930) and *Ama-Xosa* (1932).

⁹ Skota. *African Yearly Register*, xiii.

friend of or respected by 'Europeans'.¹⁰

For those represented in the *Register*, the New Africans as opposed to those who inclined towards 'superstition' and were bound by tradition, 'progress' was 'clearly the ideological touchstone or keyword'. This progress expressed itself in the celebration of individual achievement and mobility, not solely for its own sake, but for the good of the nation too. The idea of tribalism was rejected in favour of nationalism with figures such as Shaka and Sandile adopted and re-imagined as national heroes. A controlled, or 'purified nativism' that involved a revival of African history, folklore and customs (deemed not offensive to 'Christian' Europeans) was encouraged in the recognition that these elements were expressions of their African essence and the source of their unity.¹¹ This group, whom Boehmer would describe as 'transitional figures,' precariously positioned between two epistemologies, 'became acquisitive of modes of self-invention that were at once individualistic and modern, bearing a certain international currency, yet seemingly built on tradition and autochthonous custom'.¹²

Herbert Dhlomo, who was described in the *Register* as 'very progressive in his ideas',¹³ was mission-educated at the American Board Mission School in Johannesburg and completed his Teachers' training at Amanzimtoti Training Institute (later renamed Adams College) in Natal. In 1929, he returned to Johannesburg to take up the position of headmaster at his old school. Although his creative literary career had not yet begun, he was by this stage a regular contributor to newspapers and soon became involved in the production of the *Register* – the editor acknowledging his 'profound thanks' to the aspiring writer.¹⁴ Dhlomo evidently subscribed to *The Register's* implicit moderate, individual-led, nationalist creed and its confidence in a unilinear, Western notion of progress. It is hardly surprising, then, that in his first play, *The Girl Who Killed to Save* (published in 1936 but composed the previous year), the ideals of the New Africans should find expression. The play, on the whole, reflects the author's optimism regarding integration into Western 'civilisation' and the realisation of its originary ideals. The author's decision, as a Zulu, to take a Xhosa subject for his play signals his commitment to a transtribal agenda – as does his choice of English rather than a vernacular language. The fact that Dhlomo draws on science and European artistic forms and models is evidence of his claim to modernity. Above all, the dramatist provides a revisionist account of African history, charting the African's 'evolution' or 'metamorphosis', and thereby staking his claim in the modern world. Deeply implicated in this mission, too (as we shall see), is the play

¹⁰ Couzens, *New African*, 6–7.

¹¹ Williams uses the phrase 'purified nativism' to describe the 'limited and unobjectionable kind' of nativism cultivated by Soga. *Umfundisi*, 126 & index.

¹² Boehmer, *Empire*, 20.

¹³ Dhlomo was born in 1903 and died in 1956. Skota, *African Register*, 143.

¹⁴ Skota, *African Register*, xiii.

itself – as apparent ‘proof’ of civilization – and Dhlomo’s own identity and reputation as an enlightened and progressive man – a Genius, even.

WATERS’ DISMISSAL

With action subordinate to speech, Dhlomo’s play is reminiscent of Waters’. While *The Girl* skirts the destructive acts of the Cattle-Killing, it confronts and discusses the psychological, scientific and spiritual aspects of the movement as well as its ramifications for both the individual and the nation. Indeed, as one critic condescendingly remarked, ‘the author has so much to say through his characters that they become prosy at moments when swift action is taking place; but how can one blame an utterly untaught dramatist for a fault common among the best?’¹⁵ That Bernard Shaw was similarly reproached, and was doubtless one of ‘the best’ alluded to, is pertinent, for he was one of Dhlomo’s key influences and the latter’s partiality for discussion can, therefore, be assumed to have been a deliberate strategy. Commentary comes, in *The Girl*, via the prophetess’s agonised confessions to the Old Woman in the opening scene and her unprecedented posthumous observations. It also emerges (in another move suggestive of Waters) in discussions between a trio of white characters: the Missionary, the commissioner Charles Brownlee, and his philosophising brother-in-law, Hugh Thompson.

Orkin has pointed out that Dhlomo, who was a member of the Bantu Dramatic Society (BDS) in Johannesburg, almost certainly attended a performance of Waters’ *U-Nongqause* by the BDS on Saturday, 7 October 1933.¹⁶ He argues that the African nationalist inclination in Dhlomo’s subsequent play on the same subject was a ‘direct response’, a deliberate rewriting of Waters’ Eurocentric reading. According to Orkin, the only redeeming feature of *U-Nongqause* is that it

inadvertently helped to initiate the search in drama for a more authentic South African place, against the hegemony of the colonial centre... [it] inspired the young Herbert Dhlomo to undertake the first really significant attempt in South African dramatic history to recover such an authenticity.¹⁷

In fact Dhlomo, as one of the Society’s founders and joint-secretary, in addition to seeing the performance of *U-Nongqause*, was probably partly responsible for the play’s selection.¹⁸ The notion that Dhlomo’s *The Girl* occupies a ‘more authentic South African’ space than Waters’, however, is obviously problematic. Not only does it lay claim to a pure and originary space that only some can access, it allows for only one ‘true’ response or reading. Although Dhlomo would

¹⁵ G.G., ‘Cattle Killing’; Innes, ‘Talk, talk, talk’, 162–79.

¹⁶ Orkin, ‘Contesting Prevailing Discourse’, 1.

¹⁷ Orkin, *Drama*, 10–1.

¹⁸ Its selection *might* have been inspired by Soga’s apparent endorsement of the play in *South-Eastern Bantu*.

not have supported Orkin's Marxist position, he would, no doubt, have agreed about the 'authenticity' of his interpretation. Despite the fact that both Waters and Dhlomo were assumed, in their time, to be interpreters of the 'Natives' (and therefore able to shed light on the 'authentic' black experience), their foci and approaches were very different.¹⁹ Whereas Waters was considered an expert on the rural Xhosa, their history and traditions, Dhlomo (who admitted to a limited knowledge of indigenous customs)²⁰ was a spokesman of the New African: of urban, middle-class intellectuals. Whereas Waters tended towards segregationism, Dhlomo's leaning was towards assimilation. Even their attitude towards literature was somewhat dissimilar. If Waters was no Bernard Shaw (as Hoernlé intimated) – nor had the inclination to be (for her, moral pragmatism and propaganda took precedence over aesthetic and dramatic considerations), Dhlomo apparently aspired to the literary heights of the Irish dramatist.²¹ Perhaps most importantly, however, Waters was white and probably therefore, according to Dhlomo's reckoning, like 'European historians... handicapped by preconceived ideas and existing prejudices' regarding the African.²² That Dhlomo considered Waters' interpretation of the Cattle-Killing to be flawed, and that he regretted the BDS production, might be inferred from a comment he made in *The Bantu World* two weeks after the performance of *U-Nongqause*. Doubtless with himself in mind, Dhlomo wrote:

We want *African* playwrights who will dramatize and expand a philosophy of African History. We want dramatic representation of African Serfdom, Oppression, Exploitation and Metamorphosis.²³

When Dhlomo's own drama on the subject of the Cattle-Killing was published three years later, a shift in perspective was immediately apparent. Like Waters (and Beattie) before him, the playwright presents the Cattle-Killing as a terrible but seminal moment in the progress of the 'Bantu', pointing to its ultimately beneficial and civilizing effect. While in agreement over the inevitability – and necessity – of the Cattle-Killing, however, Dhlomo takes a very different angle to Waters. Whereas the latter relies on pious monologues, Dhlomo makes his point through the combined pronouncements of two characters: the generically named 'Missionary', and his philosophising friend, Hugh. Where the Missionary takes the same line as the Reverend in Waters' *U-Nongqause* (that the event was evidence of Divine intervention), Hugh provides

¹⁹ Henderson, 'Preface' to Waters, *The Light* and Skota, *African Register*, 143.

²⁰ Couzens, *New African*, 352. That Dhlomo was unfamiliar with Xhosa practices is borne out by a reviewer who commented that in the play Dhlomo introduced 'two elements familiar in Natal but foreign to the Xhosa people'. Anon, 'A Play on Nongqause', *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 5 December 1936, 10.

²¹ Hoernlé, 'Bantu Dramatic Society', 226. For Waters' regard for 'Literature', see Dorothea Ewan's hilarious description of the author's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Way-Jones interview, NELM).

²² Dhlomo, 'African Drama and Research', 19.

²³ *Bantu World*, 21 October 1933. Italics added.

explicit scientific endorsement. In language that draws freely on the theory of evolution and Social Darwinism, he explains that:

If old ideas, customs and sanctions are to be destroyed, and the site prepared for new intellectual and moral structures, there must be first a process, not of construction, but of destruction [...] If these poor people carry out their scheme and starve themselves, it will be no national suicide at all. It will be a necessary process of metamorphosis. It will be the agony of birth [...]

Nongqause, the source of this drama, may accomplish in a short time, by means of an expensive method, what in the ordinary course of events would have taken generations of Christianity and education and administrative wisdom to do [...] If we believe in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest then we may excuse her by saying that those who may survive her purging and liberating test will be individuals physically and intellectually superior to the others. You have told us that some of the people already have shown their intellectual independence by being sceptical and refusing to kill their cattle. This reveals strong characters and keen minds not totally trammelled by tradition, or enslaved by superstition.²⁴

Although these opinions are expressed by a white character, they reproduce some of Dhlomo's own views and are alluded to by the prophetess herself.²⁵ Nongqawuse, who is described in the subtitle of the play as 'the Liberator', is presented as the agent who will effect the 'metamorphosis' of the African. And it is significant that although she does not understand the process in scientific terms, nor can she predict its ultimate outcome (unlike her New Africans successors, she is still 'ignorant' and believes 'Nothing will be destroyed'),²⁶ Nongqawuse glimpses the inevitability and importance of the movement. In fact the prophetess pre-empts Hugh's explanation when she reassures the Old Man in the opening scene: 'We are being prepared for new life... Life is only being organised on a higher scale'.²⁷ By her visions and pronouncements, as Hugh predicts, Nongqawuse *does* paradoxically (but 'earnestly'), lead her people from the darkness of tradition and superstition into the light of civilization. Her 'method' might be misguided and 'expensive' but it is more effective than the combined efforts of 'Christianity, education and administrative wisdom'. This is because she is unwittingly driven, not by human intervention (dead or alive), but by greater powers. It is God *and* Nature, articulated by Hugh and the Missionary who enter the drama together and provide through

²⁴ Dhlomo, *The Girl*, 18.

²⁵ In 1929 Dhlomo wrote: 'Traditions, social customs and laws that stand up against progress must be combated and exterminated at all costs and hazards.' Quoted in Couzens, *New African*, 138.

²⁶ Dhlomo, *The Girl*, 29.

²⁷ Dhlomo, *The Girl*, 7. Nongqause's 'anticipation' of Hugh's interpretation of the event, 'without, one suspects, actually grasping the meaning' is also noted by Lehmann in his narratological reading, 'Colonial to Post-Colonial', 113.

their 'duel of wits' the moral of the play,²⁸ that are the twin driving forces: different but congruent. As fellow New African, S. M. Molema, had prophesied nearly twenty years earlier:

ultimately science itself must be the religion of the educated, for science and religion will teach the same truths, and become synonymous or at least complementary.²⁹

Dhlomo's appeal to science is significant. It marks him as 'educated' and his play as 'modern', but in addition to this, it enables him to assert a tradition of progressive African individuals and to address contemporary social issues. It allows Dhlomo to contest the prevalent, scientifically-backed notion that 'natives' were inherently – and therefore eternally – backward. By extension, it also calls into question the scientific basis upon which much racial segregationist ideology was founded.³⁰ The existence of 'intellectually independent' and 'strong characters' indicates not only that Africans are (and have, for the past century at least, been) capable of 'independent' rather than merely derivative thought, but that the original stock (to use a term common at the time) was not 'naturally' inferior. If God-Nature, furthermore, is driving the progress of the 'natives', as Dhlomo's play indicates, then their improvement is both inevitable and rational. As such, there can be no reasonable objection to racial integration in the present.

The African's 'metamorphosis' is not only predicted and described; it is also implicit in the very fabric of the drama. Like *U-Nongquase*, *The Girl* sets up a contrast between European and traditional Xhosa culture. The first two scenes, of the five that comprise the play, are set in the interior of Nongqawuse's hut and a cattle-kraal at Kreli's homestead, respectively. The third takes place in the white Commissioner's house, with the fourth 'nearby'. The final scene is set inside the hut of Xhosa converts. The distinction between the 'European' and Xhosa worlds is most vividly felt in the transition between Scenes 2 to 3, where the two spheres collide. The second scene closes with Kreli, '*Convulsed with emotion*' and brandishing a spear, commanding his councillors and warriors to convince the unbelievers, by whatever means, to unite with them in the Cattle-Killing. The chaos and noise of the '*war mad and wild*' Xhosa, complete with battle song, 'medicinal treatment' and praise poetry, is juxtaposed with the civility, quiet and order of the Commissioner's house, that opens the following scene. Here we find Brownlee and his wife, seated at separate desks, discussing 'these silly rumours... This foolish story about the people killing their cattle'.³¹

In direct contrast to *U-Nongquase*, however, which opens and closes in the white Reverend's

²⁸ Dhlomo, *The Girl*, 25.

²⁹ Molema, *Bantu Past and Present*, 167.

³⁰ See, for example, Duerden, 'Social Anthropology', 11–5. See too Dubow, 'Elaboration of Segregationist Ideology', 145–75.

³¹ Dhlomo, *The Girl*, 15.

house and is presided over by the missionary and his proclamations, Dhlomo's drama is framed by black tableaux and it is a black character (in fact, Nongqawuse herself), who has the first and the final say. Instead of concluding inside the missionary's dining room with the starving remnants of the Xhosa blocked from view, in *The Girl* we are presented with the 'resurrected' victims of the event, laughing and singing. Significantly, too, unlike Waters' Reverend's house, which remains unchanged throughout, the two Xhosa interiors in Dhlomo's play are markedly different. The opening scene, which depicts traditional life through props and action (grinding and stamping corn, cooking over an indoor fire, 'tribal' dress and, most importantly, superstitious rites and practices), is replaced in the concluding scene with evidence of 'civilization'. Although still 'raw' (rural), the household is now additionally described as 'Christian', and abounds with signs of a transformed and progressive outlook: there is furniture, people are praying to God, and the white missionary with his portable organ and thermometer is a welcome guest. The gossip and 'traditional' songs of the first scene are exchanged for prayers and a hymn in standard four-part harmony – significantly; however, it is still the work of a black composer. The biggest change (which will be examined in more detail in due course) is to be found in the character of Nongqawuse, 'the source of this drama'. Thus, whereas Waters' is a play of incipient transformation (it closes with the *promise* of a 'new earth'), Dhlomo's takes the process, perhaps not to total realisation (for there are still traditional medicines in the hut), but certainly one step closer. In the final scene we witness the arrival of the New African himself, in the form of the '*intelligent-looking black minister*', Tiyo Soga. Soga's father has already been identified earlier in the play as an unbeliever, and therefore possessing a 'keen mind... not enslaved by tradition'. His son has had the additional advantage of a western education.

MISSIONARY: I want to introduce to you my other friend here – Tiyo Soga, the new African missionary from Scotland. Your own man – you have heard of him – learned and godfearing.³²

Whether the pun on 'new African' was inadvertent or not, it is appropriate. Soga, the so-called 'progenitor of Black nationalism in South Africa', had taken pride of place in *The African Yearly Register*.³³ Although Soga is not assigned a speaking part in *The Girl*, his words (as Wenzel has discovered) are present in the hymn that accompanies this final scene. Soga's 'Fulfill Your Promise', according to the editor of his *Journal*, is 'generally believed to have come off the lips of Soga when he arrived on South African soil on his return from Scotland as a full minister', and apparent allusions to the recent 'Cattle-Killing Delusion', seem to confirm this. 'Through our

³² Dhlomo, *Girl*, 28.

³³ Williams, *Umfundisi*, 126 and Couzens, *New African*, 8.

confusion,' he writes, 'Lands have been corrupted,/ Behold my fatherland;/ And forgive all its sins' – 'Father, don't destroy us,/ For slighting the truth'. The lyrics of the final stanza, which are sung in Dhlomo's play, act as a closing prayer and exhortation.

O Lord, bless
The teachings of our land;
Please revive us
That we may restore goodness³⁴

The inclusion of this hymn, it might be argued, suggests an endorsement from the father of Black nationalism for Dhlomo's interpretation of the Cattle-Killing as 'rebirth'. By drawing on this hymn, which was also sung at the inaugural meeting of the South African Native National Congress in 1912, furthermore, Wenzel argues that 'Dhlomo borrows a text that links past and present by expressing a Christian desire for renovation in a Xhosa prophetic idiom. Dhlomo thus yokes the time of the cattle killing (when his play is set and the hymn composed) with its continuing significance in the New African context of a burgeoning pan-tribal nationalism'.³⁵

The nationalist agenda being promoted was not one of opposition or resistance (and certainly not one of submission), but initially of a common humanity – of upliftment and integration to the point where the African people could assume a full position in a multi-racial, egalitarian South African society, an imagined utopia that would be marked by mutual respect and co-operation between black and white. 'Fulfill Your Promise' was not a plea for self-determination – but a reminder of the 'millenarian basis of received African versions of missionary Christianity', versions in 'which colonizer and colonized were *joined* in a vision of plenitude'.³⁶ Indeed, Soga's first verse entreats: 'Fulfill your promise,/ God, Lord of truth!/ Let all nations of this earth/ Receive salvation'. Rather than trying to recover a pure and 'authentic South African position' through his play (as Orkin suggests), Dhlomo was trying to negotiate a new space – a space that was at once national and international, a space for the New African who was both African and a member of a 'civilised' world-community.

'DRAMA AND THE AFRICAN'

Dhlomo, who was patently aware of drama's potential to reach, inform and transform, believed that 'a wisely controlled dramatic movement [could] do much to harmonize and humanize race

³⁴ William, *Journal*, 196–7. Hymn translated by M.A. Stofile.

³⁵ Although Dhlomo does not cite Soga as the lyricist, Wenzel has confirmed him to be the author. 'Voices', 63–4.

³⁶ de Kock, 'Sitting for the Civilization Test', 400–1 & 408.

relations in this country'.³⁷ In his article, 'Drama and the African', which was published only a few weeks before *The Girl*, the author mapped out a path for the development of African drama. Like the New African, this new drama would need to draw on two sources for its inspiration: Africa and Europe. While the African would make a seminal contribution (not least by providing a different perspective), Dhlomo unequivocally stated that, 'The development of African drama cannot purely be from African roots... African art cannot grow and thrive by going back and digging up the bones of the past without dressing them with modern knowledge and craftsmanship'.³⁸

In his quest for a modern, literary African drama, Dhlomo advocated the 'grafting' of traditional African forms onto Western drama. It was a case, as Attwell has compellingly argued, not of 'modernizing tradition', but of 'traditionalizing modernity'.³⁹ In words that echoed an earlier article in which Dhlomo defended the use of English by Africans, he stated that 'the African dramatist should not fear being mocked as an "imitator" of European art. Only, he should write and produce his plays as he feels'.⁴⁰ Dhlomo refused to take the advice of well-meaning English ladies who, commenting on the use of drama in South African missionary schools, had warned that the evolution of the 'very definitely primitive' African drama should be allowed to develop 'naturally', 'along lines of [its] own'. That, furthermore, these schools

will be doing no service to the African if they teach him the latest thing from art circles in America, or the plays of Bernard Shaw – the African must begin his drama in the right place.⁴¹

Dhlomo not only rejected the idea of beginning 'in the right place', but had every intention of employing a foreign language, drawing inspiration from Western forms and, as we shall see, from contemporary modern playwrights – specifically Bernard Shaw. *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, was, of course, intended as an archetype of the new African drama. It would also serve as evidence of Africa's capacity to produce authors of modern, literary drama and was the product and proof of Dhlomo's own status as a progressive individual and artist.

Like *U-Nongqause*, *The Girl* was pioneering in its use of language. While Waters was the first English-speaker to have a play published in Xhosa, Dhlomo was the first black South African to produce one in English. This was, of course, a deliberate act, and one that was endorsed by his

³⁷ Dhlomo, 'Drama and the African', 234.

³⁸ Ibid, 234.

³⁹ Attwell, 'Modernizing Tradition', 94–119.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 234.

⁴¹ Kelly, 'African Drama', 111 & 113.

fellow black writers at the African Authors Conference in 1936.⁴² For these authors, it was partially a pragmatic choice with political implications. English could act as a national language and thereby unite the various indigenous language groups. In so doing, it worked against government attempts to impose tribalism. The use of English also served to gain entry to a wider community of English-speakers, both locally and internationally, allowing the New African to participate on the global stage.⁴³ But the choice of language was not merely a practical response to an ideological question; it was also informed by aesthetic considerations. Dhlomo, who was weaned on a literary diet of the 'great' English Romantic writers and who seems to have regarded literature, at least initially, as 'a particular kind of elevated utterance', obviously associated English with a superior form of artistic expression – as well as, of course, with civilization in general.⁴⁴ Furthermore, he subscribed to (and repeatedly evoked) the Romantic notion that the artist, a man of genius set apart and above, needed to safeguard his artistic integrity and must be allowed the freedom to use whichever tools he felt were necessary (including language) to realise his creative ambitions.

Although, for Dhlomo, 'the African dramatist must be an artist *before* being a propagandist', he acknowledged that modern drama was nonetheless more than 'literature'. It was 'a source of ideas, a cultural and educational centre, an agency for propaganda, a social institution'.⁴⁵ And the influence of the modern playwright's craft can be found in the philosophical discussions and musings that permeate *The Girl*, in Dhlomo's appeal to science to provide a rational explanation for the Cattle-Killing and the emergence of the New African, and in the exploration of his heroine's psyche. The African element is most explicitly to be seen in the dancing, the praise poem and the singing. It is worth noting, however, that unlike the *izibongo* in Waters' *U-Nongqause*, Kreli's praises which open Scene Two, while fulfilling their customary function, are in English, are highly reduced, and generic – devoid of the allusions and historical references that typically feature in such poems, but which would have been meaningless to Africans from other traditions (including Dhlomo himself), as well as to a European audience. The songs too, which *are* in Xhosa and which appear in the 'traditional' context of the first two scenes of the play, were actually purpose-written. Although Dhlomo specifically draws attention in his

⁴² In 'The Growth of African Literature', *Bantu World* 4, March 1933, 1, Dhlomo argued that Africans should not bow to pressure to write in indigenous languages rather than English. Quoted in Kruger, *Drama of South Africa*, 223, nt.12. For the African Authors Conference see de Kock, 'Sitting', 392–3.

⁴³ In fact, Dhlomo's use of English, combined with his determination to write 'literary' dramas, meant that his work only reached a small, educated group of Africans and liberal white South Africans. 'The audience he wished to reach remained beyond reach because Dhlomo's dramaturgy remained circumscribed by his different class and ideological interests.' Steadman, 'Towards Popular Theatre', 215.

⁴⁴ Visser & Couzens *Collected Works*, xiii.

⁴⁵ Dhlomo, 'Drama and the African', 234.

directions to the musical gift 'for which the black man is noted',⁴⁶ he does not allow it free rein. Rather than creating the space for improvised 'traditional' music (as Waters does), he deliberately controls his actors' 'natural' gift, by providing his own music and fixing it in notation. In addition to supplying the melody and harmonic accompaniment for Soga's lyrics, Dhlomo composed another four songs to accompany *The Girl*. Although these songs are inexplicably excluded from the *Collected Works* (1985), they appear in Dhlomo's original edition, notated (in Dhlomo's hand) in tonic-solfa and complete with Italian indications.⁴⁷ The author's name appears alongside each title, staking his claim as composer.

Although the African influence is explicit in the use of syncopation, ostinato patterns etc., western and modern inspiration are found (apart from in the acts of transcription and Dhlomo's ownership claims), in the hymn (a standard 16-bar, four-part vocal harmony composition that draws on the tradition of western hymnody) and the first section of 'Mhlakaza's Dance Song' which is in an identifiable ragtime idiom. (Dhlomo's adoption of a popular African-American style as an apparently primitive signifier is interesting in this context.)⁴⁸ The songs, as Kruger notes, 'bear witness not only to the invention of a tradition, but to the desire to draw from an African/European syncretism the means to fashion an African present and future'.⁴⁹

THE REHABILITATION OF NONGQAWUSE

Dhlomo's theoretical and ideological objectives are also clearly apparent in his recuperation of the prophetess, by far the most striking aspect of this play. Even the choice of a female protagonist was part of Dhlomo's progressive agenda. 'Drama', he wrote (and by which he meant the 'new African drama'), 'will help liberate the African woman from the tyranny of custom and tradition'.⁵⁰ In fact, in Dhlomo's *Nongqawuse*, we have not only the promotion of a woman, but a woman liberating the entire Black South African nation. In the final scene of *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, the victims of the tragedy, now happily resurrected and clothed in light, hail her as 'their Liberator from Superstition and from the rule of Ignorance'.⁵¹ Indeed, out of the historical and unlikely figure of Nongqawuse, Dhlomo forges a precursor for the New African. In order to have a better understanding of the innovative nature of Dhlomo's characterization, and

⁴⁶ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 26.

⁴⁷ CLDP, MS 16,309a.

⁴⁸ The considerable African-American influence on black South Africans is described by Couzens in *New African*, 54 & 107–14. Dhlomo's fusing of elements of African and western music was probably influenced by the work of his cousin, the well-known composer, Reuben Caluza. For Caluza, see Coplan, *Township Tonight* (2008), 94–100. Dhlomo seems to have had an ambivalent relationship to popular American music including ragtime, describing it as inferior to western classical music, but admiring the skill of its performers. Couzens, 76 nt. 75; Coplan, 127.

⁴⁹ Kruger, *Drama of South Africa*, 58.

⁵⁰ Dhlomo, 'Drama and the African', 234.

⁵¹ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 29.

his personal investment in Nongqawuse's representation, it is useful to look at some of the models that might have inspired him. Dhlomo has, in fact, left a trail of clues and self-referential allusions in his own writings and in the preliminary material that accompanied the original edition of the play.

We can at once dismiss Mary Waters' drug-induced and effectively absent prophethood as inspiration, except, possibly as stimulus for a revisionist reimagining. Certainly Dhlomo later wrote of African heroes (including Nongqawuse) who had been 'treated superficially and dismissed as barbaric', and made it his mission to reconstruct, and thereby salvage, their reputations.⁵² In the same year, 1939, he asserted elsewhere that 'Today the new African refuses to accept these men and women [Shaka, Nongqause etc.] as savages, murderers, and impostors of the schoolroom and the textbook. He regards and honours them as great tragic national leaders'.⁵³ While opinion of the prophethood might have shifted over the years, the fact is that at the time of *The Girl*, not all New Africans – Molema, J. H. Soga and Zulu poet and academic, Benedict Vilakazi included – *did* 'honour' Nongqawuse as a 'great tragic leader'.⁵⁴ Molema had dismissed her as a 'bogus prophethood' and Vilakazi, in his poem 'Inkelekele yakwaXhosa' (The Xhosa Calamity), writes of the 'tawdry prophethood's' 'cruel deceit'. Indeed, it might be argued that Dhlomo's reference to the depiction of Nongqawuse as an 'impostor' was directed at Vilakazi who uses this very term in relation to the prophethood. 'Yours is the guilt Nongqawuze,' concludes Vilakazi's poem, 'yours, O imposter!'⁵⁵ Dhlomo also writes aside Charles Brownlee's theory of Nongqawuse-as-ventriloquist, despite replicating a scene from Brownlee's *Reminiscences* in his script.⁵⁶

Dhlomo's depiction of Nongqawuse as something out of the ordinary was remarked upon from the outset. Amongst preliminary material that appeared in the 1936 but not the 1985 edition is a Foreword by Frank Brownlee, son of Charles and Mrs Brownlee, who appear as characters in the play. In his preamble, the younger Brownlee endorses the author's portrayal of his family, but also draws particular attention to the prophethood:

⁵² Dhlomo, 'African Drama and Research', 19.

⁵³ Dhlomo, 'Why Study?', 42.

⁵⁴ Molema, *Past and Present*, 167–8; Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, 241–7 and Soga, *Ama-Xosa*, 121–2.

⁵⁵ Dhlomo made this comment while embroiled in a very public and caustic argument with Vilakazi over the form and language 'Bantu' poetry should take (Attwell 'Modernizing Tradition', 94–6). Dhlomo would certainly have been familiar with Vilakazi's Cattle-Killing poem, for he used another from the same collection in *The Girl's* dedication. 'Inkelekele yakwaXhosa' appears in *Inkondlo Kazulu* and an English translation, 'The Xhosa Calamity', can be found in *Zulu Horizons*, 18–24.

⁵⁶ Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 127. Mrs Brownlee's first-hand account, which was dramatised at the beginning of Scene 3, was also published in Chalmer's *Tiyo Soga*, 106. An 'Historical Note' which, like Metelerkamp's, precedes the text proper, also draws on a description of the event from *Reminiscences* (although Wenzel claims the note was inserted by Dhlomo's publisher, R. H. W. Shepherd). There is no reason to believe that the playwright might have been inspired, as Gérard proposes, by Gqoba's 1888 Xhosa account.

I think this ambitious subject has been ably handled. Some might cavil at the author's rendering of the character of the Prophetess Nongqause but I see no reason why the present interpretation of her actions should not be accepted though it be not quite in accordance with generally accepted fact.

Frank Brownlee provided his own view of the prophetess (which presumably aligned with 'generally accepted fact') in his article 'Mass Madness' that appeared in *The Week-End Advertiser* on 18 January 1936, nearly a year before the publication of *The Girl Who Killed to Save*. While maintaining the idea that Nongqawuse was a pawn rather than an instigator of the tragedy, he modifies his father's view that Nongqawuse was a ventriloquist towards a more scientific explanation. He concludes his account as follows:

It is my personal opinion that the girl Nongqause acted under the hypnotic influence of Mhlakaza, seeing and hearing such things as he bade her see and hear.⁵⁷

Dhlomo was certainly fully aware of 'generally accepted fact' and while 'not quite in accordance with it', did not entirely reject it either. Like Brownlee's, and other early accounts, Dhlomo's Nongqawuse is not held responsible for the actual content of the prophecies. In his play, the prophetess admits that while she heard 'strange' but unintelligible sounds – 'not voices' – these were 'interpreted' by her 'father'.⁵⁸ The ancestors' message is subsequently procured only after Nongqawuse drinks Mhlakaza's medicine. Gérard argues that 'In order to turn his heroine into a suitable instrument of Divine Providence, [Dhlomo] emphasises her innocence, which makes her a guileless tool in the hands of the true villains – the chief and the witch doctor'.⁵⁹ While Nongqawuse may not have been in control of the substance of her 'feigned' visions and prophecies, however, Gérard's reading is reductive. The reviewer for the *Bantu World* displays more discernment when, having drawn a comparison with Judas Iscariot, he notes that 'Nongqause, in betraying her people thought she was serving them; for in death she visualised fuller life'.⁶⁰ In envisaging a better world, and recognising the need for change, Dhlomo, rather than making the prophetess into 'a guileless tool' in fact emphasises her foresight and agency – something that is reaffirmed later in the drama. Where Dhlomo's rendering of Nongqawuse diverges from most other early portrayals, is in the prominence he assigns her (she dominates the first scene and the critical final moments of the last), but more importantly in the complexity of her character and in the role that she ultimately and unexpectedly plays in the tragedy. Nongqawuse is not merely a pawn, but a thinking, questioning and moral human being

⁵⁷ Brownlee, 'Mass Madness'.

⁵⁸ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 10.

⁵⁹ Gérard, *Four African Literatures*, 226–7.

⁶⁰ Anon, 'Nongqause The Liberator: A Play by H. I. E. Dhlomo', *The Bantu World*, 31 October 1936, 8.

– an emotional being, too, and a physical one.

If Dhlomo 'writes aside' certain texts in order to construct his prophetess, he also 'writes alongside' others. There is a definite resonance with Metelerkamp's 'Namjikwa', for example, which was published for the second time in the year before *The Girl* appeared in print. Another crucial influence – from further afield – is Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1923). Although there is no evidence to prove that Dhlomo read Metelerkamp's short-story, it is highly likely, given that the first of his literary works to be published appeared in the same periodical only two months later.⁶¹ Certainly, while there are noteworthy differences which serve to highlight the originality of Dhlomo's interpretation, there are a number of points of contact with Metelerkamp's work. Like Metelerkamp, Dhlomo propagates the idea that the prophetess ('the loveliest of them all')⁶² was chosen by Mhlakaza for her physical rather than spiritual endowments. 'Several chiefs and councillors', comments one of her friends, 'have killed their cattle and destroyed grain merely to please Mhlakaza and capture Nongqause. They do not believe in the prophecy'.⁶³ Dhlomo's prophetess, too, like Metelerkamp's Namjikwa, is in love with an unbeliever, whose public rejection of the ancestors' message makes her doubt their truth. In fact the authors' descriptions of the prophetess' initial feelings of national pride, followed by the first stirrings of love-inspired doubt, are remarkably similar:

[Namjikwa], in the end, was to be the means of freeing her people from the yoke of the hated White Man who had stolen their country. She had been filled with a frenzy of patriotism, of belief in her own destiny, of pride in what her people were about to accomplish. All had gone well until the first visit to Umgani's kraal.

NONGQAUSE: At times I feel pride and self-assurance come up in my breast when I think I shall be the means of saving my people. The feeling brings indescribable content and self-elation, and makes me think I am better, greater and wiser than all women. But at other times, especially when I lie awake at night or when I think of Mazwi, I fear, fear, fear.⁶⁴

As a result of their supposed spiritual encounters, both women are figuratively and literally set apart – men are forbidden to touch Namjikwa, or to enter Nongqawuse's hut. Both too are promised to Kreli, who intends to make the prophetess his wife once the Cattle-Killing is over. This imposed distance awakens in the heroines a sense of themselves as individuals, as

⁶¹ Dhlomo, 'Experiment in Colour', 67–80.

⁶² Dhlomo, *Girl*, 4.

⁶³ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 5.

⁶⁴ Metelerkamp, 'Namjikwa', 70 and Dhlomo, *Girl*, 10.

articulated against the group: Namjikwa is assured of her 'own destiny', Nongqawuse of being 'greater and wiser than all women'. Both too are conscious of the power they wield and that *they* are the means of their people's liberation. But while each expresses pride in her new-found status, their equilibrium is disturbed by their love for a man. This longing – a desire that is clearly incompatible with their roles as prophetesses – highlights the isolation of their position. What makes their situations doubly problematic is that in both cases, the object of desire, in addition to being socially unacceptable, also triggers their misgivings. It is at this troubled juncture, however, that the similarity between the two heroines ends.

Where Metelerkamp's Namjikwa is impelled by instinct and emotion, Nongqawuse is ultimately philosophical, rational and driven by a search for the Truth. This difference is particularly apparent in the critical scenes where the prophetesses are forced to choose between the nation and their lovers. Namjikwa, as we have seen, shows little hesitation in choosing the latter (although she does try to return to her people once Umgani is safe). Dhlomo's Nongqawuse is far more conflicted; her decision protracted and agonised. She declares that 'The nation's love leaves me lonely [...] The love of crowds acts on one's heart as water acts on an over-oiled body – leaving you dry and cold', and she craves personal, emotional engagement – 'the love between a man and a woman that soaks into the heart, tears it, changes it'.⁶⁵ And yet, despite this and in direct contrast to Metelerkamp's heroine, Nongqawuse finally and resolutely chooses the 'greater' rather than the 'nobler' route, electing to remain with her people rather than to escape with her lover.⁶⁶

MAZWI: Come, run away with me, now, now. We can easily escape...
 Come, escape from yourself – escape from death.

NONGQAUUSE: I cannot. I dare not – will not.

MAZWI: Fool, why not? What holds you back? What ails you?

NONGQAUUSE: (*Falling on her knees before him, rapt in pain.*) The People! The Truth!⁶⁷

The prophetess' response: 'I cannot. I dare not – will not' succinctly and effectively charts a transition from unquestioning compliance, to fearful awareness, and finally, personal conviction. Yet even as Nongqawuse makes her decision, it leaves her '*rapt in pain*'.

Incidentally, if Namjikwa's reverse choice and consequent death confirms her membership in the Universal Sisterhood, it does not follow that Nongqawuse's decision disqualifies her.

⁶⁵ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 10.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 11.

Indeed, the fact that the prophetess's resolution is consistent with Mrs Brownlee's views on love and duty implies a non-racial female solidarity. What is interesting, is that Mrs Brownlee's maxim – 'When duty calls love is sacrificed. When duty calls life is endangered' – is a revision (conscious or otherwise) of Metelerkamp's final sentence: 'to a woman love means sacrifice'.⁶⁸ In *The Girl*, 'sacrifice' is no longer a specifically feminine concern, nor is the emphasis on 'love', but 'duty'. A 'duty' furthermore, that in this context, extends beyond the self to an entire nation – even, one could argue in light of the play's conclusion, to civilization as a whole.

With her decision, Nongqawuse not only forfeits fulfilment as a woman, but appears to sacrifice her individual progress in order to throw her lot in with a clearly deluded people. Mazwi who, as an unbeliever, is at a more advanced stage of development than the prophetess,⁶⁹ urges her to 'escape from yourself'. The qualification 'from yourself' implying that she needs to break free from her present believing, and therefore primitive, self. And yet, when Nongqawuse chooses her people (who depend on her as their surrogate chief)⁷⁰ and to continue her lonely search for the Truth, individual advancement is clearly not entirely abandoned. 'Nongqause's dilemma,' writes Peterson, 'is identical to the life-long quandary that confronted Dhlomo as regards the principles that should regulate the rights of individuals and those of their communities'.⁷¹ Her chosen path, one might argue, foreshadows that of the New Africans who continually tried to invent and negotiate a space where both the nation and the individual could be served.

But Nongqawuse does not remain a tragic hero – well-meaning but flawed. This is only part of the story for the playwright. *The Girl*, as Couzens has (I think correctly) remarked, is a celebration of 'the "New African" and his values'.⁷² As such, Dhlomo needed a triumphant conclusion and almost by sleight of hand, Nongqawuse is vindicated in the very last moments of the play, and hailed as the nation's Liberator. The heroine, it seems, did not need to 'escape from herself' in order to be transformed. In a scene that recalls Shaw's epilogue in *Saint Joan* – where the French martyr reappears after her death in a dream, and reunites with various characters from the drama – Nongqawuse returns in a vision to the dying Xaba.⁷³ On seeing her, he exclaims to those present:

Listen! See the beautiful crowd singing? Ah! This is the host of those who perished in the Great Famine. Do you see these people, surrounding, thanking and laughing with Nongqause? They tell her that hunger and destitution drove them into the paths of life,

⁶⁸ Ibid, 20 and Metelerkamp, 'Namjikwa', 488.

⁶⁹ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 18.

⁷⁰ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 18 & 7.

⁷¹ Peterson, *Monarchs*, 196 & 198.

⁷² Couzens, *New African*, 201.

⁷³ Shaw, *Saint Joan*, 173–89.

led them to the missionary and his divine message; put them into the hands of God. So there is triumph in death; there is finding in death; there is beauty in death. Nongqause laughs as she tells them that she was really in earnest but was ignorant. They laugh and sing. They call her their Liberator from Superstition and from the rule of Ignorance. These people are dressed, not in karosses and blankets as we are, but in Light – Light that makes it impossible to see their bodies or to distinguish their sex. There she comes to us. I greet you Nongqause. Yes, I come. Yes, thank you, do lead me to the Master. O Nongqause, the Liberator!⁷⁴

Like Metelerkamp, Dhlomo consigns the prophetess to a premature death (historians claim that she lived for a further fifty years after Soga's return from Scotland). Not only does her demise serve to strengthen Dhlomo's sympathetic portrayal by underscoring Nongqawuse's integrity (she does not abandon her people but presumably dies alongside them), it provides a platform from which the prophetess can speak without inhibition (in later life, we are told, she refused to discuss the event).⁷⁵ In this final moment, we witness a story not of individual transformation at the expense of the nation (as in Metelerkamp's 'Namjikwa'), but of an 'earnest' individual leading the nation – and herself in the process – to the Truth and new life. She has been redeemed by God-Nature and exonerated by those she unwittingly misled. The audience's final impression is of an enlightened people – literally, for that is how they appear, 'dressed, not in karosses and blankets' (the traditional attire of 'tribal' Africans), 'but in Light'. This light, moreover, disguises not only their sex but also, by implication, their race. They are indistinguishable from other peoples, and so at last, fully integrated. Unlike Metelerkamp's Namjikwa, then, Nongqawuse attains more than Universal Sisterhood for herself, she wins universal reception for the black nation as a whole.

SHAW AND HIS MAID

Bernard Shaw has a well-established reputation as a radical thinker and reformer who tackled a variety of social issues in his dramatic work including, very often, the emancipation of women. His feminist sympathies are seen not only in subjects broached but in a panoply of strong, independent and 'progressive' female characters. While critics, both contemporaneous and current, have questioned his ability to portray 'real' women, there is no question that Shaw's female creations (including the likes of Vivie Warren, Lina Szczepanowska and Ellie Dunn) directly challenged and unsettled the 'womanly woman' ideal of Victorian theatre and society.

⁷⁴ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 29.

⁷⁵ Peires, *The Dead*, 2003: 356 and Theal, *History of South Africa*, 198.

And of Shaw's many women, Joan has been crowned the most 'unwomanly woman' of them all.⁷⁶ While Dhlomo's heroine might at first seem far removed from the opinionated, impetuous, supremely confident and androgynous protagonist of Shaw's *Saint Joan*, there can be little doubt that Dhlomo found inspiration both for his portrayal of Nongqawuse (as a figure of genius and a nationalist leader), but, more particularly, for his determined recuperation of the prophetess, in Shaw's celebrated work.⁷⁷ Joan of Arc's canonization in 1920 had projected her back into the public arena and Shaw's *Saint Joan* was primarily responsible for the saint's literary and popular rehabilitation (as well as, incidentally, the dramatist's Nobel Prize). Shaw, repeatedly citing the historical 'truth' of his creation, not only famously eschewed earlier portrayals of The Maid as an idolised and idealised creature, but also presented her as 'a genius' and 'one of the first apostles of Nationalism'.⁷⁸ *Saint Joan* captured the global as well as the local imagination. 'Shaw's Maid,' wrote a critic fifty years later, 'has become the popular image of Joan of Arc, who is no longer the Joan of history or hagiology but the Joan of Shaw's *Saint Joan* much as the *Henry V* of Shakespeare has eclipsed the Henry V of history.'⁷⁹

While the Xhosa prophetess clearly did not share Joan's sentiments on love (as depicted by Shaw: 'I do not care for the things women care for. They dream of lovers') nor her near unshakeable faith in her voices, glimpses of The Maid's audacity and defiance are found in Nongqawuse. In Scene 1 she impatiently scolds the Old Man, mocks her admirers, and declares that she would defy the Chief if her doubts regarding the prophecies were confirmed. Most importantly, the teenage visionaries share what Shaw refers to as 'the evolutionary appetite' – the 'pursuit of knowledge and of social readjustments', which impels them beyond the personal and domestic.⁸⁰ In addition to reconstructing the character and appearance of the saint, an important factor in Shaw's recuperative project was his 'Epilogue'. When critics suggested that in the interests of length the playwright excise this section, Shaw retorted: 'I could hardly be expected to stultify myself by implying that Joan's history in the world ended unhappily with her execution, instead of beginning there. It was necessary by hook or crook to shew the canonized Joan as well as the incinerated one'.⁸¹ For Dhlomo, too, it was crucial that the incident, and Nongqawuse herself, did not end in failure: if black South Africans were to be considered as equal and worthy of assimilation, their history and heroes needed to be made acceptable, or at least explicable, to colonial society. Yoking one of the more notorious (and

⁷⁶ Peters, 'Shaw's life', 3–24, Gainor, *Shaw's Daughters* and Lorich's, 'The "Unwomanly Woman"', 110. Shaw, *Quintessence*, Chapter 3.

⁷⁷ The play was written and premiered in 1923 and published the following year.

⁷⁸ Shaw, *Saint Joan*, 12 & 7. See Shaw's extensive Preface (7–69) for a defence of his portrayal of Joan.

⁷⁹ Weintraub, *Saint Joan*, 7.

⁸⁰ Shaw, *Saint Joan*, 108 & 19. While Shaw contends that this 'appetite' 'may not touch the personal life of the seeker at any point' (20), in *The Girl* the individual and 'superpersonal' are seen to be deeply, if unconsciously, complicit.

⁸¹ Shaw, *Saint Joan*, 66.

perhaps misunderstood) African figures with a recently rehabilitated and celebrated European saint was a creative way of doing this.

Dhlomo first invoked the Irish playwright in relation to Nongqawuse in April 1933, probably with at least the germ of *The Girl* already in mind. In a passage that could be read as self-referential, Dhlomo writes:

The day may come when the Bantu race will produce a Bernard Shaw to dramatise the story of Nongqause and reveal to humanity the greatness of her soul, notwithstanding the destructiveness of her dreams.⁸²

Just the year before this was written, Shaw had visited South Africa. Three years before *that*, Sybil Thorndike (the inspiration for Shaw's Joan) and her husband Lewis Casson toured the country with *Saint Joan*.⁸³ The tour, which coincided with Dhlomo's move to Johannesburg to become principal of the American Board Mission School, began with an 8-week run in that city, before moving on to other urban centres. The company returned to Johannesburg in 1929 where they 'packed His Majesty's Theatre for four weeks with *Saint Joan*'.⁸⁴ With the combined attraction of a celebrity and a popular repertoire, the tour must have been the highlight of the season with every drama enthusiast, not to mention all of 'high' society, clamouring to attend performances. It is probable, considering Dhlomo's interest in the theatre, and Thorndike's insistence on having some cinemas 'converted' into theatres for single shows in order to accommodate black audiences, that Dhlomo attended a performance.⁸⁵ Even if he did not, the Thorndike tour was covered by the local newspapers, as was (to an even greater extent) the visit of Shaw himself in 1932. (It was during this trip, incidentally, that Shaw wrote his 'very blasphemous pamphlet' *Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*, made the first South African national radio broadcast and delivered his opinion on the 'natives' of South Africa who, he said, were 'more intelligent', but 'not more psychologically interesting than the white races'.)⁸⁶ Follow-up trips by both Thorndike and Shaw in the mid-1930s kept the playwright and *Saint Joan* firmly in the public imagination.

It is hardly surprising, then, that Dhlomo was not the only – or the first – South African to make

⁸² 'Bantu Dramatic Society Stages Its First Show', *Bantu World* 15 April 1933 (quoted in Couzens, *New African*, 176). This sentence is repeated almost word-for-word in Thema, *Out of Darkness*, 36 (WCST).

⁸³ Thorndike and Casson's tour took place in 1928–9.

⁸⁴ Thorndike, *Sybil*, 311.

⁸⁵ Morley, *Sybil Thorndike*, 95 and Casson, *Lewis & Sybil*, 145. His Majesty's in Johannesburg was 'unique among South African theatres in that it lower[ed] the colour-bar, usually maintained in places of public entertainment for Whites, by admitting Bantu spectators to the gallery when there is room.' Hoernlé, 'The Bantu Dramatic Society', 224.

⁸⁶ For Shaw's visits to South Africa, see Hugo 'Upset in a "Suntrap"'. For *The Black Girl* see Hugo, *Bernard Shaw's 'The Black Girl'*.

a connection between Joan and Nongqawuse. Well-known novelist, Sarah Gertrude Millin, referred to Nongqawuse as 'a Joan of Arc among the Kaffirs' in her popular history, *The South Africans* (1926).⁸⁷ R. V. Selope Thelma, editor of *Bantu World* (for whom Dhlomo worked from 1935), had far more to say on the subject in his unpublished autobiography. While he does not defend Nongqawuse's actions, he endorses her 'noble' motivation, which was 'the independence of the African race.' He continues:

As I read South African history, comparing it with that of Europe, I discovered that Nongqause was but a prototype of Joan of Arc. The only difference being that Joan's scheme succeeded while that of Nongqause proved a disastrous failure. But no one can deny that Nongqause, like Joan of Arc, was prompted by the spirit of patriotism. In urging the Xhosa people to kill their cattle and burn their corn and wait with hungry stomachs for the coming of the Day of Deliverance she was activated by one thing only, and that was her desire to see her people free from the thralldom of an alien race.⁸⁸

By juxtaposing a European saint with Nongqawuse, Millin (perhaps unintentionally) and Thelma (certainly intentionally), highlight the universal nature of her story, as well as the comparability, rather than the usually assumed inferiority, of African history in relation to European history. They also participate in the partial rehabilitation of Joan's black sister. By reconstructing the aftermath of the Cattle-Killing tragedy, Dhlomo turns what Thelma describes as a 'disastrous failure' into the ultimate victory – and thereby apparently completes Nongqawuse's rehabilitation. In 'Drama and the African' Dhlomo also explicitly declares the prophetess's (and Joan's) eternal and universal resonance.

Drama is an artist's reaction to, comment on, and view of life. It reflects the mind and beliefs of the people and the age. However, great artists and thinkers confine themselves neither to time, place nor race, but create for all climes and all time. Great art or thought (art is thought-feeling) is more than national: it is universal, reflecting the image – the spirit – of the All-Creative Being who knows neither East nor West, Black nor White, Jew nor Gentile, time nor space. The tragedy of a Job, a Hamlet, a Joan, a Nongqause, is the tragedy of all countries, all times, all races.⁸⁹

The direct reference here to Galatians 3:28 ('There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus'), recalls the final image of *The Girl*, where the

⁸⁷ Millin, *The South Africans* (1926), 31. Although the Joan reference was retained in the 1934 revised edition (33), by 1951 it had been excised.

⁸⁸ Thelma, *Out of Darkness*, 32–6. Nongqause as Joan was also evoked by Roux in *Time Longer Than Rope*, 50 and again by Cope in his play, *Nona* (1978), 4.

⁸⁹ Dhlomo, 'Drama and the African', 235. This piece was based upon two articles published in *Bantu World* in 1933.

people are clothed in an homogenizing light. Implicitly tied up with the idea that Nongqawuse's story was timeless and had universal significance is Dhlomo's own status. Dhlomo clearly believed (or at least hoped) that his play would transcend barriers of time, place and race. If it *did*, it would confirm his standing as a 'great artist' – a position which Shaw already occupied, and one to which Dhlomo obviously aspired. As if to stake his claim and to ensure this reputation, Dhlomo inscribes – and applauds – his role in his own play. Having speculated about the reason for the current crisis, the philosopher Hugh concludes:

Yes, I know that historians and writers will condemn Nongqause as a fool, a traitor, a devil-possessed witch. But is that everything that can be said about this? I hope to God not. No, I will not believe, I cannot believe that the tragedy which is now upon us can be explained in that way only. There must be something deeper. I believe that in the distant future someone will catch the proper spirit and get the real meaning of this incident and write about it. Who knows? ⁹⁰

Here we see not only Dhlomo's desire to transform and redeem Nongqawuse; but the audience is forced to consider the identity and importance of the author's own hand in this transformation. In a move that brings to mind Shaw's dismissal of previous representations of Joan, with its unmistakable inference that Shaw alone had grasped her 'real meaning', ⁹¹ Dhlomo suggests that *he* is the one able to 'catch the proper spirit' of the event, to depict the prophetess as she truly was. In Hugh, Wenzel notes, Dhlomo creates 'a character whose prophetic vision calls his own authorial voice into being. Hugh's proleptic statement anticipates and looks beyond the distorted colonial historiography from which Dhlomo will recuperate the figure of Nongqause'. ⁹² The epigraph to *The Girl* serves as further confirmation of Dhlomo's faith in his apparent ability to reconstruct the authentic Nongqawuse. While the poetry that appears as the epigraph (the first stanza of Robert Browning's 'Memorabilia', a tribute to the poet Shelley), could be seen as a mysterious allusion to an unnamed person whom Dhlomo admires (or even to Shelley himself), a reference in one of his journalistic pieces indicates that it refers instead to Dhlomo's eager desire to have an often misunderstood figure 'plainly' seen. ⁹³ If read as a self-referential statement, as many of Dhlomo's third-person proclamations (including the Hugh-Dhlomo statement, above) are evidently intended to be read, it suggests that Dhlomo has the gift of 'plain seeing' – more, that he is a genius, according to Shaw's own definition:

a person who seeing farther and probing deeper than other people, has a different set

⁹⁰ Dhlomo, *Girl*, 20.

⁹¹ Shaw, *Saint Joan* 31–5.

⁹² Wenzel, 'Voices', 58.

⁹³ Dhlomo, 'African Drama and Research', 19. The stanza, whose source Dhlomo does not acknowledge, reads: 'Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,/ And did he stop and speak to you/ And did you speak to him again?/ How strange it seems and new!'

of ethical valuations from theirs, and has energy enough to give effect to this extra vision and its valuations in whatever manner best suits his or her specific talents.⁹⁴

Because of his unique insight, it is implied, Dhlomo is able to provide the 'proper spirit' of the Cattle-Killing. There is a sense, too, in which, the author aligns himself with Nongqawuse as a leader of the African people and a seeker of the Truth.

NONGQAWUSE REVISITED?

With the publication of Dhlomo's *Collected Works* in 1985, it became apparent that the optimism of *The Girl* was, however, short-lived and soon replaced by disillusionment, bitterness and a more strident form of nationalism. This shift is hardly surprising. In the year that *The Girl* was published, after all, the Hertzog Acts were finally passed, shattering, as Walshe has argued, any hope for racial equality and catalysing 'the more assertive African politics of the 1940s and 1950s'.⁹⁵ Dhlomo's rehabilitation of Nongqawuse in *The Girl* must have been a mocking reminder, in the context of this increasingly segregated and racist country, of the author's earlier confidence in the imminent possibility of a truly egalitarian South Africa. In 'A Philosophy of "Saint Joan"', an unpublished essay that I believe was written in 1942, Dhlomo's tone is aggrieved and despairing, and he appears to have abandoned all hope of the fulfilment of the New African's dream.⁹⁶

The essay initially appears to be a straightforward review of a performance of *Saint Joan* by pupils at Dhlomo's alma mater, Adams College. It soon becomes clear, however, that the author is concerned with far more weighty issues: 'It was,' he writes, 'a drama before, within and beyond drama'. In words that mirror his 1933 call for African playwrights to dramatise 'African Serfdom, Oppression, Exploitation and Metamorphosis', Dhlomo describes how, during the course of the performance he was transported,

I know not where and how, before a great human stage, where the tragedy of African Birth, Transition and Progress was being portrayed. Here were grim-faced, living actors soused, as it were, in the moving drama of African Genius and Expression – the Soul of Africa. The action was swift and shattering or vically [sic] slow and lacerating, the scenes dark and horrifying, the stage Today, the players the white and the black in

⁹⁴ Shaw, 'Preface', *Saint Joan*, 14.

⁹⁵ Walshe, *Black Nationalism*, 21. See too *The South African Outlook*, 66:793 (May 1936).

⁹⁶ While the review is unfortunately not dated, we do know that Adams put on a production of Shaw's drama some time between 1934–45 (Brookes, *South African Pilgrimage*, 55). Given that Dhlomo relocated to Natal in 1941 and visited the school in 1942 – in the same year that the headmaster of Adams gave a talk, organised by Dhlomo, on none other than Shaw – suggests that the review stems from this year (Couzens, *New African*, 246–7). The embittered tone of the piece, and Dhlomo's reference to himself as an 'outcast', is also consistent with the author's personal circumstances around this time (KCDP).

South Africa.

Before me I saw the St. Joan of African Genius, Expression and Patriotism, eager and honest, determined to save her African France from oppression, ignorance, poverty and despair.⁹⁷

Although Dhlomo does not specifically mention Nongqawuse (whom he, incidentally, also referred to as an 'African Genius'), the prophetess's presence is palpable.⁹⁸ Here, I believe, is a sequel to *The Girl*: a postscript made in the wake of the passing of the Hertzog Bills and the betrayal of those who were ostensibly representing 'native' interests – the 'so-called sympathisers and well-wishers, experts and liberals – the "friends" of her sorely oppressed Race'.⁹⁹ What is interesting is that in Dhlomo's reading of this production, the 'white and black' players of the Present do not take up the roles of the English and French in Shaw's play. Rather, the white villains (the 'self-appointed protectors' of the Race) are Joan's own French 'masters'. This is not, then, according to Dhlomo's analysis, about a nation fighting for liberation from an alien people, but about civil tension within an established society. In his astringent denunciation of the 'masters', furthermore, Dhlomo distances himself from Shaw's insistence that there are no villains in the play, just 'normal' people. For the Zulu playwright, the white leaders are not only presumptuous, but unscrupulous, and it is the black visionary who is portrayed as the enlightened party, as holding the moral high ground. While the 'St. Joan of African Genius' doggedly pursues the apparently incontrovertible and eternal values upon which Western civilization is founded, these 'highly-positioned, great, little, saintly, dirty men' have clearly lost sight of them:

When she was beckoned and inspired by the deep, enduring music of Beauty and Truth, in her 'masters' ears dinned the twanging noises of the harsh calls of Gain and unholy tradition.

When, even as the saint goes to trial, she innocently believes she will 'find help, light, virtue and God', she is confronted instead with 'hate, evil and corruption'.¹⁰⁰ In this review, we find Dhlomo holding to account those that claim to be civilised and indeed, 'hold[ing] to eternal shame the shoddy colonial compromises inflicted in the name of the civil imaginary'.¹⁰¹

As Shaw's drama plays itself out on stage in front of the black author, the posthumous rehabilitation of Joan is undermined by her eventual abandonment, the buoyant tone by

⁹⁷ Dhlomo, 'Philosophy', 1.

⁹⁸ Dhlomo, 'African Drama and Research', 19.

⁹⁹ Dhlomo, 'Philosophy', 2. Shaw, *Saint Joan*, 62–3.

¹⁰⁰ Dhlomo, 'Philosophy', 2–3.

¹⁰¹ de Kock, 'Sitting', 403.

despair. Despite the heroine's canonization and the praises heaped upon her by former detractors and supporters alike, when she proposes in the Epilogue to return to earth, she is emphatically denied by all. While Dhlomo had optimistically followed Shaw's model as far as the saint's rehabilitation in *The Girl*, he had stopped short of her betrayal. Unlike *Saint Joan*, Dhlomo's play concludes on a triumphant note, with the recognition and acceptance of the prophetess and, by extension, her people. In this review, however, the ending is somewhat different. The writer appears to concede that *The Girl's* closing image was merely a chimera. The tragedy of Joan, as it speaks to Dhlomo in the audience, is the tragedy of the black people in South Africa. It is also a private tragedy. Indeed, in his reading the personal and superpersonal merge.¹⁰²

At last she [Joan] came to understand, learn and accept the bitter lesson that all great souls and minds throughout the ages must, like God, be alone. Their strength and sorrow is to be alone. They are despised, rejected and crucified.

The end came soon. The St. Joan of African ability and Vision must be burnt and annihilated...

Then... horror! It was not St Joan they were burning. It was I. I burn. Flames leap about me. Crowds jeer. My enemies are writhed in smiles of victory. Din. Pain. Darkness...

Did I only dream and imagine? Perhaps. But when I awoke from my dream I found it truth. From the horrible flimsy dream I awoke into the more horrible tangible reality. It was no dream I had seen. It was palpable reality. I am an outcast, despised, rejected, crucified... The fire eats into my soul. I bleed. I die. Why hast Thou forsaken me.

I thirst!

Africa thirsts!

"How long O Lord, how long?"¹⁰³

Although Dhlomo longs for the vindication and unconditional rehabilitation that he had bestowed on Nongqawuse in the closing scene of *The Girl Who Killed to Save*, he finds that it is not, after all, forthcoming. No longer clothed in the light of Christ, but crucified on His cross, the author is forced to cry out in unison with Joan (cum-the-new-Nongqawuse), 'How long, O Lord, how long?'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Visser maintains that the playwright had a tendency to 'translate his personal grievances into political terms'. 'H. I. E. Dhlomo', 4.

¹⁰³ Dhlomo, 'Philosophy', 1; 4-5.

¹⁰⁴ Shaw, *Saint Joan*, 114.

CHAPTER 5

SOUTH AFRICA – ANOTHER IRELAND?

'Far-away cows wear long horns!' Aye, those who have never left Erin's Isle would, 'tis likely, quote the old proverb if ever they could read the queer things I'll have to tell about doings in Kaffirland.

Thus begins W. G. Dowsley's novel, which includes an account of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing from an Irishman's perspective. But while this Gaelic proverb (also the original title for Dowsley's work) registers incredulity and emphasises difference and distance, it does not suggest the inscrutably alien. For the maxim also implies a comparison and, thereby, a connection – with a common point of reference. In *Long Horns: The O'Brien of the Glen's Story* (1937) Dowsley attempts to negotiate a path between the particularities of, and similarities between, the mid-nineteenth century Irish and Xhosa. The author, like Dhlomo in *The Girl*, asserts a shared humanity, but his focus is not on 'progress' and the attainment of 'civilisation'. Rather, it is on a common experience of oppression and parallel acts of rebellion. While Dowsley draws an extraordinary analogy, however, his protagonist's ultimately equivocal view of race combined with his own 'colonising' tendency, and a preoccupation with class, prevent it from becoming a liberative one. The potential for powerful anti-imperialist criticism is further undermined by a shift from a commitment to the cause of national emancipation, to that of the individual.

THE LADY IN THE PICTURE

In the picture, a young lady stands at the waters' edge, lips parted and arms involuntarily raised in an attitude of wonder. Leaning forward, she stares intently into the rippled surface beneath which glitter glorious visions of abundance, industry and well-being: fertile land, cattle grazing in the sunshine, fields being ploughed, people dancing. Behind her, in the shadows on a barren hillside slumps an impoverished man, arm slung around a thin, barefoot boy – a woman, eyes downcast, crouching at his side.

The setting is not the pool at the Gxara River, as one might expect, nor is the visionary Nongqawuse. Rather, it is Queen Victoria on the banks of Loch Neagh. And it is images of Ireland's future, not the Xhosas', that shimmer in the water.

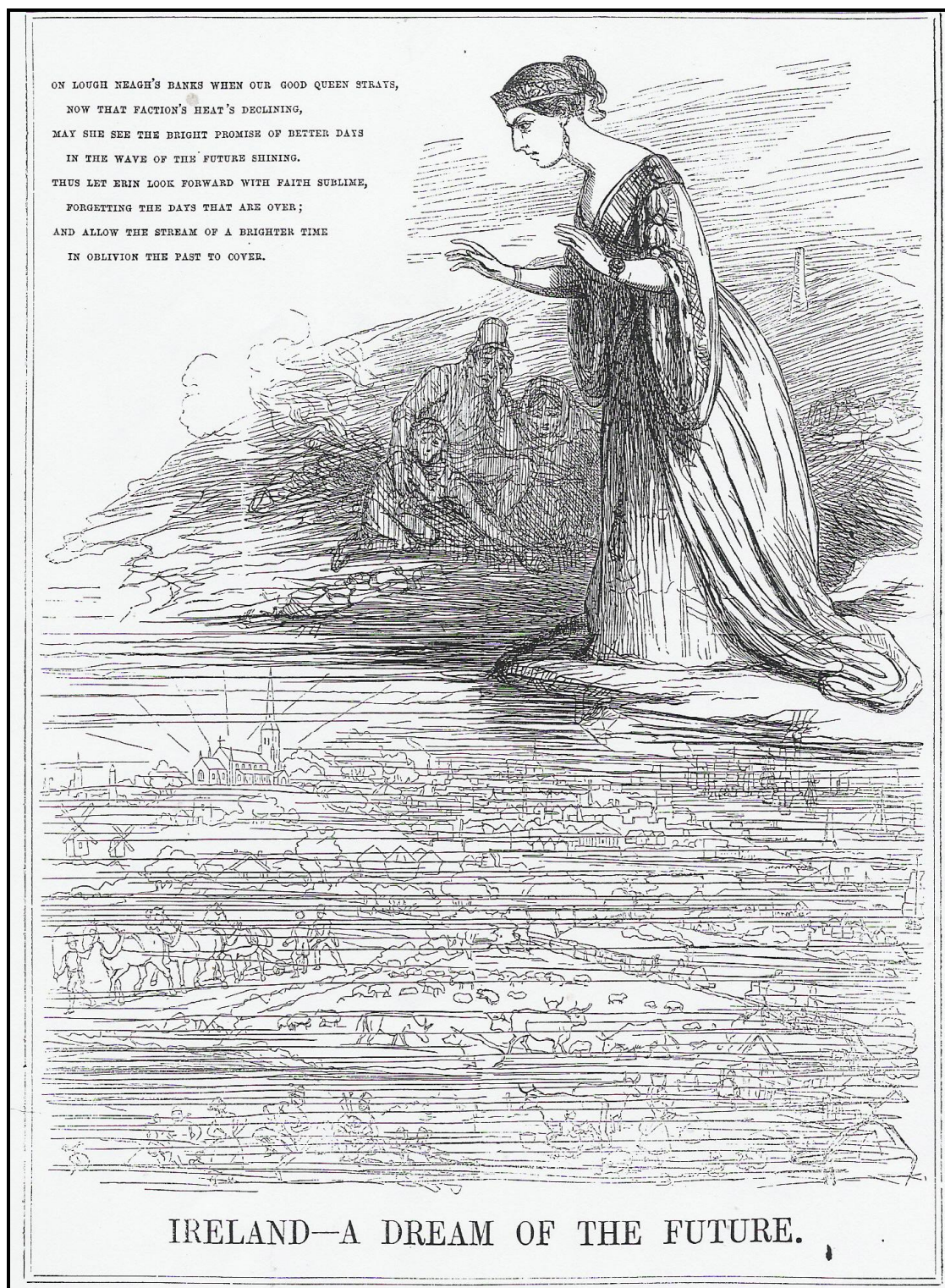


Fig. 14 *Punch*, Vol. 17 (1849), 86-7.

The full-page pen and ink sketch (fig. 14) of the youthful monarch appeared in *Punch* a year after the failure of the Young Irelanders' ill-timed and under-prepared 1848 Rising and in the wake of the Great Famine. At the time of publication, Queen Victoria was making her first official tour of Ireland to reassert her sovereignty and inspire patriotism. Accompanying the illustration is a parody of Thomas Moore's nationalist poem, 'Let Erin Remember the Days of Old', in which Moore draws on the legend of Loch Neagh and the flooded village that once occupied its site.¹ Now entitled 'Let Erin Forget the Days of Old', Moore's evocation of ancient Irish victories and champions is replaced with the apparently ignominious actions and people of Ireland's more recent history. In an indubitable reference to the rebel Irish leaders, Mitchel, Smith O'Brien, Meagher et al, *Punch* describes the 'Charlatans', Erin's 'faithless sons', who 'betrayed her' and led her naïve countrymen into 'anarchy's danger'. Believing the menace to have been contained, the parodist urges that

ERIN look forward with faith sublime,
 Forgetting the days that are over;
 And allow the stream of a brighter time
 In oblivion the past to cover.

As the lake in the picture reveals the island's 'brighter' future to a foreign queen, so too is the stain of famine and rebellion – and, through association with Moore's poem, Ireland's past independence and her 'long-faded glories' – washed away. Or so *Punch* (and the British Government) would have liked to imagine.

But far from allowing this apparently shameful moment in Irish history to remain sunk in the oblivion to which *Punch* had consigned it, it was precisely in its substance that Dowsley's second novel – perhaps inspired by Justin McCarthy's earlier fictional treatment of the subject² – found its genesis. Dowsley's interest in this event is not entirely surprising. He was born and raised in the region where the '48 Rising played itself out, and he had already demonstrated his proclivity for stories about Ireland's struggle for self-determination in his debut novel, *Travelling Men* (1925). What might, perhaps, strike one as far more surprising, is that the inspiration for *Long Horns* was equally shared by, and found its closure in, the Eastern frontier region of the Cape Colony. For, as the author writes in the Foreword:

¹ *Punch*, 17 (1849), 86–7. Moore, 'Let Erin Remember', 40–1.

² McCarthy, *Mononia* (1901). Dowsley was familiar with McCarthy's work and even gives the Irish nationalist journalist (later, Member of Parliament) a minor role in his novel.

A strange story it is, linking together the Irish Rebellion of 1848 and the Suicide of the amaXhosa Nation, 1856–7, and casting a new light upon the tragedy which accounts for South Africa being to-day a white man's country.³

The knowledge that Dowsley had immigrated to the Cape and was living in what used to be the frontier region at the time of writing, does not altogether remove the strangeness of the author's juxtaposition of two seemingly disparate events. And indeed the story that emerges is a 'strange' one. This is apparent even before the official narrative begins. According to the title page, the book is not a work of fiction at all – it is an autobiography, the story of O'Brien of the Glen, 'Written by Himself'. Dowsley, as we ascertain from the Foreword, apparently came across the battered manuscript while enjoying the hospitality of a frontier farmer and merely 'Edited and annotated' the work. Indeed, the author goes to some lengths, both within the novel and in the press, to maintain this illusion. His editorial interpolations, for instance, corroborate his fabricated hero's story while simultaneously revealing the all-too-human limitations of his perspective. Indeed, in a letter to the *Cape Times* in which he defends the historical accuracy of *Long Horns*, Dowsley refers to the work as 'O'Brien's story... edited by me'.⁴ Dowsley clearly wanted his readers to believe the tale, which is set before his birth, and his use of a framing narrative that begins with the 'Editor's' explicit acknowledgment of the extraordinary subject matter, acts to anticipate and position the readers' response: disarming scepticism and encouraging the suspension of belief. That the author's ruse was partially successful is apparent from the reviews which were split over the book's generic status.⁵ Why Dowsley wanted his narrative to be taken on trust, will be considered in due course.

Long Horns, which is essentially the story of William O'Brien's coming-of-age, opens in Ireland a few weeks before the 1848 Rising. The narrator and protagonist has recently turned twenty-one when, by sheer chance, he meets for the first time his famous namesake and cousin, the Young Irishman 'Chief', William Smith O'Brien. Having fallen head-over-heels in love with the Chief's beautiful travelling companion and acolyte, another cousin called Mary de Burgh, the younger William (a loyalist up until that point) quickly takes up the rebel cause. During William and Mary's brief courtship, we learn that the O'Briens are from landowning Protestant stock and are direct descendents of the great Irish King, Brian Boru. We learn too, from their conversations, of the death of the younger O'Brien's father in a fire apparently started by a rebel, and of the little black boy whom his grandfather had acquired from the Cape, decades earlier, to be a running

³ *Long Horns*, 7.

⁴ *Cape Times*, November 1937.

⁵ In fact Frank Brownlee, whose father features towards the end of the novel, wrote to Dowsley asking, 'for my private information', whether or not he had written the book. 20 September 1937. See too Snymman, 170.

footman for his fashion-conscious wife. Black Larry, as he came to be known, had made a marked impression upon the young O'Brien, not least because the loyal servant was believed to have died in an attempt to rescue his master from the inferno. Rebel support, meanwhile, is growing and plans for the Rising are taking shape. All hope of a victory is, however, abruptly and emphatically dashed when Smith O'Brien leads an abortive skirmish near Ballingarry. He is captured soon after and tried for treason. Having witnessed his cousin's trial, the hero is himself arrested for his part in the Rising. Sentenced to 'five years transportation beyond the seas', he soon finds himself aboard the *Neptune*, a prison ship bound for the Cape Colony. After a particularly convoluted journey – which includes a stop-off at Pernambuco where Dowsley's great uncle presses fruit and sympathy upon his rebel countrymen⁶ – the ship sails into Simon's Bay. It is met by the vociferous Anti-Convict Association who, determined not to allow 'their' country to be turned into a penal colony, refuses to allow the prisoners to disembark, or to service the ship. While the vessel loiters in the bay, awaiting instructions from the Home government, O'Brien is willingly and secretly bartered ashore in exchange for provisions. And thus, to cut a long story short, he finds himself on African soil. The second half of the book is a mirror image of the first, in an antipodean setting. After a second arrest and second escape, O'Brien ends up rescuing Nongqawuse from torture and is taken in as a guest-prisoner by the Xhosa in Independent Kaffraria. Here he is reunited with Black Larry who, far from dead, is now a chief councillor to the paramount, Sarhili. It is while he is amongst the Xhosa that the Irishman partially precipitates and participates in events leading up to a second failed anti-English rising – the Cattle-Killing. The 'author', an octogenarian at the time of writing, brings his narrative to a close in the midst of the ensuing tragedy. O'Brien returns to the colony in order to evade starvation and capture by the colonial soldiers who have crossed into Sarhili's country. He discovers that he is no longer wanted as an outlaw and is finally reunited with his beloved Mary (who fortuitously now lives in Grahamstown). He has faced moral dilemmas and psychological demons and has emerged a man of principle, with a clear conscience and the satisfaction that he has not brought shame upon his family name. His coming-of-age is complete.

While *Long Horns* is unquestionably an adventure story full of action, suspense, improbable happenings and incredible coincidences, the fictional narrative is woven into a substantial and rigorously researched historical framework. 'Mr Dowsley,' wrote the reviewer for the *Cork Examiner*, follows history 'more closely than some of the historians'.⁷ While a convincing backdrop was naturally required for his hero, Dowsley's attention to detail was also another

⁶ *Long Horns*, 123. Dowsley, as Editor, suppresses the name of his ancestor in the novel, but does refer to the family connection in his letter to the *Cape Times*.

⁷ Anon, 'New Novels: In Ireland and South Africa', *Cork Examiner*, n.d.

means of persuading readers of the autobiographical status – and hence the veracity – of the work. O'Brien's participation in various historical events, his mingling with a cast of real people, and the inclusion of a mass of historical minutiae and cultural detail was obviously essential if the illusion of an autobiography was to be maintained. Numerous cross-references to historical sources (both by the 'author' and the 'editor'), serve to further validate the text. For, despite the often sensational nature of his novel, Dowsley wanted to make a serious point. He believed that his work shed 'new light' on the event. Indeed, in a note to a publisher, he claims to have 'procured documentary evidence (to be published in a historical thesis about July, 1930)' to support the Chiefs' Plot theory.⁸ I would venture to suggest that another reason for Dowsley advancing the text's reliability was to lend weight to his liberal humanist interpretation of race relations in South Africa, and to his interracial anti-imperialist analogy with its underlying assumption of a common humanity.

Dowsley's emphasis on veracity and the soldering of a fictional protagonist onto carefully researched material – both historical and cultural – is of course reminiscent of Beattie's *Pambaniso* (1891), and a comparison might usefully be drawn between the two. Whereas Beattie's novel is self-consciously didactic and the fictional story is frequently disrupted by a plethora of historical and anthropological detail, Dowsley navigates the imaginary and the factual, the literary and the ethnographic far more successfully to produce a more uniform result. More importantly, for the purposes of this dissertation, the novels also differ significantly in their portrayal of the Xhosa and their response to British imperialism.

Although *Long Horns* does not contain the same degree of anthropological detail as *Pambaniso*, it certainly falls into Tallman's (almost too broad) definition of the ethnographic novel: 'one that conveys significant information about the culture or cultures from which the novel originates'.⁹ Like Beattie and Waters before him, Dowsley could claim first-hand experience of the Xhosa and took his research seriously. Aside from having lived in the Eastern Cape for a quarter of a century, Dowsley spent three months in the vicinity of Nongqawuse's pool, 'with a view to writing this book', talking to local people and photographing the area.¹⁰ He obviously prided himself on the accuracy of his descriptions, and his 'intimate knowledge of... the Bantu language', his 'close understanding of native customs and their significance', and 'the wealth of

⁸ 'To Publisher's Reader' (nd). The thesis referred to was probably that of his daughter, Eileen d'Altera Dowsley ('Investigation of the Cattle-Killing', 1932), although she is circumspect regarding the origins of the movement.

⁹ Tallman, 'Ethnographic Novel', 12.

¹⁰ In his note, 'For the Publisher's and Reader's information', Dowsley scathingly refers to Haggard's *Swallow*, also set in the Transkei, claiming that 'it betrays abysmal ignorance of locality and people'. There is no indication that Dowsley was aware of Beattie's *Pambaniso*. His research trip probably took place in late 1929–early 1930.

Native folk-lore' were remarked upon by reviewers.¹¹ For one reader, this aspect alone justified the book's publication:

The description of wild life among the natives in their kraals and hunting grounds is very well written and has historical value, being, I am sure, an authentic record written from contemporary evidence. For this reason the book is worthy of publication.¹²

And yet Dowsley's 'authentic record' is far removed in emphasis and character from Beattie's work, which was similarly regarded. In contrast to the author of *Pambaniso*, who leaps from one dramatic practice to another, revelling in every savage detail and dismissive of everything Xhosa, Dowsley pays attention to everyday activities and peaceful pursuits such as storytelling, children's games, the preparation of food, the naming of birds. His liberal use of Xhosa expressions and words also demonstrates a deeper acquaintance with his subject than Beattie's. While the Scotsman sees the Xhosa, by and large, as a primitive and aggressive mass, Dowsley humanises them, praising their hospitality and socialism.¹³ When he refers to the witchdoctors, whom Beattie dismisses as 'vile impostors', Dowsley's protagonist reserves judgement, ironically commenting that the 'very redcoats guarding the forts along the Great Fish were the *igqira*'s best customers'.¹⁴ Whereas Beattie finds the commoners' loyalty to their chiefs inexplicable, Dowsley admires it.¹⁵ And if Beattie describes the Xhosa as untrustworthy in their dealings with the English, Dowsley attempts to present a Xhosa perspective.¹⁶ When it comes to the Cattle-Killing itself, although superstition continues to be an important factor in Dowsley's account, he nevertheless emphasises Xhosa agency. Sarhili's plot, which precedes Nongqawuse's visions, is represented as a nationalist resistance movement – an understandable response to Imperial pressures.

Dowsley's difference in approach also extends to the illustrations (including some of the author's own photographs) that were originally intended to accompany his tale. Of at least fourteen images, only three feature black subjects: a woodcut of the Prophetess picture that appears in *Pambaniso*, a formal portrait of Chief Botman, and one of Black Larry (fig. 16). Entirely absent is the homogenising, anthropological gaze of Beattie. Instead, these subjects are not only individualised, but historicised and contextualised, appearing among images of

¹¹ R.V.K.A. review (n.p. & n.d.) and Robert Godfrey's review for the *Cape Mercury* (n.d.) See also the review in *The Territorial News*, 23 December 1937.

¹² Adjudicator (no.4) Comments, Tailteann Games, Literary Competition, 1931 (DP).

¹³ *Long Horns*, 261–2.

¹⁴ *Pambaniso*, 23 & *Long Horns*, 181–2.

¹⁵ *Pambaniso*, 44 & *Long Horns*, 132.

¹⁶ *Long Horns*, 183–4.

landscapes and important sites including Nonqawuse's pool and Hohita.¹⁷ The casual, *in situ* photograph of Black Larry (together with O'Brien and the Editor's captions) is particularly humanising – if ironic, considering his fictional status. Playing with the line between fantasy and truth, the author suggests that, far from an anthropological type (the subject is, after all, wearing a suit and has lived in Ireland!) Larry is personally known to him – indeed, real.

Dowsley's depiction of the Xhosa appears more balanced than Beattie's and is certainly far more sympathetic. But it is not without its complexities and is by no means exempt from stereotypical and racist assumptions. O'Brien reiterates, for example, the theory that the Xhosa have more finely tuned senses than Europeans, and that they are inherently happy. He also frequently describes them as 'savages' and miscegenation is regarded with distaste.¹⁸ Indeed, O'Brien's relationship with the Xhosa, as we shall presently see, is decidedly conflicted. Dowsley's depiction of the English is similarly complex and differs from Beattie's in this and other regards.

The Scottish author's view of the British Empire is uncomplicated and assured. He uncritically accepts the idea that the Imperial project is a moral one (and is exasperated by the 'mistaken feeling of pity or philanthropy'), and supports the colonial endeavour in the Cape (although he would like more attention paid to the opinion of the settlers).¹⁹ Expansionism is 'their' duty and the civilisation and 'conquest' of the 'savages' their 'crusade'.²⁰ The use of arms is seen as legitimate.²¹ Beattie is effusive in his praise of the English. Dowsley's protagonist is not, which is hardly surprisingly considering that it takes as its subject matter two anti-English risings. Having experienced English rule and anti-Irish prejudice, the O'Brien cousins are savvy to and critical of English tactics (particularly that of 'Divide and Rule') and prepared to fight for Ireland's independence. For all this, the novel cannot be described as polemical, and even displays – at times – a certain ambivalence towards the English. While the O'Briens single out the 'greedy [English] shopkeepers', the 'stupid people sent to rule them', the 'stupid soldiers set over them' and the 'stupider way' of the British government, they are eager to point out that they are not anti-English – that there are 'many good, well-meaning people of Britain'.²² Once in South Africa, where the younger O'Brien is no longer in a position to fight for his own country, and where the various white nationalities tend to combine together against the greater black

¹⁷ The illustrations were probably excluded on account of expense. Dowsley, who chose the cheapest dust-jacket for his novel, defrayed the cost of the first (and only) edition. Correspondence, January-April 1937.

¹⁸ *Long Horns*, 200, 173, 176.

¹⁹ *Pambaniso*, 9.

²⁰ *Pambaniso*, ix, 9, 11.

²¹ *Pambaniso*, v.

²² *Long Horns*, 23, 144–5.

menace that threatens the frontier regions, he is surprised to find himself defending the English against Dutch invective and even fighting on the colonial side against the rebel Khoikhoi.²³ Unlike Beattie, however, Dowsley never projects the image of the English as civilising agents, nor is there any intimation that the Cattle-Killing will ultimately prove to be beneficial, that the Xhosa will be left better off because of their new-found proximity to 'civilisation' and Christianity. There is certainly no indication that Dowsley regards the Cattle-Killing as a form of divine judgement against the Xhosa for rejecting Christianity. On the contrary, unlike most early literary accounts, the Irishman directly attributes Nongqawuse's visions to Christian millenarian teaching and influence.²⁴

Dowsley's sympathetic portrayal of the Xhosa, I would argue, as well as his protagonist's ambivalent relationship with both the Xhosa and the English, stems largely from the author's own position (represented in such heightened form through the figure of O'Brien) as a patriotic Irishman. As someone who had himself experienced English rule and Anglo-Saxonism,²⁵ Dowsley was quick to recognise and empathise with a similarly subjugated people. Indeed, the biggest distinction between Beattie and Dowsley's novels is that whereas *Pambaniso* emphasises a European/Xhosa antithesis, *Long Horns* underscores interracial correspondence.

SAVAGES, BLACK AND WHITE

'In England's eyes,' muses William O'Brien shortly after arriving in the colony, 'both Irish and Kaffirs are savages'.²⁶ And, indeed, the Irish had suffered a similar fate to that of the Xhosa under English rule. They were frequently dismissed as inherently childlike, impulsive, aggressive, indolent and unfit to govern their own affairs. Like the Xhosa, the Irish were deemed to be a static people and considered, therefore, not to have their own history.²⁷ Although the Irish had been positioned above the generic African on the evolutionary ladder, they still fell below their Anglo-Saxon neighbours and, as if to emphasise their lowly status, were frequently caricatured with distinctly simian features in Victorian political cartoons (one of which found its way into *Long Horns*).²⁸ Their 'middling' position is vividly captured in an illustration that appeared in *Harper's Weekly* (below) and in a slightly modified form in a

²³ Ibid, 140.

²⁴ *Long Horns*, 178 and 220. The complicity of missionaries is developed by Majeke (aka Taylor) in her polemical *Missionaries in Conquest*, 74.

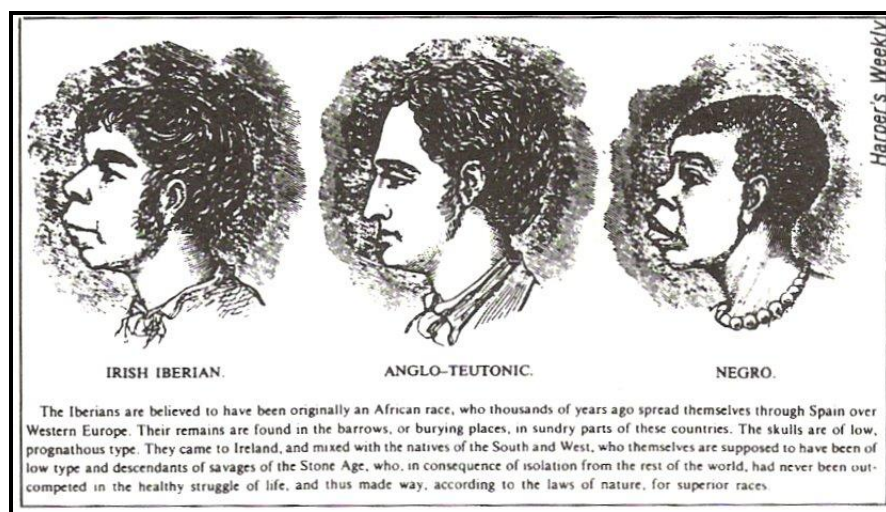
²⁵ A term used by Curtis to describe the brand of ethnocentrism peculiar to the Anglo-Saxons. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts*, Chapter 1.

²⁶ *Long Horns*, 132.

²⁷ Curtis, *Nothing But the Same*, 57. For more on anti-Irish prejudice, see Curtis' *Anglo-Saxons and Celts* and *Apes and Angels*. A contemporaneous racialised view, which alludes to a link between the 'Celtic' and the 'dark races', is asserted by Knox in *The Races of Man* (1850).

²⁸ Dowsley, *Long Horns*, 67–8.

xenophobic pamphlet entitled 'What Science is Saying about Ireland' (1881). In the sketch the profiles of an 'Irish Iberian [sic]', an 'Anglo-Teutonic' and a 'Negro' are set alongside one another. In the 'scientific' pamphlet the first two subjects are labelled 'Sir Isaac Newton' and 'Aboriginal Irish Celt'. The 'Negro' is still a 'Negro'. Even without the accompanying caption, which explains that 'the Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race', the physical resemblance between the Irishman and African is undeniable.²⁹ Had the Irishman been placed between the other two, the message would have been even clearer; the picture was obviously intended to be a visual representation of the progressive physical and intellectual evolution of the races.



While some historians argue that this racialised view of British-Irish relations is overstated, and Kiberd reminds us that 'many of the simian archetypes in *Punch*' were developed by Irish artists, it was nevertheless a view that Dowsley recognised and the one he assumed and undermined in *Long Horns*, as well as in his public lecture, 'The Celtic Revival'.³⁰ In this address, which draws on Green's revisionist account of Irish history, *The Making of Ireland and Its Undoing* (1908), Dowsley presents a people known for their culture and scholarship, an historically prosperous, self-governing people. It was a country 'in the full current of European Life' until 'into this Eden there came the [English] serpent' who 'crushed' Irish intellectual life and destroyed 'the little island's' material prosperity'. Anti-Irish rhetoric and sentiment, he notes, soon followed: 'the convenient legend grew of a people sunk in sloth and ignorance, a people whose scandalous vices justified England's invasion, a people whose only redemption was through the cannon and fire-brands of a higher race'.³¹

²⁹ The cartoon appears in Curtis, *Nothing But the Same*, 55. See also Anon, 'What Science is Saying About Ireland' (1881).

³⁰ Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, 50–2; Kiberd, *Irish Writer and the World*, 3.

³¹ The lecture, which was covered by the local Grahamstown press, was delivered on 10 June 1912.

Ireland was still very much under 'the Empire's military control and subjection' when, in 1871, Dowsley was born in Clonmel, County Tipperary – the very town in which William Smith O'Brien had been sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered, twenty-three years earlier.³² When Dowsley emigrated to the Cape at the age of thirty-three to become Chaplain to St Andrew's College (an Anglican boys' school in Grahamstown), the situation was little changed and the 1916 Easter Rising still more than a decade away. Although there is no record of his response to this action, which was initially denounced by many Irishmen, it is clear from the subject of his novels and the way that he determinedly maintained ties with his homeland, that Dowsley was sympathetic to the Irish nationalist cause and proudly patriotic. Soon after his arrival in South Africa he articulated his difference from the predominantly English inhabitants of the town in which he had settled, by defining himself as an Irishman and becoming involved in the promotion of Irish culture and community. Among his papers are programmes for The Irish Players, an amateur dramatic group that he founded in Grahamstown. Dowsley was an energetic leader of the company: acting, producing and in all probability selecting the Players' repertoire, which included works by the trinity of the Irish Literary Renaissance: W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge – as well as one by Dowsley himself. From the choice of productions, the author's celebration of these literary pioneers in his 'Celtic Revival' address, and his own use of the Anglo-Irish dialect and folklore in his fiction, it is clear that Dowsley supported and aligned himself and his work with the literary movement and figures that had played such an important role in reviving interest in Ireland's cultural heritage and in promoting a national literature. In the wake of a successful local performance of his Irish 'peasant play', *A Jug of "Old Waterford"*, Dowsley submitted the drama to the national Abbey Theatre in Dublin for consideration.³³ Although it was rejected (the second act being described as 'too stagily farcical'), the author continued to seek evaluation and endorsement for his literary work from his homeland and was rewarded with some limited success. Both novels were widely reviewed in Ireland; the recently established Irish Free State Government acquired the Gaelic translation rights for *Travelling Men*, and *Long Horns* was awarded a bronze medal in the category of Novels

³² Dowsley (1871–1947) immigrated to South Africa in 1904. There is little readily available information on the author, but Dowsley fortunately collected correspondence and other material relating to his life and works and I am grateful to his grandson for allowing me access to this collection. Unfortunately many of the press clippings are undated and/or do not record their source.

³³ The Irish Players performed it on 24 June 1913. 'Irish Plays', *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 25 June 1913. Although the Abbey rejected it, the board encouraged Dowsley to submit other work in the future (Correspondence, 14 November 1913).

in English at the 1932 Aonach Tailteann – an ancient Irish festival that was briefly revived, post-independence, as a ‘celebration of Celtic culture and a newly-independent Ireland’.³⁴

Dowsley was not, however, an uncritical admirer of all things Irish. *Long Horns*, as one of the Tailteann judges disapprovingly noted, contains a decidedly uncomplimentary depiction of rebel leader John Mitchel. In the novel, he snubs his fellow prisoners and hobnobs with the English officers. In fact it was because of his ‘attack on John Mitchel whose memory is so venerated by both Fianna Fail and the Republicans’ that Dowsley (probably with some justification) attributed the failure of an Irish publisher to take up his second novel. (Eight years earlier, Dowsley was subject to an apparently arbitrary act of censorship, when the word ‘devil’ was expunged from the Irish edition of *Travelling Men* – no doubt due to conservative Catholic sensibilities).³⁵ That Dowsley was more attached to the romantic ideal of Ireland-past, when the country was (apparently) united in her struggle and shared a dream for her future, rather than in its present-day reality, might also be suggested by the fact that although both his novels were written post-(partial)independence, they steer clear of contemporaneous developments.

Nonetheless, for much of his life and in much of his creative writing, Ireland remained for Dowsley his first point of reference. Although both his published novels were written in South Africa, *Travelling Men* was described by the author as being ‘all about Ireland’ and *Long Horns*, despite being divided into two roughly equal sections headed ‘Ireland’ and ‘Africa’ respectively, is dominated by its Irish protagonist.³⁶ Even when the location shifts to the Eastern Cape frontier, descriptions of the new country are frequently made with reference to, compared with, or find their equivalent in Ireland. In the light of this, it is entirely *unsurprising* that Dowsley should also compare the political situation of his adopted country with that of Ireland. Nor was he the first to do so.

Already twenty-eight years old at the outbreak of the second Anglo-Boer War in October 1899, Dowsley would almost certainly have been aware of the vociferous pro-Boer demonstrations that were sparked in Dublin by the declaration of war. The notion that ‘South Africa was another Ireland’, that the Boers like the Irish were fighting for their independence against a common enemy, captured the Irish nationalists’ imagination – not least, as Boehmer points out,

³⁴ The Irish edition of *Travelling Men*, *Fir Taistil* (1933), was translated by Nioclás Tóibín. ‘High Honour for a Cape Novelist’, *Cape Times*, 1 December 1930. For the significance of the Games, see Cronin, ‘Projecting the Nation’, 395–411.

³⁵ Correspondence with publisher (probably Edward Arnold), 7 August 1934. Dowsley, ‘Devil’s Bit’, 109.

³⁶ Dowsley, ‘Devil’s Bit’, 109–110. An Irish theme dominates his plays, too. In addition to *A Jug of “Old Waterford”*, amongst his papers are drafts for two plays entitled *Leprechaun in Kaffirland* and *Miracles at Clash*.

because the situation in South Africa could be used to further their own cause.³⁷ But rather than drawing upon the well-documented, parallel situations of the Irish and the Boers at the turn of the twentieth century, Dowsley takes a more unusual and fraught route. He makes a correlation between the standing of the Irish and that of black South Africans; juxtaposing two groups that were generally considered to be entirely incomparable – not only in the colour-obsessed context of South Africa, but from the perspective of most Irish, including the early nationalists. Howe remarks that 'Nationalist support for the Boers was matched by virtually complete silence about the indigenous majority of Southern Africa'. Kiberd, writing of early Irish nationalists generally, attributes their failure to identify with other subjugated peoples to a tendency to regard their situation as unique, and to racism: 'a strain of white triumphalism, running from John Mitchel to Arthur Griffith, would never countenance Irish solidarity with the anti-imperial struggles of other racial groups'. To these, Howe adds the belief that the Irish cause would be 'weakened' by such associations.³⁸ By linking the 'Forty-Eight Rising to the Cattle-Killing, through a rebel who (unlike his fellow Young Irelander, the anti-abolitionist and white supremacist, Mitchel) not only empathised with a black people but recognised the parallels between their situations and actually participated in their rebellion, Dowsley repositions Irish history and deliberately unsettles racial assumptions.

That Dowsley had sympathy for the South African 'native', and that this sympathy was linked to the experience of the Irish, is apparent from an article he wrote more than a decade before *Long Horns* was published. In the piece, which appeared in a liberal South African newspaper in 1926, the author reflects on the comparable status of the black South African and that of 'the ragged men of my own people' under English rule a century earlier.³⁹ In a heavily ironic tone, Dowsley mocks the 'alien masters' who, out of ignorance or arrogance, patronise and underestimate those they have subjugated – unaware that they are being ridiculed by the very people they imagine they control. And while the comparison between the Irish and the 'natives' is not equal or free from prejudice, it is favourable:

True, these natives can have no such background of learning as the Gael, residuary legatee of a thousand years' civilisation, but they are hungry for learning and have a thirst for music; their mind is as quick, their wit as keen. And if their singing be but in satire of us, their masters, they are treading just where the "mere Irish" trod.⁴⁰

³⁷ McCracken, 'Nature of Irish Settlement', 19. Irish sympathy and support for the Boers has recently been explored by Boehmer in *Empire and the Postcolonial*, 25–33; and its repercussions for contemporary South Africa forms the subject of her novel, *Bloodlines* (2000). Incidentally, although a number of Irishmen fought with the Boers, a far greater number of Irish soldiers fought on the side of the British. McCracken, 'Irish Transvaal Brigades', 54–65.

³⁸ Howe, *Ireland and Empire*, 45, 57 and Kiberd, *Irish Writer*, 133 and *Inventing Ireland*, 255–9.

³⁹ Dowsley, 'Hidden Native'.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Drawing upon an example from Irish history, Dowsley closes by prophesying a reversal of roles in South Africa. 'May it not be,' he writes, 'that, in the not too distant future, names now well known in Africa will be remembered only by satiric verse composed by some "boy" whom to-day, lacking knowledge of his real name, we shout for, calling him "Jim"'.⁴¹

What Dowsley felt about his *own* standing in a country where, although he could empathise with a subjugated race, his white skin automatically elevated him to the position of 'master', can only be speculated. But the tension between the phrases 'my own people' and 'us, their masters' hints at a complex and conflicted position. Dowsley's status in South Africa might have been further complicated by anti-Irish prejudice. Only two years before his arrival in South Africa 'one could still see "No Irish" notices in some Cape Town boarding-house windows'.⁴¹ Although this bigotry was probably less overt by the time Dowsley disembarked, and although it was anyway aimed at the Irish working-class of which Dowsley was decidedly not a member, it would have served to remind him of his status as an 'outsider-insider'.

Without going so far as to equate the author with his protagonist in *Long Horns* (although they do share a first name and a 'massive forehead'), the ambivalence and crisis of identity that is hinted at in Dowsley's article is made explicit and is fully explored through his character, William O'Brien. What is more, because of the author's insistence on the autobiographical status of the work, he (perhaps) inadvertently links his own voice to that of his protagonist. In so doing, he allows O'Brien's inner turmoil, to which the reader has access through his 'own' words, to be read as a reflection of his own. Of course, O'Brien's experiences both in Ireland and South Africa are far more extreme than Dowsley's, the ambivalence of his position is more pronounced and the turmoil perhaps greater.

THE XHOSA IN THE IRISH IMAGINATION

Although O'Brien conforms, on some level, to 'what non-Irishmen take to be the type – penniless, daring, a champion of the underdog, and intensely aristocratic, constantly aware that the blood of kings, however attenuated, flows in his veins',⁴² his character is in fact far more complex and introspective than this caricature suggests. Throughout Dowsley's narrative we witness O'Brien grappling with his identity, struggling to decide where his 'duty' lies. The first of three psychological turning points occurs shortly after the hero decides to join the rebel side, thereby 'making common cause with the peasantry' – and many Catholics – against the English.

⁴¹ McCracken, 'Nature of Irish Settlement', 10.

⁴² J.W.M., *South African Outlook*, December 1937.

In the midst of this mental crisis, O'Brien recalls his dead father, a member of the Protestant Ascendancy. 'I began to find out how hard it is to turn your back all at once upon old ways of thinking. I had to pull myself together every minute and twist my mind back into remembering that I was now a rebel.' It is only when he recollects his noble lineage, which apparently endows him with a superior moral and intellectual capacity and the role of 'natural leader', that he is able to reconcile his insider-outsider status. As a leader of the movement (albeit a nominal one), he is able to be a part and apart: participating in the Rising while maintaining a distance between himself and the masses.⁴³

O'Brien's finely balanced sense of self is disturbed, however, on arrival in the Cape Colony – and it is primarily with how the hero defines himself, and is defined, in Africa, particularly through his interaction with the Xhosa, that I will be concerned. While O'Brien continues to presume superiority over the commoners in Southern Africa – be they Irish, Boer, English or Xhosa – his class-consciousness is now exacerbated by colour-consciousness. His response, which is to blend in, to change colours as the situation or desire demands, is aptly captured in the nickname given to O'Brien by the Xhosa – *lovane*, chameleon. In the Cape, O'Brien lives as a fugitive amongst the colonists with whom he is nonetheless able to integrate by virtue of the colour of his skin. Later, in Kaffraria, although set apart by his whiteness as well as his pedigree (the Xhosa address him as *Nkosi* – chief – because he comes from a noble family, not because of the colour of his skin), he is quickly absorbed into Xhosa society. Listening to the old men talk one day, O'Brien wonders if they 'either did not mind my hearing what they said or, in the heat of arguing, forgot that the figure lying beside them in the blanket was not of their own colour. Maybe they did not think I could understand them – but day by day I was learning more of their language.'⁴⁴ If the actual nature and extent of his acceptance by the Xhosa is uncertain, his acculturation is not.

The protagonist, as we have seen, is immediately struck by the similarity with which the English view the Irish and Xhosa. Soon after, O'Brien finds himself identifying with the Xhosa situation (which he describes in unambiguously moral terms) and their anti-Imperial sentiments.

It was right against wrong, and heathen men can balance one against the other as well as white men can. Their scales are set to a feather-weight, and with the impetuosity of my years my heart grew fierce at the injustice done to them. They had the same pride of

⁴³ *Long Horns*, 34–6.

⁴⁴ *Long Horns*, 179.

race as the Irish, and like the Irish, their land had been wrested from them... and, as I heard them talk, I felt roused in me the fierceness of ancestors of my own.⁴⁵

But the parallels O'Brien draws are not restricted to the material and political. The children, he notes, play the same games as their counterparts in Ireland, the Xhosa and Irish share a gift for the gab and their cattle are treated with the same respect.⁴⁶ In fact it was this last that first caught O'Brien's attention, inspiring him to consider a correlation between Ireland and Africa – even before he had left Erin's shores.

Larry the Lefthand (for some called him that) had a 'gift' with cattle. I learned from him the call that brought them running to you as fast as four legs could carry them. That gave me the fancy that Africa, where people talked to cattle, must be a land like Ireland, for Irishmen, too, count cattle next to human beings. In what other country of the world would you find the people saying 'God bless you!' to a cow. And why not? Didn't God come down to a cattle-shed?⁴⁷

But the fact that the Xhosas' regard for their cattle is understood, like that of the Irish, to be tied to the story of Christ's birth merely highlights the incongruity of O'Brien's comparison and is an early indication of the superficial and unequal nature of the 'link' that forms the basis of this novel. Just as the Xhosa are described in terms of the Irish, so too is the African landscape re-imagined and described in the light of Ireland (the Valley of the Great Fish River, for instance, is compared with the Glen of Aherlow).⁴⁸ The Cattle-Killing, likewise, is presented as emerging out of the '48 rebellion. Although there are certainly commonalities between the two events (both are failed anti-English risings that involve a famine-element and an appeal to allies who do not materialise), for O'Brien, the Cattle-Killing only makes sense in terms of Ireland. The belief that the Russians are black is explained as having been imported by Larry from Ireland ('for Irish peasants all think Russians to be black men!')⁴⁹ and the idea of starving the Xhosa into fighting, as we shall see, apparently originates with the Irish famine and is suggested by O'Brien himself. Africa is re-imagined both physically and historically in Ireland's image. O'Brien's comparisons, which might at first appear inevitable and inoffensive – even liberal, in the context – contain, on closer examination, an implicit judgement and, at times, a colonising tendency.

For O'Brien, the Southern African topography does not merely resemble that of his homeland. The landscape acts as a mnemonic device, triggering memories of his past. At one point it not

⁴⁵ Ibid, 184.

⁴⁶ Ibid 172, 179.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 40.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 160–1.

⁴⁹ *Long Horns*, 209.

only brings to mind the historic battle that took place between his ancestor Brian Boru and the Danes, but in the process of remembering the protagonist actually projects the action back onto the Kaffrarian landscape.

Lying up there how could I help dreaming myself back into bygone times? Wasn't Clontarf by the left-hand corner of the Liffey? And here I was by the left-hand corner of the Kei! As I looked across the rocks and hummocks of loose sand I could picture in my mind's eye the progress of the battle [...] I could never keep my eyes from lifting to the long spur of rock notched like a top of a castle and facing me from across the Kei. I came to fancying that it was there the Danes had been massed – for I knew that Stiric, Sigurd and Broder had attacked King Brian from beyond the Liffey [...]

Lying there on King Brian's mound I'd picture myself, on that Good Friday morning long ago, ordering the battle.⁵⁰

The act of imprinting Irish history onto Southern African geography is mysteriously aided, in O'Brien's mind, by the discovery that there is an etymological link between the local name given to the 'long spur of rock' and that of the place from which the Danes originated. Seemingly endorsed, O'Brien completes his act of appropriation by renaming the hill from which he 'sees' the battle, 'King Brian's mound'. The irony of this action is underscored when O'Brien derides the insensitive and arrogant tendency of the British to rename the native peoples and geographical features in their colonies, soon after. In contrast to the English governor's politically motivated and premeditated act of 'renam[ing] u-Sarili's country!', however, the hero's imaginative colonisation is presented as natural, spontaneous and innocent. This re-imagined corner of Kaffraria also becomes crucial for O'Brien's sense of self. It is on King Brian's mound, with its view to the 'long spur of rock' beyond, that he goes to daydream about his ancestors and to role-play himself out of his present circumstances. And while this area, which straddles the Cape-Kaffrarian border, is symbolic of O'Brien trapped between white/English and black/Xhosa, it is also this landscape that ultimately reminds the hero of his 'calling' and sparks the action that will redeem him and send him back to 'his people'.

Despite his proximity to the Xhosa, then, the landscape is a reminder of his difference. For all the points of contact, Ireland is *not* Africa, the Xhosa are *not* the Irish, and the 1848 Rebellion is *not* the Cattle-Killing. O'Brien's ambivalence towards the Xhosa and his apparently inconsistent behaviour springs from the fact that while, on the one hand, he has genuine sympathy for the Xhosa, is struck by similarities and can appreciate their virtues, on the other, he is convinced of his (and on some level the Irish people's) inherent superiority.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 195–7.

Although O'Brien repeatedly praises the Xhosa for their loyalty towards their chiefs and derides the Irish for their failure in this regard, the compliment is double-edged.⁵¹ For that which binds them together in collective allegiance, binds them together in delusion as well. 'U-Sarili,' writes O'Brien, 'was a man of one idea. That's the difference between the civilized man and the savage. And superstition is the savage's religion.'⁵² Whereas the Irish Rising had collapsed 'because the peasants had not rallied after Smith O'Brien' (a regrettable fact, but a sign, nonetheless, that as a people they are capable of a range of ideas and, therefore, civilised), the failure of the Cattle-Killing is attributed to an innate flaw in the Xhosas' constitution – their superstition.

After all, what were u-Sarili and Larry but savages? Easy for them to take leave of their sense, thinking that their ancestors had called the plan into being, and were using them to do the hatching of it.⁵³

The fact that there were those who did not believe the prophecies is conveniently glossed over. And even when the ever-ambivalent hero admits to his wet nurse's and mother's superstitious inclinations, the implication is clearly that whereas in Ireland there were credulous individuals, in Kaffraria, superstition is endemic.

If the underdeveloped intelligence and susceptibility to superstition that apparently runs in the veins of the savage Xhosa set the civilised O'Brien apart from them, this 'natural' separation is strengthened by O'Brien's conscious resolve. Even as he appears to assimilate – dressing as the Xhosa do, eating their food, speaking their language – he refuses to succumb entirely. When it comes to inter-racial sex, he is resolute:

The fear of little brown O'Briens kept me from taking a native wife, however much my fancy roved towards it; for though my years were barren and I seemed further back than ever from a purpose in my life, and saw the last O'Brien of the Glen fallen from high estate into an even more shameful existence than the poverty-stricken life that many of my name had to rest content with in Ireland, yet the black ring on my finger kept the thought alive in me that, again and again, one of my breed had striven to lift himself right out of the dust.⁵⁴

O'Brien would rather see the end of his line than taint its blood through crossbreeding. Even without submitting to this apparently base act, the Irishman considers his life amongst the

⁵¹ *Long Horns*, 132, 204.

⁵² *Ibid*, 234.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 242.

⁵⁴ *Long Horns*, 176.

Xhosa to be 'shameful'. His only hope is to trust in the redeeming nature of his kingly blood. It is not entirely surprising, then, that when O'Brien hears that Sarhili is bent on war with the English, it does not take him long to decide where his loyalty lies. Indeed, it takes much less time for O'Brien to make this choice, than it did for him to resolve to unite with the Irish peasants.

To whom now lay my duty and how was I to do it?

If I warn those of my own colour who have made me an outlaw, then these natives that have befriended me will – like the old woman in the proverb who, sleeping outside in the frosty night to make hutroom for strangers, was frozen to death – be killed by their own hospitality. But though that thought troubled me I still felt that I should be true to men of my own colour.⁵⁵

Perhaps the 'impetuosity' of his youth, to which the now-elderly writer attributed his early support for the Xhosa, had already dissipated. Certainly his conviction regarding the immoral basis of imperialism ('It was right against wrong') seems to have been forgotten. For despite his earlier solidarity with their struggle, and the affection he still has for the Xhosa, O'Brien does not throw his lot in with them. When war threatens, he chooses sides based not on a common enemy or cause (as he did in Ireland) – but on skin colour. Interestingly, in order to come to this resolution, he has to override his moral disquiet. His use of the portentous Xhosa proverb suggests that he is mindful that, unlike when he joined the Rising, his decision is not the moral one. Nor is it driven by pragmatism. Unlike his fellow Irish emigrants in America who, as Ignatiev and Roediger have argued, asserted their whiteness in order to secure political and employment benefits, O'Brien's decision to align himself with the white colonists rather than the Xhosa is entirely due to his conviction that they are culturally and racially superior.⁵⁶ His wholesale acceptance of this premise (which is ironic, given O'Brien's criticism of the savage's 'one idea') takes precedence over whatever empathy he might feel towards those who had sheltered him. They are, after all, 'savages'; essentially Other. As such, his response is a rational one. By choosing 'men of my own colour', O'Brien is merely asserting the 'natural' order.

Later, when he finds himself caught up in the movement and actually participating in preparations for the Final Day, he does so not out of political solidarity but, as he explains, because his defence against primitivism has been worn down through lack of civilised contact: he has succumbed to mass hysteria. He shamefacedly confesses that 'I myself had come to

⁵⁵ Ibid, 216.

⁵⁶ Ignatiev, *How the Irish became White*, 2 and Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 136.

believe there must be something in these visions and wonders. There now, my secret's out.' But even as he admits his folly, his defence is ready:

Aye, these hands helped to build the new doors and to strengthen the hut-walls against the wind that was to destroy the *amagogoty* – the unbelievers; these hands helped to cut the grass round u-Nongqause's hut lest snakes seek shelter there from the two suns that were to scorch up all. The thoughts of those round me had played upon my mind and gained a hold over me – for when you live with the lame you learn to limp.⁵⁷

O'Brien's metaphor makes his opinion clear: the Xhosa are defective and weak. His prolonged contact with them has stunted his own healthy growth and reduced him to their level. His explanation is somewhat undermined by his passing reference to the *amagogoty*. The fact that there were those who did *not* subscribe to the ancestors' message is evidence that the Xhosa were not homogenously deluded. O'Brien did, in fact, have a choice and by discounting the alternative, is implicated in his own 'downfall'. This aside, it is significant that even at this low point, O'Brien's condition is still not on a par with the Xhosas'. The work he does in preparation for the coming millennium consists of 'civilised' work: creating and ordering. There is no mention of him slaughtering cattle or destroying corn. The implication is that his delusion is never total or fanatical, that he had never become fully savage. Furthermore, for O'Brien, it is a temporary aberration. The hero soon returns to the Colony, where he is struck by 'the gap between civilization and savagery'. It is clear that his reduced state, which accounted for his slippage into superstition, also clouded his judgement, allowing him to admire and even imitate the primitive way of life. His relief at being reintegrated with 'my own people' is palpable.⁵⁸

If O'Brien is able to assert his superiority even when united with the Xhosa in their delusion, and deliberately chooses to preserve the 'natural order' by refusing a Xhosa wife and being 'true' to those of his own colour, his unconscious actions also promote a racial hierarchy. The Irishman's explicit, although unwitting, intervention in Xhosa politics ultimately determines the course of their history and is responsible for 'the tragedy which accounts for South Africa being to-day a white man's country'.⁵⁹ The idea of starving the Xhosa into attacking their enemies is, after all, inadvertently suggested by O'Brien. Shortly before Nongqawuse is visited by the ancestors, O'Brien is summoned by Sarhili and interrogated about the Irish Rising.

While Larry put the Chief's questions I answered [...]

Hadn't the famine brought on the rebellion? When I said that it had brought it to a head, I was asked the same questions as before about the Irish Sea and the country between

⁵⁷ *Long Horns*, 235.

⁵⁸ *Long Horns*, 250.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 7.

the Kei and the Great Fish. Wasn't the one not much wider than the other? Wasn't it easier to cross the Fish River valley than the channel between the Irish and the English?⁶⁰

A little later, O'Brien explains that he had no 'notion at that time that my chance remark to Larry could have set in motion the battle for the mind and heart of u-Sarili'.⁶¹ But the damage had been done. Famine ensues, the Xhosa are dispersed, the power of their leaders is broken and many are forced into the employment of the white settlers. O'Brien's contribution has ensured the subjugation of the Xhosa nation, the dominance of white over black.

RAISING HIMSELF – ABANDONING THE STRUGGLE

The disintegration of the independent Xhosa nation significantly coincides with the third and most crucial of O'Brien's crises of identity, his emancipation, and his reintegration into the white population. Having fled across the Kei with Black Larry, the protagonist takes up cattle trading, exploiting the unsettled situation amongst the Xhosa to buy their animals cheaply before selling them at a profit to the recently arrived German settlers. With his newly acquired wealth, O'Brien tells himself, he need 'no longer live as a "white Kaffir"'. Soon after, however, he encounters Charles Brownlee, who is desperately trying to stockpile food for the starving Xhosa. Brownlee's comment that 'The sword of famine...is less sparing than the English bayonet' pierces O'Brien's conscience, 'hammer[ing] it into my head that I was Irish', and reminding him that 'if an Englishman had fattened his fortune in Ireland, as I was doing here, wouldn't I myself be the first to curse the Sassenach?'⁶² The hero is forced to confront the fact that he is tending dangerously close to the 'greedy' Englishmen that he abhors. It is a decisive moment in O'Brien's life, upon it rests his integrity, the good name of his family and, by association, that of the Irish. In the internal debate that ensues, the protagonist is almost overwhelmed when he reflects upon his life, despairingly admitting that his nickname, *lovane*, suits him:

I was more like a chameleon than anything else – for was there ever a man that had turned his coat as often as I had? In Ireland, red-hot loyalist to begin with and, after that, rebel; in Africa, fighting against the natives; next, living on their bounty; and now using their poverty to make myself rich [...] When the pinch of poverty had come, not content with leaving them in the lurch, I was standing to gain by it. A hellish thing.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 210.

⁶¹ Ibid, 214.

⁶² *Long Horns*, 250, 254.

And it might not only be in changing colour that I was like the chameleon. It's the wickedest-looking thing upon God's earth. No wonder the Kaffir reckons it to be a devil, for there's no other creature so covetous-looking or with such a leering eye. If I was like one of them, God help me now and hereafter! for in that case I had sunk lower than I had thought and was 'a white Kaffir', a man who had lost all the good qualities of the whites, and did not have the virtues of the blacks because he wasn't born one of them.⁶³

In this particularly loaded passage, we witness O'Brien's turmoil as he tries to make sense of his position. While he has frequently asserted that he stems from a line of 'natural leaders', men of principle and resolve, his conduct marks him out as an impostor. He has been inconstant, opportunistic and greedy. He has not merely descended to the level of the common white – or even black – man: he has plummeted to the most degenerate state of all, that of a 'white Kaffir'. When O'Brien used the term earlier, it was in the same spirit as the Belgian political economist de Molinari, who remarked in 1882 that the English newspapers 'allow[ed] no occasion to escape them of treating the Irish as an inferior race – as a kind of white Negroes [sic]'.⁶⁴ The term 'white negro' clearly indicated a people on the periphery of white civilisation: outwardly white, but closer to the primitive 'Negro' in every other sense and, importantly, quite separate from the English – a race who had apparently surpassed their pale neighbours to attain the acme of human civilisation. Here, however, the phrase takes on a new meaning. While it does not preclude cultural and material aspects, the term is now principally concerned with moral deficiency. Those who fall into this category comprise the worst of black and white and are no longer set on the border of white civilisation, but on the margins of humankind as a whole. O'Brien's experience at the butt-end of English rule has not led him to reject the notion of a human hierarchy, but to revise it. In his schema, the 'Kaffir' no longer occupies the lowest position, and the Irish are no longer a separate race – the missing link between savage and civilised. The latter are tacitly incorporated into a generic 'white' category while the 'Kaffirs' are drawn into a common, moral humanity – infinitesimally closer to white 'civilisation'. Their intrinsic worth is not only asserted, but their perspective endorsed and their 'virtues' shown, in some cases, to be superior to that of the Europeans. In addition to being able to 'see' O'Brien more clearly than anyone else (as is evident from the name given to him), they are also more charitable. In an ironic twist, the tormented hero remarks that Black Larry had probably assumed he would use his money to buy food for the famished people. 'To think so would be as natural for a Kaffir as it would be for a white man to think of keeping it in his own pocket!'⁶⁵ That O'Brien's subsequent action is partly motivated by a 'Kaffir virtue' is significant.

⁶³ Ibid, 262–3.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Curtis, *Apes & Angels*, 1.

⁶⁵ *Long Horns*, 263.

O'Brien's response to his potentially disastrous descent into degeneracy is twofold. He successfully subverts his chameleon-like reputation by choosing his colour and renouncing covetousness. Inspired by Black Larry's comment and the memory of his ancestors' defence of their Christian faith, O'Brien donates his ill-gotten fortune to Brownlee's famine relief initiative. Because of his actions, the protagonist can now hold his head high among both the Xhosa and the Europeans. What is more, having 'follow[ed] in the steps of those I had always been proud to own as mine!' he proves that he is worthy of the O'Brien name.⁶⁶ He is not merely 'civilised' but high-born.

O'Brien's redemption is set in high relief, but also facilitated, by the demise of another 'white Kaffir' – Black Larry. Although Larry occupies a relatively small portion of the novel, he is set up as O'Brien's counterpart. Until shortly before the tale's conclusion, the experiences and adventures of the two mirror one another: both are descended from kings, both have a way with cattle, both find themselves among a foreign people and both prove adept at acculturating. When the prophecies fail, both abscond and turn to making their fortune. But whereas O'Brien overcomes his greed and is reintegrated with his people, Larry's avarice leads to him being branded a traitor and suffering an ignominious death at the hands of the Xhosa. What is more, we learn that rather than trying to rescue his master from the fire in Ireland so many years before, Larry had followed him into the flames in order to steal his money. It is only when he realises his hours are numbered that Larry returns the cash, and his theft is discovered. Unlike O'Brien, who regains the 'good qualities' of the white man and apparently inherits the virtues of the 'Kaffir', Larry loses the latter and, as it transpires, never acquired the former. Despite years of civilisation, Black Larry is shown to inhabit the lowest position on O'Brien's moral-racial hierarchy. His death and ruination is nevertheless useful. It allows O'Brien, whose life has been intimately entwined with Larry's, to return to 'his people' unfettered. It also avoids the awkward question of where a 'civilised' black man might fit in the Colony. Finally, without his recovered patrimony, O'Brien would apparently have been unable to rejoin white society. Although morally vindicated, the protagonist, believing himself to be bankrupt, had already resigned himself to 'live the life of a Kaffir till time brought an end to all'.⁶⁷ As it is, the money allows him to leapfrog the 'Kaffir' position and recover his white status. Larry and O'Brien's social positions might have been inverted on African soil, with the Irishman a destitute convict and Larry a chief councillor, but their 'rightful' places are restored by the end.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 265.

⁶⁷ *Long Horns*, 266.

O'Brien's personal emancipation is secured, but what of the anti-Imperialist struggles with which he was involved – those of the Xhosa and the Irish? While the protagonist's re-instatement amongst the ranks of enlightened humankind might be seen as symbolic of a re-evaluation of the Irish people, a collective national identity and Ireland's struggle have in fact long been forgotten. Even when O'Brien reconnects with a fellow rebel in the final pages of the novel, he expresses no curiosity about the state of his country. His concern is purely personal – to learn more of Mary (who, incidentally, is now also removed from the scene of Irish resistance, and is no longer described as a freedom fighter, but as a widow).

As for the Xhosa, while O'Brien's narrative successfully presents their humanity and virtues, he remains noncommittal about their future and expresses no opinion about their miserably altered circumstances (aside from regret at his own material exploitation of them). The future hope of a reversal of their fortunes, which is evident in Dowsley's 1926 article, is conspicuously absent. Some might argue that *Long Horns*, with its Irish-Xhosa parallels, alludes to such a reversal; that despite the failure of the Cattle-Killing, the Xhosa (like the Irish after the 'Forty-Eight Rising) will be revitalised and finally liberated. This is not, however, supported by the text. Having pronounced the gap between Irish and Xhosa, and reasserted it so explicitly when O'Brien rejoins 'his people', there is no further cause for comparison. What is more, by the end of the narrative the subjugation of the Xhosa is confirmed. We even see O'Brien's complicity in the prevailing hegemony – albeit on a domestic scale. 'Old Nombanda', Nongqawuse's childhood friend and fellow-seer, works as a servant for O'Brien. She still calls him *Nkosi*, but the title is no longer an acknowledgment of his noble lineage, but of his position as Master by virtue of the colour of his skin.

Kiberd, writing about the Easter Rising, notes that, rather than being 'fixated on the past', the rebels used 'their power to redirect its latent energies into new constellations. They therefore reserved the right to reinterpret the past in the light of their desired futures, which they recruited against a despised present.'⁶⁸ While *Long Horns* takes as its basis two anti-imperialist movements, there is no sense of Dowsley drawing upon the 'utopian energies' that inspired the 1848 Rising – or, indeed the 1856 Cattle-Killing – in order to suggest a 'desired future'. The closest he gets, in terms of South Africa, is to allude to the present.

In the freedom of the family circle, he [O'Brien] expresses for his grandchildren's enlightenment opinions which might have been stated more guardedly had he foreseen that his memoirs would one day be published. The very revelations, however, which he

⁶⁸ Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 293.

makes regarding the relationships existing between the clashing nationalities of eighty years ago serve to remind us that the present discrepancies in South African political life have their roots in ancient times.⁶⁹

The reviewer's misconception regarding the autobiographical status of the novel highlights one of the benefits of a framing narrative. The device allows Dowsley to maintain a distance, while 'speaking' forcefully, with the liberty and authority that first person narratives and history provide. Despite O'Brien's candour, however, his opinions are complicated by racist and classist assumptions. And while they might 'remind us' of 'present discrepancies', they do not challenge them. We are left with the image of the elderly O'Brien, restored to a position of privilege, his freedom and the future of his children secure. Nombanda enters with his coffee; he lays down his pen, his story is complete. The story of black oppression, Nombanda's story, is abandoned. Perhaps Dowsley, like O'Brien, had grown weary of rebellion (we recall the protagonist's comment about the 'impetuosity' of youth), perhaps he did not want to trouble the socio-political waters. But at a time when support for racial equality was critical, Dowsley failed to maintain the radical trajectory suggested by his interracial parallels and the linkage of two anti-imperialist movements.

⁶⁹ Godfrey, 'Review', 1937, *Cape Mercury* (DP).

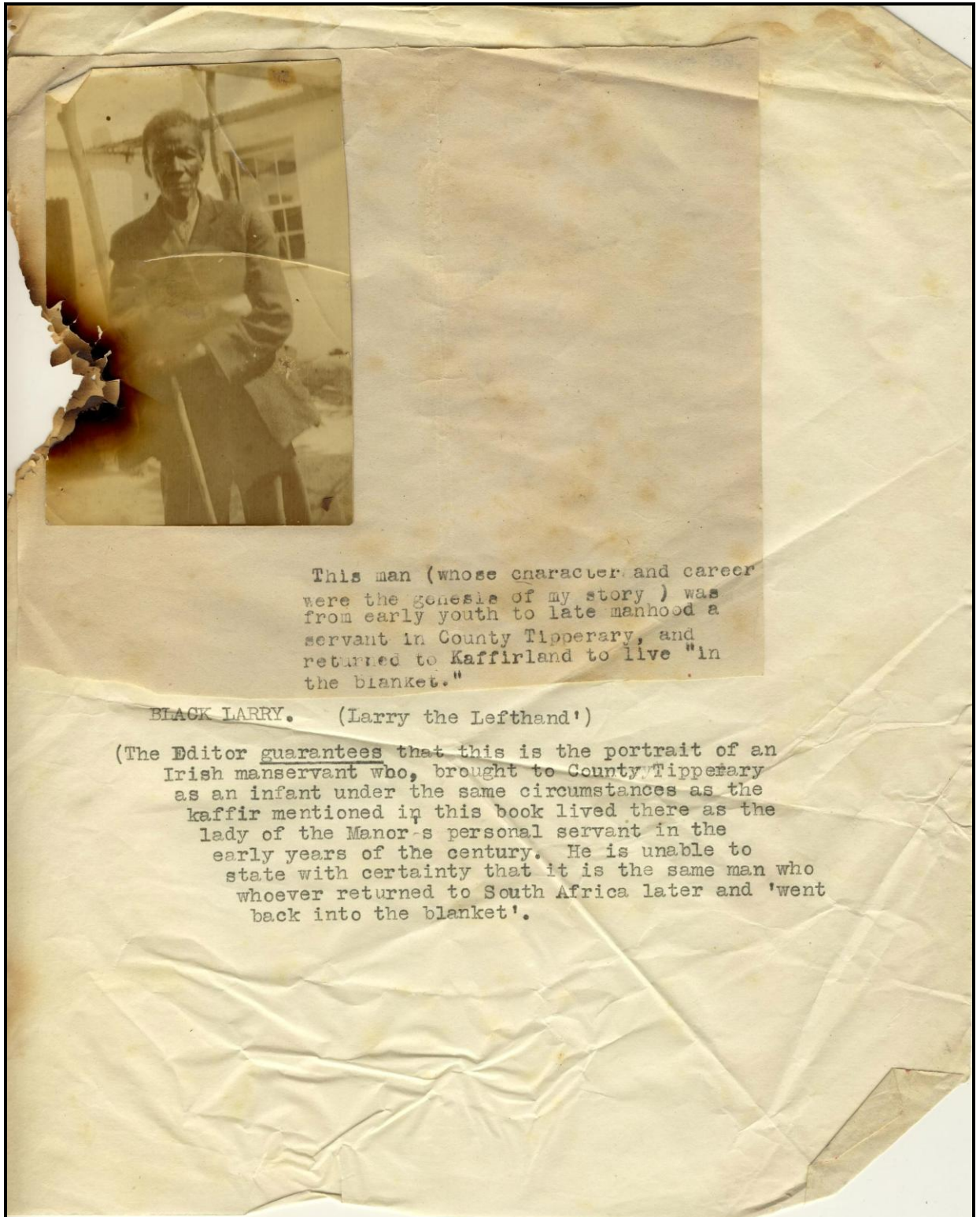


Fig. 16 This page, from Dowsley's original typewritten manuscript, was returned to the author, along with other unused illustrations, by his publisher. The bulk of the *Long Horns* manuscript is unaccounted for. Dowsley's papers were, at one point, rescued from a fire.

CONCLUSION

'A CACOPHONY OF VOICES' IN 'A FIELD OF INTERRELATED NARRATIVES'¹

This dissertation has charted the shifting meaning, and explored the various uses, of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing over some early semi-fictional narratives in English. The Cattle-Killing marks a seminal point in the subjugation of the Xhosa and, as a contributing factor in the consolidation of future race relations, represents a formative moment not only in a people's, but in a country's, history. Together, the literary works that I have examined speak powerfully of that historical moment, as well as of its ongoing political and social ramifications. During the course of the project, I have drawn into conversation, and highlighted existing connections between, these early accounts and endeavoured to show their sometimes-considerable reach and influence. I have argued, furthermore, that, although framed by a metanarrative of Progress, these texts do not form an homogenous group, and that on an individual basis they are marked by ambivalence. My focus on the contemporaneous political and social work of Beattie's, Metelerkamp's, Waters', Dhlomo's and Dowsley's narratives on the subject of the Cattle-Killing highlights the wider resonance of the movement and the imbrications of past and present. By examining an array of accounts, furthermore, I draw attention to the larger field of interpretation within which the Cattle-Killing exists and, in so doing, reflect on broader questions relating to history and history-making.

By representing the diversity and range of possibilities for the narration of the Cattle-Killing, this study becomes part of the 'revisionist cultural history' described by de Kock that 'write[s] the multiple stories of our emergence into this divided state'.² The dissertation achieves this sense of emergent division through an examination of the 'colonial' era only – that is, the period before the Afrikaner Nationalist victory of 1948. A brief look at subsequent tellings, however, will suffice to show that literary interest in the Cattle-Killing did not recede as temporal distance grew from the event. Further, that it is not solely 'Xhosa-speakers [who] remain deeply interested in the cattle-killing and continuously grapple with its significance and its implications'.³ Over time, different ways of telling and understanding the movement have become possible and, without denying the specificity of individual narratives, reconstructions

¹ Ashforth, 'Cattle Killing', 591 and Comaroff, 'The End?', 142.

² de Kock, 'Smaller Stories', 90.

³ Peires, *The Dead*, 2003:388.

on the subject have continued to reflect and address South Africa's changing socio-political environment: the deepening institutionalisation of racial inequality, the swell of resistance, the disintegration of minority white rule, and the fraught first years of democracy.

In the early accounts, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, there is a tendency to view the Cattle-Killing as indicative of the nineteenth-century Xhosas' inferiority and – working within a unilinear, teleological framework of Progress – to present the movement as inadvertently facilitating the civilization of the 'natives'. A positive consequence of this questionable metanarrative is that there is also a growing tendency across these accounts to articulate a common humanity (with the promise, in some cases, of racial equality at some undefined point in the future) and, therefore, to recognise the global resonance of the Cattle-Killing itself. For most of these early narratives, the Cattle-Killing is not particularly or primarily a Xhosa story. Rather, it is used to construe wider identities and ideas. Leon Schauder's short film, *Nonquassi* (1939), a final account from the period preceding the formal institution of apartheid, is a case in point. Despite Schauder's startling juxtaposition of Xhosa and Nazi Germans, the homology he draws between black African and white European points to their shared humanness, a common human fallibility and frailty. For Schauder, as for H. I. E. Dhlomo only a few years earlier, the Cattle-Killing is imagined as a universal parable.⁴ 'The tragedy of a Job, a Hamlet, a Joan, a Nongqause', declared Dhlomo, 'is the tragedy of all countries, all times, all races.'⁵ The accounts of these early writers might be rooted in the racially segregated reality of the Colony (and then the Union), but their authors' gaze is set on distant horizons.

After World War Two and Malan's 1948 National Party victory, a marked shift occurred. As South Africa became increasingly isolated in the international arena, so the outward gaze turned in on itself, and the Cattle-Killing became a local, self-reflective story. The optimism and possibility of the Progress narrative was supplanted by cynicism, confrontation and the racial polarization of Struggle narratives.

The question of the movement's significance during the apartheid years, however, has been the subject of some debate. Attwell, remarking recently on the fact that the Cattle-Killing has been invoked by contemporary writers such as Magona, Cronin and Mda to draw present-day parallels, asserts that the 'cattle-killing has resurfaced to become a central myth of post-apartheid narrative. The myth', he continues, 'seems to disappear during militant phases of our

⁴ For an in-depth reading of this film, see Boniface Davies, 'The Cattle-Killings as Propaganda'.

⁵ Dhlomo, 'Drama and the African', 235.

literature, and return during moments of uncertainty – as it did for Herbert Dhlomo in the 1930s'.⁶ Brown, writing during apartheid, attributed the apparent neglect of the subject to the urban and stridently political nature of black poetry. He suggested that the Cattle-Killing was not 'immediately relevant'. 'It has long since been assimilated into the history of black oppression, but there is little to be learned from that. It is unlikely that there will be many new poems written by blacks on this topic'.⁷ Black poets, in other words, were so caught up with the urgent expression of contemporary aspirations and intolerable experiences that there was little time for historical rumination – particularly when the events in question were not obviously heroic in character. But while the Cattle-Killing may not have featured prominently in published black poetry of the time, the movement certainly found expression elsewhere. What is more, it was repeatedly co-opted for contemporaneous political causes. Indeed, Scheub argued that 'the lack of clear anti-apartheid sentiment [in oral narratives] in no way suggests that the stories do not contain images, patterns, and experiences that are *essential weapons* in the struggle against racism and ethnocentrism'.⁸

Attwell's claim that Cattle-Killing narratives 'disappeared' during 'militant phases' while erroneous, is nevertheless understandable. Many accounts from this period, after all, remain unpublished, were only printed and/or translated into English several years later, or fell foul of the Apartheid government's racist legislation. It is perhaps unsurprising that Matshoba's short story, written in response to the Transkei's farcical 'independence' of 1976 and providing an explicit counter to the official narrative taught in black schools, should have been banned.⁹ But even Somhlahlo's play of 1969 – a 'thoughtful and non-inflammatory piece of work' – had its performance life severely curtailed by the Group Areas Act.¹⁰ Then there are those narratives that were never transcribed or translated. Zenani's evocative oral account (later published in Scheub's collection in English translation) is but one example from a tradition that was able to evade censorship *because* it was seldom transcribed, and was therefore well suited to keeping revisionist versions of the movement alive.

⁶ Attwell, 'Mda'.

⁷ Brown, 12. He does, however, cite Manyase's poem as an exception. Sepamla's 'To Makana and Nongqawuse' is another. For more on the issues surrounding black poetry during apartheid – including its precedence over prose narrative forms – see Chapman, *Soweto Poetry* and Gordimer, 'New Black Poetry' in *Black Interpreters*.

⁸ *The Tongue*, xxiv. Italics added.

⁹ Matshoba's collection, *Call Me Not a Man*, which included 'Three Days', was banned from 1979–85. Wenzel provides an excellent reading of this account in 'Problem of Metaphor', 153.

¹⁰ Guy Butler attempted to argue Somhlahlo's case, but to no avail. NELM, Butler and Somhlahlo files. Sepamla refers to the attention Somhlahlo's play attracted from the State in 'Problems and Dilemmas', 118.

If black storytellers and authors such as Jolobe, Mutwa, Yali-Manisi, Zenani and Matshoba were interrogating narratives of Progress and confronting colonial complicity in the Cattle-Killing, so too were 'liberal' white English writers. In addition to being openly sceptical of readings that attributed the movement to black superstition, these authors also betrayed an acute sensitivity to their whiteness – and, as a result, apprehension about engaging the subject of the Cattle-Killing – that was completely absent in the early accounts. In a letter to Sheila Fugard, just months after the 1976 Soweto school riots, Butler expressed his unease.

With regard to Nongqause [...] I myself would be nervous about handling something so mysterious and terrible in the experience of a people at once so close and so distant. Of course, if you kept your hero or heroine peripheral to those events, you might get away with it. But I may be wrong.¹¹

Butler's concomitant feelings of familiarity and strangeness, which appear to cover both the fraught relationship between black and white (irrevocably alienated by years of racial discrimination and yet coupled in humankind) and the historical movement (remote and yet so immediate), are reflected in the Cattle-Killing plays of Cope, Mann and Maister. In their complicated and self-conscious approaches to the events, these authors acknowledge both black and white historical sources and confront apartheid legislation (at least in theory) by prescribing casting across racial lines.¹² For these playwrights, too, the continuity between past and present – the 'distinct contemporary relevance' of the historical events, as Maister described it – is critical. In the poignant final scene of Mann's play, a modern-day character reads aloud from a first-hand account of the Cattle-Killing. Behind her, impossible to ignore, is an outsized contemporary landscape – a 'panoramic photograph of the little box houses of Zwlitsha (The New Land) township beside Kingwilliamstown is projected across the whole drop'.¹³

Since South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the number of semi-fictional Cattle-Killing accounts has increased at least fourfold.¹⁴ This increase exemplifies not only the continued resonance of the Cattle-Killing but suggests that the narrative has become

¹¹ Butler to Fugard, 5 November 1976 (NELM). Whether Fugard shared Butler's nervousness or was otherwise diverted, she does not appear to have gone on to tackle the subject of the Cattle-Killing. Butler, on the other hand, did – eleven years later – in his lengthy narrative poem *Pilgrimage to Dias Cross*. In this work, Nongqause is certainly not a 'peripheral' figure.

¹² Cope, i; Man, Appendix C:iv; Green, 'Strong Poetry' and Maister to Boniface Davies, 12 February 2004, private correspondence.

¹³ Mann, 63. Maister includes an apartheid protest song (70) and Cope presents the historical story within a contemporary framing narrative.

¹⁴ See appendix. In recent years there have been at least two per year.

particularly piquant or valuable for the post-apartheid context. This proliferation might be seen to reflect an increased need to own the event through narration, an increased freedom to do so, and a market for such stories.¹⁵ Nkosi (somewhat overstating his case) argues that black writers are 'suddenly fascinated' with 'the history of colonialism, attempting to discover for each ethnic group the moment of its deepest trauma and the modes of its transformation into present relations'. For the protagonists in Mda's and Magona's novels, this moment is the Cattle-Killing: 'Nongqawuse is the concealed wound in the history of Xhosa resistance to settler rule'.¹⁶ Indeed, the idea of the Cattle-Killing as a wound recurs in Bailey's play, *The Prophet*, which literally 'takes the form of a ceremony... to heal the wound opened some hundred and fifty years ago, when the Xhosa Nation was finally dismembered after the Cattle Killing – the still-festering wound'.¹⁷ For most creative writers, including those listed above, the purpose is not to recover the Cattle-Killing for a particular 'ethnic group', however, but as part of a new national history. And the healing that is required is for the whole South African nation. For many, therefore, representing several voices and highlighting the complexity of the events is essential. Describing the rationale behind *Nongqawuse: The Truth Commission* (2002), a play workshopped with students from a Community Arts Project, Guhrs writes:

The idea was to present the different interpretations of the story rather than offer one single version... The main premise at the end was simply that South African audiences should not ignore this story, and that it was far more complicated than the simple version that "Nongqawuse betrayed our nation".¹⁸

Thus, despite the current pre-eminence of a materialist interpretation of the Cattle-Killing in formal historiography, in semi-fictional reconstructions of the movement, earlier and alternate explanations have not simply surrendered to a more 'accurate' one, but persist and continue to inform the present. Together, the various Cattle-Killing narratives, as Said remarked with regard to literatures of imperialism, form a 'network of interdependent histories that it would be inaccurate and senseless to repress, useful and interesting to understand'.¹⁹ But while an examination of these narratives is 'useful' in order to grasp the sheer heterogeneity of opinion and subject positions, the key point, I think, is their interdependence. There is a danger, as Said and, more recently, Comaroff has noted, in a multitude of independent narratives – each

¹⁵ The Comaroffs considers the proliferation of informal history-making in 'The End?'.
¹⁶ Nkosi, 'Republic of Letters', 252.
¹⁷ Bailey, *Miracle and Wonder*, 169.
¹⁸ Guhrs to Boniface Davies, 19 May 2003, private correspondence.
¹⁹ Said, *Culture*, 20.

proclaiming their own unfringeable, unassailable truths: beyond mutual recognition or interrogation.

An infinite regress of assertive voices threatens to postpone, indefinitely, the process of shared *re-collection*, the subsuming of difference into an overarching totality – even if only as a field of dispute – against which claims can be relativized and difference measured. If it is not to be a chronicle of the nation, then History must find other terms... that resist the privatization of human existence. Let us hope that in contexts like the new South Africa, where so much is in the balance, a moment of *re-collection* will soon be reached; that history will emerge not as a trading pit of alterities, nor as a 'triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate', but as an argument joined about various, reciprocally entailed histories in a *field* of interrelated narratives.²⁰

I will close with a final account of the Cattle-Killing – one that, despite a clamour of different voices asserting different truths, attempts to provide a forum along the lines that Comaroff envisages. In the 1999 SABC television docu-drama, 'Day of the Two Suns: The Trial of Xhosa Prophetess Nongqawuse', the idea of a 'moment of *re-collection*' is facilitated.²¹ During the course of this modern-day courtroom drama (a tangible reminder of the continuity between past and present), historical figures are interrogated and evidence is produced for and against the prophetess who is charged with 'the deaths of many thousands of Xhosa people'. But in spite of the formality and gravity of the judicial setting, and the opportunity for all sides to be heard, courtroom protocol is nevertheless breached. In the midst of his closing statement, for example, the black lawyer for the prosecution is interrupted by Chief Xaba, a prominent believer, who vehemently insists that Nongqawuse 'spoke the truth' and who goes on to attack the solicitor's racial integrity. 'What true black man', he angrily demands, 'does not believe in the power of the ancestors?' Reprimanded, and apparently subdued, Mr Modise meekly rests his case. Later, however, when the defense counsel asks that Nongqawuse be found 'not guilty', a spectator loudly interjects: 'But she *is* guilty!' If 'Day of the Two Suns' is an imaginative example of history as contestation, it also effectively illustrates the potential of, and problems associated with, representing multiple positions. At its most hopeful, the airing of different views might inspire inter-racial identification and understanding. Certainly the makers of the

²⁰ Comaroff, 'The End?', 142.

²¹ Although Peires is listed as 'Historical Consultant' he claims neither to have seen the programme nor to have been aware of his official role therein (Cattle-Killing Conference, UCT, 20 April 2007). Zakes Mda, who is credited as author, similarly distances himself from the project, writing that the SABC 'messed it up [...] What you saw is not what I wrote' (Robertson, 'Hats off'). The director was John Matshikiza.

Saints, Sinners and Settlers series (to which this program belongs) were driven by a desire to stimulate debate and accelerate reconciliation: to '[subvert] the myths that have kept us all enslaved in our separate kraals'.²² Ultimately, however, true reconciliation is undermined by the occasional descents into chaos and the lack of resolution and controversial inference that mark the final moments of Nongqawuse's trial. And yet, for all the difficulties, the value of the process is ascertained, for serious discussion and debate *does* take place. Partner's fear, expressed in relation to the 'capricious' breach of historical 'protocol' in 'reality-fictions' (of which 'Day of Two Suns' is a case in point) is not that often propounded by critics of postmodernism: that people will come to believe anything. Rather, it is that people will grow wary and *not* believe anything, and 'thus feel no connection with the polity at all'.²³ In 'Day of Two Suns' this theory is undone, for it is the audience that is finally called upon by the judge to declare a verdict. With this unexpected twist, the viewer is forced to acknowledge his own implicatedness, to participate and to position himself in relation to the narratives he has heard.

The absence of an unequivocal ruling in 'Day of Two Suns' leaves open the possibility that there is no clear-cut judgment – that a meaningful and truthful past is constructed out of fragments from multiple intertwined stories. Furthermore, the remarkable final moment of this docu-drama is a reminder of that which is inexplicable and un'own'able, and thus powerfully argues for the uncontainability of the past. As the judge invites the viewers to declare their ruling, Nongqawuse – to the astonishment and consternation of all in the courtroom – literally disappears before their eyes. As the prophetess fades from the screen, and out of the room, her supernatural status is not only apparently confirmed, but she evades judgment.

²² Matshikiza, 'Idiot Box'. This conclusion, incidentally, is a far cry from that of another programme in the series – 'The Real Estate Man: Trial of Dingane', which investigates the murder of Piet Retief. In this instance, as the Comaroffs argue, the past is presented as 'truth and reconciliation as farce' and the contested historical moment is 'cleansed of strife'. Indeed, it is ironic – in the light of 'Day of Two Suns' which appears to align with the Comaroffian vision for history-telling – that the authors should choose a programme from the same series, as an example of what is wrong with history-telling in South Africa. Incidentally, they make no reference to 'Day of Two Suns'. Comaroff, 'The End?', 126–7.

²³ Partner, 39.

APPENDIX

LITERARY ACCOUNTS OF THE CATTLE-KILLING

The following table was collated from searches made by NALM and NELM (the English and Afrikaans branches of the South African National Literary Museums), supplemented by bibliographical sources (Mendelssohn, Nathan, Seary), published anthologies, library card catalogues, databases (including Africa-Wide NiPAD) and Internet searches. While it is the most extensive list of semi-fictional literary accounts available, despite my efforts it is unlikely to be comprehensive. I am particularly conscious of a dearth of vernacular accounts. A thorough trawl through South African periodicals would almost certainly uncover more.

DATE	AUTHOR	TITLE	GENRE	LANGUAGE	PUBLICATION DETAILS
1891	Thomas Ross Beattie	<i>Pambaniso: A Kaffir Hero, or Scenes from Savage Life: an historical Kaffir Tale</i>	Novel	English	(London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1891) AND (Cape Town/ Johannesburg: J. C. Juta, 1891)
1907 1935	Sanni Metelerkamp	'Namjikwa – A Tale of the Cattle-Slaying of 1858' 'The Prophetess – A Tale of Cattle-Slaying 1857'	Short Story	English	<i>African Monthly</i> , 3:17, April 1907, 479–88 (Grahamstown), AND <i>The African Observer</i> , 3:2, June 1935, 65–73 (Bulawayo)
1911–5	Hans Grimm	<i>Kaffernland</i>	Novel	German	<i>Duetsche Rundschau</i> , 1935 (Berlin) AND (Lippoldsberg: Klosterhaus-Verlag, 1978).
1914	Mary W. Waters	<i>U-Nongqawuse</i>	Play	Xhosa	(Cape Town/ Johannesburg: Juta, 1924)
1925	Mary W. Waters	<i>The Light – Ukukanya</i>	Play	English	(Lovedale: Lovedale Institution Press, 1925)
c.1925	Cecil Lewis	<i>Engaba – A Place of Refuge: The Story of the Cattle-Killing</i>	Play	English	Scene iii in <i>A South African Reader</i> (Cape Town & Johannesburg: Juta, 1926)
1926	Mary W. Waters	'The Story of the Native Doctor'	Oral story	English	<i>Cameos from the Kraal</i> (Lovedale: Lovedale Institution Press, 1926)

1926	I. D. du Plessis	'Nongkwase'	Poem	Afrikaans	<i>De Huisgenoot</i> , 21 May 1926 (Cape Town)
1935	Benedict Vilakazi	'Inkelekele yakwaXhosa' ['The Xhosa Calamity']	Poem	Zulu	<i>Inkondlo KaZulu</i> (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1935) AND English translation by Malcolm & Friedman in <i>Zulu Horizons</i> (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1962)
1936	H.I.E. Dhlomo	<i>The Girl who Killed to Save</i>	Play	English	(Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1936) AND <i>H. I. E. Dhlomo: Collected Works</i> (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1985)
1936	Eileen M. Tyson	'Death of a Nation'	Poem	English	<i>The Natal Mercury</i> , 28 November 1936, 23 (Durban)
1930–7	William George Dowsley	<i>Long Horns</i>	Novel	English	(London: John Heritage Unicorn Press, 1937)
1939	Leon Schauder	'Nongquassi'	Short film	English	Gaumont-British Instructional Films, 'Focus on Empire' series
1949	Ben M. Botha	' <i>Die Witmense, Au!</i> ' ['White people, Au!']	Novel	Afrikaans	(Cape Town: Nasionale Pers Beperk, 1949)
1956	Christopher Perold	'Song for Nonkwasi'	Poem	English	<i>Groote Schuur</i> , 33–4 (Cape Town)
1959	J. J. R. Jolobe	'Ingqawule' ['Holocaust']	Poem	Xhosa	<i>Ilitha</i> (Johannesburg: A.P.B, 1959) AND English translation in W. F. Kuse, D.Litt thesis (University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1977) AND Incomplete English translation in Guy Butler & Jeff Opland, Eds., <i>The Magic Tree</i> (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989)
1962	J. Bruwer	<i>Nongqause en die Bloedrooi Son</i> [Nongqawuse and the Blood-Red Sun]	Novel	Afrikaans	(Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers Beperk, 1962)
1965	Karl Frey	'Nonquase'	Short Story	German	<i>Afrika-Post</i> , 12:5, 17–9 (Pretoria)
1968	Anon	'Nongqawuse'	Short Story	Xhosa	In Garvey Nkonki's MA thesis (Pretoria: University of South Africa)

1969	Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa	'The National Suicide of the Xhosa'	Chapter	English	<i>My People</i> (London: Antony Blond, 1969)
1969	Basil Somhlahllo	<i>Nongqawuse</i>	Play	English	Unpublished (NELM)
1970	D. L. P. Yali-Manisi	'The Cattle-Killing'	Oral poem	Xhosa	English translation with Jeff Opland in <i>Words that Circle Words</i> (Johannesburg: Ad. Donker, 1992)
1972	Johnny Boshoff & Gary Burne	<i>Nongause</i>	Dance-drama	?	Première at the Bulawayo Theatre Club, 5 September 1972 & performed by PACT at the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg, 1973.
1973	Christopher Hope	'The Flight of the White South Africans'	Poem	English	<i>Cape Drives</i> (London: London Magazine Editions, 1974)
1974	Anna Minnaar-Vos	<i>Nomkosi van die Nagoon</i> [Nomkosi of the Nagoon]	Novel	Afrikaans	(Cape Town: H.A.U.M., 1974)
1975	Margaret Gough	'Nongqause'	Poem	English	<i>New Coin</i> 11:1–2, 2–3 (Grahamstown)
1975	Nongenile Masithathu Zenani	'No Person Arose'	Oral story	Xhosa	English translation by Harold Scheub in <i>The Tongue is Fire</i> , (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996)
1975	Sipho Sepamla	'To Makana and Nongqawuse'	Poem	English	<i>Ophir</i> , 22 (Pretoria) AND <i>The Blues is You in Me</i> (Johannesburg: Ad. Donker, 1976)
1976	M. Radebe	'U Nongqawuse'	Poem	Xhosa	In P. T. Mtuze, Ed. <i>Ugalda</i> (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1976)
1978	Jack Cope	<i>Nongqawuse</i>	Play	English	Unpublished (NELM)
1979	Mtutuzeli Matshoba	'Three Days in the Land of Dying Illusion'	Short Story	English	Illustrated excerpt in <i>Staffrider</i> , 2:3 (Johannesburg) AND <i>Call Me Not a Man</i> (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1979)
1983	L. T. Manyase	'Isimanga sikaNongqawuse'	Poem	Xhosa	In J. Opland & P. T. Mtuze Eds. <i>Isigodlo sikaPhalo</i> (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1983)
1985	Chris Mann	<i>The Killing of the Cattle</i>	Play	English	Unpublished (NELM)
1985	Jack Cope	'Nongqawuse Prophetess'	Poem	English	Draft. Unpublished (NELM)

1985	Ally Mokoena	'A Message From the Dead Ones'	Short Story	English	<i>Bona</i> , August–November 1985 (Johannesburg)
1987	Guy Butler	VII	Poem	English	<i>Pilgrimage to Dias Cross</i> (Cape Town: David Philip, 1987), 29–31
1988	Nigel Maister	<i>Nongqawuse: A Treachery of Winds</i>	Play	English	Unpublished (NELM)
1989	Tony Voss	'At Nongqause's Grave'	Poem	English	<i>New Contrast</i> 17:4 (Cape Town)
1990	Karen Press	<i>Nongqawuse's Prophecy</i>	Novelette	English	(Isando: Heinemann, 1990)
1996	John Wideman	<i>The Cattle Killing</i>	Novel	English	(Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1996)
1996	Patricia Schonstein Pinnock	'The Vision of Nongqawuse. 1856'	Poem	English	<i>Saturday in Africa</i> (Cape Town: African Sun Press, 1996)
1997	Jeremy Cronin	'Time of the Prophets'	Poem	English	<i>Even the Dead</i> (Cape Town: David Philip, 1997)
1997	Kelwyn Sole	'Miss Nonqawuse'	Poem	English	<i>Love that is Night</i> (Durban: Gecko Poetry, 1997)
1998	Sindiwe Magona	<i>Mother to Mother</i>	Novel	English	(Cape Town: David Philip, 1998)
1999	Margaret Gough	'Nongqause'	Poem	English	<i>Selected Poems</i> (Self-published, 1999) AND <i>Across the Light</i> (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2008)
1999	Brett Bailey	<i>The Prophetess</i>	Play	English	<i>The Plays of Miracle and Wonder</i> (Johannesburg: Double Storey, 2003)
1999	Zakes Mda/ John Matshikiza	'Day of the Two Suns: The trial of Xhosa prophetess Nongqawuse'	Television docu-drama	English	SABC2 series <i>Saints, Sinners and Settlers</i>
2000	Zakes Mda	<i>Heart of Redness</i>	Novel	English	(Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 2000)
2001	Mzwandile Matiwana	'Tribute to Nongqawuse'	Poem	English	<i>Kotaz</i> , 2:3 (New Brighton, Port Elizabeth)
2001	Kim McClenaghan	'The Weather of Before: Versions of the Xhosa Cattle Killing in 1856'	Poem	English	Unpublished, MA thesis (University of Cape Town)
2001	Vuyisile Msila	'Nongqawuse'	Poem	English	<i>A Song at Dawn</i> (Kearney, USA: Morris Publishing, 2001)
2002	Mary Langhout	'Oracle'	Short Story	English	<i>MoXie Magazine</i> (www.moxiemag.com/moxie/articles/whattthehell/oracle.html .)

2002	Tamara Guhrs	<i>Nongqawuse: the Truth Commission</i>	Play	English	Workshopped with Community Arts Project students, Cape Town
2002	Quentin Hogge	'Nongqawuse'	Poem	English	<i>Borderline</i> (Self-published, 2002)
2003	Margaret Gough	'Nongqawuse's Pool'	Poem	English	<i>Trials and Tribulations</i> (Scottburgh: Unique Publications, 2003)
2003	Nic Buchanan	<i>The Prophecy of the Cattle Killing – Nongqawuse</i>	Graphic novelette/ comic	English	(Johannesburg: Umlando Wezithombe Publishing, 2003)
2003	P. R. Anderson	'Notes on a Visit to the Grave of Nongqawuse'	Poem	English	<i>New Contrast</i> , 31:3 (Cape Town)
2004	Kobus Moolman	<i>Full Circle</i>	Play	English	Unpublished (NELM)
2004	Chris Mann	'Meditation at Nongqause's Grave'	Poem	English	<i>The English Academy Review</i> , 21, 169 (Johannesburg)
2004	Dominique Malaquais	'Nx'	Poem	English	<i>Chimurenga</i> , 6 (Cape Town)
2006	Saskia Janse. Speeltheater, Holland with Sisonke Arts, South Africa	<i>Rode Aarde/ Red Earth/ Umhlaba Obomvu</i>	Play with puppets and actors	English/ Dutch/ Xhosa	Première at Grahamstown Festival, July 2006
2008	Mats Larsson Gothe & Michael Williams. Norrlands Operan, Sweden with Cape Town Opera	<i>Poet and Prophetess</i>	Opera	English, Xhosa, Swedish	Première in Sweden, 29 March 2008

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Archives (and abbreviations)

CLDP	Dhlomo Papers (Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown)
CLGTT	Grahamstown Training College (Cory Library, Rhodes University)
DP	Dowsley Private Collection (Conal and Heather Turner, Port Elizabeth)
KCDP	Dhlomo Papers (Killie Campbell Library, Durban)
NACT	Cape Archives (National Archives, Cape Town Repository)
NELM	National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown
NLGG	Sir George Grey (Auckland) Collection (National Library (Cape Town)
SP	Schauder Private Collection (Effie Schauder, Cape Town)
UCTGP	Greyshirts Case Papers, B, BC 1105 (Manuscripts & Archives, University of Cape Town)
UCTTG	Thelma Gutsche Papers (Manuscripts & Archives, University of Cape Town)
UCTZC	Zonnebloem College (Manuscripts & Archives, University of Cape Town)
USPG	United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (Rhodes House, Oxford)
WCCE	Church of England Collection (William Cullen, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)
WCLE	C Lewis and GE Edwards Papers (William Cullen, University of the Witwatersrand,
WCST	R. V. Selope Thema Papers in South African Institute of Race Relations Collection (William Cullen, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)
WCWE	Women's Enfranchisement League, 1909–1931 (William Cullen, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)

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