“A paralysis of perspective”: image and text in the creation of an African chief.

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This paper is to be given to the African Studies and History Seminar for discussion. It is not the final version and should not be quoted until it is completed.

Jeff Guy
Department of History
University of Natal
Durban 4041
guy@nu.ac.za

Mahmood Mamdani's recent book on African politics, *Citizen and Subject*[1] is an extended study of the contemporary significance of that pervasive feature of colonial rule, segregation: territorial segregation through the establishment of reserved locations, legal segregation under customary law, cultural segregation through the creation of the tribe, political segregation by systems of indirect rule which delegated local authority to African chiefs. The legacy of this aspect of imperial control, which gave limited recognition to African culture and authority, continues to influence profoundly not just politics but political analysis. Mamdani identifies "two clear tendencies" in the debates on contemporary African affairs: the modernist with its insistence on civil rights within civil society, counterposed by the Africanist call for a politics derived from precedents within African history and culture. In his attempt to resolve these two opposing approaches, Mamdani spends much time in a long book examining the colonial roots of what manifests itself today as African tradition.

Observers of contemporary South African politics will be well aware of the divisions and tensions created by the response of advocates of these two approaches to the demands for recognition by traditional leaders. It is apparent from public and official debate that the authorities are finding it extraordinarily difficult to formulate a response to the call for the extension of powers of traditional authorities in a democratic state.[2] In fact the evidence suggests that the process of policy formulation on this question continues to exhibit what Mamdani calls "a paralysis of perspective"[3].

This metaphor provides the opportunity to situate these contemporary debates within the context of empire - which recognised not only African chiefly authority, but produced the images that represented that authority in the imperial art which forms the theme of this conference. Because it can refer to both literal and visual contexts it is a metaphor well suited to a discussion of the incapacities of those who have sought for a century and a half to represent African authority by image and text. At one level it is not difficult to explain this failure: it lies in the fundamental inability of the western modernising project to incorporate on its own terms the essential features of African traditionalism. But to recognise, and to admit to this has proved difficult: and to incorporate this recognition into political analysis and practice doubly so, and rather than resolution the attempt tends to induce a paralysis of perspective.

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[1] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject. Contemporary African the legacy of late colonialism*. Cape. David Philip, 1996.
[2] *A Draft Discussion Document Towards a White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Institutions*. Department of Provincial and Local Government. 11 April 2000.
[3] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject,* 3.

1. Ngoza kaLudaba

It is this photograph and the images and texts derived from it by those seeking to represent African political authority which forms the subject of the paper. It began as an attempt to identify a photograph present in a number of archival collections and reproduced frequently in the historical literature of KwaZulu-Natal. It is an image which struck me, as it had struck others, as powerful and significant, despite the fact that its provenance and identity was obscure. It is a photograph of a seated African man, flanked by four others, two kneeling and two standing. They are adorned rather than dressed in animal skins, furs and feathers, of extraordinary variety and volume. Their cowhide shields suggest that they are warriors, and to those familiar with Africa, or even with the popular images of imperialism, the shape of the shields suggests that they are Zulu, or at least people with connections to the Zulu. And at the centre is the seated man, a leader enthroned, whose commanding authority demands the observer's attention.[4]

Research soon showed that no straightforward exercise in identification was possible: as a photograph or engraving the image has appeared in different

[4] This particular print is taken from Album C59 in the photographic collection of the Killie African Library, University of Natal, Durban. The full page is reproduced below

forms in books, periodicals and collections over the years, under different names and associated with various and very different texts. In the process the image has exercised its influence over those who have attempted to use it, creating changing patterns of interpretation as it has moved with and through the history of empire. In this paper I examine some of the contexts in which it has appeared and in particular I consider the conflicts, even the fractures, created between image and text, for the man in the photograph occupies a powerfully ambiguous position which has disturbed and distorted the perceptions of those who have made use of the image.

The central figure was/is Ngoza kaLudaba. His origins and early life remain obscure. It would seem that he grew up in the Zulu kingdom in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, was a soldier in the Zulu army during the reign of Dingane kaSenzangakhona (1828 – 1840) and was probably present with the Zulu army at the battle of Ncome (Blood River) in 1839.[5]

In the opening years of the next decade, probably in association with Dingane's successor, Mpande, Ngoza crossed into the territory which in 1843 became known as the Colony of Natal. In 1846 Theophilus Shepstone arrived in Natal to become the official responsible African administration in the colony. First as Diplomatic Agent, and then as Secretary for Native Affairs, he initiated a policy which attempted to deal with the massive imbalance between the settler and African population by giving considerable local autonomy and authority to selected African leaders to rule as chiefs in the 12% of the colony reserved for African occupation. Some of these chiefs were men whose status was founded in the rank and power of their forbears in the pre-colonial past. Others depended more on the authority granted them by the colonial state, usually heavily influenced by the personal favour of Shepstone himself.

Ngoza was one of these. He was working in the colony's capital city, Pietermaritzburg, in a settler's kitchen,[6] before he attracted the attention of the Secretary for Native Affairs when, in 1847, he participated in an attack which Shepstone had organised on a chief seen as recalcitrant. He was appointed to the office of the Secretary for Native Affairs as an induna[7] and soon gained Shepstone's special favour. Africans seeking land to establish themselves in the colony where placed under Ngoza who was given land for his homestead and his following in the Mngeni valley, some 30 kilometres from the capital. The people placed under his authority increased, and Ngoza became a chief, a government chief, one of the *iziphakanyiswa* – those "raised up".

For such chiefs, and their followers, the advantages to be had by gaining the favour of the Secretary for Native Affairs were considerable, in these first

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[5] *Izindatyana zabantu kanye nezindaba zas'eNatal,* Natal: May & Davis, Emgungundhlovu, 1859

[6] Killie Campbell African Library. Stuart papers. Evidence of Lazarus Xaba 1 May 1910.

[7] from the Zulu *induna/izinduna*, official/officials. When referring to the African officials working within the colonial administration I use the anglicised forms, induna/indunas

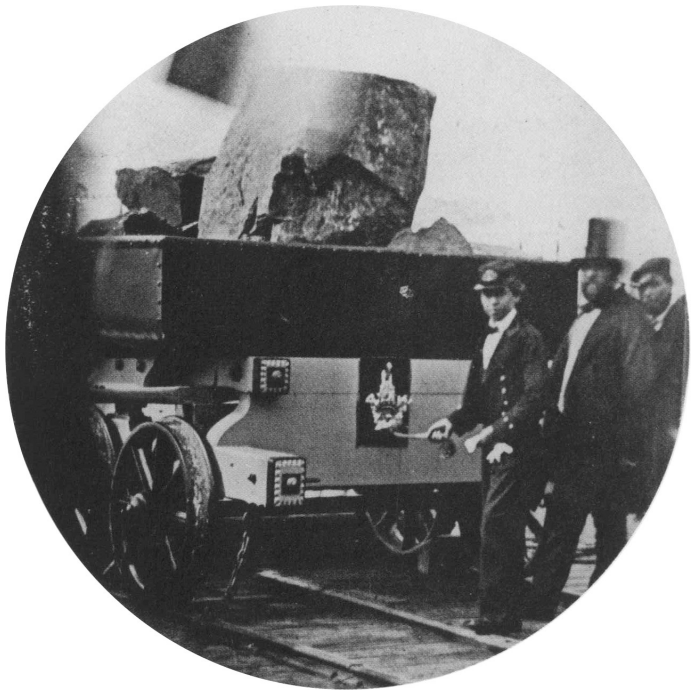
decades of Natal's colonial history at least. When John Colenso made his exploratory visit to Natal in 1854 Ngoza was there to greet him, "dressed as neatly as an European, with his attendant Kafir waiting beside him": the new bishop was much impressed:

> Ngoza is Mr. Shepstone's head man, and, though not an hereditary chief, has acquired considerable power, and is practically a chief of as much authority as any in the district, which he owes partly to Mr. Shepstone's patronage, partly to his own modest and amiable character. There are, probably, (by reason of refugees having flocked to him, who had left their own chiefs behind,) more pure Zulus under Ngoza than under other chief in Natal.[8]

When, later in the month, Shepstone took the new bishop on a tour through Natal to visit some of the most important chiefs, and observe the changes being made under colonial rule, Ngoza accompanied them. Colenso noted that the chief, with his "white hat, pilot coat and breeches", had hired out his wagon to the party to carry its supplies.

2. The Royal Tour – text and image

In 1860 Ngoza gained more publicity. In that year the High Commissioner Sir George Grey, disappointed in his attempts to extend direct British authority in southern Africa, chose to make a very public statement of his vision of a future, expanded, united South Africa. To do this he made use of British royalty and the visual record. Queen Victoria was persuaded to allow her fourth child and second son, Alfred, to visit south Africa and in August and, in September 1860, the High Commissioner and the sixteen-year old midshipman, their support staff and escorts, travelled 1200 miles through eastern southern Africa, marking Grey's civilising projects with the royal brand. Mr York, a photographer from Cape Town, travelled with them to record their achievements, both for the queen personally, and for the public in a book commemorating the tour.



Reading accounts of this trip, "one of the fastest runs through South Africa", one gets a sense of the way in which Grey used this very public trip to demonstrate his dissatisfaction at the way in which the imperial government had frustrated his plans for, expansion and enlightenment. The prince accompanied him to celebrate the sites of progress in Cape Town which Grey had instituted: the new breakwater and jetty, railway and library. In the settler villages the party passed through pressing crowds and under triumphal arches to hear long speeches of welcome and thanks to English queen for trusting her son to them.

[8] J.W. Colenso, *Ten Weeks in Natal.* Cambridge: Macmillan, 1855, 46.

Special attention was paid to mission stations responsible for African education. Missionaries read letters of loyalty from conquered African chiefs, and the Basotho king Moshoeshoe travelled all the way to the south African Aliwal, to greet the prince, exchange gifts and letters, and the meeting was commemorated with a fine and famous photograph.[9] In the Free State, Moroka's Barolong encircled, it was said, 25 000 head of game and drove them into the royal party's guns: 6000 animals were killed, the prince bagging more in fifteen minutes than his father in a season in the Scottish Highlands. Over the Drakensberg in Natal compliant chiefs and loyal settlers marched, danced and gave more long speeches of welcome. In Pietermaritzburg "The Zulu War Dance in Natal"[10], "the ceremonial dance of homage in their full war-costume"[11] was organised to greet the prince. "Tribal" or "traditional dances" were of course to become a feature of South African colonial and urban culture and deeply ambivalent one.[12] They have been many things to many people: for the organisers, parades of dominance to impress visitors, and celebrations of control: for the performers an escape from confinement and drabness of oppressive labour, opportunities for physical exertion and assertion, and for cultural creativity drawing on deep traditions of dance and song, but transformed in new contexts and for new objectives.

On September 4, 1861, in "the Park" on the edges of Pietermaritzburg, four thousand men in ceremonial military dress welcomed the royal party in the traditional manner. The tour's commemorative volume quoted extensively from a local newspaper in order that the reader might "form a vivid idea from the following pen-and-ink sketches by a writer in the Natal *Courier*." And the major figure controlling the ceremony was Ngoza himself. Colenso's "modest and amiable" chief has been transformed:

> Now Goza is a great chief preparing for the battle, his warriors are around him, his nostrils breathe fire, and his eyes flash flame.

Then

> Goza's bands began the ball, coming up towards the spectators like a surging line of inky surf, making, at the same time, a whole hurricane of noise. They advance, they retreat, they leap

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[9] See the cover of two major biographies of Moshoeshoe: Peter Sanders, *Moshoeshoe. Chief of the Sotho*. London: Heinemann, 1975 and Leonard Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds. Moshoeshoe of Lesotho. 1786 – 1870*. Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1975.

[10] *The Progress of His Royal Highness Prince Alfred Ernest Albert through the Cape Colony, British Kaffraria, the Orange Free State, and Port Natal, in the year 1860*. Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1861. opposite p.99

[11] *The Visit of His Royal Highness Prince Alfred to the Colony of Natal*. London: Jarrold and sons, nd, 17.

[12] Deborah James, *Songs of the Women Migrants. Performance an Identity in South Africa* Witwatersrand University Press, 1999, 36-7

> aloft into the air, they kneel and crouch to the round, placing their shields before them. They become frantic, brandishing their spear-sticks, and kicking with knee and foot against their shields. They see the enemy, and yell at him like a pack of demoniac hounds. How they would tear and rend him if they could but get at him! Now they retreat, holding their shields behind them, and hissing like a host of wriggling serpents between their teeth. Awful fellows![13]

The accounts continue in this style: the sound is deafening: the writhing of bodies and the threats to their enemies fearful: the soldiers roar and sweep forward wave upon wave like the sea. This might be a celebration of colonial loyalty – but the reader had to be reminded of its proximity to pre-colonial horror: "they have still latent in their hearts the brutal instincts of barbarism. They recognize no cruelty in indiscriminate massacre, no dastardy in the torture of the weak and feeble."

It would be tedious to quote more than this, but notice should be taken of a significant recurring contradiction in these pieces of popular settler writing: uncontrolled, but simultaneously contained, African savagery. If the colonial political achievement was to be properly appreciated, barbarism had to be convincingly established before it was undermined,.

> For the first time in the history of South Africa, or indeed of the world, a British Prince looked upon an assemblage of subjugated savages. For the first time in the annals of history a savage race personally paid homage to their English Sovereign's son… Only a few years ago they were the subjects of a native tyrant whose word is law, and the uplifting of whose finger might at any moment have doomed them to instant death. When once the war-spirit is aroused in their heathen breasts they know no mercy and allow no quarter. They have, when aroused, the ferocity of the tiger and the cunning of the cat. These barbarous beings have been tamed; they have submitted voluntarily to the easy yoke of the British Government; they have, in many instances, fled into Natal as a refuge from their chiefs; they are now peaceable, harmless, and happy. They crouch under the sheltering protection of the British Lion; and the sceptre of Britain's Queen guarantees to them safety, security, and salvation.

For this was a colonial exhibition of barbarism within colonial borders: the more threatening the savage the more impressive the skills of those who controlled him.

> The whole ceremonial was under the effective management and direction of Mr. T. Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs, his brother, and his three sons, all of whom are a thoroughly conversant with the native character and customs as they have succeeded in winning the most perfect confidence of the whole aboriginal population of Natal

Nonetheless the presentation of the role of these colonial administrators is fairly straightforward: they are men who understand the native and have the ability to move from the official world into that the of the colonized and in so doing manage them. Nonetheless, although Shepstone enters the world of the colonized, he always retains his place in the world of the colonizer. Ngoza's role however is more difficult to represent for he has to move autonomously in both. The essence of Ngoza's character is contradiction: he is enlightened and barbaric, a progressive traditionalist, showing a savage respectability. He was "the great Chief Goza, the commandant paramount of all", who drove his men "back with heavy rattling blows, that sent some shield-clips flying in the air", but also the

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[13] This account of the event can be found in *The Progress …. of Prince Alfred*, 95-99.

enlightened, loyal, cash-crop growing, wagon owner, a harbinger of the future. He moves effectively in the worlds of the colonizer and colonized.

In these descriptions we get some idea of the contradictory ideological burden Ngoza had to carry. There is no question here of a mere colonial Other. The Colony of Natal was not the product of military conquest and the violent eradication of the indigenous political authority: it was built on a process of negotiation which recognized or created African authorities and brought them under colonial control as "chiefs", of whom Ngoza was the most powerful. But, although African political authority was recognized in Natal, the system of authority was still built on the assumption of the superiority of colonial to African rule. Consequently, even though African rule was recognised, African barbarism had to be continually demonstrated as a justification for the assumption of colonial authority, just as the formal structures of administrative segregation were explained and defended on the grounds of the savagery of the colonized other.

And there was the additional layer to this in Natal: the chiefs had to be presented not only as savages, but also as subjects; untamed but also malleable. And it was this further contradictory imperative that made it necessary, in the account of the great ceremonial welcoming dance for queen Victoria's son, to continually match (not counter) descriptions of Ngoza's fearsome demeanour and dress with the information that he was not a hereditary African chief but an appointee to chiefly office within a colonial administration.

3. The Royal Tour – the limitations of the photograph

Alfred's father, prince Albert, was delighted by accounts of the tour:

> "What a cheering picture is here …of the progress and expansion of the British race, and of the useful co-operation of the Royal Family in the civilisation which England has developed and advanced"[14]

But there were a number of technological problems in the way of giving a literal existence to these cheering pictures in the book which commemorated the tour. As is well known, it was only towards the end of the century that the means for the mass reproduction of the photograph in association with print was developed. In the 1860s the illustrated newspapers, periodicals and books were indeed having a revolutionary impact on the history of the creation of a popular audience, but the photograph, while of course facilitating and influencing the work of the artist, did not affect the process of mechanical reproduction, from drawing to wood-engraving, and engraving to printing with text. The volume commemorating the royal tour does contain a number of photographic prints, but they are individually pasted on to the page, obviously a clumsy method. Furthermore heavy equipment and long exposure times, meant that existing photographic technology was not capable of imaging effectively some of the most memorable events of the tour such as the terror and slaughter of the hunt and the dynamic movement of the Zulu dance. As a consequence Thomas Baines was commissioned to concoct a painting of the "The Hunt at Hartebeeste Hoek"

[14] *The Letters of Queen Victoria* Vol III London. John Murray 1908. 410,n.

and a photograph was subsequently taken of the painting and a small, dull, grey photographic print of the painting pasted into the volume.[15] He also painted "The Zulu War Dance in Natal", but despite the high opinion of "the graphic pencil of Mr. Baines," and the feeling that there was "no living artist is better qualified to delineate the features of African native character" the resulting painting and print is inadequate and inaccurate.

The royal tour and its record was produced to promote the career and works of Sir George Grey. In Natal it was felt that the visit of the queen's son should be exploited to publicize the small rather obscure colony. Thus the Superintendent of Education in Natal, R.J. Mann, medical doctor, scientist - and photographer - wrote a pamphlet which described prince Alfred's visit and also sought to provide information which might attract prospective immigrant or investor. The text is not as sensational as the press reports quoted above: thus, in his description of the great Zulu dance and its leader Ngoza, Mann emphasises Ngoza's progressive side, stressing how effectively he controlled the large numbers of potential savages under him. And in pointing out that they are not just savages, but potential consumers of commodities, Mann also reveals vividly the inherent contradictions in the very concept of tradition – even at the moment of its conception.

> The price of the brush of the ox-tail, an important article of native ornament, rose in the market from a shilling to half-a-crown; and in two or three days not less than a thousand pounds was paid for feathers, robes, and skins, needed to bring the apparel up to the requirements of the occasion. The chief, Ngoza, gave forty-eight shillings for three scarlet ostrich feathers, adapted to the construction of a head-plume.[16]

Included in the pamphlet were

> The two principal chiefs of the assembly, Zatchuke and Ngoza, [who] are interesting on account of their enlightened loyalty to the state. Ngoza rides about in common in European costume, although he appeared before the Prince in ostrich feathers and monkeys' tails. He is also honourably distinguished by using the plough, and growing more cotton than any of his compeers. Ngoza has some 12,000 Kafirs under his rule, the largest native clan under a single chieftain within the colony.

[15] *The Progress of … Prince Alfred.* opposite 89.
[16] *The Visit… of Prince Alfred*, 16.

> The full-length portraits of the chieftains Zatchuke and Ngoza, are presented in engraving as they appeared before the Prince, and as they were photographed by the Superintendent General 20 of Education, shortly afterwards. In these portraits, the forty-eight shillings' ostrich feathers of the head-dress of the munificent Ngoza, must not be overlooked.[17]

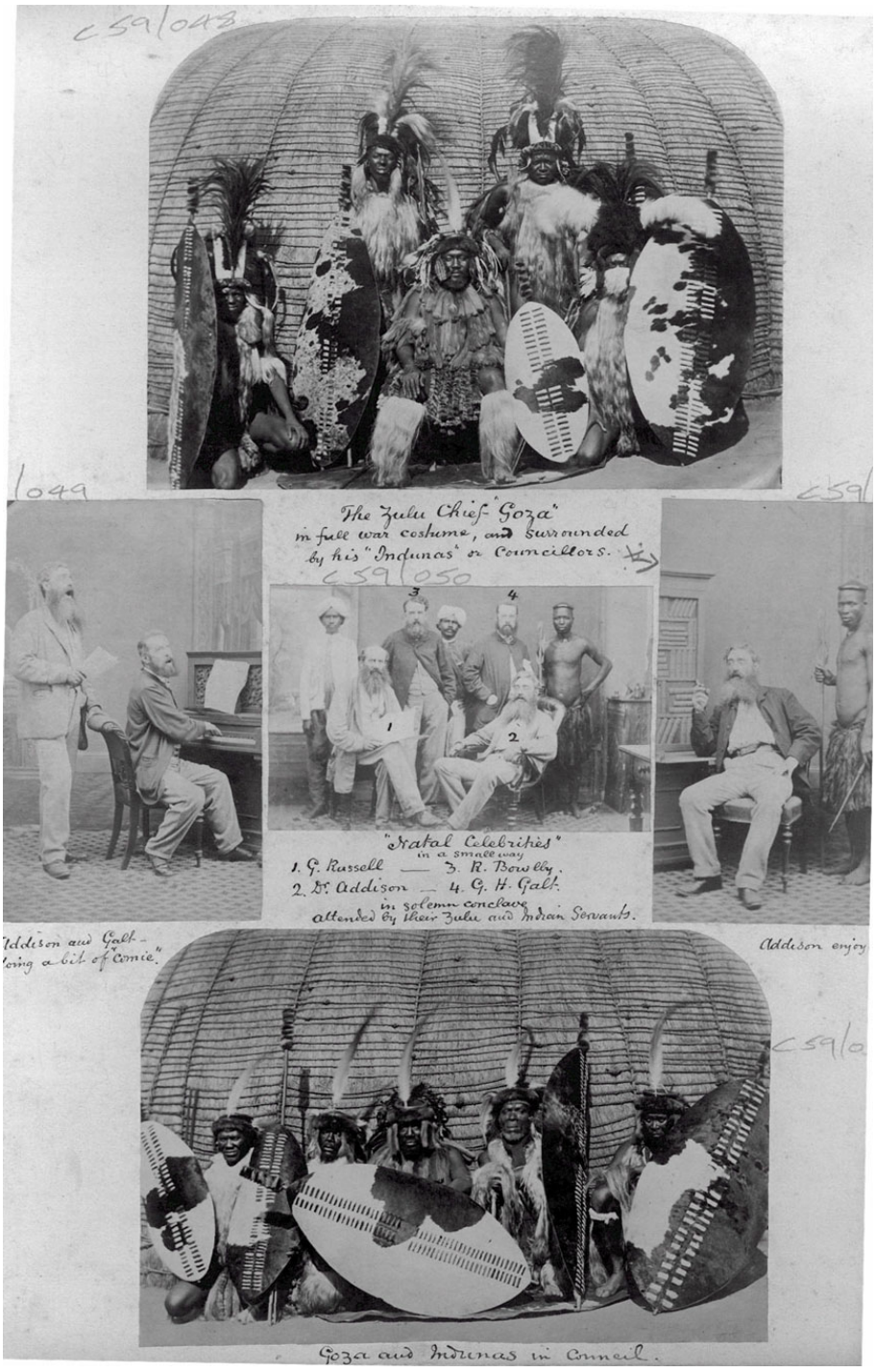
But the engraving in Mann's pamphlet is crudely executed and unimpressive[18] and it was perhaps for this reason that, at some time early in the 1860s, a photographer from Pietermaritzburg, Thomas Bowman, travelled to Ngoza's homestead and took a number of photographs of the chief and his people. In some of these Ngoza was dressed in a costume as near as possible to the ceremonial dress he wore on the occasion of the royal visit, and it is one of these photographs is the one which forms the starting point and subject of this paper.

It seems to have been immediately popular and prints were made for sale and appear in different collections. But, in the absence of text asserting Ngoza's subordinate status, it was a disturbing assertion of African independent authority, and had to be subdued. It is this feature of the photograph – that is the image without a controlling text - which has been so disturbing to so many observers, and persuaded them to confine it in words. In one example of this, the impact of Ngoza's image is contained by placing it on a page of a settler photograph album together with contrived images of white overlords celebrating their casual imposition of power and racial subordination. While the African savage glowers, the colonial toff, attended by Indian African servants, enjoys his "weed" and

[17] *The Visit… of Prince Alfred*, 19-20

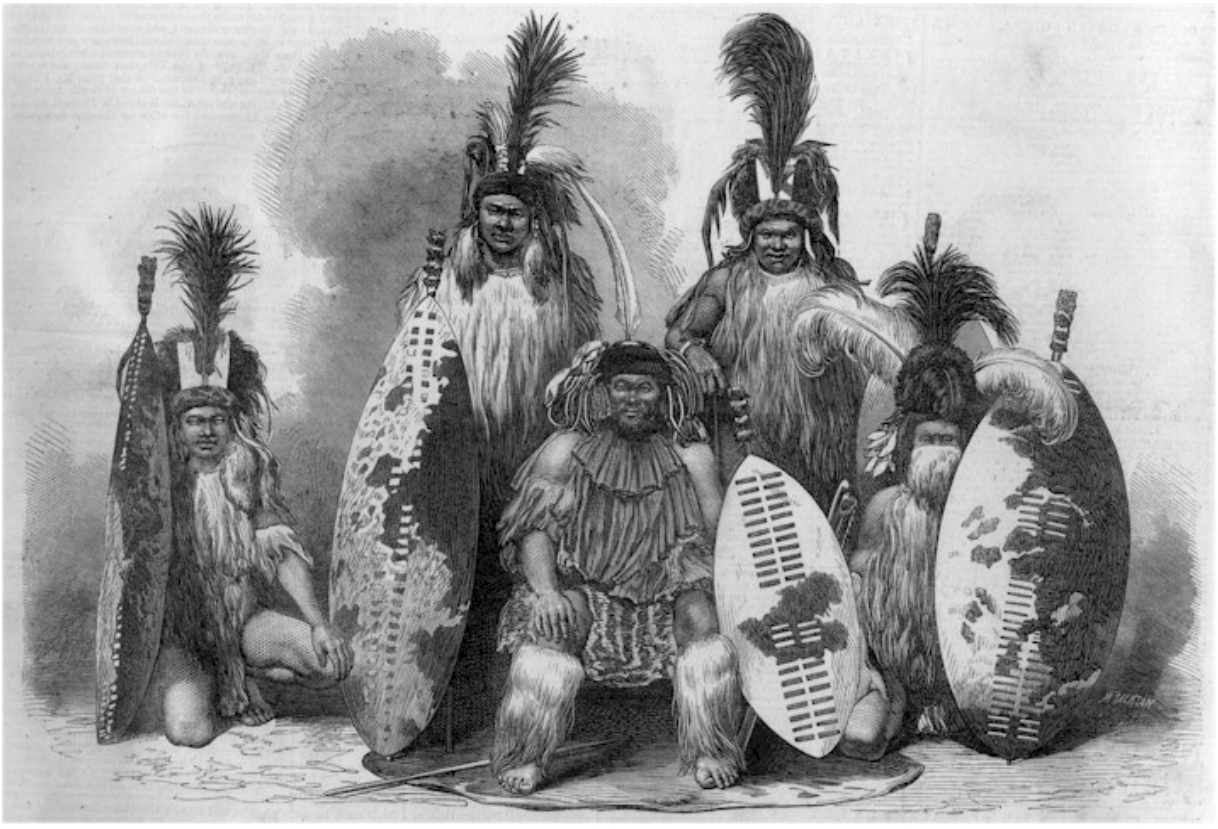
[18] I have yet to find a copy of the photograph of Ngoza in "war costume" which Mann included in hundreds of exhibits which formed the "Natal Contribution to the International Exhibition of 1862".

"does a bit of comic". Here were have the familiar theme of the controlled savage, but now parodied, the colonial subject not only as other, but treated with studied indifference. [19]



19 Album C59 in the photographic collection of the Killie African Library, University of Natal, Durban.

But this is an individual attempt, in a personal album, in a colonial context, to undermine the autonomy of the colonized generally and Ngoza's portrait in particular. The portrait was presented in very different, public, metropolitan context as an engraving which appeared in *The Illustrated London News* 14 Jan 1865 with the caption. "The Zulu Kaffirs of Port Natal". The circulation of the periodical at the time was over a quarter of a million. Ngoza was not identified nor was there any information on the context in which the photograph was taken. The text was placed at some distance from the engraving and was short, uninformative and inaccurate, but comforting. It was apparent from the picture, readers were informed, that the "Zulu Kaffirs" were athletic. Bishop Colenso had experience of their intelligence. But they were no threat: "As the Zulus of Port Natal are peaceable and docile, it is to be hoped that they will benefit by the arts of civilisation". The representation is ambivalent: the image is savage enough, although it is not clear if the rather avuncular depiction of Ngoza is deliberate: and for those who took the time to find and read it, the text negates any apparent threat.



A different engraving of the photograph was published two years later, to illustrate an article by R. J. Mann published in a periodical of popular science.[20] It is in this article that the origins and history of the Ngoza photograph which forms the subject of this paper is established. Mann dealt with the photograph and the circumstances under which it was taken both in the body of the text and in an appended commentary. Ngoza's leading role in the great dance of 4000 before Prince Alfred was described again. Special attention was paid to his dress, the type of animal skins and feathers that were used, its cost and Mann uses archaic English terms to describe some of the more obscure articles like the ox-tail "greaves" and the "tippets", and the difficulties that the movement of the wind through the feathers and the consequent loss of "distinctness and splendour in delineation". The increasing scarcity of certain of the materials used in the dress – quality white ox-tails for example – with the advance of colonialism, and the high market price was also mentioned. It was stressed that "Ngoza is not a hereditary chieftain: he won his spurs by faithful service to the British Government" and he "assembles a considerable following under his command whenever any special service is required by the Government." It is a re-assuring description, with nothing in it to unsettle a prospective immigrant. Ngoza is interesting example of contemporary African political leadership: a creature of the colonial authorities, who even in his pursuit of traditional dress is dependent on the market and thus a customer for colonially-produced goods. Despite his formidable appearance the chief is a controlled, commercially aware consumer.

As far as I know this was the last time that this image of Ngoza the African chief was to appear together with text which admits his non-hereditary status within the colonial administration. It is not that he disappears from colonial history. Although not named, the consequences of some of Ngoza's exploits can be identified in Rider Haggard's *Nada the Lily* where they have been mulled over by postcolonial critics, ignorant of and confused by the historical origins of their discourse. Later in the 1860s Ngoza was moved from the neighbourhood of the capital to a remote area on the border of the Zulu kingdom, previously the territory of a chief whom Shepstone had driven from Natal, undoubtedly as an example of benefits of loyalty to the office of the Secretary of Native Affairs and a warning to those who opposed it. Ngoza's descendants and their followers have ever since come into conflict with both the authorities fearful of their autonomy, and African neighbours who resented the insertion of these adherents of the colonial authorities into a region notorious to this day for the fearful, pervasive violence of its vendettas.[21] Here, although undocumented and outside the imperial narrative, it is "Shepstone's tea-boy" who ruled over a people "without ancestors" who is remembered today,[22] not the "commandant paramount of all".

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[20] R J Mann "The Black Population of the British Colony of Natal, South Africa, A Preliminary Sketch", *The Intellectual Observer. Review of natural history microscopic research and recreative Science Vol* X , 1867,184 -193

[21] Jonathan Clegg, Ukubuyisa Isidumbu – "Bringing back the body", in *Working Papers in Southern African Studies* Vol.2 (ed. P. Bonner), Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981.

[22] I thank Creina Alcock of Mdukutshani, for this information.

5. Ngoza and *The Natural History of Man*

But while Ngoza's influence, as a historical figure, and as a literary one, have continued in many forms and diverse trajectories, Ngoza's image made an impact in another context - in the development of British popular attitudes to race and the peoples of empire. In a recently published collection *Victorian Science in Context* attention is paid to the manner in which academic concentration on the leading "professional scientists" has tended to obscure the extremely significant role played by "popularisers": the men and women who brought the work of the largely elite professionals to a wider audience, and the consequences of this for the development of public attitudes to the scientific discoveries of the day.[23] Amongst these popularisers the name of J. G. Wood is prominent, who published widely first in the field of the natural sciences before turning the social sciences. In the same collection Lorimer, in an article on the development of racial attitudes, has selected Wood's *The Natural History of Man,* first published from 1868, as one his three examples of the significant popularizations of racial discourse amongst the Victorians.[24]

The first volume of *The Natural History of Man* deals with Africa, and the first half of that with peoples from the southern part of the continent, and bulk of this with what he calls the Kaffir races – largely the Zulu and Xhosa. The author then moves steadily northward, the length of the chapters varying largely with the amount of material at his disposal. The selection of the material is defined in the sub-title in the word "uncivilized": he seeks from his material descriptions of life when it has not been changed by contact with the European. It is essentially a descriptive piece of work, presented in an accessible, clear style which offsets the weight of detail, and debates history on the nature of race, and people, and their origins, are referred to only in passing. The history of humanity is the history of the rise and fall of states – and the difference between the emergence and decline of Egypt, Rome or Greece, and that of the Zulu, is, essentially, a difference in scale. It is a confident in the manner in which it presents the lives of the uncivilized, casual in its assumption of European superiority, wearing its ignorance and its overwhelming racism lightly.

It was first produced as a series with an envisaged print run of fifteen thousand which reduced to six thousand.[25] Lorimer believes that at a shilling an issue the readership was a middle-class one. Nonetheless in so far as the book was

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[23] Bernard Lightman (ed.). *Victorian Science in Context*. Chicago. Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1997

[24] Douglas A. Lorimer, "Images of Race" in *Victorian Science in Context*

[25] Lorimer writes that it appeared as a serial publication in thirty two parts between 1868 and 1870. The copy I have consulted is dated appears to have been published as a complete volume and was published in1874. I have as yet only been able to consult the first volume entitled "Africa". J.G. Wood. *The Natural History of man; being an account of the manners and customs of the uncivilized races of men. With new designs by Angas, Danby, Wolf, Zwecker etc etc engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. Africa.* London; George Routledge and Sons, 1874.

successful in its intention to reach a wider popular audience, so it must also have extended the range of metropolitan race prejudice. There is a continual association of perceived physical characteristics with social traits, theories of race and social evolution are implicit throughout the book, and the dominant assumption is that of overweening racial and cultural superiority of the writer and reader. As a result the effect of the book is to create an African subject which, despite the variety of its physical and cultural forms, is united by its inferiority to the European observer, whose imperial status and natural authority it confirms.

Wood's objective, he states in his Preface, was to gather information, illustrations and artefacts from those with direct experience of the uncivilized world, compile them in an accessible form, and present them to the ordinary reader, for whom, normally, the information was too difficult and expensive to obtain. *The Natural History of Man* is a compendium of information, loosely structured on what he saw as the life cycle of his subjects and their beliefs, activities and interests, and his approach is strongly anecdotal. There are lengthy extracts from the published accounts of journeys by the most famous travellers, extracts from personal interviews, and Wood gained access to artefacts in the possession of some of the best known collectors including Lane Fox. The texts heaps this together with missionary gossip, and the author's personal experiences and opinions, larded with cross-cultural asides.

The same approach is used for the images with which the book is "profusely illustrated", and which are integral to the text. Wood consulted directly with some of the artists, including Angas and Baines, and was at pains to point at that the proximity of the visual material as he wrote, thereby suggesting accuracy and immediacy of the subject - its spirit - for the reader. [26] This primary visual material was then handed over to

> Mr. J. B. Zwecker, who undertook the onerous task of interpreting pictorially the various scenes of savage life which are described in the work, and who brought to that task a hearty goodwill and a wide knowledge of the subject, without which the work would have lost much of its spirit.[27]

Photographs were especially useful in the creation of illustrations but it is significant to note the limitation that Wood discerned in the photographic images. Thus while they were useful for portraying facial expression, the photographic image of the body of the uncivilized had great limitations. The image had, by definition, to be captured without the controlling influences of the studio and the darkroom, and, even when physical movement could be controlled, lengthy exposure times meant that the photographic poses were always too stiff and were unable to match, Wood asserted, the vitality of the drawing and the engraving.[28]

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[26] They include Thomas Baines and Angas.
[27] Wood, *Natural History of Man,* Preface.
[28] Wood, *Natural History of Man*, Preface. I have found prints of photographs that Wood and his illustrators used and would dispute the validity of this assertion in most cases.

Representations of Ngoza play an important part in Wood's *The Natural History of Man* as text and image, and it is clear that Wood consulted prints from the negatives taken by Thomas Bowman, and perhaps others taken by R.J. Mann, together with textual or oral accounts of the Natal chief. As befits dominant ideas of the age Wood read much from the physical attributes of the people presented in the book, and made sweeping statements on the personal and social psychology of his subjects from their appearance – which lead very easily to racial generalisation and racist comment. Dress and adornment is an extension of this concentration on appearances, and the engravings from photographs of Ngoza provide the stimulus for pronouncements on African psychology and society. The tension however is no longer provided by the ambivalence created by the idea of Ngoza the African savage and Ngoza the colonial servant. By ignoring Ngoza's colonial persona, the context is thinned out and the tension reduced. Instead of the controlled barbarian, we have banal anthropological contrast between Ngoza, the uncivilized, whose dress in ordinary life is almost non-existent, but who on official occasions wears ceremonial dress which "makes really a splendid appearance in all the pomp of barbaric magnificence".

To visualise this the illustrator made use of photographs to create an engraving of Ngoza "the well-known Zulu chief as he appears when fully equipped for war."[29] It is a composite picture, made up of different, identifiable aspects of other images.[30] The engraving in fact matches the text – a compilation of different sources put together to create a suitable image of the uncivilized other, decontextualised and no longer threatening, merely interesting in its contrast with the civilized reader/observer. To do this Ngoza's status as a colonial-made chief, created by and working for a colonial administration is now entirely suppressed. He is now, merely

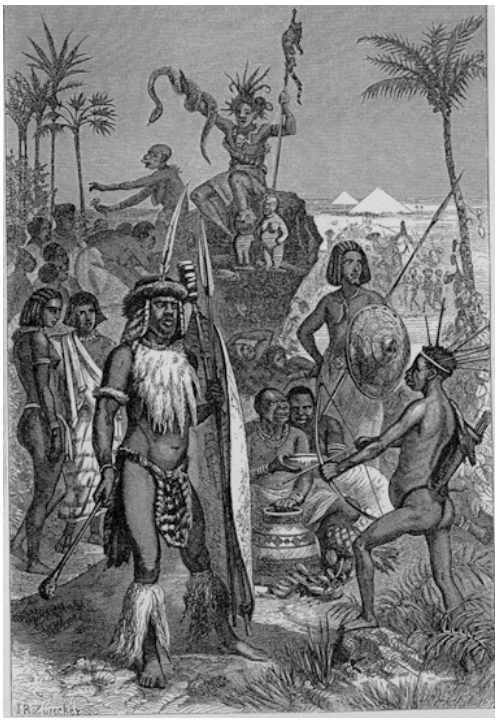
[29] The shield carried by Ngoza as illustrated on p.118, is the same as the one he holds in one of the photographs.

[30] Compare the shield in this picture with the one in the bottom of the page from the photo album on page 11.

> the well-known Zulu chief, whose name came prominently forward during the visit of Prince Alfred to the Cape. He is one of the most powerful chiefs of the Zulu tribe, and can at any moment summon into the field his five or six thousand trained and armed warriors.

Ngoza has been transformed, image and text creating an African chief suitable for fire-side contemplation, at a distance, of the extraordinary other.

The Natural History of Man makes use of another, more extreme transformation, in which the image of Ngoza is used, but changed sufficiently radically to cut all direct contextualisation in order to represent single African attribute. In the Frontispiece to the book Wood and his artists created a visual representation of the peoples of Africa: as the comment on the illustration elaborates, it is a continent of great variety containing the extremes of primitive barbarity, the hideous fetish priest, the bushman, the evil crone and the Nubian beauty. The pyramids, lit with the past glories of Ancient Egypt in the background, give a sense of a history of decline. In the foreground, at the greatest possible geographical and cultural distance from the once civilized north, stands "War": "illustrated by the Kaffir chief".



This representation of War, quite clearly has its origin in different visual representations of Ngoza. But it is no longer Ngoza. Not only has his uncomfortable status as a necessary adjunct of the imperial authority, the savage as colonized mediator, been subsumed in this racist view of Africa and its history, but so has his name. He is now a symbol of African savagery – "War".

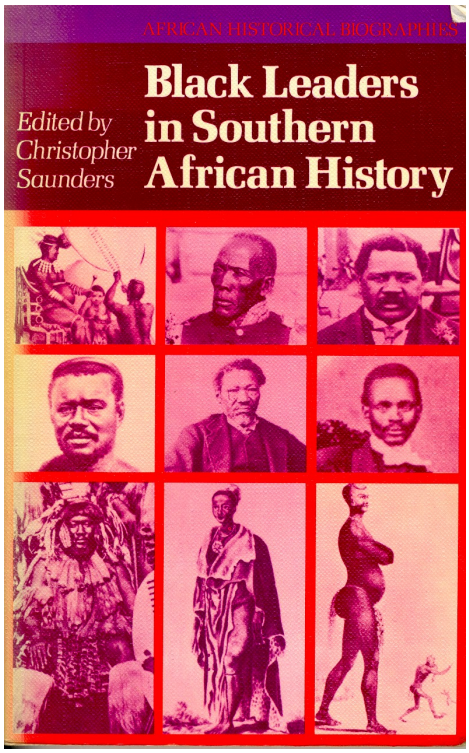
And with it, Ngoza's image disappeared from 19th century colonial and imperial literature.[31] His historical presence exists of course in the conflicts in which his descendants have been involved, and his textual presence for all those who read or analyse Rider Haggard, but not in an easily identifiable form. It is an imperial extinction which is doubly ironic for, a decade after these representations of Ngoza the "Zulu chief …. fully equipped for war" appeared, the British invaded Zululand and suffered at the hands of the Zulu army its greatest defeat in its wars against any African state.[32]

6. Post-imperial Ngoza

[31] As far as my research at the moment is concerned - May 2001.

[32] The images of Ngoza in the back numbers of the metropolitan press do not seem to have been utilized directly to illustrate the 1879 invasion. The first illustrations to appear were done so hastily as to be inadequate even fraudulent. They were soon followed by engravings based on sketches done by special correspondents at the front.

For nearly a century visual representations of the man who was described in the mid-nineteenth as "well-known" disappeared from publications, and was misidentified in the prints in the photographic collections. Then, starting in the 1970s, the image began to appear again. The broad context for this was the post-war movement for African independence when decolonization evoked contradictory responses amongst the metropolitan powers. On the one hand it saw in the United Kingdom a nostalgia for a lost empire, vividly exemplified in the enormous popularity of the film *Zulu* which was made in 1963.[33] On the other interest in Africa in the metropolitan centres, and the demands and opportunities provided by educational institutions in newly independent African states saw the development of a African studies and an Africanist historiography. For obvious reasons this latter development reached the southern part of the continent rather late but, in a book of African biographies produced for use in schools, Ngoza's image was rediscovered, appearing, not only in the text, but in a pantheon of African leaders on the cover of the book. He is identified as Mswati, King of the Swazi, on the authority of a print in the Swazi National Archives[34] and this example was then followed in widely-used text book.[35] An authorized history of the Zulu kings named the seated figure as "Goza",[36] a name which was written in the margins of the copy of the photograph in the library of the Campbell collections in Durban.



Meanwhile in South Africa interest in the Zulu war – as the 1879 invasion is popularly known – was growing, and with the end of apartheid and the increase of battlefield tourism this increased the financial opportunities for books on the war. Writers seeking to capitalise on this swept the archives for images of the invasion, and in the process Ngoza's image appeared to be an evocative, if

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[33] John M. MacKenzie. *Propaganda and Empire. The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880 – 1960.* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984, 90.

[34] Christopher Saunders *Black Leaders in Southern African History* London Heinemann 1979 Mswati p. 62 photo. Credited to the Swaziland National Archives

[35] With the qualification "reputed". See Neil Parsons, *A New History of South Africa* London and Basingstoke, Macmillan 1982 Reputed portrait of Mswati, Swazi king (1840-68), sitting in the centre among his chiefs credited to the BBC Hulton Picture Library engraving p. 137

[36] Zulu Chief Goza and *izinduna* in traditional dress (1840s) . (Killie Campbell) in Charles Ballard, *the House of Shaka. The Zulu Monarchy Illustrated* Emoyeni Books 1988, probably taken from one of the many misleading marginal identifications in the photographs of the Campbell Collections, which someone has later amended to Ngoza.

obscure, representation of Zulu military power. However the publication in 1979 of the first volume of *The James Stuart Archive*, an important collection of interviews on Zulu history made at the turn of the nineteenth century, seemed to provide the opportunity to uncover his identity and establish the links of this image of a chief with the past. It contains references to "Ngoza kaLundaba": the connection was made with Campbell collection picture of "Goza" and subsequently, books written for the popular interest in Zulu history and the Zulu war, began to identify the man in the photograph as Ngoza kaLudaba.

This was an advance. However, although named he is still misidentified. Thus a general history published in 1995 reproduces the photograph with the caption

> Chief Ngoza kaLudbaba of the Majozi section of the Cube, who broke away at the time of the battle of Ndondakusuka in 1856 and settled in Natal. He is photographed in about 1865 with some of is young amabutho in full festival array.[37]

Internal evidence suggests that most of the information is based on *The James Stuart Archive*. But while the name of the chief and the chiefdom is correct the date of the photo was probably derived from the date of the issue of the engraving in the *Illustrated London News*, and the information on the movement to Natal is incorrect. But once the lead had been given other Zulu war experts followed, but moving the description away from Natal in the direction of the Zulu military prowess perceived in the photograph:

> A Zulu chief and his retainers, photographed in their splendid ceremonial costume, c. 1865. The formidable appearance and discipline of the Zulu army aroused the suspicion and hostility of the neighbouring white states.[38]

I must stress that the point here is not the inaccuracies themselves, but their nature. To appreciate the significance of these textual distortions it has to be remembered that from the time of the first written accounts of the Zulu kingdom in the early nineteenth century, to the political violence of the closing apartheid years and beyond, the definition of who is Zulu and what defines the Zulu state has been contested in word and action. However, at the time when the photograph is supposed to have been taken there was a fairly clear political answer to the question. There were, to use Colenso's phrase quoted above, "pure Zulus", members of the independent Zulu kingdom, on the eastern seaboard of southern African between the Indian ocean and the Colony of Natal: and there were the hundred thousand African inhabitants of the Colony, usually referred to as "Natal Kaffirs". Both populations had a common language and a common history, but, until late in the nineteenth century, both populations were very aware of the African, and the colonial, contexts in which they lived and worked, and by which they were governed and defined: inhabitants of British

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[37] John Laband, *Rope of Stand. The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century*. Johannesburg. Jonathan Ball 1995, photograph 20.

[38] Ian Knight The Anatomy of the Zulu Army from Shaka to Cetshwayo 1818-1879 Greenhill Books London 1995 and Ian Knight *Great Zulu Battles 1838 – 1906* Arms and Armour Press London 1998

colony and subject to its laws, or members of an independent African kingdom. Thus the fact that an African official of the Natal colonial administration, is, a century later, called a Zulu chief is I would argue a significant misinterpretation .

And it is not just the way in which the name Zulu is indiscriminately extended to include this image of African militarism and authority. It is also the manner in which Ngoza's colonial status is eclipsed. The information upon which the captions to the photographs is based is taken from evidence collected by James Stuart from Magidigidi kaNobebe who states that Ngoza was the African appointee of a colonial official: that he was "Sir T. Shepstone's *induna*".[39] But this crucial piece of information is not simply ignored: it is ignored only in the caption to the photograph of Ngoza. In the text of the book Ngoza is not a chief at all, he is a "commoner", one of Shepstone's "own dogs". [40] Confrontation with Ngoza's photographic image has created in the observer a response so deeply ambivalent that it cannot be resolved within the historiogaphical conventions in use, and leads to rupture: two Ngozas are created: the image is of a Zulu chief – the text describes a colonial lackey. The tendency towards a separation of image and text has been apparent from the time the photograph was taken - but the final schism has only occurred recently, made possible by the demands of a commercialised imperialist historiography which has so weakened links with the past that it can tear text from image without opposition or critical comment. Segregation of the traditional and colonial has been achieved historiographically - with a violence and a purity never possible politically.

In this paper I have examined a visual image of an imperial subject in some of the forms in which it has appeared over the past hundred fifty years, and how different imperial historical contexts have changed the texts with which the image has been presented. The common factor in the different misreadings has been, I argue, the capacity of the original photograph's representation of African traditionalism to disconcert the colonial and imperial observer. In their reaction to the image we can discern the steps they have taken to bring it under control, to reduce its independence. In the mid-nineteenth century, in a colonial context, it was necessary to emphasize simultaneously the savagery and subservience of the colonised subject in order to create a sense of the colonizer's power and authority. Popular anthropology created a less contradictory image of the bizarre and backward uncivilized other, creating and confirming the cultural and racial superiority of a distant imperial audience. In the context of late twentieth-century nostalgia for empire, its military history in particular, distortion has become visual and textual separation: when textual evidence demonstrates that the image is not that of the required Zulu chief, text and image are torn apart: the same man

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[39] Magidigidi kaNobebe, interviewed on 7 May 1905. *The James Stuart Archive.* volume 2, C. Webb and J.Wright (eds) Pietermaritzburg and Durban University of Natal Press and Killie Campbell African Library 1979, p. 87 where it is suggested that the Majozi a part of the Cunu, but the editors refer to A. T. Bryant where the Cube are suggested instead.

[40] Laband, *Rope of Sand,* 157 – 8. Rider Haggard used the word "dog", attributing it to the Zulu king. It appears in older sources as well.

is presented in the same book as both chief and commoner: in the photograph the epitome of Zulu military authority, in the text its opposite, the degraded African assistant to a colonial official.

Of course the process of depiction and commentary is not over. One of the features of the contemporary debate on the future role and status of the traditional chiefs in South Africa is what emphasis to place on the significance traditional authorities with roots in the pre-colonial past, and those whose status is in some way connected with the post-conquest era. Images seen to represent that traditional past, particularly like the one under consideration which ranks amongst the oldest, will be used in this debate, and the art of empire will again be re-viewed, with new texts seeking new meanings, and changing as they do, old images. But, until the image/text[41] is read and viewed within a new synthesis which ceases from attempting to effect a reconciliation between tradition and modernity, until integration replaces segregation by finding a representational foundation for analysing power in a post-imperial world, so these fractures, and the paralysis of perspective they creates, will continue.

[41] It has been obvious from the first page of this paper that my approach to art in empire is that of a historian of empire. But I use the typographical convention image/text here to acknowledge the influence of W.J.T. Mitchell's *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, which persuaded me, in such a challenging and fascinating manner, of the need to integrate image and text.