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*The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual: A Discursive Biography of  
Magma Magwaza Fuze*

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*Thesis Presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Department of Political Studies of the University of Cape Town  
September 2005*

## Abstract

The case of Magama Magwaza Fuze (c. 1840 – 1922) is about the problem of the introduction of writing in a colonial context and, more specifically, in the context of extensive missionary activity. The relative 'success' of this missionary endeavour appeared not only in the small but growing number of converts to Christianity, but perhaps even more momentously with the emergence of a small but critical mass of individuals who were literate and therefore no longer confined to an oral culture only. By the end of the nineteenth century one could talk of an incipient 'class' of educated and literate Africans. As the products of mission education they collectively shared an identity of being both Christian and educated. They were *amakholwa* (plural noun for 'believers'). Being an *ikholwa* was a political and social, rather than just a religious identity. Above all, by converting to Christianity and by subscribing to progressive ideals of private property ownership, individual rights and the Protestant work ethic, the *amakholwa* within the limited political sphere of colonial governance acquired, according to their own understanding, the rights of British subjects. As intermediaries between traditional and colonial society, the *khulwa* became the *de facto* 'native informants' of the colonial political system. They were often consulted by colonial administrators on matters affecting the 'natives' and solicited for their opinion through colonial institutions. Magama Magwaza Fuze was exactly such a 'native informant' turned *khulwa intellectual*: he was a Christian convert, literate, a printer by profession and an assistant to the controversial John William Colenso, the Bishop of Natal. On several occasions he was a signatory to petitions and appeals to the colonial government. In the early twentieth century, he was a columnist for the Zulu-English newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal*. In particular he was the author of *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (1922). The basic aim of the thesis is to describe how Magama Magwaza Fuze became a writer; how he made the transition from being born into an oral culture and first becoming the printer and assistant of Bishop Colenso and eventually to being the author of the book *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona*, one of the first works of African political thought in South Africa.

## Acknowledgements

Over the years many people, too numerous to name, have helped and encouraged me; they have offered advice, sustenance, shelter, transport and more importantly they almost always managed to say the right thing at the right time. Of these I would like to offer my special thanks to André du Toit, my supervisor, for being generous almost to a fault. He introduced me to South Africa's intellectual traditions and to Magma Fuze. He was always ready to assist and guide; and over the years he has written many a progress report full of praise I didn't really deserve! My research on Magma Fuze would not have been possible without the initial clues and hints supplied by Jeff Guy and Vukile Khumalo – thank you both. My visits to Natal would have been extremely lonely and disheartening without Marijke du Toit. The other Natalians<sup>2)</sup> I should mention and thank are Jonathan Draper, Glenn Cowley and John Wright. The year I spent at Columbia University as a visiting student was both memorable and productive and for this I have Mahmood Mamdani, Nick Dirks, Partha Chatterjee, Marcia Wright, Gregory Mann and Thea K. Hunter to thank. I also benefited immensely from Emmanuel Eze's 2003 visit to UCT; our conversations helped refine my ideas about Fuze as a thinker.

I would also like to thank UCT's Postgraduate Office especially Marion Green for taking care of the bread and butter issues and for listening and improving on the services they offered to postgraduate students. I want to thank UCT's Mellon Fellowship and Research Associateship for assisting with funding. Last but not least, I would like to thank the libraries and librarians who have assisted with finding sources and navigating their archives and collections. I would especially like to mention Nellie Somers from the Killie Campbell Library, the staff of the National Library of South Africa in Cape Town, and UCT's Interlibrary Loan department.

To the friends and families who have taken care of me – thank you.



## *Table of Contents*

<b>Abstract</b>	<b><i>i</i></b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b><i>i</i></b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b><i>1</i></b>
On the consequences of the introduction of writing	<b><i>3</i></b>
Enter the <i>kholwa</i>	<b><i>5</i></b>
Dilemmas of the 'native informant'	<b><i>7</i></b>
Magama Fuze, <i>Abantu Abamnyama</i> and the aims of this study	<b><i>8</i></b>
Fuze's life and writings: a preliminary survey	<b><i>13</i></b>
A brief overview of Fuze's life	<b><i>13</i></b>
A preliminary overview of Fuze's writings	<b><i>21</i></b>
Literature survey: Fuze's readers	<b><i>28</i></b>
Structure and organisation of the thesis	<b><i>39</i></b>
<b>Chapter 1 - The Making of Kholwa Intellectuals: A Critique of the Secondary Literature</b>	<b><i>45</i></b>
Introduction:	<b><i>45</i></b>
What did this life mean? : The biographical approach to <i>kholwa</i> intellectuals	<b><i>47</i></b>
Can the <i>kholwa</i> write history?: The traditionalising approach to <i>kholwa</i> intellectuals	<b><i>57</i></b>
A class on a national stage: The materialist approach to the <i>amakholwa</i>	<b><i>66</i></b>
The past has its own voices: A postcolonial or post-apartheid reading of <i>kholwa</i> intellectuals	<b><i>70</i></b>
Writing a <i>kholwa</i> intellectual history: Some remarks on the methodological and theoretical foundations of an intellectual history	<b><i>75</i></b>

<b>Conclusion:</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Chapter 2 – Missionary Scholars and their Native Informants</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Colonial Scholarship as a Collaborative Enterprise – An Introduction:</b>	<b>81</b>
Colonial scholarship, travel writing and othering discourses	85
Colonial Scholarship as a ‘Commitment to Truth’	88
<b>Missionary Scholarship: Reconstructive vs. Deconstructive Methods</b>	<b>91</b>
The missionary scholar as a linguist	94
The missionary scholar as an ethnographer and historian	101
Indigenous Testimony and Missionary Scholarship’s ‘Commitment to Truth’: Some Concluding Remarks	112
<b>From ‘Native Informant’ to ‘Kholwa Intellectual’</b>	<b>115</b>
The ‘Native Informant’ as a Problem for Colonial Scholarship	115
Native Informants and the Missionary Scholar: Could the ‘Informants’ Speak?	117
When ‘Native Informants’ become ‘Native Intellectuals’	122
The ‘Native Informant’ – A Conceptual Critique	125
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Chapter 3 – Magera Fuze and his Writings</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Introduction:</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>The Primary Moment of Articulation: Missionary Education and Conversion</b>	<b>136</b>
Fuze’s education and conversion in context	138
Missionary education and conversion as a moment of articulation	141
The earliest writings	141
‘Three Native Accounts’	143
‘Amazwi Abantu’	145
<b>Thematic articulations in Fuze’s later writings</b>	<b>152</b>
On conversion and identity	152
On writing and becoming literate	154

On the quest for enlightenment	155
<b>The second moment of articulation: Langalibalele's trial</b>	<b>156</b>
Background to kholwa and Zulu affairs and politics	158
Langalibalele's trial as a moment of articulation	164
Anticipations: the earliest writings on Zulu affairs	165
Magema's testimony at Langalibalele's trial	166
The 1875 kholwa petition	169
'A Visit to King Ketshwayo'	172
Later thematic articulation	175
Writing Zulu History	176
On the Natal-Zululand divide	185
Proto-Zulu nationalism	187
<b>The third moment of articulation: the St. Helena Years</b>	<b>192</b>
Background to the St Helena years	192
The St Helena years as a moment of articulation	193
Living in exile	193
Encountering the African diaspora	194
<b>Thematic articulations in Fuze's later writings</b>	<b>196</b>
The discovery of Africa & the affirmation of Africanist knowledge	196
The 'Black People' and their Origins	201
Intimations of Pan-Africanism	207
Black Atlanticism	210
<b>The fourth moment of articulation: from <i>Ilanga</i> to <i>Abantu Abamnyama</i></b>	<b>212</b>
Background to the Ilanga years and Abantu Abamnyama	214
The Ilanga years as a moment of articulation	218
<b>Thematic articulations</b>	<b>219</b>
Writing for readers: Fuze in 'dialogue' with the readers of <i>Ilanga</i>	219
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<b>223</b>

**Conclusion** \_\_\_\_\_ **224**

**Bibliography** \_\_\_\_\_ **228**

University of Cape Town

## Introduction

The basic aim of the dissertation is to describe how Magma Magwaza Fuze<sup>1</sup> (c. 1840 – 1922) became a writer; how he made the transition from being born into an oral culture and first becoming the printer and assistant of Bishop John W. Colenso and eventually to being the author of the book *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (1922a) / *The Black People and Whence They Came* (1979), one of the first works of African political thought in South Africa. This process of ‘becoming’ a writer and an intellectual was not straightforward nor can it be understood in biographical terms only. Rather, the process was facilitated by missionary education and colonial subjugation: for Magma Fuze even just learning to read and write involved leaving his home and family and was intimately tied up with a process of ‘conversion’ to Christianity. As an author and as an individual Magma Fuze represents the colonial experience in its acutest form: in 1856 he left his home in Natal at the age of about twelve, and enrolled at Colenso *Ekukhanyeni* school; in 1859 he became the first in his family to be baptised as a convert to Christianity, he was the first in his family to learn to write, he served as an assistant and printer for the ‘infamous’ Bishop of Natal. It is this colonial education that equipped him with a technical knowledge of books and perhaps also fostered an independent intellectual stance. In his last years he wrote a book which on the surface was an indictment of colonialism and a rallying call for ‘the black people’ to unite. *Abantu Abamnyama* cannot be read literally; despite its title it does not offer a conventional historical account of ‘the black people and whence they came’ nor does it provide an authentic transcription of local oral traditions. The book raises more profound questions, especially about what the writing of such a work by an author of Fuze’s background might represent. If we accept that the book is neither a ‘history’ of the black people nor a recounting of traditional oral narratives then the obvious question to ask is how should we characterise and locate Fuze’s *Abantu Abamnyama*. For our purposes the significance of Fuze’s book, as both a contingent and an inaugural work, is precisely that it cannot be placed within established categories, disciplines and traditions. It both represents a decisive break with earlier (oral) traditions while it also marks a serious attempt to initiate a new kind of (literate) discourse community. Making use of the intellectual skills provided by an *Ekukhanyeni* education it sought to apply these in the service of fashioning a ‘black identity’ and explicating an African vocabulary and discourse of emancipation and modernity.

This dissertation sets out to demonstrate that *Abantu Abamnyama* cannot be interpreted or understood independently of broader questions about the making of intellectual traditions in South Africa. At the most basic

level *Abantu Abamnyama* represents a tradition of black intellectual thought that could have been. As literati produced by mission schools and educated for acculturation, Magma Fuze and his *kholwa*<sup>2</sup> contemporaries were at the vanguard of the intellectual, social and political transformations of indigenous communities in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century southern Africa. From this position of intellectual advantage these *amakholwa* intellectuals could have been a foundation for an indigenous or native intelligentsia. Their literary efforts as recorded in missionary journals and colonial newspapers, both black and white owned, demonstrate a willingness and enthusiasm to assume this role. At the height of their intellectual dialogues and exchanges, Fuze and his contemporaries visualised themselves as participating in a novel community in which each was an equal and could freely engage with one's peers and readers on the pages of newspapers or in letters sent and received.

This vision was however not realised; the emergent intellectual tradition was stifled in its infancy. Fuze's book, even more than the works of Sol Plaatje or the Jabavus (John Tengo and D.D.T.), proved still-born and was soon largely forgotten. This premature demise of this nascent intellectual tradition may at one level be explained by contextual political developments. The unification of South Africa in 1910 and the creation of a white state effectively dispersed and marginalised this emerging discourse community of *kholwa* literati. At another and deeper level, though, we are confronted with the basic critical dilemma in the development of black intellectual thought, namely how could traditions of social and political criticism and theorising develop in a colonial context, in which the vanguard intelligentsia was itself 'colonised' and therefore without the independent means to sustain or protect their position? This critical dilemma is the starting point for the present dissertation.

In the study of *kholwa* intellectuals biographies have functioned as an obvious entry point. Brian Willan's biography of Sol Plaatje, Catherine Higg's biography of D.D.T. Jabavu and Tim Couzen's biography of H.I.E. Dhlomo are notable examples. In a sense this dissertation also aims to be a biographical study of Fuze, but with a difference: rather than a conventional study of his life and times the dissertation aims to provide a 'discursive biography'. What this means is that while the dissertation involves a study of the historical figure of Magma Fuze he will be studied primarily with a view to exploring a range of related political, intellectual and theoretical issues within South Africa's intellectual history. Fuze's life story represents a first-generation experience of the transition from an oral culture to the modern world of literacy. As such it is more than just the story of a life; it is as much the story of profound shifts in the discursive conditions and aspirations of local intellectual life. Fuze was a member of that pioneer elite, including the likes of Tiyo Soga, Sol Plaatje, John



Tengu Jababu and John Dube, who first moved on from being 'native informants' of colonial administrators, missionaries and ethnographers to becoming authors and *kholwa* intellectuals in their own right. As a member of this literate community he wrote extensively for newspapers including the Zulu-English newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal*. His book, *Abantu Abamnyama*, was one of the earliest South African attempts to construct the imagined community of an 'African nation'. In both representing and also articulating some of the major intellectual and political transitions of his time – from an oral culture to modern literacy, from being a 'native informant' to becoming a *kholwa* intellectual, and from a customary ethnic identity to membership of the 'nation' as discourse community – Fuze's life and thought thus provide ample material for a concrete case study of key themes in the making and unmaking of indigenous South African intellectual traditions.

### On the consequences of the introduction of writing

Writing is not neutral. When writing is introduced to a society or culture which was previously oral, the social, political and intellectual effects far exceed the technical and mnemonic functions of literacy. In *History and Memory* (1992) the French historian Jacques Le Goff traces the manifold ways in which the development of writing and literate culture impacted on European society. From the ancient Greeks to the twentieth century, Le Goff analyses the extent of, and continuing changes in, writing's impact on the ability of literate societies to commemorate and to document their achievements. His central theme is that the 'appearance of writing is linked to a profound transformation in collective memory' (1992: 58). Negatively the impact of writing and literacy is associated with the erasure of living memories and oral traditions; on the positive side literacy enables new forms of learning. The trade-off between the negative and positive impacts of the introduction of writing is aptly summarised in Jack Goody's anthropological analysis in which he stresses the 'power of the written tradition'. Goody asserts that writing is a 'technology of the intellect', since it:

**...refer[s] not just to pen and paper, stylus and tablet, as complex as these instruments are, but to the training required, the acquisition of new motor skills, and the different use of eyesight, as well as to the products themselves, the books that are stacked on the library shelves, objects that one consults and from which one learns, and which one may also, in time, compose (2000: 133).**

The sum of the effects of the introduction of writing, namely improved knowledge acquisition, recording, storage and retrieval, has individual as well as social consequences. At the individual level one only has to note the personal and intellectual transformations experienced by those who are the first in their communities to become literate. Even rudimentary literacy can be a revelation: it can sever traditional affinities and open up new cultural and social worlds. Part of the explanation why writing has such profound effects on the individual is that through the ability to record conversations, ideas and facts verbatim the individual acquires the ability to

transmit information and knowledge to other literates and to access a different order of community whose members can share in the same store of knowledge and information. The explanation can be further generalised, in the words of Wilhelm Wundt, by stating that 'communication in writing is the first step from folk culture to world culture' (quoted in Thornton, 1988: 18). Or, in Thornton's own words

**Writing, then, is more than a discovery, it is a bridge that connects the limited context of speech and experience of primitive society to the larger world through the narrative that captures the experience of the particular and makes it available to a universal scrutiny. (Thornton, 1988: 18)**

This position is further developed in the account of text and writing given by the philosopher Paul Ricoeur. In his 'What is a text?' Ricoeur defines a written text as 'any discourse fixed by writing' (1981: 145). Ricoeur argues that:

**...writing preserves discourse and makes it an archive available for individual and collective memory...The emancipation of the text from the oral situation entails a veritable upheaval in the relations between language and the world, as well as in the relation between language and the various subjectivities concerned (that of the author and that of the reader). (1981: 147)**

It is precisely the implications of this general 'emancipation of the text from the oral situation' that will concern us in the particular case of a first generation literate individual like Magma Fuze.

At the social level the manner in which writing enters a society can vary. As a system of graphic and symbolic representation of a language, and a technical and learnt skill, writing can enter a society and be acquired by its members under different political and social conditions. In a primary sense, we can speak of an *endogenous* transition from oral to writing practices. Such endogenous transitions occurred in different parts of the world, for example in ancient Mesopotamia and China, and were subsequently disseminated in complex ways to neighbouring societies and cultures (See Le Goff, 1992: 58-60). In these cases of endogenous transitions the profound impact of writing and literacy on memory and learning is primarily an internal process within the societies concerned. This needs to be distinguished from the *exogenous* introduction of writing, as when a colonising culture introduces writing to a colonised populace.<sup>3</sup> The distinction between the exogenous and endogenous provenance of writing is only one of several theoretical distinctions that underpin the study of the relationship between writing and society. For our purposes, though, the relevant concern is that when introduced through coercion, or under conditions of cultural domination of one society by another, the effects of writing as a 'technology of the intellect' are infinitely complicated in social, cultural and political ways. It is in this politically charged environment of a colonial and missionary project that Magma Fuze's conversion and initial apprenticeship in literacy was located.

## Enter the kholwa

The case of Magera Fuze is about the problem of the introduction of writing in a colonial context and, more specifically, in the context of extensive missionary activity. Prior to the development of a state-funded or centralised education system in South Africa, schooling in basic literacy was until the end of the nineteenth century largely left to itinerant teachers, private institutions and missionaries. For the indigenous communities it was the missionaries, both before and after colonial incorporation, who had the greatest impact by introducing writing simultaneously with the Christian Gospel. The relative 'success' of this missionary endeavour appeared not only in the small but growing number of converts to Christianity, but perhaps even more momentously with the emergence of a small but critical mass of individuals who were literate and therefore no longer confined to an oral culture only. By the end of the nineteenth century one could talk of an incipient 'class' of educated and literate Africans, especially in what was then the Cape Colony.<sup>4</sup> Although these individuals moved into various professions and occupations, as the products of mission education they collectively shared an identity of being both Christian and educated. They were *amakholwa* (plural noun for 'believers'). Being an *ikholwa* was a political and social, rather than just a religious identity. Above all, by converting to Christianity and by subscribing to progressive ideals of private property ownership, individual rights and the Protestant work ethic, the *amakholwa* within the limited political sphere of colonial governance acquired, according to their own understanding, the rights of British subjects.

Yet, no sooner were these rights granted than they began to be eroded. Once the *kholwa* began to claim their rights as British subjects and to petition for their extension, successive colonial governments in the Cape and in Natal began, incrementally, to qualify and abrogate such rights as the *kholwa* had acquired. This dual process, of the granting and the withdrawal of rights, meant that the *amakholwa* were, in legal terms, a 'privileged' class since the rights they acquired were not universally extended but based on a conceived gradual and restricted upward social mobility, which permitted only a select few to acquire such rights. In consequence, the *amakholwa* became a kind of colonial and black aristocracy, though they lacked the political wherewithal to protect the rights on which this existence depended. Despite these political and economic limitations the *amakholwa* were, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a self-consciously politicised group. This process, of the *amakholwa* becoming 'conscious of themselves as a class on a national stage' (Marks, 1986: 12), was the product of a gradual realisation that the rights promised by mission philosophy and Western enlightenment would not be realised. The centralisation of 'white power' at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the

unification of South Africa, brought this gradual politicisation to a crisis which resulted in the formation of political organisations like the South African National Native Congress (SANNC) in 1912.

However, it was by no means the case that the *kholwa* recognised their oppressed status only by the early decades of the twentieth century. On the contrary, the history of late nineteenth-century black political thought is the history of *kholwa* political protest against discrimination and for their rights 'as British subjects'. With increasing frustration *kholwa* intellectuals expressed, through the limited channels of the colonial political system and media, their disenchantment with the unfulfilled promises of 'enlightenment'. These testimonies and expressions of political and social frustration, although often unacknowledged, became the foundations of a distinctive *kholwa* contribution to colonial discourse; in a sense this has been part of South Africa's intellectual and political history since the time of the prophetic figures of Nxele and Ntsikana. The close of the nineteenth century only sharpened the focus of this intermediate role played by the *amakhholwa*. What is of interest in this politicisation of the *amakhholwa* is that the terms they used to express their political aspirations, whether these were expressed in public arenas or in published books, were almost always borrowed from the political vocabulary of the colonial order. It is therefore not surprising that in 1875 Magera Magwaza [Fuze] was a signatory to a petition, addressed to the governor of Natal, Sir Garnet Wolseley, which demanded a clarification of the *amakhholwa's* status as 'British subjects'. The petitioners stated their case plainly:

**Now here is our lament. If a white man goes to law with a black, we hear it is said that the case is tried by Kafir Law or Dutch Law. We fled from Zulu country because of fearing Kafir Law, and came to place ourselves under the Dutch Government, but their treatment to us was too bad. And when the English Government arrived, we placed ourselves under it, and the missionaries taught us, so we rejoiced.**

**But now the Government wishes to drive us back again by saying that we ought to serve our old law which drove us from Zululand through fear, whereas we know that the English is a light nation. We came here being young, and now we are grown older – here is the question:-**

**How can a man become to be of the English?... (Khumalo and others, 1875: 623)**

Significantly, what the petitioners were challenging was not their colonial subjugation as such; the language of the petition suggests that they not only accepted their colonial status as 'refugees' from Zululand but that they also accepted Natal's colonial historiography which defined 'Zulu despotism', the petitioner's 'Kafir Law', as the main factor that drove them to settle in Natal. Thus, the question of how 'a man become to be of the English' represents these *amakhholwa's* assent to the legal and political system of British imperialism and a request that the accompanying rights be enunciated and applied to them in everyday practice. The gist of the petition was nothing less than an unreserved identification with the British legal system and its concomitant rights and privileges. Moreover, by positioning themselves in this way, these petitioners were also claiming for themselves

a special role as mediators between the *indigenous* community and the colonial state on the basis of their intermediate status between their traditional backgrounds and their desired status as British subjects.

### Dilemmas of the 'native informant'

As intermediaries between traditional and colonial society, the *kholwa* became the *de facto* 'native informants'<sup>5</sup> of the colonial political system. They were often consulted by colonial administrators on matters affecting the 'natives' and solicited for their opinion through colonial institutions. Thus, one finds that commissions of inquiry, like the Natal Native Commission (1881) and the 1903-05 South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC), explicitly solicited and implicitly relied on 'native informants' for their interpretations and descriptions of customary law and indigenous culture. Their responses, to sometimes pointed and deliberately crafty questions about land tenure, alcohol prohibition for 'natives' and polygamy were carefully but selectively incorporated into the findings of such commissions. This presence of selected indigenous voices in the deliberations of commissions designed to provide answers to the 'Native Question' raises questions about the role of such 'native informants' as representatives of the indigenous viewpoint. Significantly a number of the 'native informants' who responded to these and similar invitations would later make their appearance in the public sphere as *kholwa* intellectuals. The basic question becomes: how do we interpret the contribution of these would-be *kholwa* intellectuals to colonial discourses about the 'native'?

The emergence of *kholwa* intellectuals may be considered in both national and localised terms. Being Christian and literate as well as born in local oral cultures meant that when the *kholwa* turned to writing as an expressive art and as a political act, they could refer not only to the biblical traditions of exegesis, criticism and narration but they could also source indigenous oral traditions either for stylistic or thematic purposes. This dual inheritance of Western and indigenous literary and artistic traditions defined the *amakholwa's* political and intellectual imagination. If the *kholwa* were converts to a foreign religion, and so by definition shifted their allegiance to a novel set of ideas, the facts are that when they took to writing they did not entirely abandon or denigrate their pre-Christian past. Their writing was paradoxically both backward- and forward- looking, in that it was expressive of both 'pre-colonial' as well as of colonial or 'modern' African society. This predicament, namely that the 'native intellectual' was entangled in the tension between 'pre-colonial' and modern or colonial social forces, defined the social, cultural and legal status of the *amakholwa*. This entanglement is not exceptional nor does it negate the possibility of critical thought; arguably the *amakholwa's* predicament is characteristic of the position of 'intellectuals' in society more generally. In her discussion of postcolonial

discourse, Asha Varadharajan equates the dilemma of the 'native informant' to that of the 'Western critic', who presumes to speak on behalf of 'those whom she can never 'know'':

**The native informant is equally subject to these problems; indeed, they are compounded by the contradiction between her political allegiance to her 'origins' and her facility with the discourses of the colonizer. (1995: xvii)**

As native informants who possibly aspired to or became writers, the *kholwa* literati represent this contradictory position. Yet, as Walzer's argument demonstrates, a 'facility with the discourses of the colonizer' does not necessarily undermine this literati's potential for social criticism. According to Walzer,

**Social criticism must be understood as one of the more important by-products of a larger activity – let us call it the activity of cultural elaboration and affirmation. This is the work of priests and prophets; teachers and sages; storytellers, poets, historians, and writers generally. As soon as these sorts of people exist, the possibility of criticism exists...so long as they do *intellectual* work, they open the way for the adversary proceeding of social criticism. (1987: 40)**

### **Magama Fuze, *Abantu Abamnyama* and the aims of this study**

Magama Magwaza Fuze was exactly such a 'native informant' turned *kholwa intellectual*: he was a Christian convert, literate, a printer by profession and an assistant to the controversial John William Colenso, the Bishop of Natal. On several occasions he was a signatory to petitions and appeals to the colonial government. In the early twentieth century, he was a columnist for the Zulu-English newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal*. In particular he was the author of *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (1922a). Magema Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* is unique and deserving of attention for various reasons. The most obvious reason is that as a book written in the Zulu language, it was the first of its kind (Cope, 1979: ix). More pertinently, for our purposes, as the product of a *kholwa* mind, Fuze's book offers the analyst an opportunity to study the impact of literacy and Christianity on a person who made the transition from an oral culture to a literate one. For other reasons, too, *Abantu Abamnyama* is relevant to South Africa's intellectual history. As a product and proselyte of Colenso's *Ekukhanyeni* institution, Magema Fuze represents both a striking instance of Colenso's pedagogical and theological influence, but also a unique perspective on his political activism and colonial infamy. Magema Fuze was both a repository of Zulu oral traditions as well as a witness to many of the events he reported and described in the book. A significant aspect of Fuze's articles in *Ilanga lase Natal*, from which the book originated, is that the book was shaped in response to the many requests he received from his readers to write such a book for posterity. The fact that Fuze's *Ilanga lase Natal* readers were so keen to have his ideas published in book form suggests that as a writer Fuze was contributing to the formation of a new kind of discourse community of literate Africans. In this regard, *Abantu Abamnyama* is a reflection of the intellectual and cultural aspirations of a class of individuals who shared a common interest in the written word. The title of the book indicates that Fuze's



central concern was to provide an account of the origins of 'the black people'. As such a narrative of origins Magma Fuze significantly understood 'the black people's' origins in continental and not ethnic or local terms; *Abantu Abamnyama*'s central thesis thus consists of an explication of a 'black' or 'African' identity.

Fuze's book needs to be located in its specific political and historical context. In the colonial context of Natal this was the period marked by the orchestrated destruction of the Zulu kingdom and the beginnings of the Zulu people's incorporation into colonial society (See Guy, 1994 [1979]: 41-50). It is ironic that it was also during this period that missionary endeavour in Natal and Zululand intensified; as the autonomy and influence of the Zulu kingdom declined so did the rate of conversion and missionary success increase (Etherington, 1997: 105-106). The political 'climax' of this period was the 1906 Bhambatha rebellion, which formed an important historical moment for both the colonisers and the colonised Zulus. As one of the last and decisive assaults on the autonomy of the Zulu kingdom and king, the colonial reaction to the rebellion, while it marked the demise of the kingdom, also served to elevate the Zulu king to the status of a national symbol, albeit an ambiguous one (See la Hausse, 2000: 12). As a witness to these momentous times Magma Fuze, in his book offered an incisive and dexterous interpretation of the events leading up to, and the personalities involved in, the destruction of Zulu autonomy. This act of witnessing decisively informed Fuze's writing: as an example of nineteenth-century *kholwa* literature his *Abantu Abamnyama* was written as a proto-nationalist tract. By emphasising the need for unity and co-operation among all black people, Fuze's work could be classified as a precursor of the Zulu as well as African nationalisms that emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century. To account for Fuze's ideas on the necessity and urgency of African unity, one has therefore to examine his relationship to the emerging African and Zulu nationalist discourses in Natal and Zululand and the extent to which his nationalism was influenced by his personal experiences as a Bishopstowe scribe, printer, court witness and tutor to the exiled Zulu princes and king.

From these various reasons, it should be evident that a study of Fuze's life and work can be of wider relevance and significance; indeed, the attractions of this study lie in the ways in which it allows us to generalise the problem of the *kholwa* intellectual or writer. The dissertation proposes to examine the case of Magma Magwaza Fuze both as a prototype of the formation of a *kholwa* intellectual and also for the personal transformations and re-inventions of Fuze himself as he developed into a self-assertive intellectual. By definition, categorising Magma Fuze as a *kholwa* intellectual implies examining his ideas and thoughts in order to better understand his unique contribution to a genre that may be called *kholwa* literature. Although much has been written about the contribution of Xhosa- and Tswana-speaking intellectuals such as Tengo Jabavu, Tiyo

Soga and Sol Plaatje, much less is known about the development of a *kholwa* intellectual class among Zulu speakers.<sup>6</sup> The dissertation therefore aims to locate Magma Fuze within the specific and localised process of the emergence of Zulu-speaking intellectuals. Historically, this emergence of a distinctive Natal-based intellectual corps coincided, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the emergence not only of African nationalism but also of Zulu ethnic consciousness and proto-nationalism.

In general, therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate, analyse and interpret Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* in the context of his life and times. This general objective may be divided into three main topical concerns:

First, is the problem of Fuze's role as author of *Abantu Abamnyama*. The book contains innumerable and fascinating facts about the culture and customs of the Zulu people and their neighbours; it provides concise histories of Zulu kings and their reigns; but above all the book presents Fuze's interpretations of these facts – a clear sign of his transition from 'native informant' to *kholwa* intellectual. Accordingly a particular objective of this thesis is to problematise the concepts 'native informant' and '*kholwa* intellectual' through examining the particular case and texts of Magma Fuze.

Secondly, as a book written by a first-time author, *Abantu Abamnyama*, as both a Zulu and a translated text, is an example of how the novelty of writing, especially in a previously oral language, can in itself be a revealing testament to the cultural, intellectual and social change effected by literacy. Accordingly a second main objective of this thesis is to examine the general problem of the transition from orality to literacy, especially in a colonial context where this results from the exogenous intervention of missionary education, and to investigate how this is at work in the writings of Magma Fuze. The objective here is not merely to reiterate that Magma Fuze and his fellow converts and writers made this transition. Rather, the objective is to examine how this transition became a foundation for a culture of writing that emerged among the *kholwa* and of which Fuze became a proponent and a representative.

In the third place it is significant that Fuze selected 'history', and more specifically the identity and origins of 'the black people', as the dominant theme of the book, as revealed both by his prologues and his urgent exhortations to his readers to participate in the quest of discovering the origins of 'the black people'. Consequently, the focus of this study is on mapping the relationship between the discourses of 'history' and 'identity' in Fuze's writing.

These three objectives or topical concerns of the thesis – the problematic of the 'native informant' turned *kholwa* intellectual; the colonial manifestation of an exogenously introduced transition from orality to literacy;

and the historical quest for the origins of a black / African identity – are not separate and exclusive concerns, but interact and overlap with each other in various ways. Another way of framing this set of objectives is to begin with the basic premise that if Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* is read as both a nationalist tract and as a history lesson, then it is a classic example of the orality-literacy dichotomy that defines the literary works of all writers whose cultural background is partially or wholly based in oral traditions. The fact that Fuze, in writing his 'history', cites oral traditions as well as written or colonial accounts raises the question of what the relation between oral and written history is in his work. Secondly, and related to this latter problem, is the question of how one assesses and categorises a historical narrative derived from oral sources and whether such a 'history' requires tools of interpretation that are different to those used when assessing written and documented historical accounts. These are questions about the contrast between the construction of 'history' as a distinct discipline and the reproduction or recitation of oral traditions as cultural artefacts. Implicit in these kinds of issues is another general problem regarding the audience for which the book was written. We have already referred to the new discourse community of literate Africans evident in the responses to Fuze's contributions to *Ilanga lase Natal*. The fact that Fuze and his *khulwa* compatriots were also read by and wrote for a literate, colonial, and sometimes critical or sceptical audience complicates the nature of their authorship.<sup>7</sup> If we accept Michel Foucault's (1984) observation that an author is more than the individual involved in writing or the name appended to a work,<sup>8</sup> then this problem of the relation between *authorial identity*, or the 'subject position' of the author, and his audience, both in the sense of the *intended audience* and of the various *actual audiences*, becomes acute in a case like that of Fuze. Thus, even if in one sense Fuze's intended audience was decidedly not the few whites in Natal who also subscribed to *Ilanga lase Natal*, in another sense the very notion of an 'author' addressing his literate audience in print was based on colonial models of scholarship and criticism. Finally there is the question of the relation between his actual contemporaries, both the small number of literate Africans and the much larger number of Zulus and other blacks, to 'the black people' who were the discursive object of Fuze's writings. This problem of the collective identity of 'blacks' or 'Africans' as the object of his writing leads to the fourth and final objective of this dissertation:

The final objective of this dissertation is to investigate the relation, if any, between Fuze's writing and the *colonial scholarship* which functioned as an authoritative source of knowledge about Africa and Africans. The aim is to explore the extent of his contribution to that body of knowledge which is collectively known as the 'colonial library'. As Desai defines it, the 'colonial library' is 'the set of representations and texts that have collectively 'invented' Africa as a locus of difference and alterity' (Desai, 2001: 4). In the second chapter the

term 'colonial scholarship' will be introduced to designate the work of the missionary linguists, ethnographers and historians; the two terms, that is, *colonial scholarship* and the *colonial library*, should not be confused. Whereas the 'colonial library' refers to the entirety of texts written about Africa, including the contributions by 'native informants and/or *kholwa* intellectuals, the terms 'colonial scholarship' and 'colonial scholar' refer specifically to the process by which the intellectual traditions of Western philology, ethnography and history were applied and tested by missionary scholars in their encounters with the 'native informant'. Since Fuze wrote his book as a colonial subject and within a context where there already existed a body of 'colonial' texts on African and Zulu history, culture and customs, our study is therefore an examination of the relationship between Fuze's use of oral and indigenous narrative traditions, his contribution to the general 'colonial library' and his interactions and familiarity with the localised colonial scholarship. In other words, did the oral traditions resuscitated and/or used by *kholwa* writers like Fuze inaugurate a new indigenous historiography, or were these traditions renovated to compete with and/or support the extant colonial historiography? This is a more specific form of the general problem posed above, namely that writing is not neutral, especially when it is implicated in an exogenously introduced transition from orality to literacy, which in itself occurs as a product of the colonial encounter.

The four objectives enumerated above emanate from the observation of a basic paradox in the subject and form of Fuze's writing and thought as a *kholwa* intellectual. Fuze's authorial project took the form of writing a *history* of 'the black people', but in *writing* that history he implicitly and explicitly departed from the oral traditions that had hitherto preserved and reproduced the collective memories of local communities. The first puzzle is that 'writing history' is not an obvious consequence of the introduction of writing into an oral culture; the *amakhholwa* could, as converts to Christianity, have limited their literate activities to religious and theological matters. Why then is it that they chose 'history', and not religion or theology, as an object of study? The second and more basic paradox is that in taking up this task of writing a history of *abantu abamnyama* Fuze knowingly or unknowingly both usurped the authority of the oral tradition and also appropriated some of the forms and substance of that oral tradition. The dissertation will therefore attempt to explicate the significance of the fact that Fuze as a *kholwa* intellectual chose this authorial role for himself. The aim therefore is to interpret Magma Fuze's work as a *kholwa* intellectual from this perspective of an unequal and contested but also mutually beneficial fusion and relationship between colonial and African discourses of history and identity.<sup>9</sup>

As a study of an individual and of texts, the dissertation involves both discourse analysis and intellectual history. This implies that while one can write about Magma Fuze, the writer and printer, one also has to

connect his activities to the wider intellectual milieu of colonial scholarship in which he was writing. The primary examples of the kind of scholarly work that was possible in Fuze's time typically consisted of the philological, linguistic and ethnographic texts on indigenous culture and societies written by missionaries and amateur colonial writers. Of interest is the fact that the colonial scholarship inaugurated by missionaries and other colonial writers was profoundly informed by the availability, willingness and co-operation of indigenous sources, the 'native informants'. Significantly, though, if the object of this colonial scholarship was the language and culture of indigenous peoples, such writings were often primarily addressed to metropolitan and colonial audiences. If this was the character of colonial scholarship, the question arises: what place or role did this dependence and reference to metropolitan audiences create or foreclose for newly literate Africans like Fuze? They could potentially serve as indispensable 'native informants' mediating the enterprise of colonial scholarship and supplying it with its material, but this would not turn them into the authors of the work or part of the intended audience. Yet this momentous shift is just what was involved in Fuze's writing of his 'history' of 'the black people'. Although this latter theme will be explored further in the second chapter, it is still useful at this point to enumerate some of the reasons for studying this transformation of 'native informants' into intellectuals. If one accepts the argument that the dominant discourses of colonial scholarship were established through the contributions of, and debates between, missionary scholars over both the rationale and the scope of studying African peoples, their cultures and languages, then it follows that these exchanges set the foundations not only for later colonial scholars, amateur and professional, but they also instituted the intellectual parameters within which literate and educated Africans could write about their 'own' cultures. This did not mean, however, that indigenous writers always chose to remain in their designated roles as 'native informants' serving colonial scholarship. Magema Fuze is an example of a 'native informant' who, while acknowledging the influence, direct and subtle, of his missionary mentor, went on to write his own book. Our concern will be with this problematic and contested transformation of the 'native informant' become *kholwa* intellectual.

## Fuze's life and writings: a preliminary survey

### *A brief overview of Fuze's life*

Before beginning our examination of how Fuze made this transition from 'native informant' to *kholwa* intellectual, it is essential to give a brief chronicle of his life. This biographical chronicle is meant to function as a preface and background for the main 'discursive biography' in the last chapter. As mentioned, Magema Magwaza Fuze, or Skelemu as his family had nicknamed him, left his home to attend Colenso's *Ekukhanyeni*

school in 1856. He was baptised in 1859. When asked to choose a new name by which he would be known after his baptism, Skelemu picked the biblical names of Petros and Johane. However, both were rejected by Colenso who 'objected to African people being called by foreign names which meant nothing to them'; Colenso then chose the name 'Magama' for him (Fuze, 1979: iii-iv).

The curriculum and activities at *Ekukhanyeni* were designed to emulate those of an English public school as evident in Colenso's description of the school as a 'Kafir Harrow' (See Kearney, 2003: 196). In his first report to the journal *Mission Field* Colenso specifically mentioned the young pupils' potential as cricketers (Colenso, 1856: 177). Beyond these fun and games, the students of *Ekukhanyeni* were taught mathematics, by Colenso himself, some took piano lessons and all were given lessons in drawing. Colenso hoped that in the longer term some of his students could be trained as doctors and architects (Kearney, 2003: 198-199). Like many other mission schools, Colenso's choice of curriculum was between industrial training and 'book learning'; Colenso seems to have chosen to emphasise the latter although his students did engage in manual labour and training. Printing was the main artisan skill that was taught at *Ekukhanyeni* (Kearney, 2003: 200). Magama Fuze was trained as a printer; his recollections of his training do not contain any specific details except that he was trained by a Mr. Purcell (1979: iii). Before being appointed as head printer in 1862, Fuze had according to Colenso first spent twelve months at home (Colenso, 1982 [1865]: 225); although the reasons for Fuze's departure and return are not given it is likely that it was because of the hurried closure of the *Ekukhanyeni* school in 1861. Rumours had been circulating in Natal that the Zulu prince Cetshwayo was planning an invasion of Natal in order to remove his brother Mkhungo from the care of Colenso (Guy, 1983: 105). After 1862, though, his employment as a printer for the Bishopstowe press kept Magama Fuze at the mission station. It is difficult to know how Fuze spent his days; he did not keep a diary, and when he did, as when he travelled to St. Helena in 1896, it was very short-lived. However, judging from the volume of publications printed at the Bishopstowe press even before the Pentateuch controversy or the Langalibalele rebellion, Fuze and the press were very busy. Between the years 1859-1860, the press published a translated version of the New Testament, the books of Genesis, Exodus, I and II Samuel, and a Zulu liturgy. In these and subsequent years Colenso also published a Zulu-English dictionary, a Zulu grammar and a history of Natal in *isiZulu* titled *Izindatyana Zabantu Kanye Nezindaba Zas'eNatal* / The People's Affairs and the Affairs of Natal (Khumalo, 2003: 228).

Theologically, the year 1862 was significant for Colenso, the Bishopstowe mission and his converts because it was in that year that he published *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined*. In the



book and its subsequent volumes Colenso challenged the historical veracity of the bible, he demonstrated, almost always mathematically, that biblical narratives were not literally true. The immense public controversy – the infamy and accusations of heresy caused by the book – both in England and in colonial Natal, meant that for years to come Colenso was embroiled in a struggle to rescue his reputation; and in the process he also implicated his mission, including his converts. But, the influence also flowed in the opposite direction: Colenso, in turn, was profoundly indebted to his ‘native informants’; he not only relied on their indispensable knowledge of Zulu culture and politics, but his ‘heretic’ theology was a direct consequence of these conversations. Colenso’s converts, especially William Ngidi and to some extent Magama Fuze, were implicated in the bishop’s challenge to the Christian canon especially in *The Pentateuch* (See Draper, 1998: 18-19; Guy, 1994: 19-20). Indeed, Colenso’s acknowledgement that his dissenting and heterodox views were a result of the critical queries by these ‘Zulu philosophers’ played a substantial part in the reception of his religious writings. Colenso was eventually excommunicated from the church. At the time, the recognition that what had occurred between Colenso and his converts was an inversion of roles, led some commentators to sarcastically accuse them of ‘converting’ the Bishop of Natal.<sup>10</sup> In the aftermath of the *Pentateuch* controversy Colenso relied even more on the assistance of his converts and his printer Magama Fuze. When he left Natal for England in May 1862 he left William Ngidi and Magama Fuze in charge of *Ekukhanyeni* with Fuze as head printer at the press. His departure predated the publication of the book, but he remained in England for three years from 1862-1865 (Guy, 1983: 110-111, 2001: 22; Khumalo, 2003: 229). Whilst in England, Colenso presented a lecture in which he praised the work of Fuze at the press by stating that ‘what I most admire is not the accuracy and neatness of his printing, but the perseverance with which he has hitherto continued at his labours month after month, year after year, during my absence in England.’ (1882 [1865]: 225).

A central theme of Fuze’s life at the *Ekukhanyeni* mission was the ever-constant intrusion of Zululand politics and Natal’s colonial ambitions and intrigues. By virtue of Colenso’s guardianship of Mkhungo, the son of Mpande who had fled Zululand with his mother during the 1856 civil war, the mission was already associated with the politics of the Zulu royal family (Guy, 1983: 64). The rivalry between Cetshwayo’s *uSuthu* and Mbulazi’s *iziGqoza* concerned Mpande’s successor to the throne. The consequences of the civil war, both physical and political were still evident in 1859 when Magama Fuze took his first trip to Zululand and thus made his first personal contact with the Zulu monarchy. He and other *Ekukhanyeni* residents including William Ngidi accompanied Colenso on his visit to the Zulu king Mpande. As part of the journey Fuze kept a diary, as instructed by Colenso, and this narrative became his contribution to the *Three Native Accounts of the Visit of the*

*Bishop of Natal in September and October, 1859, to Umpande, King of the Zulus; With Explanatory Notes and a Literal Translation, and a Glossary of All the Zulu Words Employed in the Same: Designed for the Use of Students of the Zulu Language* (1901 [1860]).<sup>11</sup> The trip was also significant because it initiated his concern with the Zulu monarchy which hereafter determined the course of his life and framed the notions of kingship he expressed in *Abantu Abamnyama*. In this respect the 1870s were an important period in Magma Fuze's life because it was in this period that he became an active member of the 'Bishopstowe faction' which throughout the latter part of the century represented the Zulu cause in colonial Natal (Guy, 2001: 43). The mission's involvement in colonial politics began with a defence of the Hlubi chief Langalibalele, who was accused of rebellion and treason in 1873. The history and particulars of the rebellion are dealt with in more detail in the final chapter. What is relevant to Fuze's life story is that Colenso's defence of the chief depended on the evidence given by Fuze, Ngidi and other *Ekuhanyeni* residents. Magma Fuze became a scribe, investigator and witness in the trial and his testimony appeared in Colenso's report on the affair which was published both independently and as part of the British Parliamentary Papers under the title 'Langalibalele and the AmaHlubi Tribe: Being Remarks Upon the Official Record of the Trials of the Chief, his Sons and Induna, and Other Members of the AmaHlubi Tribe' (1874; Colenso, 1875; Guy, 1983: 226). These testimonies by Fuze and other *Ekuhanyeni* residents reveal something about the nature of the open-minded attitudes that the *Ekuhanyeni* / Bishopstowe education had imparted to its students. Both Fuze and William Ngidi were not shy to contest the version and interpretation of events offered by colonial officials, even and especially those of Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA). The effect of the contest between Bishopstowe and Natal's colonial order as embodied in the person of Shepstone had important long-term consequences for Fuze's career.

In the immediate aftermath of the Langalibalele trial, Fuze was a signatory to the 1875 petition drafted by Natal's *kholwa* community which as described above demanded a clarification of their status as 'British subjects'. Fuze and Harriette Colenso were accused of instigating the petition (Guy, 2001: 47). Matters were made worse by the fact that, as the printer of the petition, Fuze had included in the 1875 petition the names of petitioners, some of whom were now dead, who had signed a similar petition in 1863. In its attempt to minimise the political damage caused by the airing of *kholwa* grievances, the colonial government dismissed the petition by reminding the petitioners that they could apply for exemption from 'Native law'. The colonial government also arrested and imprisoned Fuze (Khumalo, 2004: 216). The petition was evidently an important moment in Fuze's politicisation; when he testified to the Natal Native Commission of 1881-1882, he gave his own account of the nature and circumstances under which the petition was drawn. In response to a commissioner's question

he said that the petition was not about exemption from 'Native law' and admission into 'English law' but that 'our prayer was for the same privileges as the white people' ('Evidence,' 1882: 165).

The responses that Fuze gave to the 1881 commission were perhaps also a reflection of his 1878 experience of travelling to Zululand to investigate rumours that the Zulu king Cetshwayo was killing Christian converts. In *Abantu Abamnyama* Fuze stated that Cetshwayo presciently told him of the impending invasion of Zululand by 'abelungu' / 'the English [white] people' (1922a: 189; 1979: 110). The invasion of Zululand by the English in 1879 became a defining moment in Magama Fuze's life; it brought him into even closer contact with Zulu nobility, the *uSuthu*, and implicated him more deeply in Colenso's fight for the Zulu cause. The Bishopstowe response to the invasion was to attempt to expose the motives of the colonial officials who caused the war. Colenso adopted the strategy of annotating and commenting on official documents concerning the war. Fuze's job was to print these 'Extracts from the Blue Books', a task made more difficult by the fact his printing press assistants were conscripted (Guy, 2001: 55). The defeat of the British army at Isandlwana, the Battle of Ulundi, the capture and exile of the Zulu king Cetshwayo and the partition of Zululand into thirteen chiefdoms were events that were closely watched, recorded and reacted to by Colenso, his family and his Bishopstowe press. Again Fuze was responsible for printing the Bishop's commentary on official documents and newspapers, which he titled 'The Digest on Zulu Affairs' (Guy, 2001: 67). While the Zulu king was in exile in Cape Town, Colenso continued to petition the British government for his return and his restoration; it was at his suggestion that Cetshwayo requested permission to go to England and present his case to the imperial government and the Queen (Guy, 1994 [1979]: 125-126). When the restoration of the king, following his visit to England, was finally approved, the details of his restoration were left to Natal's colonial officials. The outbreak of civil war which followed the king's return to Zululand testifies to the precarious nature of the agreement reached between Cetshwayo and the colonial government; Shepstone was sent as an emissary to present the terms of the settlement to the returning king and to officially restore him to power. Zululand was split into three, with Cetshwayo's territory sandwiched between his rival Zibhebhu's and the 'Zulu Native Reserve', the territory reserved for those who objected to living under Cetshwayo's rule (Guy, 2001: 68-71). When civil war broke out in March 1883, the news of the violence and the injustices committed by Zibhebhu's followers against the *uSuthu* reached Bishopstowe with difficulty because *uSuthu* messengers were stopped by the border police; Colenso however continued to publicise the news that reached Bishopstowe (Guy, 2001: 71-72). Colenso died in June 1883, a few months after the beginning of the civil war; Harriette, his daughter, was left to continue the work of defending the Zulu king. Cetshwayo himself died in February of 1884, after having sought refuge with

the British Resident in Zululand, Melmoth Osborn (Guy, 2001: 84). Disaster also struck at the Bishopstowe residence because in September of 1884 a fire destroyed the house and the printing press (Guy, 2001: 115-118). This practically meant that, at least for the time being, there would be no work for Fuze and no printed commentary on the political affairs of Natal and Zululand.

What had happened to Cetshwayo would repeat itself in the case of his heir, Dinuzulu. As if to repeat his earlier sojourn, Magma Fuze visited Zululand in 1885 and wrote to the Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA), Henrique Shepstone, the son of Theophilus Shepstone<sup>12</sup> (Guy, 2001: 127). What Fuze was relating to the SNA was that ever since the death of Cetshwayo, the Zulu people had lived without a legitimate source of authority and that even the supporters of the *uSuthu* were unruly and likely to be the cause of another war (Fuze (Magwaza), 1885b). Fuze returned to Bishopstowe in 1886; Harriette had managed to purchase a second-hand printing press and with Fuze's return she resumed the printing of commentaries on Zulu politics and the situation in Zululand (Guy, 2001: 149-150, 197).

The political crisis in Zululand deepened; the conflict between *uSuthu* and Zibhebhu and his followers continued. In May 1887 official permission was granted for the Natal government to annex Zululand; from now on Zululand was governed through magisterial rule. In practice this meant the extension of Natal's indirect rule, as shaped by Shepstone, to Zululand. Each of the six districts into which Zululand was divided was placed under the control of a Resident Magistrate, the 'traditional' chiefs became paid government officials with a colonially defined jurisdiction and function (Guy, 2001: 174-175). Most of the *uSuthu* leaders and the young prince, Dinuzulu responded to this new order by refusing to recognise or meet the new authorities. Dissension was however already sowed among the *uSuthu* elite with some leaders urging the prince to acquiesce to the annexation (Guy, 2001: 178-181). The state of Zululand and the character of *uSuthu* leadership post-Cetshwayo deserves better explication (See Guy, 2001: 211-213); but what is important to note here especially in relation to Fuze as a member of the Bishopstowe network is that he continued to assist Harriette Colenso in her attempt to publicise the blunders that were being committed by colonial officials in the name of pacifying Zululand (Guy, 2001: 205). Acts of violence committed by both Zibhebhu and *uSuthu* supporters increased and intensified in the year 1888; the government of Zululand depicted these as the fault of the *uSuthu* (Guy, 2001: 233-240). Although the Zululand government had already tried to arrest Dinuzulu and other *uSuthu* leaders they had not succeeded. But, Harriette anticipated events; Dinuzulu could not be on the run forever and even before his eventual surrender in November 1888, she had begun to enquire about how the court that would try him would be constituted. By the time Dinuzulu was arrested in November 1888, Harriette had already sent Magma Fuze and

others to Eshowe in Zululand to prepare for the planned trial (Guy, 2001: 254-256). When the trial began on 15 November 1888 it marked an important transition in the relationship between Bishopstowe and the Zulu monarchy; while Colenso Snr. had defended Cetshwayo as a king of an arguably autonomous kingdom, Harriette was defending an 18 year-old prince accused of defiance and rebellion in a political context of a Zululand which was now *de jure* a colony of Natal. Magera Fuze re-entered the picture as Harriette's assistant and as tutor to Dinuzulu and his uncles. Fuze's recollection of the trial in *Abantu Abamnyama* is brief and dispassionate; he listed all the main members of the prosecution and defence teams as well the Special Commissioners who heard the cases but doesn't give details of the charges against Dinuzulu and his uncles. His own role as he describes it was to teach the prince and his uncles to read and write. He remained at Eshowe from 1888 until 1890 when the convicted Dinuzulu, Ndabuko and Shingana were transported to St. Helena (Fuze, 1922a: 223-226; 1979: 129-131). Fuze travelled to the island in 1896 as a tutor to the Zulu king and his uncles. Although Fuze doesn't mention it in the book, he also continued to function as a member of the Bishopstowe network, transmitting news he received and the goings on in Eshowe to Harriette (Guy, 2001: 304). When the three were transported they were accompanied by attendants, wives, a custodian and an interpreter. The latter was a Lovedale-educated African by the name of Anthony Daniels; Harriette had attempted to get Fuze the position but the colonial officials rejected this suggestion because of Fuze's supposed notoriety (Guy, 2001: 335; Khumalo, 2004: 160).

In the aftermath of the trial Fuze does not seem to have returned to *Ekukhanyeni* / Bishopstowe. Instead he went to St. Alban's College in Pietermaritzburg where he taught students typesetting. However even when he was not at *Ekukhanyeni* people came to him with news from Zululand and requested him to write on their behalf; he was also given monies to send to Dinuzulu in St. Helena (Fuze, 1979: 132; Guy, 2001: 337). The time that Fuze spent at St. Alban's was also significant because it coincided with the establishment of a newspaper to which Fuze would contribute articles and letters. This was *Inkanyiso YaseNatali*, which was established in 1889 and published at St. Alban's under the editorship of the Rev. F.J. Greene (Khumalo, 2004: 272). What is more politically important is that while he wrote for *Inkanyiso* Fuze also worked to get the letters of Dinuzulu, which he was writing from St. Helena, published in the newspaper. In these letters the prince Dinuzulu described his own struggles to receive a proper education and be taught to read and write (Khumalo, 2004: 279). The fact that such letters from the Zulu king were published suggests that by the end of the nineteenth century there was a growing demand from literate Zulu-speakers for newspapers in their language. It is therefore not surprising that in 1898 another newspaper targeting a Zulu readership was established. This newspaper called *Ipepa lo Hlanga*

was established through independent means by four businessmen including Mark Radebe who became the paper's editor and printer (Khumalo, 2004: 243-244). The acquaintance that Fuze made with Dinuzulu during the trial and his association with Harriette Colenso and the Bishopstowe press partly explain why Dinuzulu requested, in 1896, that Fuze be sent to teach his children who had been born on the island. The Zulu royals' exile ended in 1898, but their return from St. Helena did not end their troubles. The prince was returned to a political order in which he was reduced to the status of one chief amongst many (Guy, 2001: 438-439). On the prince's return it was Anthony Daniels and not Magera Fuze who became Dinuzulu's interpreter. Daniels and Dinuzulu fell out and Fuze was again summoned in 1904 to resume his duties as teacher and interpreter. He soon also left because of what he saw as the lack of work; he also tried to sue the prince for not being paid for services rendered to the prince at St. Helena. Harriette resolved the issue by paying him £100<sup>13</sup> (Fuze, 1979: 137-138).

The St. Helena years (1896-1898) are crucial to the development of Magera Fuze's pan-African vision of an African modernity and an African nation. These years feature prominently in Fuze's narrative in *Abantu Abamnyama*; his ideas about Africa, slavery and the diaspora can be attributed to his experiences there (See Fuze, 1979: 7-9). In view of the nationalist and pan-Africanist discourses of the early twentieth century, it is important to assess the extent to which *Abantu Abamnyama* propagated either of these visions. In the book Fuze doesn't write as either an African or a Zulu nationalist; his calls for Africans to unite and to realise the strength of this unity are inclusive. However, the fact that at the time when he was writing these differing versions of nationalism were already palpable means that Fuze could not have entirely escaped each of their grasp. In a letter addressed to the editor of *Ilanga* Fuze offered his opinion about a Congress-organised meeting held in Johannesburg. The main thrust of his argument is summarised in his reminder to the readers that 'Ukuhlangana kungamandhla' / Unity is power (Fuze, 1919f: 3). What he was advocating was a continuation of protest and petition politics rather than a direct appeal to the imperial government. This at least indicates that he was aware of the Congress movement and its activities; his advice to the organisation was on strategy and not ideology. This example also serves to distance Fuze from the Zulu ethnic nationalism associated with the Inkatha of Mangosuthu Buthelezi. However this doesn't mean that he would have disagreed with the aims and objectives of Zulu cultural societies and organisation such as the original Inkatha of 1924 which was part of 'competing initiatives to shape a new form of regional politics on the basis of an alliance with the Zulu monarchy' (la Hausse, 2000: 111). Also, Fuze's relationship with John Dube meant that he was aware of these initiatives



(Fuze, 1979: i); his own earlier association with Dinuzulu may have even permitted him a prominent place in some of these discussions.

When the Bhambatha rebellion broke out in 1906, Dinuzulu was blamed by the colonial government and he was again tried, found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment; Louis Botha arranged for him to be banished to a farm in the then Transvaal where he died in 1913 aged 43 (Guy, 2001: 444-446). The situation of the Colenso sisters, Harriette and Agnes, and of Bishopstowe and its residents also worsened; a law passed by the Natal parliament called the Church Properties Act led to the sale of the land on which Bishopstowe and *Ekukhanyeni* were built. This meant the dispersal of the men and women who had worked and lived with both Harriette and her father John William Colenso (Guy, 2001: 446-447).

The particulars of Fuze's life once he left Bishopstowe are hard to find. In this period after the dispersal of the Bishopstowe mission and household Fuze's address changed regularly. In a November 5, 1915 letter in *Ilanga lase Natal* titled 'Sapumapi Tina? Ukuhlazulula Uhlanga' he gave the address 528 Church Street, Pietermaritzburg but in another letter published on September 15, 1916 he gave his address as 'New England, P.O. 286 Ortomann Road, P.M. Burg'. This constant change in address was probably due to poverty; in 1919 Fuze wrote to the Colenso sisters requesting that as a former employee and subject of the Bishop he should receive a pension (Fuze, 1919g). The only other source of personal information about Fuze's life is the will he wrote in May 1922. In it Fuze gave the names of all his children and their inheritance (Fuze, 1922b). Again, more will be said about this will in the last chapter of the thesis.

### ***A preliminary overview of Fuze's writings***

The above sketch has chronicled Fuze's life by connecting personal details with the political events of the time. However, since the main objective of the thesis is to understand Fuze as a writer we can now turn to his writing. The difficulty has been in compiling this corpus of work; his writings are fragmented and scattered, and come from different stages of his personal and intellectual life. The earliest texts are from his youth and provide a contemporary testimony of his early induction to literacy. The earliest available piece of writing by the young Magama is an essay he wrote describing the daily routine at *Ekukhanyeni*; it is preserved like that of the other *Ekukhanyeni* boys in the Grey Manuscript Collection (See Fuze, 1857). Because of its importance in understanding how the experience of conversion, mission education and acculturation looked from the perspective of a young *Ekukhanyeni* student, this essay is discussed in the last chapter. The young Magama soon applied his skills as a compositor and composed a versified transcription of everyday dialogue titled 'Amazwi Abantu' / 'The People's Words (Voices)' (1859) which Colenso sent to Wilhelm Bleek. This lengthy printed

record of people's conversations, fictitious or real, is an important example of the impact of literacy on the mind of the young Fuze. Again, because of its relevance to our understanding of the development of Fuze as a writer this work receives more thorough attention in the last chapter. Both the short essay and 'Amazwi Abantu' seem to have been written before Colenso's trip to Zululand and the publication in 1860 of *Three Native Accounts* (Colenso, 1901 [1860]). This travel narrative is the first instance in which Fuze appears in a published text as a writer and was part of other converts' 1859 narratives about Colenso's visit to the Zulu king Mpande. In his original introduction to the narratives, which were published simultaneously in *isiZulu* and English, Colenso marketed the book as 'well adapted for any who are beginning to study the language [Zulu]' (1901 [1860]: n.p.) As late as the 1930s, *Three Native Accounts* was considered to be 'one of the four best examples of the purest Zulu' (Quoted in Guy, 1983: 65; See also Ricard, 2004: 111-112). His narrative of his subsequent travels to Zululand in 1877<sup>14</sup> was published in *Macmillan's Magazine* as 'A Visit to King Ketswayo' (1878). Again because of its relevance to our general understanding of Fuze as a writer this article receives more attention in the last chapter. What is noteworthy is that the account published in the magazine is vastly different from the one in *Abantu Abamnyama*; the account in *Macmillan's Magazine* contains detailed accounts of conversations he had with the Zulu king, whereas this detail is largely absent in the book.

As a characterisation of the earlier years before his *Ilanga lase Natal* period, Fuze could be described as an active letter writer and petitioner. Fuze's contribution in the 1890s to the newspaper *Inkanyiso* included letters to the editor which he wrote in response to the letters and comments of other readers. Some of the issues that were contested on the pages of *Inkanyiso* included the question of whether Natal's Zulu men should continue to wear *izicoco*, the traditional head-rings, which were a symbolic and physical marker of the status of manhood (Khumalo, 2004: 275-278). In 1901 Magema Fuze, together with another former *Ekukhanyeni* student, Mubi Nondenisa collaborated on a series of articles about John W. Colenso, 'uSobantu', and the *Ekukhanyeni* institution (Khumalo, 2003: 215-218, 2004: 86-91). It is in these examples of Fuze's participation in the writing and reading networks of other *amakholwa* that one discerns the basic features of the audience to which *Abantu Abamnyama* was addressed. It is also important to know that in terms of his development as a writer, Fuze had kept an abbreviated and incomplete diary of his journey to St. Helena, and that while he was on the island he continued the Bishopstowe practice of writing letters to friends and acquaintances, and also letters of protest; he even communicated extensively with Alice Werner, the linguist and friend of Harriette Colenso. Because of the importance of Fuze's correspondence with Werner and her later assessment of his book *Abantu Abamnyama* more will be said about their relationship in later parts of the introduction.

In the years after his Bishopstowe career (from 1915 onwards) Fuze wrote serialised articles for the newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal* and these serials included, 'Abantu Nemikuba Yabo Bengaka Biko Abelungu' / 'The Black People and their Customs before the Coming of the Whites' and 'Sapumapi Tina? Ukuhlazulula Uhlanga' / 'Where Do We Come From? A Clarification of Origins'. Other articles by Fuze that appeared in the newspaper include, 'Isipeto Sika Zulu' / 'The End of the Zulu People' in 1916; 'Ukuhlasela KwaBelungu KwaZulu' / 'The Attack of Zululand by the White People' in 1919 and from 1916-1922 Umuntu Kafi Apele / 'When a person dies, that is not the end of him'.<sup>15</sup> What characterises these articles, and letters to the editor is that they more often than not elicited robust and contrary views from his readers. The impression created by this dialogue and exchange of ideas and queries between Fuze and the readers of these serials is that the readers of *Ilanga lase Natal* regarded the newspaper as a public forum in which they could each be apportioned space to express their views, however unpopular or idiosyncratic. Although no single example of this dialogue can sufficiently capture the liveliness of this interaction it is enough at this point to state that the *Ilanga lase Natal* phase of Fuze's writing consists of a medley of articles and opinions on Zulu history, Zulu customs, Church politics, and sometimes details of Fuze's personal life (as when his daughter was murdered by her husband). This suggests that this collection of texts forms part of Fuze's contribution to both the establishment of the newspaper as a forum for *kholwa* opinion and also to the discourses of history and identity of early Zulu intellectuals. These *kholwa* commentators constituted themselves as a 'community of discourse' (Wuthnow, 1989). Newspapers such as *Ilanga lase Natal* are therefore a crucial source if one is to better understand the general debates among literate Zulu speakers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although it is impossible to critically study the content of the newspaper in detail, it is sufficient to observe that as an organ of the intellectual and cultural aspirations of the *kholwa* elite, the newspaper served the function not only of disseminating ideas of mutual benefit, but it also created an audience for the kind of African and Zulu history Fuze wanted his contemporaries to read and write.<sup>16</sup>

Before outlining the general structure of the dissertation, some comments on the book *Abantu Abamnyama* are necessary. In the book Fuze revealed his fundamental and continuing indebtedness to missionary scholarship by quoting extensively from Colenso's *Izindaba Zas' eNatal [Natal Affairs]* (1859). The implication is therefore that to understand Fuze's 'history' of the Zulu people one also has to understand the influence of Colenso's *oeuvre*, mission, and involvement in Zulu affairs. If Fuze's later writings testify to the emergence of an independent authorial role in relation to a new discourse community of literate Zulu speakers then his underlying embeddedness in colonial scholarship and missionary education remain profound and

manifold. It is this creative dialectic that will be explored in the thesis.<sup>17</sup> The fact that Magesa Fuze extensively announced on the pages of *Ilanga* that he was writing a book, through both his constant requests for funding and his updates on the progress he had made, probably raised the expectations of his readers. They would however have found the final product disappointing. In comparison to the articles in *Ilanga*, *Abantu Abamnyama* was an anti-climax. It simply lacks the depth and detail found in his serialised articles. So for example whereas in *Ilanga*, Fuze wrote a genealogy and history of the AmaHlubi and published it over a couple of weeks; in *Abantu Abamnyama* the AmaHlubi and their chief Langalibalele receive only a few cursory remarks. Such omissions make *Abantu Abamnyama* a qualitatively different text to the *Ilanga* serials. It is however possible that the manuscript for *Abantu Abamnyama* was completed *before* his *Ilanga* period; Harry Lugg states that he met Fuze in 1902 and that by that time he had 'written or partially written his book, and was a frequent visitor to our Native Affairs Department seeking financial aid for its publication' (Lugg, 1979: xviii). This incongruous relationship between the book and the newspaper articles and the fact that Fuze speculated on the origins of 'the black people' in the north of Africa could be the main reason why the book and author have been largely marginalised, or at most footnoted by scholars of Zulu history, literature and culture. However, other factors contributed to this marginal legacy and status of Fuze and his book. One of these factors was the cost of the book; la Hausse quotes a price of 5s (la Hausse, 2000: 119n121). The other was that although the book may have been of interest to the scholar or historian, it was probably not considered suitable for inclusion in the school syllabus. As la Hausse demonstrates in his discussion of the career of Petros Lamula and his book *UZulukaMalandela*, Natal's education officials could choose to ignore a book and not prescribe it as a school textbook even when it was popular with Zulu literates (2000:106). This meant that a few specialists and collectors of Zulu literature, probably read the book, but that it did not really attract popular appeal. Petros Lamula had himself seen the book in someone else's office and wrote to Harriette Colenso, in 1923 requesting a copy of Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* (la Hausse, 2000: 99). But these explanations only account for why the book was not popular at the time. What is less explicable is why the book was not 'discovered' by African nationalists and acknowledged as an early expression of the nationalist spirit. The most convincing explanation is that from the 1920s onwards the nationalist and Congress movements became anglicised, in that English became the preferred language of political engagement. As an *isiZulu* text, Fuze's book did not match this emerging political vocabulary. This is especially significant in the case of Natal where African nationalism competed with and was accommodated alongside an emerging Zulu ethnic nationalism (la Hausse, 2000: 14-15).

As a translator's text *The Black People* is not an exact copy of *Abantu Abamnyama*. This disparity between the original and the translated text affects the manner in which the two texts can be read. *Abantu Abamnyama* was written for literate Zulu speakers and it is now near impossible to recover the ways in which they read and understood the book. *The Black People* on the other hand has been glossed and annotated and has therefore had more legible readers and readings than the original. The importance of this distinction is that in the process of translation and editing certain changes were made to the original text and these changes present both practical and theoretical problems. While editing *The Black People*, A.T. Cope divided the book into three sections, namely, 'history', 'ethnography' and 'Zulu history'. In his editor's preface Cope justifies taking these liberties on the grounds that the 'book falls naturally into three sections' (Fuze, 1979: x). Cope's attitude to the book reflects the general problem of translation since he imposed on Fuze's text a taxonomy grounded on his own interpretation, or misinterpretation, of the book rather than on what Fuze said about the book. This supposed 'naturalness' of the three labels used by Cope creates the impression that Fuze would have identified with these scholarly 'disciplines'. As they stand these labels may suggest that Fuze was imitating the categories used by the colonial scholars who had previously produced work on Zulu culture, history and politics. Contrary to Cope's assumptions, Fuze did not locate the book within this tradition of colonial scholarship or imply that he was responding to this literature point for point. To his readers in *Ilanga*, Fuze depicted the book and the process of writing as an act of correcting what had already been written. In requesting that twelve men,<sup>18</sup> each paying £3, should contribute to a fund that would publish *amabhuku* / books (in the plural), he ends the notice by stating:

**Ngicela ukuba amadoda anjalo aqamuke masinyane, ukuze nami ngipangise ukuloba, ngoba pela nako loko osekucindezelwe kugcwele iziposiso, kufanele kulungiswe ngokunye. (Fuze, 1919b: 4)**

**I am asking that these men should appear soon, so that I can also speed up the writing, this is because what has already been published is full of mistakes, which should be corrected by others.**

When the final product was published, it consisted of a sequence of *izahluko* / chapters which weren't arranged either topically or chronologically but ranged over numerous subjects. Some of the headings that Fuze used in the original include 'Abantu abamnyama, ukuvela kwabo' / 'The black people, their origins', 'Amalinganiso' / 'Comparisons' – Cope retained many of these original headings, but he rearranged some in order to fit them into his three parts. The most notable feature of the original text is Fuze's choice of titles for his prefaces; he chose words associated with wedding ceremonies as the imagery with which to introduce the book. On the 'Isisusa', to which Cope gave the title 'Prologue', Fuze began by stating, 'Njengokuba s'azi sonke ukuti "isisusa simnandi ngokupindwa"' / We all know that 'the wedding dance is nice when repeated' (See Doke, et al., 1958: 771; Fuze, 1922a: iii). The other words 'Inkondhlo' and 'Amangebeza' also belong to the vocabulary of wedding

celebrations. These terms obviously resonate with Zulu traditional life but Draper also suggests that Fuze could have used them to refer to both 'the parables of Jesus and the Wedding Banquet' and to the 'awakening of nationalist hopes' since the wedding could function as a 'symbol of national revival as the will of God worked out in history' (1998: 22). It is these subtle puns and allusions which are lost when the text is divided into the three parts it was not originally in. Yet, this misidentification of the 'intention' of the author is itself useful because it complicates the problem introduced in the second chapter of the dissertation, namely, the relationship between the intellectual and scholarly contribution of missionaries to the study of Zulu culture, customs and language and the contribution of 'native informants' to this system of knowledge. In view of Magma Fuze and *Abantu Abamnyama*'s interpretations and descriptions of Zulu customs and history the question is not just about whether there was a continuity or discontinuity between the methods and objectives of the missionary scholar and those of the 'native informant'. Rather the book reveals how colonial scholarship prefigured, in incomplete and ambiguous ways, the 'corrections' offered and continuously offered by native informants-turned-kholwa intellectuals.

Identifying the intertextual relationship between the *kholwa* intellectual's work and the preceding colonial scholarship is only a first step in interpreting *The Black People and Whence They Came*. The second move is to re-read, reinterpret and re-orient the book as a product of historically contingent discourses. This second objective is the more substantial of the two since it involves plunging into the uncharted waters of critically exploring a 'bilingual' text in the hope of offering a novel view of what the book may have meant to the author and to his readers. This critical examination of *Abantu Abamnyama* and *The Black People* will consist of an alternating interpretation and thematic analysis of the two texts. The alternation occurs because the two works are essentially separate and could even be defined as two different discourses. Therefore, where it is appropriate the discussion will emphasise the autonomy of each of the texts; for practical purposes the two books *Abantu Abamnyama* and *The Black People* are assumed to be the same text.

From the fact that Magma Fuze's serialised articles in *Ilanga* often provoked his readers to challenge his theories and dispute with him the finer points of his speculations about African history, one can surmise that there was indeed a lively conversation between Fuze and his readers and that, in the absence of contemporary reviews of the book *Abantu Abamnyama*, the letters serve as a barometer of his readers' attitudes to his intellectual project. Typically, this conversation between Fuze and his readers was punctuated by either scathing criticism of his articles or praise as exemplified in the following request from I.N. Nyembezi who praised him thus:



... Udaba lwako lokuhlazulula uHlanga lumtoti luyatokozisa. Luyisiqalo sezindaba zonke ezipambili ezizovuselela uHlanga lubhale, sibe nezincwadi zolimi lwesintu. Akwaba uzokwenza incwadi ezogcina indaba yezizwe zakiti, nezikole zezingane zoyitenga, izingane zazi imikuba yesizwe sazo zingaphenduki amaBholomane nje. AbeSutu sebenezincwadi eziningi zolimi lwakubo. (Nyembezi, 1916: 3)

...This matter of yours of clarifying our ancestry [kinship] is sweet and pleasing. It is the beginning of all excellent stories that will awaken [revive] our kin<sup>19</sup> to write, so that we may have books in our 'indigenous'<sup>20</sup> [folk] languages. You will perhaps create a book that will preserve [store] the story of our nations, so that the children's schools could buy it, and the children know the customs of their nation and not become half-castes<sup>21</sup>. The Sotho people now have many books in their language.

Nyembezi's enthusiasm for books and the writing of the 'story' of the nation in indigenous languages confirms what we already know about the general characteristics of the educated African readers of *Ilanga lase Natal*. His response dovetails with the title of Fuze's series of articles, namely, 'Abantu Nemikuba Yabo / Ukuhlazululwa Kwohlanga' / 'The People [Black people] and their customs / A Clarification of Ancestry'. In his repeated use of 'Abantu' / 'The People/Black people' one can already discern Fuze's preoccupation with the 'origins' of South Africa's 'black people' and their migrations from other parts of the African continent. However, Fuze's writing was not so programmatic; the titles of these articles often changed from week to week and surprisingly, the content of these suggestively titled articles was not about the 'African' people generally, but about the recent history of the Zulu people and the demise of the Zulu kingdom. This suggests that there is in fact no direct or obvious relationship between these articles and the book *Abantu Abamnyama*. The telling proof of this is that in the book, Fuze only mentions his 1877 trip to the Zulu kingdom to see Cetshwayo and not his 1859 trip which he made as a young man in the company of Colenso and his *Ekukhanyeni* contingent. The relevance of Nyembezi's request is therefore not the fact that as early as 1916 Fuze was being encouraged to write a book, but that to Nyembezi and other readers the undertaking would preserve indigenous custom and thus act as a bulwark against the degeneration of black people into 'half-castes'. Although the use of the term 'half-caste' suggests a racist concern with purity and an aversion to 'miscegenation', it is also possible to read in Nyembezi's statement a desire to preserve, through writing, the cultural integrity of African peoples. This is evident in his comparative statement that the Sotho people have their own literature, and that in this regard they were far ahead of their Zulu-speaking counterparts. Nyembezi was therefore focussed on the modern activities of writing and producing books rather than the preservation of some traditional and atavistic racial identity. Nyembezi's measure, of comparing the literary productions of the Sotho-speakers with those of the Zulu-speakers is shared by Alice Werner whose 'Some Native Writers in South Africa' is one of the few contemporary reviews of Fuze's book that exist. Her article is also an example of an assessment of *Abantu Abamnyama* that was based on the original Zulu text.<sup>22</sup> Like Nyembezi, Werner compared the literatures of the

various language groups and rated them accordingly; she also identified the Sotho-speakers as the leaders in literary output<sup>23</sup>:

**The present generation...has witnessed a remarkable outburst of literary activity among genuine natives. The best known of these, so far, hail from Basutoland, but there is a growing number of books in Xosa [sic], of which less has been heard in this country, and in Natal several promising writers are coming forward. (1931: 27)**

Nyembezi's praise of Fuze's work therefore seems prescient when read in light of Werner's description of the strides made by 'native writers'. Moreover, this reinforces the argument that those black colonial intellectuals who identified with the modernising effects of writing were painfully aware of the urgency of the task of recording indigenous history and custom. On the book itself, Werner, like Nyembezi depicted it as a worthy beginning to the establishment of an indigenous literature in the Zulu language. She also gave Fuze the benefit of the doubt by describing *Abantu Abamnyama* as a 'curiously mixed production' (1931: 36), she added:

**...along with valuable first-hand accounts of Zulu customs and of incidents which had come within the writer's own knowledge – e.g. the events of 1888, with the trial and subsequent exile of the Zulu chiefs – we find speculations as to the ultimate origin of the South African peoples from the Lost Ten Tribes. In fairness, however, it must be said that the latter occupy comparatively little space. (1931: 36)**

Taken together, both Nyembezi and Werner's comments suggest that Fuze's decision to write his book was partly a response to the urgency of 'keeping up' with the other language groups, and also that Fuze's desire to conserve, for future generations, the customs and traditions of 'the black people' was not an idiosyncratic impulse but a common preoccupation of the African literati. Thus, although there are not many contemporary reviews and criticisms of the book, it is fair to conclude that, at least from the perspective of his *Ilanga lase Natal* readers, Fuze's book had laid the foundations for a Zulu language historical literature and to some measure compensated for the absence of Zulu-speaking 'native writers'.

### ***Literature survey: Fuze's readers***

As an author Magma Fuze, has unlike his other contemporary Sol Plaatje, not been lionized, or even inducted into that exclusive pantheon of anti-colonial writers. This is despite the fact that his book, the translated version mostly, is widely read and referenced by a medley of authors and thinkers, both now and then. One can speculate about the reasons for this state of affairs, but the fact that *The Black People and Whence They Came* continuously appears in footnotes and bibliographies suggests that the disparity in the careers of the author and of the text has not diminished the value of the book. That said, these citations of *The Black People* have served different functions and have not necessarily been approving, or well considered. Moreover, most of these citations rely on the English version of *The Black People* and not the Zulu *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona*. Thus, caught in the trap of being a translated text, *The Black People and Whence They Came* has



received mostly a cursory treatment from historians and students of Zulu culture, language and literature.

Although the latter observation may seem like an indictment of the neglect of Fuze's book, it is not. Rather, the observation is meant to indicate that the canonisation of authors is essentially a selective process in which the political, social and cultural climate can push an author like Fuze to the margins of an emerging literature or literary culture. The marginalisation of Magma Fuze, as a Zulu-language author, is therefore explicable, but the central objective of this discussion is not to provide such explanations. Rather, the aim is to read *Abantu Abamnyama* in light of its neglect, or even misrepresentation. This means understanding how Fuze's book fits, or doesn't fit into that broad category of 'African letters' which Olakunle George defines as 'an attempt to develop a discourse where "the modern" is not covertly associated with the West while the non-West is discursively frozen in the status of "the traditional"' (2003: xv). Although George uses the term to define the literature produced by African writers in the 1950s and 1960s, it seems equally appropriate to use the term to define the intellectual products of the *amakholwa* of Fuze's generation by examining how this literature has been read and interpreted.

It is useful to think of Magma Fuze's readers as divided into two kinds: there are those who have read and interpreted *Abantu Abamnyama* from a literary point of view and there are those who focus on Fuze as a historical figure or narrator of historical events. By far the most prominent and significant portion of Fuze's readers consists of the latter group, namely historians and scholars who have largely used or searched the book as a source of historical information. In this regard, the general guiding principle is that *Abantu Abamnyama* is an imperfect historical source, which should be read in conjunction with other sources and writers. This understanding of the contribution of colonial 'native writers' is central to the debates on South Africa's historiography traditions. Historians like Chris Saunders for example tend to place Magma Fuze in the category of 'amateur historians' (See Saunders, 1988); and this suggestion of amateurism permits a guarded reading of these writers' historical narratives. This debate on South African historiography and the contribution of black writers is explored in the second chapter. In contrast to these historiographical debates, there are those scholars who have chosen to locate Fuze within the broader category of African or Zulu literature.<sup>24</sup> From this perspective Fuze is a marker in a trajectory of an emerging literary culture that is often dated back to the first missionary grammars, dictionaries, translations and hymns and stretches to the most contemporary novels in *isiZulu*. When interpreted from this point of view, *Abantu Abamnyama* becomes an example of a particular phase, style or genre within the category of 'Zulu literature'. The objective of the present discussion is to summarise and present the manner in which *Abantu Abamnyama* was/is read as both a historical book and a

literary work. The focus therefore is on the historian or literary critic as a context-bound reader rather than just as a writer of historical accounts or literary criticism. Reading is therefore assumed to be a contextual activity, bound up in the historical, political and social environment of the reader. The discussion begins by presenting some preliminary comments on how Fuze was read by his foremost readers, namely the translator and the editor who are responsible for the English version *The Black People*. As hinted at, A.T. Cope's editing divided the text into categories that Fuze himself did not use and in so doing introduced a typology that classifies Fuze's writing into ethnography, history and Zulu history. Notwithstanding these excisions and alterations, A.T. Cope and the translator H.C. Lugg are the most immediate of Fuze's readers precisely because their interpretations of his text have structured its present form and now accompany the book as supplements and gloss on the text. Moreover, the inclusion of Shula Marks' notes as part of the glosses on Fuze's book, adds her to the list of readers and commentators. These three readers, Lugg, Cope and Marks, are therefore significant because their commentary has inadvertently become part of Magma Fuze's book and therefore implicitly influenced the way that others may have read the book.

In his role as the translator, H.C. Lugg provided a brief chronicle of Fuze's life which emphasised his conversion to Christianity and his relationship to Colenso. On the significance of *Abantu Abamnyama*, Lugg, like other reviewers underscored the novelty of the book as the 'first book ever written by an African of this Province [Natal]' (1979: xvii). Lugg's assessment of *Abantu Abamnyama* begins from the presumption that the book is a repository of what he calls the 'sidelights of Zulu history' (1979: xvii). Such a statement serves two functions: it identifies Fuze's book as a historical book but it also immediately marginalises the work by insinuating that for the 'highlights' of Zulu history, one would have to look elsewhere (See Draper, 1998: 19). Ironically, Lugg obtained his copy of the book from the estate of J.Y. Gibson, the author of *The Story of the Zulus*, whose inscribed copy indicates that Gibson was also one of Fuze's readers (1979: xviii). The distinction between the 'sidelights' provided by Fuze and the 'highlights' provided by the likes of Gibson is not explored by Lugg, but it is clear that his reading of *Abantu Abamnyama* belongs to the 'oral history' school of African historiography. As defined by Desai (2001: 162), this approach adopts a sceptical attitude to the oral testimony of African informants since their narratives are assumed to be changeable and malleable (See chapter 1). In the case of Lugg, this scepticism towards the oral testimonies is transferred to *Abantu Abamnyama*, as an account written by an African writer.<sup>25</sup> Implicit in this approach is the tendency of the translator, editor and other commentators, to annotate the text with 'corrections' and supplementary information, which highlight the errors

of the author. Lugg, for example, makes a particular note of Fuze's 'faults of style and errors of fact' (1979: xvii). Cope responds to Lugg's criticism by stating that:

**The quality of the book depends largely upon its literary style...There are 'errors of fact', some of which have been corrected by the editor...As to the 'faults of style', they arise from the fact that the author's background was not a literate society, and he has no standard of literary style. He writes as he speaks...(1979: xii)**

Although a seemingly charitable and appropriate rejoinder to Lugg, Cope also identified deficiencies in Fuze's book. His comment on the title of the book is that,

**The full title of the book is *Abantu Abamnyama* (The Black People) and less prominently *Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (Whence They Came). I have deliberately played down 'whence they came' in the title, for the interest here is not in how much the author knows, but how little he knows (except in the matter of clan relationships and genealogies), and how limited his historical and geographical horizons. One's admirations for Bryant increases when one realises that it was from such shreds and scraps that he compiled his remarkably coherent picture entitled *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*...(1979: ix)**

Thus whereas Lugg only described Fuze's book as containing the 'sidelights' of Zulu history, Cope goes further by highlighting not only Fuze's ignorance but also by setting A.T. Bryant as a standard by which Fuze's work should be judged. His decision to underplay the 'whence they came' is thus informed by his comparison of Fuze and Bryant, and this despite the fact that he acknowledges that Fuze had 'no standard of literary style'.

Furthermore, Cope did not mention that at least a whole chapter of Bryant's *Olden Times in Zululand* was 'dedicated' to Fuze (see Chapter 2); the 'shreds and scraps' of Bryant's narrative came from informants like Fuze, who in his case, were struggling to have their own writing published. By further entrenching the notion that African writers remain 'native informants' even when they write their own original works, both Cope and Lugg implicitly endorsed the colonial historiography created by the likes of Bryant in that they did not explore the possibility of an African-originated narrative 'style'.

On the broader political and social significance of the book, Cope more than Lugg, explored Fuze's nationalism and his conflicted identity brought on by his conversion to Christianity and his acculturation through mission life. In emphasising Fuze's life as a partial explanation of the content of the book, Cope underscored what he terms 'the expression of mind and the sociological reflections' found in the first eight chapters and introduction of the book (1979: x). For Cope, Fuze's historical and social environment defined both his identity and the kind of book he could write. Cope argued that,

**As a convert to Christianity in the nineteenth century colonial situation, even under a teacher so sympathetic as Bishop Colenso, the author stood at the forefront of the clash of cultures, values and interests...A major interest of the book is the way in which Fuze lives in several worlds at once. (1979: x-xi)**

In further defining what this 'clash of cultures' meant for converts of Fuze's generation, Cope specifically emphasised the fact that Fuze did not 'capitulate' nor 'resist' these competing identities and demands, but that

instead he developed and reached his own conclusions independent of Colenso. Moreover, Cope speculated about the effect that Fuze's thinking could have had on Colenso, and regrets that Fuze did not record his conversations with the Bishop (1979: xi). Thus, as a characterisation of the intellectual, social and political dilemma's that defined the *kholwa* experience, Cope provides some illuminating insights into what motivated Fuze to write his book. Although sufficient for the purposes of an editor's preface, the observation that Fuze's writing was partly inspired by his conflicted identity needs further substantiation and development. By pointing to the communalism of the mission, Fuze's travels through Natal and Zululand, his chance meetings with visitors who came to Bishopstowe and his introduction to the affairs of the Zulu royal family, Cope concluded that it must be the admixture of these events that created Fuze's sense of Zulu and African nationalism, and that,

**All these strands are woven together in Fuze's life and work: the traditional and the Christian, the local and the national, Zulu nationalism and African identity; he sees the value of both local custom and national unity, he has faith in both the past and the future. (1979: xii)**

Although useful as a characterisation of the *kholwa* intellectual such a sketch only goes halfway to explaining why Fuze chose the medium of writing, why the book's central concerns were with the historical origins of 'the black people' and why Fuze adopted a modernist stance in his attempt to balance 'the traditional' and 'the Christian', 'the local' and 'the national' and so on.

The relevance of Cope's comments is that, in reading Magma Fuze, many other historians and commentators have followed a similar kind of logic by depicting the literary products of *kholwa* intellectuals as epiphenomena of the 'colonial' environment and condition, or Cope's 'clash of cultures'. Examples of these analyses are provided by Wolfgang Gebhard in his study of what he terms 'black perceptions of South African history'. Gebhard's main objective is to argue for the existence of a 'black school' of South African historiography, and in the process of this investigation he describes how African writers have reacted to each other's works. Thus, in comparing Modiri Molema's *The Bantu Past and Present* and Magma Fuze's *The Black People*, Gebhard criticises the two's concern with the origins and fate of 'the black people' by arguing that:

**The polemics of history had not yet emerged to influence the writers thus far discussed [Molema and Fuze]. They had not yet become involved in the controversy surrounding the ownership of the land, in which the question of who could claim the right to it would rest on establishing who had arrived on the subcontinent first. (Gebhard, 1991: 43)**

By measuring Fuze's work against the 'polemics' of 'modern' black writers, Gebhard, like Cope establishes a standard by which he assesses Fuze's work. Unfortunately his standard assumes that 'land' is the only category around which 'the polemics of history' should revolve. If this is *the* definition of what a 'black school' of South African historiography should concern itself with, then it seems that Magma Fuze's concern with a Pan-

African identity would not fit into this 'school'. The problem with Gebhard's reading of Fuze is that it is based on comparing him to writers who were writing in a different time and under different social, political and intellectual conditions. This anachronism means that Gebhard does not actually interpret Fuze's *The Black People*; he merely critiques the absence of certain themes in his and Molema's books.

There is a perceptible change in the interpretations and readings of Fuze when one retrogresses to early twentieth century literary criticism and studies of Zulu literature. In his unpublished doctoral thesis, B. W. Vilakazi named a phase or period in Nguni literature 'The Age of Rubusana and Fuze (1900-1930)'. By labelling a whole period of Nguni literature after both Fuze and Dr. W. B. Rubusana,<sup>26</sup> Vilakazi demonstrated not only his commitment to the study of Nguni rather than 'Zulu' or 'Xhosa' literature, but also the value of attempting a comparison of authors as contemporaries, living and writing under the same intellectual, cultural and social conditions. The writers included within this age or generation include John Knox Bokwe, Tiyo and J. Henderson Soga, John L. Dube and S. E. K. Mqhayi. On Fuze, Vilakazi highlighted some of the same weaknesses identified by Cope and others, such as that although the title suggests that the book is about 'the black people' it is really an ethnography of Nguni tribes (Vilakazi, 1945: 294). His praise for Fuze's work is expressed in his appreciation of Fuze's method of 'supporting historical issues by legend' (1945: 296). This compliment refers specifically to the manner in which Fuze described the *abaTwa* ('the Bushman' / San) by retelling a story of how in the olden days one exchanged greetings with an *umuTwa*, especially how such a greeting was phrased to avoid offending the *abaTwa* about their height (Fuze, 1922a: 3; 1979: 2). As a literary reader of Fuze's work Vilakazi's compliments of Fuze are relevant since they derive from a particular understanding of the meaning and function of literature in a society. Although Vilakazi's literary theory is a study in its own right, it may be sufficient to quote his definition of literature and its relationship to its authors. He wrote:

**History of literature has to be essentially biographical, for true criticism and appreciation of a literary work cannot separate the author from what has nurtured him...Literature of all nations prizes as the highest of its national glories those books which have grown out of human lives, rooted oftener, perhaps, in sorrow than in joy. The scheme of books is always woven round the scenery and the society amid which the author played his fleeting part. The author's past history and his aspirations leave an indelible imprint upon the pages he writes. (1945: 288)**

This commitment to studying literature as a product of the 'scenery and society' in which the author lived is clearly evidenced in the historical accounts that accompanied his literary analysis. His discussion of 'The Age of Rubusana and Fuze' is preceded by a section titled 'Historical Background' in which Vilakazi charted a history of South Africa in the 1900s; included is a description of the consequences of the 1913 Natives Land Act and also of the effects of urbanisation and the emergence of a black proletariat (1945: 289-290). What is important

about these historical accounts is that they not only located the authors under discussion within a specific political and social context, but they create the impression that the literary development of black writing paralleled the growth and maturity of political unity and organisation. In the case of a writer like Rubusana this parallelism is more than just an impression; he was a founding member, and vice-president of Congress (Vilakazi, 1945: 290n4).

Written in the 1970s, Albert Gérard's retrospective on Zulu literature is another example of Fuze's treatment as a literary figure. Like Werner, Gérard offers a comparative description of the achievement of Zulu or 'vernacular' writers and his points of comparison are the Xhosa and Sotho literatures. What distinguishes Gérard's characterisation of Zulu literature and of Fuze's work within it is that he identified Isaiah Shembe, prophet and founder of the Church of the Nazarites, as the transitional figure of Zulu oral and literary composition (Gérard, 1971: 184-185, 188-189). Specifically he focused on Shembe's hymns, written in Zulu, as examples of the earliest Zulu poetry 'composed...under the impact of the new civilization' (1971: 189). What is noteworthy about this characterisation of Shembe's hymns is that although these hymns were not published in book form until 1940, it gives a new meaning to the idea that the *amakholwa* were the transitional figures in the shift from orality to written culture. By identifying the transitional moment with an Ethiopian and prophetic leader, Gérard implicitly shifts the attention away from the *kholwa* towards a brand of Ethiopianism which was possibly an anathema to the orthodox *kholwa*. These shifts and comparative points need further development; for our purposes however the importance of Gérard's work lies in his assessment of Magma Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama*. His reading of *Abantu Abamnyama* centred on his main observation which is that Fuze could be 'said to have set the tone for much of modern Zulu literature' (1971: 202). He specifically highlighted three qualities of the book, namely Fuze's description of Zulu traditions and customs, his 'peculiar sense of historical greatness' and his 'keen sense of all-Bantu unity' (1971: 202). These three qualities form the base of Gérard's far-reaching conclusion and argument, which similar to Vilakazi's relied on comparing Fuze to Rubusana. He argued,

**The purpose of both men was to prepare the black South African for a dignified future by making him conscious of the greatness of his own past history and cultural legacy...Zulu literature is the only one that really began, as Fuze's example shows, with a markedly historical and nationalistic outlook. This is because it did not emerge until the time when the educated black South Africans throughout southern Africa were beginning to think that the praises and chronicle poems, being the records of the high deeds and the great men of their past, were the worthier part of their literary inheritance. (1971: 203-204)**

Although Gérard did not go as far as Vilakazi who coins the label 'The Age of Rubusana and Fuze' to define the work of the two writers, he went further by defining Fuze as a progenitor of a specific kind of historical writing namely nationalistic history. The three qualities identified therefore become important not just because they

accurately reflect the import of the book but because they connect Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* with the political emergence of African nationalism and underscore the pivotal role played by historical narration in the formation of a specifically *kholwa* nationalist consciousness.

In his 'Zulu Oral Tradition and Literature', Harold Scheub offered another retrospective and comparative description of Zulu literature. In his assessment Magera Fuze's 'interest in the Zulu past' placed him in the category of 'Early literary activity: Traditional Zulu life' (1985: 495). According to Scheub, Zulu literature is divided into two kinds, the first kind is about Zulu traditional life and history and the other consists of the Christian literature of translated scriptures and hymns. His innovation was to argue that these two elements co-mingled in the 1930s to form an 'imaginative literature' which reflected on the 'crucial conflicts which have profoundly concerned southern African writers for decades: the urban, Christian, westernized milieu versus the traditional African past' (1985: 493). This conclusion derives from Scheub's categorisation in which the missionary literature of translated scriptures was defined as a precursor to the historical and ethnographic texts of writers like Fuze. From this perspective *Abantu Abamnyama* looks less like an inaugural or transitional text and more like a variation on a theme that was taken up by a later generation of writers. In comparison to Vilakazi and Gérard, Scheub's reading of Fuze focused less on the book's political significance, although he does mention Fuze's call for black unity, and more on its literary content and place in the broader category of Zulu literature in which the missionary's grammar is just as important as the *kholwa* intellectual's historical novel. The conclusions Scheub reached are not uncommon, they in fact seem to reflect a shared assumption in the study of Zulu literature which is that there was a linear progression from the missionary writer and scholar to the *kholwa* intellectual and finally to the 'modern' writer. This assumption is also reflected in the work of C. M. Doke, who in 1932-33 was convenor of a committee which investigated the state of African literatures in southern Africa. The committee's report was based on a comparative analysis in which southern Africa's indigenous languages were grouped into 'clusters', with Zulu and Xhosa being the main 'groups' in the Nguni cluster (Doke, 1933: 10). In general the report did not paint a positive picture of the state of Zulu literature in 1933 – Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* appeared in an appendix titled 'The Most Important Zulu Publications' in a sub-category called 'Ethnology, History, Customs in the Vernacular' (1933: 51). Although the report did not directly criticise or praise Fuze's book, it is worth noting what the committee said about the state of Zulu literature if only to better understand why they did not give a more prominent place to *Abantu Abamnyama*. The investigation found that,

**In vernacular works Zulu is extremely poor. In marked contrast to Xhosa there is a dearth of Native writers. Apart from Dube's "Insila ka Tshaka" there is no attempt at biography. Nor is**

**there a single novel in Zulu. These are serious defects in the literary development of the language which does not reflect a healthy growth. (Doke, 1933: 14)**

This conclusion about the state of Zulu literature and writers is not very different from that reached by Alice Werner in her 1931 article. Yet, what distinguishes this report is the acknowledgment given to newspapers as a medium through which 'vernacular' writers were expressing their literary creativity. In this regard the report stated that,

**The part played by the "Native Press" constitutes a special subject fit for investigation...Much of the writing in newspapers is admittedly poor, but some is of a much higher standard. Often gems of literature, praise songs, history, folk-lore, etc., find their way into the Bantu papers. The best-known names are the following: Umteteli wa Bantu, Abantu-Batho (now defunct), Ilanga lase Natal, Imvo Zabantsundu...(1933: 28)**

This recognition given to newspapers, most of which were black owned, serves as an indication that these papers had a literary and cultural function of providing the *kholwa* literati with an avenue for expressing their collective literary ambitions. This means that although the report was not glowing or specific about Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* it at least recognised the collective efforts of this literati through indirectly giving credit to the newspapers they established and sustained. The conclusions of the report can be linked and compared not only to the analysis of Fuze's other readers, but also to Doke's own writing about Zulu literature. As a professor in the Department of Bantu Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Doke knew and had written about the missionary contribution to Zulu literature. In an article titled 'Bantu Language Pioneers of the Nineteenth Century' he traced and described the works of a large number of travellers and missionaries who had recorded or speculated, no matter how crudely, on the nature, grammar, vocabulary, and possible orthography of the indigenous languages. Magera Fuze appears in this comprehensive survey as a footnote to Doke's description of John Colenso's contribution to Zulu literature. Doke described Colenso as an 'outstanding figure in Zulu literary work' and listed three works that most deserved mention (1940: 234). In his list Doke included the *Three Native Accounts*, which as his description indicates was published in Zulu as *Inncwadi yamuhla uMbishopo was'eNatal ehambela kwa'Zulu*. He mentioned Fuze in relation to *Three Native Accounts*, and stated that 'Magera Fuze, who died in 1922, became the author of "Abantu Abamnyama lapha bavela ngakona" [sic]' (1940: 234).

In most of the above readings of Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama*, the focus is either on him as a historical figure or on him as a literary figure, the two foci hardly ever converge. This separation has been recently bridged in the work of for example Paul la Hausse (2000) and Vukile Khumalo (2003; 2004). The difference between la Hausse and Doke or Cope is that whereas the other scholars located Fuze first within the broad category of 'Zulu literature' or 'vernacular' writing and only secondarily within the literary culture of the



*kholwa* intelligentsia, la Hausse combines a literary with a socio-political analysis. The image of Fuze constructed by la Hausse in his *Restless Identities* (2000) is also based on a comparative reading; he depicts Fuze as not only the author of *Abantu Abamnyama*, but also as a member of an emergent literati and nationalist movement in which his protagonists Petros Lamula and Lymon Maling also participated. This inclusive approach is not however a simple matter of locating Fuze within a political, intellectual and social context; what la Hausse attempts to do is to integrate the socio-political with the intellectual by reading Fuze as both a *kholwa* intellectual and as a political actor. That nineteenth-century Zulu politics and the emerging African nationalism were important factors in the growth of a Zulu-speaking intelligentsia is central to la Hausse's book. In his work, la Hausse identifies the converts' world-view, what he terms, *kholwa* ideology, as emphasising, 'the practical efficacy of Christianity, the importance of unencumbered individual access to freehold land and its commercial exploitation, and the right to legal and political equality in common with other colonial subjects of Queen Victoria' (2000: 10). It is from la Hausse's work that one can discern that Fuze's understanding of the African 'nation' was shared by, contested and was one of the founding ideas of an emerging Zulu intelligentsia. This group of intellectuals however, still had to agree on the terms on which a modern African / Zulu identity would be launched. It is as a consequence of such disagreement that la Hausse can provide, through a biographical study of Petros Lamula and Lymon Maling, details of how in the early part of the twentieth century fissures appeared within this intellectual class with the resultant creation in the 1920s of competing regional nationalist organisations and ideologies (2000: 25).

la Hausse also offers explanations of how the colonial context structured and determined the manner in which this Zulu intelligentsia constructed notions of an African identity as an antidote to colonial versions of this identity. In the first instance, this intellectual class was marginalised by the fact of their self-identity, which hinged on a self-conscious assertion of their collective distance from their pre-colonial social roots even when they lacked the political and legal rights required to defend their positions within colonial society (2000: 12). Such complex contradictions defined the central political goals of late nineteenth-century African nationalism. One of the most important ways in which these Zulu converts attempted to assert their modern identities was by contesting 'the terms under which Zulu history and culture were being recovered by those seeking to establish the Zulu as objects of administration and proselytisation' (la Hausse, 2000: 12). Thus, for example there were debates in 1905 concerning the Zulu orthography proposed by white scholars: John Dube, editor of *Ilanga*, challenged these scholars and their Zulu supporters by stating:

**That we are indebted to foreigners for the dawning of Zulu literature is a dream invented...Please recognise that long before the Europeans ever thought of the Zulu nation, Zulu**

**literature existed not in printed books, but in the brain and mind of Zulu poets and orators &c. who transmitted it from generation to generation. (Quoted in la Hausse, 2000: 12)**

It is worth noting that both John Dube and Petros Lamula, one of la Hausse's central characters, would later write 'historical' works on the Zulu monarchy and Zulu history. Moreover, in the case of Dube, it is possible to talk of a direct link between himself and the legacy left by Fuze: not only was he the editor of *Ilanga* when Fuze wrote his serial articles, but in his prologue, Fuze acknowledges Dube's role in the production of his book. He wrote:

**...today we are fortunate in the mutual acquaintance we receive through the services of the newspaper [*Ilanga laseNatal*] produced by the son of a chief of the Ngcobo people, the Rev. J.L. Dube, son of James, also son of a chief, which makes observations for us throughout this country of ours in Africa. (1979: i)**

Thus, not only is there a direct link between Fuze and Dube, but Fuze depicts the *Ilanga* newspaper in essentially Africanist expressions; the newspaper is said to act on behalf of its readers by bringing news from other parts of Africa. In the original Zulu text, Fuze does not actually use a Zulu word for 'country' instead he writes almost metaphorically of 'kuleli lakiti eAfrica' (1922a: iii), loosely translatable as 'in this our Africa' (the italics are in the original text). Shula Marks, author of *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal*, corresponded with Fuze's editor Cope, and her assessment of Fuze's mention of Dube is that:

**As late as the second decade of the twentieth century, Fuze was still in close contact with Harriette [Harriette Colenso, daughter of Bishop Colenso], and seems to have acted as her intermediary to the Rev. John Dube, one of Natal's early nationalist leaders and the first president of the South African Native National Congress (later the African National Congress). In Harriette's diaries there are frequent allusions to meetings with Fuze and Dube between 1910 and 1920. It is perhaps to these contacts between Fuze and Dube that one must attribute Fuze's introductory acknowledgement to *Ilanga LaseNatal*, the African newspaper founded by Dube in 1903, as well as his clearly articulated African nationalism. (Fuze, 1979: xvi)**

Despite the fact that Marks knew of these connections between Fuze and Dube, she does not investigate their meaning in her *Ambiguities of Dependence* in which she deals mainly with Dube, the Zulu king, Solomon, son of Dinuzulu and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, future leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party. As such Marks' study is limited in that it does not refer back to the contribution of the likes of Fuze nor does she demonstrate how the 'ambiguities' experienced by a later generation of Zulu intellectuals, such as Dube, had antecedents in an earlier period. These examples suggest that Magema Fuze did not only exercise some influence on his intellectual contemporaries, but that he was aware of the 'nationalist' current circulating at the time. Further work needs to be done to describe the extent of this influence on for example Petros Lamula and other later Zulu historians. Because Magema Fuze is not his main concern la Hausse's assessment of Fuze is brief but its usefulness is in the fact that it is not based on just the book but on his other writing, especially his *Ilanga lase Natal* articles. In his work on what he terms the 'Class of 1856' Khumalo also reveals a concern with not just understanding Fuze

and his 1856 classmates as *amakholwa* but also as letter writers, petitioners, political agents and social critics. Khumalo's choice of the label 'Class of 1856' reflects the legacy of Colenso which bound the group of students who were the first to attend his *Ekukhanyeni* school together. Consequently Khumalo's work is not mainly about Fuze, but about the whole set of relationships, personal and intellectual, that were forged by those who had been educated at *Ekukhanyeni*. These two studies, by la Hausse and Khumalo, are a crucial complement to the present thesis.

## Structure and organisation of the thesis

As a study of the transition of Magera Fuze from a 'native informant' to a *kholwa* intellectual the thesis is also a study in the intellectual history of black thought in South Africa. Consequently, the topic cannot be approached from a purely developmental perspective, by tracing the phases or periods of Fuze's life and writing and then identifying continuities, breaks, disjunction, and so on. Rather, the present thesis interprets Magera Fuze and his book *Abantu Abamnyama* as a problem and part of South Africa's intellectual history. One cannot understand Fuze without understanding the intellectual conditions which preceded his writing of the book. The thesis is therefore a 'discursive' biography precisely because rather than being only about Fuze's life and times, it is also about the emergence of a *kholwa* intellectual elite and the extent to which this elite was intellectually dependent or autonomous from the missionary scholars who were their predecessors and mentors. As the first chapter will demonstrate, studies of the *kholwa* intelligentsia are not new, the purpose of the thesis is to understand how the life and development of one *kholwa* intellectual can illuminate the predicament of the collective of *amakholwa* not just as a class but also as a discourse community. The first chapter on the making of the *kholwa* is a critical summary and review of some of the approaches that have been adopted in the study of this group. Its main problematic is the basic issue of whether the *kholwa* were mainly mimic men (and women), a colonised intelligentsia produced by a Victorian and enlightenment mission education or whether they were *bricoleur* practitioners, cobbling together an intellectual and cultural existence from the remnants of their old oral world and fragments of the new literate one.

When understood as a problem of creating and sustaining a discourse community, the *kholwa*'s cultural and social predicaments become less an issue of measuring the limitations imposed on them by their colonial condition and more of an investigation into the extent to which they transgressed and undermined these boundaries and limits. Yet, the problem of the *amakholwa*'s colonial condition cannot be easily dismissed. In *Abantu Abamnyama* Fuze unashamedly borrowed from Colenso's *Izindaba Zas' eNatal*. The obvious question then becomes, what was the intellectual connection between Fuze and Colenso, and why did Fuze cite his

missionary mentor? The third chapter on colonial scholarship is dedicated to exploring this missionary intellectual legacy. As a body of knowledge, missionary scholarship is as large as it is complex. Missionary scholars wrote grammars, dictionaries, reports, letters and travelogues; it is therefore not possible to account for all these genres of writing. As a beginning to this exploration of this scholarship it should be noted that the missionary scholar is not synonymous with the missionary as a religious proselytizer. This is because when he wrote as a scholar, the missionary was not writing with his converts in mind – he was writing for a literate, erudite and curious readership located in the imperial centres. This distinction between the missionary as a scholar and the missionary as a proselytizer was however not as rigid as may seem. Despite attempts at objective scientific and scholarly enquiry the missionary's embeddedness in the project of conversion inevitably seeped into their scholarly treatises and it did so in the form of the 'native informant' who often appeared as a potential or actual convert or as an assistant to the missionary writer. Magma Fuze was Colenso's assistant and as Colenso's theological doubts demonstrate, he also became his 'native informant'. The central problem of the chapter is to describe the ways in which Fuze and other informants like him were represented by their missionary mentors in their scholarly works. The second chapter will therefore explore *colonial scholarship* as a body of knowledge in which indigenous cultures were represented, in writing, to an audience that was physically and intellectually removed from the actual encounter between the missionary and the observed culture. For our purposes our main focus is on the dominant discourses of philology, ethnography and history that characterised nineteenth-century depiction of Zulu culture and society. Although there are numerous examples of nineteenth-century ethnographic and philological treatises on the Zulu people, the chapter will focus on two missionary scholars and their work. The first is Bishop John W. Colenso, who, through his relationship with Magma Fuze, greatly influenced the direction of Fuze's life and work. Colenso's linguistic labours produced numerous contributions to Zulu literature, including his definitive grammar *First Steps in Zulu: Being an Elementary Grammar of the Zulu Language* (1904 [1859]). The other scholar is Henry Callaway, also a missionary and a student of the Zulu language; his most illustrious work was the collection of Zulu folklore titled *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus* (1868 [1866]). He is however best known for his exposition of Zulu spiritual and religious beliefs, *The Religious System of the Amazulu* (1870).

As stated, the central transformation that defined Magma Fuze's life is his shift from the role of 'native informant' to that of a *kholwa* intellectual. These two concepts of 'native informant' and '*kholwa* intellectual' are however not self-evidently meaningful. The third chapter is a critical analysis of the nature and significance of colonial scholarship, with a special emphasis on the contribution of the '*native informants*' to this literature.

Neither Colenso nor Callaway ever used the modern terminology of 'native informants'; the term is here used anachronistically to designate their collective attitudes and characterisations of the 'natives' as collaborators in the construction of a colonial scholarship, and the reactions of these informants to their incorporation into these scholarly debates. The main question or problem about the presence of the 'native informant' in the work of the missionary scholar is that if we accept that the missionary-as-scholar was distinct from the missionary-as-proselytizer, what role did the convert-as-informant play in realising this distinction? The main focus is thus on the manner in which once their intellectual labours were complete and being reported and recorded on paper, the missionary scholars described to their reading audience, the manner in which they acquired information from their selected informants and the extent to which they claimed that this knowledge was an authoritative account of the culture about which they were writing. The purpose is to discern how the missionaries conducted their researches: did they for example identify their informants by name, did they mention their ethnicity or personal history, and when elicited for their opinions on cultural, political or linguistic issues, did the missionary scholar qualify, annotate or give free reign to the ideas and insights of their informants? By describing the manner in which the missionary conducted his scholarly fieldwork – the basic assumptions of his search for knowledge, the method of enquiry and breadth and ambitiousness of his conclusions – it becomes possible to first, define missionary scholarship as a discourse community in its own right and secondly to speculate on how the intellectual labours of the missionary enabled or constrained the knowledge claims that the aspiring *kholwa* intellectuals could make.

Once we have better understood the *kholwa*'s cultural and social predicament and described and defined the role that they played as 'native informants' it becomes possible to turn to Magesa Fuze and his writing. As a prelude to the third chapter, the two chapters described above are meant to function as a base for the proposed discursive biography. As a 'biography' of Fuze, the third chapter is also a biography of his intellectual growth – it traces the process through which he became a writer, from his conversion to Christianity to the publication of *Abantu Abamnyama*. This process will however not be described chronologically. Rather Fuze's life will be divided into 'moments' of intellectual growth and maturation since this permits a diachronic study of how issues and themes that appear in his earlier work developed over time and re-appear in his later work. Besides the difficulty of compiling Fuze's entire *oeuvre* of written work, Fuze's literary career is simply not a smooth trajectory which can be used to structure a conventional biography. As an account of Fuze's growth as writer and intellectual the third chapter will therefore develop the argument that as a *kholwa* and would-be intellectual Fuze's life involved not only the construction of a personal identity rooted in mission life, but that it was also

about the creation of the cultural and authorial identity that shaped him as a member of the *kholwa* literati. Thus, beginning with Fuze's conversion experience the chapter will describe how and why he converted to Christianity and how he *later* depicted his conversion to his readers. It will be argued that in the course of his life and in his writing his identity as a Christian convert was for Fuze a site of competing meanings both for him and for those around him. The chapter will identify the events and situations which brought on these competing identities. The chapter will for example interpret Fuze's contribution to Colenso's *Three Native Accounts* as both a convert's narrative and a first experiment in writing in *isiZulu*. It will be argued that the *Three Native Accounts* offer a glimpse into the young converts' negotiation of what I term the *Natal-Zululand divide*. The latter refers firstly, to the geo-political reality of Natal as a colonial state existing next to the independent Zulu kingdom; secondly, it refers to the traffic of ideas, humans and goods from Natal to Zululand and vice versa; lastly, it refers to the dislocated and nostalgic sentiments through which Colenso's young converts and other *amakholwa* expressed their desire for the reform, enlightenment and modernisation of Zulu governance. The objective of the proposed discussion is therefore to demonstrate how these often contradictory Natal-Zululand experiences and understandings were formed and expressed in Fuze's written work.

In his later life, when Fuze wrote for *Ilanga lase Natal*, these early experiences were recounted for this Zulu literati audience. The chapter will aim to connect these retrospective accounts to the earlier work. Fuze's articles and letters in *Ilanga* are important for other reasons. They for one provide a prism through which to comprehend the relationship between his book, his personal experiences as a writer and an *ikholwa* and the notion of 'history' he presented to his audience. The chapter will therefore focus extensively on Fuze's *Ilanga* career as a complement and a supplement to the book *Abantu Abamnyama*. The main argument of this discussion will be that the articles and letters that Fuze and other *amakholwa* wrote in *Ilanga* reflect the fact that while there was, among the *kholwa*, a growing realisation that the power and autonomy of the Zulu kingdom was being destroyed there was also on their part an anomalous rediscovery of the Zulu past and Zulu traditions. It is therefore not surprising that when he wrote *Abantu Abamnyama* Fuze exhorted his readers to 'adhere' to their history and customs even while they were modernising. There was however no agreement among the *amakholwa* on how these contradictory forces of modernity and tradition could be balanced. The chapter will therefore explore how the *kholwa*, and Fuze specifically, used writing firstly as a tool in their fight for political recognition, secondly, as a medium to express their opposition to the colonial attack on the Zulu kingdom and thirdly, as an ingredient in their conceptualisation of a unifying and nascent nationalism. This discussion will therefore form part of the chapter's exploration of Fuze's nationalist views, and the interpretation thereof will

demonstrate not only how the emerging Zulu and African nationalisms were linked, by Fuze, to other problems of colonial modernity, but it will also attempt to extend this observation through examining how as a proto-nationalists Fuze understood modernity and his place within it.

In summary, Magma Fuze as the author of *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* is a prototypical member of the first generation converts and *kholwa* literati; but he is also a unique example of the effect of religious conversion on an individual's life. As a prototype of the *kholwa* intellectual, Fuze symbolises the promise of enlightenment and equality that was exported to the peripheries of the colonial world by the humanitarian impulses of evangelical and missionary societies. He was brought up and educated at a mission station aptly named *Ekukhanyeni* ('The Place of Light'). Like other *amakholwa*, Fuze continued to hold on to this promise of full and equal incorporation into colonial civil society and despite the disillusioning crises of the 1870s, he continued to believe in the Victorian ethos exemplified by his mentor, John W. Colenso, the Bishop of Natal. Beyond this representative position is Magma Fuze the individual – the printer, the assistant, the scribe, the tutor, the columnist and the author. Fuze's close association with Colenso meant that when the latter's career turned to colonial and Zulu politics, his converts acquired fitting new roles. The *Ekukhanyeni* faction became an institution; its members were implicated not only in Colenso's defence of Langalibalele in 1873, but also in his attempts to quell rumours about Cetshwayo's killing of converts in 1877, his condemnation of the Anglo-Zulu War and all his other political causes. In this regard, Fuze was in a unique position to observe these events; his personal biography is unmistakably punctuated by the urgency of these demands and causes. Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* can therefore be understood as an expression of two competing forces, the push of frustrated class and collective aspirations and the pull of the struggle for the autonomy of indigenous cultures and authority. Consequently, when writing the book, Magma Fuze expressed not only his own personal views and conceptions, but he also responded to the social context which made the project necessary and possible. In the introduction to the book, Fuze begins with the statement that:

**For a very long time I have been urging our people to come together and produce a book about the black people and whence they came, but my entreaties have been to no avail. Had they complied, the book would have been produced many years ago...Even though I may now be alone in this project, I think that there will be many of us desirous of having a book Abantu Abamnyama in our schools, in order that our children may get to know where they originally came from, because at the present they do not know. (Fuze, 1979: v).**

By positioning himself as a historian of the 'black people', or at least as a prime mover in this grand narrative of origins, Fuze is clearly writing for posterity. His aim is to tell the story of the origins of 'the black people' / 'abantu abamnyama', and to preserve this narrative for future generations. As such, Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* is an expression of historical consciousness in motion. By thus linking the identity and origins of 'the black

people' in his personal project of writing down this history, Fuze brought to fruition his own lifelong engagement with and participation, as Colenso's printer, in the production of 'Zulu literature'. His scholarly attachment to writing, as a tool and a manifestation of agency, found expression in his indictment of his contemporaries who were slow to appreciate the magnitude of his scheme. Consequently, what Fuze provides, in *Abantu Abamnyama*, is an illuminating commentary on colonial history, Zulu history and customs as well as his own speculative reflection on the pan-African connections that bind 'the black people' as a single historical unit. As an expression of his frustrated aspirations, Fuze's commentary should be located in the context of an emerging anti-colonial resistance. Faced with the dilemma that by the late nineteenth century military opposition to colonial expansion had been exhausted; Fuze and many other educated *amakholwa* launched an intellectual and cultural challenge to colonialism. In the case of Fuze, one can perceive an attempt to reconcile the contradictions and dilemmas of a colonial modernity through a reinterpretation of the past and the creation of a 'modern' Zulu identity which would be both a continuation of the past and a signal of future prosperity. An example of this re-articulation of Zulu identity is in Fuze's notion of the relationship between man and God, which had for him a special meaning for the African people and their customs. He stated:

**Adhere strictly to your own. It does not mean to say that because you see civilised people and wish to become like them, that you should discard your own which is good...The creator did not create us foolishly, but wisely, and there can be no doubt that if we love and acknowledge Him, He will uplift us like all the nations; but if we treat Him with disdain, and do not acknowledge Him, He will forsake us for ever...You will attain nothing by your present state of disorganisation. Unite in friendliness like the enlightened nations. Do not merely look on heedlessly when others are being exploited. So long as you desire evil to one another, you will never be a people of any consequence; but you will become the manure for fertilizing the crops of the enlightened nations, disorderly, useless, and without responsibility. (Fuze, 1979; ix)**

From this excerpt, it can be inferred that for Fuze salvation was not an individual act, as described by the Christian New Testament; salvation was collective or national and based on collective upliftment and progress. Other Christian converts also propagated such ideas and these constituted, as Paul la Hausse argues in his *Restless Identities*, a world-view which he aptly calls '*kholwa* ideology' (2000: 10). Thus, as a participant in the construction of this collective world-view, Magesa Fuze wrote *Abantu Abamnyama* at a time when Africans, Zulu and otherwise, were beginning to contest colonisation from an intellectual and cultural perspective. As oral languages and traditions were captured and fixed in texts, the colonised began to question the terms under which they would be textually described and documented. It is in this context that history becomes a discourse of identity (la Hausse, 2000: 12)



## Chapter 1 - The Making of *Kholwa* Intellectuals: A Critique of the Secondary Literature

### Introduction:

The proposed discursive biography of Magma Fuze – as a convert, a ‘native informant’ turned *kholwa* intellectual, and a writer of a ‘history’ on the origins of ‘the black people’ – raises more general issues about the making of *kholwa* intellectuals. If one of our objectives is to understand how the emergence of this class of individuals took place then it is important to explain their existence and literary products as theoretical problems rather than as just historical ones. In other words, as far as Fuze is concerned the objective is not merely to give a historical account of his life and his work, but it is also to reflect on the general conditions underpinning the contribution of seminal black or ‘indigenous’ thinkers to colonial intellectual life. If we take the case of Fuze as representative of firstly, the processes involved in the exogenous introduction of writing and literacy in oral societies and secondly, the emergence of local intellectual traditions then we need to reflect on the making of *kholwa* intellectuals more generally. For our purposes this central problem is conceptualised as the intellectual transition that occurs when ‘native informants’ become ‘native intellectuals’, using Magma Fuze as an exemplary case. The principal limitation in effecting this aim has been that there is no substantial body of secondary literature dedicated to Magma Fuze or *Abantu Abamnyama*. To compensate for this paucity and neglect, our investigation will take the form of a critique of the theoretical and other positions and approaches that have been used in the literature to understand and write about *kholwa*, black and diaspora intellectuals.

There are various approaches to the study of the ‘native’ or *kholwa* intellectuals ranging from biographical sketches to Marxist-materialist analyses. In the case of South Africa, the latter approach has often been more prominent than the former. One of the central and disputed issues within and between these approaches is the perennial problem of social sciences and humanities, namely the relationship between the individual and social group, agency and social action and personal and impersonal factors and forces. Although this dissertation cannot claim to offer a novel solution to these long-standing debates, it will attempt to transcend these dichotomies between the biographical and the social, the ‘personal’ and the ‘political’. Accordingly, Magma Fuze’s personal and literary life is explored through combining both a biographical and a socio-political and economic description of the emergence of the ‘native intellectual’. The first step in this exploration is to examine and assess extant scholarly work on the ‘native’ / *kholwa* intellectual. From a critical survey of the

literature we can distinguish four main approaches centring on *kholwa* intellectuals. Explicitly or implicitly each of these approaches is based on particular assumptions about this class of individuals, their personal, political and economic origins and their development (or demise). Each set of assumptions whether implicit or explicit raises key issues for theoretical reflection. The first of these approaches relies on biography or the biographical method as a tool for explaining and describing the making of *kholwa* intellectuals. As previously mentioned a notable number of studies of key *kholwa* figures, from Brian Willan's work on Sol Plaatje to Paul la Hausse's account of Lamula and Maling, are in the form of biographies. Biographers are, by definition, supposed to give primacy to a complete and candid account of their subject's life rather than to a theoretical examination of their work and thought. The *kholwa* have been no exception; their biographers have tended to adopt the traditional approach and have rarely foregrounded their intellectual development or ideas, the latter tend to be diluted into the other life history details. The second approach is based on the assumption that *kholwa* writing, especially that which deals with historical topics, must be weighed and assessed according to its conformity or divergence from either the indigenous oral traditions or the 'modern' specifications of historical narration. For our purposes this will be termed the traditionalising approach to *kholwa* intellectuals. This is because from the point of view of this perspective the *kholwa* are important because they are deemed to be either the articulate representatives of their indigenous cultures or intermediary personas who are neither traditional nor modern. As such, their experiences and writing are treated as exemplars of how a culture's oral traditions can be transcribed into written texts or corrupted by the very act of transcription. Thus, their accounts of local culture and society, whether historical or ethnographic, are read not as 'history' or 'ethnography' but as either instances of a communal tradition of story-telling and historical narration, or negatively as corrupted fragments of a once vibrant tradition. The third approach, which can be termed materialist or class-oriented, situates the *kholwa* within the colonial political economy and depicts them as either a colonised petty bourgeoisie or a complicit comprador class. From this perspective the term *kholwa* intellectual is an oxymoron, since it is argued and assumed that under colonialism there could be no independent indigenous cultural or intellectual expression. This central assumption of the materialist approach is controversial and contested. With the emergence of postcolonial studies there has been a rejuvenated interest in the workings of the colonial order and with this renewal has come theoretical arguments that question many of the assumptions that sustained the materialist approach to the 'comprador classes', like the *kholwa*, who were created by the colonialism and imperialism. One area of interest for postcolonial theorists has been the emergence of anti-colonial nationalisms and nationalist discourses. When studied as nascent nationalists, the *amakhholwa* would be situated within a

nationalist trajectory that begins with the articulation of a 'national culture' and culminates in the ideological reformulation of nationalism into a state ideology.<sup>27</sup> From this perspective the *kholwa* function as either the dominant and nationalist elite or as a marginalised subaltern class.

### **What did this life mean? : The biographical approach to *kholwa* intellectuals**

As one of the standard approaches to understanding the making of the *amakhholwa*, the 'biography'<sup>28</sup> has been a prominent tool with which scholars assess and evaluate the contribution of these key individuals to the political and intellectual history of South Africa. For our purposes a biography represents more than just the chronicling of an individual life into a coherent narrative. Rather, as a particular approach to understanding the making of *kholwa* intellectuals 'the biography', as a method and a product, needs to be examined: why is it such an 'obvious' and appealing approach to understanding the emergence of intellectuals among newly literate Africans? What are the assumptions and implications of adopting this approach to the making of *kholwa* intellectuals? This is what we will term 'the problem of biography'.

The biographical approach works at different levels. Firstly, biography can be a method for writing history, especially when historians write biographies to illuminate 'the life and times' of their subject. This assumes that historical processes can be adequately investigated at the level of individuals and their lives. When so understood, biography becomes a kind of methodological individualism. The approach also assumes that the distinctive significance of these individuals, in this case their emergence as *kholwa* intellectuals, may be adequately understood in terms of their own life experiences. The dissertation proposes to question both assumptions and will argue that, at least with regard to the making of *kholwa* intellectuals such as Fuze, neither of these assumptions can be sustained. Secondly, the *kholwa* themselves often chose to write biographies, accounts of their own or others' lives; biography and autobiography therefore became a mode of *kholwa* self-representation. This may be interpreted as evidence of the appropriation by these newly literate individuals of an established Western literary genre for depicting their own lives in ways which did not exist in their indigenous cultures. However, such conclusions may be premature. It is important that we first explore just what these *kholwa* writers understood such biographies and autobiographies to be, and how they represented themselves as subjects or authors. The last level on which 'biography' functions is at the level of *personal* identity. In this regard 'the problem of biography' is linked to the broader problem of whether and how the *amakhholwa* could act independently of their mission mentors, that is, the extent to which they could be said to have 'identified' with the precepts of missionary education whether these be understood in terms of enlightenment personhood

and subjectivity, colonial / imperial liberalism or the promise of a free-labour work ethic. These multiple senses of 'biography' complicate our understanding of the biographical approach to the making of *kholwa* intellectuals.

The case for a biographical approach to the work and significance of *kholwa* or black intellectuals has mostly been assumed rather than explicitly argued. Critical reflections on the nature and aims of a biography tend to be concerned with various subsidiary issues. Thus, in the introductory chapter to *The Ghost of Equality: The Public Lives of D.D.T. Jabavu of South Africa, 1885-1959*, Catherine Higgs laments the fact that 'there is no great tradition of biography of either blacks or whites in South African historical writing'<sup>29</sup> (1997: 3). Higgs explains this paucity of biographical writing as due to the fact that autobiography is more common and that this genre is driven by the 'need to "set the record straight" in a society in which an official white history has distorted historical understanding of all South Africans.' The problem, according to Higgs, is that autobiography is 'not quite history; it is limited by being a 'personal' view.' Accordingly, historians have in Higgs' view sought to overcome this limitation by using both oral and written evidence to document the lives of black South Africans (1997: 4). Cited, as examples of such recent historical biographies, are Brian Willan's biography of Sol Plaatje, Tim Couzens biography of the playwright H.I.E. Dhlomo and Shula Marks' *The Ambiguities of Dependence and Not Either an Experimental Doll*. For Higgs these scholarly biographers share with earlier biographies a concern to 'get the story right' and have therefore aimed to 'restore to South Africa's history voices muted by race, or by class, or by gender' (1997: 4). Higgs' own contribution is to study D.D.T. Jabavu as a model of what she calls the 'New African'; a term she borrows from Tim Couzens' *The New African: A Study of the Life and Work of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (1985). Her argument is based on identifying this 'New African' as paradoxical figure, who in the case of Jabavu, 'is able to function in two worlds without apparent conflict' (1997: 3). This idea of a 'double-consciousness' within the biographical self-understanding of the 'New African' is also evident in Attwell's characterisation of Jabavu's work as defined by a 'sense of accelerated temporality' and his claim that this feature dominates 'mission literature' (1999: 271). Citing, like Higgs, Shula Marks' study of John Dube, Attwell underscores ambiguity as a defining existential issue in the writing of the *kholwa*. He writes,

**The question raised...is whether intellectuals of Dube's class – the *kholwa*, converted – merely accepted the metaphors of the civilising mission or whether they appropriated them to serve their own interests...for Zulu-speaking Natal intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s ambiguity was a keynote which sounded in virtually every project they undertook. (1999: 268)**

What all these characterisations seem to have in common is a reiteration of the dilemma that is in fact part of the historical problem, namely the relationship between African modernity and conversion.

The nature and significance of religious conversion poses a crucial problem for the biographical approach to the making of the *kholwa* intellectuals. As a member of a newly literate class, the 'educated native' was most often the product of Christian mission education. Understanding the impact of Christian conversion on the personal and intellectual development of the *kholwa* is thus complicated by the fact that this personal change was part and parcel of a more fundamental social and political transformation. The process of individual conversions was inextricably accompanied by the introduction of canonised religious doctrine into a society that was previously illiterate. In such a situation the convert is required not only to master the tenets of their new-found faith but they are also expected to acquire a new intellectual skill, namely literacy. On the latter point, it should be noted that the Christian faith and literacy do not necessarily go together. Even within the history of Christianity, the notion that each believer was entitled to direct access, through literacy, to the scriptures was a hard-won right; it was not a self-evident outcome of the early expansion of the faith. But by the time missionary expansion reached Africa, southern Africa to be more specific, literacy and Christianity had become an inseparable, and as yet uncomplicated pair. For our purposes, the double impact of religious conversion and mission education on the lives and thought of the *kholwa* needs to be problematised in ways in which the biographical approach does not lend itself readily.

The generally accepted explanation of the role that conversion played in the creation of a indigenous intellectual class has been that conversion, by its close association with the introduction of literacy, precipitated a struggle between 'tradition' and 'modernity', 'orality' and 'literacy'. The dichotomies of tradition versus modernity, and of orality versus literacy, have thus been used to suggest that conversion's ultimate outcome is the surrendering of the traditional in favour of the modern, or more often a 'syncretic', unstable, and inauthentic admixture of both. On this view, and more especially at the level of individual biography, the central agent involved in the process of conversion is not the convert but rather the missionary mentor who is deemed to be actively fashioning beliefs and minds. Consider, for example, the implications of taking Magera Fuze's conversion to Christianity as the starting point of a biographical account. It follows that his relationship to the Bishop of Natal, John W. Colenso would be a central feature of the account with Colenso assumed to be the primary agent. This relationship can however be accounted for in ways other than the conventional view of the missionary fashioning his convert's mind and person. One of these ways is indicated in the chapter on the 'native informant' which will problematise the nature of the relationship between the missionary and those who assisted him in his intellectual labours. It will argue that missionary writing itself was conditional on the co-optation of willing and able local informants. Moreover, it will examine the extent to which the missionary's

written and scholarly work was in fact permeated by the presence of his informants' views and ideas. But this switch in the direction of influence, implying that the missionary's scholarly work was as much fashioned by his converts as he fashioned their minds and souls, is not readily accommodated by a biography focused on the story of the 'convert's' life.

There is also a second sense in which writing Fuze's 'biography', in a conventional style, would be problematic. In an important sense his 'biography' preceded his own efforts to represent himself through writing. What is a biographical account to make of the fact that Fuze's life story was publicised, especially as a consequence of the Pentateuch saga, even before he could articulate his own position as an indigenous writer or *kholwa* intellectual? For those informants who were aware of it, their appearance in print, albeit for a largely European or colonial audience, pre-emptively defined the parameters of their later engagement with literate cultures, both local and international. A biographical approach to a *kholwa* intellectual like Fuze could thus doubly fail: one failure relates to not adequately recognizing the convert's own agency in the process of his conversion and self-fashioning, the other failure relates to the almost inevitable omission of those literary or scholarly conditions which did structure these personal processes. In this sense, therefore, the 'problem of biography' is about the extent to which an account of Fuze's life could possibly explicate these underlying discursive conditionalities.

The challenge, therefore, is to consider the different levels, in terms of the individual life as circumscribed by these discursive conditionalities, at which the concept of a 'biography' can function. The central problem with the biographical approach to the making of *kholwa* intellectual life lies in the very juxtaposition of the terms '*kholwa*', which suggests an individual conversion, and 'intellectual', which suggests a public function: how could the *kholwa* transcend their already implicit function within missionary scholarship? What was the relationship between Christian conversion and cultural or intellectual engagement? How could the *kholwa* intellectuals be both Christian and worldly? What was it about Christianity or wordliness that made the *kholwa* gravitate towards writing as a mode of expressing their ideational world?

There are some similarities and important theoretical confluences between the biographical approach to *kholwa* intellectuals and the 'colonization of consciousness' thesis espoused most consistently in the work of Jean and John Comaroff (See Comaroff, 1991: 4, 199). This connection may not be immediately evident. After all, unlike Willan and others, the Comaroffs did not literally set out to write biographies of key *kholwa* figures; their main aim was to theorise and comprehend the historical anthropology of the missionary project. At the heart of the 'colonization of consciousness' thesis is the contention that the literacy introduced by missionaries

also surreptitiously transformed the African mind and predisposed the African writer to intellectual and cultural plagiarism or mimicry. On this account the missionary transmitted to his converts not just the tenets of a foreign religious doctrine, but also the very notion of enlightenment personhood as well as the *bellettrism* of nineteenth-century European literature. The implication of such a viewpoint is that writing, by black and mission-educated literati, must lack originality and could only be a reflection of their mentors' intellectual imprint. For instance, following a description of the extent of missionary disregard for the *Setswana* language and oral tradition, Jean and John Comaroff assert that,

**...when mission-educated black intellectuals were to build a new literary canon, they began by writing life-stories, chronicles of events, lyric poems, novels, even translations of Shakespeare...They had internalized the lessons of linguistic colonialism and the bourgeois ideology that lay silently behind it, concealed in such genres as narrative history and individual biography, such precepts as moral universalism and semantic transparency. (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991: 224)**

While this broad-brush relegation of all literary products of *kholwa* writers to the status of unimaginative mimicry of the cultural paradigms of the missionary may be useful as a generalisation, it does not explore how these writers developed their own authorial identity or articulated their vision of the meaning of writing. More specifically, the Comaroffs present as self-evident the idea that 'biography' was both a tool and a genre handed to the *amakholwa* by their missionary mentors and that these *kholwa* unquestioningly 'internalised' the subjectivities implied by the 'bourgeois ideology' of self-representing subjects. If by definition the relationship between the missionary and his converts was always unequal, destructive and structured by the 'linguistic colonialism' of the missionary it seems to follow that Fuze's literary corpus is a direct product of his conversion. The implication is that the biographies and autobiographies of the mission-educated intelligentsia were already inscribed with the cultural colonialism and markings of Western semiotics. However, this is a contentious assertion and not a self-evident truth. The 'problem of biography', namely the usefulness and theoretical appropriateness of the biographical approach to the making of *kholwa* intellectuals, is intimately connected with that of the extent to which mission-educated writers could write 'independently' of the discourse, ideology, and the civilising mission of their Christian pastors. The life and writing of Magera Fuze represents the possibility of such intellectual and ideological independence, if independence is understood as the ability of the colonised writer to articulate, despite the cultural, social and political constraints, an alternative discourse to the colonial one.

A different approach is suggested by la Hausse in his definition of biography which connects the lives of his protagonists with the underlying process of modernity. He states that,

**...modernity, unlike the rituals and cultural practices of traditional societies, offers no obvious ontological security for the formation of self-identity. It is, of course, in the nature of biography,**

**which is itself closely linked to the rise of modernity, that it contracts to deliver a self. Yet it must do so on the basis of a myth of personal coherence – for no person's self, subject as it is to recreation through time, can be said to possess a single, irreducible, objective form. (la Hausse, 2000: 3)**

This alternative approach to the cultural and intellectual milieu that formed the *kholwa* intellectual implies that the interaction between the modernity introduced by mission education and colonialism and the crises of self-identity experienced by these intellectuals are not, as the Comaroffs contend, reducible to the formula of the 'colonization of consciousness'. As la Hausse suggests, modernity functioned as a matrix<sup>30</sup> in which the *amakholwa*, in the absence of assured success, created and re-created their 'selves'. Significantly the fashioning of new personal identities involved participating and sharing in new discourse communities of mission-educated and literate Africans. This contest over selfhood and self-expression was not primarily a private affair; what is noteworthy about Fuze and his contemporaries was their commitment to publicising their intellectual dilemmas and endeavours. The most common medium of this collective identity formation was the newspaper. Therefore, in addressing this tension between the 'private' mission-educated self and the 'public' writerly self, our discursive biography of Fuze will give primacy to the notion of the *kholwa* writer as 'a public self under construction' over and above the other project of fashioning a mission-directed 'modern' or private self.

This dichotomy between a public and a private self can be read literally, as is the case with Catherine Higgs' *The Ghost of Equality* (1997). As a biography of D.D.T. Jabavu, one of the Cape Colony's illustrious black liberals and intellectuals, Higgs' work is an example of how biography as a historical and narrative method can be deployed. As such her study is based on some notable assumptions about biography and its uses. The most salient of these assumptions is her assertion that,

**If the central question the biographer asks is, "What did this life mean?" Jabavu is a particularly accessible subject, for he seemed to wear no mask, no public face for the white world and private face for the black. D. D. T. Jabavu knew the meaning of his own life. He self-consciously defined himself as a role model for other, less fortunate Africans...Education for Jabavu was the great leveler of both class and race differences. His embrace of Cape liberalism was for the most part without irony, though this is not to suggest that he was so enamored of the West that he did not also define himself as an African. (1997: 2-3)**

With these telling statements, Higgs outlines both the possibilities and limitations of a biographical approach to *kholwa* and black intellectuals. By posing the biographer's question of what a life might mean, Higgs articulates the basic aspiration of writing a biography, namely that it involves ascribing meaning to a collection of lived experiences that cohere around the notion of a 'self'. Yet, her conscious appreciation of the biographer's conceit is immediately undermined by her next assertion, which is that Jabavu 'knew the meaning of his own life'. The latter assumption allows Higgs to place the burden of proof, on the question of the meaning of his life, on Jabavu rather than on herself as a biographer. In other words, if Jabavu knew the meaning of his own life then



the biographer's work is already done; she only needs to find everything that he might have said about himself and assume that this self analysis is by definition true. The assumption that as a historical and literary figure, Jabavu could know his own life leads to the obvious question of why, if the meaning of his life was so obvious, would he need a biographer. This observation is not meant to discredit Higgs' framing of her biography, rather it should function as a starting point to our understanding of the rest of her description of Jabavu, namely his political association with the Cape's liberal tradition and his Africanism.

Two other biographies of key black intellectuals are Tim Couzen's *The New African: A Study of the Life and Work of H. I. E. Dhlomo* (1985) and Brian Willan's *Sol Plaatje: A Biography* (1984). These biographies are mentioned here not because of any deficiencies in their style or approach, but because they are important reference points on how the lives of black intellectuals have been represented. Both Couzens and Willan reveal an awareness of the complexities of writing a biography, and in both their prefaces they describe, with varying degrees of detail, their individual methods and dilemmas about writing a biography. Couzens, for example, points to some of the ethical issues that a biographer inevitably confronts. He notes,

**The writing of a biography is a task of enormous responsibility, especially when the subject of the biographer is no longer alive to defend himself...The balance between sympathy for my subject and critical detachment is one which I have tried to maintain; inevitably I have failed on occasion. A biography often reveals as much about its writer as its subject. I wish it were not so. (1985: xiii-xiv)**

This tension between sympathy and criticism and the position of the biographer vis-à-vis their subject is just one example of how the problem of biography can be conceptualised and problematised even while the biographer commits to attempting the task of writing.

Although not contemporaries, Fuze, Dhlomo and Plaatje are seminal African intellectuals who, beyond the coincidence of their identity as cultural workers, also shared intellectual networks and discourse communities. Rather than a biographical focus on the course of their individual lives a concern with the development and role of these discursive contacts may provide a better perspective on the making of these *kholwa* intellectuals. This is especially true of the cultural legacy that connected Dhlomo and Fuze. Both writers published in *Ilanga lase Natal* and both in their different ways acknowledged the role played by John Dube in the creation of the newspaper as a forum in which black writers and intellectuals could express themselves. Thus in his elegy 'John Langalibalele Dube: Two Songs' (1946a) and obituary of John Dube (1946b), Dhlomo revealed his admiration for Dube as a *kholwa* intellectual, educator, writer and African nationalist. In his prologue to *The Black People*, Fuze wrote of the 'mutual acquaintance we receive through the services of the newspaper [*Ilanga lase Natal*] produced by the son of a chief of the Ngcobo people, the Rev. J.L. Dube' (1979: i). As for Plaatje, Fuze and him shared at least two important friends and correspondents, namely Harriette

Colenso, the bishop's eldest daughter and Alice Werner, linguist and lecturer at the then School of Oriental Studies (Willan, 1984: 186). Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa* is dedicated to Harriette, for 'her unswerving loyalty to the policy of her late distinguished father and unselfish interest in the welfare of the South African Natives' (1982 [1916]: n.p.). Fuze spent most of his life at Bishopstowe, he worked with Harriette as a printer and for the Zulu cause after Colenso senior had died, and he continued to correspond with Harriette and her sister even after the mission had been officially disbanded (See Guy, 2001: 150, 205, 304). The correspondence between Werner and Plaatje and Werner and Fuze also confirms the existence of what Khumalo calls the 'epistolary networks' (2004: 1, 27) which sustained both *Ekukhanyeni's* political activity and Fuze's contact with a world beyond the colonial frontiers. For newly literate writers like Fuze and Plaatje the worldliness made possible by writing was an important part of their personal biographies; it allowed them to connect not only with each other but with sympathetic readers and kindred spirits in other parts of the world. Fuze's correspondence with Werner was particularly frank and personal. During his tenure as tutor to the Zulu king on St. Helena he wrote to her not only about her interest in the genealogy and praises of Zulu kings, but also about his own feelings of abandonment and isolation; in a letter dated 20 December 1896 he told her, '[f]or the present I am living at the Island as an orphan who has lost his father and mother before being able to help himself' (Fuze (Magwaza), 1896a). As writers, both Plaatje and Fuze benefited from advice and encouragement offered by Werner. When Plaatje was trying to get his book on the Natives' Land Act, which became *Native Life in South Africa*, published in the years 1914-1915, lack of funds caused innumerable delays and Werner intervened to help him raise the necessary money (Willan, 1984: 190). In the case of Fuze, Werner included a brief review of his *Abantu Abamnyama* in her article 'Some Native Writers in South Africa'; the cordial nature of their relationship and their mutual friendship with Harriette Colenso is evident in her description of Fuze as '[m]y dear old friend the late Magema ka'Magwaza Fuze' and she mentions that he was 'encouraged by Miss Colenso to write his recollections, which appeared in 1922' (1931: 36). These and other examples could be cited to demonstrate how the use of a biographical approach as a historical method can give clarity and, in Higgs' term, give meaning to the life of a black intellectual. In the above comparison of Fuze, Dhlomo and Plaatje, it is obvious that there are ample possibilities of delving deeper into their interconnected lives and perhaps build a much more solid foundation for comparison. For the purposes of our critique of the biographical approach it is, however, not enough to point to the personal interconnectedness of the *kholwa* intellectuals. The objective of our critique is to move beyond these personal sets of mutual friendships and acquaintances towards knowledge of how these writers constructed their identity as writers within shared ideational worlds.

Heather Hughes' 'Doubly Elite: Exploring the Life of John Langalibalele Dube' offers a more critical position on the problem of biography by comparing it to the problem of deciding between what is 'history' and what is 'heritage':

**The relationship between a biography of Dube and Dube the modern icon is not unlike that between 'history' and 'heritage', as portrayed in contemporary debates. History, so it is claimed, has as its end the pursuit of verification and corroboration of evidence and of revealing and explaining complexity and contradiction. Heritage is said to have opposite goals, to secure the past and make it palatable by smoothing out the rough bits, forgetting the embarrassing bits and embellishing the bits that are important for present-day needs. (2001: 446)**

Hughes argues that as the first leader of the African National Congress, Dube is in the 1990s remembered as a political figure whereas in the past the scholarly emphasis had been on his role as an educationist, writer, editor and missionary (2001: 446). Hughes' distinction between Dube as a historical figure and Dube as a heritage icon is developed into an argument about the problem of reconciling the personal 'double-consciousness' of the *kholwa* and their public lives as intellectuals, writers and political activists. Hughes argues that Dube's public life was based on his dual access to the elite politics of both the African Christian elite and the Qadi chiefdom (2001: 447). This identification of the *kholwa* with elitist politics is also implicit in the approach of biographical studies which define the public lives of these early intellectuals in terms of the liberal tradition of South African historiography, that is, the failed materialisation of political liberalism in South African history. Thus, when Higgs writes of the 'ghost of equality', she is referring to the fact that although the civil rights of Africans were gradually eroded after 1910, they remained on the statute books as the 'last vestige of the Cape liberal tradition' and were finally erased only in 1959 (1997: 1). This relationship between the *kholwa*, liberalism and identity is generally described as an unrealised ideal, or even more caustically as a kind of duplicity as in, for example, Leon De Kock's statement that:

**The African elite who readily assimilated missionary education in the hope of joining the millenarian society implicit in the promise of civilisation and Christianity, and who looked eagerly to the fulfilment of grand humanitarian ideals associated with the name of Victoria and formulated in the face of settler colonialism and Boer hostility, were ultimately betrayed as the 'liberal' Cape Colony was drawn into the first version of South Africa in 1910...the narratives of identity proffered by missionaries and counter-narratives discussed here occur within this larger story of colonial duplicity which, if not consciously or maliciously formulated, nevertheless worked to savage effect in the name of 'civilisation.' (1996: 28)**

This unflattering depiction of nineteenth-century liberal ideology is a reminder that the public lives of the African Christian converts were circumscribed within the bounds of colonial society and its differential definition of civil rights and civility.

That said, we still have to return to the predicament posed by Higgs; can writing a biography provide an adequate account of the making of an *intellectual* or scholarly life through giving meaning to an individual life? Can the biographical approach illuminate the specific paradox of being a *kholwa* intellectual? Here we

need to reiterate and expand on our basic starting point, namely 'the problem of biography'. In his critique of what he terms the 'biographical moment', Lewis R. Gordon argues against the reduction of black intellectual life into biography. As he phrases it, his concern is with 'the ongoing practice of locking black intellectuals and their productions in the biographical moment' (2000: 26). For Gordon this 'locking' or reduction occurs when black intellectuals are studied primarily in biographical terms: 'the ideas of the black theorist were often absent and, instead, his or her biography became text for political interpretation' (2000: 27). Frantz Fanon and the emergence of 'Fanon studies' are for Gordon the quintessential examples of how black intellectuals become locked in 'the biographical moment'. In his assessment, studies of Fanon significantly fail to deal with Fanon's ideas and their usefulness to theoretical work; instead they typically refer to the text of his life. In a deliberately dualistic formulation Gordon connects this inadequacy of the biographical moment with the problem of engaging with theoretical work by black intellectuals in general by stating:

**The biographical is almost mandatory fare in the order of blackness. The implication – insidious, patronizing, and yet so familiar and presumed – has achieved the force of an axiom: *White intellectuals provide theory; black intellectuals provide experience*. The status of experience is such, however, that it becomes temporally bound, entrapped in historical specificity. Fanon's becomes a biographical text because his blackness is such that few of his critics can imagine otherwise. (Gordon, 2000: 29-30 Italics in the original)**

Read together with Higgs's pluralisation of Jabavu's life into '*public lives*', Gordon's axiom, and his critique of the privileging of experience in the name of biography, implies that studying black intellectuals should not primarily be about their experiential lives, but rather about their ideational life, that is, the life of their ideas. Moreover, when framed in this manner the biographer's aspiration of ascribing meaning to a life become less about relating the private with the public self of the intellectual, but rather concerns the category of 'the intellectual' itself. In other words, Gordon's critique brings to the fore the problem of a black intellectual in a colonial context: his or her ideas, whatever they may be, are typically interpreted as private experience rather than the universal and public activity of formulating 'theory'. The implication of this for a study of Fuze is implicit in Gordon's injunction that:

**...the writings of black intellectuals demand, then, engagement that genuinely requires a challenge to the self-reflection of our species...black reflections also are theoretical and informative of the human condition. (2000: 36)**

The transition to modernity, attendant as it is with ontological insecurity, is exactly the kind of generalised problem of the human condition that Gordon is referring to. *Kholwa* identities were formed and shaped, like other identities, by firstly the exigencies of the human condition and secondarily, by the colonial condition. A biographical approach is useful if it traces these identities as they take shape.

In setting out to write a 'discursive biography' of Fuze one has to confront the fact that in *Abantu Abamnyama* the presence of Fuze as a narrator is mercurial and erratic. When he chose to insert himself in the text as an actor or agent he often downplayed his own participation in the event being narrated or the culture being described. His self-representation within the text may therefore be termed an exercise in, or denial of, the autobiographical or autoethnographic moment. From his extensive descriptions of Zulu customs it is obvious that Fuze was acting as an ethnographer not of others but of his own culture. These cultural and historical details are however not presented in a detached and 'scientific' manner. Rather, Fuze weaves together legends and stories from the oral traditions with the contemporary histories. This admixture between the traditional and the modern genres of history telling create a complicated fiction / non-fiction boundary. Indeed Fuze's book exists on a capricious boundary between 'fiction'<sup>31</sup> (due to the oral component and his own creativity) and 'fact' (the inclusion and interpretation of recorded historical events and ethnographic detail), thus raising the question of the relation between such 'fiction' and the 'facts'. As Deck's definition makes clear, in an important sense both autobiography and ethnography are 'fictions':

**As texts, both autobiography and ethnography can be understood as fictions – not in the popular sense of something merely opposed to truth, but in the sense of something made or fashioned, based on the word's Latin root *ingere*... We can discuss the "art" of autobiography and ethnography as a skillful [sic] fashioning of a select group of experiences in a life or the fashioning of useful artefacts from a particular culture. The making of both tests [sic] is artisanal, "tied to the worldly work of writing"... (1990: 245)**

This distinction between 'fact' and 'fiction' also relates directly to one of the theoretical dualisms which have become standard in the study of the African past, that of orality versus literacy and of oral versus written histories and traditions. Equally important is the theoretical linkage between history and identity, or more specifically how the tension between orality and literacy constitutes and defines the identities of those involved in this historical transition. All these elements constitute the central parts or ingredients of a discursive biography.

### **Can the *kholwa* write history?: The traditionalising approach to *kholwa* intellectuals**

A significant portion of the literature on *kholwa* intellectuals has been preoccupied with how to categorize the 'histories' written by these late nineteenth and early twentieth-century writers and how to construe the relation between writing, history and emerging conceptions of an African identity or identities in their works. If it assumed that they were breaking new ground in attempting to write their own 'histories' then this should be reconciled with the fact that the *kholwa* did not entirely abandon their traditions, in both the practical and cultural sense. To the extent that the *kholwa* intellectuals were offering an alternative to colonial history, the

question must arise as to what kind of resources did they employ and to what extent did they revive traditional historical narratives and narrative styles in order to write these histories? This is especially true in the case of Magesa Fuze with his attempt in *Abantu Abamnyama* to write a history of 'the black people and whence they came'.<sup>32</sup> How should such a 'history' be located and understood? On this issue the literature tends to be marked by a crucial ambivalence, if not confusion. On the one hand it is taken as an obvious assumption that, in writing about their cultures and histories, the *kholwa* extended and continued established oral traditions and styles. On the other hand, it is taken as equally obvious that in their attempts to produce such 'histories' *kholwa* writers inevitably adopted modern narrative structures. Typically the general assessment of the historiographical relevance of a book like Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama*, as evidenced in Cope and Lugg's prefaces to the book, has tended to either compare his work to the oral traditions or to highlight its lack of the 'modern' qualities of a formal or professional historical account. On both counts it is assumed that 'traditional' oral histories involved qualitatively different narrative structures while the attempt to write 'history' is interpreted as transforming and relocating these traditions towards a universal narrative frame of progress and modernity. These assumptions define what we will term the *traditionalising approach* to the making of *kholwa* intellectuals. As an alternative to the biographical approach it is concerned with modernity's formative influence on *kholwa* identity, that is, with the effects of the confluence of mission education and identity formation. As an approach to *kholwa* literary products, its central concerns are with characterising the writing of *kholwa* 'histories' as either related to the established narrative frame of (universal) history or as containing elements of the traditional narrative style and thereby depicting these histories as instances of this style of narration.

The relationship between 'history' and orality has, for historical and philosophical reasons, been especially complex. From the point of view of the traditional definition of history as a discipline the oral cultures of Africa are notoriously supposed to be lacking in history. There has been a long-standing but underdeveloped debate about the extent to which Africans could be said to have possessed an established 'historical narrative' prior to colonial intrusion (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1997: 40-53). In the South African context, in particular, the development of history as a discipline and a literature is and was in the main synonymous with the emergence of a settler or colonial historiography in which 'history' begins with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck. Although the end of apartheid and the democratic transition has brought about a growing recognition of the need to accommodate alternative voices and African perspectives on our history, this has not meant an automatic rediscovery of the *kholwa* 'histories' produced nearly a century ago. These 'histories' have not, however, gone entirely unnoticed, but they have typically been construed using one or more traditionalising

assumptions. A representative example of how these *kholwa* 'histories', and that of Fuze in particular, have been treated is provided by Christopher Saunders' *The Making of the South African Past* (1988). Saunders' discussion of South African historiography is taxonomic and chronological. It is taxonomic in that Saunders proceeds by differentiating a number of schools or approaches to South African history; of the five parts of the book, three are dedicated to groups of historians that Saunders labels 'Amateurs and Professionals', 'The Liberal Africanists' and 'The Radical Challenge'. The chronological approach is in the fact that Saunders surveys these various approaches to South African history in sequential order; he begins his study with George McCall Theal, South Africa's most voluminous settler historian.<sup>33</sup> For our purposes the relevant aspect of Saunders' study is the place he gives to African writers in the emergence of history writing in South Africa. Magma Fuze is categorised under 'Early Africanist Work', whose defining characteristic is that it is 'amateurish'. Saunders writes that before the 1950s there were a 'few amateur white scholars who took an interest in African societies, and some Africans themselves who began to write about their past' (1988: 105). The first 'early Africanist' that Saunders cites is A.T. Bryant, a missionary and author of one of the canonical works of colonial Zulu historiography, namely *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal, Containing the Earlier Political History of the Eastern-Nguni clans* (1929). Saunders' identification of these colonial scholars with 'Africanism' has a certain poignancy. When he writes about the contribution of Africans themselves to this 'school' of historiography, it is mainly to stress their reliance on these earlier colonial and amateur historians. It seems that even as amateur historians they were essentially derivative in their 'histories' of African peoples. While describing the *Short History of the Native Tribes of South Africa* (1899) by Francis Peregrino, Saunders states that this Ghanaian, and son of the editor of *The South African Spectator*, 'published the first general work of history by an African in South Africa' though he 'drew heavily upon Theal, but presented a far more balanced account than was to be found in Theal's pages.' (1988: 106-107). The next two Africanists mentioned are Sol Plaatje and Silas Modiri Molema, and only after these does Saunders come to Magma Fuze whom he describes thus,

**...an early Christian convert in Natal, [he] wrote in Zulu a general history of 'the black people' shortly after the turn of the century...*Abantu Abamnyama* opened with the history of 'Bushmen and Hottentots', and was much concerned with the origins of different black groups. In part ethnographical, it presented a Zulu view of Zulu history. Only when, translated into English, it was published by the University of Natal Press in 1979, did it receive wide attention (1988: 108-109).**

Following the poetic license taken by Trevor Cope in editing the translated *The Black People*, Saunders evidently assumes that Magma Fuze's concern with 'the origins of different black groups' involved 'race'; and that it was ethnographic rather than a matter of 'history'. He does not comment on the relationship between this concern and emerging African ideas on identity which were often asserted in historical terms that transcended

the narrow and colonial understanding of 'race'.<sup>34</sup> Saunders' summation of this early Africanist work confirms the criticism that South African historiography has developed on the presumption that the study of Africans and their past did not belong in the discipline of history, but belonged to some other discipline, in this case anthropology. He argues:

**In the 1930s and 1940s most professional historians assumed that the study of Africans – as distinct from policy towards them – 'belonged' to the discipline of anthropology, because African societies had been changeless and there was no evidence to allow historians to recover the history of African lives...No professional historian before the 1960s thought that the writings of anthropologists could be of any use to his or her work. (1988: 110-111)**

The question raised by Saunders' account, though he does not address this, is why then were these early Africanists concerned to write 'histories' at all? The traditionalising approach appears unable to accommodate their interest in the 'origins of the black peoples' as a genuine subject matter.

Saunders' taxonomic categorisation of South African historiography was updated in Alan Cobley's article 'Does Social History have a Future? The Ending of Apartheid and Recent Trends in South African Historiography' (2001). This article retains the chronological identification of the pro-settler, liberal paternalist, and Africanist historiographical traditions. Again, Magera Fuze appears in the list of 'Africanists', and Cobley cites Saunders as his source. However, rather than define the Africanist tradition in terms of its amateurism, Cobley argues that its greatest impact was its 'concern for African agency in South African history' and that this concern inspired the emergence of a 'revisionist critique' represented by Shula Marks, Martin Legassick and Anthony Atmore (2001: 614). Unlike Saunders, Cobley's category of Africanist historians acknowledges that 'agency' is the central issue of contention and investigation rather than just 'race', ethnographically understood. According to Jewsiewicki and Mudimbe the conflation of history and anthropology is part of the development of African historiography generally. They argue that in the post-negritude 1960s the desire to 'demonstrate the historicity of African societies' led to a recourse to oral traditions and the validation, through the emergence of university-based African historiography, of the 'blurring of frontiers' between the disciplines of history, anthropology and linguistics (Jewsiewicki and Mudimbe, 1993: 2). Citing Jan Vansina as the pioneer, they argue that this concern with the 'ethnographic present' has created an artificial division of the African past into two periods, the colonial and the precolonial. Precolonial history was defined as 'the melting-pot of truly African experiences', whereas colonial history was 'neglected because it was perceived as a parenthesis, a time of acculturation and of domination.' (Jewsiewicki and Mudimbe, 1993: 3). Moreover this division supports the idea that oral traditions 'exist only for the precolonial period' and has also sustained a number of myths, one of them being that, 'an urbanized African would then be, from a cultural standpoint, a 'bastard'; only the rural and



thus 'traditional' African would be the incarnation of Africanness' (Jewsiewicki and Mudimbe, 1993: 3). This recognition of an 'oralisation' of African history is echoed in Desai's question that:

**Much of the discussion of African discourse has revolved around postcolonial writers and philosophers...I am pointing to our unacknowledged conceptual divide between the colonial and postcolonial moment that leads us to falsely equate the colonial moment with the oral and the postcolonial with the written. What happens then, to the works of those Africans who were writing under colonialism? (2001: 9)**

The general import of these observations is that many of the problems experienced by the historian in accounting for not just African history but also for the emergence of African historical writing emanate from a presumed division between oral-precolonial Africa and written-(post)colonial Africa. The effect of such a division is to mask the presence of the colonial African historian and intellectual whose interstitial existence between the African past and colonial modernity is as much an issue of agency as it is one of identity.

Quite apart from these taxonomic and chronological concerns in characterising African history and historiography, the presence of oral traditions has made historical narratives more difficult to construct for the historian interested in the African past. Even historians like Jan Vansina, who were concerned with how oral traditions can be referenced as indispensable sources for writing African history, still tended to treat oral traditions merely as 'corrupted' or 'fragmentary' portions of a potentially objective history, the latter being of course the product of the historian's sifting through the oral record. In his *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (1965) Vansina defines oral traditions thus,

**Oral traditions are historical sources of a special nature. Their special nature derives from the fact that they are 'unwritten' sources couched in a form suitable for oral transmission, and that their preservation depends on the powers of memory of successive generations of human beings...oral tradition is not necessarily untrustworthy as a historical source, but, on the contrary, merits a certain amount of credence within certain limits (1965 [1961]: 1)**

Vansina's primary concern was thus to make the materials of oral traditions subservient to the writing of 'history'. The problem with this approach has been well summarised by Ato Quayson:

**The urge to establish a scale of factuality by academic historians relates to attitudes in a broader field of scholarship to do with orality in Africa. It has to do with the attitudes towards oral traditions in general and the means by which to derive 'History' (as a Western and academic category) out of them. Nowhere is the problem of conceptual categories better articulated than in Jan Vansina's landmark contributions to the historical study of oral traditions. His *Oral Tradition* (1965) inspired great efforts in this direction by proposing a methodology by which to isolate the distorting impact that things such as generic conventions and cultural imagery have on the properly historical aspects of oral traditions. (Quayson, 1997: 22)**

The inadequacy of the traditionalising approach, typified by Vansina, is that in its overriding urge to eliminate the distortions from its sources in the aim of gaining access to the uncontaminated oral traditions it tends to discount the historical nature and significance of these intermediary agents. This problem is especially acute when the historian of ideas has to contend with and interpret the sources of the ideas and images of the traditional past as expressed by the nineteenth-century African intellectual class, of which Fuze was a member.

Rather than considering the 'histories' of these *kholwa* intellectuals as distortions of supposedly pristine oral traditions, we need to consider the possibility that the 'distortions' are themselves symptomatic of a change in the historical consciousness of the narrators, and that this change is itself historical.<sup>35</sup>

What we have defined as the *traditionalising approach* to the writings of *kholwa* intellectuals is by no means confined to the specialised historical literature. The key assumptions and problematic implications of this approach inform other important literatures as well, not least that of historical anthropology. The anthropological perspective on the emergence of African literati and their identity crises is represented, within southern African scholarship, by Jean and John Comaroff's work on the Tswana. The second volume of their projected trilogy, titled *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, is an exploration of 'how "margin" and "metropole" recast each other as Africans and Europeans, plural both, came to mark their similarities and dissimilarities, to inhabit and inhibit one another's fantasies – and taken-for-granted practices' (1997: 7). In short, in this volume the Comaroffs attempt to account for the 'agency' of Africans in the missionary and colonial encounter. However, it is telling that in the first volume, they express suspicion of the colonial African intellectual by describing the relationship between these intellectuals and missionary literature and publishing in sycophantic terms. They posit:

**In the field, the churchmen were also avid propagators of the "word". Their printing presses soon poured forth a stream of texts: lessons, hymnals, vernacular Bibles – and most of all newspapers, which were to bear the fruits of their campaign to produce black literati... The African petite bourgeoisie was to be as obsessed with leaving its signature on the world as its teachers had been. (1991: 37)**

The 'obsession' with writing, is for the Comaroffs another instance of cultural imperialism; a colonisation of consciousness that verges on the pathological. To be fair, the Comaroffs' statements in the second volume do respond to exactly the criticism that their first volume attributes too much 'historical consciousness' to the missionaries while leaving the Tswana with nothing but poetry and psychosomatic expressions of history. An example of the kind of statement that elicited criticism of their understanding of historical consciousness and oral or written expression is their characterisation of the difference between pre-colonial Tswana politics and the modern context. They stated:

**Poetics (in the form of praise poems, initiation songs, and the like) had been the medium of collective representation in precolonial Tswana politics. But in the modern context such poetic practice was most tangible in the everyday actions of the illiterate majority, who spoke of their history with their bodies and their homes, in their puns, jokes, and irreverencies. (1991: 35)**

What the Comaroffs mean by speaking of history 'with their bodies' is not clear. And, moreover, as Peel argues, the problem with 'nonverbal tokens' as foreground to historical consciousness is that they render Tswana culture 'amenable to a certain kind of anthropological analysis... Devoid of narrative themselves, they

[the Tswana] depend on the anthropologist to tell the story for them.' The irony, in Peel's view, is that this had been precisely the role that missionaries often arrogated to themselves on behalf of the people they were evangelising (1995: 588). At the core of the debate between the Comaroffs and their critics is therefore the question of how colonial African Christian converts came to 'historical consciousness' and what the relationship is between this form of consciousness, mission education and the precolonial traditions of historical narration and mnemonics.

The Comaroffs' dialogue with J.D.Y. Peel revolves around these questions of historical consciousness, agency and African narrativity.<sup>36</sup> The focus here will only be on 'narrative' and its connection to historical consciousness. A sceptic could maintain that oral traditions represent a narrative style that is simply incommensurable with Western notions of historical narration and consciousness. Such incommensurability is in fact suggested by the Comaroffs in their response to Peel's criticism of their notion of Tswana narrativity (1997: 42-47). The debate between the Comaroffs and Peel concerns the validity of oral traditions as historical narratives and their compatibility with what the Comaroffs define as a teleological and Western mode of history telling. In defending their stance on Tswana 'poetics' as narrative, the Comaroffs argue that it was not their intention to present the Tswana as lacking a capacity for narrative; rather, their position is that 'given the rich repertoire of media at their disposal, it was one that, *as a marked and specialized genre*, they seldom chose to use spontaneously, save in response to question or challenge' (1997: 43). For them 'the role of narrative in historical consciousness' has a specific meaning and does not refer to 'all cultural expression' (1997: 43). They state:

**Borrowing from our colleagues in anthropological linguistics, we understood it to denote a particular genre of storytelling and history-making: one in which past events are condensed into linear, realist accounts that make claims to authority and public currency, impute cause and agency, and so assert their own truth value. (1997: 43)**

As is made clear in the above statement, the Comaroffs seem to presume teleology as a defining feature of historical consciousness. However, even with the missionaries such 'narrative realism' was a construct of Western discourse on history and not a self-evident mode of 'history-making'. In fact it seems that the Comaroffs do not adequately respond to Peel; his criticism of their views on narrativity was not about whether the Tswana did or did not have notions of historical narrativity but that the Comaroffs' defined 'narrative' in such a way as to suggest substantial *differences* between the missionary, indigenous and African literati acts of narration. The issue is therefore one of definition and not of presence or absence. For Peel, narrative is 'a critical instrument of human agency, for it is the principal means by which agents integrate the temporal flow of their

activities' (1995: 582). Furthermore Peel acknowledges that the form that narrative takes is dependent on a social and cultural context:

**...while narrative as a universal human capacity underlies all forms of historical consciousness, it is always realized in forms that are affected by particular material, social, and cultural conditions. In all its forms, from the simple stories that enable individuals to schedule their activities over time to the complex histories that maintain social hierarchies and national identities, narrative empowers through enhancing the capacity for action. (1995: 585) <sup>37</sup>**

More specifically Peel poses the question, 'Did the first literate Tswana historians really have no prior local narrative traditions to work from?' (1995: 587). The Comaroffs respond by pointing to the fact that these early historians, namely Sol Plaatje, Modiri Molema and Z.K. Matthews, often complained about the lack of an indigenous narrative tradition. They quote, as an example, Sol Plaatje's complaints, in the preface to his historical novel *Mhudi* that his discovery of the story of the Ndebele-Rolong conflict on which the novel is based, was incidental to his other project of collecting 'stray scraps of [Tswana] tribal history' (1997: 46). The Comaroffs do not question why Sol Plaatje was collecting these 'scraps' of tribal history in the first place. Moreover they neglect to mention that Molema, for example, wrote his *The Bantu, Past and Present* (1920) in a belletrist style borrowing from 'Theal and other Eurocentric sources' and that when in 1951 he published a biography of Chief Moroka a reviewer called the biography 'a worthy product of George McCall Theal' and 'an INSULT to the African people' (Quoted in Saunders, 1988: 108). Thus, the Comaroffs neglect to mention that the views of these historians were challenged by other Africans and that therefore there was more than one emergent historical consciousness amongst literate Africans. To further substantiate Peel's argument on the arrogated 'right' of the anthropologist to interpret African narratives, one can compare his criticism to Mudimbe's statement on the similarities between missionaries and anthropologists. He argues,

**If there is a difference between missionaries' and anthropologists' interpretations, it comes from the intellectual particularity of their respective missions. In order to "save souls," the missionary undertakes the task of integrating his understanding of the local community into a process of reduction grounded in a theology of salvation defined within Western historicity. On the other hand, the anthropologist wants to contribute to the history of humankind by paying careful attention to all of its regional peculiarities and interpreting them according to a methodological grid of analysis and generalization which, also, depends upon the same Western historical experience. (1988: 66))**

Taken together, Peel and Mudimbe's assertions suggest that, in assuming the position of an interpreter of African culture, the anthropologist cannot claim to be free of the pitfalls that beset earlier forms of 'translation' and interpretation, especially those introduced by the missionary. Moreover, even though the Comaroffs claim that in their second volume they give more credit to colonial African narratives this promise is hollow if their search for African narrativity is premised on a definition synonymous with the 'narrative realism' they ascribe to missionaries.

On oral traditions and their impact or influence on Christianised African writers, Ato Quayson's study of the Nigerian Rev. Samuel Johnson in his *Strategic Transformations in Nigerian Writing* (1997) offers some insights into how the subject could be approached so as to avoid these dilemmas of the traditionalising approach. Like Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama*, Johnson's *The History of the Yorubas* (1897) was less about 'history', and more about the coming to consciousness of a class of intellectuals; like Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* it was a fusion of the epics, myths and legends contained in oral traditions with the colonial historiography that was threatening to supersede traditional expressions of historical consciousness.<sup>38</sup> Commenting on the contribution of Jan Vansina to the study of oral traditions, Quayson notes that the drawback of treating oral traditions merely as 'corrupted' or 'fragmentary' portions of a potentially objective history is that it conceals and negates the conditions under which such oral histories are produced and reproduced. He contends that,

**...what is at play in this methodology is a chirographic impulse to treat oral traditions as written documents would be treated, excluding the problematic parts that would relate to the dynamics of orality that might disturb the chirographic paradigm...In my view, a proper appreciation of *The History* requires that it is treated first and foremost as a cultural product, with an awareness of all the multivalent potential that it derives from its background of orality. (Quayson, 1997: 22)**

Quayson's critique of the historian's impulse to treat oral utterances as potential written documents has implications for the study of *kholwa* intellectuals: when confronted with the presence of evidence derived from oral tradition in the work of a writer like Fuze, these should be treated as *sui generis* articulations of the author's cultural and intellectual position rather than ascribed to the oral tradition he is assumed to be representing.

As a consequence of these contests on narration and narrative, the sources of historical knowledge, the historian's methods and the products of historical writing have in turn become the subjects of critique. The effect has been to make the would-be historian both more self-reflective and explicit in declaring their own stakes and agenda in the 'history' they are writing. Following the work of Hayden White<sup>39</sup> it has become increasingly difficult for those writing about the past, to claim that they can access and describe it from objective and neutral perspectives. By complicating the task of writing history, the notion of 'narrative' has brought the historian closer to the tropes and figures of speech that are commonplace in literary criticism. The extent to which this critique of narrative is directly applicable to the writing of *kholwa* intellectuals is an open question. This is especially so because when dealing with a writer like Fuze, the historian is confronted by a specific type of narrative, namely the native intellectual's articulation of a speculative and tentative desire for an African or Africanised historiography, with the author presenting himself or herself as a progenitor or a founding member of this 'revisionist' history. Writing a discursive biography of Fuze thus implies examining not only his relationship with South African historiographical traditions, but also his attempts to engage with the intellectual

crises of his generation, that is, his reflections on the meaning of 'history' as both a lived experience and an intellectual discipline.

### **A class on a national stage: The materialist approach to the *amakholwa***

One way in which some of Fuze's readers have dealt with the problem of the relationship between *kholwa* identities and the latter's infatuation with the enlightenment's modernity is by depicting the *amakholwa* of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century as a kind of emergent petty bourgeoisie.<sup>40</sup> Our analysis will challenge the crude 'class' theories used to interpret the literary products and political activism of the *kholwa* literati, namely that their writing and politics were the ideological products of a naïve and misguided African elite.<sup>41</sup> Laura Chrisman provides an apt summary of this standard materialist interpretation of *kholwa* writers and their work. She argues:

**On the whole, these writers have been featured as precursors of the national and cultural liberation movements whose proper birth began in the second half of the twentieth century. Their constitutional reformism has been construed as deriving from a middle-class self-interest; their cultural practices as illustrating anti-colonial thinker Frantz Fanon's 'first stage' of 'native' intellectual development, an 'assimilationist' stance that imitates European codes. Alternatively, their adherence to nationalism itself has been analysed as a version of imperialism itself. (Chrisman, 2000a: 16)**

Using the language of hegemonic domination, Shula Marks argues that the ambiguities that defined the *kholwa* experience in the early twentieth century were a product of the creation of a centralised South African state and the impact of this process on local bourgeois classes (1986: 12). From this perspective, the centralisation of the South African state created the platform for *kholwa* politics and thus facilitated both their incorporation into the colonial order and also their resistance to it. She states:

**As in many parts of the colonial world, it was the weak African intelligentsia – themselves a product of Christianity, colonialism, and the demands the colonial state and mission churches made for literate clerks and functionaries – who first became conscious of themselves as a class on a national stage. Small in number and without the backing of a powerful bourgeoisie, they were both the most ardent believers in the new colonial order and its most vociferous critics. (Marks, 1986: 12-13)**

Although the above analysis is focussed specifically on the period after 1910, Marks applies the same kind of argument to explain both the appeal and the denunciation of Cape liberalism by African Christians (1986: 55).

In defining the African Christian community, Marks states that:

**For the prosperous peasantry settled on the Protestant mission stations of the Cape and Natal, as for the petty bourgeoisie that derived from it...the mid-Victorian "code-words" *progress* and *improvement* had a material reality. (1986: 47)**

Likewise the main assumption of Gebhard's criticism (1991: 43), namely that a 'black' historical consciousness only begins when the educated African contests subjugation by contesting settler claims to land, belongs to a 'materialist' interpretation of the *kholwa* experience. In its crudest form, this materialist definition of *kholwa*

identity implies that the *amakholwa* were merely peddlers of Western goods and values and that this was a direct extension of their uneven incorporation into the colonial economic system. Sheila Meintjes argues as much when she states that when applied to the *kholwa* the term 'petty bourgeoisie' denotes:

**...the intermediate class position of the *kholwa*. Their distinguishing characteristic was involvement in full-time exchange in a capitalist colonial economy. (1988: 27-28)**

The main difficulty with this approach is that it infers a direct relationship between the class position of African Christians and their cultural world and intellectual aspirations. As an explanation of the *kholwa* experience it cannot offer a more specific account of *kholwa* ideas and views. A strict class analysis would thus suggest that because Africans were dispossessed of land and forced into a position of a marginalised peasantry, the *kholwa* elite should have produced writing that reflected this mode of colonisation. That the *kholwa* did not in the main produce such an indigenous agrarianism then paradoxically becomes further proof of their colonised state. The effect of this caricature of *kholwa* life and culture is that it defines their efforts to participate in colonial cultural life as 'commodified' and therefore inauthentic, or not 'revolutionary' enough. Consequently, a historian like Golan uses the terms 'Zulu Christian community' and 'petty bourgeois' interchangeably when she writes: 'The historical writing of the Zulu Christian community, that is, the petty bourgeois' (1994: 8). From this materialist perspective *kholwa* writing is itself a product, literally, of a colonial 'petty commodity economy' (Meintjes, 1988: 28).

While the materialist approach to *kholwa* cultural life underscores the economic constraints imposed on this elite by colonialism, it inadequately recognises their specific and historically contingent appreciation of their colonial predicament. Historians like Gebhard are so focused on the material interests that *ought* to concern *kholwa* writing, the dispossession of land being an example, that they fail to explore what is there in the literary products of the *kholwa* literati. Although land was the major point of contention in say Sol Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa*, other *kholwa* literati chose to stake their claim in different arenas of contestation. One of these was the rapid rate and intrusion of 'modernity'. As a central theme of the *kholwa*'s self-understanding the question of what it meant to be 'modern', and the kind of transformations required by the precepts of 'modernity', acutely reveal the trade-offs that the *amakholwa* were forced to contemplate in their transition from traditional to modern society, from orality to literacy and from chiefly subjects to mission residents and/or 'British subjects'. These shifts towards the 'modern' involved more than just changes in the 'modes of production' of African life, they involved an intellectual adjustment to the cultural vocabulary that defined modernity but from which one was also, by definition, excluded. Thus 'progress' and 'improvement' became the code-words of *kholwa* life, not just in the material realm, but in the intellectual and cultural sphere as well.

One suspects that the reason that the *kholwa*'s struggle with or against modernity has been treated with a measure of scepticism is because the concept itself is so imbued with European and enlightenment overtones that it becomes difficult to distinguish the *amakholwa*'s conception from those of their missionary mentors. Attwell argues that such a distinction does exist. In his discussion of Magera Fuze's 'chronicle-writing', he argues that for the likes of Fuze 'modernity' was a 'particular experience of temporality' rather than just a project or a period (1999: 273). This definition of modernity differs from the missionary one because it does not imply that the experience of a changing temporality was either progressive or retrogressive. Rather, it suggests that the *kholwa* experience of modernity was just that, a specific and contextual experience of a changed relation between time and historical agency. Similarly, when Limb compares Fuze and Plaatje as historians, he argues that the absence of 'professional' black historians is a result of the effects of white supremacy and the 'restrictions on the free growth of a black intelligentsia':

**Plaatje and other black *literati* such as Rubusana, Fuze and Molema did write, often in the vernacular, about history. In doing so, they articulated the need for an expression of African identity and an African account of the past. (2003: 35)**

The particularity of their experience of modernity is that for these black *literati* the 'past' of local oral cultures was being re-read through the lens of the 'progressive' present and while this did not preclude an engagement with the colonial situation, colonialism and imperialism were not necessarily the central topics of *kholwa* histories. Rather, for *kholwa* writers the dilemmas of identity and modernity were inextricably linked both in their personal biographies and in their understanding of history and historical writing. The arguments presented by Attwell and Limb thus suggest that when reading *Abantu Abamnyama*, one cannot assume that its modernist tone and discourse are just an epiphenomenon of mission education and 'linguistic colonialism' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991: 224).<sup>42</sup> Such criticism ignores the possibility that black views on modernity were not just intended for a colonial audience, but that they were also part of the conversation taking place within the black diaspora on the concept 'modernity'. The breadth and reach of this conversation is encapsulated in the term 'black Atlanticism', which Gilroy (1993: 3) defines as the 'stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originated by, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing, and remembering that I have heuristically called the black Atlantic world' (See Chrisman, 2000b; Gilroy, 1993; Masilela, 1996).

The main thrust of these alternative readings of *kholwa* writing is that their cultural concerns were as important as their material ones. However, an appreciation of the discursive and intellectual conditions that created or hindered *kholwa* writing does not imply a neglect of the historical context in which they found themselves. It is therefore important to reiterate that Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* was written as a reaction to the



political crises of the late nineteenth century which culminated in the arrest of Cetshwayo, the destruction of the Zulu kingdom, the exile of Dinuzulu and the Bhambatha rebellion. His *kholwa* counterparts such as Plaatje or the Jabavus responded to the unique crises they identified in their communities according to their particular vantage point. In general such crises sharpened the *amakholwa*'s understanding of their social, political and cultural position, but they are not the only 'cause' of the group's recognition of themselves as a 'class on a national stage'. This study will instead highlight the incomplete nature of colonisation and proselytisation as an explanation why literates, like Fuze, continued to express a connection to their 'origins', and used writing to revive their Zulu past and traditions while also being conversant in the 'colonial' discourse of modernity. The basic argument is that the work of 'class formation' and 'class consciousness' was already underway; the political events of the late nineteenth-century merely heightened the identity crises that the *amakholwa* were already experiencing. One aspect of this crisis, namely, the contest over the meaning of Christianity, especially its relationship to secular and political circumstances, was already part of the *kholwa* cultural and intellectual discourse. Magma Fuze's anxieties about the role of the Zulu monarchy in the modernisation of Zulu society and governance, for example, predate these political crises since he expressed his views to Cetshwayo in 1877. The *kholwa* petition of 1875 also represents the identity crises that were already a shared concern of the group. In general therefore *kholwa* angst was due to their failed assimilation into colonial society. By the late nineteenth century they had experienced the colonial version of modernity; the failure of this version to deliver on the promise of an inclusive and equal society prompted these intellectuals to seek the foundations of an Africanised version of modernity.

That Fuze wrote his book as a colonial subject is a glaring and obvious fact; colonial Natal was both his vantage point and his nemesis. Yet, this does not in itself imply that the colonial context fostered or instigated a typical style, genre or theme for members of the colonial and educated class of Africans. There was in other words no omnipresent *zeitgeist* that unified the endeavours of the *kholwa* intellectuals, even though they shared a common identity as converts. *Kholwa* intellectuals, however, shared at least one salient and critical characteristic, that of being a colonised intelligentsia. In the work of Fuze the 'colonial condition' is both a context and a contested item. The colonial condition of the *kholwa* writers was a double-edged sword, in that it limited and also 'liberated' these writers. The limitations were obviously in the political, social and economic constraints that were imposed on all Africans generally and experienced more acutely by the educated 'natives'. Paradoxically, the latter status of being an 'educated native' also afforded the *amakholwa* a degree of liberation; not only could they formally apply to be exempted from 'native law', but they were also able to access the

intellectual, theological, philological, philosophical and other colonial and international discourses. Collectively the *kholwa* literati were faced with the Herculean task of defining their position within these various discourses; and then precariously linking these to their local circumstances and dilemmas.

When thinking of the *kholwa* as writing from within the context of colonial, imperial and capitalist expansion, this should be considered as one of many other kinds of contexts in which we can locate their activities. 'Context' therefore, is not a definite constraint on both the tale that can be told, and the characterisation of the teller. In his persuasive *Rethinking Intellectual History* (1983), Dominick La Capra argues for a differentiated notion of context that captures its multilayered relationship to texts and writing. Thus, in his discussion of the relation between culture and text, La Capra not only challenges the well-worn distinction between 'elite' and 'popular' texts, but he also problematizes the distinction often drawn between 'traditional' and 'revolutionary' texts. He writes,

**To the extent that a text is not a mere document, it supplements existing reality, often by pointing out the weaknesses of prevailing definitions of it. In a traditional context, texts may function to shore up norms and values that are threatened but still experienced as viable...In a revolutionary context, texts may help to break down the existing system and suggest avenues of change. But it is at times difficult to distinguish clearly between the traditional and the revolutionary context. And any text that pinpoints weaknesses in a system has an ambivalent function, for it may always be read against its own dominant tendency or authorial intention – a "conservative" text being used for "radical" purposes or vice versa. (LaCapra, 1983: 48-49)**

Implied in La Capra's observation is a warning that simply writing a description of a particular cultural, social, economic and intellectual *status quo* and labelling it the 'context' of the writer's thoughts, is not a solution to the problem of situating writers vis-à-vis their intellectual and social milieu. This serves as a necessary correction to those nomenclators who are keen to categorise African literatures, and more especially the writings of colonial African intellectuals, into 'traditional' and 'revolutionary' or, as is often the case, 'traditional' and 'anti-colonial'. In Guarav Desai's *Subject to Colonialism* (2001), the use of such categories is criticised for creating and entrenching a false association between the colonial moment and the oral versus the postcolonial and the literate. He argues that the main consequence of this dichotomy is that Africans who wrote under colonialism are sidelined and unacknowledged (2001: 9). Thus, the fact that Magerma Fuze and his contemporaries were a colonised intelligentsia should not be merely a conclusion, but the beginning of an analysis of how this group used writing to 'supplement' the reality of colonial subjugation.

### **The past has its own voices: A postcolonial or post-apartheid reading of *kholwa* intellectuals**

Rather than focus on colonial Africans as merely by-products of the missionary endeavour, contemporary Africanist and postcolonial scholars have attempted to define and describe the contribution of these Africans to

colonial culture and letters. Whereas the anthropologists focus on conversion and the exogenous introduction of literacy as the conditions under which a colonial intelligentsia was created, contemporary Africanist and postcolonial authors have focused on the function and roles that this group fulfilled within the colonial context. Of these functions, the one that concerns us most is the *kholwa*'s contribution to colonial intellectual life. The latter term is used here as a rubric for defining not only the literary and political activities of the *kholwa*, but also the social, cultural and political effects and representations of conversion by the convert, their community of origin and the colonial society in general. This kind of interpretation of conversion is, as an example, used by Simon Gikandi (2001) in his case study of Jomo Kenyatta in which he presents the argument that Kenyatta's ambiguous relationship with the Church was evidence of a 'calculated sense of rebellion' (2001: 366) and that 'conversion' actually facilitated the cultivation of a form of alienation that made resistance to colonialism possible. Thus, he states:

**...I want to suggest that conversion from one entity to another, from the semiotics of tradition to those of modernity, rather than being a mode of social transference – the shifting of identities from one cultural formation to another – was the condition in which alienation could be made respectable...**

**Members of the colonial elite could resist both traditional and colonial authority not simply because their alienation had put them above the rules and practices of these institutions, but also because they had acquired, through their colonial education, the technologies of resistance...The mobility afforded the educated Africans by the newspaper, the telephone, and the telegram enabled them to imagine nationalism as a counterpoint to colonialism; it also allowed them to negotiate the culture of colonialism in an unprecedented way. (2001: 366-367)**

Although Gikandi's assertions seem to capture the intellectual contribution of colonial intellectuals, it also uncritically assumes a teleological connection between the education of the 'natives' and the emergence of anti-colonial nationalism. For Magma Fuze's generation of *kholwa* literati such a teleological assumption was not self-evident and therefore it is would be anachronistic to posit this link. Part of the reason that Gikandi, and others, assume this seamless emergence of anti-colonial nationalism from a mission-educated colonial elite is that the colonial intellectuals that preceded the 'nationalist' phase are often maligned as 'traditional' or reactionary. This is evident in, for example, Herbert Mnguni's 'African Intellectuals and the Development of African Political Thought in The Twentieth Century' (1987), in which Mnguni, citing Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, defines the three stages of the development of African political thought, namely, assimilation, questioning or rebellion and national identification or national liberation struggles (1987: 114). On the assimilationist phase, Mnguni states:

**In the assimilationist phase, these people completely identify with colonialist or imperialist oppression. Not only are they indifferent to their rich national cultures, they even deny their very existence and that of African history itself. They see themselves as Europeans rather than as Africans...It is not surprising that this period produced nobody or anything of intellectual quality and of lasting effect. (1987: 114-115)**

Reading Magma Fuze's exhortation that Africans should, 'Adhere strictly to your own... You will attain nothing by your present state of disorganisation. Unite in friendliness like the enlightened nations.' (1979: ix), it is difficult to associate him with the assimilationist phase. The assumed unimportance or even ill repute of pre-nationalist colonial political thought is a result, as argued by Desai, of the misconceived divide between 'the colonial and postcolonial moment that leads us to falsely equate the colonial moment with the oral and the postcolonial with the written.' (2001: 9). For Desai the constraints imposed by colonial structures on African intellectual self-fashioning functioned as and became the foundation and source of *colonial* rather than *postcolonial* African texts.

With the passing of time, the problem of context has to shift from an exploration of how, when and why Magma Fuze was read by his contemporaries, to the whys and hows of present-day readers. A retrospective re-reading of a text written in a different time and place presents its own unique challenges: the benefit of hindsight can become a handicap, leading to facile and uncritical interpretations of the written products of past generations. In the case of South Africa, the political and social changes inaugurated by the 1994 transition to democracy mean that the past now looks different. Debates have erupted about how the past should be represented, or 'preserved', in for example history textbooks, museums and public archives.<sup>43</sup> Although it is unlikely that Magma Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* will ever occupy a prominent place in these reconfigured public records and memorial discourses, his work nonetheless raises questions about the future of South African historiography and the extent to which the 'past' can be recaptured by or represented to a new generation of South African readers and thinkers. Confronting this dilemma, of how now to represent or interpret the past, makes an interpretation of Fuze's work a postcolonial or post-apartheid reading.

South African history is not unique in this regard. Rather, in the wake of the recent democratic transition South African intellectuals, like those in other postcolonial societies, are now also faced with the overdue opportunity and challenge of re-defining how 'history' as a discipline and as a product is to be conceptualised and presented to a reading public. Due to the decline of the grand narratives of 'progress', 'class' and 'revolution' it has become increasingly difficult to define the relevance and urgency of studying not only thinkers like Fuze but even the colonial period itself. A seemingly marginal figure like Fuze, whose work has not received the kind of scholarly attention it might have deserved, presents a special kind of problem in this regard. Perhaps the most fitting description of the challenges inherent in currently re-reading *Abantu Abamnyama* and writing about Fuze is Ong's statement that:

**When a text which has laid unread for several hundred years or thousand years is first seen and, often with great difficulty, finally read, moved through the current time, the discourse of which the text was a record is resumed. (Ong, 1988: 265)**

Although Fuze's text has not been dormant for as long, the challenge of resuming the aborted discourse to which *Abantu Abamnyama* belonged is no less critical. The objective of assessing Fuze's work from a post-apartheid vantage point is therefore not merely to speculate on why his contemporaries did not respond more enthusiastically to his proposed project of writing a history of 'the black people', but also to discover why his work faded into obscurity and has not been resuscitated, despite vogueish talk of an 'African renaissance'.

Resuming the discourse, of which Fuze's work left a record, implies an understanding of what this discourse was. The demise of the meta-narratives of 'progress', 'class' and 'revolution' noted above, means that Fuze and his work can no longer be uncritically usurped and merged into any of these. His account of the 'origins of the black people' does not easily fit into the prevailing 'nationalist' discourse about the trials and triumphs of an 'African nation'. Nor can it be assumed that, because Fuze has been 'marginalized' within South African historiography, he represents a subaltern consciousness that should be recovered. Our postcolonial state requires a more nuanced and reflective contemplation of the relationship between our present position as 'historians' and the past. Pivotal to this reconsideration of the colonial past is an examination of the relationship between the intellectual conditions of the past and those of the present. In other words, what were the intellectual conditions under which Fuze wrote, and what is their relationship to the conditions of academic debates in contemporary South Africa? Without doubt this involves reconsidering the notion of a 'colonial intellectual' vis-à-vis the postcolonial scholar. This reconsideration can be achieved in different ways: one obvious strategy is to provide concise and thorough definitions of the different types of intellectuals concerned, as in Herbert Mnguni's three-stage development of African political thought. However such a strategy is insufficient; it is itself the product of the writer's own position in history and conceals behind a neat taxonomy a lack of engagement with the actual cultural and literary contribution of these thinkers to the country's intellectual history. That said, there is however no guaranteed or proven method of 'doing' intellectual history as a critical 'dialogue' with the past (La Capra, 1983: 64). Although scholars concern themselves with different aspects of the development of an African intellectual life, there is as yet no theoretical explication of the links between colonial intellectuals, the contemporary academic environment and the state of postcolonial intellectual life in Africa. The most common declaration about postcolonial intellectual life is that even the contemporary African intellectual is still a product of the colonial encounter and Western acculturation. Kwame Anthony Appiah, for example, defines the postcolonial condition thus,

**Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: of a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained, group of writers and thinkers who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa. (1992: 149)**

Such an unflattering definition of the relationship between the postcolonial intellectual and the 'West' does not bode well for a study of *colonial* intellectuals in that it suggests both a lack of legitimacy and a consumerist preoccupation with 'cultural commodities'. Moreover, while Appiah does not specify the nature of the commodities being trafficked, the implication seems to be that there are distinctly 'Western' and 'non-Western' cultural items and therefore intellectual conditions or products. Although the latter conclusion is contrary to Appiah's general aim, namely to demonstrate why the *négritude* and nativist movements, amongst others, failed to establish the foundations of Pan-African solidarity; his definition of the postcolonial condition is premised on a one-sided traffic between Africa and the 'West'.

In defining their conception of a historical anthropology, the Comaroffs seem to concur with these generalised notions and definitions of African intellectual life when they warn against the excesses of cultural histories or subaltern narratives by arguing that,

**...There is no great historiographic balance that may be restored, set to rights once and for all, merely by replacing bourgeois chronicles with subaltern accounts...History, Antonio Gramsci reminds us, is made in the struggle among the diverse life worlds that coexist in given times and places – between the “tendentious languages” that, for Bakhtin...play against one another and against the “totality” (posited, *realized*) that gives them meaning. For historiography, as for ethnography, it is the relations between fragments and fields that pose the greatest analytic challenge. (1992: 17)**

The effect of such warnings on a reading of Fuze's work is that they preclude simplistic classification of his writing and necessitate the abandonment of well-worn dichotomies of 'bourgeois' versus 'populist', 'traditional' versus 'modern' and so on. Thus, resuming the discourse, of which Fuze's work was a part, does not simply mean 'recovering' lost voices of the past or juxtaposing dominant versus subordinated narratives. Rather, as LaCapra suggests, history is a dialogue with the past (1983: 25, 63). In the case of intellectual history, such a dialogue, according to him, can only be fruitful if it centres on an interpretation and engagement with texts as products of discursive processes. He notes,

**Even if one accepts the metaphor that presents interpretation as the “voice” of the historical reader in the “dialogue” with the past, it must be actively recognized that the past has its own “voices” that must be respected, especially when they resist or qualify the interpretation we would like to place on them. A text is a network of resistances, and a dialogue is a two-way affair; a good reader is also an attentive and patient listener. (LaCapra, 1983: 64)**

With this injunction in mind, this dissertation's analysis of Fuze's writing will be an interpretation first, and a history or biography second. Thus, although the historical, social and political circumstances in which the texts

were written are important ingredients of the context in which Fuze wrote, they will not be used as a substitute for an engagement with the actual meaning of his writing.

### **Writing a *kholwa* intellectual history: Some remarks on the methodological and theoretical foundations of an intellectual history**

An underlying reason for the pervasive theoretical lacunae and limitations in these different approaches to the making of *kholwa* intellectuals could be that the very terms of studying colonial intellectual life have not been clearly explicated. In this regard it is important to return to a more basic question: what does a history of colonial intellectual life entail? In this regard Wickberg (2001) presents a succinct and challenging examination of the differences between intellectual history and the social history of intellectuals. Briefly, Wickberg argues that intellectual history has become subsumed and confused with the social history of intellectuals and cultural history. In part this is due to an ambiguity about the term 'intellectual'. Methodologically the social history of intellectuals is concerned with the history of 'a distinctive social class charged with the business of thinking... 'the intellectual as a social type'' while intellectual history deals with a different class of phenomena, the history of 'products of mind, the content of thought, ideational 'stuff'' (2001: 385). In criticising the dominance of the social history of intellectuals, namely the study of the intellectual as a 'social type', Wickberg argues that:

**If intellectual history is understood as a form of social history, if history is primarily social history, and secondarily everything else, then thought is imagined as a function or instrument of an anterior reality... What ends up happening with a position that gives priority to social history is that ideas come to be seen as tools, weapons, instruments to achieve goals that are defined by interests or social position that exist in some pre-conceptual or pre-intellectual way. (2001: 387)**

The implication is that in studying colonial intellectual life, terms such as 'assimilationist' beg the question since their use may conceal a misunderstanding or elision of the content of the colonial intellectual's thinking. The problem is that this terminology focuses on the social position of the intellectual and not on the actual ideas and arguments offered by these intellectuals. Once we begin to ask questions about what assimilation may have *meant* to colonial intellectuals at the time maybe the answer would look different to the one offered by Mnguni.

If the mission-educated thinker is not merely a naive *comprador*, then, what are the alternative ways of describing the emergence of *kholwa* intellectuals, as agents of an anti-colonial, but pre-nationalist, ethos? To answer this question it is important to recognise that although it overlaps with some of the issues discussed above, it also refers to a different theoretical concern, namely, the need to elaborate on the apparent relationship between 'agency', 'consciousness' and 'identity'. Our starting point will be that as an affirmative change in identity and consciousness, conversion is not to be understood only, or primarily, as a personal and theological

process of personal and communal transformation and change, either in terms of the individual biographies or of the social history of the *kholwa*. In the colonial context conversion was as much an intellectual and cultural process whose meaning and ramifications were largely determined and inhibited by the problems of translation inherent in the missionary endeavour. The reason for defining conversion in these cultural terms is that it opens up the possibilities for exploring the general problem of translation with the aim of demonstrating how the 'agency' of the native intellectual can be depicted and interpreted, even under conditions of colonial constraint and cultural disruption.

The cues for this type of examination come from many directions. Gikandi (2001: 357-358) offers two possible answers to the rhetorical question, 'how did subjects who had identified with some powerful doctrines, structures, and institutions of colonial modernity become the most powerful advocates of nationalism?'. First, there is the modernization perspective, which would, according to him, define the colonial intellectual's story in terms of the 'archetypal bourgeois narrative of progress, one structured by the subject's movement from the homestead and the hearth to the urban world of modernity and its anxieties.' Alternatively, the native intellectual would, from the postcolonial theory position, 'be surrounded by all the paraphernalia of hybridity, an ability to live inside and outside conflicting worlds' (2001: 358).<sup>44</sup> Ahluwalia likewise examines the identity of the colonial intellectual with regard to the sharp divergence between the modernization and postcolonial theorists' definitions. Starting with a defence of postcolonialism, Ahluwalia argues that postcolonial theory, as represented by Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, is an engagement with European modernity (2001: 7). He contends that it is not so much the case that postcolonialism took 'hybridity' to Africa, but that hybridity and creolisation are part of African history. From this observation, Ahluwalia then concludes that 'the question of identity is one that links African studies and post-colonial studies' (2001: 12). The conclusion that can be drawn from this formulation is that for both the colonial and the postcolonial intellectual, in Africa and other parts of the colonised world, contested identities and hybridity defined and continue to define the discourses that address the native intellectual's attitudes and reflections on colonialism.

If, as some postcolonial theorists suggest, the position of the (post-) colonial intellectual is defined by the complex articulation of 'identity' and 'agency' then what are the implications of this understanding for our definition of *kholwa* cultural life as a problem in the intellectual history of South Africa. Put differently, understanding the *kholwa* as an incipient intelligentsia also means explaining how their intellectual and political activities, or alternatively, their 'agency' was circumscribed by the colonial environment in which they were functioning. Wickberg offers a partial answer by suggesting that the disputed concepts of 'agency' and



'experience' are at the core of the division between intellectual history and the social history of intellectuals. On agency, Wickberg posits that although social history has moved away from its cruder formulations of 'social action', as represented by E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, it has nonetheless retained the key notion of 'social agency as its driving force' (2001: 388). The alternative offered is that rather than defining 'agency' as a collection of interests that function as a tool or instrument, it should be studied as an idea in itself:

**Agency, after all, is an idea as well, with its own history, as are the conceptions of personhood that underlie it. To assume that agency and personhood are non-intellectual qualities that help us to understand intellectual ones is to deliberately put a whole sector of phenomena in a category of non-historical, as well as to embrace a traditional material/intellectual dualism. (2001: 390)**

Wickberg applies the same critical perspective to the notion of 'experience' and its dominance in social history.

Whereas the social historian attempts to recover the experience of past actors through a reading of primary texts,

Wickberg posits that the historian of thought reads primary texts as the expression of thought because:

**...what organizes and gives shape to a text – any text, including census records, political and legal documents, personal memoirs – is not the experience that it purports to describe, but the imaginative or conceptual sensibility that frames it...From the point of view of the history of thought, experience of past actors is inaccessible. The patterns of mind that shaped documents, on the other hand, are relatively more accessible. Social history, then, seems to put experience in the driver's seat, and to see mind as simply a reflection of experience. (2001: 390)**

For our purposes the major implication of this definition of the relationship between the 'text' and 'mind' is that colonial texts that may have failed the test of representative 'experience' may yet become the subject of the intellectual historian's inquiry. Thus, in the case of Magera Fuze, the personal memoir, the petition or any other form of autobiographical self-representation becomes a relevant primary text for understanding the intellectual life of the 'educated native'. An intellectual history of this kind amounts to a reproach of scholarly approaches that assume that conversion was a religious *experience* only. An alternative understanding to the notion of conversion-as-experience is offered by Paul Landau (1999) who contends that 'translation' is *the* problem, rather than product, of missionary practice and the academic's approach to it. This is because, as Landau argues, the missionary construed an analogy between his own understanding of 'religion' and religious language and what seemed to be an African vocabulary of the same. Unlike those scholars who presume an opposition between pre-colonial African religious practices and missionary doctrine, Landau (1999: 22) expresses his problem differently by stating that:

**It is not that a sphere of African thought and practice, discrete conceptually though somehow thoroughly imbricated in the quotidian, was distorted in its Western representation. It is that African analogies to Western religion were elicited, named, translated, and systematized, out of the whole of Africans' activity and thought – by Africans and missionaries both – in order to produce Africans' Christianity. [Italics in the original]**

Thus, for Landau conversion is unequivocally a problem of translation. The implication is that even if Africans are supposed to have had a pre-mission religious life, conversion only becomes a possible mode of social and personal transformation once the outsider, in this case the missionary, constructs analogies and translations of concepts and practices using presumed equivalents of religious language in the convert's society. In other words, as much as it is possible that pre-colonial Africans experienced various forms of personal, intellectual and social transformations, it is only in the context of translation that 'conversion' becomes a *religious* experience. By moving 'conversion' away from the sphere of 'religion' into the sphere of language and translation, Landau's views suggest that the historian's task is not to sort the 'traditional' from the Christian beliefs, but that our task is to revisit the moment of translation and question the nature, appropriateness and context of the questions the missionaries asked of their potential converts, because the answers the converts gave may be evidence of an intellectual rather than merely religious engagement with missionary propositions. The broader implication for the colonial intellectual is that the personal and social transformations brought on by conversion and the colonial encounter should be examined as intellectual first and as experiential second. Thus, agency becomes not just an 'experience' but a form of scholarly commitment based on the articulation of ideas formulated by an independent mind.

Accepting a definition of thought that focuses on the content of the colonial intellectual's professed ideas is not a denial of the impact and constraints that colonialism placed on the development of a native intelligentsia. The postcolonial terminology of 'hybridity' in fact highlights the fact that such intellectuals cannot be understood as the authentic and untainted representatives of either 'traditional' or 'modern' culture. Nonetheless, there is still some debate about how the native intellectual's relationship to colonial discourse, should be theoretically understood. In Gikandi's formulation, a contrast is drawn between 'subaltern' and 'native elite' agency. Using a definition borrowed from John and Jean Comaroff, he posits that the native elite are those whose voices, 'spoke about the experience of being colonized – consciousness, culture, and all – in very different terms; often much darker, more concretely political, more concerned with what it meant to be acted upon' (Quoted in Gikandi, 2001: 359); he then insists that it is this group and not the 'unvoiced subaltern' that should be the point of reference. He states:

**It is not my claim that these native agents were better representatives of the consciousness of the colonized, but I think that precisely because of their contradictory relation to colonialism, and their active role within the institutions of colonial culture, these subjects were more active agents in the theatre of colonialism and more self-conscious of the close connection between modernity and models of human subjectivity than so-called subalterns. (2001: 359)**

Gikandi thus equates agency with the notion of 'voice' and vocalised opposition to colonialism. This idea of 'voice' seems to conform to Wickberg's preference for 'thought' rather than 'experience'. However, construing

an opposition between the 'subaltern' and the 'native elite' may actually serve to re-introduce the colonial dichotomy between 'educated' and 'traditional natives' by suggesting that the voicelessness of the subaltern implies ineffectiveness or acquiescence to colonial subjugation. Moreover, Gikandi's formula may be at odds with the professed and accepted definition of the 'subaltern' as used by for example the Subaltern Studies group whose main aim is to give recognition to subaltern agency and voice. However, even this latter objective has to be examined and qualified. In his summation of the impact of Subaltern Studies on the writing of social history in South Africa, Alan Cobley suggests that even this type of postcolonial theory has shifted from depictions of the subaltern as an 'autonomous historical subject' towards a more nuanced articulation of subalternity as the discursive effect of the exercise of colonial power (Cobley, 2001: 622). More specifically, this revised position does not preclude the possibility that the subaltern also 'spoke' up against colonialism even if the articulation of this 'voice' was intricately linked with the operations of colonial power. In this regard we may note Dipesh Chakrabarty's assertion that:

**The idea is to write into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and ironies that attend it. That the rhetoric and the claims of (bourgeois) equality, of citizens' rights, of self-determination through a sovereign nation state have in many circumstances empowered marginal social groups in their struggles is understandable – this recognition is indispensable to the project of Subaltern Studies. What effectively is played down however, in histories that either implicitly or explicitly celebrate the advent of the modern state and the idea of citizenship, is the repression and violence that are as instrumental in the victory of the modern as is the persuasive power of its rhetorical strategies. (Quoted in Cobley, 2001: 621)**

By placing 'power' as the critical counterpoint of subaltern agency, Chakrabarty makes it possible to understand the native intellectual as a subaltern rather than an 'elite' agent. This permits an inclusion of even those intellectuals who, although technically literate and converted, were nonetheless on the margins of elite 'native' culture. This is especially important in the case of Magma Fuze whose work was 'marginal' to the largely anglicised thinking of nationalist intellectuals of his and later generations.

## Conclusion:

This section has focused specifically on the *kholwa* as intellectuals and examined how their role as 'writers' has been studied. By focusing on various theoretical and disciplinary approaches, we attempted to demonstrate the usefulness and limits of these various theoretical positions. The greatest scope for further research seems to lie in a comparative approach in which one reads the work of early African intellectuals not only across generations but also across language and national boundaries. Thus, Magma Fuze's *The Black People and Whence They Came* could be read simultaneously with Sol Plaatje's *Mhudi* or Rev. Samuel Johnson's *The History of the Yorubas* (1897). The objective of such a reading would be to demonstrate the fact, even though they shared a

common history of conversion and acculturation, when the *kholwa* literati sat down and wrote, their narrative styles or assertions of 'historical consciousness' were not uniform or articulated in the same manner. There were in fact, various African historical narratives in nineteenth-century southern Africa and each author addressed a specific set of traditions, audience and themes.

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## Chapter 2 – Missionary Scholars and their Native Informants

### Colonial Scholarship as a Collaborative Enterprise – An Introduction:

If we accept that the distinguishing characteristic of the cultural and intellectual milieu of which Magera Fuze was a part was that 'converts' like himself became *kholwa* intellectuals and set out to establish an indigenous literary and 'historical' tradition independently of the missionaries who had introduced them to literacy, then it follows that one of our main objectives should be to demonstrate how this was done. At its core this endeavour involved nothing less than a project on the part of these newly literate Africans to become the subjects and not just objects of colonial histories. At the same time it must be recognised that Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* and its concern with 'origins' cannot be properly understood if read in isolation from its colonial influences, that is, if it is read as an unmediated expression of the 'native' point of view. Accordingly the present chapter will explore the discursive relationships involved in the development of colonial scholarship as a collaborative project between missionary scholars and their converts as 'native informants' who in turn became *kholwa* intellectuals and writers in their own right.

What kind of intellectual work does *Abantu Abamnyama* represent, and how should it be understood? One answer is provided by the editor's classification of the book's parts into 'Historical', 'Ethnographical' and 'Zulu History', thus suggesting that Fuze's aim was to contribute to these scholarly disciplines. The book's original Zulu title, *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* likewise suggests that Fuze was concerned with an account of the historical and ethnographic origins of 'the black people'. However, Fuze's actual 'scholarly' credentials are somewhat contestable as revealed by A.T. Cope's editorial statement, quoted in the Introduction, about Fuze's 'limited historical and geographical horizons' and the comparison he makes between Fuze and Bryant. While questioning Fuze's historical knowledge of the verifiable migrations of 'the black people', Cope fails to mention that Bryant did in fact *directly* rely on Fuze as one of his informants in the writing of *Olden Times in Zululand*. In a laudatory credit and obituary, Bryant wrote about Fuze in these terms:

...of the whole Ngcobo tribe, to our way of thinking, the most honourable figure, worthiest of our remembrance and our gratitude, was that dear old scion of the Fūze<sup>45</sup> house, Magera, son of Magwāza, of Matomela, of Toko, of Dileka, of Dindi, of Mdunane, of Sanimuse, of Xonxo, of Gāsela, of Dingila, of Ngcobo, who, alone amongst the many thousands of his tribesmen, troubled to preserve for us and all future generations something of the long and complicated story of their past. Esteemed collaborator of Bishop Colenso in his early youth, in his old age, from his humble tenement in a back street of Maritzburg, he generously supplied us with most of the matter recorded in this chapter. Since then he has been called away to receive, we hope, the reward of a long life well spent. *Valeas, amice mi, et requiescas.* (Bryant, 1929: 498)

Even this generous acknowledgement of the direct contribution of Magma Fuze, as an informant, to the work of A.T. Bryant, as an authoritative scholar, does not adequately capture the underlying collaborative nature of colonial scholarship, especially, the contribution of African informants to the written products of the missionaries, travellers, traders and such who recorded, translated, and presented to the literate readership of Europe the 'native's' thoughts, traditions and histories. Moreover, the relationship becomes even more complicated when the 'native informant' becomes a writer in his own right, and when a *kholwa* intellectual like Fuze produces his own account on '*abantu abamnyama*'. The question then arises as to the converse set of relationships between Fuze's work and missionaries and writers like the bishop John W. Colenso and Bryant. In the case of Bryant, the relationship between native informant and colonial scholar seems clearly defined; but in the case of Fuze's own writing, the significance of the converse influences is more problematic. Thus, if we return to the title of his book, we can ask the following questions: was *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* conceived as a continuation of the intellectual projects of the missionary-colonial scholar, or was it a radical departure from this intellectual tradition? Just what was the nature of Fuze's central concern with 'lapa bavela ngakona' / 'whence they came', and how did it resonate with the earlier concerns of his mentor Colenso? In his prologue to the book Fuze first traces his own origins in genealogical terms as the 'son of Magwaza', but then proceeds to his own different line of questioning regarding 'the black people and whence they came'. Some indication of the depth and complexity of this new kind of inquiry may be gleaned when he writes:

**To proceed with this book, he had long begun questioning his people asking them, 'Where did we come from?' But at a certain stage there came forward Mncindo kaDangadu kaMnyani kaNgqamuza kaNtomela of the Ngcobo people, to state that 'All of us of Ngcobo stock sprang from the reed beds of Umvoti river'. Such an account, of course, is like a fool with neither head nor foot. I feel strongly that our people should know that we did not originate here in Southern Africa. (Fuze, 1979: iv)**

Fuze's explication indicates that he clearly understood the nature of his own inquiry into the origins of 'the black people' as qualitatively different from conventional mythological accounts of the origins of the local Ngcobo clan. The notion that people originated in the reed beds of a local river was a common and traditional answer to similar inquiries into 'origins'. Deliberately rejecting this, Fuze makes it clear, in his derision of Mncido's answer, that he is not satisfied by this or any other mythological account. But with what kind of 'origins' of 'the black people' was Fuze himself then concerned? Fuze's alternative and non-mythological account of 'origins' is specifically concerned to trace the pan-African and historical movements that brought 'the Ngcobo' and others to southern Africa. In the introduction of the book, he propounds his hypothesis on the origins of black people more explicitly by arguing that, 'It would be well for you all to know that many of our tribes were left behind by us at the Horn of Africa (Suez Canal)' (1979: v). Such a claim obviously contradicted

the established scholarly knowledge about the history of African migrations and population movements. It is therefore not inexplicable that his editor Cope, 'deliberately played down the 'whence they came' in the title' (Fuze, 1979:ix), but it also placed him at odds with Fuze's understanding of his own work. A concern with the origins of the 'black people' was at the heart of Fuze's book, though in just what sense remains elusive. His concern with 'origins' was deliberately anti-mythological, but it also did not fit readily into the extant historical scholarship. This again underscores the need, if we are to understand the authorial project of a *kholwa* intellectual like Fuze, to critically investigate the nature of colonial scholarship as a collaborative enterprise involving both missionary scholars and their 'converts' as 'native informants' in producing interpretations of indigenous traditions and histories.

If our eventual objective is to explain how it is that a native informant, in this case Fuze, becomes a writer then we first need to explore the nature of colonial scholarship as a historical and discursive context. The immediate objective of the chapter will thus be to describe how the colonial scholarship that produced Magesa Fuze defined the terms in which the 'Zulu people' would be written about and spoken of as a historical, social and political object. Conversely the objective is to investigate how colonial scholarship defined the authorial role of a 'writer', and whether or not such definitions included or excluded the *kholwa* intellectuals, who were themselves equally concerned with producing knowledge about their cultures and societies.

It is important to note that our topic is not limited to a biographical discussion of the influence of the missionary bishop, John W. Colenso on Fuze, his 'esteemed collaborator' in Bryant's terms. This would be misleading because, on reading Colenso's work, it becomes evident that, as a colonial scholar, he was writing to an audience beyond the provincial and parochial concerns of his Bishopstowe mission. It is therefore necessary, that we locate the ethnographic, linguistic and political labours of Colenso within the broader context of colonial and international intellectual currents. In this wider context, though, Colenso was certainly not a conventional missionary scholar. As the analysis develops, it will become apparent that the main characteristic of Colenso's influence on his audience, broadly defined, and his converts was not only his notorious theological 'heresies' but that as a missionary bishop he became an active protagonist within the colonial political sphere, and that this precipitated insurmountable conflict between his roles as a missionary and as a scholar and intellectual. Thus, Colenso is an important starting point for understanding Fuze's work because he was not just a 'student' of the Zulu language; he also became, despite his initial eschewal of 'politics', a political advocate of the Zulu kingdom's independence. Even so, the distinction between Colenso's more specific political interventions and

his scholarly work on ethnography and philology should not be overstated: as enterprises in colonial scholarship these preoccupations were not politically neutral either.

The political nature of the ethnographic and philological writing of these missionary scholars of the Zulu language is encapsulated in the notion of the Zulu's 'political identity'. As the originators of Zulu ethnography, missionary writers provided later scholars and colonial administrators with a ready vocabulary with which to interpret and define the 'Zulus' historical, political and social identity. One of the purposes of the chapter is to demonstrate how these identities were defined in the writings of missionary linguists and ethnographers. Specifically, the focus will be on the political language in which the 'Zulu people' were and would be spoken of in the future, that is, how the Zulu's political and historical identity would be defined. The general contention of the chapter is that colonial writers, who wrote to justify the colonisation of Natal and Zululand Africans, or in Colenso's case to protest this, implicitly relied on constructing relationships between history, ethnography and political identity. Political identity, in other words, was, for the colonial scholar, the point where ethnography met political necessity. In the case of the Zulu kingdom this poignant juncture was reached around 1879 when the destruction of the kingdom's autonomy began. One objective of the chapter is to demonstrate how the tension between politics and ethnography, action and description was always present in the writing of missionaries like Colenso and how this set the terms for when African writers would, in their turn, attempt to deal with the same cultural and political themes.

The general thrust of our analysis will thus be that colonial scholarship was inherently both a political and collaborative enterprise, an ongoing if unequal interactive and joint project of missionary scholars and their 'native informants'. Just as much as Fuze was influenced by his relationship with Colenso, later ethnographers like Bryant relied on the works and accounts given by 'informants' like Fuze to construct their own theories on the 'black people and whence they came'. Accepting that Fuze's work was informed by the missionary works that preceded him does not however explain the nature and limits of the relationship. In order to explore this relationship, the chapter will focus on missionary writing concerning the political and historical identity of Zulu-speakers, in Zululand and Natal. As time frame for the analysis we will focus on works written after the 1854 arrival of Colenso in Natal up until the publication in 1922 of *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona*. This section will describe how the creation of a Zulu-language political vocabulary and lexicon was both a technical process (involving protracted translation conflicts between missionaries on the meaning, orthography and etymology of Zulu words) and a political process defined by the contingent actions of both the Zulu 'native informants' and colonial writers. The basic contention of the section is that it was missionary dictionaries,



grammars and presses which facilitated the evolution of native informants into *kholwa* intellectuals who then re-interpreted this lexicon in light of the prevailing cultural and political conditions. Reading, as both a skill and an interpretive tool was central to this transition. In the late nineteenth century, a younger generation of African intellectuals like Modiri Molema and Sol Plaatje's joined or formed 'reading' and 'improvement' societies<sup>46</sup> which were established with the explicit aim of debating the past and the future of black peoples (Starfield, 2001: 479-480). What needs to be explained is how, as writers, converts like Fuze adopted and adapted the vocabulary of missionary and colonial writing and applied it to their own societies.

The immediate aim of this section is to give an account of the relationship between the missionary scholar and the native informant by analysing how, on paper, this was presented to their readers. Moreover, the focus is on how colonial scholarship defined and described the political identity of both the informants and the subjects of such scholarly knowledge. In other words, the focus is on how colonial writers both politicised and de-politicised the identity of their subjects through the description, or lack of description, of the political, social and historic forces at work. This discussion will deal with the specific discourse of 'colonial scholarship', differentiating this from earlier varieties of colonial othering discourses and travel writing. The next step is to provide an assessment of missionary ethnographic writing as a genre and as constitutive of a community of discourse. Implicit in this assessment are basic questions about the preconditions and conditions of the discourse's creation, the nature of the audiences to which the writing was addressed and the manner in which this literature dealt with its human subjects. Lastly, this section will focus on some of the themes and problems which occupied these colonial scholars. This includes such issues as whether indigenous southern Africans had 'religion', whether they had notions of a supreme being or what name they gave to this being and more importantly the question of how the missionary, as an evangelist, should and could study these 'religions'.

### ***Colonial scholarship, travel writing and othering discourses***

Nineteenth-century missionaries were not the first to write about indigenous African societies. Both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are littered with examples of travel writing and other documents which contained descriptions of indigenous cultures.<sup>47</sup> The distinguishing characteristic of some nineteenth-century South African missionary writing is a more self-conscious and articulated commitment to an 'accurate' rendition and reporting of the histories and traditions of the observed cultures. It is this kind of missionary writing, claiming as it did to provide evidence-based and authoritative knowledge of indigenous culture and societies which we have labelled as 'colonial scholarship'. The term 'colonial scholarship' is thus used in a specific sense and as an umbrella term for travel writing, travelogues, grammars, ethnologies; and the 'native' literature

produced, for scholarly purposes, by travellers, traders, officials, missionaries and missionary presses. There is a sense in which 'colonial scholarship' is part of the broad family of colonial discourses, but for our purposes the distinctive features which differentiates it from earlier forms of colonial othering and travel writing are more important. The significant fact is that by the second half of the nineteenth century we find, along with the traditional genres of colonial travel writing, works with more scholarly aspirations, especially those written by missionaries. As Thornton argues, missionary publications significantly differed from previous travel writings while typically also serving diverse functions and purposes:

**In many cases the reportage of the missionaries in mission bulletins presented a rather different picture of Africa. In contrast to the portraits of cruel slave-raiders and despotic kings that clearly sold the well-appointed travelogues, we see on occasion some close and affectionate relationships between lonely Europeans and African catechists, converts, 'back-sliders' and even respected ritual experts and chiefs. On the other hand, the missionary reportage was often frankly critical of African beliefs and life-ways. They were often narrow-minded and priggish in their judgements, but it is worthwhile remembering that they were often bitterly critical about European society and culture as well. (Thornton, 1988: 4)**

The notion of a 'colonial scholarship' is also not meant to suggest a unity of purpose of the writers. It is best understood as an analytical category: the written products of many missionaries contained an element of each of these genres, to various degrees, and it is misleading to simply consider a missionary text as 'travel writing' while ignoring its ethnographic and anthropological content and pretensions. The apparent similarity between such missionary writings and earlier 'othering' or travel writing can therefore present a false impression of seamless continuity between these earlier works and the writing of nineteenth-century missionaries. Subtle differences in method, audience, and product can be missed in a haste to proclaim all missionaries 'travel writers'. The objective of the chapter is to therefore consider the missionary not as a travel writer, but rather as a scholar, that is, as a linguist, ethnographer, historian etc.

For our purposes it therefore becomes important to distinguish scholarly missionary writing from earlier forms of travel writing, particularly if such a difference helps explain the position of the 'informant' or 'native' within the work of missionary writers. Our first conceptual consideration is of the function and significance of the colonising 'gaze' which has been identified as a defining feature of the longstanding tradition of travel writing. In her *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt discusses the emergence of a genre of travel writing associated with not only the scientific ideals of natural history but also with European economic and political expansion and which according to her argument had an overtly imperialist thrust. In her account this category includes early eighteenth and nineteenth-century travel writing emanating largely from the Cape of Good Hope. Pratt labels these enlightened travel writings the discourse of 'the anti-conquest', which she defines as

**The strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony. The term 'anti-conquest' was chosen because, as I argue, in travel and exploration writing these strategies of innocence are constituted in relation to older imperial rhetorics of conquest associated with the absolutist era. The main protagonist of the anti-conquest is a figure I sometimes call the 'seeing-man', an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male subject of European landscape discourse – he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess. (Pratt, 1992: 7)**

As her title suggests, Pratt's argument is that an imperial and expansionist gaze remains at the core of even such enlightened travel writing. Thus, she asserts that the main purpose of her investigation is,

**...to suggest how natural history provided means of narrating inland travel and exploration aimed not at the discovery of trade routes, but at territorial surveillance, appropriation of resources, and administrative control. (1992: 39)**

A similar approach to colonial writing is offered in David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (1993). In defining colonial discourse and the role of the writer, Spurr focuses on the 'rhetoric', that is, the tropes used by colonial writers; and these tropes are said to emanate from within the discourse. The clearest statement of Spurr's literary approach to colonial discourse is provided by the analogy that,

**... one can see a metaphorical relation between the writer and the colonizer. The problem of the colonizer is in some sense the problem of the writer: in the face of what may appear as a vast cultural and geographical blankness, colonization is a form of self-inscription onto the lives of a people who are conceived of as an extension of the landscape. For the colonizer as for the writer, it becomes a question of establishing authority through the demarcation of identity and difference. (1993: 7)**

Although this analogy suggests, importantly, that colonial writing is an attempt to establish authority through the foregrounding of identity and difference, this follows from Spurr's assertion that the writer is faced with 'vast cultural and geographical blankness'. The latter observation may however not be entirely borne out by the evidence, especially if one considers that the works of missionaries like Colenso and Callaway overflow with detail and not 'blankness'. Such a stance inevitably creates explanatory lacunae: how do we account for the participation of Africans in missionaries' activities of interviewing, verifying, corroborating testimonies, histories, genealogies, artefacts and such? Pratt's analysis of the colonising 'gaze' of these travel writers, like Spurr's account of the rhetoric of colonial discourse, are convincing if one is interested in demonstrating a teleological relationship between travel writing and imperialism. However, in actuality the relationship between imperialism, travel and the genre of travel writing tended to be rather more complex. Thornton alerts one to some of these possibilities when he states that in the case of missionaries like David Livingstone, '[t]here were travellers before them who did not write (e.g. Osman, the Afrikaner pastoralist and hunter who guided Livingstone) and travel-writers who did not travel though they wrote as if they did (for example Daniel Defoe, or the man who 'pirated Livingstone's reports for his publisher')' (1988: 15-16). This latter approach to travel writing as a genre reminds us that the travel writers' 'method of discovery' was a function not just of the subject

position of the author or the audience, but also of the availability of information via local informants. This crucial reliance on native informants can be extended to the collaborative enterprise of missionary scholarship as a distinguishing characteristic that separates the latter from earlier versions of travel writing which were premised on the colonising 'gaze'.

### *Colonial Scholarship as a 'Commitment to Truth'*

Our concern in this chapter is specifically with that variant of missionary scholarly writing that was premised on the idea that the 'truths' about indigenous languages, beliefs, traditions and languages could only be proclaimed after careful study and that this study had to be conducted according to scholarly 'rules' that had yet to be decided. In other words, what is of interest is how the missionaries' 'commitment to truth', inadvertently perhaps, pushed them towards a scholarly or even scholastic approach to indigenous cultures. Significantly this also involved a crucial reliance on 'native informants' as effective scholarly collaborators to provide the indispensable evidentiary material. As a general tendency, analyses of travel and othering discourses seem to overemphasise the role of the writer as the autonomous, invasive and inquisitive agent while underestimating the extent to which there were 'natives' willing and able to provide and sustain, whatever the conditions of this interaction, the endeavours of the travel or missionary writers. In this respect, the missionary scholars' claim that their authority is based on the African informant's participation represents a major new departure. 'Colonial scholarship' of this new kind thus raises the question of what happens when the language of colonial discourse is given *authority* on the assumption that it was informed by the vocabulary of the Africans themselves.

Missionary writers would not only explicitly acknowledge that they were writing to an audience which may be unfamiliar with their subject, but they were also aware that in a sense they were 'intermediaries' between the audience and the culture about which they were writing. Taken from his *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus, In Their Own Words and With A Translation into English and Notes* (1868), Henry Callaway's<sup>48</sup> preface not only distinguished between the 'student' of the Zulu language, presumably the philology scholar, and 'the public', but he also claimed that he was giving the reader a 'trustworthy exposition' not only of Zulu culture but of the 'native mind' in general:

**I must here state that I regard the Work in its present form as THE STUDENTS' EDITION: the student whether of the Zulu language, or of Comparative Folk-lore. There are therefore some things retained in it which are not fit for the public generally; but which could not for the student be properly suppressed. The very value of such a work depends on the fidelity with which all is told. To be a trustworthy exposition of the native mind it must exhibit every side of it. I have felt what so many other collectors of such legends among other people have felt before me, that I have had a trust committed to me, and that I can only faithfully execute it by laying every thing before others. (Callaway, 1868: n.p)**

This claim to fidelity and trustworthiness is what is meant by the term 'commitment to truth' as a defining feature of colonial scholarship. Of course such claims of fidelity cannot be taken at face value, nor will we attempt to assess their validity and credibility. Rather, the purpose is to describe how such claims underpinned the emergence of a public discourse about African and Zulu traditions, culture, history and languages; how, in other words, they exemplify the aspirations of a colonial scholarship.

In his unpublished manuscript 'Capture by Description: Writing Ethnography in Southern Africa, 1845-1900', Robert Thornton provides a thorough account of this emerging discourse that was at once the raw material of the nascent discipline of anthropology, and was also disseminated to a wider audience of European readers through its association with missions and missionaries. Thornton acknowledges the inherent linkages between missionary work, travel writings and the colonial 'capture' of Africa:

**...the discovery of Africa was also a discovery for paper, for text. Had the great Victorian travellers not written anything, it would not be said today that they had discovered anything. (Thornton, 1988: 15)**

But he is also concerned to problematise such 'capture by description'. As a genre of writing and a component of colonial discourse, missionary writing cannot so easily be separated into constituent parts of 'travel writing', 'ethnography', 'history' and 'philology'. Although it is tempting to simplify the problem by writing separately about the missionary-as-an-ethnographer, the missionary-as-an-historian and the missionary-as-a-linguist, this would not reflect the panoramic and sweeping perspective which many of these writers assumed when writing about the cultures, languages and histories with which they came into contact. The value of Thornton's account is firstly, that it does not essentialise the distinctions between the various 'disciplines' to which the missionaries contributed. Secondly, the relevance of Thornton's work is that he defines missionary writing as part of the intellectual history of European scholarship while at the same time illustrating its role in the establishment of a colonial scholarship. Moreover, rather than classifying missionary writing according to its subject matter, Thornton distinguishes missionary writing from European ethnological scholarship by arguing that:

**Ethnography was written at first chiefly by missionaries who lived in the colonial periphery. Their work was "captured", in a sense, by metropolitan scholars who wrote finished ethnological treatises derived from the raw-material of missionaries' monographs, letters and reports. (1988: viii)**

This suggests not only that the missionaries' work was utilised as 'raw material' but that it was derived from various sources, namely 'monographs, letters and reports', and turned to professional use by European ethnologists. If missionary writing represented experience at the periphery while ethnology was the product of academic theorising, then Thornton's distinction brings to the fore the idea that as a discourse and as a constituent of colonial scholarship, missionary writing was defined as much by what it said as it was by its

audience. This notion that a discourse is defined by its public nature is further supported by Patrick Wolfe's assertion in *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* that when studying the development of anthropological theory:

**The significant issue is not, therefore, the moral or political credentials of individual anthropologists but the social effects of the publicizing of their theories. In this connection, the key question is the conditions under which particular theories became suitable for appropriation to political ends. (1999: 5)**

Although Wolfe is writing from the perspective of the 'capture', to use Thornton's term, of the Aborigines of Australia for anthropological theory, his assertion reaffirms the idea that a discussion of missionary writing should aim to explore not just the endogenous relationship between author and text, but it should also account for the exogenous relationship between author and informant, author and audience. A 'commitment to truth' becomes, therefore, a commitment to present, to an audience, information gathered through informants who may or may not become a visible component of the text itself. Accordingly as a method of scholarly writing used to produce ethnography, philology or history, the mode of such a 'commitment to truth' was often determined not by the local conditions but by the perceived expectations of audiences, both lay and erudite. To restate Thornton's point, the 'discovery' of Africa, and in this case, the 'discovery' of the Zulu language and Zulu traditions, culture and history, was an event that occurred as much 'on paper' as it did in the conversations between the missionary and his informants. The objective of this section is to examine the extent to which this 'discovery' was a function not just of the method of the missionary's research but also of his position in relation to the 'native informants'.

In the case of the missionary scholars of the Zulu language and Zulu society, individual missionaries like Colenso who wrote from the mid-nineteenth century onwards discovered both landscape and 'society'. Following Thornton's definition the term 'discovered' is not used to suggest novelty, but rather to suggest that as a community of writers, thinkers and scholars, these missionaries transmitted to each other and to their readers the idea that the cultural contact they had made with African societies were 'discoveries'. Our particular concern is with the ways in which these 'discoveries' were made with the assistance of native interpreters, informants and subjects. Moreover, amongst themselves, missionaries who aspired to ethnography seem to have contested the terms and method of such discoveries. They contested the finer points of philological and anthropological classifications, orthography, the possibility of a 'universal alphabet' and the value of a comparative approach to these cultures.<sup>49</sup> In other words, missionary scholars participated in and contributed to the emerging disciplines of anthropology, philology, and 'world history' more than they did to theology.

In an obvious attempt to depart from the standard approach to missionary scholarship, Thornton points to the continuous interplay of various forces in the production of colonial discourse concerning southern African peoples. Firstly, he distinguishes the actual experiences of the missionary from the erudition of the European scholar, and secondly, he situates the 'ethnographic monograph' in a worldwide market of ideas. In his discussion of the market, or 'audience', of missionary writing, Thornton inclusively analyses the travelogue, the missionary report, missionary linguistic studies and translations. The value of such an analysis he contends, is that it is essential to,

**...show their contribution to the development of the ethnographic monograph by helping to provide specialized vocabulary, by defining both the "field" of study and some of its essential organizing concepts (such as "tribe" and "language"), and by setting the moral parameters of the discourse. (1988: xii)**

If the missionary is defined as both a part of a scholarly tradition, because of his contribution to its founding concepts, but also as its antithesis, because of his intimate contact with those he was studying, then a more ambivalent picture of colonial and missionary discourse emerges.

The difference between Pratt's 'anti-conquest' and the position taken in this chapter is that because the missionary's work was focused on explaining indigenous cultures by taking into account the native's testimonies, the missionary's position can be redefined as being twofold: first, is the missionary's own awareness that the participation of Africans in the description of their own cultures was simultaneously a problem of *translation*, since it implied translating the meaning of the culture from the informant's perspective and second, is the fact that as a 'scholar' the missionary was confronted by the basic choice of 'method', that is, what technique of enquiry and reporting to adopt when soliciting and interpreting information from his 'informants'. Missionary translations, both at the level of language and at the level of culture, then become examples of the problem of speaking not *about*, but *for* the 'native'. Unlike Pratt's travellers, the missionary's predicament was one of *listening* and not of seeing; by soliciting responses to his curious questions, the missionary was engaged in an act of listening and deciding which portions of the transcript of his dialogues were fit for public consumption.

### **Missionary Scholarship: Reconstructive vs. Deconstructive Methods**

To focus solely on missionary writing as an archive of texts written for scholarly purposes and for a foreign audience or market, may appear counter-intuitive and even apologist, if one assumes that, in the final analysis, the basic aim of all missionary activity was the conversion of Africans to Christianity. To argue that the missionaries were also credible scholars who had a genuine curiosity about African societies and cultures can

seem like an evasion of the larger problem of cultural imperialism and the civilising mission, which the missionaries represented. However, as indicated in the Introduction, conversion to Christianity entailed more than assent to a novel and foreign religion, it was an intellectual, social and political transformation. From the perspective of prospective 'converts' this considerably complicated the possible appeal of the Gospel. In other words, the obvious goal of converting Africans to Christianity was regularly frustrated by the fact that Africans could and did offer their own narratives, myths and traditions in response to the biblical ones presented by the missionaries. Moreover, it was not just an issue of Africans resisting Christian evangelisation; they often presented their own counter-arguments to contest the missionary's dogma.<sup>50</sup> Missionaries offered differing responses to these challenges. However, it seems that few were outright dismissive of African traditions. Instead, many attempted, even if patronisingly, to understand, explain, contextualise, translate, compare and historicise African traditions, languages and cultures. The missionaries' 'commitment to truth', inadvertently perhaps, pushed them towards a scholarly or even scholastic approach to indigenous cultures, while at the same time requiring them to adopt particular attitudes and methods of reasoning that were less about the theological task of presenting the Christian doctrine to a 'heathen' audience and more about re-examining the very foundations of Christian theology vis-à-vis African traditions.

To localise and clarify how this commitment to truth developed, two divergent schools of thought will be identified and defined, namely the reconstructive and the deconstructive schools. The chosen terms are different from the terminology used by David Chidester in his *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in South Africa* (1996) in which he argues that all missionary scholars and theologians were *comparativists*,<sup>51</sup> in that their method of enquiry was premised on the idea that all societies were once 'traditional' or 'superstitious' and that therefore African beliefs were remnants of this phase and were by definition comparable to the traditions of other 'traditional' or 'backward' societies. For the purposes of our discussion however, Henry Callaway's work represents the reconstructive method or approach. This is because in his study of Zulu beliefs, folktales and mythology, he began from the assumption that the extant beliefs and stories were fragments of a pristine whole which once existed. He therefore implicitly attempted to 'reconstruct' these traditions. The second approach will be termed deconstructive because it was based on the assumption that the function of the missionary was to re-interpret Christian doctrine from within the mission context and that therefore doctrine and Scripture had to be made to 'speak' to the context, customs and languages of the African's life and history and could not be assumed to be universally intelligible. This latter approach became the more controversial approach to Christian evangelisation and theology. John William Colenso was its



infamous representative. This distinction is a convenient shorthand and also an extension of the work done by David Chidester. For Chidester, comparative religion was a generalised discourse practiced by all those who wrote about the religious beliefs, or lack thereof, of the indigenes of southern Africa. He states:

**On southern African frontiers, comparative religion was a discourse and practice that produced knowledge about religion and religions, and thereby reconfigured knowledge about the human, within the power relations of specific colonial situations. For European travelers, missionaries, settlers, and colonial agents, who all operated, at one time or another, as comparative religionists, this human science was a powerful knowledge to the extent that it contributed to establishing local control. In this respect, frontier comparative religion was a “rhetoric of control,” a discourse about others that reinforced their colonial containment. (1996: 2)**

Chidester’s argument is persuasive and thorough, but the objective here is not to re-examine the work of Callaway and Colenso as instances of frontier comparative religion. Rather the objective is to examine how, in the process of doing their comparisons, Colenso and Callaway adopted distinctive attitudes towards their informants and their informants’ views, which in turn informed each theologian’s position and conclusions vis-à-vis Zulu culture, political identity and religion. Differentiating between the reconstructivists and deconstructivists in this way does not imply that these schools of thought were mutually exclusive: one could for example be reconstructivist on matters of language and philology but deconstructivist on theological issues. Moreover, the differences between the two schools were not marked by denominational differences; instead, the differences were influenced first and foremost by the imported intellectual traditions and debates occurring in Europe, and secondly by the colonial situation itself. Again, it is important to note that underpinning these differences was the unresolved issue of how the missionary should interpret the testimonies and contributions of his informants. Both schools relied on informants, but as a reconstructivist Callaway, for example, tended to emphasise the incompleteness and fragmentary nature of African cosmogonies and traditions. By contrast, Colenso’s method of deconstruction tended to treat all informant accounts as *sui generis* exemplars of the individual’s beliefs; the assumption was that the burden of proof lay not with the Africans but with Christian theology.

The objective of the following discussion is therefore to demonstrate how two missionaries, Henry Callaway and John William Colenso, established and sustained the grounds for these two scholarly approaches vis-à-vis Zulu culture, language, traditions and history. In so doing they arrived at distinct images of the Zulu, as a society and as potential converts. Moreover, this discussion is a starting point to a broader discussion of how these conclusions had intellectual, historical and political repercussions because they were used to further inscribe or contest notions of a ‘Zulu’ historical and political identity.

### *The missionary scholar as a linguist*

Although missionary writing cannot be neatly separated into distinct genres and disciplines, the following discussion will revert back to these simplified distinctions for the sake of clarity, and also for the sake of demonstrating how the reconstructivists differed from the deconstructivists on issues of language, history and culture. To begin with, therefore, the linguistic works and approaches of Callaway and Colenso are discussed and compared. The objective is to point to the ways in which their grammars, dictionaries, and 'literatures' formed the basis for particular political interpretations of 'Zulu' history and identity. The first step is to describe how these two missionaries understood their linguistic labours as these related to *isiZulu* as a language and also to their overarching aim of converting the Zulus to Christianity.

One of the classic examples of the legacy of colonial philology is the term 'Bantu', which was and continues to be used to categorise the languages of the peoples of southern Africa. According to Ricard and Thornton, Wilhelm Bleek<sup>52</sup> coined the term 'Bantu', while writing his doctoral studies<sup>53</sup> in philology in Germany (Ricard, 2004: 10; Thornton, 1988: 25, 47). Thornton is, however, quick to point out that Bleek's classification of African languages, especially his identification of the class of languages which he called 'Bantu', would not have been possible had it not been predicated on the philological studies of missionaries working in the field (1988: 22). The political significance and intellectual implications of this classification were momentous. In Thornton's words:

**On a larger scale, the coining of the term Bantu had even more far-reaching historical effects, both intellectual and political, since it came to designate, ambiguously, an imagined "race", a conjectured common history, a family of languages, a zeitgeist or worldview, a "stage of civilization", or a culture. (1988: 25)**

The significance of Thornton's conclusion is that it demonstrates how categories and concepts coined for use in one discipline were transferred to others, and also how these concepts often assumed a political function which they did not have when they were coined. Our objective is to apply and extend this conclusion to the missionary studies of *isiZulu*, by demonstrating how their philological studies began to inform the kind of identities they ascribed to Zulu-speakers.

In the 1866 preface to his *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus, In Their Own Words and With A Translation into English and Notes*, Callaway describes the manner in which he learnt the Zulu language. He stated,

**At a very early period I began to write at the dictation of Zulu natives, as one means of gaining an accurate knowledge of words and idioms. In common conversation the native naturally condescends to the ignorance of the foreigner, whom, judging from what he generally hears from colonists, he thinks unable to speak the language of the Zulu: he is also pleased to parade his own little knowledge of broken English and Dutch; and thus there is a danger of**

**picking up a miserable gibberish, composed of anglicised Kafir, and kafirised English and Dutch words, thrown together without any rule but the caprice and ignorance of the speaker. But whilst such a compound might answer for the common relations between whitemen and natives, yet it must be wholly insufficient to admit any close communication of mind with mind, and quite inadequate to meet the requirements of scientific investigation. (1868 [1866]: i)**

Immediately, one notices that Callaway's linguistic enquiries and his education in the Zulu language were set in a political context: the native condescending to the ignorance of the foreigner, the speaking of broken English and Dutch and the reference to 'common relations between whitemen and natives'. Callaway's 'research' method is to separate himself from this political context: since he was conducting a 'scientific investigation' he could not settle for the 'common' relations that had been established between Africans and colonists; his aim he argues, was 'close communication of mind with mind'. This latter claim assumes that he already knew the language sufficiently to transcend the political conditions of communication that were the colonial norm. Surprisingly, Callaway's contact with 'anglicised Kafir', does not stop him from further asserting that the nursery tales and folklore collected in his book are in 'pure Zulu', which begs the question of what happened to the conversations conducted in 'anglicised Kafir'. Callaway further declares that his mode of inquiry involved obtaining his testimonies by requesting a 'native...to tell a tale; and tell it exactly as he would tell it to a child or a friend; and what he says is faithfully written down' (1858: i). And, that as a further requirement,

**...what has been thus written can be read to the native who dictated it; corrections be made; explanations be obtained; doubtful points be submitted to other natives; and it can be subjected to any amount of analysis the writer may think fit to make.**

**Such is the history of the mode in which the original Zulu, here presented to the public, has been obtained. Very many different natives have taken part in the work. There will be, therefore, found here and there, throughout, personal and dialectic peculiarities; but for the most part the language is pure Zulu. It was clearly no part of the work of the collector to make any change in the language with a view of reducing it to one imagined standard of purity. (1868: i)**

Again, Callaway acknowledges an imperfection in his sources due to the 'personal and dialectic peculiarities', but still insists that what he has recorded is 'pure Zulu' and that as a 'collector' he has not reduced the language according to an 'imagined standard of purity'. Notably, the latter caveat, written perhaps to warn potential philologists, contradicts Callaway's earlier statement that some of his informants initially spoke to him in 'anglicised Kafir', precisely because he actively expunged these hybridised accounts from his 'pure Zulu' ones.

Interestingly, such purification and filtering of the 'native's' narratives was advocated as a methodology by later Africanists, especially those influenced by the work of Jan Vansina.<sup>54</sup> Like the nineteenth-century linguists and collectors of folklore and oral histories, Vansina was of the view that the 'oral testimony given by native Africans was subject to doubt because it was felt that it was manipulable, changeable, and thus unreliable as an archive of what had really happened.' (Desai, 2001: 162). In its nineteenth-century context it was however a tentative and contested approach. Yet, Callaway as its advocate was diligently consistent in

applying it, no matter that it often meant saying more than what the 'native' had actually said. Thus, in his 1870 *The Religious System of the Amazulu* the explanatory footnotes often exceed the transcript of the informants' narratives.<sup>55</sup> The consequence was that on matters of language Callaway's concern with 'purity' created an impression of cultural and social homogeneity; as Thornton's conclusion suggests, he confounded language with political, social and historical identity and so denied the 'modernity' of the Zulu informants who already spoke a colonial *lingua franca*. Moreover, the opposition between 'anglicised Kafir' and 'pure Zulu' had implications for the presumed relationship between language and thought. From Callaway's point of view, the Zulu language and the folklore preserved in this language were hypothesised to be descendants of a higher culture, which had now been lost or had become degenerate and corrupt.<sup>56</sup> Thus, Callaway states:

**In reflecting on the tales of the Zulus the belief has been irresistibly fixed upon my mind, that they point out very clearly that the Zulus are a degenerated people; that they are not now in the condition intellectually or physically in which they were during "the legend-producing period" of their existence; but have sunk from a higher state...But though by themselves they may be powerless to retrace the footsteps of successive generations, yet is it unreasonable to suppose that under the power of influences which may reach them from without, they are not incapable of regeneration? Far otherwise. For it appears to me that this Zulu legendary lore contains evidence of intellectual powers not to be despised; whilst we have scattered every where throughout the tales those evidences of tender feeling, gentleness, and love, which should teach us that in dealing with these people, if we are dealing with savages, we are dealing with savage *men*, who only need culture to have developed in them the finest traits of our human nature.**

**And it is in bestowing upon us the means of bringing this culture to bear upon them, that we may see the chief practical use of this collection. We cannot reach any people without knowing their minds and mode of thought; we cannot know these without a thorough knowledge of their language, such as cannot be attained by a loose colloquial study of it. (1868: n.p.)**

Folklore and oral traditions are therefore in themselves a catalogue of historical regression which, according to Callaway could be reversed, albeit with help from 'without'. Notably, Callaway does not here speculate on the nature of the 'higher state' from which the Zulu had descended or fallen. Instead, he focused on re-enforcing the purported link between language and thought: the Zulus once possessed 'intellectual powers' as evidenced in their lore; and their 'mode of thought' can only be accessed through a thorough, as opposed to colloquial, knowledge of their language. Callaway also conceded some points to the humanism of the century by noting that, although 'savage', the Zulus are men and that culture would bring forth the best side of their nature. The humanism is of course in his juxtaposition of man and nature, culture and human nature, and the universal trajectory he assumed connects savage man to culture. In this schema of cultural and social development, language determines thought, and thought structures history so that the history of the Zulus becomes synonymous with the history of the *isiZulu* language and its folklore. Intellectually, this implied that one could take for granted, or even ignore, their contemporary political and social predicament of cultural heterogeneity and colonial encroachment by focussing instead on what the Zulus should have or could have been.

That the presumed link between language and thought, thought and history, is tenuous becomes apparent when Callaway discussed his orthography versus that of his missionary colleagues. In a rather brief exposition of what became the 'conjunctive-disjunctive debate', Callaway attempted to deal with the problem of transcription. Orthographically the disjunctive method emulates English grammar in that words that are, in spoken Zulu, pronounced as one, would in the written form be separated into subject, verb and noun while the conjunctive method retains the compounded words in written form.<sup>57</sup> What Callaway encountered was the elementary problem that, an oral language cannot be verbatim converted into a written, legible and visual representation without confronting problems of meaning and accuracy. On this issue, Callaway merely offered the unqualified statement that he disagreed with the Colenso-Bleek conjunctive method. His grounds for disapproval were that, as with the antiquarians of 'ancient' or pre-modern texts, a disjunctive orthography would have facilitated more efficient translation of these antique languages. He cited the example of Max Müller's deciphering of Cuneiform tablets, which because the pictograms were written 'conjunctively', had been mistaken for ornaments. He therefore admonished:

**Who that has ever attempted to decipher old manuscripts, in which the words are all run together, has not felt a wish that the writers had adopted the modern system of writing each word by itself?...Being than practically acquainted with the difficulties and obscurities occasioned by the ancients having run their words together, why should we, in reducing a savage language to writing, introduce similar difficulties. (1868: iii)**

Such comments reveal a fundamental assumption that the lessons of Western philology are directly applicable to the study of the Zulu language, but also that Callaway saw the reduction of the oral Zulu into written form as an extension and continuation of the 'modern' project to make ancient languages more legible. The Zulu language is therefore equated with other 'antiquated' tongues and implicitly assumed to be in need of the same modernisation. Moreover, soon after making such a direct and forthright declaration against the conjunctive Colenso-Bleek method, Callaway admitted exceptions to his own orthographic preference. He identified, in his words, instances 'where a sentence has become petrified, as it were, into a word, although its etymology is still evident,' and declares that 'I have written it as one word' (1868: iii). Admitting such exceptions results in an orthography that is arbitrarily conjunctive and disjunctive. Just as with his insistence on the 'purity' of the Zulu he had recorded, Callaway did not grasp the irony of his situation. Thus, on the issues of the 'purity' of the Zulu language and the orthography used to transcribe an oral language into writing, Callaway conforms to the reconstructivist approach in that, on both counts, he does not evaluate the merits of the language on its own terms, but ascribed the efficacy of his method to the antecedents set by the study of 'savage' tongues conducted by others in other parts of the intellectual world and in other times. Also, on both counts, the witness of the 'native informant' was treated with scepticism, while the erudition of the missionary-linguist takes centre stage.

If the education of Callaway in the Zulu language and its oral traditions was depicted as taking place in an unpoliticised environment, Colenso's occurred in a context of political volatility and angst. When Colenso first visited Natal in 1854, to survey his future diocese, he was accompanied on most excursions by Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs, thus giving an immediate and palpable political tone to his first encounter with Natal's Zulu-speaking Africans. With an obvious admiration for the reception which Shepstone received when he visited African homesteads, Colenso remarked:

**...it was most touching to observe how his perfect knowledge of their language and modes of thought, his quiet yet dignified manner, the mingled firmness and gentleness of his character, and their entire confidence in his good faith and good will towards them, brought these poor savages to his feet at every kraal we visited, including those of the two chiefs, Langelibalele and Putine, just referred to. They looked up to him like children to a father, told him of all their little troubles and grievances, and received with most truthful reliance every word of advice he gave them. Nothing, certainly, can be compared with the wonderful influence Mr. Shepstone has acquired over the great body of the Natal Kafirs, except, as before, the very similar case of Sir James Brooke among the Dyaks of Borneo. (Edgecombe, 1982: 13)**

In later years, the initial camaraderie between Shepstone and Colenso vanished, especially once Colenso became involved in the defence of the same Langelibalele mentioned here. What is significant in the above statement is that Colenso's admiration of Shepstone's eloquence and his exercise of political power are intermingled and form part of his 'education' in the Zulu language. Subsequently, when Colenso prepared a Zulu grammar or commented on linguistic issues, the political condition of Natal's Zulu-speaking population was a prominent feature of his understanding of the language. Thus, in the introduction to his 1859 *First Steps in Zulu*, Colenso stated:

**The Zulu-Kafir Language<sup>58</sup> is properly the dialect of a small tribe, the amaZulu, who under their famous Chief *Tshaka* (Chaka), and his brothers and successors *Dingane* and *Mpande*, have acquired and maintained, for some sixty years, the supremacy over the natives along the S.E. coast of Africa, excepting, of course, those who have been living under British protection since Natal came under our Government in 1845. (1904 [1859]: 1)**

Compared to Callaway's statements on the language, it is apparent that Colenso wrote about the Zulu language in its political and social context rather than in terms of its 'imagined' purity. Notably, in his *Zulu-English Dictionary* (1861), Colenso emphasised the fact that since this was a Zulu-English dictionary, it was 'meant to contain, as far as possible, only pure Zulu words, and not such words as belong to the amaXosa Kafirs, and to other kindred tribes, which inhabit the Southern part of this Colony' (1860: iii). Thus, unlike Callaway, the notion of linguistic purity was not a matter of expunging the 'anglicised Kafir' to arrive at a pure Zulu. Instead, Colenso distinguished between Zulu words and those that were borrowed from other kindred languages. Moreover, he did not link the lack of 'purity' to notions of 'degeneration'; rather, he emphasised the cross-fertilization between similar languages in the region without presuming some historically antecedent 'legend-producing period' as Callaway did. Whereas Callaway attempted to reconstruct an evolutionary picture of the

Zulu language, Colenso chose to understand the language in its contemporary form, namely, within its contemporary social and political context. In fact, one can venture to argue that the reconstructivist and deconstructivist approaches respectively represent diachronic and synchronic theories of language.

That Colenso preferred the latter method, is evident from some of the accounts of his 1859 journey to visit the Zulu king, Mpande. Frequently on this journey, Colenso and his party would be hosted by families and homesteads who would give them shelter, food and hospitality. In one instance, they found themselves the guests of a Zululand family on a Sunday, and Colenso recounted how they spent that day:

**We had Service with our own people in the hut, and some other natives were present. I addressed myself, as well as I could, to the understanding of the latter, as Providence had brought them under our teaching. Of course, I told them the chief points of the Christian doctrine, but the main thing I tried to press on them was that the Unembeza within them was the voice of God (Unkulunkulu), and that by striving to obey it they would best please their Father in heaven. The Zulus have a distinct idea of the mystery of man's double nature, expressed in the common teaching by the flesh and the spirit. They speak of his two hearts – the Ugovana, which tells him to lie, steal, covet, kill, and commit adultery; and the Unembeza, which "bids him leave all that."**

**In the afternoon, visitors came over from another neighbouring kraal. I read to them several of the narratives which we have just printed in Zulu, with which they were greatly interested, and would have had me go on *ad infinitum*. Indeed, I did go on, assisted by Magema, till it drew towards dusk, and it was time for them to return home. (1982: 86)**

By identifying the Zulu word for a 'conscience', that is *unembeza*, and applying it to the Christian doctrine, Colenso expressed the obvious missionary goal of using the Zulu language to establish the theological foundations for conversion. However, what is also evident in this account is that Colenso brought and read to the audience other texts, other than the Bible, that he had written and printed in the Zulu language. Edgecombe hazards the guess that the narratives being referred to were contained in Colenso's *Izindaba Zas'e Natal* which was published in 1856<sup>59</sup> (1982: 157n). The implication is that, although Colenso was concerned with identifying Zulu words and concepts that could facilitate religious conversion, he was also interested in transmitting to his potential converts news of the contemporary state of affairs in Natal and colonial events in general.

Even when he did construe a link between the linguistic and evangelical endeavours of the missionary, Colenso couched this in terms of the idea that the missionary's knowledge of the Zulu language should facilitate a theological conversation between him and his potential converts. These theological conversations were for Colenso not just about making converts; he was concerned that Africans should convert to Christianity because they understood the truths of the Christian message. On this point, Colenso displayed an approach to the testimony and thinking of his converts and informants that ultimately led to his infamy, ridicule and rebuke. Although there are many examples of Colenso's dialogues with his converts about religion and the Christian faith, his most poignant statements about the nature of the connection between language, thought and religious belief were to an audience at the Marylebone Literary Institution, at which he presented in 1865 a lecture titled,

'On Missions to the Zulus in Natal & Zululand'. By this time, Colenso was in the thick of the Pentateuch controversy, and yet the lecture was not dedicated to the defence of his views on the Pentateuch but to a defence of missionary work, against social Darwinists like Winwood Reade, who were arguing that, since nations like the Zulus would perish on contact with 'civilized' peoples, evangelising and 'civilising' them was futile (Edgecombe, 1982: xxxiv-xxxv).<sup>60</sup> Colenso's replies presented more than just a theological defence of missionary work: he brought to bear the whole of his experience in Natal and Zululand to refute the idea that the Zulus were irreclaimable savages doomed for extinction. On the issue of why the missionary should continue his labours amongst 'heathen' peoples, he stated,

**...Wherever we meet with the power of speech, with reason and conscience, with tender human affections, we must confess that the owner of such gifts is "a man and a brother," – that he has a claim upon us as a member of the great human family; - for in his heart is beating, even now, however faintly, the Life which, we are told, is "the Light of men," ... (Colenso, 1982 [1865]: 221)**

Although this lecture to an English audience was an impassioned vindication of his experiences and studies of the Zulu language, culture and traditions, Colenso did more than just describe these experiences. Citing the evidence of contemporary science, from Lyell to Darwin, he demonstrated to this audience the necessity of a theological shift from traditional exegesis of the Bible to a 'modern' one, which accommodated, according to him, the idea that science is also God's revelation and will. Thus, in his defence of missionary work, Colenso also presented a practical justification of missionary evangelism by constantly referring to his encounters with Africans, as humans and potential converts. Thornton summarises Colenso's 'modern' theology thus,

**In understanding Colenso's approach to the Zulu, and to the value of other cultures in general, we must look with equal care to the universalism that he espoused, and to his willingness to apply to one realm of thought analogies or evidence from another. While his criticism of the Bible was certainly derived from his familiarity with Zulu mythology, and with the skepticism of his Zulu converts, he was also very much aware of the finding of geology that the earth was more ancient than [sic] the Bible appeared to indicate. (1988: 90)**

Thus, in Colenso's work and thought one finds an attempt to reconcile the philological and anthropological roles of the missionary. Rather, than dedicate his linguistic labour to the 'discovery' of the extent to which the Zulu had degenerated from their glorious past, Colenso chose to search, in their contemporary situation, for signs of a living and intimate language from which he could draw analogies for his ministry. His identification of a dualistic Zulu ethics of *unembeza* and *ugovana*, gave him a ready-made vocabulary with which to communicate the Christian doctrine, while also updating his would-be converts on the political state of affairs in the colony of Natal. As justifications of Christian mission work, Colenso hoped that his modern method of biblical criticism would appeal to European theologians as well as to converted Africans and to the sensibilities of the unconverted, who were in his written reports depicted as potential converts and theological inquisitors or informants.



*The missionary scholar as an ethnographer and historian*

Language was not the only area of expertise for the colonial scholar cum missionary; the very nature and rationale of their missionary work required that they had to compose and produce descriptive accounts of the cultures they had immersed themselves in. Again, there are three relevant parties to this relationship: the missionary scholar, the literate and metropolitan audience and the native informants. As with missionary linguistics, a method of inquiry had to be devised and a format for dissemination found in order that the missionary scholar could communicate his findings to both his colleagues and the European audience to whom most of these ethnographic monographs were addressed. Of necessity, the rationale of the missionary endeavour implied reportage: the missionary was usually supported from his home country by societies and church sects that were themselves dependent on philanthropic contributions from their congregations and patrons to survive. At a basic financial level, the missionary had to account for the money being spent on his mission and to write something about the people he was evangelising. As Susan Thorne notes of the missionary societies of the early nineteenth-century,

**In their efforts to raise funds and volunteers for their foreign operations, missionary societies produced and disseminated a voluminous body of propaganda representing the colonial encounter to which the Victorian religious public proved enormously receptive. The attractions of foreign missionary intelligence were considerable in an age before alternative means of enlightenment, entertainment, and even assembly were widely available. (1997: 239)**

Although Thorne's essay is concerned with demonstrating the link between British imperialism and the emergence of 'class' as a social category,<sup>61</sup> the above conclusion is an apt summary of the complex and intricate relations of dependence and obligation in which the missionary found themselves implicated. However, as Wolfe warns about postcolonial studies of late nineteenth-century anthropology, this should not reduce the 'rhetoric of science', or in this case the rhetoric of mission, to a 'funding strategy' (1999: 64). At issue is not just the fact that missionaries were funded by philanthropic and evangelical societies; rather the relevant point is that there emerged in the European metropolises and academic institutions an expectant audience and that missionaries often wrote, implicitly or explicitly, with this audience in mind.

More specifically, as Thornton also suggests, missionary reportage attracted two kinds of audiences: the first received mostly missionary reports and letters and these were written in the first person and the 'narrator' addressed the readers directly. The second type of audience was the audience of the ethnographic monograph. This scholarly audience was 'patterned after the 'objective' scientific genres, [and] the reader lost sight of the narrator, the observer himself, and was presented only with a kind of disembodied narrative' (1989: 9). This suggests that missionary writings were characterised by a dual nature in that they attempted to be both

popular and scientific. The tension between popular and scholarly writing certainly affected the missionary's 'commitment to truth' and how the latter was in fact presented to readers as the method of 'doing' ethnographic description. The objective of this discussion is therefore to discern how, on matters of ethnography and history, the missionary writer appealed to his popular audiences while at the same time attempting to justify the practice of ethnography in scholarly terms. The focus is again on the work of Colenso and Callaway.

It should be noted that 'ethnography' and 'history' are not differentiated in our discussion. A distinction between the two is difficult to make precisely because missionary writing often presented a seamless connection between the contemporary southern African cultures and the supposed histories of the continent's peoples or other 'primitive' societies. More often than not, southern African cultures were studied from the perspective of continental and global developments rather than just with regard to local technology, government and kingship, social organisation and cultural practice. To reconstruct the manner in which the colonial scholarship of missionaries defined the ethnographic field the discussion variously considers the manner in which the missionary writer presented his subject to his audience; how the culture of the 'native' was analogously defined through references to other 'studied' cultures; and how missionaries defined both the fields of 'ethnography' and 'history' by either constantly referring to or ignoring their actual experiences of the 'other' culture.

As with their linguistic labours, the missionary scholars of nineteenth-century southern Africa often explicitly stated their method of inquiry. However, unlike in the case of language where a missionary could construct his own grammar and orthography *ab initio*, 'ethnography' and 'history', as fields of colonial scholarship, were manifestly intertextual. Each missionary had to rely heavily, and often did, on the work of his intellectual predecessors, whether in support or as a rebuttal of the predecessor's ideas. Such intertextuality reinforces the defining concept of the missionary writer as a colonial scholar precisely because it points to the fact that he had to refer, and perhaps defer his own conclusions, to those writers who had preceded him in the field. Thus, when Colenso gave his first report in 1860, printed 'for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; and sold by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge', he not only chose the 'personalised' narrative style of a letter to the Society, but he also began his account by depicting, for his readers a history of the Zulu people and their contemporary political situation - a picture largely drawn from, and referenced to, the narratives of earlier travel writers and traders. He stated:

**It is desirable that I should first give a brief sketch of the present political state of the Zulu country, which is such as to require the exercise of more than ordinary caution and prudence in our preliminary operations. The main facts of the history of the three half-brothers, sons of Senzangakona, Tyaka, Dingane, and Mpande (frequently spelt Chaka, Dingaan, and Panda),**

**who have successively ruled over the Zulu people, are now, partly through the works of Mr. Isaacs, Captain Gardiner, and others, but chiefly of late through the narratives which have been published in connection [to] the Natal Missions, made tolerably familiar to those members of the Church of England who take a special interest in Missionary matters. (Colenso, 1982 [1860]: 44)**

The audience, members of the Society, immediately recognised themselves in the argument that, through the works of Isaacs and Gardiner, they should be, if they were not already, familiar with the history of the Zulu people. As a historical entity the Zulu people owed their existence, the audience is reminded, to Shaka, Dingane and Mpande; Colenso specifically positioned the missionary within this history by underscoring the caution with which the evangelical endeavour should proceed. Again, one finds in Colenso an unresolved tension between the missionary as an observer and the missionary as a participant in the political life, intrigues and affairs of the society he is studying.

In contrast, Henry Callaway's collection of Zulu folklore is premised on a universal history of mankind, rather than on the peculiar history of the 'Zulu' as a political unit. On the value of collecting folk traditions and tales, he surmised:

**We know not yet what shall be the result of such collections of children's tales. Children's tales now; but not the invention of a child's intellect; nor all invented to gratify a child's fancy. If carefully studied and compared with corresponding legends among other people, they will bring out unexpected relationships, which will more and more force upon us the great truth, that man has every where thought alike, because every where, in every country and clime, under every tint of skin, under every varying social and intellectual condition, he is still man, - one in all the essentials of man, - one in that which is a stronger proof of essential unity, than mere external differences are of difference of nature, - one in his mental qualities, tendencies, emotions, passions. (1868:n.p)**

Callaway's universal history of mankind, and the positioning of the Zulu within this history, conforms and reaffirms his commitment to a reconstructivist approach to culture. Compared to Colenso's articulation of the political anxieties that beset the missionary among the Zulu, Callaway's emphatic statement of the 'essential unity' of mankind seems to suggest that the reconstructivist's method was less prone to stereotype because it presumed a common history. Significantly, though, Callaway's seminal collection of nursery tales contains no acknowledgement of the conditions under which he collected them, only a cursory mention of his informants and no references to the 'present political state' of Natal and Zululand. It is therefore his silence about the politics of colonial co-existence as much as his pronouncements on a common humanity that marks Callaway's work as reconstructivist. Whereas he was quick to speculate on the origins of the 'clicks' in the Zulu language, he was less inclined to reflect on the 'origins' of some of the informants he interviewed; even when he knew that, although they were Zulu-speaking, they were not ethnically 'Zulu'. Such elision is evidenced in an account of a conversation he had with a young Ibhaca man. Of this encounter he wrote,

**...Returning from the Umzimkulu with a young Ibakca for my guide, I availed myself of the opportunity to discover whether there existed among the Amabakca the same traditions as**

**among the Amazulu. I therefore requested him to tell me what he knew about the tradition of the chameleon. (1870: 15)**

Callaway's singular focus on discovering the essential religiosity of the Zulus meant that the sociological facts of his conversations with informants were neglected, in favour of a peremptory assertion of the unexceptional history of the Zulu.

The question remains whether Callaway's resolute focus on transcribing folklore can actually be called 'ethnography'. In other words, to what extent does the act of collecting folklore, and the value the collector places on such a collection, qualify as ethnographic scholarship in this nineteenth-century context? Thornton explains Callaway's method firstly, in terms of its relationship to the Romantic literary corpus of the nineteenth century and secondly, with reference to Callaway's reliance on the Bible as a template for all history. On the former explanation, Thornton posits that Callaway's ethnography was characterised by what he terms, 'the rhetoric of "fragments" and "remains"' (1988: 143). Within Europe's intellectual circles, this literary and scholarly movement was represented by writers as diverse as William Wordsworth and Thomas Carlyle. At the colonial periphery, the influence of this 'rhetoric' was more visible in the work of the colonial scholar for whom,

**Fragments were taken to be the incomplete indexes of much greater societies, myths, languages. Individuals collected such "fragments", as they do today, as tokens of emblems of "history", seen in a new light as a greater, more fully encompassing order than the "fragmented order" of industrial, republican Europe and America. (1988: 144)**

It was however not the fact of collecting that made these 'fragments' meaningful; the colonial scholar often interpreted such 'fragments' by reconstructing the cultures from which these were sourced, by comparing them to 'fragments' from other cultures or by drawing analogies between these traditions and the biblical narrative.

Thus, when one of Callaway's informants began his 'creation' story with the word '*ekukqaleni*', Callaway noted:

***Ekukqaleni. In the beginning. There is the same obscurity in the Zulu use of this phrase as in our own. We must understand it here as meaning, in the beginning of the present order of things, and not, from all eternity. (1870: 2)***

On such uses of the biblical chronicle as a reference point for writing the history of the Zulu, Thornton's explanation is that these allusions emanated from Callaway's attempt to limit the meaning of Zulu 'creation' stories and narratives by demonstrating how these cosmogonies and traditions, although revealing a partial knowledge of divine creation, were nonetheless not equal to the biblical genesis story (1988: 153-154). Both Thornton's explanations of Callaway's ethnographic method imply a connection between the direction of colonial scholarship and the changing interests of audiences in European metropolises and intellectual communities. Thus, he contends that the ethnographic collections of the mid-century shared in common 'aim, concept and practice' in that when these writers saw indigenous peoples engaged in their daily lives they saw

“‘fragments’ of greater wholes rather than people, events and contexts with their own independent historical existences’ (1988: 145). Similarly, Callaway’s *The Religious System of the Amazulu*,

**...applied the same principle in assembling oral traditions from wide provenance and considerable historical depth into a single textual compendium that was presented to the reading public as a systematic account of a single coherent religious cosmology. (1988: 146)**

Such a vision of southern Africa’s Zulu-speaking peoples demonstrates how, although Callaway’s method was ‘universalistic’, it was nonetheless premised on the supremacy of the biblical narrative and the assumption that all other myths were corrupted or incomplete remnants of higher cultures that would presumably be reconciled with the Mosaic story. Significantly for our purposes, this ethnographic method also implied a particular attitude to the contributions of native informants. Thus Thornton argues that,

**...what was given to him by Zulu narrators as “stories” – that is, as narrative episodes that were meant to be taken as more or less complete in themselves – Callaway treated as fragments of a much greater “sacred text”. (1988:153)**

For a reconstructivist like Callaway the central function of the ‘collector’ or ethnographer began where the ‘native’ left off, that is, the colonial scholar’s function was to give meaning through analogy and thereby construe an interpretation that surpassed that given or could have been given by the ‘native informant’. Thus, although Callaway explicitly professes that the value of local traditions is that they demonstrate the common history of human thought, such claims are compromised by his assumption that the development of myth and cosmogony amongst the Zulu was a linear regression from ‘higher’ to degenerate cultures and that the authentic meaning of these cultures had been lost because the Zulu no longer ‘know’ their own traditions. His conclusions, therefore, presuppose and also justify the idea that although the Zulu may have at some point possessed a systematic world-view this had now been so corrupted that they would have to be reclaimed from this corruption. Just what this reclamation would consist of, was a moot point.

While sharing the same goal of ‘discovering’ Zulu culture, Colenso constructed his notion of its ‘universal’ significance from the proof of a common humanity as provided by the advances of Victorian science rather than any notion of a linear trajectory of moral, intellectual or cultural decline. Again it is important to note that in the specific examples cited Colenso and Callaway were addressing dissimilar audiences. Whereas Colenso was speaking directly from a lectern to a physical audience, Callaway was writing for the ‘student’ of the Zulu language and the erudite scholar of ethnology and philology. However, as in the language debates, the missionary’s experience in the field served different functions in the work of the two men. For Callaway, his interactions and conversations with Africans reinforced his attempt to define the Zulu by analogously comparing them to other ‘primitive’ cultures. Colenso, on the other hand, set up science and scientific inquiry as the arbiters of the extent to which all human societies were making an advance not only towards better social

organisation but also towards a modern understanding and interpretation of biblical 'truths' and the divine destiny of humanity. Thus, while addressing the audience at Marylebone Literary Institution in 1865, Colenso clearly positioned himself against the notion of the 'degeneration' of mankind. He argued,

**In one word, it is joyous and refreshing to know that we are not laboriously toiling to recover some of that almost infinite extent of ground which Adam lost for us by his one act of sin; it is hopeful to be assured, by the plainest evidences of scientific research, that all our present advances in art and science are the just results of the proper development of the great human family, as part of their great Creator's scheme from the first, and to know that every fresh fact, brought to light by a course of honest and persevering inquiry, is a fresh blessing bestowed upon the race from the Father of Lights – a fresh conquest, either in the domain of the present or the territories of the bygone past, which the Mind, that guides and governs all, has permitted and enabled us to achieve, with the powers entrusted to us. (1982 [1865]: 208)**

Moreover, Colenso articulated an appreciation of the potential of a contemporary Zulu or African contribution to the development of theology by citing the fact that Christian thought had, from the beginning, been influenced by the cultures it came into contact with, and that in antiquity there had been African bishops who were served the church. He suggested that:

**...the peculiar type of the Zulu will not be without its place, use, and glory in the great family of regenerated man – "the one body of that Church which shall be gathered out of all nations." We know already how greatly the Christian religion has been affected by coming into contact with the philosophy of Persia, Alexandria, and Rome, and, in still later days, by the circumstances under which it has been developed among the branches of the Teutonic race. We know not what may be the special work of the African. Black bishops there were, no doubt, who took part in the councils of the early Church; but we have no evidence to show what were their contributions to the common stock of human thought. Perhaps we may yet have to find that we "without them cannot be made perfect" – that our nature will only exhibit all its high qualities when it has been thoroughly tried in the case of cultivated black races, as well as white. (1982: 223-224)**

The idea that Christian theology and European thought could perhaps not reach their pinnacle of 'perfection' without the contribution of the African was probably an anathema to an audience that was used to reports and arguments that created the impression that the main rationale for missions and evangelisation was to impart to Africans the 'culture', 'civilisation' and philosophic 'thought' they supposedly lacked. To be told that the African had a special contribution to make to the development of human thought must have confirmed for many of his listeners the cause of Colenso's infamy. Yet, in effect, Colenso was merely extending an argument he had been developing since the publication of *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* and the ensuing Pentateuch controversy. For our purposes, the main implication of Colenso's acknowledgement of the potential contribution of Africans to theology was that it emanated from his actual experiences of having to respond to the theological queries of his African interpreters and converts. Rather than repeating commonplace notions of the recalcitrance and 'superstition' of would-be converts Colenso took this as an intellectual challenge. His advocacy of a 'modern' theology was thus a logical consequence of his advocacy of deconstructive and synchronic biblical criticism.

That John W. Colenso was able, under the colonial conditions of nineteenth-century Natal, to construct a definition of theology centred on the experience of conversion itself rather than on the rote memorisation and mimicking of dogma needs further explanation. Could the explanation be that he was an exceptional intellect, theologian and linguist? Or, are the reasons for his incisive and urgent appeal for a 'modern' interpretation of biblical texts to be found outside the colonial and parochial concerns of his fellow colleagues in the field? A close examination of Colenso's earliest reports and writing reveal that he in fact began where his colleagues also began, namely with a notion of the inseparability of ethnography and history. On reading his preliminary comments on Zulu history and culture one realises that, at first, Colenso conformed to the 'norms' of missionary reportage that had been set by his predecessors: he recounted the 'political state' of Natal and Zululand as it was probably dictated to him by his guide and instructor Theophilus Shepstone. Thus, in his 'Church Missions among the heathen in the diocese of Natal' written shortly after his first visit in 1854, Colenso begins on an ethnographic note by defining the identity of Natal's Zulu-speaking population with reference to the different applications of the term 'Zulu'. He wrote:

**The natives of Natal are all of Kafir race, and commonly called by the general name of Zulus. Strictly speaking, there are but a few within the Colony, who properly belong to the tribe of the Amazulu, which at no time, probably, ever numbered more than 5, 000 souls; but the name has been applied to all, who at any time have come under the power, or even suffered from the ravages, of the great Zulu chief Chaka, or his brothers, Dingaan and Panda, and at length has been extended to all the coloured people of Natal. (Colenso, 1982 [1854]: 1-2)**

Such a representation of the Zulu-speakers of Natal as refugees from the despotism of Shaka and his successors were common and in fact became a cornerstone of Natal's colonial and settler discourses and historiography. Colenso then was merely reiterating the founding statements of a colonial history, which defined all the 'coloured people of Natal' as 'Amazulu' by virtue of being Zulu-speaking.

Yet, even while presenting and repeating the central notions of colonial and settler history, Colenso also concluded that the obligation of the Christian mission to the Zulu-speakers of Natal should not just be concerned with their 'heathenism' but derived from their political relationship with Britain. He explicitly defined Natal's African population as *British subjects*:

**I would desire to remind you, Christian Brethren, that these natives are not mere strangers and foreigners, who, [as] Christians, we may compassionate in their present low and miserable condition, but they are *British Subjects*, whom God has given into the charge of this Christian country, in a very remarkable manner, and under the most hopeful circumstances, for doing His work among them....they have come to us, as refugees, from the cruel oppressions of their native chiefs, the three brothers above-mentioned, Chaka, Dingaan, and Panda, who have ruled successively the Zulu nation to the north of the Natal district, and have made themselves names in the history of South Africa, by devastating conquests abroad, and deeds of brutality and bloodshed at home. ...On this account the natives of Natal look up with affection and reverence to their English protectors. At least, they did so a short while ago, and would do so still, if we dealt but *justly* with them, and while enforcing their *duties*, acknowledged also their *rights* as subjects of a Christian Queen, to share with us the full blessings of her government. (1982: 2-3)**

...

**For, though we have not taken their *land*, we have taken and do take their *money*, and that to a large amount, by direct taxation. For the last four years, a tax of 7*s.* annually has been laid on every hut, and the sum thus raised from the Zulu people amounts to not less than £10,000 a-year. Thus they are not merely refugees, whom we have pitied and relieved, without giving them thereby a right to found a further claim upon us. But we have recognised them, in the most distinct and practical manner, as "our own." (1982:3)**

Colenso's analysis of the circumstances of Natal's Africans was profound in that he conceived the relationship between them and the colonial government in terms of basic political economy. Unlike his predecessors, Colenso did not justify the Christian missionary endeavour by only referring to a 'civilising mission'; instead he pointed to the effective political incorporation of Natal's Africans as tax payers as reason enough for them to be accorded the rights of British subjects. To further drive his point home Colenso depicted, for his English audience, a 'rebellious' and discontented subject population; he speculated on the potential causes of a rebellion but also gave examples of 'passive' rebellions that had already occurred, such as the refusal by Natal's African population to offer military assistance to Sir Harry Smith (Edgecombe, 1982: 10-11). Moreover, Colenso's report indicates that the 'Kafir Question', as he terms it, was already part of the official discourse of the colony of Natal; a commission of inquiry had already been constituted and the commission's findings, cited by Colenso, confirmed the alarmist colonial and settler view that the settlers were not only outnumbered by the African population but that this population was beginning to know its own strength. The commission of inquiry had been established by the then Lieutenant-Governor Benjamin Pine in 1852 (Edgecombe, 1982: 26n33), and using a similar language of crisis and rebellion, the commission had concluded:

**"...The Kafirs are now much more insubordinate, and impatient of control. They are rapidly becoming rich and independent. They are better organized and consolidated, increased in numbers by immigration, and more clearly aware of their real strength...The authorities will find that the Kafirs have eluded the grasp, slipped out from under their control, and become their masters. This process has been gradually and silently going on for some years in Natal, and is now rapidly arriving at a crisis." (Quoted in Colenso, 1982: 11)**

Ascribing such a 'rebellious' character to Natal's African population became the foundation of a settler and colonial discourse that would pervade official ethnographic description and therefore policy towards these erstwhile 'refugees'.

In the case of Colenso, his first assessment of the temperament of Natal's Zulu-speaking population can be explained as an indication of his initial imbibing of the general and pervasive colonial mentality alarmed by a 'dangerous' and 'uncontrolled' otherness. On the other hand, Colenso did, after the abrupt end of his relationship with Shepstone, adopt a more sympathetic attitude towards the Zulu kingdom and its kings, past and present (Edgecombe, 1982: 23n9). This change in attitude involved a change in Colenso's understanding of the relationship between 'ethnography' and 'history', and between cultural description and political agency. Long



before his split from the Shepstonian fold, Colenso's point of view began to change due to his own personal experience of visiting the Zulu king Mpande in 1856. Colenso's experiences on this journey persuaded him that there might be more to Zulu politics than just 'despotism' and bloodletting. This changed perspective was partly a consequence of his apprehension of the inherent contradiction between the Shepstonian version of colonial history and logic of authority and his own calling as bishop and missionary.

Colenso's report on his 1859 visit to the Zulu king, titled 'First Steps of the Zulu Mission', was written in an epistolary style so that it, as he put it, 'may be realized more vividly the actual state of things in the Zulu country at this moment, and the difficulties which our Missionaries will have to contend with in consequence, at least in this early stage of their proceedings' (1982 [1860]: 43-44). As noted, Colenso assumed that his readers had at least some acquaintance with the details of Zulu history from the accounts of earlier missionaries, travellers and traders. However, his own narrative did not merely echo their conclusions, rather it vacillated between repetition and rethinking: he was uncertain about how to assess the supposed rivalry between Mpande, the king and his son and contested heir, Cetshwayo while being aware that by his very presence there he was implicitly drawn into offering his opinion on the contested issue of the meaning of the Shakan legacy within contemporary Zulu politics. It is in these dithering statements that one finds Colenso's first encounters with 'Zuluness' as a political and contemporary identity rather than as a prehistoric and ossified traditionalism. From his report it is obvious that Colenso set off from Natal with clear instructions from Shepstone not to mention or discuss 'politics'. Throughout his account he wrote about the suspicion, intrigue and espionage amongst the Zulus, and of his fear that any inappropriate mention of the political state of the kingdom would spark an unexpected overreaction and confirm rumours that he was there on a political mission. Ironically, Colenso was indeed perceived in political terms by the Zulus themselves. This was because he was the custodian and guardian of one of Mpande's other sons, Mkhungo, a fugitive from the 1856 civil war, who had fled with his mother Monase to Natal and then placed by Shepstone under the custodianship of Colenso. From the reports of the other members of his travelling party Colenso discovered that, even before their arrival, rumours had circulated that he was coming with an *impi*, a militia, and that in expectation 'the whole Zulu people' had spent the night at the uMfolozi River waiting for him (Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 132). His cautious response demonstrates his unease at being the focal point of such suspicions. To the readers of his report he offered the following assurance:

**Of course this is all exaggeration, but it is sufficient to show that there were strange suspicions afloat as to the object of my coming, which my dropping in one morning with only a single native follower must have helped to disperse. (1982 [1860]: 114)**

However, it transpires that this vigilant and anxious disavowal of politics and political matters was not Colenso's own idea but that it had been imparted and reinforced by Shepstone. It is at this point that Colenso was confronted with the contradictions inherent in being bishop, missionary, guardian of Zulu political dissidents and a friend of Shepstone. Whilst at Mpande's homestead, he received a letter from Shepstone, delivered by his messengers, and on reading Shepstone's 'opinion' on how he should behave he wrote:

**His opinion relieves me from one responsibility. I have not yet said a word about political affairs, nor mentioned Ketchwayo's name. I have had some doubts, however, whether I should or not before I left; for it seemed as if a Christian minister ought to labour for *peace* at all events, if that were possible; and my spirit was not quite at rest in the idea of leaving the land without making some effort towards effecting a reconciliation between father and son. But Somseu's [Theophilus Shepstone] counsel is sufficient to determine my conduct in this respect; and I shall, if possible, abstain to the end, from any reference to the political state of the country. (Colenso, 1982 [1860]: 108)**

This recognition of the paradoxical and incongruous demands of colonial politics and the ministry could be said to be the first step in the direction of Colenso's later involvement in the political affairs of the colony of Natal as exemplified by his defence of the Hlubi chief Langalibalele. In 1859 however, his understanding of his role was still structured by the influence of Shepstone and the pull of a colonial perspective on Zulu politics. Yet Colenso's 1859 experiences of Zulu politics had significance beyond his initial realisation of the tensions between the colonial vocabulary of 'Zulu despotism' and his own reconsideration of the stereotypes of Zulu kings and government. In his 1865 Marylebone lecture, Colenso referred to this experience as being decisive in his 'discovery' of the humanity and theism of the Zulu people. Even in 1859 Colenso was beginning to appreciate that, whereas earlier missionaries and his contemporary colleagues had understood Zulu identity, politics and history in predetermined and inflexible tropes and had therefore approached their missionary labours with an outmoded theology, a reformulation of the missionary's objectives, method and expectations was imminent and necessary. This conclusion was not an outcome of a purely scholarly and comparative speculation but a consequence of experience and an engagement with the 'native' point of view. Thus, when in 1865 Colenso asserted that Christian theologians could not afford to ignore the inquiries and contributions of their potential and actual converts, because 'we may yet have to find that we "without them cannot be made perfect"' (1982 [1865]: 224), he was arguing for the insertion of the 'native' enquirer's point of view into Christian theology and thereby further distancing himself from the reconstructivist position propagated by his former colleague Callaway.

The Pentateuch saga which established Colenso's reputation as a theological radical or, as some would argue, a heretic can only be understood if one appreciates the gradual and incremental way in which Colenso shifted away from the established ideas about the 'native' towards his own dialogic approach. In the preface to

the offending book *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined* Colenso described for his readers how in the process of translating the scriptures into *isiZulu* he had been reluctantly forced into contending with his informants and assistants' queries. He described their assistance by stating:

**In this work I have been aided by intelligent natives; and, having also published a Zulu Grammar and Dictionary, I have acquired sufficient knowledge of the language, to be able to have intimate communion with the native mind, while thus engaged with them, so as not only to avail myself freely of their criticisms, but to appreciate fully their objections and difficulties. (Colenso, 1862: vi)**

Unlike Callaway, whose mode of engagement with local culture was punctuated by the need to expunge the 'kafirised English' from the pure Zulu, Colenso's rationale for communicating with his assistants included recognition of the need to listen to criticism and objections.

The preface to the controversial *The Pentateuch* is an impassioned justification of this choice of method. Of interest is the fact that Colenso mentioned that this preface originated as a letter, which he admits he never sent, addressed to a 'Professor of Divinity in one of our English Universities' (1862: v). As such the preface was an open letter to the intellectuals and theologians of his time, written with the objective of defending his perceived apostasy but also to affirm his religious convictions. As a critique of the state of colonial scholarship and mainstream theology it is therefore a revealing account of the intellectual issues at stake both at the colonial periphery and at the metropolitan centre. On the state of intellectual life in the colonies, Colenso depicted himself as a 'brother in distress', stating that the magnitude of his distress was intensified by the fact that,

**...in this distant colony, I am far removed from the possibility of converse with those, who would be capable of appreciating my difficulties, and helping me with friendly sympathy and counsel. (1862: v)**

This statement on the paucity of scholarly dialogue is perhaps also an indication of how much Colenso had been alienated from his missionary colleagues, especially Callaway. The most thorough critique is however reserved for his European contemporaries, especially the English theologians whom he accused of being inert and slow to respond to the theological challenge posed by scientific discoveries and German Rationalism. As a theological exposition, Colenso described his work in terms that were informed by the emerging scientific disciplines of the time. He argued,

**...the main result of my examination of the Pentateuch, – viz. that the narrative, whatever may be its value and meaning, cannot be regarded as historically true, – is not – unless I greatly deceive myself – a doubtful matter of speculation at all; it is a simple question of facts. (1862: xx)**

His criticism of the metropolitan-based English theologians is therefore that, when faced with these 'facts' and questions about the truth of biblical miracles, they responded by offering what he terms 'a piece of thorough 'neologianism'' (1862: x). Thus, when Colenso made his commitment to truth, namely 'to follow the Truth

wherever it leads us, and to leave the consequences in the hands of God' (1862: x), he was challenging the standard of truth set by other colonial scholars and by his English contemporaries. Significantly, this critique was based directly on his missionary experience and his conversations with his converts.

That Colenso's deconstructivist method was never established as an intellectual and theological tradition in South Africa is proof of its radical implications; even Colenso himself could not have predicted that his commitment to the 'native' perspective would precipitate a full-blown involvement in the defence of indigenous political autonomy. In their own terms, however, Colenso's 1859 report, his 1865 lecture and his open letter on the Pentateuch confirm his growing predilection for a deconstructive and localised theology in his approach to missionary scholarship. This approach defined and established the identity of the Zulu and their religious and political ideas by sourcing a vocabulary of concepts already familiar to the would-be converts and informants. The general implication of this approach was that ethnographic data and description were not a substitute for a contemporaneous understanding and conversation between the missionary and his audience. It was a disavowal of the 'ethnographic' theology of Callaway which while it preserved the folklore and mythology of the indigenes, also denied the validity of their notions of divinity on the grounds that these were merely fragmented excerpts from antiquated 'higher' myths, cultures and traditions.

### ***Indigenous Testimony and Missionary Scholarship's 'Commitment to Truth': Some Concluding Remarks***

Whereas the nineteenth-century European scholar was defined by the ability to accurately depict the nature and dynamics of society, the nineteenth-century missionary scholar was defined by the ability to portray an unfamiliar and strange culture and present it to a readership that was itself not part of the culture being studied. The missionary scholar was therefore both a stranger and an intermediary, claiming that it was possible, even from this peripheral position both in relation to the audience for whom he was writing and the cultures on which he was commenting, to provide accurate knowledge of that culture. Yet, a closer examination of missionary self-representation reveals a less certain method of inquiry – at one point the missionary would claim to understand the language he was learning and studying and at another he would qualify such statements by noting his own 'imperfect knowledge' of the language and culture. This suggests that the missionary scholar was a hybrid creature; he claimed to be a novice of a culture while at the same time arrogating to himself a position of authoritative knowledge. This ambiguity and shift in roles of the colonial scholar seems to suggest that there was at work an intellectual transition that would 'transform' the scholar from the position of merely being a

student of a language or culture to being that culture's ethnographer, and this transition seems to begin the moment he makes a 'commitment to truth'.

Although there are numerous theories and explanations of the conditions under which colonial ethnography emerged, the extant literature, Pratt (1992) and Spurr (1993) for example, has tended to focus on how the works of these colonial scholars depicted and 'exoticised' the subjects being studied. There has however been less of a focus on the ways in which these colonial scholars constituted a 'community of discourse', that is, the extent to which they were self-consciously and explicitly choosing agreed techniques of enquiry, adopting similar styles of reporting on the outcomes of these enquiries, making claims in the name of 'Truth', and so constituting their identity as a community of intellectuals and scholars. In particular, there has been very little focus on how missionary and colonial scholarship was made possible by the conversations between the scholar and his 'native informants' or the degree to which the colonial scholar was willing to acknowledge his indebtedness to his local sources. Thus, although postcolonial theory, in the tradition of Edward Said's seminal *Orientalism*, has been thorough in laying bare the tropes, images, stereotypes and discourses that created the 'other' in colonial literature, less attention has been paid to the manner in which each writer dealt with and justified his method of enquiry vis-à-vis his conversations with the indigenes, interpreters and informants he relied on.

The present discussion has applied the insights of postcolonial theory to answer first the question of what characterised 'colonial scholarship' as a category of writing and inquiry especially when compared to the earlier genre of travel writing; secondly, the discussion has interrogated the various ways in which the missionary scholar arrogated to himself the function of linguist, ethnographer, historian and thirdly, it has speculated on the meaning of the role of the native informant in informing and structuring the type of ethnography that was possible for the missionary scholar to write. In comparing the work of Henry Callaway and John W. Colenso, the main focus was on understanding and explaining what distinguished the two men's approaches rather than what unified them. As missionaries, Colenso and Callaway had a lot in common: Colenso preached at the ordination of Callaway in 1854, both came to South Africa in the same missionary party with Colenso as bishop, and both would become authorities on Zulu linguistics and the translation of the Bible into the Zulu language (See Edgecombe, 1982: 25-26n26). These biographical coincidences do not however in themselves explain the two men's choice of different ethnographic and linguistic methods in their studies of southern Africa's cultures. The conclusions reached in the above discussion hint at some of the ways in which the mode of enquiry of nineteenth-century colonial scholarship was structured by the individual writer's

attitudes to the contributions of his African interpreters in forming his ideas. A distinction was drawn between *reconstructive* and *deconstructive* methods of inquiry. The import of this distinction was demonstrated through an examination of the work of Colenso and Callaway especially how both used their missionary experiences to construct and present to European audiences a particular image of the Zulus as a political, cultural and linguistic community. The general contention of the discussion was that Colenso and Callaway's views diverged precisely because each had a different notion of the value and validity of the 'native' point of view. Thus, whereas Colenso was adamant that the theological inquiries of his converts and indigenous audiences deserved to be responded to in a systematic and thorough manner, Callaway directed his attention to the preservation of Zulu folklore and mythology while at the same time diminishing their relevance to the contemporary moral and intellectual condition of Natal's Zulu-speakers. The consequence of these divergent views was that both men arrived at differing notions of Zulu identity and what this identity meant for the future of their missionary functions. Implicitly, the two were formulating and justifying competing views on what constitutes religious belief, both for the unbeliever and for the Christian. For Colenso, the Christian could not assume that their interpretations of biblical text were the only ones possible. As he argued in his 1865 lecture, the contribution of the African to theology was a necessary outcome of contact with Christian doctrine and it was not the task of the theologian to foreclose this possibility by disallowing or ridiculing possibly genuine inquiries of proselytes. In contrast, Callaway perceived the role of the theologian and missionary as being limited to demonstrating to the indigenous culture the incompleteness, and perhaps erroneousness, of their religious beliefs in order that they may understand the 'truthfulness' of Christian beliefs. Although such a divergence of views may, to the student of colonialism, seem to be marginal to the grander project of imperial subjugation, the aim of the discussion was not to redefine the nature of the colonial project; rather it was to characterise the nature of colonial scholarship as it emerged in nineteenth-century South Africa, specifically among the missionaries who targeted the Zulu-speakers of Natal and Zululand for conversion. The discussion was therefore an attempt to draw the general contours of an intellectual history of missionary writing. This objective follows from Thornton's definition of intellectual history as well as his argument that the dedication of missionary writers to their intellectual endeavours is explicable only if one understands their sense of perplexity at the impossibility of interpreting the cultures they had immersed themselves in. On intellectual history, Thornton states that, 'the intellectual history of a discipline is more than the history of its ideas. It is also the history of the rhetorical forms in which these ideas are cast' (1988: x).

The present section has focused on the 'native informant' as a defining presence in the work of the missionary intellectual and on the manner in which this informant was presented to the readers of ethnographic writing. Missionary-colonial scholarship was according to Thornton characterised by a sense of bewilderment combined with the discovery by these writers of the 'intractability to "ordinary" interpretation' of indigenous traditions and myths and consequently that these colonial writers 'bequeathed later scholars a gift of irony, for their perplexity was real, and it was profound' (1988: 79-80). Missionary ethnographic writing has become synonymous with colonial discourse, but such an equation conceals the missionary's authentic bewilderment at being confronted by a new culture and their resultant desire to 'know' and interpret the culture. This is not to argue that colonial missionary writing was not colonising; on the contrary, it is an attempt to reorient theories about colonial writing by recognising the contribution of the 'native' in the collaborative project of missionary scholarship by taking account of the position that the informant took within missionary discourses on language, culture, history and tradition. Since the general contention of the preceding discussion has been that the methods of inquiry adopted by Colenso and Callaway emanated from their divergent assessments of the value of indigenous testimony, it follows that one can assume that these were actual and intellectual points of disagreement rather than merely superficial and epiphenomenal outcomes of an unchanging and fixed colonial discourse. Such an understanding of the missionary writer, as perplexed and bewildered, makes it possible for one to present their work as a backdrop against which one can explain the emergence, in the nineteenth century, of an African and Christian literati which had close ties, intellectual and spiritual, to these early ethnographers and linguists.

### **From 'Native Informant' to 'Kholwa Intellectual'**

#### ***The 'Native Informant' as a Problem for Colonial Scholarship***

The 'educated native' is the *bête noir* of the colonial encounter. Typically representing two contesting moments of the colonial encounter, namely both colonial acculturation as well as anti-colonial resistance, the educated colonial African is a contradictory and paradoxical historical figure. As a product of the 'civilising mission', the 'educated native' became a source for and focus of colonial anxiety. Seen either as an 'imitator' of European sensibilities or still an untamed and potential rebel, the new African intellectual was caught between the rock of 'betraying' traditional culture and the hard place of colonial discourse. Unable to completely divorce themselves from their 'pre-colonial' past and yet prevented from fully assuming the rights and privileges of 'civilisation', the 'native intellectual' occupied the 'grey' area of the colonial encounter. These brief statements summarise,

although incompletely, some of the descriptions and attributes that have been used in writing about that group of individuals known as 'native intellectuals'.<sup>62</sup> Whether one is describing colonialism in Africa, Asia or the Americas, the 'native intellectual' is a question mark, the ambiguous 'other' who challenged and continues to challenge not only the colonial mission itself but the postcolonial scholar. The irony, of course, is that the 'native intellectual' was a colonial creation, literally and metaphorically. As a product of mission education the 'native intellectual' has either been too closely associated with the aims and objectives of the missionary enterprise or with the inculcation of Western lifestyles of modes of being. Neither of these definitions however, account sufficiently for the role of the native intellectual in the establishment of a colonial intellectual life.

If as the previous section of this chapter has suggested, missionary writing was instrumental in constructing the 'native informant' as a source of cultural, linguistic and historical data, the question arises as to the nature of the relationship between the missionary's 'native informant' and colonial culture's 'native intellectual'. When one reflects on a figure like Magera Magwaza Fuze his significance lies in the fact that he represents that interstitial point where a 'native informant' becomes a 'native intellectual', and the loss, for the missionary and coloniser, of control over the consequences of the 'civilisation' being supposedly effected. As an author of anthropological texts the missionary's audience and reception were determined by the intellectual conditions and curiosities of imperial Europe. When the 'native scholar' puts pen to paper, he also attempts to establish a 'community of discourse' to rival, and perhaps, more controversially, complement the extant ethnographic, linguistic and historical literature. That the two discourses emerged contemporaneously is of considerable significance. It suggests that the missionary's 'native informant' was perhaps always a chimera, or at least that he was always breaking ranks with a discourse that defined him as static and stultified. Significantly, from the perspectives of the practical demands of conversion, the Christian gospel was contested as it was being disseminated. And, this contest was at first 'oral'<sup>63</sup> before it manifested itself in written form: the 'native intellectual' was associated with the latter form of contest.

However, before such claims can be made about the role played by the 'native intellectual' it is imperative that an argument is constructed to demonstrate how such a challenge to the civilising mission could in fact be mounted by this nascent intelligentsia. The objectives of the section are therefore multiple. The first step is to assess, by reviewing some of the secondary literature, competing explanations of the impact or effect of the 'civilizing mission' on Africans. If one accepts the argument of the previous section on colonial scholarship, namely that the missionary, by arrogating to himself the role of interpreter and ethnographer of indigenous culture and society, also required a certain type of 'native informant', the question must arise as to



whether such informants ever resisted their 'capture by description', to use Robert Thornton's phrase. In other words, it is important to ask if and how such 'informants' understood their role within this discourse of colonial scholarship especially how they comprehended or responded to the claims to knowledge being produced by the missionaries about their cultures. This will be the second objective of this section, that is, to demonstrate how even within the constraints of the missionary/colonial discourse 'native informants' were able to contradict and contest the terms under which their culture, beliefs and history were being appropriated for a foreign audience. Magma Fuze, and his act of writing *Abantu Abamnyama*, represents such a moment and site of contest. As an individual and a writer, Fuze was simultaneously an 'informant' and an 'intellectual', or at least he ambivalently and contradictorily assumed these two roles. The third aim of the section is therefore to introduce Fuze as both a protagonist and an antagonist in the colonial contest over the conditions and premises on which knowledge of 'native' culture and traditions could rest. Such an introduction of Fuze implies that it is necessary, as was the case with the missionary scholar, to define and explore the nature, assumptions and limits of the counter-discourse he and his contemporaries attempted to establish. In other words, how did Fuze make the transition from 'informant' to 'intellectual' and what did this transition mean? What role did 'writing' play in this transition: did Fuze share his aspirations to 'write' a black people's history with his contemporaries? If so, who were his audience and what characteristics did they have in common? The last objective is to investigate the usefulness of the term 'native informant' and the extent to which the term itself delimits the participation of the 'native' in the reproduction of his/her culture for a literate, European or modern audience. Considering that it is possible that Fuze and his contemporaries imbibed from their missionary mentors a desire for 'knowledge' and then attempted to emulate their mentors' mode of inquiry, it is important to investigate the extent to which, as a 'community of discourse', these indigenous intellectuals were also reconstituting their own 'identities' through an engagement with their cultures. Thus, although the term 'native informant' has its uses in describing the relationship between the missionary and his sources, it is less certain that this term is appropriate for describing the 'native' intellectuals' preoccupation with writing and the public discourse of culture, history and tradition. Alternative terms like *bricoleur*, subaltern, autoethnography, biography and identity have been used to define these intellectuals' self-representation<sup>64</sup> and the section will therefore assess the extent to which these alternatives are useful in understanding and prying open the 'native' intellectual's *raison d'être*.

### ***Native Informants and the Missionary Scholar: Could the 'Informants' Speak?***

Although the central conceit of the missionary scholar was that the narrative he constructed about the indigenous culture and society he was studying was his very own scholarly 'discovery', occasionally 'native'

voices would seep through and disturb, confuse or even expose his scholarly dependence on indigenous sources. Such occasions are few and far between and yet they reveal the inextricable intellectual ties that bound the missionary writer to those who were his objects and subjects. The previous section (on colonial scholarship) demonstrated how the missionary writer depicted this relationship to his European and erudite audience; the present section will attempt to go further by demonstrating how some 'native informants' broke ranks with the general import of the missionary discourse by inserting themselves in the missionary's text either by disputing the 'findings' of the missionary writer or by disrupting, through their contrary views, the missionary's claims to knowledge. Of interest is the fact that missionaries sometimes included this contrariness, presumably as a curiosity for the unfamiliar reader, without fully comprehending the irony, or even mutinous potential of such comments, and in some cases, their sheer critical or oracular undertone.

We return to John William Colenso and his 1859 trip to the Zulu king Mpande. On the way back from the trip, he reports a conversation he had with William Ngidi, his assistant, on the manner and method that the missionary should adopt in ministering to the 'heathen' Zulu. Colenso noted his assistant's words:

**William spoke much also of the necessity of a Missionary, sent to a people like the Zulus, untaught and ignorant, not beginning at once to "speak with force" to them, and lay down the law with a "loud voice," saying, "I am not ashamed of preaching the Word of God among you; I am not afraid of being laughed at," &c. He very properly observed, that when St. Paul used such words as those, he was addressing men already learned and powerful, white people, inhabitants of great cities...But [it] is quite different when a white Missionary, who is to them, as it were, an angel from heaven, and looked up to as a being so infinitely their superior, goes to teach a poor ignorant people like the Zulus...He must go to work very gently, quietly, and patiently, as a father teaching his children...biding his time, and watching his opportunities, saying here a little and there a little, until his teaching has sunk down like soft rain into their hearts. If he goes to work differently, with violence, and laying down the law, he may perhaps get one convert to upset his kraal, and put all his family into confusion; but that will drive away all the others. (Colenso, 1982 [1860]: 140-141)**

William Ngidi was speaking from experience; he had, before joining Colenso, lived and worked on a mission station and he prefaced this conversation with Colenso by saying that 'he had had once an opportunity of a long conversation with a Missionary, on the subject of polygamy' (Colenso, 1982: 140-141). What is striking about the picture that Ngidi paints of how the missionary should minister is that it confirms the inherent power relations between the missionary and the would-be converts. By appropriating a standard missionary distinction between the 'ignorant' and 'learned' he both revealed his inculcation by the discourse, but also his ability to invert its import and use it for different purposes as when he referred to St. Paul. Ironically Ngidi and Colenso confronted this problem of the missionary's 'laying down the law' on the contested issue of 'polygamy' when in 1869 Colenso was forced to dismiss Ngidi for taking another wife (See Guy, 2001: 43). Even more ironically, Colenso did indeed adopt towards the Zulus the gentle persuasion advocated by Ngidi only to find that he had to defend himself, and 'speak with force' to his missionary colleagues on the question of the Pentateuch and the

veracity of the biblical narrative. The double irony therefore was that for Colenso, at least, his most acerbic and relentless critics were not the would-be Zulu converts but his European contemporaries who, like St. Paul's 'learned and powerful' men, demonstrated an aversion to any re-interpretation of the Christian message for an African audience. Ngidi also assessed the failure of missions amongst the Zulus in perceptive terms. He observed that where a missionary chose the forceful approach he might manage to win one convert and 'upset his kraal', but he simply pushed all others away. Again this observation was prophetic because Ngidi correctly pointed to the personal, social and political upheaval caused by conversion and thus preempted the controversies of 1877-1878 when the Zulu king Cetshwayo was accused of ordering the death of converts and Colenso sent Magera Fuze to investigate. His account, published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1878 confirmed that conversion had indeed caused an 'upset' in families and communities. As an example of a blending of the missionary discourse and the informant's self-representations, Ngidi's attempt to redefine the role of the missionary demonstrates not only an acute and precise appreciation of the 'issues at stake' in the fraught relationship between missionary and convert, but also Ngidi's uncanny ability to read the Christian scriptures from his own rather ambiguous relationship, as both Colenso's translation assistant and a convert. This seepage of the native informants' identity into the 'scientific' discourse of the missionary scholar was not uncommon; however, it still needs to be better understood and explained.

The missionary's occasional willingness to include the 'voices' of his informants should not be construed as evidence of 'equality' between the two, neither should it be interpreted as suggesting that 'native informants' could assume autonomous and self-assertive stances within missionary texts. Rather, such invasions and interruptions of the missionary's confident authority signal the need for a potential re-reading of the conditions under which missionary knowledge of indigenous cultures was acquired and disseminated. In this regard it is important to distinguish between two kinds of positions that the 'native informants' could assume. Firstly, he could, like Ngidi, play multiple roles as convert, linguistic assistant, cultural attaché for the missionary and also be in all these things a representative of what 'civilisation' could achieve. In this role, the 'native informant' represents the totality of what one could call the *missionary effect* because his entire life and livelihood is prescribed and defined by his personal relationship to his missionary mentor. As such he is more than a convert only; and this position is not just personal and social, but it is also political. On the other hand, the 'native informant' could just be exactly that, a source of information for the missionary, with essentially a mediating role and need not make any appearance in the missionary's final product. Here the informant is a flash on the horizon of the missionary scholar's intellectual endeavour, here now and gone on the next page.

Both positions destabilise missionary texts, but to varying degrees. The works of Colenso and Henry Callaway contain ample evidence of how these informants make their unsettling appearances in the otherwise predictable and predetermined scholarly preoccupation of the missionary writer. Furthermore, this distinction between 'native' disciples who were the product of the missionary effect, on the one hand, and the purely textual informant, whose speech is transcribed into knowledge, on the other, relates roughly to the distinction made between the deconstructivist and reconstructivist missionary traditions. The efficacy of this distinction, however, requires further discussion.

The fact that Colenso appreciated the political, social and, of course, intellectual usefulness of cultivating 'native' assistants may be demonstrated from his response to the rumours that had spread prior to his Zululand visit. As noted, rumours had spread that he was bringing an *impi*. His arrival was however announced by Ngidi, and in retrospect he concluded that 'my dropping in one morning with only a single native follower' (1982 [1860]: 114), helped dispel the rumours. Ngidi, as the said follower, functioned in this instance as a kind of Trojan horse, both concealing and revealing Colenso's reasons for being in Zululand. While his sole presence served to dispel rumours of an impending invasion by Colenso and his followers, he also represented the fact that, as a missionary and 'chief', Colenso did have 'native' followers. The political nature of this *missionary effect* becomes more salient when Colenso reports that on a rainy day:

**I happened to call out to Undiane and Magema, "not to get wet in the rain – to go into the wagon." "So," said the girls, "he has consideration for his people," which seemed to them quite unusual in a chief. (1982: 108)**

The missionary and his followers therefore represented more than just a religious mission; their arrival and presence was interpreted in overtly political terms by the observant inhabitants of Zululand. Thus, whether Ngidi, Fuze and company were actually Christian converts became a secondary issue to their perceived association with the missionary as a secular and political authority - a chief. In fact, the evidence suggests that many of the conflicts that occurred between missionaries and African rulers hinged on such questions of political allegiance, especially where converts chose to live, or sought refuge, on mission stations (See Etherington, 1978: 58-59 & 67). Being a missionary's informant thus amounted to more than being a source of information; it was an over-determined political and representative function whose effects exceeded the boundaries of a theological conversion to a foreign religion.

Whereas Colenso explicitly articulates an awareness of the ways in which his converts also implicitly functioned as political and social intermediaries, Callaway is more reticent about his reliance on 'native informants'. In his *The Religious System of the Amazulu*, Callaway repeatedly appends the name 'uMpengula Mbanda'<sup>65</sup> at the end of his recorded narratives without revealing the nature of his relationship to Mbanda or

why he is repeatedly quoted. It is only when confronted with a 'difficult' exposition on Zulu religious beliefs that he reveals that his informant is actually a 'Christian'. On encountering this difficulty in interpreting Mbanda's non-traditional view of Zulu mythology, Callaway confessed that:

**This is a most difficult piece of Zulu, which has been necessarily translated with great freedom; a literal translation would be wholly unintelligible to the English reader. I have produced the above translation under the immediate direction of the native who first dictated it to me. What he means to say is this, that they really know nothing more about Unkulunkulu than that he made all things, and gave them to mankind; having made men proper for the things, and the things proper for the men; but that there is not known to be any connection between the present state of things and the primitive gift of the creator. (1870: 23n47)**

It was only at the end of Mbanda's account that Callaway noted in passing that:

**The reader should note that this is an account derived from an educated, intelligent, Christian native. (1870, 31n59)**

We may observe that there are contradictory processes at work in Callaway's text. On the one hand, it could be said that he is effectively hiding the contrary or deviant views and identities of his informants; on the other hand, in so doing Callaway actually exposes his own attempts to excise and deny the intellectual acculturation of his informants. It is noteworthy that it was when Mbanda demonstrated an independent re-interpretation of traditional Zulu cosmogony that Callaway encountered his difficulty in translating. Yet, in his earlier *Nursery Tales*, Callaway had been more open in acknowledging his reliance on native 'revision' of his work. In the preface of the 1868 edition, he conceded that after the publication of the first part of the volume literate 'natives', who had read the work, approached him and suggested emendations to some of his tales and offered their own alternative versions. He told the reader that:

**The issue of the First Part aroused a spirit of enthusiasm among the natives of the village who were able to read, and several came and offered themselves as being capable of telling me something better than I had printed. From this source of information thus voluntarily tendered I have obtained by far the best part of the contents of this Volume... (1868 [1866]: n.p.)**

The irony, of course, is that whereas in the *Nursery Tales* Callaway had been willing to allow the corrective voices of literate Zulu informants to disturb his own 'scientific' and philological method, in *The Religious System* he adopted a doctrinaire approach to the testimonies of his informants. Notwithstanding this, the dissident presence of Mbanda undermines Callaway's project to present a 'pure' Zulu mythology. Unlike in the writing of Colenso, it is difficult to discern the views of Callaway's informants since their self-representations are either excised or purified by his approach to 'scholarly' expositions.

Brief as it is, the comparison between Callaway and Colenso's willingness to allow indigenous identities to colour their own narratives, provides evidence that the 'native informant' was both anthropologically and politically a necessary ingredient in the missionary's self-conception and 'scholarly' credentials. The objective of the above analysis was to point to the presence of defiant and contrary voices of

informants in missionary scholarship and to suggest that these are glimmers of much larger identity reconstitutions that were taking place as part of the missionary effect, defined above. It was in this fashion that the William Ngidiso and Magera Fuzes of the nineteenth-century made their first appearances in colonial discourse as anthropology's pedestrian 'native informants'. And yet, even in such menial positions these informants exhibited self-assertive and independent thought, which sometimes served to undermine the missionary's authoritative discourse. This served as the point of departure for the next phase in the development of the 'native informant', namely the phase in which the 'native informant' becomes the 'native intellectual'. In the case of Magera Fuze, these two phases of his life are equally important and *Abantu Abamnyama* reflects their inseparability.

### ***When 'Native Informants' become 'Native Intellectuals'***

In the same way that the 'native informant' creeps into the narrative of the missionary, the reverse also happened, that is, the missionary also made an appearance in the written works of these early African intellectuals. Again, what is at issue is not so much the equality of the actors in the relationship but the type of identities and identifications that structured such a referential discourse. When African writers of Magera Fuze's, and perhaps a later, generation put pen to paper they were confronted by the dilemma that their notions of the subject matter at hand were in a sense prescribed by the requirements of colonial discourses. Moreover, in the absence of established institutions of higher learning as a basis for a South African intellectual elite, these writers were relegated to the amateur category and could not be called 'scholars' in the strict sense of the word. These twin factors in turn determined the extent to which each writer could appeal to particular kinds of audiences, employ a particular style of writing and, most importantly, choose the language in which they addressed their readers. Thus, like conversion, writing both created and resolved crises of identity for the nineteenth-century *kholwa* literati. Yet, even as it sustained certain kinds of communal and collective identities, writing was also a 'modern' tool and therefore implicated in the creation of distinctions between the 'educated native' and his 'raw' brethren. The objective of this sub-section is to investigate how, in constructing his own identity as a writer, Fuze negotiated the fissures that often threatened to undermine his intellectual mission. If one assumes that the self-understandings of the *kholwa* literati were defined solely by their conversion to Christianity and the subsequent influence of mission education, then their desire to broadcast their views to a wider readership and community can be understood as a triumph of the religious and intellectual inculcation practiced by their instructors. This would certainly be the conclusion reached by the Comaroff / De Kock school of thought. In the case of Fuze, however, one observes both an explicit acknowledgement of, and a critical

stance towards, the missionary inheritance. Furthermore, one may also observe a dialectical struggle between this missionary inheritance and other identities, colonial and otherwise. The *kholwa* writers were in other words more than just the sum of their education; their intellectual world is interesting precisely because of their valiant struggle to resolve this dilemma while at the same time retaining their commitment to 'modernity', broadly understood.

The *Three Native Accounts*, Colenso's 1860 collection of travel narratives, introduced Magama Fuze to travel writing and the journal as modes of self-representation and thereby mark his initiation into the realm of the written word. Letter writing also became a central function and expression of the *kholwa*'s identity and another marker of their 'modernity'. At first, letter writing served the practical purposes of conveying urgent or personal information in private correspondence, but by the turn of the nineteenth-century, the *kholwa* literati also published letters in newspapers like *Ilanga lase Natal* to communicate with a newly literate discourse community, and to create a shared sense of collective grievances and common interests (See Khumalo, 2003: 16-18, 26-27). This shift from the private to the public and polemical use of the letter is evidence of Fuze's maturation as a writer. As a young apprentice and manager of the Bishopstowe printing press, Fuze wrote to Colenso while he was away in England. Colenso later mentioned these letters from his young converts as proof of their diligence and intelligence. Yet, these letters also demonstrate that the brewing Pentateuch controversy exposed them to the vagaries of European intellectual and theological debates. In his lecture at the Marylebone Literary Institution, Colenso quoted from an August 1863 letter written by Fuze asking:

**...“I wish now to hear plainly whether, indeed, they have spoken the truth or not, to wit, that you no longer believe. But I know there is not a word of truth in what they say. Just this one thing is, that we believe in God our Father, who knows everything.” (1982 [1865]: 226)**

In the same lecture, Colenso sarcastically used the term 'Zulu Philosopher' to describe William Ngidi; members of his audience familiar with the criticisms levelled at his views would have known that he was responding to the queries about his 'intelligent' Zulu assistant. One of these critics was Matthew Arnold and in *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, the editor R.H. Super contextualised Arnold's essay on Colenso, by citing the *Times*' jibe about Colenso's informants.

**The *Times*, amusing itself at Colenso's expense on February 16, 1863 ... tells how the bishop set to work translating the Bible with the help of “an intelligent Zulu, a sort of coloured Spinoza, as it would seem. This *enfant terrible*...began to ask impertinent questions, which Dr. Colenso found a difficulty in answering...Instead of Dr. Colenso converting the Zulu, the Zulu converted Dr. Colenso” (1962: 416)**

Thus, both Fuze and Ngidi end up as weapons in Colenso's defence of his biblical and theological dissidence. What is also of interest is that as converts to the faith, they instinctively comprehended that, if Colenso's faith was under question, then so was theirs. Most importantly, for our purposes, Colenso's views on the validity of

his converts' inquiries threatened the very definition of the 'native informant' as understood by his missionary and theological colleagues. This further indicates that even within his work, Colenso's followers were positioned as more than just 'informants'; they were nascent intellectuals and therefore worthy of an audience, which presumably was what Colenso attempted to achieve by presenting their thoughts to metropolitan readers.

The intellectual and spiritual crisis precipitated by the Pentateuch controversy could have blighted the intellectual curiosity of Fuze and his Bishopstowe compatriots and led to their disenchantment with the 'modern' theology preached by Colenso. That this did not happen is evident from the fact that when Fuze wrote *The Black People* he presented the desire to 'enlighten' others as the basic rationale for writing the book. He wrote:

**Let it be for each to strive according to his lights, and diligently search for the dates of these events, so that in subsequent editions of books published now, they who wish to revise them may by their experience attempt to accomplish much more than we have done today, and so rouse our children from the deep sleep which we have slept for so long, giving the impression that we have been destined for such a state by our grandfathers and great-grandfathers...(Fuze, 1979: vii-viii)**

This call to diligence follows Fuze's confession that his book is 'without horns [without effect] in that it treats events without dates' (1979: vii) and thus the reference to the 'search for the dates of these events'. As an author, Fuze presents his intellectual mission in modernist terms; he clearly sees himself as writing for posterity and as initiating a 'tradition' that will be carried on by others. Such a self-conscious articulation of a writer's function suggests that by the time he wrote *Abantu Abamnyama*, Fuze had made the full transition from 'native informant' to 'native intellectual' because his calls were addressed to his contemporaries whom he hoped would be as enthusiastic about the history of '*abantu abamnyama*' as he was.

Decades after the Colenso controversies and his death, Fuze articulated his aspirations to write a history of 'the black people and whence they came'. His appeal to posterity and the urgency of awakening slumbering minds reinforces the idea that what the *kholwa* shared was a 'sense of accelerated temporality' (Attwell, 1999: 271). As a community of discourse, and inheritors of the missionary legacy, they tentatively claimed their stake to modernity's boon, while at the same time attempting to define a sphere of influence that was 'African' and therefore beyond the grasp of colonial culture and scholarship. Thus, although the legacy of Colenso's polemic and biblical writing would be inherited by his converts and reflected in their writing, they were not just repositories of an undigested religious dogma. The specifics of this legacy follow in the next chapter. However, for now, it is sufficient to reiterate the objective of the section, namely that, the narratives of the missionary and his converts bled into each other and specifically that by introducing his converts to the letter and the journal, Colenso imparted to his informants a self-reflexive and 'modernist' identity that was instrumental in their later engagement with other *kholwa* thinkers. At issue is the question of what this transition



from the position of 'informant' to 'intellectual' consisted of, and it has been suggested here that this transition consisted of an articulation of modernist views and acculturation into the literary culture of journal and letter writing.

### ***The 'Native Informant' – A Conceptual Critique***

The concept of the 'native informant' is so tied to notions of 'authenticity' and 'identity' that its use must raise questions about who the 'informant' is. There is generally an inexplicable neglect of the 'native informant' and this is extremely disconcerting given the nature of missionary writing: with few exceptions the missionary was deeply concerned with the metaphysics of personhood, that is, with naming and polarising, at a basic psycho-social level, the 'heathen' from the 'believer', the 'superstitious' from the 'faithful'. Armed with an intrusive imagination, missionary scholars speculated on all aspects of the African personality and lifestyle in an attempt to identify, in a foreign culture, the philological, anthropological and theological foundations of religious belief. Such identification required a predetermined map of personhood and identity. And so did the missionary practice of identifying, writing about, transcribing, translating and producing knowledge derived from conversations with those who availed themselves for this dialogue. It is in the context of this missionary practice that the term 'native informant' must be located. The term's efficacy is in its association with the discipline of anthropology, specifically ethnography, which was in its infancy, nurtured by the missionary scholar. It is however, not the only term that could be used to describe the relationship between the missionary and his 'native' associates. Other applicable concepts, though with different theoretical assumptions and implications, include such terms as *bricoleur*, autoethnography and subaltern. This concluding section proposes to assess the theoretical usefulness of the concept of the 'native informant' by juxtaposing its use with such alternative conceptualisations. The objective is to demonstrate how the uncritical association of the 'native informant' with his 'culture', as if this was a natural habitat, can lead to a misidentification of the sometimes subversive self-realisation and complex personal roles of those who found themselves in this position. The general thesis is that although missionary discourse, and one may dare say modern critics of this discourse, limited the function of the 'native informant', in accordance with the overriding objectives of their method of inquiry into indigenous cultures and societies, these 'informants' often transcended their assigned functions and definitions by pursuing their own aspirations and interests in the culture being studied. The conclusion is that the ability of this nascent intelligentsia to comprehend, or perhaps misunderstand the colonial condition in which they lived, should be an object of intellectual history in its own right.

That the 'native informant' emerged in conjunction with colonial scholarship is evident in Mary Louise Pratt's use of the concept of 'autoethnography'. After describing the notion of 'the anti-conquest', namely, the literary strategies by which Enlightenment travel writers absolved themselves of the imperial conquests won by the nations they represented, Pratt gives the following thorough definition of autoethnography:

**I use these terms ['autoethnography' and 'autoethnographic expression'] to refer to instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with the colonizer's own terms*. If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations... Autoethnographic texts are not, then, what are usually thought of as "authentic" or autochthonous forms of self-representation... Rather autoethnography involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror... Autoethnographic texts are typically heterogeneous on the reception end as well, usually addressed both to metropolitan readers and to literate sectors of the speaker's own social group, and bound to be received very differently by each. Often such texts constitute a group's point of entry into metropolitan literate culture. (1992: 8-9)**

As a definition of the concept of 'autoethnography', Pratt's statements presents four moments, phases or actions in the creation of an autoethnographic text: first is an engagement with colonial discourse, second is the dialogue between the 'centre and the periphery', third is the contest over 'authenticity' and last is the ambiguous reception on both sides of the colonial-metropolitan divide. These moments, as distinguished here, seem to apply also more generally to the colonial encounter in so far as there, too, one finds a shift or transition from dialogue to resistance or assimilation. Yet, as already mentioned, definitions of the 'native informant' as a collaborator with the colonial or travel writer foreground the issue of 'authenticity' since these writers had to deal with the opinions of their informants, some of which revealed the extent of their acculturation rather than a 'native point of view'. Thus, although sufficient, Pratt's definition of autoethnography still presumes an imbalance of 'idiom' in favour of the conqueror and the metropolitan reader, without fully appreciating the possibility that the 'literate sectors of the speaker's own social group' could also be well-versed in the idiom of cultural authenticity. What is more, Pratt does not even raise the question of what 'authenticity' is. By contrast, Alice Deck's article on 'autoethnography' situates the problem in a different context by investigating the rationales of those who authored such texts. Her focus is on Zora Neale Hurston, the African-American writer and folklorist, and Noni Jabavu, writer and granddaughter of John Tengo Jabavu. As a fusion of the genre of biography and the discipline of ethnography, autoethnography shares, for Deck, problems endemic in both disciplines, for example the problem of understanding 'the inevitable gaps between experience and the production of human expressions of that experience' (1990: 244). As a response to this critical dilemma, Deck presents both ethnography and biography as problems in the 'anthropology of experience', she states:

**As texts, both autobiography and ethnography can be understood as fictions – not in the popular sense of something merely opposed to truth, but in the sense of something made or fashioned,**

based on the word's Latin root *fingere*... We can discuss the "art" of autobiography and ethnography as a skilful fashioning, be it the fashioning of a select group of experiences in a life or the fashioning of useful artefacts from a particular culture. The making of both texts [sic] is artisanal, "tied to the worldly work of writing"... (1990: 245)

From this theoretical perspective, Deck thus defines the work of Hurston and Jabavu as:

... written by individuals indigenous to the culture under scrutiny, who are as concerned with examining themselves as "natives" as they are with interpreting their cultures for a non-native audience...these writers have produced texts which are a hybrid of ethnographic explication as well as autobiographical concerns with their personal development as children within, and their adult relationships to, their native settings...Of equal importance is the fact that Hurston's and Jabavu's indigenous status allows each of them to promote their interpretations of their worlds as authentic without the validation of other social scientists. (1990: 246-47)

Compared to Pratt's definition, Deck's understanding of autoethnography focuses more on the internal dynamics that sustain this admixture of autobiography and ethnography rather than on the issue of authenticity. Moreover, her appreciation of the intrinsic centrality of experience in the contest between the 'native's' world and that of the 'non-native' audience suggests that rather than view this relationship in terms of collaboration and alienation, it is possible to view it as a self-fashioned and interpretative role precisely because, as Deck points out, these writers need not seek validation from others. Deck concludes that,

As "indigenous anthropologists," Hurston and Jabavu understood the subtleties of their respective black cultures, subtleties of expression that reveal exactly how things stand with the "inner life" of their communities. (1990: 254-55)

Although this 'organic' definition of the 'indigenous anthropologist'<sup>66</sup> as having access to the 'inner life' of their communities is potentially problematic, it nonetheless begins from a different set of assumptions to Pratt's since it re-arranges the relationship between the 'native' and their culture, by equating writing with cultural introspection rather than with collaboration with the colonising culture.

The optimistic evaluation of autoethnography expressed by Deck is however not generally shared. In fact, the contrary is true: along with 'biography' autoethnography is treated with scepticism if not downright scorn by many in the humanities and social sciences. An example of this thorough scepticism is John and Jean Comaroff's statement that:

...Biography is anything but innocent. Its most articulate textual vehicles in our own society are the private diary, the journal, and the memoir, which find their way into much, often methodologically naive, historical writing; in the ethnographer's notebook it typically appears in the guise of the life history, a singular dialogue contrivance of observer and subject. Yet the diary and the life history are culturally specific, patently ideological modes of inscription. The former is strongly associated with the rise, in the eighteenth century, of bourgeois personhood...the Cartesian "I," an image of a self-conscious being freed from the webs of enchantment and possessed of the capacity to gaze out at, and measure, the world. As a medium of (self-) representation, more generally, life-histories bespeak a notion of the human career as an ordered progression of acts and events; of biography as history personified, history as biography aggregated; of the "biographical illusion," Bourdieu (1987) calls it, a modernist fantasy about society and selfhood according to which everyone is, potentially, in control of his or her destiny in a world made by the actions of autonomous "agents". (1992: 26)

No concept is left unturned in this incisive analysis of not just biography, but the nature and source of its conceit. The statement is also an apt summary of the 'intentional fallacy' associated with the study of the author in literary criticism. Yet, as with Pratt's definition of autoethnography, the Comaroffs' conceptualisation of biography precludes other kinds of 'selfhood' that may be grounded in the same apparatus of 'the diary' and 'the journal'. The assumption is that any appeal to autonomous agency involves a certain kind of teleological reasoning in which the 'human career' is understood as consisting of a progression of acts and events. This precludes the possibility that biography could in fact be the expression of the exigencies of identity formation, rather than a conceited assertion of autonomy. Moreover, as Stanley Fish points out, the 'death of the author' has not been accompanied by a new form of criticism that does not appeal to the biographical or intentional, rather:

**...if the self has been thus dissolved, the notion of an intentional agent with a history and a biography must dissolve too; but in fact that is not at all the case, for, as Foucault notes in announcing the death of the self, we have "merely transposed the empirical characteristics of an author to a transcendental anonymity." That is, if the origination author is dissolved into a series of functions, if the individual mind is merely the tablet on which the mind of Europe or the mind of the pastoral or the mind of myth inscribes itself, then we have not done away with intention and biography but merely relocated them. In principle it does not matter whether the originating agent is a discrete human consciousness or the spirit of an age or a literary tradition or a culture or language itself; to read something as the product of any one of these "transcendental anonymities" is to endow that anonymity with an intention and a biography. (1991: 13)**

The implication then is that simply removing notions of intention and biography from one's theoretical work does not in itself displace the 'self' it merely anthropomorphises those impersonal or structural factors, causes and sources that are cited in the place of the autonomous subject. The broad implication of these debates on biography is that our conception of the function of the 'native informant', especially when s/he chooses to write an autoethnographic text, is inseparable from our conception of the relationship between author and text in general.

Thus, when confronted with the case of a literate, but culturally and politically insecure, nineteenth-century African community, the relationship between the self, culture and writing becomes more complicated. And, rather than reduce the study of these *kholwa* literati to a set of impersonal and structural forces one could adopt as an alternative Guarav Desai's notion of 'colonial self-fashioning'. In his reading of the writings of Akiga Sai, the Tiv historian and author of *Akiga's Story: The Tiv Tribe as Seen by One of Its Members* (1939), Desai explains the confluence of Christianity and modernity in the life of his converted protagonist by demonstrating how these twin forces led Africans like Akiga to adopt a 'doublespeak'. He writes:

**...the irony that it is precisely the moment of evangelism that becomes the scene of his own history lesson does not escape him. Christianity gives with one hand what it takes with the other. And it is in the midst of this give-and-take that Akiga's subject position and his narratorial "self-fashioning" become worthy of study. Akiga must engage in a doublespeak in order to pass the**

**test of “appropriateness” not only on the part of his community but also on the part of his Church mentors and his translator and editor, Rupert East. And furthermore, if this doublespeak must address all these various constituencies, then perhaps more importantly it must on occasion also address his own hybrid self. (2001: 120)**

Again, the emphasis in Desai’s conception of the ‘native’ writer is not on authenticity but on the construction of an authorial identity, one that is undeniably framed by colonial culture and missionary influence, but that is nonetheless essential for understanding the manner in which converted and literate Africans appropriated writing as a mode of self-expression. This suggests that the question ‘for whom were these African writing?’, should not be answered by referring to their supposedly pre-modern identities and communities, rather it should focus on how they understood their own transition to modernity, their displacement from traditional lifestyles and values and their incomplete incorporation into colonial civil society and intellectual culture. ‘Colonial self-fashioning’ is thus not an attempt to assert an autonomous and ‘bourgeois’ self, but it is a method of engagement with the colonial condition itself. In a further elaboration of the notion of ‘colonial self-fashioning’, Desai demonstrates that he has reservations about defining these vulnerable indigenous literati as subalterns. He argues that the experimental ‘production of history’ historiography, which he acknowledges as influential in his own choice of approach, has emphasised the need for alertness to,

**...how colonized subjects, should they choose to share their opinions and experiences with the colonizers, must, in an unequal economy of knowledge, wrench their experiences into the discursive forms of the latter...But this process of epistemic translation has not been a politically vacuous one – for it is precisely through the process of being such translators that many colonial subjects found a way to distinguish themselves from the “uneducated” natives. As Gayatri Spivak<sup>67</sup> has suggested, in order to be heard at all, subaltern voices have had to play by the rules of the disciplinary and institutional game, but in doing so they have also ceased to be “subaltern” in any meaningful way. (2001: 124-125)**

The theoretical differences and similarities between ‘colonial self-fashioning’ and ‘subalternity’ could be further explored; however, for the moment it is sufficient to reiterate that the relevance of the two terms is that they both demonstrate that in the case of the colonised indigenous intellectual, claims to ‘authenticity’ cannot be interpreted as ‘natural’ or genuine, rather they are themselves part of the process of these intellectuals’ engagement with their social, political and cultural predicament. It therefore follows that the *kholwa*’s engagement with colonial culture is a multifarious affair involving appeals to both modern and ‘traditional’ values and expressions.

To further elucidate and understand this multifarious relationship between Christian conversion, modernity and African intellectual life, the term ‘bricolage’ has increasingly been used as a central concept in interpreting the literary and other intellectual endeavours of the nineteenth-century *kholwa*. Thus, David Attwell rejects the argument that the *bellettrism* assumed in the creative works of mission intellectuals is evidence of ‘a colonised mind’ and instead posits *bricolage*, ‘the work of handymen who eclectically stitch forms together

from various sources', as an alternative interpretation (1999: 270). A similar notion appears in Draper's article 'The Bishop and the Bricoleur' who, following from the Comaroffs' discussion of culture, hegemony and power, finds the practice of bricolage amongst both Africans and missionaries. He argues:

**...both parties became *bricoleurs*, in their own ways, sorting through the debris of the two collapsing social universes for usable odds and ends of culture. Of course it is more obvious in the case of the African converts, since their predicament was the more severe, but it was true also for the missionaries as well, since they constantly found that things did not work as they should and their received ideas were challenged. Both parties engaged in the work of cultural bricolage...(2000: 418)**

The advantage of both Attwell and Draper's conceptualisations of the African literati's cultural products is that they restore a sense of creative agency to African converts. However, it is notable that there emerges a difference between Draper's cultural and Attwell's literary or linguistic understanding of bricolage. Thus, whereas for Attwell, bricolage reveals 'at best a *partial* rather than complete embedding in the strategies being deployed; such eclecticism implies an experimental, role-playing approach in which the potential for irony and masking always runs deep' (1999: 270); Draper, by contrast, reinforces the 'cultural imperialism' interpretation of the missionary encounter. The latter's definition of bricolage at first suggests a kind of post-iconoclasm, a rebuilding after a collapse of two *separate* cultures, and yet in a later discussion of the relationship between Colenso and Fuze, Draper demonstrates how both of these colonial *bricoleurs* were concerned with questions of *continuity*. Thus, in interpreting Fuze's inquiries about the origins of black people, evident in the title of his book *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona*, Draper observes that 'the effect of Colenso's Christian mission was to raise the question of origins, of historical identity and continuity, in its acutest form' (2000:444). Taken together, the relevance of these definitions is that they are an attempt to explain the critical tone in Fuze, and other *kholwa* writing; moreover, both definitions preempt the fact that the political fortunes and ideals embodied in the communalism of mission life were dramatically curtailed by intensified imperial expansion and colonialism in late nineteenth-century South Africa. This paradox of *kholwa* ideals and colonial reality is aptly captured in the observation that, 'the intensity of the converts' enthusiasm for the plough, education and literacy was in inverse relation to their assimilation as British colonial subjects' (la Hausse, 2000: 10). Notwithstanding the political reality that impinged on the *kholwa*'s self-assertive ideals, writing and cultural dialogue continued to serve the function of bricolage as political and cultural expression. Furthermore, the literary concerns of the *kholwa* elite were not exclusive of political engagement with colonial power. In the case of Magera Fuze, his involvement in Zulu politics predated the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and the subsequent imperial destruction of the kingdom's autonomy. The focal point should therefore be on the fact that although the *kholwa*'s main inheritance from mission education was literacy and writing these were also separate spheres of activity from

religious practice, especially since they supported the establishment of an African intellectual life and a pan-African and 'imagined' community of discourse.

## Conclusion:

As an essential constituent of ethnographic writing the 'native informant' occupies an impossible position<sup>68</sup> in that the colonial ethnographer's only interest in him is as a source of curious data about the culture he supposedly represented; beyond this any interest the ethnographer takes in his existence and identity is incidental. Such an understanding of the 'native informant' is reinforced from a postcolonial perspective when secondary readers of colonial ethnography continue to read the testimony of the informant merely as an artefact of the colonial/ethnographic encounter. The above discussion has attempted to offer a different reading of the 'native informant's' function. It was suggested that, since the missionary scholar's method of inquiry typically tended to adumbrate the informant's identity, this method and its consequences should not be taken at face value nor should we assume that what the colonial ethnographer captured in his writing was 'pure' culture as expressed by 'authentic' indigenes. Instead, we have argued that despite the missionary ethnographer's 'commitment to truth', the identities of his informants often seeped into, and were sometimes even allowed to interrupt, the account of the ethnographic dialogue. Such interruptions allowed the informant to contest the conclusions and method of the missionary ethnographer and sometimes even offer corrections. A contrast was drawn between the approaches of Henry Callaway and John W. Colenso with a view to comparing the extent to which each was willing to allow their sources space to articulate their own ideas and views, and how each dealt with the identities of these sources. The objective was therefore to investigate the extent to which missionary scholars could accommodate the subversive voices of their 'native informants'. Moreover, it was suggested that the informants did not only sometimes subvert but could also occasionally transcend the limited function prescribed to them by colonial discourses.

The other consequence of noting such dissident presence in missionary ethnographies is that it permits a re-reading of the manner in which the likes of Magera Fuze and William Ngidi were actually acculturated by and educated in the 'tools' of modern and expressive writing. The 1859 journey by Colenso and his converts to the Zulu king was a defining moment since it was on this trip that Colenso introduced his converts to the accoutrements of the modern writer, namely, the journal and travel writing. Although such introductions to, in the Comaroff's terminology, 'bourgeois personhood', have been largely condemned for their pernicious effects, we have suggested that the would-be *kholwa* writers fashioned their own understandings of the value of writing as a symbol and expression of their own desire for modernity's promise. Moreover, it was noted that for a

missionary like Colenso, his African followers represented more than just exemplars of successful conversion, they also performed the supplementary functions of cultural, linguistic and social diplomacy and mediation. The holistic appropriation of the converts' identities as Zulu-speakers was labelled the *missionary effect* in so far as it reflects that the missionary made an impact that exceeded his religious objectives of evangelising. Again, this consequence of the association between the missionary and his converts was identified as an instance in which the former reveal their dependence on the latter's co-operation and assistance, and thus as another opportunity for the converts to assert their own identities.

The last section of the chapter revisited some theoretical issues and problems by assessing the usefulness and efficacy of the concept of the 'native informant'. Although this concept is used in ethnography to designate those persons, who as members of an identified culture, converse with, and provide the anthropologist with data, we suggested that the position of the 'native informant' was in fact an unstable set of identities whose complexities were often neglected by the missionary ethnographer. As a constitutive concept of the discipline of ethnography, the term 'native informant' was chosen because it theoretically connects missionary scholarship and discourse with the objects of this discourse, namely, the 'native' and yet at the same time reveals the inescapable tie between the production of colonial knowledge and the presence of the willing informant. As alternatives to this dominant concept, other definitions of the relationship between the missionary, the convert, modernity, tradition and all the paraphernalia of Western culture, were suggested through the use of terms like 'self-fashioning', '*bricoleur*', and 'autoethnography'. These alternative terms are, like the term 'native informant', ways to problematise the identity not just of the early converts, but also later *kholwa* intellectuals. They are, in other words, an attempt to imagine an escape route out of the colonial discourse and scholarship that curtailed the intellectual and cultural careers of these African men and women of letters.



## Chapter 3 – Magama Fuze and his Writings

### Introduction:

Writing a biography requires selective reading. Writing a discursive biography even more so. As a first attempt at interpreting the body of work Fuze produced, this thesis has explicitly chosen to eschew the traditional or hagiographic biography, 'the biography of great men', in favour of a discursive and intellectual history of Fuze as a writer. Fuze was not a 'great man', and this thesis does not propose to make claims that he was. Instead our concern is with the making of Fuze as a *kholwa* intellectual and an author. Conventionally, an intellectual biography involves either giving a chronological account of the different phases or periods in the subject's life and works, or systematising the body of work as a whole in terms of appropriate themes or topics. The approach taken here adopts neither the chronological nor the systematic method. Instead, this discursive biography constructs a specific argument about how, in the course of his life as a writer, Magama Fuze came to articulate a number of ideas and themes whose provenance can in the first instance be traced to particular historical moments of his life but which then continued to concern him in his later writings as well. This means that though his life as an author developed through distinct stages and contexts his writings cannot be neatly located in, or confined to, for example 'early', 'mature' or 'late' periods. Instead we will distinguish between different *moments of articulation* in which a particular set of issues first emerged in his writings, and the *thematic consolidation* of these ideas and issues in his later work. Our discursive biography thus involves both a diachronic element through an account of the particular contexts and significant events that acted as catalysts within which he first developed certain key ideas as well as a more thematic discussion and interpretation of themes and ideas articulated throughout his work.

One reason for preferring a discursive biography of this kind is that a linear chronicle of Fuze's life or systematic study of his work would be untrue to the nature of his writings as well as the manner in which he *wrote* about his own life. Fuze's writing is fragmented and dispersed across genres and media, with no explicitly stated unifying theme or teleology. At a basic level this problem of fragmentation is the problem of an incomplete corpus. It has simply been impossible to find and compile a complete *oeuvre* of his work. Unlike the conventional men and women of letters, Fuze did not keep a diary, or collect all his letters for the purpose of publishing them. Even when he did keep a

diary,<sup>69</sup> this was short-lived, or so the evidence suggests. By implication therefore the present analysis is a tentative exploration of his disparate writings rather than an authoritative account of Fuze's work.

The fragmentary nature of his writing also means that it is impossible to make categorical assertions about its nature and location. A great deal of the interest and significance of Fuze's work has to do with the ways in which it was located in the transition between different cultural and intellectual worlds. Qualitatively, Magama Fuze's work, composed as it was in *isiZulu*, but written by a *kholwa* intellectual, contains elements of both an indigenous narrative style and 'westernized' abstract thought. There is no obvious balance struck between the two nor did he succeed in constructing some new and stable synthesis. It is this quality that confirms that his work was the product of an ethos of *bricolage*. In terms of the manner in which he addressed his readers, Fuze's work again belongs to different worlds and can best be described as dialogic. Whether one reads the book *Abantu Abamnyama* or the serialised articles in *Ilanga* one finds Fuze addressing an audience, real or imagined, which no longer belongs to a traditional oral culture nor quite yet to the modern world of literate culture. This combination of active *bricolage* and dialogue is also present in his writings. The resultant collage of ideas and arguments is difficult to categorise under a single name or term as either 'traditionalist' or 'modernist', 'tribalist' or 'nationalist'.

In choosing not to adopt the conventional biographical methods of either a chronological or a thematic account, the discussion aims to avoid the problem of the 'autonomous subject' which haunts the biographical genre within the Western discourses of personhood and identity. Instead of assuming that as an author Magama Fuze was an 'autonomous subject', possessed of the requisite powers of self-actualisation and self-representation, the present discussion begins with the assumption that the ideas which came to define Fuze's intellectual life, were typically first articulated in and by particular historical contexts and moments of his intellectual life. In that sense these ideas and intellectual concerns were often expressions and articulations of the particular historical moment in which he found himself rather than abstract and general ideas generated by him as an autonomous subject and author. But, once articulated, these ideas and intellectual concerns did not disappear from his writings when that particular moment had passed. Rather they typically remained as sustained themes in his later writings as well. The ideas articulated in each of these moments were then later developed or recalled in different contexts as when he wrote the book *Abantu Abamnyama* or the *Ilanga* articles. To make the distinction clear we will distinguish between the *moments of articulation* and *thematic consolidation*

respectively. This distinction should not be taken to imply that each idea progressed from its moment of articulation towards its thematic consolidation in a linear way. Rather, the distinction is meant to suggest that each idea germinated or emerged at a particular historical moment, sometimes without being clearly and explicitly articulated by Fuze, only to be revived later in more explicit and direct terms. The difference between the moments of articulation and those of thematic consolidation consists not only of changed political and historical contexts, but also of distinct writing styles, genre, vocabulary and audience.

There are five themes and topics that have been selected as definitive markers of Magama Fuze's growth as a writer, and each of these thematic issues had its moments of articulation and of thematic consolidation:

Fuze's first and primary moment of articulation was connected with the experience of leaving his home and the customary context of Zulu life, attending Bishop Colenso's *Ekukhanyeni* school and becoming literate and a convert, a member of the first *kholwa* generation. The theme of transition – from customary Zulu life to that of the Christian mission, from an oral to a literate culture – was initially articulated in the essays, written at that time by the young Magama and other students. The writings of the young Magama expressed not just the novelty of the new lifestyle of being a Christian, but also provided hints about what literacy and conversion meant to Colenso's young converts. The keywords 'conversion', 'writing' and 'enlightenment' would from this moment of articulation become key themes of Magama Fuze's understanding of his life as an individual and as a writer.

The second moment of articulation was connected with Fuze's immersion in the political events of the 1870s, specifically the trial of Langalibalele and the destruction of the Zulu kingdom, the events which were instrumental in bringing Fuze into contact with the Zulu royal family and which laid the foundation for his later re-interpretation of the whole history of Zulu monarchical rule. The ideas and concerns first articulated in his writings at this time can be summarised by the phrase 'the Natal-Zululand divide'. In general, these events were central in the formation of the nationalistic views which Fuze later articulated in the pages of *Ilanga lase Natal* and in his book.

The third moment of articulation concerned his St. Helena years in which Fuze lived in exile as a tutor and scribe for the Zulu king Dinuzulu and his uncles; these were the years in which Fuze first encountered individuals from other parts of Africa and discovered the cultural and political commonalities of the African diaspora and which, retrospectively, he would describe in pan-Africanist

terms. His quest for the 'origins of the black people' as distinct from that of local communities and tribes, which would be most fully developed in his eventual book *Abantu Abamnyama*, may be traced to this St Helena experience.

The fourth moment of articulation, following his return from St. Helena, was connected to Fuze's term as a columnist for *Ilanga* and the experience of writing for a newly literate audience of responsive and interactive Zulu readers. Not only were Fuze's own ideas increasingly shaped in interaction with the readers of *Ilanga* but the idea of creating 'acquaintances' with these readers and of constituting a new kind of literate discourse community became an implicit theme of his writings. The notable differences and indeed incongruity between his writings for *Ilanga* and the eventual book may be traced to the role of the respective readerships in his mind.

The fifth and final moment of articulation came at the end of his life. Religion and theology reassert themselves in the fifth and last theme, when as if to return to his earlier conversion moment, Fuze expressed eschatological views which were not only original and provocative, but also a revival of elements of Colenso's biblical criticism and heretical views. For the sake of economy and clarity, this last theme, although interesting because Fuze expresses intricate, complex and controversial theological views, has been left out of the present discussion.

In general, the four chosen themes are explored through an examination and emphasis on the *autobiographical hints* that suffuse Magama Fuze's writing, namely, how he presented his own aims, goals, objectives and interests to his readers. A caveat should however be added; identifying and interpreting *autobiographical hints* is not synonymous with deciphering the 'intentions' of the author. Instead, the proposed notion of autobiographical hints concerns the self-reflexive manner with which Fuze engaged with the act of writing. In other words, what is of interest are Fuze's attitudes, expressions, and understandings of the function of the writer, his relationship with his readers and his interactions with the wider world of other writers and the social and political circumstances of their shared discourses. Our procedure in this chapter will accordingly consist of successively providing an account of each moment of articulation followed by thematic discussions, first in terms of his writings at the time, and then by drawing on relevant later writings.

### **The Primary Moment of Articulation: Missionary Education and Conversion**

The primary moment of articulation in Fuze's intellectual life was, of course, the seminal experience of missionary education and conversion itself. In the context of his life this amounted to much more than

the mere acquisition of the technical skills of reading and writing, or the substitution of one set of religious beliefs for another. Rather it was nothing less than a qualitative change, a basic and ongoing process of intellectual identity formation. From the outset this dissertation has in different ways been concerned with the problematic and significance of missionary education and conversion as the founding context of Fuze's intellectual life. Thus the opening section of the Introduction dealt with some theoretical issues on 'the consequences of the introduction of writing' while the next section described the general context for the emergence of that first generation of African missionary converts to which Fuze also belonged (See 'Enter the *kholwa*'). The brief overview of Fuze's life in the Introduction sketched the basic biographical facts regarding his education at Bishop Colenso's *Ekukhanyeni* mission from the 1850s as well as his conversion to Christianity and baptism. In this final chapter we will be concerned with missionary education and conversion as a primary moment of articulation from the perspective of Fuze's own writings. Thus whereas in the previous chapter the discussion focused on conversion as a theological problem which missionaries had to reconcile with their own colonial condition, the objective of this section is to re-visit the process of conversion from the African convert's point of view. If one accepts that religious conversion is more than just the renunciation of one set of beliefs in favour of another, then it follows that understanding Magama Fuze's conversion means unravelling the ways in which Christianity and its values and mores were woven into his life and ideas. For our purposes 'conversion' will be conceived as a life-long and everyday engagement involving the constitution of self-identity in relation to others. The connection with missionary education meant that, by introducing Africans to literacy and writing, conversion also produced among converts a curiosity and desire for knowledge which found expression in their constant demand for 'proper education' and thereby turned *kholwa* intellectuals like Fuze into advocates of a literate Zulu-language culture.

Admittedly, the aim of revisiting the process of conversion from the African convert's point of view is inhibited by a paucity of written documentation. There is no tradition of 'conversion narratives' in South Africa equal to, for example, the African-American tradition of 'slave narratives'.<sup>70</sup> Given the limited accessibility of conversion narratives Fuze's writings, both at the time of his initial education and conversion and later in retrospective accounts and reflection, are that much more valuable as primary sources. Fuze's writings provide the 'evidence' that will be appealed to in reconstructing and exploring this primary moment of articulation, namely his representations not just of his own

conversion experience, but also his descriptions, denunciations and supplications on behalf of his *kholwa* brethren.

### *Fuze's education and conversion in context*

For Magama Magwaza Fuze his 'conversion' began, before he met John W. Colenso, as a childhood epiphany. In his prologue to *The Black People*, he reports that as a child, he told both his parents and his playmates that he would not grow up at home, but that a white man of rank would come for him. He wrote,

**When Manawami attained the age of six or seven ( I am not certain about that), he began to talk in a manner unintelligible to his parents, but they paid no heed to it, regarding it merely as child's talk...In his conversation with the other children he used to say, 'I am not going to grow up here at home. A white man of high rank will be coming here from across the sea; he is the one for whom I will work, and who will call me by the name of Skelemu.' As he was always speaking in this way to the other children, his parents eventually discarded the name of Manawami and Skelemu became his permanent name. (1979: ii)**

This is, of course, not the account of the young Magama, in his own words or at the time, but by the elderly Fuze some decades later. We will return to his retrospective reflections and interpretations of his conversion experience with reference to these later writings below. Still, whether a child's intuitive comprehension of the increasing encroachment of white settlers, or a 'prophecy', Fuze's recollection of his childhood reveals how religious conversion is in fact an ingredient in identity formation. At a basic level of names and naming, the story of the premonition explains how he got the oddly 'colonial' nickname of 'Skelemu'<sup>71</sup>; it also preempts the story of his baptism and how he then 'received' from Colenso, the name 'Magama' ( See Fuze, 1979: iii-iv). The young Magama's oracle also proved to be 'true' for another reason; he indeed did not grow up at home. As one of the young children brought to *Ekukhanyeni* when Colenso established the school in 1856, Fuze would in fact spend most of his life in the employ of Colenso and the mission.

Contrary to the Christian doctrine of individual salvation, Fuze's conversion was not so much a personal catechetical pronouncement as an outcome of parental consent. In an article on the proposed Zulu mission school in Natal, written in 1856 and published in the *Mission Field*, Colenso wrote to his mission audience describing the initial difficulty of attracting students to his mission school. He described how with the help and, of course, translation of Theophilus Shepstone, the then Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, he was able to convince some chiefs to send their children to him. Parental

consent played a pivotal role in securing the children's attendance. In his concluding remarks Colenso stated:

**As the parents, no doubt, will frequently visit the Station, we may hope to reach their hearts by degrees, and induce them, by God's grace, to embrace the Gospel: but till then we cannot, of course, baptize their children, as they *might* be at any moment withdrawn from us into heathenism...**

**At present the Kafir school is a great fact; and, whether or not, it may end ultimately in failure, the sight of those nineteen little ones so trustfully committed to our care by their parents' free choice, and those parents *heathens*, - a thing before unheard of in the whole history of our dealings with the Kafir race, is one of the most pleasing and comforting, - a sight never to be forgotten by those who have witnessed it. (1856: 177 & 178)**

That the presence of the children could only be effected through the intervention of the colonial administrator Shepstone, and his influence over their parents, is evidence enough that the proposed and expected conversion of the children involved much more than religious beliefs or individual salvation. Many years later, when recollecting his baptism, Magema Fuze remembered not his own assent to the faith, but that Colenso had to convince his parents of the meaning of their son's becoming a Christian. Because of its detailed conversational content, it is worth quoting the larger part of Fuze's recollection. After describing how he had learnt to work the printing press, Fuze states that his father, true to Colenso's prediction in the *Mission Field*, came to visit:

**It was about the year 1859. Thereupon Sobantu [Colenso's Zulu name] spoke these words to Magwaza [Magama's father], 'Magwaza, I wish Skelemu<sup>1</sup> to be baptized'. 'Sir, what do you mean by being baptized?', this question being put by Magwaza to Sobantu. And Sobantu replied to Magwaza saying, 'I wish him to abandon bad habits and follow the path of the King above.' 'Wo, Sir', replied Magwaza, 'then you wish to convert him into a Christian?', And Sobantu admitted that it was so. Thereupon Magwaza said, 'Sir, I am afraid of my child becoming a Christian. There is a son of So-and-So at the Edendale Mission School over yonder who went there to study, and when his mother went to see him she found he was no longer there, and it was said he had simply left and no longer lived there. I am afraid, Sir, and I do not wish my child to become a Christian, because he will defy me and his mother.' To this Sobantu made no reply, but picked up the Bible and opened it and ordered Skelemu to read the Ten Commandments so that his father could hear them. And so Skelemu read them in full. When he had done so, Magwaza said, 'Hau, Sir, then you wish to make my child honour me and his mother, and desist from the evil practices of stealing and fornicating? Wo, Sir, I have nothing to say, and I give my consent for you to do to him what you want to do to him...And there the matter ended. (1979: iii)**

That Colenso resorted to the strategy of drawing an analogy between the biblical commandments and indigenous notions of respect for one's elders was an ingenious tactic. In appealing to the universal cultural value of 'honouring' one's parents Colenso was not actually translating the theological content of the commandments, but was invoking some African equivalent of the commandments.<sup>72</sup>

Significantly, the conversation between Colenso and Magwaza centred on the loss of parental authority, a complaint that became central to African and colonial opposition to the mission stations

and African Christians.<sup>73</sup> Viewed in context both the theological mediation of Colenso and the political pressure applied by Shepstone were necessary to achieve the parental consent that preceded baptism.

If the conversion to Christianity of Colenso's young pupils at *Ekukhanyeni* needs to be understood in this wider social and political context, the same applied to the basic project of missionary education in a colonial setting. Hailed as a 'Kafir Harrow', Colenso's school at *Ekukhanyeni* represented both Colenso's attempt to introduce the culture of public school education to his African charges; but also his principled notion, contrary to settler views, that Africans should be taught both academic and industrial skills (See Guy, 1983: 80; Kearney, 2003: 196). His choice of curriculum for his young converts was not easily accepted. The written and sketched works of his young students, suggest that Colenso adopted a 'liberal' view of what should be taught and the kind of intellectual and cultural dispositions he desired his converts to imbibe.<sup>74</sup> The stumbling blocks to Colenso's vision of an educated African corps were administrative and tactical. As Kearney describes, Colenso struggled to retain able teachers who shared in his vision; plus he was under scrutiny by both the colonial government and the settler community. Thus, when Lieutenant-Governor Scott criticised Colenso, the latter's response was to note that what Scott had found wanting at the school was the plantation or cotton fields regime, which according to Colenso, 'may make a Native a better machine for the purposes of his European Masters, but not a better or nobler Man' (Quoted in Kearney, 2003: 200).

Perhaps as evidence of his young charges' progress, and by implication the success of the school, Colenso sent samples of their writing and paintings to Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape Colony.<sup>75</sup> As works of art, the drawings are persuasive evidence that Magama and his fellow students had developed, in the three or four years after the inception of the school, an appreciation of art that perhaps surpassed that of many of the colony's students.<sup>76</sup> As representative of the 'success' of mission education, the drawings are ironically proof of the thoroughness of the conversion process and the effects that could be achieved in completely altering the 'worldview' of the convert. As such they could be defined as apt examples of the 'colonisation of consciousness'. Yet, this would be problematic if based on the assumption that the convert cannot or does not 'understand' the meaning of acquiring and utilising such skills. For our purposes these drawings may better be taken as exemplifications of the diverse ways in which the historical moment of missionary education opened up new forms of 'seeing' and representation to the young converts and novel literates.



### *Missionary education and conversion as a moment of articulation*

The missionary education of prospective young converts like Fuze operated at different levels. At its most basic it involved the practical skills of learning to read, write and draw. But to these first generation initiates to the modern world of literacy it also meant a great deal more. From his first years at *Ekukhanyeni*, Fuze learnt about the power of writing; its ability to communicate ideas and dissent. Beginning with the *Three Native Accounts* via the publication of Colenso's heretic theology to his own article in defence of Cetshwayo in 1878, Fuze was inducted into the art of writing as an intellectual, literary and political tool. Of all the skills acquired at *Ekukhanyeni*, writing became for Magama Fuze both a technique and a mode of self-expression. As a trained printer, the printed word was for him a product of a technical process which he executed with the kind of diligence that would, Colenso told an English congregation, 'not disgrace any fair workman in England' (Colenso, 1982 [1865]: 225). This daily contact with the printed word in both its tangible and literary forms created a congenial environment for Fuze and imprinted in his mind the urgency and immediacy which could be communicated in writing. Moreover, the lessons he learnt from the infamy that dogged his mentor no doubt influenced his own later attempts to 'revive' a cultural and nationalist dialogue among his *kholwa* contemporaries. If one recalls Fuze's childhood premonition, then it seems likely that the novel experiences of learning to draw, to set the type,<sup>77</sup> to play the harmonium,<sup>78</sup> to sing 'God the save the Queen'<sup>79</sup> would all have been understood in terms of his prophetic 'fate' of not growing up at home and that they would therefore form the foundations of his new identity as an *ikhholwa*. It is with reference to this experience of missionary education and conversion as a founding moment of articulation that we may best understand Fuze as a writer and the various shapes his career took. He would not only become a printer, but a teacher and private tutor to the exiled Dinuzulu, a columnist in *Ilanga lase Natal* and finally the author of *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona*. We propose to investigate the thematic articulation of Fuze's authorial development as this was shaped first in the earliest writings at *Ekukhanyeni* and then in terms of his later and sustained reflections on the key issues of conversion, writing and enlightenment.

### *The earliest writings*

The earliest writings which Fuze and the other converts at *Ekukhanyeni* produced during the late 1850s are of considerable significance both as a testimony to the abilities of these newly literate young students as well as for the ways in which they reflect and articulate different aspects of the experience

of mission education and conversion itself. The samples of their writing and paintings which Colenso sent to Sir George Grey in Cape Town included some telling sketches, both literal and artistic, of mission life. In his vignette on *Ekukhanyeni* life, Magama (still called 'Skelemu') chose to write mainly about the daily and Sunday routines at the mission. He said,

**Ekukanyeni siyababula kakulu...Kaloku siyabala siyafunda siyahlabelela amagama kaDio. Kuti ngeSonda singene enhlini yokukuleka kusasa, sikuleke. Kuti ilanga selizakuba pezulu, kukale insimbi yabelungu ibabize bafike ekaya bangene, enhlini yokukuleka, bakuleke bafunde izindaba zikaJesu Kristu indodana kaDio Unkulunkulu. Kuti abelungu bapume enhlini yokukuleka sesihla idina. [S]esiqidile, kukale insimbi yabantu abamnyama...Gemihla inkosikazi iyasifundisa ukubala imifanekiso. Sefunda ukubala nokuhlanganisa nokususa ematweni esibala ngawo, Sefunda incwadi yamangise kodwa asikayazi yona impela<sup>80</sup>...(Fuze, 1857: 3)**

Translations of the boys' essays were also provided, and in this case the translated version reads:

**At Ekukanyeni we are very happy...Now we cypher [sic], we read, we sing hymns of God. It is, on Sunday, that we enter into the house of prayer early, we pray. It is, when the sun is high that there rings the bell of the white men to call them that they come from home; they enter into the house of prayer – they pray – they read the accounts of Jesus Christ the Son of God, Unkulunkulu. It is, the white men come out of the house of prayer. Now we eat dinner. When we have finished, the bell of the black men rings...Daily, the Lady (Mrs Colenso) teaches us to draw pictures. Now we learn to cypher and to add, and to subtract on the slates which we cypher on. Now we read a book of the English: but we do not know that perfectly. (Fuze, 1857: 4)**

Precisely because it is a naïve and impressionable description of the mundane and everyday activities at the mission, Magama's essay offers a glimpse of how the Christian religion and Western learning looked through the eyes of a young African. Paradoxically, these samples represent both the noble vision of Colenso's pedagogical ambitions, and also his willingness to conform to 'settler' prejudices. On the one hand, the young students were taught all the fine arts of Western education, from arithmetic to art, while on the other hand Colenso preached, every Sunday, to a segregated congregation, with the young boys acting out the ritual of marching to the bell that separated the 'white' from the 'black' services.<sup>81</sup> At the same time the passage from Fuze's essay also represents the moment in which he articulates the meaning of conversion. This is because the rituals he describes are manifestly constitutive of the conversion experience of the young boys. On closer reading these texts also offer further glimpses of the missionary process at work. Thus at the level of language and translation, the passages are a testimony of Colenso's translation labours in Magama's use of the term '*Dio*' for the Christian God. Colenso had already made known his objections to the preferred use, by his missionary colleagues, of '*uTixo*', because he concluded that this word was inauthentic and borrowed from the Khoisan languages via *isiXhosa* (See Etherington, 1997: 418n441; Hermanson, 2003: 7-11). Thus, the linguistic experiments of the teacher are reflected in the products of the students. There are however

intimations of independent and critical reflection on this experience of missionary religion. Thus Colenso's compromise with the colonial mindset of segregated congregations led 'Mankenjane, son of Sotyenge', the other young man whose essay was also sent to Grey, to ponder why it was that 'blacks' were different from 'whites' even though they were made by the same uDio (Sotyenge, 1857: 1). Even at this earliest stage the Bishop's pupils were ready to make their own critical judgements of the coherence of the Christian religion to which they had converted.

### *'Three Native Accounts'*

These early samples of schoolboy essays were followed soon enough by actual publications. In 1860 Colenso published the *Three Native Accounts of the Visit of the Bishop of Natal in September and October, 1859 to Umpande, King of the Zulus*. This marks the moment in which Fuze first appeared in print. When Colenso set off with his party of young converts, he explicitly instructed them to keep diaries of their experiences of the journey.<sup>82</sup> It was the consequent writings of Fuze, William Ngidi and Ndiane which were published as the *Three Native Accounts*. As the earliest printed works of these newly literate authors they merit close scrutiny for the articulation of some seminal themes and issues. One such theme involved the earliest articulations of their conception of the 'Natal-Zululand divide' which will be explored more explicitly in relation to the second moment of articulation below. Here we will only deal with the more general aspects of their writing in the *Three Native Accounts*.

For our purposes it is noteworthy that Colenso's instruction to Fuze and the other two travelling companions was not an open-ended invitation to write just anything; effectively he introduced his converts to those mainstays of Enlightenment letters, namely, travel writing and the journal. Travel writing is a decidedly 'colonial' genre. Colenso's experiment of inviting the young Zulu literates to try their hand at independent writing was therefore also an induction into the colonial genre of travel writing. The results were instructive in different ways. As the work of novices one would expect that Magama Fuze and the other converts' contribution to Colenso's *Three Native Accounts* would be a formulaic, repetitive and simplistic collection of journal notes reflecting the demands of the teacher, and the conventions of the genre.<sup>83</sup> For his part, the young Magama did conform to the demands of the travel narrative by making observations about everything from landscape to wildlife; some members of the party even did some hunting and shooting (Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 109). On the whole, though, the three narratives are so dissimilar to each other that any description of them as formulaic and repetitive would not do them justice. This does not mean that Magama, William Ngidi

and Ndiane did not use repetitive language, but their selection of themes, observations and events is notably varied. A brief consideration of especially the accounts by Ndiane and William Ngidi, will reveal these distinctive features.

As they set off on their journey, only Ndiane chose to note their purpose in going to *kwaZulu* (Zululand). His story opens with the following lines:

**The book of the day we set out from home, we part company with our people, we going to Umpande, the King of another land, according to that which we have been ordered about in the holy Book, namely, 'Go ye, go into all the world, and tell all the nations that which you have been given through the Mercy of your Father who is in Heaven.'**  
(Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 122)

This explicit expression of a missionary purpose of the journey is for Ndiane the manifest rationale of their journey. In contrast, for Magema and William Ngidi the purpose of the journey emerges only implicitly in the course of their travels. In the case of Magema, the missionary purpose of the journey appears only after Colenso had met Mpande. In his account, the emphasis is not only on the spreading of the gospel but even more on the ignorance of the Zulu people. He stated:

**...for Sobantu had gone to the Zulu country, that he might go and ask for land, that there might build there a missionary, and teach those ignorant people of the Zulu country, and make to spread among them the word of the Lord God Almighty. For they are ignorant people. (Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 118)**

A striking feature of Fuze's narrative in *Three Native Accounts* is his vivid recounting of particular and telling incidents, unlike the categorical generalisations<sup>84</sup> on which the colonial genre of travel writing so heavily relied. Thus in his account of their 1859 trip to the Zulu king, Magema recounted an encounter with two white men who found him sitting alone.

**...as I was sitting, there came in sight two white-men carrying guns. Said one to me, 'Hold my gun here:' I held it. He leapt over a little muddy spruit; he said (let me give) I was to give him his gun. I went into the spruit, my legs sank in the mud, they went down; they laughed at me; I gave him the gun. He asked and said, 'Are you a boy of the Bishop, eh?' I assented, and said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Do you know it, to draw a bullock, and a horse, and a bird?' I said, 'I know a little.' They started off and went, they crossed the Tugela; I returned to the wagon. (Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 119)**

Significantly the two white men already had some notion of the nature of Fuze's mission education but to them this was only an object for colonial sarcasm and scorn. The casual cruelty indicated in this little vignette is heightened when one sees the paintings and drawings of Magema and his fellow students. No doubt his interlocutors had probably not seen the sketches, and even if they had, this would most likely not have changed their antipathy to the 'educated' young men of Colenso's mission.<sup>85</sup> Magema's laconic account of his encounter with these white men is interesting, firstly, as a report of how he learnt firsthand about the attitudes of colonial society to his education and his mentor Colenso; secondly, such an encounter must have impressed on Magema's young mind a different perspective on his own

'conversion' since by ridiculing his artistic skills, acquired in the mission context, these uncharitable men probably cast a shadow on his newfound identity as a Christian.

We will return below, in the context of our discussion of the 'Natal-Zululand divide', to the ways in which the *Three Native Accounts* reflected an awareness of Zulu succession politics in the historical aftermath of the 1856 Battle of Ndongakusuka. Here we should note, though, how for the converts, especially William Ngidi, warfare had taken on a new meaning. While both Magama and Ndiane merely noted the grim remains of the battle, Ngidi in his closing remarks inserted an anti-war and modernist message. If writing is 'consciousness-raising',<sup>86</sup> then Ngidi's 'Book of Peace' may be viewed as an attempt to harness and 'Africanise' this power of writing. In his closing entry in the journal, Ngidi wrote,

**Yes, indeed, my brothers, the weapons of war should be beaten into ploughs for cultivating the ground, and war-shields be sewed into garments of clothing, and peace be proclaimed, on the north and on the south. And on both sides, through the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Unkulunkulu, who ever liveth, and all evil become peace, I mean become goodness. (Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 167)**

No doubt, Ngidi's exhortations and later hymn, would have found favour with Colenso's ideals and enthusiasm for a Zululand mission. His articulation of a Christian salvation is modernist in that it merges elements of Christian doctrine with an Africanised progressive ethos. Although it is not clear how much time had lapsed between William's journal entry and the subsequent composition of his 'Zulu Hymn' (See Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 168-170), it is undeniable that, whether as a simple exhortation or as a hymn, William's summation of the situation in Zululand was a prototype for similar discourses emerging in the writing of other literate Christians.<sup>87</sup> The contradistinction between 'war' and 'peace' would not have been lost on a later generation of *Ilanga* readers who were exhorted to turn from 'darkness' and embrace 'light'.<sup>88</sup> The irony is that although it was Ngidi who, in 1859, expressed an awareness of potentially 'nationalist' Christian imagery, it was Magama Fuze who brought the project to fruition in his *Abantu Abamnyama*.

#### *'Amazwi Abantu'*

Compared to the writings published as *Three Native Accounts* in 1860, Magama Fuze's unpublished manuscript entitled 'Amazwi Abantu' / 'The People's Words/Voices'<sup>89</sup> presents challenges of a very different kind. Certainly it presents a twenty-first century reader not only with problems of orthography and of translation but also with challenging problems of interpretation. For our purposes, though it provides written material of special interest. It seems that the document was sent by Colenso to

Wilhelm Bleek, who dated it 'Cape Town, 1859' and described it as: 'Composed & Printed by Magama, a Zulu boy of about 14 years, from a rough M.S. (formerly, Skelemu)'. From the fact that Bleek used 'Magama' and not 'Skelemu', and noted the name change, it is logical to conclude that the text was sent to him after the initial essays on life at *Ekukhanyeni* from 1857. The text itself is difficult to categorise: it consists of 549 lines of verse, written in Zulu, and not translated. It is not poetry, but consists of 'snippets' of conversations. Because of the randomness and unselective placing of the sentences and phrases, it cannot be called a 'story'; at most it is a transcription of dispersed and unrelated conversations, juxtaposed and versed.

The special interest of 'Amazwi Abantu' as a piece of writing by the newly literate Fuze is that it comes close to being an unmediated text outside conventional genres. So far, our understanding of Fuze's work has been mediated by translations, provided in most of the cases by Colenso. 'Amazwi Abantu' is unique in this regard; it does not seem that Colenso translated it.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps he, like a contemporary reader, might simply have savoured the lushness of the language preserved by the young apprentice. Or, perhaps he was overwhelmed by its experimental nature and just sent it to Bleek as it was, without attempting to translate it. Be that as it may the text of 'Amazwi Abantu', removed from its original context of production, still requires translation in two senses: firstly, as a text written in *isiZulu*, the portions of the text used here needed to be translated for the English reader; secondly, the text is, by virtue of its age, a historical document of written Zulu, so that the orthography and sometimes obscure grammar peculiar to the *Ekukhanyeni* press also has to be translated. At the first level of translation, consulting a good Zulu-English dictionary helps. Yet, even here the dictionary, with its modern orthography can sometimes prove an obstacle. The second level of translation, namely, translating the text as a historical record of written Zulu, presents the greater challenge. 'Amazwi Abantu', as a record of a nascent *isiZulu* literature, represents both Magama's competence at printing, as a technical skill, and his inculcation into the world of writing and its representational power. For the young Fuze the novelty of printing texts written in the Zulu language inspired experimentation and not imitation. In other words, 'Amazwi Abantu' is not a 'mission' or religious text; there are scant mentions of religion or missionaries. Indeed its uniqueness makes it difficult to confine it to a specific genre. Thus, if one accepts that the text is in fact an example of 'classical' spoken Zulu, it becomes important to speculate on what the potential effect of presenting these utterances in written form could have been. Moreover, in some ways 'Amazwi Abantu' suggests that the young Magama was already

aware of a growing body of *isiZulu* readers, and he may therefore have implicitly intended his text for this nascent language community.

However, it is by no means clear what the nature or purpose of 'Amazwi Abantu' as a written text actually was. Compared to the case of the *Three Native Accounts*, which fits into a recognised and prescribed genre of travel writing, it represents the exact opposite. This makes 'Amazwi Abantu' of special interest in the context of the transition from an oral community to a newly literate society; indeed it can be taken as an apt example of how the transition from an oral to a literate culture takes place and how the novelty of writing in the Zulu language could translate into new meanings and new identities in the process of creating a literate Zulu-speaking language community. Interpreting this text is therefore an exercise in translating not just its linguistic meaning but its cultural significance. As a practical exercise in writing in the Zulu language, the text is an encyclopaedia, containing as it does the names of trees, animals, plants, diseases (human and animal), medicinal cures, work activities, types of cattle and so on. As for the intellectual purpose and relevance of the text, it is not clear whether it was based on real or fictitious conversations. As a medley of facts, perhaps fictions, conversations and observations, it is near impossible to pinpoint its political, social or cultural import. It is, for example, possible to posit that the young Magama was merely practising his writing and printing skills. Yet, the sheer length of the exercise suggests otherwise. It is therefore prudent to suppose that this example of Fuze's early work is best taken as some sort of documentary montage of *Ekukhanyeni* life and the type of conversations and discussions people held with each other. Taken in this way it may then represent something of the young Magama's appreciation of the social and political circumstances of his fellow mission residents and other Natal Africans. Not only does the text mention by name various political personalities and *Ekukhanyeni* residents, but it also refers constantly to the *uSuthu* and *iziGqoza* factions.<sup>91</sup> It is with a view to the articulation of this intellectual representation that we proceed to a closer scrutiny of the actual text of 'Amazwi Abantu'.<sup>92</sup>

The opening lines of 'Amazwi Abantu' strikingly illuminate the document's hybrid nature:

**Inkosi ing'abele = inkosi ingipile = inkosi ingixotyisile<sup>93</sup>.**

**Ngimabele ezinkomeni zami.**

**Yapula ukuni lapo, sibase.**

**uDingane wahlulekile amaSwazi.**

**Yakisa indhlu, uyitote<sup>94</sup> kahle.**

**Ngiy'ahluleka y'iloko, bandhla.**

**Uze ung'ahukanisele umsebenzi.**

Yanula leyo'nnewadi<sup>95</sup> etywabeneyo.  
 Umbila aub'anele<sup>96</sup> abantu bonke.  
 Ubandakanye izinkezo nesitya.  
 Lwas'ahlula uSutu tina'ziQoza.  
 Was'apuea amageja etu, siyakulima.  
 Isela liti, lingabanjwa l'eba, libakaze.<sup>97</sup>  
 Umuti, owau lapa, wahlulwa umGeni.  
 Lueityile ubaqa; yoka lapo pandhle. (1859: i)

These lines may be translated as follows:

The king [chief] has given me a grant = the king [chief] has given me a gift = the king has given me a present.  
 I gave him a share from my own herd.  
 Break [chop] the firewood there, so we can light a fire.  
 uDingane was defeated by the amaSwazi.  
 Help build the house, bind it tightly.  
 I am falling at this matter, dear folks.  
 Do give me a share of the work.  
 Straighten that book [letter]<sup>98</sup> that is creased.  
 This corn is not enough for all the people.  
 S/he<sup>99</sup> has mixed the spoons and the dish.  
 The uSuthu defeated us the iziQoza [iziGqoza].  
 S/he snatched our hoes, when we were on our way to the fields.  
 When a thief is caught, s/he will look about nervously.  
 The tree that was here was uprooted by umNgeni [the river].  
 The torch has gone out; relight it from the fire outside.

On the face of it this is a random list of sayings, with no apparent topic or recognisable logic. Removed from their original contexts and rendered in printed form such sayings no longer bear their determinate meaning and significance. In an important sense this represents a crucial difference between contextually-based oral communications and literate texts.<sup>100</sup> If we read such lines as the literal rendering of oral sayings in printed form, shorn of their oral contexts but not yet fashioned into the conventional forms of literate texts, that makes 'Amazwi Abantu' into a fascinating documentation of the very transition from orality to literacy. But it also follows that as such an interstitial document there is no proper way to know how to either 'hear' the original voices or to 'read' this text. Taking this into account we may nevertheless, by dint of reconstructing some of the missing social and historical context of the mission community at *Ekukhanyeni*, discern some of the issues articulated in this text. Considering, for example, that the word 'inkosi', as in the phrase 'Inkosi ing'abele', was used both for



traditional Zulu chiefs and also for missionaries who disbursed land to their converts, the opening line of 'Amazwi' could invoke the ambiguous position of *Ekukhanyeni* residents vis-à-vis both Colenso and traditional society.<sup>101</sup> There is no clear referent in the sentence, and the sense of ambiguity is intensified by the fact the next saying, rendered in the first person, could suggest that the 'inkosi' in question had given a grant of cattle taken from his private herd. At this point in the text, though, a possible sense of continuity is interrupted by the subsequent and unrelated saying about firewood. Politics then makes an appearance in the phrase about the defeat of Dingane by the *amaSwazi*.<sup>102</sup> The latter confirms that even among the *Ekukhanyeni* converts, Zulu history was still a topic of conversation. However, it is the later saying, written in the passive voice, about the defeat of *iziGqoza* at the hands of the *uSuthu* faction that positions the speakers within the conflict and marks them as a member of the defeated faction. Again, because of the nature of the text, it is not clear whether it is Magama himself who identifies with the defeated party, or whether he is merely recording someone else's utterances.

These three themes, namely the daily life at *Ekukhanyeni*, the resident's relationship to the Zulu kingdom and Zulu history and the dissension between the *iziGqoza* and *uSuthu* are intermittently mentioned throughout 'Amazwi'. On the identity of those who lived at *Ekukhanyeni* the most significant saying contained in Magama's text reads:

**Abantu bonke ngabegqoka,<sup>103</sup> abatanda ukuya ekuKanyeni. (1859: viii)**

**All those who like to come to Ekukhanyeni wear European clothes.**

In normal use, the verb '*gqoka*' simply means to put on or wear, usually an article of clothing; the noun '*ngabegqoka*', suggests an association or belonging between people and their clothes. One of the definitions provided by Doke for the verb '*gqoka*' is: 'Dress as a European; be civilized' (1958: 266). On the nouns '*igqoka*' and '*amagqoka*', Doke gives the following as one of the definitions: 'Person wearing European clothes' (1958: 266). The terminology thus suggests that when Magama was writing, those who lived or who associated with *Ekukhanyeni* were known by their choice of European clothes. This further suggests that in fact the '*amakholwa*', as they have conventionally come to be known in the literature, were possibly for a time simply known as '*amagqoka*'. Fuze's particular use of this terminology is doubly interestingly because he uses an associative form of the noun, which in English could be translated loosely as 'they are of the clothes'. The translation provided does not therefore fully capture the meaning of Magama's description of *Ekukhanyeni* residents. But, what is also noteworthy is that the term seems to have become obsolete since it no longer appears either in the secondary or the primary literature. Thus, the residents of *Ekukhanyeni*, or those who went there, were to begin with not

identified by their religious affiliation; rather it was the wearing of European clothing which identified them.

The other marker of *Ekukhanyeni* affiliation seems to have been a predilection for reading and writing. The text contains various phrases about books being read or being written in, suggesting once more the primary role that education and literacy played in the daily lives of the residents. As such, these phrases although incomplete and discontinuous, reveal something of the nature of *Ekukhanyeni* dialogues. At one point, for example, Magama records a saying that is about books and drawing or writing. He wrote:

**Penya innewadi leyo, ubone; kukona lapa ngidwebe kona. (1859: ix)**

**Page through that book, and see; there is a place where I have drawn [written].**

These and numerous other similar expressions paint a mosaic picture of life at the mission 'village', as Colenso called it, and although it is not certain whether they are fictional or real they are nonetheless a unique record of the conversations the residents' could have had. 'Amazwi Abantu' is also an example of the richness and eloquence of the Zulu spoken by Magama's characters, fictional or real.

Presented as they are in versified format, it seems logical to assume that Magama's 'dialogues' could be related to traditional modes of story-telling or even praise poetry. But, this assumption would not be supported by the material that Magama presented. The use of traditional idioms and proverbs is minimal. In one example, he made a passing comment that referred to the folktale about the chameleon and the lizard. The context of the saying creates some ambiguity. Although there does not seem to be an obvious continuity with the preceding nor the subsequent sayings, there is nonetheless a common suggestion of speed and haste in all three sayings. He wrote:

**Woza wena, gijima bo, uz'esule izieathulo zami.**

**Kwati intulwa yashiya unwaba<sup>104</sup> ngejubane.**

**Papamani! niy'ezwa nje? kuhlatywa umkosi. (1859: iv)**

This may be translated as:

**Come here, be quick, and wipe my shoes.**

**And then the lizard speedily overtook the chameleon.**

**Awake! Do you not hear? The alarm is being sounded.**

According to the oral tradition, the Creator sent the chameleon to tell people that they would live eternally; on its way the chameleon dawdled and was sidetracked. The Creator then sent the lizard with the opposite message, that is, that the people would die; and it was quick about delivering the message. When the chameleon finally reached the people with the original message, they said, 'We are holding

on to the lizard's words'. The tale is often used proverbially to describe a person who is unwilling to change or accept contrary views; the person is then described as 'holding on to the lizard's word'.<sup>105</sup> In this case, the reference to the folktale could involve a continuation of the previous saying, namely the demand to hasten and wipe the speaker's shoes. Or, it could also be part of the subsequent saying about the alarm being sounded. Either way, the point is that this is one of the few uses Magama makes of traditional Zulu idioms. The relevant conclusion to draw from this is that he was not in any substantial way relying on or emulating the form or style of the oral traditions in composing his dialogues. Magama seems to be executing a strategic fusion of everyday Zulu speech, decontextualised but 'natural', and his newly-learned technical skill of transcribing and fixing words in print. He confirms Quayson's conclusion that African intellectuals of Fuze's calibre, concerned as they were with the preservation of history and culture, used orality as a background to their literary and other writing. Moreover, as he observes, this kind of use of the writer's oral culture itself implies 'the intervention of writing in a conceptual arena of flux' (Quayson, 1997: 13). In the case of the young Magama, the arena of flux was *Ekukhanyeni* itself; the fragmented utterances he presents in 'Amazwi' are an attempt to depict this sense of constant change, while at the same time remaining true to the kinds of conversations the inhabitants of the mission had with each other.

If dialogue was all there was to Magama's 'Amazwi' then it would suffice to laud the text for preserving the natural speech of nineteenth-century Zulu speakers. However, though it is not clear whether Magama's reported speeches actually took place or whether he has fabricated them, these sayings have a certain realism. Moreover, the text does make numerous references to actual events and personalities. In this regard 'Amazwi' may be taken as a sketch of the social, political and personal predicaments and circumstances that brought people to *Ekukhanyeni*. Thus, one speaker for example mentions being expelled by Mbulazi:

**W'akiswa ubani lapa na? Ng'akiswa uMbulazi. (Fuze, 1859: v)**

**Who expelled you from this place? I was expelled by uMbulazi.**

This mention of Mbulazi, the challenger to Cetshwayo and leader of the *iziGqoza*, harks back to the opening lines of 'Amazwi' in which a speaker mentions the defeat of Mbulazi's faction at the hands of Cetshwayo. The repeated reference therefore suggests that the *uSuthu-iziGqoza* division continued to affect the lives of *Ekukhanyeni* people and those around them, long after the 1856 battle between the brothers. Whether or not the same speaker was involved in both instances is impossible to tell; the fact

is that the young Magama recorded both references to the dispute thus indicating its enduring significance to the *Ekukhanyeni* community.

In summary, as an example of Fuze's earliest creative work, 'Amazwi Abantu' is a hybrid text characterised by discontinuous dialogue and the presence of an assortment of characters and personalities. It was an experimental exercise in printing and in the production of Zulu literature. When placed in a rough chronology of Fuze's work, 'Amazwi Abantu' marks a shift from the didactic *Three Native Accounts*, towards the kind of social commentary and angst precipitated by the crises of the 1870s and captured in 'A Visit to King Ketswayo' of 1878. Notwithstanding its lack of coherence, 'Amazwi Abantu' is thus a valuable document for what it preserves of the linguistic, political and social milieu of mission station life. As a documentary of *Ekukhanyeni* life, the text contains interesting and rare comments about the lifestyle and habits of the residents. As a catalogue of political events, the text's references to events, like the Matshana affair (to be dealt with in our discussion of the Langalibalele trial), confirms Magama's perceptive and perhaps precocious grasp of their momentousness. The poetic liberties that the young Magama may have taken with reporting conversations and events, should therefore not detract from his insightful and dexterous use of both the Zulu language and the medium of print, to preserve, record and comment on his social, cultural and political circumstances.

### **Thematic articulations in Fuze's later writings**

The themes and issues articulated during this first moment of missionary education and conversion did not disappear from Fuze's later writings. Indeed, some of these later writings were used as sources for the preceding accounts of the young Fuze's experience of missionary education and conversion. But if these were concerned, in conjunction with his earliest writings at the time, with a reconstruction of such issues in the context of the original moment of articulation, it remains a different question how Fuze in his later writings consolidated their thematic articulation. In the following sections we will trace, with reference to various later writings, how Fuze continued to reflect and elaborate on such themes as the meaning of his conversion and identity, on writing as a vocation, and on the quest for enlightenment.

#### ***On conversion and identity***

At the outset of this section we referred to Fuze's retrospective account, in the prologue to *The Black People*, of his childhood epiphany, which anticipated his mission education and conversion to a

different identity. Fuze's recollection of his childhood reveals how he conceived of his religious conversion as in fact an ingredient in identity formation. Written in retrospect and in the third person, this account is oddly impersonal and does not seem to be about Fuze at all: the 'prophecy' is presented as an authoritative statement about his future identity as a convert and as an assistant to Colenso; he depicts it as a kind of magnetic fate which he could not avoid or escape. When recollecting, his baptism, Magama Fuze likewise remembered not his own assent to the faith, but that Colenso had to convince his parents of the meaning of their son's becoming a Christian. Thus, the fact that Fuze not only remembers his conversion in the third person, but that his father played a decisive role in his baptism clearly indicates that he did not regard his conversion primarily as a matter of theological beliefs or of religious salvation. If his conversion was the foundation of his identity he also paradoxically regarded this as something that was destined to happen to him rather than as a personal choice. Whereas his earliest writings, such as 'Amazwi Abantu', did not yet contain any explicit identification with, or articulation of, distinctly *kholwa* views, the later works of Magama Fuze begin to reflect on the precarious position of the *Ekukhanyeni* converts. Thus, although 'Amazwi Abantu' is silent on the *amakholwa*'s political and social predicament, with age, Fuze's notions about religious belief and Christianity became more self-consciously pronounced. What is striking is that in neither his book *Abantu Abamnyama*, nor in his *Ilanga lase Natal* serials, did Fuze sermonise about religion. Rather, his most articulate pronouncements on religion occurred in the context of the political and social crises which overtook Fuze and his *kholwa* contemporaries and which necessitated an engagement with the political and social circumstances that defined their colonial condition. From his first encounters with inquisitive colonials who quizzed him about his artistic skills to his 1878 reported conversation with the king Cetshwayo, Fuze was in one way or another a 'representative', however reluctantly or inadvertently, not just of Christianity but also of his infamous mentor, the mission station of *Ekukhanyeni* and the collective of *amakholwa*. That his identity was most questioned or questionable in times of crises is therefore not surprising: the 1859 trip to Zululand occurred in the context of an unresolved succession dispute and his 1877 trip was a consequence of the spread of rumours that the Zulu king was killing converts. For Magama Fuze and his Natal contemporaries, political crises translated into identity crises in ways that reinforced and tested their association with all things Christian, modern and colonial. The close of the nineteenth century would intensify the pressure exerted by political turmoil on the life of Christian converts. The arrest, trial and exile of Cetshwayo,

the arrest, trial and exile of his heir Dinuzulu and the Bhambatha rebellion would all affect the *kholwa*'s individual and collective identities and thus Fuze's interpretation of the Christian message and its implication for him and his contemporaries. Religion, or Christianity to be specific, was thus thrust into this maelstrom of social disintegration and political upheaval; these pushed to the limits what being a Christian meant to the *kholwa* group.

### *On writing and becoming literate*

Philologically and philosophically there is no doubt that the shift from an oral to a written language fundamentally transforms the contemporary and the future possibilities of the language concerned. In the case of South Africa's indigenous languages, the irony is that for the most part this process was initiated and sustained by missionaries whose driving objective was to translate Christian scripture into the local languages. However, as argued in the previous chapter, these missionary scholars were of necessity dependent on their 'native informant' who typically was recruited because they were a convert but who in some cases, such as that of Magama Fuze, became inspired to become a *kholwa* intellectual, a writer on his own account. Becoming a 'writer' of this kind was an inherently contested matter. Whereas the missionary philologist could study a language with dispassionate erudition, the 'native speaker' had more to lose in becoming a 'writer'. As an intermediary between the oral idiom and the written product of the mission press, Magama Fuze was acutely aware of the broader social and political implications of the emergence of a 'Zulu literature' that was so much dependent on missionary goodwill and labour. His pronouncements to Cetshwayo's chiefs in 1877, about the necessity of allowing black teachers into the kingdom, reveal his anxieties about the political effects of the lack of learned Zulu speakers to guide and counsel the king. Although this cultural angst is not yet present in his 1859 composition, it is possible to surmise that it is a natural outcome of the introduction of literacy to members of a previously oral culture. Also, Fuze implicitly, and even naively, assumed that the creation of a Zulu intelligentsia would act as an antidote against biased colonial and settler interpretations of Zulu culture and history. These latter misrepresentations were almost always accompanied by settler challenges to indigenous histories and claims, and in this regard, Fuze's *The Black People*, much more than 'Amazwi', was an attempt to rescue indigenous history from this seemingly inescapable destiny. Therefore, even though 'Amazwi' is not overtly a historical or political text, it shares with Fuze's other work, a sense of not only the necessity but the efficacy of published words and ideas. As Ong posits:

**Print encourages a sense of closure, a sense that what is found in a text has been finalized, has reached a state of completion. This sense affects literary creations and it affects analytic philosophical or scientific work. (1982: 132)**

The introduction of written language alters what can be 'done' with words. Printing allows words to be preserved in the present, and to be available for future use and reading. Printing is a teleological activity. In this regard, the emergence of a Zulu literature, religious or secular, inevitably involved a form of canonization, not only of the literary and other writing from the missionary presses, but also of the idiosyncratic and sometimes whimsical philological choices of missionaries and converts alike. The irony, in the case of Fuze, is that his work, especially *The Black People and Whence They Came*, did not receive this kind of canonical validation. It did not become a 'classic' of colonial scholarship nor was it incorporated into the emerging nationalist literature of the early twentieth century.<sup>106</sup> This is not to claim that Fuze's book was not well-received or that it was not for a time read and in demand. Rather, the argument is that the discourse of cultural, intellectual and historiographical autonomy and self-reliance, which Fuze tried to inaugurate, did not take root.

### ***On the quest for enlightenment***

The impact of Colenso's pedagogical ambitions was not limited to introducing his students to the rudiments of reading and writing, or to practice such established genres as that of the travel journal, as per his instructions to his young charges in 1859, nor to his teaching them sketching. Colenso also imparted to his students a basic Victorian predilection for 'enlightenment'. As a consequence, Fuze imagined the future of African social and intellectual life as *Ekuhanyeni*<sup>107</sup> writ large. Thus, in his 1877 conversation with Cetshwayo, who was concerned about rumours that the Natal government wanted to impose hut-tax on his subjects, Fuze countered with the suggestion that the king should allow black teachers into Zululand:

***Magama. Ndabezita, it would be very good that you should allow that black men who have been taught should settle in your land, and carry on the work of teaching, and enlighten thoroughly your land. (1878: 430)***

Obviously used to hearing such a request from missionaries, and in view of their rumoured and actual flight, Cetshwayo answered by saying that he would also like his subjects to be educated, but he did not want missionaries anymore because 'they have broken off (*hlubuka*) from me without saying a word of farewell to me.' To this, Fuze quipped that, 'I too... would not say anything about white men... I speak only about black men' (1878: 430). The import of Fuze's suggestion was that the king's subjects needed education but that they did not only have to rely on mission education; he was suggesting that

the educated *amakholwa* were capable of carrying out the 'enlightenment' of the whole of the Zulu people, and to do so unassisted by the European missionaries. Fuze reiterated this idea of an educated corps of black teachers to Cetshwayo's *indunas* Mnyamana and Vumandaba. After chastising them for listening to 'izanusu' (diviners) and telling them that many Zulus living in Natal wished to return to Zululand, but would not do so if it meant being killed, presumably at the instigation of the *izanusu*; Fuze expressed his admiration for Zulu government:

...I admire the government of Zululand as it is carried on by you. I should say confidently that among the Zulus the country is quiet, and life is pleasant here...Now I bid you farewell. But I wish to tell you that to my mind Ketshwayo's doings which I have seen are excellent. There ought to be here some instructed black men to instruct your children. Also I ought to tell you that I have spoken with Sobantu, and told him that I wish to go to Capetown some time or other, and see the living and ruling and doing of the white men. (1878: 431)

Although Fuze never made the trip to Cape Town, his message to the *indunas* was clearly a statement about the role he imagined for himself and his fellow converts. As an imagined idyll, the notion of a reformed and 'Victorian' Zulu sovereign became a central organising topic in Magama Fuze's assessment of the political crises affecting Zululand. It is as if Fuze believed that a thriving black and educated class would be a panacea not just for the problem of *izanusu* and the misrule and chaos they supposedly created, but that a black intelligentsia, residing in Zululand, could be a vanguard against the imminent threat of white settlement and colonisation. This kind of naïve idealism only makes sense within the broader notion of 'enlightenment' ('*ukukhanya*') to which Fuze and his fellow mission residents had become committed. Considering what we now know of the subsequent history of South Africa, Fuze's belief in 'enlightenment' was bound to disappoint. Yet, even as late as the early twentieth century, Fuze continued to appeal, this time in the columns of the newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal*, to these ideals. More specifically he continued his attempt to re-imagine, through his debates and discussions with the readers, African societies governed by enlightenment and justice.

### **The second moment of articulation: Langalibalele's trial**

If *Ekuhanyeni* life had once afforded the young Magama a cloistered, but scholarly life in which he could contemplate the establishment of a reading and Zulu-language public, then the crises of the 1870s would throw him into an intellectual, political and theological turmoil which irrevocably altered his ideals about the role of an African intellectual class. Beginning with Colenso's heresy charges, and the consequent ignominy, coupled with events like the Langalibalele trial, the balkanisation of the Zulu kingdom and the exile of Dinuzulu, Magama Fuze's skill as a printer and a writer were increasingly



directed towards the articulation of a different and more politicized set of issues and ideas. The years after 1862, when Colenso departed for England and left Fuze and William Ngidi in charge of the mission (Guy, 2001: 22-23), were the crucible that shaped Fuze's identity as an *ikholwa* since he was increasingly caught between the forces of colonial authority and the representatives of the Zulu kingdom. When the bishop's career took a political turn in the local colonial context, he took his converts along with him and they became witnesses to the unfolding colonial drama of the destruction of the Zulu kingdom and, in Colenso's eyes, the betrayal of British justice and ethos of fair play (Guy, 1983: 205-206). It was only in the 1870s that Fuze began to comprehend the nature of the colonial condition that circumscribed his and other *amakholwa*'s existence. In many ways the seminal event was the Langalibalele affair which brought the underlying issues into the open and therefore functioned as the second moment of articulation for Magama Fuze. Caught between the indignant Colenso, the embattled Langalibalele and the unrepentant Shepstone were *Ekukhanyeni*'s residents, Magama Fuze being one of them, who were drawn in as witnesses during the trial proceedings and as Colenso's cultural interpreters and messengers. The experience of the Langalibalele trial brought about a qualitative change in Fuze's ideas and writings. Whether one reads the 1875 *khohwa* petition to the governor or Fuze's 1878 article on the state of Zululand under Cetshwayo, there is a perceptible emergence of a politicised consciousness. In the context of the 1870s – that is, given the absence of political associations and of other collective interest groups among Natal's *khohwa* community – the manner in which this new consciousness was expressed was still fragmented and inarticulate. The public broadcasting of the *amakholwa*'s disenchantment with the promises of British enlightenment only became a collective reality much later with the establishment of newspapers like *Ilanga lase Natal* (1903). But the historical moment in which a set of core ideas, chief among them being the constitutive significance of 'the Natal-Zululand divide', the quest of 'writing' Zulu history and the principles of a proto-nationalism were first articulated and inaugurated by the Langalibalele trial. The objective of this section is therefore to trace the development of Fuze's ideas from the earliest writings in which some of these core notions were anticipated, through the texts produced in and associated with the Langalibalele trial and other political events of the 1870s, to the ways in which these themes were developed in his later writings. The emphasis is again on how this particular historical moment shaped the manner in which Fuze articulated his views and how these were, in later writing, consolidated into more explicit and articulate arguments.

### ***Background to kholwa and Zulu affairs and politics***

Although *Ekukhanyeni* and Bishopstowe were located in colonial Natal and therefore geographically removed from the Zulu kingdom, its residents were time and again drawn into Zulu affairs in ways which would powerfully affect their intellectual and political identities. Predictably Fuze and other educated Natal 'natives' experienced a kind of social and political estrangement when relating to their fellow Zulu-speakers from the independent kingdom north of *uThukela* (Thukela River). This Natal-Zululand divide was partly a function of the differences in the political and social systems of the two societies: the Natal Africans now lived under a colonial government, whereas the Zululand Africans still lived under a traditional authority. The perceived divide was, however, also a consequence of the fact that Colenso had sheltered the runaway Zulu prince Mkhungo and his mother at Bishopstowe. Such circumstances complicated the manner in which Colenso and his party of young converts were received when they visited the Zulu king Mpande in 1859. At the time of Colenso's visit to Zululand, the Zulu royal family was embroiled in a succession dispute. As Colenso and his converts well knew, the young prince Cetshwayo had already, in the 1856 battle of Ndongakusuka, eliminated some of his rivals to the throne, notably Mbulazi. Mbulazi and his followers, the *iziGqoza*, were attempting to cross the Thukela into Natal when Cetshwayo's army attacked and killed Mbulazi and most of his brothers.<sup>108</sup> Mkhungo, one of the survivors, and his mother, Monase, fled to Natal (Fuze, 1979:60). Magema, William Ngidi and Ndiane were well aware of Mkhungo's royal heritage and importance since he lived with them at Bishopstowe. It seems that Colenso had plans to send Mkhungo to Cape Town to study with the children of other kings who were being educated at Zonnebloem College<sup>109</sup> (Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 158). Mpande did not, however, share Colenso's ideal of an educated African aristocracy, and therefore vetoed these plans.

In contrast to Mpande's concerns about his exiled son's welfare, some of his subjects saw the presence of Colenso and his converts as an opportunity to seek refuge in Natal. For them Mkhungo represented not so much the residual threat of a repeat of the bloodletting of Ndongakusuka but the prospect of freedom from the authority and obligations of Zulu society. The image of Natal as a place of refuge for Zulu people fleeing the 'tyranny' of their Zulu kings would later become a commonplace of South African textbook-history, and as such it would also be challenged by revisionist historians.<sup>110</sup> But at the time it did inform the role of these *kholwa* visitors. By their very arrival in the 'Zulu country', Magema, William Ngidi and Ndiane symbolised, for some Zulu subjects, a kind of temporal

'salvation' quite independent from Colenso's missionary one. Thus, in his account of the visit Ndiane reported that,

**The sisters of Umkungo came, and said, 'Au! do you put us too into the wagons here, (that) we may go with you, and go to the white people.' We refused for our part, and said, 'No! you are bringing blame on us.' They said, 'No! there is no blame to you; we are greatly troubled by the indunas [the king's councillors or chiefs. (Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 132-133)**

In William Ngidi's journal, the situation of the princesses is described in even more compassionate terms, but also with a clear appreciation of the potential political consequences of their intervention:

**Well, but I saw a great sorrow, the children of Umpande crying, and saying, 'Now we shall die, we, since you see it is said, 'Inasmuch as ye trust, saying, there is that thing there, well, I will certainly sweep away all this which is here.' They cried saying, 'Alas! that you were a louse of William's blanket, that you might hide yourself in him, and go and come out among the white people!' They asked me also, they said, 'If we follow now, William, and go and overtake you on the plains far away, how would it be?' I said, 'O, no! it would be very bad, both here and among our people, and it would be said, Sobantu went to the Zulus, he went to steal the people of Umpande, and by that it would be very bad.' Nokwenda assented, saying, 'O, Yes!' So they cried, saying, 'Well but that child too (Umkungo), we shall come to see him when?' I said, 'O! no! I don't say, to-wit, you will see him, since he will not come here.' They beat their hands. (Colenso, 1901: 166-167)**

On this first encounter with Zulu politics the young *kholwa* still found themselves outsiders with no effective role to play; it would be different when, more than a decade later, they would be drawn into the ramifications of Langalibalele's trial.

As a colonial incident, the supposed rebellion of Langalibalele and his tribe the *amaHlubi*, is minor detail. And yet, if understood within the longer trajectories of the imposition of colonial rule in Natal, the conflict between Natal and the independent or protectorate polities on its boundaries (including Zululand), the destruction of the Zulu kingdom and the formalisation of 'customary' law, the ostensible rebellion and even more Langalibalele's subsequent trial, marked a significant watershed in the evolution and everyday functioning of Natal's policy of 'indirect rule'. At the time of the rebellion, in 1873, 'customary law' was nothing more than a set of guidelines and thus, 'indirect rule' was itself only nominal and therefore pliable. The significance of Langalibalele's case was that, in the judicial process of the trial, attempts were made to concretise and rigidify previously elastic notions not only of the 'customary' but also of chiefly or kingly sovereignty. Langalibalele's trial became a test case for the colonial enforcement of the supposedly patriarchal nature of African social organisation, the definition of the boundaries of the colony, notions of rebellion and acquiescence and other supposedly indigenous cultural practices.

To understand the impact of this unravelling saga, we need some account of the background and a brief chronicle of the 'rebellious' acts Langalibalele is supposed to have planned and committed.

Langalibalele was born in Zululand in 1818 and as son of chief Mthimkhulu of the *amaHlubi* he succeeded his father. Although the Hlubi had been scattered by the Mfecane conflicts, a small section was incorporated into the Zulu kingdom. But in 1848, fearing an attack and his execution by the Zulu king, Mpande, Langalibalele and the Hlubi fled to Natal and requested refuge. At first, they were settled on the Natal-Zululand border, but Shepstone moved the seven thousand refugees to a location at the foot of the Drakensberg mountains (Guy, 1983: 197). It was therefore as a colonial subject that Langalibalele was accused of 'rebellion' when in 1873 he ignored a summons by the colonial authorities to answer charges in Pietermaritzburg and instead attempted to remove his people from colonial territory. Langalibalele's decision to flee with members of his 'tribe', the *amaHlubi*, was precipitated by a series of decisions and miscalculations on both his and the colonial administration's part. At issue was an 1872 law which required all Africans to have their guns registered with their local magistrate. The picture was however complicated by the fact that for the Hlubi owning guns was directly related to the function which they had been assigned, when moved to the Drakensberg, namely to act as a 'buffer' between the colony and 'Bushmen' cattle-raiders. Moreover, it seems that the young men of the Hlubi tribe were also valued as servants and workers, especially on the diamond fields. Shepstone's sons, who worked on the diamond fields often paid Africans, including some Hlubi, in guns (Colenso, 1875: 6; Herd, 1976: 14n). When instructed by the Resident Magistrate, John Macfarlane, to register according to the new law all the guns in the possession of his subjects, Langalibalele is said to have asked how one can 'count the maggots in a piece of beef?' (Guy, 1983: 199; Herd, 1976: 10). When Langalibalele procrastinated in his response to these orders, he was summoned to Pietermaritzburg to appear before Shepstone as the Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA). Despite his promise to appear before the SNA, Langalibalele did not go to Pietermaritzburg. On 30 October 1873, after Langalibalele received a second summons and a warning, a colonial corps of volunteers, regular British troops and African levies, moved towards the Hlubi location. Alarmed, Hlubi men began to move towards the Drakensberg with their cattle, while the women, children and the elderly sought shelter in caves and hideouts. However, for Shepstone the real turning point was the report he received from his messengers: Mahoyiza, the chief messenger, told the SNA that he had been stripped, insulted, threatened with death and told by Langalibalele that he would rather flee than submit to Shepstone. On 2 November 1873, Shepstone issued a proclamation giving the Hlubi twenty four hours to surrender to the Natal force or face the consequences of 'rebellion'. The plan was to prevent

the *amaHlubi* from crossing over to 'Basutoland' (Lesotho) and the Natal volunteer forces were sent to block their passage over the Drakensberg. Disaster followed disaster, and on 4 November the Natal Carbineers came face to face with the fleeing Hlubi; in the panic the Hlubi opened fire, killing three colonists and one Mosotho. Meanwhile, in the Hlubi location, martial law was declared, Langelibalele deposed and the Hlubi were to be 'broken up'. Colonists, African levies and regular soldiers were soon involved in the indiscriminate violence of dispossessing the *amaHlubi*. Not only were women, children and elderly 'smoked out' of their hideouts and killed, it was proposed that survivors be sold off to colonists as 'apprentices'; property and cattle were seized or destroyed, and the Hlubi's neighbours, the *amaNgwe*, were devastated despite their non-participation in the rebellion (See Guy, 1983: 200-202).

As a court-room drama, the Langelibalele case assembled an interesting list of *dramatis personae* (Guy, 1983: 205-213). First was Langelibalele himself the embattled *amaHlubi* chief. Langelibalele was reputedly also a rainmaker and a diviner (Colenso, 1875: 58, 83). The second main character was John William Colenso, the now infamous and heretic bishop. Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA), needs no introduction to the student of Natal colonialism. As the father of Natal's native policy, Shepstone's image looms large over late nineteenth-century history in southern Africa. The trial of Langelibalele marked the end of Colenso's previously close relationship with Shepstone. The two had initially shared in Shepstone's vision to relocate thousands of Africans to an area south of Natal, and to establish, under his rule, a 'Black Kingdom', in which he would be the secular and patriarchal leader and Colenso the spiritual supplement (Guy 1983: 49, 84-86). As late as his 1859 visit to the aging Zulu king Mpande, Colenso still thought such an idea viable, despite the fact that it had been vetoed by Shepstone's imperial superiors. The Langelibalele affair, by exposing the differences in Colenso and Shepstone's attitudes to African people, destroyed the two's shared paternalistic philosophy. The presence of both Colenso and Shepstone added to the volatility of the situation and definitely heightened the suspicions of the respondents and the questioners. To the African bystanders, this publicised and emerging rift between Colenso and Shepstone must have created even more uncertainty since they had become established patriarchs, *Sobantu* and *Somtseu* respectively. The clash between the two white *amakhosi* ('chiefs') was thus a spectacle in its own right and must have created more doubt about what the 'truth' really was.

When the trial of Langelibalele began on 16 January 1874, Colenso still proclaimed that it would be based on the 'basic principles of English justice' (Quoted in Guy, 1983: 205). He thus

objected, in a newspaper article, to some of the colonists' conclusions that Langelibalele's guilt was a *fait accompli*. But, he was also anxious to understand the role of his friend, Theophilus Shepstone in the suppression of the rebellion. Contrary to Colenso's expectations, the whole trial was a travesty of the 'English justice' he espoused.<sup>111</sup> In effect the whole constitution of the trial was a reflection of Shepstone's version of paternalism, both as an administrator and as a personification of *Somtseu*, the 'African patriarch'. Shepstone embodied, in his reliance on the oral rather than the written word, what he believed to be the cardinal values of a paternal government, and he demonstrated this through his attachment to and use of oral rhetoric to confound those who dared to defend Langelibalele. As Secretary for Native Affairs, Shepstone deliberately framed his own authority in terms of indigenous rituals of government. His actions were calculated to reinforce the allure of indigenous power and authority and to create the impression of personal rule. As a fluent Xhosa and Zulu speaker, Shepstone also preferred to exercise his power using the gestures of the oral world:

**...speaking in Zulu, using the verbal message, the public meeting, the indaba, where the rituals of oral communication and debate were followed, and where no written record was kept which might attract the legalistic mind of the colonial official or the meticulous calculations of the accountant. (Guy, 1994: 21)**

Ironically, Shepstone appears in the oral record, not as a manipulative colonial official but as the sovereign-patriarch '*Somtsewu kaSonzica*', whose 'desire [was] to speak with all people' (Quoted in Guy, 1997: 5). The conclusion of the trial was therefore not unexpected, Langelibalele was found guilty and sentenced to banishment; he was sent to Robben Island.

If the Langelibalele trial first pitted Colenso and the *Ekuhanyeni* faction against Shepstone on 'native policy' within the colony, this confrontation continued and escalated in the years that followed only now in relation to the fate of the Zulu kingdom. In the course of the 1870s Shepstone became ever more directly involved in Zulu royal affairs. When Cetshwayo became king in 1873 he was actually 'crowned' by Shepstone, who vicariously presided over the coronation and was understood to do so by the councillors who invited him 'as Chaka' (Hamilton, 1994: 11). Although the historical details of this coronation are complex, it is important to note that from the perspective of the Zulus, Shepstone was invited by them to crown their king; therefore, the act was not a complete surrender of power. Thus, for both the Zulus and the Natal colonial administration the 'alliance', cemented by the coronation, was a pragmatic political tool. Following this coronation, Shepstone drafted a report, a copy of which, bound in red, embossed in gold and placed in a leather case, was sent to the Norwegian missionary Hans Schreuder to be delivered to the Zulu king (Guy, 1994: 23-24). The contents of this document were

central to the justifications and counter-arguments concerning the January 1879 invasion of Zululand and the defensive Battle of Isandlwana. For the Zulu, the events around the invasion highlighted the duplicity of the written word: while the colonial officials sent Cetshwayo an ultimatum he could not read, Cetshwayo himself sent messengers to Schreuder requesting him 'to cast his eye over its contents [the *Report*] and say in what way he had transgressed its provisions' (Quoted in Guy, 1994: 25).

For their part, Colenso and the Bishopstowe / *Ekukhanyeni* faction were also drawn into the politics of the Zulu kingdom, but increasingly as critics and vocal opponents of Shepstone's aggressive policies. In due course this gave rise to an informal, but organised circle of supporters of the Zulu cause, whom Harriette Colenso audaciously called, 'the Zulu National Party' (Guy, 2001: 150). It should be remembered that the contact between the Bishopstowe mission and the Zulu royal family did not begin with the political crises of the 1870s. In the 1850s the exiled and surviving son of Mpande and Monase, Mkhungo had found refuge at *Ekukhanyeni* and implicitly involved the mission in the *iziGqoza* and *uSuthu* quarrel that had forced this young prince into exile. It is therefore ironic that some decades later the *Ekukhanyeni* / Bishopstowe faction became vocal advocates and defenders of Cetshwayo, whose *uSuthu* had, in 1856, fought with the followers of Mbulazi and sent Mkhungo and his mother into exile. For Colenso, as it was later for his daughter Harriette, there was no contradiction in this 'royalist' stance; the Colenso family and their supporters viewed the 1879 invasion of Zululand by British forces as another injustice committed against the Africans of Natal and Zululand (Guy, 2001: 54-55). It was at this stage that Colenso began a writing career of a different sort; he began annotating and commenting on British Parliamentary Papers, the Blue Books, and sending these commentaries to friends and sympathisers of the Zulu cause. Magama Fuze printed these political tracts (Guy, 2001: 55). Thus, for the *Ekukhanyeni* / Bishopstowe collective, criticising and scrutinising imperial and colonial policies and politics was a continuation of their earlier involvement in the Langalibalele crisis.

For Magama Fuze, the period after the Langalibalele crisis bound him even more to the fate of his mentor, the Bishop of Natal though now in ways that also directly and indirectly involved him in Zulu affairs. It was as an active member of 'the Zulu National Party' that he critically witnessed the systematic decimation of the Zulu kingdom, from 1879 onwards. These developments would also significantly affect *kholwa* perceptions of their own political prospects. That the *amakholwa* of Natal could in 1875 write a petition in which they depicted themselves as 'refugees' from the conflicts within Zululand who now as British subjects could claim their civic rights, reflects their naïve optimism that

they would eventually be incorporated into Natal's colonial civil society. The actions of colonial and imperial agents that destroyed the Zulu kingdom would also expose the illusory nature of the assimilationist promise of British colonial rule. Accompanying the increasing independence of the colony from metropolitan control was a depreciation in the prospects for the realisation of the *amakholwa*'s social and political freedoms. Magama Fuze and other *Ekukhanyeni* converts were central to Colenso's struggle for justice not just because they were employed by him; they continued to work for the cause because they rightly perceived a parallel between their own struggles for recognition in colonial Natal and the Zulu king's struggle to retain his sovereign power. It was this new political context, to which they had first been introduced by their involvement in Langalibalele's trial, which shaped the articulation of Fuze's ideas in his writings from the 1870s onwards.

### ***Langalibalele's trial as a moment of articulation***

The traffic of people, cattle, goods, news, ideas and conflict between the colony of Natal and the independent Zulu kingdom is central to understanding Magama Fuze's introduction to colonial politics. As a 'Natal native' Fuze already represented the difference between Natal and *kwaZulu* (Zululand); his conversion to Christianity and his literacy only intensified the cultural, political and social differences between himself and his Zulu-speaking brethren of Zululand. These differences were already a lived experience for Colenso's young converts, so that as early as 1859, they were writing of the Zulu king Mpande as a king of 'another land'. As a sign of the cultural distance between Natal's Africans and Zulu denizens, the expression of such attitudes was also a signal of an emerging geo-political orientation of Natal's *kholwa* community. Over the last decades of the nineteenth century, the geo-politics of the divide turned into a fully-fledged political and social crisis as many *kholwa* had to come to terms with their continuing disenfranchisement while simultaneously witnessing the end of the Zulu kingdom's autonomy. Magama Fuze's writing reflects these nodal points of change and may be said, with some qualifications, to reflect the experiences of the *amakholwa* generally. In the following sections we will trace the articulation of these views based on the available writings and documents, first with reference to the earliest writings of the young converts in which some of these issues were already anticipated and reflected, then with regard to the documentation of their involvement in Langalibalele's trial itself as well as other writings from the 1870s, and finally in terms of the thematic articulation of these issues in Fuze's later writings.



*Anticipations: the earliest writings on Zulu affairs*

Of all the events, issues and observations included in *Three Native Accounts*, as a compendium of 'native' writing, the most salient is the fact that Colenso's converts already perceived their residence in colonial Natal in binary terms. That Ndiane described Mpande as 'the King of another land', is an example of how, as literate Zulus living and being educated in colonial Natal, the 'Zulu country' was conceived as 'foreign' by Colenso's young converts. This sense of an emerging social and political chasm between the 'educated' Natal African and their untutored Zululand relations suffused the young converts' understanding of Zululand political life.

One example from Ndiane's account should serve to illustrate how the behaviour of Colenso's converts was closely watched, but also how they were themselves unsure about how to behave. On their detour visit to the prince Cetshwayo, Ndiane was chastised by a Zulu young man because he did not sit down, in the presence of Cetshwayo, when the others sat. Ndiane reported the incident thus:

**I stood by the hut, I leaned against it, I forgot to sit down; all the people sat. The young man looked at me, before whom I stood, and said, 'Ho! sit down! are you chief here?' I sat. (Colenso, 1901 [1860]: 127)**

Such blunders over the correct protocol were not only about where the travellers sat, but they were also about where they could enter and exit homesteads, where they could park their wagons and whom they could speak to and at what time. In short, the converts had to engage in these minor power struggles and altercations while at the same time ensuring that they did not commit the graver blunders like stowing runaways.

Even before Colenso's journey in 1859, the residents of *Ekukhanyeni* showed an interest in the goings-on in the Zulu kingdom and in the colony. These expressions of interest were given voice in Magama's unpublished 'Amazwi Abantu'. The text of 'Amazwi Abantu' includes some scattered references to contemporary politics. Chiefs, colonial officials, and missionaries are all mentioned, by name in most cases. Theophilus Shepstone, for example, appears under his Zulu name 'Somseu'. Thus one saying is a brief story about Shepstone who sent a messenger to deliver a summons to Ngangezwe<sup>112</sup> (Fuze, 1859: xii). No other information is provided as to why Shepstone would have summoned Ngangezwe, but the fact that Magama notes this incident, even if cursorily, indicates that it must have had some local importance at the time. One of the other political episodes that the young Magama mentioned in 'Amazwi Abantu' would prove oracular in the light of later developments leading up to Langalibalele's rebellion and trial. Again, it is a single and simple phrase stating:

**Kwaluke impi, iye kwa'Matyana. (Fuze, 1859: ii)**

**A war party has gathered; it is going to Matshana's.**

The significance of the attempted arrest of Matshana by an *impi* would only be apprehended fifteen years later when Langalibalele, chief of the *amaHlubi*, was tried for supposedly rebelling against the colonial government. In 1858, some of Langalibalele's men had participated in an attempt to seize the unyielding chief, Matshana kaMondise. In what was meant to be a peaceful meeting, John Shepstone, Theophilus Shepstone's brother, produced a concealed gun; in the ensuing fracas Matshana escaped while thirty of his men were killed. He summarily returned to Zululand (Brookes and Webb, 1965: 114; Guy, 1983: 197). In the light of the later trial the irony of this contemporary reference to the so-called 'Matshana affair' is that *Ekukhanyeni* residents, like Fuze, evidently knew about John Shepstone's concealed gun in 1858 (Guy, 1983: 244), and yet it was only in 1874 that it became 'public knowledge' when Colenso cited the incident in his defence of Langalibalele.<sup>113</sup> In particular, it was the fact that the Hlubi themselves had participated in the attempted arrest of Matshana, and therefore knew the potential treachery involved in being summoned, which retrospectively gave the affair its poignancy. That an intimation of the importance of the Matshana affair to some of the residents of *Ekukhanyeni* should appear in the young Magama's text of 1859 demonstrates that 'Amazwi Abantu' should be understood as a *vox populi* and a summary of the concerns, quotidian tasks, human characters and dialogues that defined Magama's young life.

*Magama's testimony at Langalibalele's trial*

At the time itself Fuze did not write anything dealing with Langalibalele's trial or the issues raised by it. What we have, though, as part of the record of the trial are some telling exchanges when Fuze, along with other *Ekukhanyeni* residents, became involved in the trial proceedings through providing testimony regarding the veracity of crucial pieces of evidence – only to find his testimony vigorously challenged in cross-examination. Of all the evidence given during Langalibalele's trial, the contest over two fragments of such evidence is particularly important for understanding both the language that framed the supposed 'rebellion' and the role that Fuze and other *Ekukhanyeni* residents played in exposing the weak foundations of the case. The first piece of evidence to be presented and interrogated by the Bishopstowe contingent was the role of the 'Matshana affair' in precipitating Langalibalele's decision to flee the colony. Second, was the evidence of Shepstone's messenger, Mahoyiza, on how he was treated by Langalibalele and the Hlubi.

The trial evidence regarding Langalibalele's motives for his 'rebellious' flight and Mahoyiza's supposed stripping rested largely on the official account of the 'Matshana affair'. The trial had already started when Colenso heard a different version of the Matshana and the Mahoyiza stories from Magama Fuze and the *amaHlubi* residing at *Ekukhanyeni*. After hearing these accounts Colenso brought to Shepstone's attention the relevance to the case of John Shepstone's concealed weapon. At first, he agreed with Shepstone that the evidence should be tested, and on 27 January 1874, Colenso's Hlubi witnesses (Mhlaba and Ngwadla) and the messenger, Mahoyiza and his 'indunas' (Nofihlela and Ndabezimbi) were interviewed and cross-examined, at the offices of the SNA. The conduct of the cross-examination reveals the extent to which Magama Fuze's role both as a scribe and as a witness was contested. Like the trial itself, the testing of Mahoyiza's statement implicated both minor and major characters. Two of the 'headmen' that had accompanied Mahoyiza on his errand contradicted his claim that he had been ill-treated by Langalibalele's people. Fuze had taken down the statements of these two, when they were made to Colenso; and in the presence of Shepstone and his 'indunas' and chiefs, he was ordered to read them aloud. On hearing Nofihlela's statement read out, one of Shepstone's 'indunas' challenged the veracity of Magama's reporting:

**Said Zatshuke, chief induna of Somtseu [Shepstone]: "Yes, it is very nice, my lad, since it is you who are the writer! It is quite right that we should hear from you how it stands about those words, from you who originated them? For, you see, you know how to write the words of one man and leave out those of another. What's the reason that you have kept back those of Mahoiza [Mahoyiza, the SNA messenger] and only given plainly those of Langalibalele?" Said I, "Excuse me, Induna; I have not done it with any idea of making plain the words of Langalibalele, and keeping back those of Mahoiza. I wrote simply what I was told by the men, and not for the purpose of getting up a case. (Colenso, 1875: 110)**

Zatshuke's response represents a paradigmatic encounter between the oral and the written word and is central to understanding why Fuze found himself implicated as a scribe. Zatshuke's objection expressed, not just his suspicion of the recorded word, but also his own understanding of the larger issue at stake. It was in fact Shepstone who had to point out to him that what was at issue was not Langalibalele but the testimony of Mahoyiza. Even with this interjection from Shepstone, Zatshuke still insisted on hearing from Nofihlela directly:

**Said Zatshuke, "We had better hear from Nofihlela's own mouth, and leave off being told by this writing." (Colenso, 1875: 110)**

This suspicious attitude towards writing was no minor issue since the whole of Fuze's report of the meeting was structured by queries about who said what, and whether what they said was accurately recorded on paper. Moreover, under the pressure of cross-examination, and in the presence of

Shepstone and Colenso, the respondents presented new parts of the story or augmented their earlier statements. This further undermined the 'reliability' of Fuze's transcription. This shuttling in meaning between the oral and the written words was no doubt exacerbated by the political overtones of the impending trial of Langalibalele. Notwithstanding Colenso's intervention as an *amicus curiae* and his revelation that Mahoyiza's account of being stripped was highly suspect, the evidence he documented never made it to the court room (Guy, 2001: 39-40). Colenso and Fuze's efforts to introduce the written record as basis for the trial proceedings were blocked by Shepstone's manipulations which combined with basic suspicions regarding written records in general.

Fuze's involvement in the trial concerning the second contested fragment of evidence occurred when Colenso, still believing in the possibility of a just outcome, wrote a petition, on behalf of Ngwadla and Mnyengeza, two elder *amaHlubi* chiefs who were now living at Bishopstowe (See Guy, 1983: 208-210). When the Hlubi elders' petition was presented to the SNA, it once again set the oral and literate worlds on a collision course. Shepstone's immediate response was to dispute the validity of this petition. He summoned the petitioners, Ngwadla and Mnyengeza, on 4 March 1874 and interrogated them about the petition. In his attack, Shepstone exploited the two elderly men's illiteracy by re-interpreting the spirit of the petition and presenting the two elders as upstarts, falsely claiming to represent the entire Hlubi group. Thus, Magama Fuze reported that Shepstone questioned Ngwadla "severely" (*ngamandhla*) saying that the latter had requested the appeal because 'forsooth, you are such a great man, you surpass all the rest of the amaHlubi tribe! Is it so?' Even when Ngwadla protested saying 'there is no such word in the paper as that' Shepstone insisted that 'It is written here in the paper. It is not we who say so, it is your paper' (Colenso, 1875: 129). The *Ekukhanyeni* faction again played their role as interpreters and messengers; William Ngidi and Magama Fuze's testimonies on the petition reveal that Shepstone did not merely test the integrity of the two men's petition or exploit their illiteracy, he also attempted to present the petition as an affront to his own authority. In effect Ngwadla and Mnyengeza's petition was taken as a challenge to this 'oralisation' of factual and legal evidence and to Shepstone's own duplicitous interpretation of the written word. Fuze reported that not only were the two elders told that 'the paper' said they surpassed the others in importance but that Ngwadla had 'gone to law with the Supreme Chief and Somtseu (Mr. Shepstone), and that I [Ngwadla] shall be put in prison' (Colenso, 1875: 129). Thus, emerged the distinction introduced by

Shepstone, and repeated by the Resident Magistrate, John Bird, between 'going to law' (*ukumangala*) and 'making a plaint' (*ukukhala*). On being asked what the petition meant, Magema responded,

**M. [Magama]** The old men were lamenting themselves very much about the ruin of their House, and bewailing their Chief.

**Mr. B. [John Bird].** Did they go to the Bishop himself to make a plaint (*kala*) about that?

...

**M. Sir,** the old men also desired that the cause of their Chief should be heard again, making a plaint with their hearts.

**Mr B.** Don't you mean that they *complained* (*mangala*, go to law) to the Bishop?

**M. No, Sir,** I don't know that they complained.

**Mr. B.** Don't fence with me, Magema, tell me the truth. Do you say that they made a plaint only? (Colenso, 1875: 129-130)

William Ngidi brings this legal and rhetorical fencing to its climatic contradiction, when in his testimony to Bird he adopted an ironic tone. Bird asked him whether he had heard all of Fuze's words, and he replied that he had but that,

There is only one word, Sir, in respect of which I should differ with Magema, even if he had agreed with you – to wit, that these people did not come to go to law. Why, is not going to law paying 5s. to the Magistrate, that another may be summoned? I am certain that they merely lamented to the Inkos' [Colenso]. (Colenso, 1875: 131)

By pointing out that justice for Natal's Africans came at a price of 5s., Ngidi exposes the self-serving interpretation inherent in the supposed distinction between *ukukhala* and *ukumangala*. For Ngidi both concepts belong to the colonial order and not to some 'traditional' notion of justice. The irony in his observation is exactly that in terms of the colonial definition of customary law one had to pay 5s. before they could 'go to law', but in this situation the colonial definition was being ignored since it obviously undermined the political and moralizing purpose the trial of Langalibalele was meant to serve. From Bird's questioning of the two, it is as if the right of appeal, because it involved 'going to law', was a novelty, whereas in fact, as pointed out by Colenso, it was a right entrenched in Ordinance No.3 of 1849 (Colenso, 1875: 128).

### *The 1875 kholwa petition*

Politically, the trial and the banishment of the *amaHlubi* chief also revealed the precariousness of the Shepstonian system of 'indirect' and personal rule. For the *amakholwa* of Natal, the event may also have re-ignited their resentment of 'customary law'. It is therefore not surprising that in 1875 Fuze was party, as a printer and signatory, to a petition requesting their exemption from the application of 'customary law'.<sup>114</sup> In 1863 these *amakholwa* had drafted a similar petition but due to disagreements with, first an unnamed advocate and next a missionary, to whom they had entrusted the petition, they

had not received satisfactory representation. As an example of *kholwa* grievances, the 1875 petition, and its relation to the Exemption Law of 1865, highlighted the 'tools' used by this first generation of *kholwa* intellectuals and therefore allows one to analyse the pre-Congress politics of *kholwa* identity, and how such petitioning of the colonial authorities foreshadowed the twentieth-century politics of protest. Written in the immediate aftermath of Langalibalele's trial and transportation, the petition implicitly alluded to the 'rebellion' and expressed the *amakhholwa*'s objections against forced military conscription while they lived without civic protection. They declared,

**That we fled from Zululand through fear of fight, having no power to fight, but all the same it is often ordered by Government that our people ought to go to fight, whereas we have been told that this 7s. hut tax is paid by us for purpose of keeping soldiers who will guard us and that we shall only stay comfortable, not going to fight. At this last fight it was ordered that our people must go to fight, but some of them who returned home were fined £20 by Government. We pray to the Great Chief to see to this, for the blacks are not soldiers, and do not like to kill their own relatives, besides having no right weapons to fight with, as Government refused natives to possess firearms. (Khumalo and others, 1875: 624)**

The reference to the prohibition on Africans owning guns, suggests that the petitioners had the 1872 law in mind. The list of grievances in the petition also included the petitioners' expectations that as British subjects they would receive the same treatment, under the law, as the European colonists. Their aspirations are summarised in the suggestive rhetorical question, 'How can a man become to be of the English?' (1875: 623). At first sight this plea might seem to confirm the colonial stereotype of the 'educated native' whose purpose is to mimic the European; yet, the petitioners' plea was an appeal not to the image of an assimilative, but of an 'accommodationist', British Empire. To convey their appreciation of imperial benevolence they resorted to a homely metaphor,

**We say that you are the same as a hen, which does not mind any kind of chicken, whether of a duck or turkey, or for any other bird, she does keep them all under her wings. (Khumalo and others, 1875: 623)**

Jeff Guy (2001: 47) suggests that it was this metaphor that upset Sir Garnet Wolseley, the new governor, who regretted 'the tone in which they have thought fit to state what they consider to be their grievances' (1875: 624). The contrast, drawn by the petitioners, between British refuge and Zulu 'despotism' and by implication British civil law and 'Kafir Law' functions to place them within a continuum of events that links their residence in colonial Natal to the Zulu kingdom. As aspiring 'British subjects', they did not distinguish their 'exit' from Zululand, from their desire to be free of 'Kafir Law'; their understanding of the nature of Zulu rule seems to correspond to the Zulu kingdom in general and not to the 'Native law' that was being codified under colonial rule. Consequently, the petitioners' rejection of colonial 'Kafir Law' is not synonymous with a rejection of traditional culture.

Their statements suggest that they wanted to retain certain elements of 'custom'; they, for example, expressed muted support for polygamy and *lobola* (dowry), and a desire that the government assist them in preventing their 'women' from 'living in towns and becoming prostitutes to white men' (1875: 624). The petitioners however, also reveal a shrewd appreciation of the 'modern paternalism' of colonial governance, by questioning the fact that the government demanded a £5 marriage fee, while, 'we never receive any help from Government during the sickness of our families... we cannot call this law, but eating up' (1875: 624).

Writing retrospectively about the petition, Fuze, in a letter titled 'Isililo Ngo John Kumalo (Ku Mhleli we "Langa")',<sup>115</sup> offered an impassioned correction of an obituary dedicated to John Khumalo published on October 22 1915 in *Ilanga lase Natal*. The obituary, it seems, had depicted Khumalo as one of the foremost converts of the Church of the Province of South Africa, a breakaway from the Church of England. Fuze not only challenged Khumalo's supposed participation in this secession, but also Khumalo's supposed activities against the £5 marriage tax, mentioned in the petition. Fuze's retrospective description of the 1875 petition implied a direct relationship between their petition and the exemption laws, when in fact, the exemption law had been promulgated in 1865. He stated that with the arrival of Wolseley, Mr. Isaac Caluza ('uSilevana') and John Khumalo came to him and told him about the actions of Rev. Markham, namely, that he opposed their writing to the new governor – 'uHulumeni ofikile' / 'The newly arrived government':

**Bacela ukuba ngibe kanye nabo, silobebe uHulumeni, konke esikusolayo. Nembala ngabavumela...Kepa ngobugwala buka John Kumalo no Isaac Caluza, bati uba bezwe ukuti uHulumeni utukutele ngokuzwa law'amazwi esicelo setu, babaleka bangishiya ngedwa... Kwabelapo seku vela izwi komkulu eseliti "Otanda ukungena emteweni wobulungu kazotata incwadi komkulu, uyakuvunyelwa." Abaleka njalo ke law'amadod'amabili angibange ngisawabona; ngaze ngati sengizwa kwasokutiwa ahambile ayakutata lezo'ncwadi zokupuma emteweni wabantu omabili, ngasengikhohlwa nje ukuti kanti ng'abantu abanjani labo!" (Fuze, 1915d: 4)**

**They [Caluza & Khumalo] asked me to work with them, to write to the Government, about our allegations [dissatisfaction]. I readily agreed...But, because of the cowardice of John Khumalo and Isaac Caluza, as soon as they heard that the Government was angered on hearing the words of our request, they ran and left me by myself...And then it happened that there arrived word from the capital that "A person who would like to enter into the law of Englishness can fetch a letter and they will be permitted." That is how these two men ran, I never saw them again; eventually I heard that they had both gone to fetch those letters to leave the law of black people, and I just thought what kind of people are these!**

Even in this recollection, Fuze seemed to be continuing the dialogue of 1875 in that he again uses the contrast between the 'law of Englishness' and the 'law of black people'. A literal translation of the two contrasting notions is complicated by the fact that they do not literally mean 'British civil law' versus

'customary law'. In fact, Fuze's account offered a summary of the official response to their petition, namely that those Africans who objected to living under Natal's 'Kafir Law' could apply for exemption as provided by Law No. 28 of 1865.<sup>116</sup> From the official response of 1875, it is obvious that whereas colonial officials understood the difference between 'customary' and British 'civil' law in a legalistic manner, by for example citing Law No. 28, Fuze and his fellow petitioners understood their grievances and the redress they sought in cultural terms, as exemplified in his use of the notion of 'Englishness'. Fuze's retrospective comments demonstrate that, even in 1915, he still understood the objectives of their petition in these terms. Moreover, Fuze's recollection, by implying that their petition had directly led to the exemption laws, suggests that the government had not openly publicised the law when it was promulgated in 1865. The petition also indicated a growing radicalisation of *kholwa* opinion. As with the Langalibalele case, Magama Fuze appeared largely as an interlocutor, who formalised and printed the collective's grievances. Consequently, it is difficult to identify, in the 1875 petition, Fuze's ideas and separate them from those of the collective. His comments on John Khumalo's obituary must therefore serve as the best indication of his opinions on the petition and its supposed impact on the colonial government. Although, it may also have exaggerated his own contribution to the 1875 petition, Fuze's criticism of Khumalo defined his position vis-à-vis other *amakholwa* and their grievances; it depicted him as 'radical' and unafraid of confronting the colonial government.

### 'A Visit to King Ketshwayo'

Whereas in 1859 the Natal-Zululand divide was still largely about the Zulu royal refugees who had fled to Natal and were residing with the Bishop; by 1877, when Fuze visited Zululand again, converts had become a more prominent population group; their status, within the independent Zulu kingdom, was a growing bone of contention. As a consequence, Zulu authority and sovereignty were challenged as being intolerant to converts and conversion. There were rumours that the Zulu king Cetshwayo was killing converts, and missionaries were also known to be abandoning their missions (Etherington, 1978: 84-86). Fuze travelled to Zululand in July of 1877 to investigate the allegations that the Zulu king was ordering the execution of converts. His account, 'A Visit to King Ketshwayo', was published in the prestigious *Macmillan's Magazine*. This published account was remarkable in that, apart from the records of Fuze's conversations with the king, it also included ethnographic details about the practices of the Zulu people as well as historical information about the graves of deceased clan chiefs. Of



principal interest, for our purposes, was Fuze's admiration for what he termed the 'government of Zululand', and his proposals of how educated Africans could be of use to this government. The text was, according to Colenso, written in Zulu and translated and edited for publication by him.

It was Colenso who framed Fuze's article as a defence of the Zulu king Cetshwayo. It is obvious that the article was intended for an English audience and therefore Colenso began by describing reports of 'atrocities' as 'exaggerated'. The Bishop wrote:

**Such exaggerated accounts have been sent to England of the state of things in Zululand, and particularly of the "atrocities" which are said to have been committed by orders of the king, in respect of numerous native converts, and to have caused a sudden flight of many of the missionaries from the district, that your readers may be interested in a narrative of a visit which has just been made to the Zulu king, by a Natal native, written down by himself in Zulu, and literally translated into English. (Fuze (Magwaza), 1878: 421)**

Colenso then went on to describe how Fuze worked as a manager of the Bishopstowe printing office and vouched for the reliability of his account. Colenso's English readers would probably not have thought that it was significant that Fuze was described as a 'Natal native', but the fact that Magama Fuze and his fellow converts were from Natal was in fact relevant both to how they perceived the political situation in Zululand and were themselves perceived by Zululand's 'heathens'. This cultural and social difference, embodied in the position of the 'Natal native', was evident in Fuze's approach to the Zulu king. Although he, as expected of a Zulu subject, saluted, praised, and was obsequious in his conversations with the Zulu king, Fuze also took great liberties in advising the king on how he should be governing the Zulus. Thus, after hearing all the reports concerning the converts who allegedly had been killed and the king's denial of his involvement in these killings, Fuze and Cetshwayo entered into a conversation about the missionary, Robert Robertson. The king alleged that Robertson had been saying that all his Zulu people *and* soldiers should be converted. Cetshwayo told Fuze, 'I answered him that we don't know anything about that; he had better go and make converts of the soldiers of his own people first, and after that these people of ours may be converted' (1878: 426). That Cetshwayo well understood the double standards of British imperialism and its agents was thus clearly enunciated.

Fuze, true to the controversial teachings of his mentor Colenso, responded to the king's obvious unease at the implications for his authority of more conversions to Christianity, by stating that:

**King of kings! That is good. Gumede!<sup>117</sup> And I too say, sir, that the soldiers of the king and the whole Zulu people should be converted. For what means that being converted? Is it not a good thing to be converted? To be converted, sir, it is to practise what is right and good before men and in one's own heart, to carry a white heart through reverencing Him who made all men. That is not being converted, Gumede, when people cast off the power which is appointed to rule over them, and despise their king, and go and live with the missionaries. (1878: 426)**

Fuze's apparent acceptance of Zulu authority, that is, his translation of the meaning of conversion to include obedience to the temporal powers of the Zulu sovereigns, might seem surprising. After all, he had been to see Mpande in 1859 and had heard the laments of Mkhungo's sisters and their fear that they would be killed when Cetshwayo came into power. By claiming that there is no contradiction between the secular power of the Zulu king and the sacred act of conversion, Fuze performed the kind of explanation-by-analogy which Colenso had used to explain baptism to his father. Moreover, it is obvious that Fuze's understanding of the legitimacy of the Zulu king was not just concerned with his customary authority but was instead envisaging a basis for the future autonomy of the kingdom. Thus, in Fuze's ensuing comments on Zululand, it became apparent that his notions of proper governance were by no means 'traditional'. In his assessment of Cetshwayo, he for example stated:

**It is right that all people should know that Ketshwayo loves his people; he does not at all wish that they should kill one another, or that he himself should kill them. He has altogether abandoned the policy of Tshaka and Dingane, and carries on that of the English in earnest. (1878: 428)**

At another point, Fuze chastised the Zulu councillors of the king, for allowing diviners ('*izanus*') to continue their practices of 'smelling out' supposed witchcraft. In these comments, Fuze's Victorian ideal of Zulu sovereignty was explicitly stated:

**I wish to tell you that all the Zulus across the Tugela (refugees in Natal) wish to return here to-day, being oppressed with trouble coming from the white men, through having to pay much money to the government and to the white landowners. But I assure you that there is not one who will come back to be killed, for truly you are people ruled by *izanus* [diviners], who tell you that this or that person is an evil-doer...Why, don't you know that you have now joined yourselves entirely with the laws of the Queen?...Further I wish to tell you that it would be good that all the children of Zululand should be instructed...and get power to be wise like white men. Your sons ought to speak with the white chiefs, and to go across the sea, and speak with the great Queen of the English, who is kind and gracious in all she does; you ought to know that. (1878: 431)**

Fuze's complex articulation of the views of the Natal refugees; his desire for a modernised, albeit Victorian Zulu mode of governance and justice; and his exhortation that the Zulu aristocracy should be educated to converse with the colonial and imperial order, encapsulated the dilemma of the 'Natal native' within the geo-political, Natal-Zululand divide. Fuze's comments, rather than suggesting a complete capitulation to English ways, seemed to be about the pragmatic management of power as a response to the presence of European power and expansion. Thus, although the reference point is Queen Victoria, and to a certain extent Christian notions of just government, this should not suggest that Fuze was a Zulu imperialist. Rather, what Fuze articulated was the novel idea that the political divide between the independent Zulu polity and colonial Natal was temporary, and would be bridged if and when Zulu government was reformed, along Victorian lines.

Fuze's 1878 article thus gave a generally sympathetic view of the reign of the Zulu king, Cetshwayo. His admiring comments on the peacefulness of Zululand and the kindness and virtues of Cetshwayo were evidently written to counter the unflattering reports of those who were fleeing Natal. Notably, Cetshwayo himself expressed his suspicion that there was a hidden strategy behind the accusations that he was killing converts. After Fuze had told him about the appeals that had been made on behalf of Langelibalele by Colenso, Cetshwayo replied:

**You see Sobantu there is a father to me, he is not like other white men; his words are different from theirs, they are pleasant...I hope that Sobantu will always have a care for me, for those white men are talking – talking – talking, and they want to come down with might upon me. But for my part, as I have done no wrong, I will not run away. And yet through that I know the ruin of the land will come. (Fuze (Magwaza), 1878: 426)**

The king's appreciation of his predicament is extended by Fuze, who compared the position of Cetshwayo to that of Langelibalele and Matshana. In his own assessment, Fuze emphasised the potential ruin of the Zulu king. He stated:

**One who knows the story of the ruin of Matshana will see plainly how matters stand with black people, and how the black chiefs are attacked with accusations...Why, Matshana was completely ruined through it; it was said that it was he who sent his people to kill that Sigatiya; and that talk, in fact, drove Matshana away from Natal, and he fled away to Zululand. After many years the truth was brought to light through the trial of Langelibalele, that Matshana never sent men to kill Sigatiya; and so Matshana was ruined for nothing at all, and his people were killed for nothing at all. Will it be the same, I wonder, in the case of Ketshwayo? It ought to be thoroughly known that Ketshwayo is wholly blameless in respect of the death of the convert. (1878: 428)**

This portentous judgement of how indigenous leaders were ruined by rumours and accusations that they were killing converts, defined not only Fuze's sympathy for Cetshwayo, but underscored his personal interpretation of the Langelibalele trial. Like Cetshwayo, Fuze could from experience appreciate the hidden colonial strategy in the accusations, and this informed his conclusions that Cetshwayo's rule was benevolent. When he wrote *Abantu Abamnyama*, Fuze repeated his laudatory assessment of Cetshwayo's government and although the book's account of his conversations with the king differed from the 1878 article, he re-iterated the argument that at the time Cetshwayo had sensed an imminent invasion. His later views, on Zulu government and Zulu kings would be consistent with those expressed at this time.

### ***Later thematic articulation***

The key themes and issues articulated during Langelibalele's trial and in the 1870s were not confined to that context only and did not disappear from Fuze's later writings. As we saw, some key issues such as the *kholwa* awareness of a binary 'Natal-Zululand' identity, were already anticipated in Fuze's

earliest writings even if they only took centre stage in the politicized context of the 1870s. Once articulated they remained central concerns in Fuze's later writings. In one way or another these later writings were consistently concerned with the thematic articulation of the issues involved in firstly, the act of 'writing Zulu history', secondly, the dilemmas and implications of 'the Natal-Zululand divide', and lastly, with the articulation of a proto-nationalism. In the following sections we will trace, with reference to his later writings, how Fuze continued to reflect and elaborate on these themes.

### *Writing Zulu History*

In the Introduction of this dissertation we posed the general problem that Fuze's authorial project took the form of writing a *history* of 'the black people' while noting at the same time that 'writing history' was not an obvious consequence of the introduction of writing into an oral culture. As a *kholwa*, that is, as a convert to Christianity, Fuze would have been expected to limit his literate activities to religious and theological matters. Why then was it that as an aspiring *kholwa* intellectual he chose 'history', and not religion or theology, as his particular authorial project? Our discursive biography on the making of Fuze as a *kholwa* intellectual and author hopefully begins to provide some of the answers to the problem of how and why Fuze set out on this authorial project. Thus, as a first step we considered the Langalibalele trial as a particular *moment of articulation*, our next step is to clarify why and how from the 1870s on Fuze became committed to 'writing history', which from the manner in which he wrote amounted to 'writing Zulu history'. In this section we will trace the thematic articulation of this authorial project through Fuze's writings.

As we have seen Fuze's earliest encounters as a young *kholwa* exposed him to key events in contemporary Zulu history. The 1859 visit to king Mpande took place in the aftermath of the 1856 battle of Ndongakusuka and was shaped by the fact that Mkhungo, one of the survivors, had found refuge in Natal at *Ekukhanyeni*, thus directly implicating Colenso and his mission in these Zulu succession conflicts. It is no accident that the battle of Ndongakusuka would become a central event in the emergence of Zulu historiography and more especially in Fuze's own historical consciousness as reflected in *Abantu Abamnyama*. In this work Fuze described how the internecine conflict between Cetshwayo and his brothers was not just another case of succession politics turned violent but was a battle about who the rightful inheritor of the Shakan legacy was (See Fuze, 1979: 60-61). Considering that he knew about the 1856 battle of Ndongakusuka and the associated image of the survivor, Mkhungo, and the Shakan legacy which he symbolised, Fuze's portrayal of this legacy was central to

his reinterpretation of Zulu history. Fuze was however not atypical in this re-interpretation of Shaka's rule: the Shakan model of government has appeared as an ideal of social order and discipline, not only in colonial discourses, but also in recorded oral traditions, albeit in ambiguous terms. As Hamilton argues, various African informants, in James Stuart's oral records, depicted the Shakan state in terms of the order within and the chaos without (Hamilton, 1994: 6-12, 1998: 68-69). In general these latter representations were based on the assumption, negative and positive, that the legitimacy of Shaka's rule rested not on hereditary entitlement but on his achievements, namely his military organisation and its effective establishment of law and order. Fuze's 'writing' of Zulu history drew on some of these accounts of the Shakan legacy, sometimes contradicting and sometimes complementing the oral traditions.<sup>118</sup> Fuze's commentary on the rule of various Zulu kings was a pervasive theme in all of his writing, and the most notable features were his explicit admiration of Shaka and his declarations on the legitimisation of all kings. First, while giving credence to both the oral and written evidence of Shaka's cruelty, Fuze chose to focus on his intelligence in dealing with the 'white people'. Thus, in comparing him to Dingane, Fuze wrote:

**Even though we may condemn Shaka for having a lust for killing people, we can say with conviction that he was a clever man who liked to act intelligently. He wished to co-operate with the white people, having seen the products of their knowledge. I feel sure that had he not been killed, our life would have been different for us, because he ardently desired to associate himself with the white people in respect of all their works of wisdom. (1979: 85)**

Thus, in Fuze's view the Shakan state was a modernising state; keen to acquire the technology of the Europeans and to use it for the benefit of its subjects. Fuze's emphasis on Shaka's interest in cooperating with Europeans should however not be interpreted as a naïve 'invention' of Zulu modernity. Fuze was aware that Shaka, while extending the power of Zulu sovereignty to include European 'chiefs', did not concede his own sovereignty. In Fuze's narrative, and this links to the second aspect of his account, Shaka's demise was divine in origin and not secular or colonial, because he forgot that he was ruling the Zulu people on behalf of his kingly ancestors and *uNkulunkulu*. He noted:

**...it is right to remember that all kings are supported by God, and it is He who appoints and supports them. If sovereignty is not supported by Him, it is dead, and authority non-existent. Also if a king rules without the realisation that he is a servant, a mere headman to represent his people to God, his kingship is non-existent and dead, because God will soon bring it to an end.**

**Shaka, who moulded the sovereignty [*ubukhosi*] of the Zulu nation, ruled for only ten years. For when he defied the Owner of all people for whom he ruled his people, his rule was terminated and God roused his brothers to kill him...(1979:97)**

Although this excerpt suggested, as argued by Draper (1998: 23), a biblical and millenarian legitimization of Zulu kingship, Fuze also proposed that Zulu rule failed because Shaka discarded 'the old ways of Senzangakhona and his forebears' (1979: 146). In the Zulu version of the above extract, Fuze (Fuze, 1922a: 170) used the term *uNkulunkulu* to suggest a divine foundation of all kingship. By suggesting that all kingship is divine, Fuze introduced the notion of the ideal sovereign, whose purpose and source of authority did not derive from their temporal prowess. Although possibly infused with Christian notions, Fuze's idea was 'modern' because it suggested the possibility of an African state that governed justly, and would be committed to transcendent moral values. Furthermore, such a view of statecraft also suggests a continuity between his ideas as expressed in the 1878 article and his subsequent assessment of Zulu kingship in *Abantu Abamnyama*. In other words, it is possible to argue that in both cases Fuze was searching for a way to resolve the dichotomy of the 'benevolent' colonial state and the 'despotic' Zulu kingdom (the Natal-Zululand divide): his solution was that Zulu kings need only pursue divine ends and Zulu sovereignty would be restored to a modern status, perhaps to parallel and counterbalance the colonial state. The extent to which these views on providential election were based on purely Christian notions is questionable. What is clear is that as a common theme in both his 1878 article and the book *Abantu Abamnyama*, the problem of defining a role for the *kholwa* intellectual in traditional society and government was central to Fuze's preoccupation with reforming Zulu society.

As argued Fuze's involvement in the trial of Langalibalele led to his more direct interaction with the Zulu king as a member of Harriette Colenso's 'Zulu National Party' and intensified his concerns with Zulu affairs and history. As a witness to the miscarriage of justice of Langalibalele's trial, Magama Fuze would in *Abantu Abamnyama* draw parallels between the death of Colenso and the death of his son, who both died, according to him, in defence of this cause – Colenso in the defence of Langalibalele and his son in the defence of Dinuzulu (Fuze, 1922a: 250; Fuze, 1979: 144). Strangely, though, given its undoubted and formative significance to Fuze, the Langalibalele trial is hardly mentioned in *Abantu Abamnyama* compared to his extensive account of the arrest and trial of Dinuzulu. It must therefore have been Fuze's visit to king Cetshwayo in 1877, at a time when the imperial threat to the survival of the Zulu kingdom was just becoming palpable, that definitively focused his enduring concerns with writing Zulu history. Whether it was a case of a perceptive premonition, or an appreciation of the inevitability of colonial subjugation, Fuze's statements in his published account of

'A Visit to King Cetshwayo' about the prospective 'ruin' of the Zulu king, and other African leaders, was a first articulation of what would become an enduring concern with the historical fate of the Zulu kingdom and people. Many years later, in *The Black People*, Fuze revisited Cetshwayo's suspicions by re-iterating the argument that at the time Cetshwayo had sensed an imminent invasion; Fuze accentuated the Zulu king's premonitions by noting the fact that one of the king's residences was renamed 'Olandandlovu' and explains that this was evidence of the Zulu people's prescience. He wrote,

**It was then said to be 'Olandandlovu', which means, 'It is from here that the elephant is fetched', the elephant of course being Cetshwayo. For at that time it was well known that the white people were about to invade Zululand, to fetch the king, and to abolish Zulu rule. (1979: 109)**

Now in writing about Cetshwayo's premonitions in this way, he was evidently constructing a specific narrative of Zulu history, namely, that the 'benevolence' of Cetshwayo was 'rewarded' with colonial antagonism and African internecine strife. Thus, in his 'Isipeto sikaZulu' / 'The End of the Zulu Nation/People' articles which appeared in *Ilanga lase Natal* in June 1916, Fuze spent a few editions describing the deposal of Cetshwayo and his exile. In one of these articles, he described the 1880 visit of Colenso and his daughter Harriette, to the now incarcerated king, in Cape Town (See also Guy, 2001: 63). In subsequent articles in the same series, Fuze gave more details about the incarceration and the perfunctory restoration of the king. His narrative of the events was both laudatory and critical in that he, for example, included the praises (*izibongo*) of Cetshwayo in the June 23, 1916 article, but also made it clear that the 'restoration' of the king, for which he travelled to meet Queen Victoria in 1882, was meddled with by Shepstone (Fuze, 1916b: 3). Fuze then discussed how *kwaZulu*, following the restoration of Cetshwayo, was split into 'two'.<sup>119</sup> Fuze's conclusions about this splitting up of the Zulu kingdom indicate a discerning reading of colonial politics and Zulu history. Fuze chose the term *amaMbuka* or 'deserters'<sup>120</sup> to describe those Zulus who opposed Cetshwayo's rule, and argued that they defected because they had been deceived by false promises:

**Lapa pela abangamambuka basebete ngokwahluleka ukulwa, bavama ukulwa izwi lokuti "Senizakwenziwa nibe amakosi nonke, nizibusele nani, ningaloku nibuswa umuntu munye ozinge enibulala." Poke, isituta esi umuntu omnyama sesizwa sikohliswa kutiwa sizauba yinkosi, salahla ubukosi baso besiminya saqoma ukwambata ingubo enobulele njengeselesele emanzini...(1916b: 3)**

**It was so that once the *amaMbuka* could no longer fight, they contested this assertion [word] that "You will all be made into kings, and rule yourselves, instead of being ruled by one person who continually "kills"<sup>121</sup> you." Yes indeed, the fool that a black person is, on hearing the deception that he will be king, abandons true sovereignty and would rather wear a gossamer [mossy/webbed] blanket like a frog in water...**

Fuze's barbed indictment of the gullibility of the traitorous *amaMbuka* is conspicuously absent in his *Abantu Abamnyama*.<sup>122</sup> This is evidence that the eventual book was not necessarily Fuze's most extensive or authoritative exercise in 'writing Zulu history' compared with the series of articles which appeared in *Ilanga lase Natal*.

As already noted one of the strangest features of *Abantu Abamnyama* is the absence of any extended account of Langalibalele's 'rebellion' and trial. This is even more inexplicable in view of the fact that between September 1919 and January 1920, Fuze penned a history of the *amaHlubi* for his *Ilanga* readers. As an example of popular history, the *Ilanga* series was a thorough genealogical and historical account of the creation and destruction of the Hlubi clan. Of particular significance for our purposes, though, is that in both its first instalment and its last, Fuze chose to lecture his readers on the work he was doing as a writer of history, and Zulu history specifically. As an epilogue to his history, Fuze told his readers that:

**Bantu bakiti, – Ngiyigcinile namhla le indaba ebuhlungu yokuciteka kwamazwe asemaHlutshini nelakwa Mazibuko. Angitokoziswa luto – ukuxoxela abantu abangelekeleli muntu odabeni lwakubo – ingabi kwoza kukale nyonini basambuluke ebutongweni. (1920a: 3)**

**My dear people, – This is the last on this painful matter about the dispersal of the lands of amaHlubi and Mazibuko. I am not pleased in any way – I am narrating for people who don't help anyone in telling their own tale – I wonder what bird has to chirp before they are roused from their sleep**

This expression of annoyance at the fact that the readers of *Ilanga* did not adequately support his literary efforts, and maybe did not grasp the significance of his labours in 'writing history' would be repeated time and again in his articles and letters. The story of the destruction of the *amaHlubi* also offered Fuze an opportunity to comment on the colonial order and the experience of conquest in general. In an imaginatively complex metaphor, Fuze defined the difference between 'black' and 'white', by stating that 'whites' are like an ocean into which the waters of other rivers do not flow. He wrote,

**Umlungu wahlukene kude nomuntu, njengelanga nomhlaba. Kakonzeki, kapululeki, ufana namanzi olwandle wona engangenwa ngamanzi eminye imifula. Kungaloko abakiti abengapambili kwetu babuzile kubo bati, "Sitsheleni ukuba nina nikonzwa kanjani?" bebabuza ngoba bebabona bentshampuntshampu,<sup>123</sup> bengangeneki mihla yonke. (1919a: 2)**

**An English [white] person is very different to the black person, it is like sun and the earth. S/he cannot be paid homage [tribute], s/he cannot be flattered [stroked], s/he is like the waters of the ocean into which other rivers do not flow. That is why our predecessors asked them saying, "Tell us how do we pay homage to you?" they were asking because they saw that they [the English] were superficial and impenetrable on any day.**



As a prologue to his history of the *amaHlubi* this statement was both political and cautionary. Politically it reflected the lessons of assimilation and acculturation: Fuze seemed to be arguing that given the 'impenetrability' of the English, as conquerors, Africans would inevitably continue to bear the burden of finding their own ways of dealing with colonial intrusion. As a cautionary tale, Fuze might have been suggesting to his readers that the old methods of 'paying homage' (*ukukhonza*) were now inappropriate in dealing with the present order. In the epilogue to the series, Fuze advocated a new approach, not only to political engagement but to other traditional practices like the consulting of diviners (*izanusì*). He told his readers:

**Bakiti, konke kuyapenduka namhla, kuvela okutsha. Makuyekwe okudala kwenziwe okutsha, kulandelwe izizwe ezihlakaniphile. Ngiyazi ukuti uma siqinisa sonke siya pambili, siyakugcina ngokufinyelela kuloko esikufisayo. (1920a: 3)**

**My dear people, everything turns [changes] now, new things appear. Let us abandon the old and do the new, in imitation of the wise nations. I know that if we all persevere and move forward, we will reach our desired goal.**

Although he did not explicitly state what the desired goals of his readers should be, it is clear that Fuze interpreted the demise of the *amaHlubi* as a cautionary tale of how Africans should not deal with a constantly changing and 'modern' political and social world.

Although it is tempting to speculate on the lack of continuity between the articles in *Ilanga lase Natal* and the book in their respective versions of Zulu history, it is likely that the different tones adopted in the two works were due to Fuze's more direct interaction with his *Ilanga lase Natal* readers. Since it is difficult to establish whether *Abantu Abamnyama* had already been written, and waiting for a publisher,<sup>124</sup> while Fuze was writing for the newspaper, it is wiser to assume that, at least in the latter case, Fuze wrote for his readers. Thus his description of, for example, the antagonists in the Zulu civil war as those who 'would rather wear a gossamer [mossy/webbed] blanket like a frog in water', a Zulu equivalent for the 'emperor's-new-clothes' metaphor, was probably intended to provoke the readers with whom he was conducting this dialogue on Zulu history (as evidenced in the numerous letters addressed to him). Thus, the immediacy and directness of the dialogues in the newspaper, though also their transient nature as serial publications may be contrasted with the enduring nature of the book as well as its more distant and elusive readership.

Denouncing the petty power squabbles of petty chiefs was a pervasive theme in Fuze's *Ilanga lase Natal* serials. As part of the weekly dialogue that he was conducting with his readers, Fuze used these articles to present to them a selective but belligerent Zulu historiography. The series of articles titled 'Ukuhlaselela kwabelungu kwaZulu' / 'The attack of the English [whites] on Zululand' was printed

in the newspaper in the year 1919 between the months of January and May.<sup>125</sup> This series was however not the first in which Fuze gave an account of the destruction of the Zulu kingdom, in 1916 he had published, as already noted, a few articles under the title 'Isipeto sikaZulu / 'The End of the Zulu Nation/People'. As examples of Fuze's history writing these articles emphasised his position that Zulu monarchical rule was modern and in line with the Victorian ethos of humane governance; he had said as much to Cetshwayo's councillors in 1877. Fuze's preference for a Cetshwayo-centric historiography structured his description of Dinuzulu and his trial, imprisonment and exile on St. Helena. The fact that Cetshwayo had been officially demoted by the imperial and colonial governments also meant that Dinuzulu had not been automatically recognised as his successor as the Zulu king; indeed Sir Henry Bulwer, Special Commissioner for Zululand and Governor of Natal, used the opportunity to rewrite Zulu history by declaring that Dinuzulu could not be heir to Cetshwayo because succession had been secured not by custom but 'by force or by right of force' since the establishment of the Zulu nation by Shaka, (Quoted in Guy, 2001: 11). Rather than refute this distorted colonial historiography of Zulu history or re-assert the value of 'custom', Fuze adopted a historical perspective informed by a re-interpretation of cultural and linguistic meanings. Therefore, in line with his conclusion that 'a name reflects its owner like a person's shadow' (1979: 90), Fuze punned on the meaning of Dinuzulu's name – according to Fuze, Cetshwayo gave his son the name because it 'means that the Zulus would be made tired and exhausted by him' (1979: 90). To link the last Zulu king, Cetshwayo to the fate of his son and heir, Dinuzulu, he stated that:

**When Dinuzulu was still a boy of about ten years...the European army invaded the country and destroyed the nation. It was at that painful time that the Zulus began to weary of their king. For when Cetshwayo gave this name to his son, he was giving expression to his very own feelings. And indeed the Zulus promoted and completed all that which had been predicted by Cetshwayo in naming his son Dinuzulu and in the end they sold him to foreigners because of their weariness of him. (1979: 122)**

The history of the strife and civil war that followed the death of Cetshwayo in 1884 is well-documented (See Guy 2001: 71-73, 209-261; 1983: 335-348); Magama Fuze did not merely rehearse the facts of these events to the readers of the *Ilanga* serials; he was more interested in condemning the balkanization of Zululand and the minor titles and chiefdoms that were awarded to those who participated in the dismemberment of Zulu sovereignty. He gave his historical account of the destruction of the Zulu kingdom a nationalist slant by asserting that:

**Kwa njaloke ukupangwa kwezwe lakwaZulu. AmaBhunu kawalipanganga ewodwa; kwabe kuyisifiso sabelungu balapa eSouth Africa ukuba kuncitshiswe amandhla kaZulu; kona abantu be ngezuhlangana babe muntu munye; ngoba beqonde kahle ukuti "ukuhlangana ku amandhla."<sup>126</sup> Umuntu ongakuboni kahle loku okuhlelweyo, kufanele**

ukuba ake abukisise ukuti angakanani amakosi (okutiwa ngamakosi kambe) alapa eNatal nakwaZulu; ngiti anga'amakulu, kukona neziphakanyiswa eziningi, ezenezelela ukuba kwandiswe ubuning' balaba ababizwa ngamakosi oselwa. Kwenzelwani-ke loko? Kwenzela ukuba abantu bangahlangani ukuba babe moya munye; ngoba kwaziwa ukuti, kwoti mzuku behlanganayo besebeba abantu. (Fuze, 1916b: 3)

So went the plunder of the land of the Zulu. The Boers did not plunder alone;<sup>127</sup> it was also the wish of the English of South Africa that the power of the Zulu nation [people] be diminished; so that the people would not unite into one body; they knew that "unity is power." The person who cannot see this plan, should look closely at the number of chiefs (if they are chiefs at all) here in Natal and kwaZulu; I would say they are a hundred, there are also numerous appointed chiefs [officials/dignitaries], to increase the number of those who are called royal chiefs [hereditary chiefs]. Why is this done? It is done so that the people should not unite and be one in spirit; since it is known that when they unite they will become a people.

That this condemnation of indirect rule was both a judgement on contemporary politics and also involved a retrospective interpretation of Zulu history is evident in Fuze's exposition on Zibhebhu kaMaphitha Zulu, the main rival of the *uSuthu*. He argued that, like 'Mbopha ka Sitayi', who was asked to conspire in the assassination of Shaka, he had also been promised 'umuzi om'kulu, abe yinkosi naye njengabo...' / 'a large homestead, so he could be king like them' (Fuze, 1916b: 3). This comparison neatly connects the Shakan legacy and tragedy to what Fuze perceived to be the contemporary manifestation of this internecine conflict and dissension, namely, the destruction of the Zulu kingdom and the elevation of Zibhebhu and his allies to the status of 'royal chiefdom'.

In the course of 'writing Zulu history' in this way, Magama Fuze recast the role of the main Zulu kings into a heroic and providential mode. This was especially true of the legacy and legend of Shaka Zulu which becomes in Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* a centripetal axis around which his narrative revolved. However, Magama Fuze's Shaka was not a deified hero but a tragic figure, whose fatal flaw, Fuze argued, was that he forgot that all power is granted by God. In Draper's terms Magama Fuze's exposition of Zulu history turned it into a 'salvation history' (1998: 22-23). But, before expanding on Fuze's contribution to the Shakan legacy, it is worth knowing that he also assigned a new role and agency in the founding events of Zulu history to Dingiswayo,<sup>128</sup> Shaka's guardian and mentor. Fuze stated it as a fact that Dingiswayo, as the exiled son of the Mthethwa clan, had returned on his father's death, 'riding a white horse given to him by white men' (1979: 16).<sup>129</sup> The return of an exiled son to assume power is a standard feature of political foundation myths, but the appearance of white people, as *deus ex machina* agents in a succession dispute, suggested something else, namely the intrusion of a foreign power into a traditional society. The way in which Magama Fuze mentioned this incident suggests that he thought the gift and use of a horse, symbolically legitimised Dingiswayo's ascension

by associating him with the alien and intruding presence of the white men and perhaps also their 'superior' military power. Likewise Fuze's account of Dingiswayo's assassination by Zwide, the Ndwandwe chief, was imbued with symbolic significance. Fuze wrote:

**In my opinion Zwide did not act of his own volition when he put Dingiswayo to death. I maintain that Zwide, who was a very powerful chief, was motivated by the intuition as to what would happen, and so killed Dingiswayo without the slightest guilt, because his removal would enable all these things to be brought about. In relying on his own great power, he brought about his own downfall, not knowing that all human power comes from One only, God indeed. (1979: 59)**

By inserting a fatalistic and providential reading of the history of the Zulu people, Fuze both confirmed the centrality of Shaka to the history of southern Africa's peoples, and revealed his own modernist assumption of a linear and purposive history. The latter aspect is especially true of his arguments about Shaka's government and its significance for the black peoples of southern Africa. He wrote:

**At that time Shaka was the ruler of the whole of South Africa, there being no chief who dared to touch him...It was the first time that there had been a government to unite the whole country of South Africa under a single ruler like Shaka. And it was for this reason that all people were said to be Zulus. (1979: 66)**

For Fuze therefore Shaka's role in history was that of a unifier, whose power and influence encompassed 'the whole of South Africa'. The significance of Fuze's exposition of the roles of Dingiswayo and Shaka was that it amounted to an implicit interpretation of the origins of the *Mfecane*. When Zwide killed Dingiswayo in 1818,<sup>130</sup> Fuze observed, 'there began the series of evil events that brought about the many wars that have never ceased' (1979: 47). This interpretation of the *Mfecane*, as a fated set of repercussions resulting from the assassination of Dingiswayo, and of Shaka's subsequent attack on Zwide in order to avenge his death, is the basic foundation of Fuze's history of the Zulu people. The actions of Dingane, Shaka's assassin and successor, were inevitably compared to those of Shaka, and Fuze concluded that,

**Dingane, although a person in form, had the heart of a dog and the nature of a witch [umthakathi]...Not a single good act was ever committed by Dingane, in contrast to those I am now about to narrate about Shaka. (1979: 84)**

The symbolic value of Shaka to African interpretations of the history of South Africa and Africa has been acknowledged and theorised (See Golan, 1994: 5-7; Hamilton, 1998: 4-7, 36-71). The preceding discussion of Fuze's explanation of Shaka Zulu as divinely ordained serves to underscore these theories concerning the 'invention' of Shaka as a nationalist symbol. There is however a further theoretical point to make, namely that the significance of Magema Fuze's Shaka is not so much whether the image was similar or different to that of other *kholwa* writers, but that Fuze's image was born of a contest between a nascent historical consciousness of his Africanness, a novel discourse in his time, and the

lessons of a colonial historiography, which denied the historical agency of Africans. In Fuze's history therefore, Shaka is not only a tragic hero, whose lust for power was compatible with his wisdom, but he also becomes a standard by which to judge his successors. Moreover, if one recalls Fuze's conversation with Cetshwayo in 1877, the image of Shaka as an innovator and modern ruler dovetailed with Fuze's entreaties to the king to reform Zulu governance so that the 'refugees' living in Natal could return. The effect of this representation of Zulu, Nguni and African history was that it simultaneously created a role for the *kholwa* writer who became indispensable to the historical narrative precisely because s/he represented the convergence of modernity and history into a single narrative. Thus, what Fuze did when he spoke to Cetshwayo about reform was to insinuate that he, and other mission-educated *kholwa* were the necessary interlocutors between the past and the present and that they were in essence continuing with the modernist project inaugurated by Shaka. To Magama Fuze Shaka was therefore more than a nationalist symbol, he represented the entrance of modernity into Zulu life and history.

### *On the Natal-Zululand divide*

From the earliest stage, Fuze's encounters with the 'Natal-Zululand divide' had been a formative experience in the making of his *kholwa* identity as reflected in his various writings. The *Three Native Accounts*, as a published record of their first visit to king Mpande and Zululand, reflected and articulated as early as 1859 key aspects of the three young converts perspectives of themselves in relation to the 'Zulu country'. What makes the book unique and invaluable is that whatever the naivety or incipient sophistication of the writers' prose, each expressed individualised interpretations of what it meant to travel from Natal to Zululand, and implicitly also of what it meant to be a *kholwa* and no longer a subject of the Zulu kingdom. The *Three Native Accounts* revealed not just the newly literate writers' perceptions of Zulu royal affairs but also the converts' own unease, their obvious social and political ineptitude and their distinguishable difference when compared to their 'heathen' kin. In this latter sense *Three Native Accounts* also amounted to a record of the experience of modernity and of modernity's place in history and personal biography. For Fuze the formative significance of the 'Natal-Zululand divide' was greatly intensified by his involvement with the Langalibalele trial, his membership of the 'Zulu National Party' and his personal encounters and relations with Cetshwayo and the Zulu royal family before and after the destruction of the Zulu kingdom. As this colonial history was being made, Fuze continued to work for Colenso as a printer. He was instrumental not only in printing Colenso's annotated extracts from the Blue Books, but after Colenso's death, he continued to work

with Harriette Colenso for the Zulu cause. Reading his retrospective interpretation of the events, it is obvious that Fuze was never just a bystander or spectator to this tragic history. But, the transition he made from *comprador* to 'Zulu royalist' was determined by the events and not so much by any particular choice he could have made. And yet, he did not just follow this 'fate'; he seems to have been constantly engaged in defining his own role within Zulu and colonial politics (sometimes with the benefit of hindsight). Being simultaneously a member of 'the Zulu National Party' and a *kholwa* meant that Magama Fuze's ideas on the role of the Zulu king were not separate from his perception of his own role as a *kholwa* intellectual. Thus, once the trial of Dinuzulu and his uncles ('the princes') began, Fuze became once again a scribe, and later a teacher to the imprisoned members of the Zulu royal family. The trial itself, which began on 15 November 1888, galvanised the *Ekukhanyeni* / Bishopstowe faction including not just Magama Fuze but also Mubi Nondenisa, who had also been educated at *Ekukhanyeni* and had become a teacher and printer (Guy, 2001: 276). Even after the destruction of an independent Zulu kingdom the 'Natal-Zululand divide', at least in the context of his later writings, continued to be a fundamental and profound concern informing Fuze's political thought.

So far the thesis has presented the theoretical problems of representing and understanding the making of *kholwa* intellectuals and has taken the approach of constructing a discursive biography, in this case of Magama Fuze. However, to write of Magama Fuze as a *kholwa* intellectual invites the obvious question of what a *kholwa* intellectual is and what the connection is between this identity label and the emergence of historicist and nationalist thought in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Natal. Magama Fuze's *The Black People* provides an opportunity to demonstrate how the act of conversion to Christianity, the status of being an *ikhholwa* and mission education could interact to produce a cultured, political and intellectual coterie of writers, teachers, journalists, interpreters, political polemicists etc. The main issue of concern has been the complex relationship between missions, Christian conversion, colonialism and the *amakhholwa*'s position as a politicised, but colonised intellectual class. In our case of Magama Fuze the focus has been on the nexus of factors and events that I have dubbed 'the Natal-Zululand divide'. As argued, this divide ensured that for Natal's *amakhholwa* the Zulu kingdom – its kings, subjects and customs – continued to be the focal point of their imaginative hopes for a modernised monarchy and system of governance and that they would eventually return from Natal, bringing with them the 'enlightenment' of missionary education. The 'Natal-Zululand divide' was however specific to the political and social situation of Natal and Zululand and the manner in which the

politics of imperialism and colonialism were experienced by Magama Fuze and his fellow *Ekukhanyeni* residents. The next question to pose would be whether this political dualism of 'the Natal-Zululand divide' can be generalised to other *amakholwa*, specifically the *kholwa* literati. In other words, were the experiences of the *Ekukhanyeni* residents shared by the earlier generation of Eastern Cape's *amakholwa* or the second and third-generation of *kholwa* descendants who became the founding fathers of the African nationalist movement? It should be remembered that in the case of *Ekukhanyeni*'s residents and converts, it was the actual experience of shuttling, physically and mentally, between Natal and Zululand which informed their political and intellectual identities. To fully explore these experiences would require an extensive comparative investigation well beyond the capacities of this dissertation. However, without wanting to preempt any such comparative investigation there does seem to be reasons to think that the 'Natal-Zululand divide' especially characterised the Natal *amakholwa* and that this had something to do with their contributions to the articulation of a proto-Zulu nationalism distinct from a more inclusive African nationalism at that time.

### *Proto-Zulu nationalism*

As a *kholwa* intellectual Fuze's writings are notable for the fact that they are predominantly in Zulu and that he did not shift to English as primary medium for literary and political communication. Politically it is difficult to locate Fuze; he was not in any obvious way part of the early mainstream articulations of an inclusive African nationalism. Instead his writings allied him, on the one hand with the emergence of proto-Zulu nationalist sentiments and, on the other hand, with nascent pan-Africanist ideas. In an important sense the roots of Fuze's particular blend of nationalist views can be traced back to aspects of his earliest mission education, in particular to the special valuing of the Zulu language which that involved. Despite his own objective to make *Ekukhanyeni* a 'Kaffir Harrow', Colenso did not anglicise his young converts' education. Instead, he insisted that his young converts write in the Zulu language and he even used their writing, the *Three Native Accounts* for example, as Zulu language primers. Colenso's hermeneutical principles shaped the later intellectual development of his converts. In Fuze's case, the Zulu language continued to be his idiom of choice, and *Abantu Abamnyama* was written in *isiZulu* at a time when many other African intellectuals were turning to English as a medium for intellectual and political work. From orthography to lexicography, Fuze's corpus is in itself a history of written *isiZulu* as it developed. When the *Three Native Accounts* was published Colenso explicitly

mentioned, in his introduction, the book's usefulness to a student of the Zulu language; its value he asserted was that:

**As these narratives are written in simple idiomatic Zulu, they are particularly well adapted for any who are beginning to study the language. On this account, I have thought it well to append a translation and notes...('Introduction', 1901 [1860]: n.p.)**

Ironically, Fuze's 1878 article, although also perhaps an example of 'idiomatic Zulu', was not prefaced with the same references to its didactic functionality nor was the Zulu original provided for the reader.. Magama Fuze's work, written as it was in the Zulu language, effectively represented a shift from concerns with the learning and transcription of a 'new' language to the establishment of a language community.

Magama Fuze's experiences, as a member of the Bishopstowe 'Zulu National Party', placed him at close quarters to the royal family. The fact that Harriette Colenso could coin the term 'Zulu National Party' as a label for supporters of the Zulu cause suggests that the sentiment that the Zulu people or nation were an autonomous and independent polity and cultural group entitled to power and self-determination was part of the rationale of the coterie's activities. As a member of this party, Magama Fuze over time developed his own views about the Zulu monarchy, the impact of colonialism and imperialism on traditional society and authority and the future of black peoples in South Africa. Fuze and his generation experienced first hand the demise of the Zulu kingdom and the 1906 Bhambatha rebellion. This had the effect of focusing their political concerns not so much on the civil rights of Africans generally but rather than on the need for reconstituting the relationship between their elitism and the traditional authority symbolised by the Zulu monarchy (la Hausse, 2000: 12-13; Marks, 1986: 67-68). Fuze's desire, naïve as it was, was for the restoration of the magnanimous Zulu government he praised after his 1877 trip to Zululand. Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* romanticised the legacy of Zulu kingship, but was not explicitly neotraditional in its assessment of contemporary and past Zulu politics. For example, when Fuze described the crowning of Cetshwayo in 1873, he gave at least one reason why the Zulu kingdom began to disintegrate with Cetshwayo's rule. He argued,

**...the accession of Cetshwayo to the position of his father was not fortunate, and had to contend with a dangerous atmosphere...For even his installation by them [the whites], as subject to the conditions imposed by them, was not legitimate; it was simply a device to ensnare him. And there were interfering whites with a sweet tongue, who were in the habit of approaching the dignitaries of the Zulu nation with attractive talk of what they could do for themselves if they agreed to demolish the royal house, saying that they could all rule as chiefs [independently] and no longer be subject to the rule of one man only, who oppressed them mercilessly. (1979: 100)**



Thus, although Fuze may be said to be a monarchist, for supporting the Zulu royal family, he was not particularly enamoured with the entire structure of traditional authority. In the above statement he expressed and repeated his view that the 'chiefs' were culpable for the destruction of the kingdom because of their credulousness. His articles in *Ilanga* were, as discussed, more militant on this point since he accused these chiefs of being turncoats, '*amaMbuka*'. His was not a Zulu nationalism based on nostalgia for traditional authority. On the Bhambatha rebellion, Magama Fuze gave a dispassionate account of the events that led up to the rebellion and the manner in which the colonial government reacted to the unrest. Contrary, to what one might expect of a nationalist, Fuze did not depict Bhambatha and the rebellion as an act of anti-colonial resistance. He described those who fought as people who 'were driven to fighting by their hearts, without weapons, and without thought of their bodies' (1979: 143). From this statement alone it is evident that Fuze would not have been one of the *amakholwa* who joined the rebellion (la Hausse, 2000: 12-13; Marks, 1986: 60). His concern to absolve Dinuzulu from the accusation, for which he was tried and convicted by the colonial government, that he had instigated the rebellion dominated his account. Despite this detached account of the events, one should not underestimate the effect that the rebellion had on the collective psyche of the *kholwa* elite. As la Hausse argues,

...the rebellion also served to deepen *kholwa* awareness of the fragility of their status in colonial society. Out of the trauma of the rebellion emerged the basis for novel forms of élite political identification with Zulu chiefs and commoners, and with the Zulu royal house itself. (2000: 13)

In the case of Magama Fuze his identification with the Zulu royal family would seem to have taken precedence to any identification with Zulu chiefs and commoners. But, this has to be read in the light not only of Fuze's personal contact with the Zulu royal family, but also his express admiration for the Shakan legacy which the Zulu monarch represented.

The one aspect of Fuze's nationalism that most conformed to his mission education is his belief in providential intervention in the success or failure of nations. In both his *Ilanga lase Natal* articles and in *Abantu Abamnyama* he made statements to the effect that kings are enthroned by God and that nations collapse when they lost sight of the favour granted to them by providence. However, this providentialism should not too readily be equated with that of orthodox Christianity. The classic statement of this view occurred when Magama Fuze told his readers that humanity did not originate from the same source, and that they, as 'the black people', should not abandon their customs and imitate those of the foreigners. If this, perhaps surprisingly, indicated a polygenetic view of creation,

Fuze's actual view of the creator may have been even more heterodox. To support his argument that 'the black people' are a unique instance of creation, he stated:

**The creator did not create us foolishly, but wisely, and there can be no doubt that if we love and acknowledge Him, He will uplift us like all the nations; but if we treat Him with disdain, and do not acknowledge Him, He will forsake us for ever. (1979: viii)**

Although the above is seemingly an endorsement of the Christian view on the intervention of God in human affairs, closer investigation of the original Zulu text makes the Christian element less prominent. Fuze used the word '*uMenzi*' which has multiple literal meanings, from 'the doer' to the 'subject' (the grammatical part of speech) (See Doke, et al., 1958: 191). The original reads,

**Kasidalanga uMenzi ngobupukupuku, usidale ngokwazi. Akungabazeki ukuti inxa simtanda, simkonza, uyakusipakamisa nati njengezizwe zonke; kodwa inxa simeya, singamkonzi, uyakusilahla kube pakade. (1922a: xiv)**

When used in this context the word '*uMenzi*' is ambiguous because it does not necessarily denote the Christian God. Still, the thrust of Fuze's statement seems to be the notion that a nation's fate is determined by its relationship with the creator. Draper describes these sentiments as a 'prophetic nationalism infused by Christian symbolism' (1998: 22). Draper's reading of Fuze's 'prophetic nationalism' includes not just his arguments on the providential purpose of kings, but also Fuze's allegorical use of Zulu ceremonies, his allusion to the auspiciousness of Shaka's birth and his appropriation of the colonial and imperial notions of kingship (1998:22-24). These are indeed important elements of Magema Fuze's conception of his 'prophetic nationalism', but Draper's investigation simply focuses on the Christian components of the argument, thereby implying that Fuze was merely appropriating Christian salvation theology for a nationalist purpose. Comparatively, however, Fuze was not the only *kholwa* writer to appeal to prophetic idioms to express nationalist aspirations. In Sol Plaatje's *Mhudi*, a novel about the fatal clash between Mzilikazi's Ndebele and the Barolong, Mzilikazi foretells the disastrous consequences of the alliance formed by the Barolong with the invading Boers (Chrisman, 2000a: 198-199; Lodge, 1991: 123). In Plaatje's narrative of the conflict, when Mzilikazi realises that the Barolong have allied themselves to the Boers, he makes a shift from a personal to a national definition of the impending tragedy and this shift also entails a redefinition of African identity, since Mzilikazi forecasts the ascendance of colonial power and the consequent subjugation of black peoples (Chrisman, 2000a: 195-199). It is therefore possible to interpret Magema Fuze's prophetic nationalism, by applying the same kind of analysis, namely, that as a writer Fuze was reading into the past the contemporary struggles of the *kholwa* elite. In the same way

that Plaatje 'put words' into Mzilikazi's mouth, Fuze gave expression to his nationalism by depicting Shaka as a divinely ordained ruler who was sent to unify black people. He observed,

**If a person thinks and looks at the unexpected activities of Shaka, he cannot conclude that he was merely the progeny of Senzangakhona and Nandi; he can see clearly that he was a special product appearing from above, who arrived here expressly for the purpose of bringing unity to the country instead of disunity, and rule by one person instead of everyone doing as he pleased. (1979: 59)**

Although there are elements of messianic theology, Fuze's vision of Shaka was part of his response to the contemporary political disenfranchisement of Africans and the demise of the Zulu kingdom. One only has to recall his warning to his readers that,

**You will attain nothing by your present state of disorganisation. Unite in friendliness like the enlightened nation. (1979: viii)**

Moreover, Fuze described the demise of the Zulu kingdom as an extension and antithesis of the Shakan legacy. He noted:

**Today Zululand is no longer Zululand, it is Natal, ruled by the English, the original government having passed away and a new one taking its place. The rule of Zulu has disappeared. And why is this? It is because Shaka established it with great force and haste, like a great wind and whirlwind, discarding the old ways of Senzangakhona and his forebears. (1979: 146)**

By directly linking the declining fortunes of Natal's *amakholwa* with the destruction of Zulu autonomy, Fuze used prophetic and fatalistic language to give meaning to this colonial condition. The implication of this was that although these statements were infused with Christian symbolism and theology, they formed part of his articulation of a nationalist discourse, which as the Plaatje example demonstrates, was often expressed through an appeal to prophecy and biblical metaphors. One explanation why the *amakholwa* relied on Christian allusions to express their nationalist aspirations is that the language of national and teleological progress, to which they were introduced by missionaries, was infused with a Protestant theology. As Attwell observes, 'educated Africans in nineteenth-century South Africa came to the Enlightenment via Protestantism' (1997: 563). In the context of a decline in the influence of the liberal humanitarianism associated with the missions, *kholwa* writers appealed to Christian theology as if to remind the erstwhile 'friends of the natives' of the political tradition they represented. As with Soga, Magema Fuze's use of biblical imagery can be read as an attempt to reclaim this Christian humanism and re-insert Africans into the progressive and assimilationist trajectory the missionaries had initially mapped them onto (See Appiah, 1992: 16; Attwell, 1997: 569-570; la Hausse, 2000: 102).

What then are we to make of this peculiar blend of modernism, providentialism and proto-Zulu nationalism in Fuze's writings? It may be instructive to follow David Attwell's lead. His study of

Tiyo Soga concludes with an apt summary of the kinds of questions one should ask when thinking about nationalism in a colonial or post-colonial context. He opines,

**On a larger historical canvas, Soga's life raises the question of whether nationalism can ever break the historical link between the civilizing mission and racism, between reason and instrumentalism, between enlightenment and oppression. (1997: 576)**

Writing about Magema Fuze's nationalism should therefore function as an investigation of how Fuze dealt with the paradox that the nationalism and modernism he was advocating were also implicated in the processes of colonisation and imperial domination. As a Zulu-speaking *kholwa*, the nationalist question would test Magema Fuze and his contemporaries' attachment to the civil rights and progress their mission education had inculcated in them. More importantly, the development of an African nationalist discourse and consciousness among the Zulu-speaking elite of Natal coincided with the ascendancy of a parochial and ethnic Zulu nationalism, producing an untenable commitment to both provincial and national concerns. This is why it is not helpful to simply define Fuze as exclusively an African, or a black or a Zulu nationalist. What makes Magema Fuze's ideas on unity, African identity, colonialism etc. noteworthy is that they emanate from these competing focal points of nationalism which like other *amakhholwa* he was struggling to reconcile.

### **The third moment of articulation: the St. Helena Years**

#### ***Background to the St Helena years***

After their sentences were handed down in early 1889, the Zulu princes, Ndabuko kaMpande, Shingana kaMpande and the unrecognised king Dinuzulu, were initially incarcerated at a prison in Eshowe (Guy, 2001: 292-294). It was while they were thus detained that Harriette Colenso was granted permission to teach them to read; and when she had to leave Eshowe to attend to her sick mother in Natal, Magema Fuze became their teacher (Guy, 2001: 304). When the three princes were hurriedly transported to St. Helena in 1890, Harriette was en route to England and Fuze did not travel with them. Instead, the colonial government appointed its own guardian, W. Saunders and interpreter, Anthony Daniels. The colonial officials refused to allow Magema Fuze to serve the princes as their interpreter (Guy, 2001: 309, 334). It was only in 1896, at the request of Dinuzulu that Fuze travelled to St. Helena to work as a tutor and interpreter for him and his uncles (Fuze, 1979: 133). That said, Fuze did not in his later recollections dwell on these negative experiences of St. Helena; although on his return to Natal he did quarrel with Dinuzulu and Harriette Colenso over his pay for services rendered (Fuze, 1979: 137-138).

### *The St Helena years as a moment of articulation*

The objective of examining how Magama Fuze's St. Helena experience influenced his Pan-Africanism is to demonstrate, through a re-reading of his self-proclaimed aims and objectives, how as a *kholwa* intellectual he construed his 'discovery' of Africa. Of course this involves acknowledging his indebtedness to Colenso's history of Natal and Zululand and other colonial ethnographies and scholarly works; but the main thrust of the argument is that indebtedness does not imply gullibility. In terms of the development of Fuze's speculative thesis on 'the black people and whence they came', the St. Helena years solidified his pan-Africanism. This is because while on the island, Fuze not only met men and women from other parts of Africa and the diaspora, but he was also in constant correspondence with Alice Werner,<sup>131</sup> with whom he exchanged information about the customs of other Nguni peoples of southern Africa. The following section will therefore examine the St. Helena years as the moment in which Fuze articulated and 'discovered' the interconnectedness of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora. Both the experience of living in exile and his contact with other Africans underpinned this moment. Also, what is noteworthy about this emergence of pan-Africanist thinking in Fuze is that it was only in retrospect that he fully articulated and consolidated his views. Thus, his statements about Africa and African identity in *Ilanga* and *Abantu Abamnyama* properly represent the moment in which his views were consolidated.

### *Living in exile*

At a practical level, living with 'incarcerated' individuals meant that one was suspicious by association. Thus, the first inconvenience that Fuze had to acclimatise to was the fact that all his letters were detained, opened and read. On discovering this, Fuze wrote a letter of complaint, addressed to the Governor of St. Helena and copied to Sir Marshal Clarke, Resident Commissioner in Zululand. His protest at this invasion of privacy demonstrates the centrality of letter writing in the relationships between *Ekukhanyeni*'s affiliates and their supporters. Thus, Fuze decried the practice of opening letters on the grounds that:

...I may also inform Y. E. [Your Excellency?] that this is the first time I ever [?] rec<sup>d</sup> [received?] this bad treatment. The English Gov<sup>t</sup> is Christian one, & is always expected to treat everyone with justice. And I thought this was forbidden by all English law – to explore one's heart [?] without proper reason except when one was found dead suddenly. And for this cause, I pray Y.E. to advise me what to do to escape this trouble. I am, Sir, Y.E. [?] Magama Magwaza. (Fuze (Magwaza), 1896c)

The poignancy of Fuze's letter was his observation that reading another's letter was to 'explore one's heart without proper reason'. This sense that the government was not only spying but that it was

delving into his inner thoughts, underscored the depth of feeling that he, and possibly other *Ekukhanyeni* members, attached to writing. Moreover, his sincere shock that such could be done by an 'English Government' is proof of his disappointed admiration for the Victorian ethos he so consistently asserted.

### *Encountering the African diaspora*

Magama Fuze, like many of his *kholwa* contemporaries and predecessors underwent a process of 'discovering' the continent and their place in it. As an intellectual and cultural journey, this did involve borrowing the scholarly tools and methods of travel writers, colonial historians and missionary scholars, which is why it is so easy to accuse *kholwa* writing of lacking the appropriate 'polemics of history' or a 'vernacular imprint'. As a judgement on the value and importance of *kholwa* writing this kind of accusation decontextualises this body of written works by unfairly expecting *kholwa* writers to express ideas about colonialism that were simply not available to them at the time. Instead, when Fuze wrote about his experiences of St. Helena, for his *Ilanga lase Natal* readers, he emphasised his friendships with other people of African descent whom he met there, and he re-asserted his gratitude that Queen Victoria had abolished the slave trade, which had dispersed African peoples. He told his readers:

**Inxa ngikhumbula aoMbhilimbhili labo ngitshaywa luvalo namhlanje, ngibone ukuti kako owake wabakona onjengoKwini Victoria njeya! Owabe esebuzela<sup>132</sup> [sic] uNkulunkulu ngendhlela epeleleyo yobuKristu, engumvikeli wazo zonke izizwe ezinjani nezinjani ezipansi kwelanga!! Ngiti mina uyakuhlala ebongwa emhlabeni na izizukulwana eziyakuvela emva kwetu. (Fuze, 1915c: 5)**

**When I remember Mbilimbili and others I tremble with fear, because I realise that there has never been one like Queen Victoria! She worked for God in the fullest Christian sense, as the protector of all sorts of nations existing under the sun!! I say that she will continue to be praised [thanked] worldwide even by the generations who will come after us.**

The correspondence between Fuze and Alice Werner provides further evidence that his ideas about the African diaspora were developed while he was living on St. Helena. Fuze and Werner seemed to have been comfortable in writing to each other in the Zulu language and English because the first letter in the collection is in *isiZulu* but the rest are in English. Also, the confidences shared between the two warranted Fuze's indignation at his letters being opened and the officials 'exploring his heart'.

Addressing her as 'Nkosazana', Fuze related to her how he had been sharing her stories with Dinuzulu's uncles:

**Omunye umNtwana wenkosi yakwaZulu, uNdabuko, uzwile kimi ngimxoxela indaba ngawe yaleso'sizwe esimnyama owauhlezi pakati kwaso, nangezincwadi lezo owauzinge ungitsheleka zona ukuba ngifunde ngesikati leso engangigula ngaso kithi Ekukanyeni...**

**Ngimlandisile futi ukuti abanye bakulezo'zizwe bakuluma ngolimi lwakwaZulu impela, ngitsho labo ababiza uNkulunkulu ngokuthi 'Mulungu', nabanye abalulimi lwabo lusondele kwolwetu. (Fuze (Magwaza), 1896b)**

**One of the other princes ['children'] of the Zulu king, uNdabuko, has heard me talk about you and the story of that black nation that you lived amongst, and about the books you used to lend me to read while I was sick back home at *Ekukhanyeni*...I told him that some of these people from those nations speak the language of the Zulu people truly, I mean those that call God ['uNkulunkulu'] 'Mulungu', and all those whose language is close to ours.**

Identifying shared linguistic roots from Werner's ethnographic work, was just one feature of the conversation between Fuze and her. This excerpt from his letter also indicates that she had loaned him some books when they first met back in Natal, and although one does not know what these books were, it is clear that Fuze had read beyond what was available at Bishopstowe and in the colony. The theory that the word 'Mulungu' was used across southern Africa, in various forms, to designate 'God' was also presented by Colenso in his 1860 *First Steps in Zulu: Being an Elementary Grammar of the Zulu Language* and he attributed it to Wilhelm Bleek, his early philological associate (Colenso, 1904 [1859]: 2). It may well be that even before his contact with Werner, Fuze was familiar with philological theories about 'Bantu' languages. However, in relating his exchanges with Werner to his *Ilanga lase Natal* readers, Fuze emphasised his own interpretation of these similarities, namely that: 'nginxanele ukunihlazululela ukuti sonke tina'ndhlu emnyama sibanye sonke' / 'I am keen to clarify for you that all of us of the 'black house' are one' (Fuze, 1915c: 2). As if to demonstrate this unity to his readers he told them about the arrival of a black regiment, presumably British, on St. Helena in 1897 and how the black soldiers had wanted to see Dinuzulu.<sup>133</sup> There is no doubt therefore that the St. Helena years concretised Fuze's pan-Africanist convictions by giving him more reasons and proof of the unity of the 'black house'. Moreover, as the following argument will demonstrate, it was while in exile that Fuze began to contemplate the 'origins of the black people' as a historical and not mythological problem. The other effect of the St. Helena years was therefore that on meeting other people of African descent, Fuze transcended what he saw as the narrow parochialism, and 'foolishness' of local myths and mythology; he expanded the purview of his thinking to include the whole continent and the black diaspora. His sceptical and questioning attitude towards both the biblical and the local myths of origin should therefore be read as an attempt to reconcile his St. Helena experience with his curiosity about the 'origins of the black people'. Magema Fuze's reminiscences about his St. Helena years also hint at the fact that it was there that he conceived and discovered his African identity. His meeting with and

contemplations on the lives of the descendants of slaves reveal a growing and well-considered identification with Africans on the continent and in the diaspora.

### Thematic articulations in Fuze's later writings

#### *The discovery of Africa & the affirmation of Africanist knowledge*

If one accepts the above interpretation of Fuze's encounter with the African diaspora then it is possible to argue that the book, *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* should be read as part of this 'discovery' of an African identity. Yet, this claim that Fuze 'discovered' Africa and an African identity complicates the interpretation of the text by suggesting that 'Africa' and 'the black people' did not exist before Fuze, and that like European travel writers and explorers, he serendipitously 'discovered' them. From Fuze's arguments in both *Abantu Abamnyama* and *Ilanga lase Natal* this would seem to be the case since there are hints that he was implicitly engaging with the ideas about the 'origins of the black people' found in the colonial scholarship which preceded him.

If we return to the initial image of *Abantu Abamnyama* as a journey of discovery, it is evident that in arguing against his contemporaries' fixation with foreign books, Fuze was challenging the foundations of the colonial scholarship that had up to that point defined 'Africa' and 'Africanness', 'the Zulu' and 'Zuluness'. If we concur with the definition that 'Africanism' is 'knowledge about Africa' (Mudimbe, 1994: 38), then it is not far-fetched to conclude that Fuze's admonitions form part of his journey of discovery in that he was dismissing 'foreign' books in favour of a self-authored Africanism. Furthermore, Fuze admitted the limits of his own book by describing it as being 'without horns [without effect] in that it treats events without dates' (1979: vii). But, even this acknowledgement concluded with him assessing the contemporary state of knowledge and issuing a challenge to his readers. He wrote,

**Let it be for each to strive according to his lights, and diligently search for the dates of these events, so that in subsequent editions of books published now, they who wish to revise them may by their experience attempt to accomplish much more than we have done today, and so rouse our children from the deep sleep which we have slept for so long, giving the impression that we have been destined for such a state by our grandfathers and great-grandfathers...(1979: vii-viii)**

The notion that the young need to be roused from slumber, and that this awakening requires the publication of appropriate books, indicates that Fuze anticipated the Africanist language and ideas that were an essential ingredient of anti-colonial rhetoric. In comparing Isaka ka Seme's 'The Regeneration



of Africa' speech with Kwame Nkrumah 1962 opening address to an Africanist conference, George argues that in both Nkrumah and Seme's orations:

**[the] metaphor of recuperation after a period of incapacitation implies that Africa has been asleep in discourse, and the awakening is now...beginning. It also suggests that Africanist discourse, and the knowledge it seeks to disseminate, is *contingent* on the colonial encounter; that, in essence the event to which the Africanist project responds is the colonial event. (George, 2003: 77)**

This definition of Africanist discourse serves several purposes in relation to Fuze's statements. Firstly, it generalises Fuze's concern with 'rousing' the youth of his time by demonstrating that this metaphor is common to all Africanist discourse. Secondly, it makes the claim that Africanist discourse is inseparable from the kind of knowledge about 'Africa' it seeks to create and disseminate. And lastly, George's definition proposes a controversial link between Africanist discourse and the colonial encounter. The latter claim, about the link between Africanist discourse and the colonial condition, also answers the criticism that *kholwa* intellectuals were not 'polemical' enough or that they were not sufficiently conscious of their colonial condition. Contrary to Gebhard's view, George defines the political consciousness of the colonised intellectual by investigating the significance of the metaphor of reawakening from a discursive slumber, rather than on the material conditions that underpin and sustain colonialism. One can also extend the meaning of this metaphor by interpreting it as an expression of *kholwa* angst about the 'late' arrival of modernity in African society; the notion that African discourse has been asleep certainly implies dormancy and delay. The urgency in Fuze's statements is therefore about using books and reading to accelerate the pace of modern thought within his Zulu-speaking readership. Specifically, his understanding of how this modernity could be effected demanded a creation of knowledge, stored in books, about the origins of black peoples. *Abantu Abamnyama* was therefore written as a contribution to this store of knowledge, and Fuze's explicit recognition of the limits of his book demonstrates that he understood his Africanist project as unending and open to constant revision.

In contrast to his explicit acceptance that his book was limited because it treated events without dates, there was an implicit limitation of his book, which Fuze did not acknowledge, and that was that in writing his history of 'the black people' he seemingly treated the history of Africans as synonymous with the history of the Nguni peoples of southern Africa. Thus, although he described his book as being about 'the black people', the 'ethnography' sections of *Abantu Abamnyama* mainly consist of the genealogies of various Nguni clans. This obviously invites the question of whether his project was Africanist at all; the narrow focus on the Nguni seems to be ethnocentric rather than

Afrocentric. Although the latter is an obvious shortcoming, it could also simply be an indication of the educational limitations imposed on Africans by colonialism. If one recalls that at least one of the premises of Seme's speech was that Africa's greatness has been underestimated due to the absence of a dedicated historian, then Fuze's failure to write a continental 'history' of African peoples is understandable. Seme had lamented,

**Oh, for that historian who, with the open pen of truth, will bring to Africa's claim the strength of written proof. (Quoted in George, 2003: 76)**

Fuze could not have provided the kind of deliverance that Seme's call demands, yet in speculating about the origins of the Nguni peoples, he was furnishing some written proof by merely asking the question 'where did we come from?' and thereby disturbing his contemporaries' assumptions about the issue of 'origins'. By querying both the traditional and the Christian cosmogonies and myths of origin, Fuze was intimating the central problem of Seme's speech, namely, the misrepresentation and diminution of Africa's contribution to world civilisation.

As if to anticipate the scepticism of his readers concerning the legitimacy and originality of his book, Fuze warned that:

**In as much as there are some of us who like to examine, chapter and verse, the books of other nations, thinking that they contain the truth about the creation of heaven and earth and all else, visible and invisible, begin today to devote yourselves to this book which belongs to you and absorb it thoroughly, chapter and verse, for the sake of your children. Leave the enthusiasm for foreign affairs, and remember the fable of the chameleon and the salamander. (1979: viii)**

Although he does not mention which books had captivated his contemporaries, the references to chapters, verses and 'heaven and earth' suggest that Fuze was subtly warning his contemporaries against a zealous devotion to the bible. This is not surprising since he had issued similar warnings in his *Ilanga lase Natal* articles. However, considering that Fuze himself had read 'the books of other nations', lent to him by Alice Werner, it is just as probable that he was warning his readers against the colonial literature on African history, especially Zulu history and ethnography, that had been steadily developing. The third possible interpretation of Fuze's statement is that he was exaggerating the importance of his own book, by depicting other books as 'foreign' and therefore as not belonging to his readers. Yet, his resort to the tale of the chameleon and salamander suggests that his warnings were more than just a form of self-advertisement. As explained above, the tale of the chameleon and the lizard is used proverbially to warn against tardiness or to express an unswerving commitment to an initial promise or state of affairs. In this instance, Fuze seems to be adding an original meaning to the moral of the fable, by using it to emphasise the need for books written by and for African people. In the

Zulu text, his use of the fable had a clearer meaning since he stated that his readers must stop propagating the stories of others because they have 'lost' their own story about the chameleon and the lizard. He wrote:

**Ake niyeke ukucumisa<sup>134</sup> okwezizwe, ngennxa yokudukelwa eyakini yokutunywa kwoNWABU neNTULO. (1922a: xiv)**

**Stop propagating the things of other nations, because you have lost your own about the errand of the CHAMELEON and the LIZARD. [My translation]**

Although he did not expand on the moral of the chameleon-lizard story, his subsequent sentences on how a flock of sheep can be led astray by a goat, implies that Fuze had reinterpreted the story and was arguing that the fable was really about being duped or misled. His use of the Zulu word 'ukucumisa', which implies an organic multiplication and flourishing, underscored his almost alarmist view that the ideas, customs, habits, 'the things' of other nations were being rapidly spread among his contemporaries to the detriment of the indigenous ones. The logical conclusion for his readers to draw was that his book was intended to cultivate and propagate the indigenous 'truth'. Yet, as suggested above, the manner in which Fuze used the vernacular idiom, to warn and cajole his readers, was not 'traditional' since he was after all writing about books. By arguing that his readers should devote themselves to the *reading* of his book, instead of the foreign ones, Fuze was applying a customary proverb to a modern dilemma, namely, his and his contemporaries' lack of knowledge about the 'origins of the black people'. He was imploring his readers to assist him in the construction of an alternative knowledge concerning 'the truth about the creation of heaven and earth and all else, visible and invisible'. Although this may suggest that Fuze was only challenging biblical or 'foreign' metaphysics, there is in his warning a hint of a secular interest in the foundations of colonial Africanism.

What complicates Fuze's attempt to contribute to this revivalist discourse is that his own description of Nguni history was interlaced with constant references to Colenso's *Izindaba Zas'eNatal*<sup>135</sup> [*Natal Affairs*]. This seems to be an overt deference to the 'foreign' scholarship he was condemning. This is especially relevant since he was, after all, Colenso's protégé. Yet, when one examines these citations it is striking that Fuze treated them as an addendum to his own work; he clearly marked them as separate and in some instances offered his own commentary on the Colenso text. There are therefore no 'hidden' influences or unconscious imitations and the dialogue that he conducted with Colenso is plainly introduced in the following terms:

Now I am going to tell you about matters that I have read in the book written by Sobantu [Bishop Colenso], *Izindaba ZaseNatal [Natal Affairs]* (1856), dealing with early history. (1979: 69)

Namhlanje ngizakunilandisa izindaba engizitata enncwadini ka'Sobantu (IZINDABA ZAS'ENATAL, p. lxxxi.), epete izindaba ezindala. (1922a: 90)

In the Zulu text, Fuze used the word 'namhlanje' which translates as 'today', rather than 'now' as preferred by Lugg. This use suggests that for him his history was a tale told in several episodes and that therefore his borrowing from Colenso was a transient act, a temporary excursion into colonial writing, 'just for today'. Moreover, when one considers that Colenso's book was itself collated and written from the accounts of travel writers and adventurers, and Fuze knew this, his commentary seems to illustrate further the point he was making, namely that a history of 'the black people' needed to be written. In fact, when he reached Colenso's description of the assassination of Shaka by Dingane and his conspirators, Fuze paused to insert a caveat:

If you find some sections in brackets, you must understand that they have been written by me, M.M. Fuze, and not by the white people, for there are some matters that conflict. (1979: 71)

INXA NIBONA AMAZWI ALOTSHWE PAKATI KWAMA-brackets [ ]  
NIBOKUMBULA UKUTI LAWO'MAZWI AKUSIWO AWABELUNGU, NIQONDE  
UKUTI NG'AWAMI LAW. MINA M.M. FUZE. KUKONA EZINYE IZINDABA  
EZINGAQONDENE, EZIPIKISANAYO KWAMANYE AMAZWI (Capitals in the  
original, 1922a: 111)

In writing his own glosses to Colenso's history of Natal and Zululand, Fuze not only revealed his intellectual independence, but he distanced himself from the fraternity of colonial scholars, 'the white people' (See Draper, 1998: 17). By highlighting the conflicts and differences between the history of the Zulus as told by *abelungu* ('the white people') and his own history, Fuze established the authority of his own reading of Zulu history. This departure from colonial historiography was especially important to Fuze's grand project of awakening and reviving the youth because it allowed him to perform the double-act of acknowledging an established body of knowledge while at the same time challenging its appropriateness. This is perhaps what La Capra means when he writes of the 'dismemberment' of a text, that is, when an author chooses to intersperse within her work the writing of others. For La Capra this act can be a deliberate strategy by the author, and it is characterised by, 'the use of montage and quotation through which the text is laced or even strewn with parts of other texts – both written texts and elements of social discourse' (1983: 55). Whether Fuze dismembered his text as a deliberate strategy aimed at illustrating the limits of colonial histories, or whether he used Colenso's text to compensate for the poverty of his knowledge, is difficult to determine. What is clear is that he did not conceal this borrowing from his readers. Moreover, since Colenso later revised his version of the

history of African people, specifically the Zulu, Fuze's attribution of the content of the work to a generic 'the white people' seems to exonerate Colenso from the authorship of the book.<sup>136</sup> It could also be that Colenso's *Izindaba Zas'eNatal* was the only reference work on southern African history that Fuze owned; it is unlikely that he had an extensive library.

As an example of the 'discovery' of Africa by a *kholwa* intellectual, Magama Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* is not a history textbook; it could not have aspired to be such. Rather, it is a daring and speculative attempt to compensate for the lack of an indigenous and written historical tradition. When Fuze was writing there was no voluminous body of Africanist thought or history; his only reference point was Colenso's *Izindaba zas'eNatal*. Yet, even while he blatantly borrowed from Colenso, and thereby assented to the colonial histories cited by Colenso, Magama Fuze contributed his own interpretations and 'corrections' to this colonial history. The presence of these citations also further highlights the incompleteness of Fuze's project; he openly admitted to narrating a history without dates. The challenge he issued to his readers was that they should search for the details themselves. However limited and incomplete Fuze's historical account of 'the black people and whence they came' is it is still significant because it raises important questions about how Africa was discovered by *kholwa* intellectuals. This discovery is important precisely because on the surface of it, it seems to be an imitation of the travel writer and missionary's discovery. As an extension of Robert Thornton's arguments about the ethnographer's discovery of Africa, it is possible to argue that like the travel writer and missionary scholar, Fuze's discovery of Africa was 'a discovery for paper, for text' (1988: 15). From his pleas to his contemporaries to assist him in writing his book, one can surmise that his main concern was with the *writing* of a book, any book about 'the black people'. And, in this regard he represents what Thornton means when he argues that,

**...writing itself, the technique and practice, is really a process of discovery, not merely a means for organizing material which is given. (1988: 15)**

The content of Magama Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* is therefore not as important as the act he is committing. This implies that his inaccuracies, his 'faults of style' and his wild speculations can be understood as the products of an intellect that is experiencing and experimenting with the power of the written word.

### *The 'Black People' and their Origins*

As mentioned, Fuze introduced his book with clear statements about the nature of his mission and how he expected his readers to treat the book. He explicitly expressed the view that the oral traditions

concerning 'the black people' were no longer a sufficient answer to the question 'where did we come from?' (1979: iv). The fact that Fuze mentioned that he had long begun asking his kinsmen these questions and that they continually gave him the answer that the Ngcobo had sprung from the 'reed beds' further demonstrates his dissatisfaction with the state of knowledge about the origins of 'the black people'. It is this search for alternative answers to the question 'where did we come from?' that marks Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* as an intellectual journey of discovery.

Considering the fact that Fuze recounted, to the readers of *Ilanga*, his experiences of St. Helena in the context of clarifying his theories about the origins of black people, then it becomes apparent that for him the diasporic experience of slavery and dispersal was inseparable from issues of genealogy and origins. The title of this series of articles 'Sapumapi Tina? Ukuhlazulula Uhlanga', hints at Fuze's objectives in writing about his St. Helena experience. Loosely translated the title is 'Where Did We Originate? A Clarification of Ancestry/Genealogy'; the operative word is 'uhlanga'. The latter is significant because it conjures up myths about the primordial origins<sup>137</sup> of the whole African 'race' while also simply meaning one's family genealogy. The fact that the article presents Fuze's theory about the migrations of black people on the African continent, suggests that he had the former meaning of 'uhlanga' in mind. He hypothesized about the migrations of black people around the Zambezi River and re-interpreted the Zulu folktale about *iSiququmadevu* by arguing that stories about this fabled monster are oral-tradition narratives about slave ships. Thus re-interpreted the oral traditions about the primordial origins of clans and the children-devouring monster become the rationale for Fuze's revision of southern African history and explain his gratitude for the abolition of the slave trade. However, Fuze's references to the slave trade and the dispersal of African peoples are more than just a demonstration of the magnanimity of the English Queen. His pan-Africanist vision and his understanding of the African diaspora are based on his encounters with St. Helenians of African descent. He narrates to his readers the story of how Mbilimbili and the others ended up on the island:

**I must tell you about the people from the Congo whom I saw at St. Helena at the time the Zulu princes were imprisoned there. I saw them in 1896-7, they who were the same as those who were captured on the Congo river in former times, Cummings, Williams, George, together with Mbilimbili (I have forgotten the name by which the Europeans called him). These four men were captured on the Congo river as they were bathing, when they were small children....after they were captured they were rescued from the white men who had seized them by the ships of the Queen, and taken to the island of St Helena by her orders. They remained there until they grew up into men... This Mbilimbili was in the habit of telling me stories about Nqaba kaMbekwane Khumalo, the chief of his people, who was a man of much wisdom like Chakijana Bogcololo. (1979: 8)**

As the editor points out, '*Chakijana Bogcololo*' is the name of a wise or cunning mythological figure in Zulu folklore (See also Fuze, 1979: 154n2; Doke, 1958: 108). The function of linking the myths and folktales that Fuze heard from St. Helenians with those he knew from Zulu traditions is to endorse his notion of a shared ancestry and continental migrations. It should also be remembered that in writing about his correspondence with Alice Werner, Fuze emphasised, to his *Ilanga* readers his own interpretation of these similarities, namely that these proved that 'tina'ndhlu emnyama sibanye sonke' / 'all of us of the 'black house' are one' (Fuze, 1915c: 2). The very familiarity of the term '-ndhlu' / 'house', as it is often used to speak about a family or the descendants of patriarch, suggests that Fuze attempted to transmit to his readers the sense of unity and shared culture that he had observed while on the island. The fact that he could also cite the work of Werner strengthened his argument. In both the *Ilanga* serials and in *The Black People* Fuze presented more radical conclusions and attributed them to these experiences. He, for example, questioned whether all of humanity emerged from the same source. He stated:

...when we began to be roused by foreign peoples, we then thought that we had sprung from the same source as they, ceasing to observe our own ways and respectful customs, and grasping those of the foreigners and then finding that we had been abandoned by the One above from whom we originated. I now warn you to abandon all this pretence because it is of no benefit whatever. Adhere strictly to your own. It does not mean to say that because you see civilised people and wish to become like them, that you should discard your own which is good. (1979: viii)

Fuze's assertion seems to imply that he favoured a polygenetic explanation of the diversity in the human species. This would mean that he was not only challenging the biblical myth of origins, but also the African oral traditions, because as he argued the 'uhlanga' (reed bed) myth was an insufficient explanation for how the black people had reached southern Africa. Yet, his reasons for adopting such a controversial stance seem to be cultural rather than racial or genetic. Moreover, to his *Ilanga* readers he emphasised the speculative nature of his argument by requesting that his readers should assist him in his quest:

Kulendaba engiyixoxayo, ngingajabula inxa bengati bonke abafunda amazwi ami bawafunde ngesineke. Ayeke umuntu ukuba ati engawafundisisanga eb'es'epangisa ngokuti uyabhala uyangibuza... Ngingxusa kini nonke ukuba nani keningicabangise kahle indhlela yetu esase sati siba lapa nje sabe sihambe ngayo. Bhekani kambe nani, kulukuni nakweyami inhliziyo, ukuba ngihle ngiti ngingedwana zwi, ngihle ngikhulume indaba enkulu kangaka engabonanga ikulunywe naobaba abangifundisileyo – abafundisi kambe – ebona bengitshenise nebala lika a,b,c ... Ngicela kini nonke ukuba niqapele kahle ningipendule senibhekisisile, ukuti, "Sapumapi tina silapa njena?" (Fuze, 1916c: 3)

In this story [tale] that I am telling, I would be happy if all those who read my words, read them with care [patience]. A person must not, if he has not properly read them, rush to write and ask me questions...I am pleading with you all to think with me about the path that we travelled to bring us here. Look for yourselves, it is difficult for my

**heart, that I should be alone in discussing such a weighty matter that was not even discussed by the fathers who taught me – I mean the missionaries – who showed me the colour of a, b, c...I am asking all of you to be vigilant and respond only when you have examined closely, this, “Where did we come from now that we are here?”**

This appeal to his readers to contribute to his speculations appears in a rather oddly titled article: the title ‘Umhlaba Ungo kaJehova’ / ‘The Earth/World is Jehovah’s’ is not one of the usual titles he used for his series on origins, namely ‘Sapumapi Tina?’ This suggests that he wrote the piece specially, as an appeal to his readers. It is only the closing statement that connects this article to the thesis on the origins of the black people. He signed it, ‘Yimi otanda abakubo, / Ofisa ukwazi uhlanga lwakubo. / M.M. Fuze’<sup>138</sup> / ‘It is I who loves his people / And wishes to know his ancestry. / M.M Fuze’ (1916c: 3). Thus, it is evident that although Fuze’s theory that all of humanity did not originate from the same source seems at first sight controversial and radical, it is in fact speculative and concerned with cultural rather than evolutionary origins. Such openness to conjectural thinking and demystification, even to the point of challenging the biblical genesis story, derived from Fuze’s St. Helena experience and his correspondence with Alice Werner (not to mention the teachings of his mentor, Colenso). What is significant is that he did not reject the biblical narrative and turn to the purely oral mythology: his theory was a combination of various strands of Christian, indigenous and even Darwinian or scientific theories. An example of such an admixture of various theories is his statement that:

**...Why should the story not be true that the first person to be created was a baboon, and that in the course of time the baboons developed into humans such as us? Afterwards people dispersed over the face of the earth. There is an account that states that the members of the Thusi clan are baboons, that becoming weary of cultivating crops, they went to live in the veld and inserted their hoe handles into their rumps, where they grew into tails...No one can be positive on the subject of the first man and the first woman, of whom it is said she was created out of the rib of the man. Such talk completely confounds us! (1979: 11)**

Magama Fuze’s aim of discovering the origins of ‘the black people’ is undeniably elusive and therefore never realised. Due to his lack of scholarly knowledge about Africa and its peoples, Fuze’s statements on the origins of ‘the black people’ are speculative and naïve. He confidently told his readers that:

**I feel strongly that our people should know that we did not originate here in Southern Africa. (1979: iv)**

He then developed his claim that the peoples of southern Africa originated at the Horn of Africa, by arguing that:

**It would be well for you all to know that many of our tribes were left behind by us at the Horn of Africa (Suez Canal). There are very many tribes there. From the extent and large size of Africa, I can safely assert that those of our people still living there are more enlightened than we are here. They wear clothes that they manufacture themselves. (1979: v)**



The argument that southern Africa's peoples were not originally from the south, was not new. For reasons independent of Fuze's arguments, one version of the theory was used in settler histories to justify European colonisation, the so-called 'vacant land' thesis. However, Fuze's claims are more akin to the Semitic myth which was popularised by travel writers and early ethnographers. The idea that the presence of similar cultural practices and social customs in Nguni and Semitic societies meant that the two shared a common ancestry was popular in both nineteenth-century travel writing and early twentieth-century ethnography. Writing of his stay among the Zulu in the 1830s, the missionary Allen Gardiner argued that the similarities between Zulu and Hebraic customs were proof of the orthodox view that true religion had been revealed to Adam and that this truth and revelation had degenerated with time; the Zulu's incoherent notion of god was in his view a symbol of the degeneration of Adamic monotheism (See Golan, 1994: 48, 58-59; Martin, 1982: 182). Magama Fuze's version of this migratory history of the Nguni people is based on a different set of premises, some of which contradict the biblical foundations of the standard 'Semitic myth'. In this assessment of the 'Semitic myth', Fuze argued:

**There are some of our people who are in the habit of reading the scriptures of the Hebrews and who have come to the conclusion that we black people came from the people of Israel...All this is mere conjecture, for it is not possible for anyone to say definitely where we came from. Yet the migrations of the black people from the curve of the sea (Suez Canal) indicate to us that they were constantly moving forward, and also that there was something pursuing them from behind wanting to overtake them. (1979: 9-10)**

The fact that Fuze rejected the biblical foundations of the Semitic myth reveals that he was aware of its prevalence and attractiveness to the more literally-minded readers of the bible. By rejecting it as mere 'conjecture', Fuze is able to then refer to other possible origins of 'the black people' while at the same time arguing that all these theories are speculative and cannot be proved. In justifying his own theory about the origins of African peoples, Fuze adopted neither biblical creationism nor evolutionary theory; instead he used the evidence of oral traditions to argue that:

**It is not known where the people had originally come from when they left the Horn of Africa (Suez Canal), but some suggest that it was Egypt. None of our predecessors tell us; they did not tell us anything about where we originated. Only one thing they do narrate, and that is that there were great rivers in the country where they formerly lived, which could only be crossed by boats. There, when children went to bathe, there appeared a monster known as *Siququmadevu* [shaggy-haired monster]. (1979: 6-7)**

The mention of this monster, the *iSiququmadevu* is purposive, Fuze then argued that the story is no fantasy or folklore, but that it referred to the slave ships that kidnapped black children and sold them

into slavery (1979: 7). It is in this argument that one finds the rationale of Fuze's theory about the origins of 'the black people'. He explained:

**It is due to this that so many of our people now fill America...I will not weary myself by telling you about the many of our people now in America, amounting to hundreds and thousands today, who were transported by *Siququmadevu* and bartered and sold and turned into slaves of the white people. (1979: 8)**

It is now clear that when Fuze writes of 'the black people' ('*abantu abamnyama*') he is not just referring to the Nguni peoples of southern Africa, but to the black diaspora. The fact that he identified the trans-Atlantic slave trade as the main cause of the scattering of Africans shows that Magema Fuze's understanding of the problem of origins was not ethnocentric but Afrocentric. His discovery of 'Africa' and the 'Africans' was therefore guided not by a desire to prove the truth of the biblical or the evolutionary story, but to argue for the pan-Africanism of the category '*abantu abamnyama*' ('the black people') (See Draper, 1998: 21).

The thesis that the black people of southern Africa had originated in the north was also presented to Fuze's *Ilanga lase Natal* readers. Paradoxically, in these articles Fuze seems to have argued in favour of the theory that the Nguni were the descendants of the dispersed tribes of Israel. In the November 5, 1915 article 'Sapumapi Tina? Ukuhlazulula Uhlanga', Fuze affirmed that 'the black people' originated from the 'north' ('*eNyakato*') and that as argued in his other articles the travels of the Nguni people are joined to the travels of the tribes of Israel. The original Zulu text reads:

**...uyakubona kube so'bala ukuti ukuhamba kwakiti kuhlangene kunye nokuhamba kwabantwana abakwa Israel. (1915b: 2)**

**...you can see that it becomes plain that our travels are joined to the travels of the children of Israel.**

The incongruity between his argument in *Ilanga* and the book *Abantu Abamnyama* is partly a consequence of the unresolved chronology of which came first the book or the articles. If one assumes that the book was first, then is possible to argue that when he wrote *Abantu Abamnyama* he was sceptical of the idea, but that by the time that he wrote the *Ilanga* serials he was more receptive to the 'Semitic' theory of the origins of 'the black people'. This shift in favour of the myth needs to be qualified and explored because the responses he wrote to some of his readers' remarks suggest that he subscribed to a polygenetic theory of human origins and not to the biblical narrative of the dispersal of the twelve tribes. In a strongly worded reply to a Mr. Joshua Caluza who wrote to *Ilanga* arguing that he believed in the story of '*uMvelinqangi*' who originated in the reeds. Fuze replied:

**Uyababaza ke lapo uMr. Caluza, uti ngizifanisela nomlungu. Mina ke namuhla ngicela kuye owakwetu lona ukuba angitshene ukuti kanti bangaki abantu abadabuka ohlangeni mandulo? Babe bangaki abamnyama beba ngaki futi abamhlophe, nabampofu**

**nabansundu na? Ngicela futi kuye owakwa Caluza ukuba ake angitshene ukuti, uzwe ngobani yena ukuti abakwa Israel laba babe abelungu na? Badalelwe kuyipi indawo nakulipi izwe bona abantu laba? Abadalelwanga yini, kanti, ensimini yase Eden, ezweni lase Asia na? (Fuze, 1915a: 3)**

**Mr. Caluza expresses astonishment, he says I'm likening myself to a white person. Today I'm asking my fellow kinsman to tell me how many people originated from the reeds in those ancient times? How many were black and how many were white, tan-coloured, brown? I also ask the son of Caluza to tell me where he heard that the Israelites were white people? From which place and from what country did these people originate? Were they not created in the garden of Eden, in the land of Asia?**

If read together with his statements in *Abantu Abamnyama*, Fuze's theory about the origins of the Israelites suggests that he thought that whereas they originated in Asia, the black people had originated in Egypt and that at some point their paths crossed. The fact that some of his readers misunderstood his theories perhaps indicates their subtlety. Mr. Caluza's assumption that the Israelites were white again demonstrates that Fuze was often confronted by readers who were reading the bible literally and accepting, or in the case of Mr. Caluza, rejecting the genesis story purely on the grounds of belief or unbelief. Even while responding to these astonished readers, Fuze retained his vision of proving, through an exposition of 'origins', the pan-African identity of all black people. Thus, in the subsequent December 17 edition of the paper, his 'Sapumapi Tina' article described the arrival of a black regiment on the island of St. Helena and as mentioned he told his readers that he was anxious to demonstrate that 'all of us of the 'black house' are one'.

### *Intimations of Pan-Africanism*

When considered as a 'history' text, *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* presents the obvious problem of whether and in what sense, if any, its author merely by virtue of attempting to write a history of Zulu affairs and of 'the black people', should be regarded as a historian. By conventional standards Fuze was at best an amateur: despite all the explicit references to colonial histories, he is as described in the Introduction, categorised as an 'amateur historian' by Christopher Saunders.

Moreover, while Magema Fuze was adept at using oral traditions to substantiate his claims or challenge those of others, he was not a traditional narrator of oral traditions; instead he was knowingly or unknowingly usurping the authority of the oral tradition. The important issue is thus not so much whether Fuze deserves the title of 'historian'; it is rather whether his literary adroitness and his pastiche of competing and contradictory discourses were unique to him and his version of history or whether they were traits he shared with other *kholwa* writers. In his article on Tiyo Soga, South Africa's first black missionary, Attwell describes Soga as representing a 'transformative paradox' because 'Soga's nationalism involves both a claim to participate in universal history and an affirmation of his

Africanness' (1997: 565). Magama Fuze made a similar claim when he urged his contemporaries to read his book because it contained their history, written for them and therefore more valuable than the 'foreign' books in circulation. Again, it should be emphasised that in his writing Fuze did not specifically draw a distinction between the Zulu people, as a distinct group with its own history, and *abanta abamnyama* / 'the black people' as a continental and diasporic identity. As a consequence some of his statements about Zulu history and affairs are intermingled with his speculations about the origins of black people in general. The overall effect of this type of argument is that by inserting 'the black people' into a universal historical trajectory, while asserting their unique contribution to history and culture Fuze, like Soga, was caught up in the 'transformative paradox' of placing African histories on a world stage, while simultaneously reaffirming the cultural integrity and distinctive historical trajectory of 'the black people'. Soga's transformative moment occurred, when his would-be biographer John Aitken Chalmers published an article in 1865 titled 'What is the Destiny of the Kaffir Race?' in which he argued in Darwinian terms that Africans were destined for extinction (1997: 567-568). Soga's reply, under the pseudonym 'Defensor', challenged Chalmers' reading of African history by enumerating examples that illustrated the vitality of Africa. He wrote:

**Africa was God given to the race of Ham. I find the Negro from the days of the old Assyrians downwards, keeping his "individuality" and his "distinctiveness," amid the wreck of empires, and the revolution of ages. I find him keeping his place among the nations, and keeping his home and country...The fact that the dark races of this vast continent, amid intestine wars and revolutions, and notwithstanding external spoliation, have remained "unextinct," have retained their individuality, has baffled historians, and challenges the author of the doom of the Kaffir race in a satisfactory explanation. (Quoted in Attwell, 1997: 568-569)**

Soga's nationalism, and Pan-Africanism, is therefore encapsulated in his argument that Africa is historically the home of the 'race of Ham' and his supposition of a unique individuality or Africanness. Magama Fuze presented a similar argument when he wrote about the *iSiququmadevu*, the monster that transported African children into slavery in the Americas. Moreover, like Magama Fuze, Soga defined the 'African' in diasporic terms by pointing to the hopes of the 'Negro in the present struggle in America' (Quoted in Attwell, 1997: 569). Based on these similarities it is possible to argue that Soga and Fuze shared a similar view on the place of Africa in world history. This Afrocentricism is however not unproblematic. This is because the basic assumption of both writers was that Africa was also part of the linear and progressive historical trajectory associated with enlightenment ideas. The difficulty is that both Soga and Fuze came from cultures and societies that possessed oral traditions that were not based on this assumption of linear progression. As a result, their writing on history and progress reveals

a tension between the oral traditions of the author's community and the literary and historicist traditions of Western history. To bring about a congruity between the familiar oral tradition and the universalist and progressive historiography, Magama Fuze adopted the strategy of recreating the indigenous past in modern terms by amongst other things refining the fables of the oral traditions and giving them new meanings. This same strategy is adopted in his articulation of African nationalist views.

If one assumes that Fuze's admiration and veneration of Zulu governance formed the foundations of his proto-Zulu nationalism and that his experiences and accounts of his time in St. Helena were the foundations of his Pan-Africanist thinking, then it remains an open question as to whether he was aware of or participated in the politics of the emergent African nationalism that culminated in the establishment of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) in 1912. This is especially important since, as la Hausse (2000: 14-15) argues, the emergence of a nationalist intelligentsia in Natal coincided with the emergence of Zulu ethnic consciousness. In the case of Fuze it seems that his notion of black nationalism was inseparable from and made explicit his definition of 'the black people', while at the same time giving expression to the *amakholwa*'s collective attempts to construct a modern identity as black people. As stated Magama Fuze's definition of the category 'the black people' encompassed the diaspora and was based on the basic premise that the slave trade may have dispersed Africa's peoples but it had not erased their ties to the African continent. As will be argued below this aspect of Fuze's thinking links him to the broader debate on black Atlanticism as a form of counter-modernity or counter-enlightenment. For the moment, our concern is with the fact that as part of his and other *kholwa*'s objective of constructing a modernist and historical discourse Fuze and his peers revisited the Zulu past and sifted it for meaningful answers to their colonial and subjugated condition and for material with which to construct an imagined nation. One way of recovering this past was through the re-appropriation of traditional symbols and rituals. Thus, in a letter to the editor of *Ilanga* titled 'Ukuhlangana ku Amandhla' / 'Unity is Power', Fuze called for the unification of black people across the provinces of South Africa, in the same manner that traditional travellers used to contribute to an '*isivivane*'<sup>139</sup> / 'a stone cairn'; he suggested that each person contribute a pound a year towards a collective fund. His argument was that this unity among black people would demonstrate to the 'newly arrived' nations that they too are 'a people'. He stated:

**Po, Mheli kunani, ngiyacela ukuba iti indaba enjengalena ike ivezwe pakati kwezwe lapa kusuke kuhlangenwe kona na? Soza sibe abantu nini tina na? Kwoqanjwa loko lapa**

**kubusa yipi inkosi na? Ngiti mina isenzo singahlanganisa izwe lonke lakiti ziti nezizwe lezi zokufika ziqale ukubona ukuti kanti nati singabantu. (1920b: 2)**

**So, Editor what does it matter, I am asking that a matter of this kind be suggested to the nation whenever there is a meeting. When are we going to be a people? Which king would have to be ruling for us to establish this? I am saying that this action would unite the entire nation so that even these newly arrived nations would begin to see that we are also people.**

The vision of unity that Fuze had in mind consisted of exactly the kind of nationhood or nationalism that compared favourably to that of other nations. In other words, his notion of nationalism was based on the assumption that nations are created and replicated, and that this process of creation was based not just on collective action, but also on a collective aspiration towards national cohesion – the process of becoming an ‘*isizwe*’ / ‘a people’. What should be underscored however is that although Fuze’s use of a traditional past to construct a modernist black identity and consciousness may seem to suggest that there was consensus among the *amakholwa* about the content and relevance of this past, there in fact wasn’t. In comparing Petros Lamula’s *UZulukaMalandela* and Magema Fuze’s *Abantu Abamnyama*, la Hausse argues that the manner in which the Zulu past could be appropriated and written into an alternative history was contested (2000: 98-99). Moreover, this dissension was not just between African writers and thinkers, but also between white segregationist and African nationalists (2000: 99). By definition therefore Fuze’s book belongs to the wider debates of the early twentieth century in which the search for a Zulu ‘useable past’ took centre stage (la Hausse, 2000: 100). Yet, by this time Magema Fuze had ‘discovered’, through his experiences on St. Helena, a pan-Africanist, rather than an exclusively Zulu, foundation for his historical and nationalist discourse.

### *Black Atlanticism*

The fact that a historical discourse that merged heroic agency, providential intervention and enlightenment linearity was novel and contradictory did not deter Magema Fuze; his statements seem matter of fact and self-assured. But, how could *kholwa* writers articulate such contradictory historical narratives and not perceive the irony in it? The explanation offered by Attwell is that *kholwa* intellectuals did not subscribe to mainstream enlightenment ideas but that in fact they were part of a counterenlightenment, which in the case of Tiyo Soga meant,

**...incorporation into a global and teleological history, the retention of racial distinctiveness, and adaptability... The position is paradoxical but also transformative, an enlightened mode of counterenlightenment. It is certainly the consequence of Soga’s in-betweenness and of his being in an “agonistic” relationship to power. (1997: 570)**

The two key insights of the above characterisation of Soga is that it gives a new meaning to the mental and cultural struggle of the *kholwa* to be both modern and African, and also their exclusion and distance from the colonial elite and society.

The notion that the *kholwa* literati acted as critics of the enlightenment project is developed in the debates on black Atlanticism and the impact of the diaspora on African and South African political thought. The notion of black Atlantic thought is relevant to an interpretation of Magama Fuze's work because it not only provides one with a theoretical framework for explaining his Pan-Africanism, but it also reveals that his 'discovery' of trans-Atlantic slavery forms part of a general black Atlantic discourse to which he inadvertently contributes. The central issue of black Atlantic discourse seems to be the extent to which Africans living here and in the diaspora could critique modernity in its political manifestation, namely imperialism and in its cultural form, namely the civilising mission. Thus, in reply to Paul Gilroy's thesis that black Atlanticism emerged as 'a distinctive counterculture of modernity...a unique body of reflections on modernity and its discontents' (Quoted in Chrisman, 2000b: 12), Chrisman accuses him of mystifying black Atlanticism by 'presenting modernity as the exclusive object of black Atlantic critique' (2000: 12). Moreover, she argues that Gilroy's neglect of African cultures in favour of an African American focus leads to the conclusion that, 'African-Americans personify the modernity that African intellectuals aspire to' (2000: 13). Her own alternative definition of black Atlanticism is materialist in that she focuses on the material conditions that make a critique of modernity, imperialism and colonialism possible. More importantly, her definition of the discourse emerges from her comparison of Sol Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa* and W.E.B. du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk*. Her more striking argument, however, is on Tiyo Soga's response to Chalmers. Chrisman argues that Soga's statements, on the individuality of the African and his support for the Liberian repatriation scheme, suggest that the political meanings of black Atlanticism do not always correspond to its cultural ones (2000: 14). What she means is that by championing the migration of African-Americans to Liberia, on the grounds that they would transport civilization and Christianity to Africa, while at the same time lauding the vitality of African cultures, Soga was engaging in a double discourse of accepting modernity's cultural demands of assimilation and Christianisation while rejecting its political underside, that is, imperialism. Magama Fuze's notion of the historical agency of the *kholwa* elite is based on the same dual conception of modernity and its discontents since he also understood the role of the *kholwa* as being that of a cultural vanguard that was

being constrained by the vicissitudes of Natal's colonial order. Again, his 1877 visit to Zululand reveals the tug of this duality; on the one hand Fuze is ebullient in enumerating the benefits of education, while also expressing *kholwa* unease at their increasing disenfranchisement within Natal. By the time *Abantu Abamnyama* was published this optimism was on the wane; the *kholwa*'s position as a cultural elite was increasingly insecure and Fuze's foray into historical writing was therefore an attempt to communicate this urgency and insecurity to his readers. His exhortations to his contemporaries to leave off the reading of foreign books should therefore be understood as an expression of this historical consciousness of the critical role of the *kholwa* elite.

Defining this elite as the critics of modernity, serves to resolve their paradoxical role as the champions of modernity's enlightenment, while at the same time rejecting its colonial form. In this regard, Magama Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* is a modernist text because like the genealogies and ancestry he described in the book, Fuze's notion of 'history' as a discourse was based on the assumption that reviving the past was the first step in the construction of an Africanist knowledge. This revival was not based on simply transcribing the oral traditions and putting them on paper. Rather, it was based on the disquieting revelation that the oral past was silent on the issue of how its inheritors should react to modernity. Fuze and other *kholwa* writers were therefore writing in response to this deafening silence, which in the case of Fuze was evidenced in the inability of his elders to answer the question 'where did we come from?' Since the past of 'the black people' did not spell out how they, as a Christianised and educated elite, should deal with the intrusion of modernity, these writers and intellectuals arrogated to themselves the task of speaking for the past. Alternatively, this naïve revisionism of making Zulu history speak to the present can be understood as Fuze's attempt to normalise the *amakhholwa*'s untenable modern condition of colonisation, acculturation and marginality by reconciling modernity with the traditional past through imagining continuity between the traditional past and their modern predicament. So when Fuze enthroned Dingiswayo, riding on a white horse, or when he lauded Shaka's wisdom in co-operating with white people, he turned these traditional figures into modernist and nationalist heroes.

#### **The fourth moment of articulation: from *Ilanga* to *Abantu Abamnyama***

It is perhaps ironic that after a long career as a printer, it was only during the final decades of his life that Magama Fuze came into his own as an author producing substantial pieces of writing and finding a distinctive readership. His earlier writings took the form, at best, of isolated essays which more often



than not amounted to little more than fragments of dispersed writings. Significantly, most of these earlier writings did not relate to any well-defined readership. Thus Fuze's contribution to the *Three Native Accounts* was written on Colenso's instructions and published by the Bishop in 1860 as a language aid and primer rather than as a literary work. In the case of an early manuscript like 'Amazwi Abantu' it is, as we saw, unclear just what its function or purpose was, or whether it was intended for any particular readership at all. When he did publish, as in the case of 'A Visit to King Ketshwayo', which appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* in England in 1878, Fuze's relationship to his distant readers, both geographically and culturally, was exceedingly tenuous. It was only in the final years of his life that Fuze effectively discovered and constituted his own distinct readership when, from 1915 on, he regularly published serialised articles for the newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal* on topics and issues closely related to his eventual book *Abantu Abamnyama*. It was a conspicuous feature of the *Ilanga* articles that they both evoked lively responses from the newspaper's readers and in turn Fuze would offer direct replies, comments and exhortations to his readers. Behind Magama Fuze's exhortations, warnings and pleas one senses that he was familiar with his readers; that he knew their prejudices, their gullibility, their angst, and even their reading habits. He chastised them for reading 'foreign' books, thus indicating that he must have had some idea about what these books were. Moreover, there is an ostensible continuity between his *Ilanga lase Natal* articles and *Abantu Abamnyama*, so that it is likely that the newspaper's readers were already familiar with his ideas by the time the book was published. All this raises intriguing questions about his readership. What, for example, did it mean to the readers of *Ilanga* to read a discourse on the origins and course of Zulu history, conducted in the Zulu-language? But for our purposes it raises even more important questions about Magama Fuze's authorship. If Fuze had at long last discovered and constituted his readership, how did this in turn contribute to the making of Fuze as an author? From his own comments about the history and writing of the book *Abantu Abamnyama*, and from the letters in the newspaper responding to his serialised articles, it is clear that Magama Fuze's readers urged him to write on these topics and that he responded accordingly. However, it is also clear that there was no automatic correspondence of views between him and his readers: although Fuze was evidently writing for other *amakholwa* like himself, the debates that occasionally erupted on the pages of *Ilanga* suggest that they did not necessarily share his views and positions. The development of this dialogic relationship between the writer and his readers constituted the moment of articulation of Fuze as an author in his own right. The objective of this

section is to explore the ways in which this developing relationship between Fuze and his readers took the form of Fuze writing *for* his readers. In previous sections of this chapter we dealt extensively with different aspects of his later writings in so far as these consolidated themes and issues first announced in earlier moments of articulation; now we will be specifically concerned with these later writings as in themselves reflections of Fuze's identity as an author and his articulation of a sense of writing *for* readers.

### ***Background to the Ilanga years and Abantu Abamnyama***

Studies of the writing and reading habits of black South Africans are few and far between; those of the reading habits of nineteenth and early twentieth-century black literati are virtually nonexistent (See Hofmeyr, 2004: 27 & 80). The problem of estimating the extent of a Zulu-speaking literary culture is compounded by the fact that, as Khumalo observes, the activity of reading is ephemeral in that it stops when the reader puts the text down and also leaves no traces (2003: 231). There is however evidence to suggest that there were in fact different kinds of reading publics and techniques. In her study of how John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* traversed the world, especially the imperial and colonial peripheries, Isabel Hofmeyr makes the observation that, although converts tended to imitate their Protestant missionaries by reading Bunyan's text as 'a quasi-magical charm or object capable of precipitating extraordinary transformations in its users and readers', there was also space for an African method of reading which 'drew on the quasi-allegorical methods inherent in the riddle and "folktale"' (2004: 39). Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress* was one of the books translated by John Colenso (Hofmeyr, 2004: 80); and although it is difficult to establish whether the book was physically printed and distributed by the *Ekukhanyeni* press it is likely that like other converts Fuze had read Bunyan and was therefore aware of the 'transformative' power of this specific book. Along with other standard missionary texts *The Pilgrim's Progress* laid the foundation for the creation of vernacular reading publics, so that readers often knew about the existence of specific books even before they had read them. As Hofmeyr demonstrates, Colenso's 1868 foreword to the book suggested that the story of Christian was, through hearsay, already known to prospective readers<sup>140</sup> (2004: 80). In being both an aspiring *kholwa* intellectual and a professional printer for the *Ekukhanyeni* press the young Fuze was therefore intimately acquainted with and closely involved with the creation and expansion of this distinctive missionary reading public.

In his article 'The Class of 1856 and the Politics of Cultural Production(s) in the Emergence of Ekukhanyeni, 1855-1910', Khumalo provides evidence of the impact of the *Ekukhanyeni* press on the reading habits and aspirations of the mission-educated and Zulu-speaking readers. Fuze was a member of 'the Class of 1856', the original group of students sent to Colenso's mission to be educated (Khumalo, 2003: 209). As writers, translators and printers, the group – consisting mainly of Magama Fuze, William Ngidi, and Mubi Nondenisa – worked to establish *isiZulu* as a literary language by contributing to the stabilisation and formalisation of the orthography and also by publishing and popularising Zulu texts. In the lifetime of the *Ekukhanyeni* press, from 1855 to 1910, numerous books were published; the titles included the *Three Native Accounts* and *Izindatshana Zabantu / People's Stories/Histories* (Khumalo, 2003: 227). Some of John Colenso's religious and political tracts were also printed at the *Ekukhanyeni* press (See Guy, 1983: 363-364). What is relevant here is not so much the quantity or literary quality of the works published by the mission's press, but the value attached to the books by those who read them. Khumalo evocatively suggests that,

To most of the mission-educated writers and even those who received education at home through private teachers supported by parents, the book represented more than just a number of written or printed sheets fastened together; the book was an agent of change. For them, the cover of a book seemed to contain or conceal something much more significant than an open bi-weekly newspaper or magazine. And, by owning and reading books, the mission-educated readers would not only read for information but also nourish themselves through this 'more solid food'. (2003: 227)

For Khumalo, the *kholwa*'s demand for books was a consequence and a part of the broader debate on whether Africans should receive an industrial or 'book' education. Reading books, he argues, was associated with a 'proper education' (2003: 222-226). This does not however mean that books were necessarily considered privileged or elitist objects. On the contrary, Khumalo suggests that part of the appeal of both the Zulu and the English versions of the *Three Natives Accounts* was its simple readability, the fact that the dialogic style of the prose allowed readers to dramatize the text and assume the different roles in the book and that the book may have inspired young readers to imitate the writing styles used in the book (2003: 235). Reading was also not a silent and hermetic activity; those who could not read benefited from the fact that texts were often read out loud and in groups<sup>141</sup> (Khumalo, 2003: 231). The other crucial aspect of the influence of the *Ekukhanyeni* corps was the establishment of a communicative network through which its members exchanged ideas with other literate Zulu-speakers; this broad sphere of readers and writers was dubbed an '*ibandla*'. The term *ibandla* has both traditional and modern connotations since it means a gathering or assembly and also a denomination or congregation; the term is also used rhetorically when addressing a group of assembled people (See also

Khumalo, 2003: 209). The *Ekukhanyeni* Class of 1856 were thus instrumental in creating an imagined community of readers, because it was their published texts, from the *Three Natives Accounts* to *The Pilgrim's Progress* which popularised *isiZulu* texts and established the foundation of a Zulu literary culture.

In its hey-day the *Ekukhanyeni* printing press was an epicentre of Zulu literature – the Colenso method of orthography, also known as the conjunctive method, became the standard orthography of writing the Zulu language, and letters requesting Zulu books continued to arrive at *Ekukhanyeni* up until the mission's closure in 1910 (Khumalo, 2003: 234, 241). Nor was *Ekukhanyeni* the only mission-based printing press; the local production and publishing of *isiZulu* texts, especially biblical translations, became a necessary part of the business of conversion since, as Etherington points out, it was impractical to send manuscripts in Zulu to be printed and proofread in Europe (2002: 426). These missionary translations, although published by denominational presses, were traded between missions. Also, these presses did not only print religious tracts: secular texts were also part of the curriculum offered to mission students (Etherington, 2002: 426–427). The reading habits of the mission-educated elite were therefore formed not just by reading religious material, but also by reading the secular books that were part of the mission-school curriculum. The American mission also ventured into the newspaper business by establishing, in 1876, the first Zulu newspaper *Ubaqa* [sic]<sup>142</sup> (Etherington, 2002: 433). All this suggests that, although there are no reliable statistical estimates of the number of Zulu readers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the existence of these missionary presses and their substantial output of books in the Zulu language indicate that there was a healthy readership which demanded and read these books.

If Fuze as a *khohwa* intellectual was nurtured by, and also catered for, this missionary reading public, especially as a member of the *Ekukhanyeni* 'Class of 1856', then it was only through his serialised articles for *Ilanga* that he discovered himself as an author writing for and addressing a distinct readership. A complete and thorough history of the emergence of *Ilanga lase Natal* as a local, black and *isiZulu* newspapers is not possible here.<sup>143</sup> For our purpose it is important to merely note some of the background particulars about the emergence of these newspapers and the different kinds of reading publics they targeted and fostered in general and *Ilanga lase Natal*'s readership in particular. If *Ubaqa* was indeed, as Etherington states the first Zulu newspaper, then it was as he states *Ilanga*'s 'lineal ancestor.' (2002: 433). Although he does not elaborate on who the readers of *Ubaqa* were,

Etherington cites evidence that the newspaper folded because its *kholwa* readers complained that it 'carried too little commercial news' (2002: 433). Les Switzer offers a different account of both the lineage and the readership of black newspapers; on the first score his chronology of the emergence of Zulu newspapers begins with *Inkanyiso yase Natal* as the first newspaper which 'gained a reputation as a protest journal' (1997: 25). On the readership of *Inkanyiso*<sup>144</sup> Switzer argues that although the paper was originally established in 1889 as an Anglican mission product it was not restricted to religious matters and that after it was in 1895 handed over to its African editors it 'operated beyond the confines of mission censorship' (1997: 25). As mentioned in the Introduction, there was at least one other newspaper that was established in the late nineteenth century to cater for a Zulu readership and this was *Ipepa lo Hlanga*<sup>145</sup> which was established in 1898 under the editorship of Mark Radebe, who was also one of the paper's founding members. Again, it is worth repeating that when Fuze briefly worked at St Alban's in the 1890s, he published articles in the mission's newspaper *Inkanyiso* and later also for *Ipepa lo Hlanga* (See Khumalo, 2004: 274-279, 294). Thus, when *Ilanga* was published for the first time in 1903<sup>146</sup> there was an already established readership and although *Ilanga* is often characterised as a bilingual, Zulu-English newspaper, it was in some of its earlier editions also multilingual because it included articles and letters written in *Sesotho*.<sup>147</sup> As a newspaper that was established by an *ikholwa* it is not surprising that in general its content reflected the aspirations and cultural and literary tastes of Natal's *kholwa* elite, which Davis Jr. (1997: 89) sums up in the term 'an improving Christianity' (See also Switzer, 1997: 3 ). The latter term encapsulates more than just the *kholwa*'s Christian identity, Davis Jr.'s argument is that for the *kholwa* Christianity signified the principal identifier of the dominant colonial culture and that therefore their attempt to gain entry into this culture involved not only an adherence to Christianity but also 'utilizing the linguistic and conceptual terrain of the colonizers' (1997: 89). It therefore follows that the newspaper would be exactly such a terrain. It is however also possible to understand the emergence of this 'protest press' in terms of Benedict Anderson's contention that newspapers, as by-products of the explosion of print capitalism, create and sustain 'imagined communities' (1991: 34-35). The *amakholwa* were in this regard an imagined community not only because they shared a common identity as converts but also because they read the same newspapers. As the following discussion will demonstrate, Magama Fuze wrote about his readers and himself as a writer as members of an imagined community. In turn his readers would respond, whether in criticism or praise, and affirm this connection they shared on the pages of the newspaper. Moreover, as will be

shown, those readers who praised Fuze's writing also tended to encourage him to write a book or books. Their words of encouragement therefore function at a conceptual level as a link between *Abantu Abamnyama* and the *Ilanga* articles; the reality was possibly different – the book was not necessarily a direct product of the *Ilanga* years.

### *The Ilanga years as a moment of articulation*

As a reader of and a writer for *Ilanga*, Fuze played a dual role of being both a member of the targeted readership of the paper, and also a writer who addressed this audience. As a moment of articulation, the *Ilanga* years represent not only the beginnings of Fuze's continuous encounter with this readership, but also the development of his authorial identity. In general, Fuze's method of writing was to treat the reader as part of a live community of readers being addressed by a live speaker or writer who was observing the traditional decorum and conventions of public speaking. In one of his 'Isipeto sikaZulu' / 'The End of the Zulu People' articles Fuze ended his historical account with a response to those readers who criticised him for writing as if he was an 'expert' ('isazi') on the origins of the black people. His reply was that, he regretted that he was speaking 'when the sun had already set' / 'law'amazwi sengiwa kuluma kini ilanga selitshonile', and that he was no expert:

**Amanga, madoda, angazi luto nami ngalendaba, ukupela ngikuluma loko nje kwabakiti kupela engikucabanga ngenhliziyo...Inxa konje sihlangu sonke tina bandhla esifunda "Ilanga", singecabangisane size sibone njena lapa umkondo wetu wabe uqamuka ngakona na?... (1916a: 3)**

**Truly men, it is all lies, I know nothing about this matter, I am only expressing [speaking] to my fellow people what I think in my heart...If perhaps we as the congregants who read 'Ilanga' united [met], could we not collectively think until we see where our trail [path] originated from?**

Although it is strange that in an article about the destruction of the Zulu kingdom, Fuze would bring up the issue of 'origins' and his readers' reactions to his theories, it is nonetheless noteworthy that he characterised the readers of *Ilanga* as an 'ibandla' / 'an assembly or congregation'. This image of the readers as an imagined assembly appeared again in *The Black People*. In introducing himself to the readers of *The Black People*, Fuze immediately established a sense of familiarity by telling the readers that,

**...it is fitting that I should tell you from the outset something about the person who relates to you the matters recorded in this book, so that you may know him and understand him, all you readers of this book. For today we are fortunate in the mutual acquaintance we receive through the services of the newspaper [*Ilanga laseNatal*] produced by the son of a chief of the Ngcobo people, the Rev. J.L. Dube, son of James, also son of a chief, which makes observations for us throughout this country of ours in Africa. (1979: i)**

The above statement about the services provided to the readers by *Ilanga* is followed immediately by Fuze's autobiography. By including these biographical references in the prologue to his book, Fuze conveyed to his readers what he presumed was a common identity because he not only cited his customary genealogy, but he also related how he was converted to Christianity. The subsequent account of his childhood prophecy that, 'I am not going to grow up here at home' (1979: ii), gives the prologue an aura of prophetic vision and fulfilment, while at the same time demonstrating his attachment to the mission life he had lived and his close relationship to Colenso. However, what is most striking about Fuze's perception of the relationship he enjoyed with his readers was not so much their shared identity as *amakholwa* or literate Africans, but more specifically their shared readership of *Ilanga lase Natal*, 'the mutual acquaintance we receive through the services of the newspaper'. By defining himself as an author in relation to his readers in these terms, Fuze conjured up nothing less than this 'imagined community' of readers participating in a shared routine around the regular publication of the newspaper. Again, it is notable that his characterisation of the newspaper's significance was not limited to the local Zulu-readers but encompassed the whole of the African continent because he made the claim that *Ilanga* 'makes observations for us throughout this country of ours in Africa'. Thus, for Fuze his personal biography resonated with that of his readers not just because they are presumed to be Christian and literate, but also because they read the same newspaper. As an author Fuze set out to write *for* this particular readership. This section will be concerned with the way in which he articulated this theme of 'writing for readers', first with respect to the readers of his serialised articles in the newspaper *Ilanga*, and secondly with regard to the similar but also different readership of his book *Abantu Abamnyama*.

### **Thematic articulations**

#### *Writing for readers: Fuze in 'dialogue' with the readers of Ilanga*

There is perhaps no other way to gauge the nature of Fuze's conversation with his readers then by referring to his reception by this readership of *Ilanga*. The sense that Fuze was engaged in a dialogue<sup>148</sup> with his readers is confirmed by the fact that they also used the pages of the newspaper to comment on his writings. In a letter titled 'Opendula uFuze' / 'One replying to Fuze', J. M. Mcunu responded specifically to Fuze's controversial speculations on the afterlife by urging him to return to his older theme of Zulu history. He wrote:

**Kadu sakutyela sati yenza izincwadi zezindaba zaba kwaZulu owawu sixoxela zona kuqala sizitenge. Uma uti uzopika ngokupendula bonke abantu maqondana nalendaba yako ipepa lizosuka ligcwale ezako kupela kunga kulunywa ezinye. (1918: 3)**

**We've been constantly telling you to make [write] books about the affairs of the Zulu people you used to tell us about before, so we can buy these. If you insist on responding to all people concerning this matter of yours, the newspaper will fill up with your stories [matters] only and others will not be discussed.**

In this way Mcunu not only expressed his reservations about Fuze's eschatological speculations, but he also reminded him as a writer of his previous thematic concerns, especially the history of the Zulu people. This suggests that Mcunu was a regular reader of not only *Ilanga* but of Fuze's columns. His suggestion that Fuze write a book or books, especially his identification of a collective desire for such books, suggests that he also knew that others had been urging Fuze to do the same.

Mcunu's reminder to Fuze is an example of one of the positive responses his writing elicited from his readers. However, as noted these responses were not always constructive or laudatory, some were critical and dismissive of Fuze's work. What is also noteworthy is that even amongst those readers who supported Fuze, there were divergent opinions about what his writings actually meant and the purpose they served. Some readers chose to identify him with what they presumed to be an *ibandla* / 'congregation' of readers; an idea which Fuze himself had expressed. To these *Ilanga* readers Fuze epitomised an already familiar, if controversial voice of the Zulu-speaking *ibandla*. Although the exact constitution of this assembly of readers is hard to establish, their chagrin and consternation about the lack of 'proper education' and the absence of vernacular books is clearly discernible. To his supporters, Magema Fuze and his histories, represented the older tradition of *ibandla* reading in which books were shared through public and open assemblies. In the case of Fuze and his historical association with Colenso, one need only remember that one of the activities that he engaged in while travelling with Colenso to Zululand in 1859 was to assist him in reading aloud to an assembled audience the narratives that Colenso had printed in *isiZulu* (Colenso, 1982: 86). Likewise, the audience he addressed when writing his articles could be depicted as 'listening' to narratives that Fuze was publicising in an indirect way through the newspaper. Thus, it could be argued that what his readers were expressing when they praised Fuze was an appreciation for the public sphere<sup>149</sup> that his articles and writings were creating for them to express their opinions. Thus, as a commendation of Fuze's histories, A.C. Maseko wrote a letter titled 'Injobo Enhle Etungelwa Ebandhla'.<sup>150</sup> The title is a Zulu proverb which literally translates as 'the most well-crafted wild-cat tassel is sewn in the assembly'; metaphorically the proverb is used to



suggest that experience is gained in the company of others, or that good manners are cultivated in society (Doke, et al., 1958: 362). It is often used when urging or praising someone for their openness or public participation. By invoking a traditional idiom of '*ibandla*' and using this in relation to Fuze's writing, Maseko was suggesting that Magama Fuze's histories deserved praise because they were presented to the public assembly of *Ilanga's* readers. He added,

... Nginesibindi sokuba ngibhale ngibonge lowomsebenzi kaMr. Fuze, nakuba umuntu engasabongwa eSilungwini esapila, kepa ebongwa esefile... Kepa ngifisa sengati lezi zindaba ngakube uMr. Fuze uzibhala pansi zibe incwadi enkulu kumbe izincwadi eziyakuhlala njalo zize zifundwe izizukulwana... Ngisho ngazi ukuti oSazikangcono sebe basola beti sikatele ilezizindaba zika Mr. Fuze, besho bengasizi muntu ngemfundo yabo ngapandhle kokuba belungele kona ukude besola labo abalinga ukusiza abanye ngokufunda kwabo. (Maseko, 1916: 3)

...I've plucked up the courage to write and thank [praise] the work of Mr. Fuze, even though according to English ways you no longer thank [praise] a person whilst they are still alive, only when they are dead...But, I wish that these stories would be written, by Mr. Fuze, in a sizeable book or books which would be ever-lasting and read by our grandchildren...I'm saying this knowing full well that the Messrs. Know-Best have already complained that they are tired of Mr. Fuze's stories, saying this while they are not helping anyone with their education besides being good only at criticising those who are trying to help others with their learning.

By appealing to the notion that those who are knowledgeable should share their knowledge with others, Maseko reinforced the idea that for literate Zulu readers, written texts were addressed to the *ibandla*, the assembly of readers who congregated around a text, literally and imaginatively. This is also evidence that the notion of an *ibandla*, or assembly of readers, was not just Fuze's invention, but that some *Ilanga lase Natal* readers also thought of themselves as part of this imagined community. It is noteworthy that Maseko also urged Fuze to compile a book containing his stories and that this book would be a reference work for the younger generation. In the same letter Maseko lamented the absence of Zulu-language books, on 'ngokudabuka kwabantu' / 'the origins of our people' and stated that those written in English / 'ngolimi lwabelungu' often miss the point and embellish the truth / 'zivamise nokupapalaza zisenge ezimitho nje' (1916: 3).

It is therefore not surprising that when Fuze wrote *Abantu Abamnyama* he would appeal to the notion of an '*ibandla*'. In his 'Amangebeza' / 'Exhortations' he opens the chapter by establishing a sense of familiarity between him and the readers – he visualised them as an assembly to be addressed using the traditional decorum of *ibandla* rhetoric. The notion that the readers of Zulu texts were an assembly emerges in Fuze's salutation in which he addressed his readers as,

Members of the tribal assembly of our chief, and all you readers of this book, *Abantu Abamnyama*...(1979: vii)

In the original text, it reads,

**BANDHLA lenkosi yakiti, – Nonke nina enifunda le'nncwadi yaBANTU  
ABAMNYAMA...(1922: xiii)**

The translated text separates the salutation 'members of the tribal assembly' and the 'readers of this book' whereas in the original text the members of the assembly were the readers. Moreover, there is no 'tribal' connotation in the original because the '*inkosi*' (chief) is not specified, which suggests that Fuze could simply be using the traditional opening as a rhetorical flourish rather than as an address to an actual 'tribal assembly'. What is most remarkable about this gesture is the fact that Fuze could, in a written text summon, in an Althusserian act of interpellation, his readers to the book as if he was summoning them to a public gathering. While it is tempting to conclude that when Fuze addressed his *Abantu Abamnyama* readers as '*ibandla*' he was invoking and writing to the same audience that read his *Ilanga* articles, such a conclusion is however tenuous. The unresolved question of which came first, the *Ilanga* articles or the book *Abantu Abamnyama* makes it impossible to reach any definite conclusions about how Fuze's notion of an assembly of readers functioned in both his *Ilanga* articles and in the book *Abantu Abamnyama*. Perhaps the only conclusion that can be reached is that the main distinguishing characteristic of the *Ilanga* readers is that they could respond and engage in a dialogue with Fuze, whereas those of *Abantu Abamnyama* could not. This serves to underscore the difference between the 'book' and the 'newspaper' as cultural texts. Whereas the book is a text that can perpetuate itself into eternity and continue to create and recreate public spheres long after the author is dead, the newspaper is as Anderson<sup>151</sup> describes it defined by its 'ephemeral popularity' (1991: 34). The obvious implication of this is that the dialogic public sphere that Fuze created for his readers on the pages of *Ilanga* was also ephemeral, whereas when he wrote *Abantu Abamnyama* he was aware of the possibility that the book could have a more lasting impact. In this way it could be argued that the book was written for posterity, and that the *ibandla* being addressed was an imagined community of the future.

On a practical level, what is also surprising about the dialogue between Fuze and his readers is that their enthusiasm did not translate into financial support for the publication of the book or books they were urging Fuze to write. As expressed in the Introduction to *The Black People*, Fuze struggled to find the money to publish the book; he stated that it was only with the help of N.J.N. Masuku that it was published at all. One possible explanation could be that although by the 1920s the dominance of the missionary presses, which had controlled the publication of vernacular material and newspapers, was no longer an issue African entrepreneurs and members of the black literati simply did not have the

kind of capital investment required to sustain the publication of books and newspapers. Switzer argues for a general demise of independent African publications in the 1930s as these either collapsed or were bought out by white entrepreneurs. In the case of Fuze, the other probable explanation is that the demise of the *Ekukhanyeni* press, for which he had worked all his life, changed the literary fortunes of 'The Class of 1856' and its associated writers. Black writers had to rely on private initiative if they wanted to publish books, or as la Hausse says of Magama Fuze, 'for a black writer to publish a book in Zulu during the 1920s was an historic act of courage bordering on the reckless' (2000: 103).

### **Conclusion:**

Magama Magwaza Fuze began his writing career as an apprentice printer and died a published author. In between these two stages is a succession of changes of identity, of social, political and cultural transformations. Uniting all these changing identities and roles was the act of writing. Magama Fuze's *oeuvre* was a lived history and exemplar of the transformation that occurs when an oral culture is introduced to writing. As an individual he represented the acquisition of the technical skills and modes of self-expression that accompany literacy, namely, the keeping of journals, the writing of letters and the inscription of thoughts and ideas on paper. As a member of the *kholwa* collective, writing for Fuze became a political tool with which their shared grievances and aspirations could be expressed, prejudices countered and historical change recorded and preserved. As such Fuze's literary career represents both the tangible and the intangible effects of the intellectual, social and political 'revolution' inaugurated by writing.

## Conclusion

As a study of the life and work of Magera Magwaza Fuze this thesis has hopefully contributed to a richer understanding of the making of a *kholwa* intellectual as a product of mission education. As a discursive biography the thesis aimed to recover, revive and give meaning to the ideas of an otherwise marginal historical and literary figure. As the author of *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona*, Magera Fuze is a classic example of how first-generation converts made the transition from oral to literate cultures, the homestead to the mission and from being 'native informants' to being *kholwa* intellectuals. The *kholwa* had no secure cultural or political identity, caught as they were in the 'Natal-Zululand divide', between the promise of full and equal incorporation into colonial society and the ties that bound them to traditional society and culture. Their predicament went beyond the inability to secure the material prosperity and political rights promised by the civilising mission of their missionary mentors. Their predicament was also cultural: how were they to fashion an identity that reflected both their aspirations as moderns and their cultural pasts? The thesis has suggested that the *kholwa* identity was fashioned through the practice of *bricolage*, namely the cobbling together, in indeterminate and sometimes contradictory ways, of elements from both the colonial and the indigenous cultures. The overarching argument of the thesis has therefore been that although they were conversant in the language and discourse of the colonisers, the *amakholwa* used the instruments of cultural imperialism, namely petitions, letters, books and newspapers, to create a signature resistance to both the cultural and the political implications of subjugation and conquest.

The first chapter on the making of the *kholwa* examined how their role as 'writers' and intellectuals has been studied through a review and critical analysis of the theoretical approaches in the literature. This chapter highlighted the inadequacy of theories that depict the *kholwa* as mere products of the civilising mission and therefore as lacking in both intellectual and cultural autonomy. We argued, amongst other things, that the relationship between conversion and the *kholwa*'s political and intellectual activities was a creative construction of a 'self' rather than a purely destructive 'colonisation of consciousness'. As a collective that was acculturated to function as a colonial intelligentsia, the *kholwa* were a product not just of the mission or the colonial practice of privileging the 'civilised'; they were also defined by their own attempts to conceptualise what it meant to be 'modern'. Their literary works and practices of protest politics should therefore be read with this context in mind. In particular, the chapter argued that as 'historians' these *kholwa* intellectuals should not necessarily be read either as representatives of oral traditions or as committed to modern templates. The emergent historical

consciousness, which prompted their writing, was contested by the *amakholwa* who could not agree with each other about what kind of history or literature they should be writing. One of the reasons why the *amakholwa* had competing visions of what an African-narrated history might be was that their own writing did begin with a *tabula rasa* but was preceded and informed by the ethnographic and philological studies of colonial scholars. The chapter on the native informant's symbiotic and collaborative relationship with the colonial / missionary scholar was an attempt to account for this intellectual legacy that connected not only the missionary scholar to his native informants but also the *kholwa* intellectual to colonial scholarship. The chapter examined the work of two missionary scholars, Henry Callaway and John William Colenso, and argued that each scholar developed a distinctive method of inquiry for collecting and interpreting data as a basis for knowledge claims regarding indigenous societies and cultures. Implicit in these approaches was, as argued, alternative assumptions and attitudes to the testimony of the native informant as an essential constituent in the production of colonial scholarship. However, taking into account their agency the chapter demonstrated that, even in the confined arena of colonial scholarship, native informants could subvert or correct the colonial scholar's claims to knowledge. For our purposes, this acknowledgement of the role of the native informant in both the creation and the subversion of colonial knowledge was important as part of a more substantive argument that some native informants, like Fuze, made the transition from being the sources of information about their cultures to being autoethnographers and culture critics in their own right. The last chapter is properly the discursive biography of Magera Fuze and functions as the linchpin of the broader argument that Fuze's literary life represented a black intellectual tradition whose potential was not realised. As the author of *Abantu Abamnyama* and of serialised articles in *Ilanga lase Natal* Fuze was involved in the creation of a community of discourse consisting of members of the literate and Christian elite, but which was also symbolically defined as an *ibandla*, the traditional communal assembly. The objective of the chapter was to demonstrate how this notion of the role of writing and constructing an 'imagined community' was itself the consequence of certain historical, social and political moments that impinged on or changed the course and direction of Fuze's intellectual and personal life and the collective fortunes of the *amakholwa* in general.

If one accepts the argument that Magera Fuze's writing is important because it represents a particular historical juncture in the development of black political thought in South Africa, then it is also important to explore, in these concluding remarks, the implications of this argument for our understanding of South Africa's intellectual traditions in general. One of the problems in writing about Magera Fuze's work is that it does not belong to a single genre; it for example crosses the boundaries that separate history from imaginative literature.

This latter problem has in some sense been nullified and transcended by David Attwell's recently published book *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History* (2005), in which he defines both black writing and black intellectual life in a way that accommodates these multiplicity of genres and writers while also relating black writing to the general problem of 'modernity'. For example, Attwell argues that 'it is one of the key historical functions of black South African writing culture to translate modernity into South African terms, to wrest its promises away from corruption and give them new meaning' (2005: 4). Such a definition thus makes it possible to insert Magma Fuze into that broad category of 'black writing' and interpret his work as serving this function of translation. Moreover, Attwell posits that this function in itself entails 'acts of *transculturation*' (2005: 4), which according to him are different from acculturation because the latter term 'implies a degree of passivity on the part of 'recipient' cultures' whereas *transculturation* 'suggests multiple processes of cultural destruction followed by reconstruction on entirely new terms' (2005: 18). When understood in this way the work of Magma Fuze can be categorised and studied with that of other black writers who were involved in this process of *transculturation*. That work remains to be done.

Another possible avenue to explore concerns the function and use of 'vernacular' languages in black writing. One of the suggested reasons for why Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* has not received the kind of validation and approval as for example Sol Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa* is that as a text written in *isiZulu* it simply did not appeal to a generation of writers and thinkers who were increasingly and explicitly preferring English over indigenous languages. Leon De Kock offers an insightful account into why this choice was made; he points to the fact that one of the resolutions of the 1936 African Authors Conference was that 'Africans must write for Africans, but English is the medium through which Africans can be reached. It is impossible to produce a national literature through the use of a tribal language; only tribal literature will result' (Quoted in De Kock, 2004: 118). This political and linguistic decision to write and define a national literature in the English language was, argues De Kock, a reaction to attempts in the late colonial period to 'retribalise' Africans (2004: 120).<sup>152</sup> He argues that for these writers it was 'an act of political affirmation to declare oneself an inhabitant of nothing less than the English language and Western 'civilisation' at large' (2004: 120). Ironically, Fuze's choice of the Zulu language as a medium for communicating with his readers was also political; as he told the editor of *Ilanga* English-speakers had their own newspapers and these were more numerous than the Zulu ones and he therefore posited that the entire newspaper should be in *isiZulu*. There is more to be done in investigating the extent to which, by writing in the Zulu language, Magma Fuze inadvertently relegated his own work to the class of 'tribal literature' and thus alienated a later generation of

black writers. It is however also possible to evaluate Fuze's use of *isiZulu* in positive terms, especially with regards to his historical articles in *Ilanga*. Of all the articles that he wrote for *Ilanga*, the two that are prominent as examples of Fuze's historical writing are 'Ukuhlasele kwabelungu kwaZulu' and 'AmaHlubi'. In both cases the concern with narrating the destruction of the Zulu kingdom in the case of the former, and the *amaHlubi* clan in the latter are examples of Fuze's understanding of the course of Zulu history. As demonstrated he concluded both articles with statements to his readers that were both cautionary and nationalistic. The combination of historical narrative and didactic overtones can be read as an attempt by Fuze to write, for his *Ilanga* readers, popular histories. In this regard he could be compared to Gustav Preller, the Afrikaner popular historian whose work has been studied by Isabel Hofmeyr (1988). The obvious point of comparison is that both Fuze and Preller wrote histories in the 'vernacular', and both their projects were tied up with emerging nationalisms, the one Afrikaner the other African. In defining what made Preller a 'popular historian', Hofmeyr argues that for him 'personal experience was the very stuff of history, which was an accumulation of intimate events, details and recollections' (1988: 523). Preller became a collector of popular history, which as Hofmeyr argues 'he translated into a range of cultural objects which reached people through a variety of media: books, magazines, newspapers' (1988: 524). Although Fuze did not explicitly source individual oral histories and although he didn't disseminate his ideas in as many media as Preller, he could still be regarded as a popular historian because like Preller (Hofmeyr, 1988: 530) it was some of his readers who expressed an appreciation for the work he was doing, and it was them who urged him to write a book. If understood in these terms Fuze's choice of *isiZulu* as a medium through which to communicate the urgency of writing the history of 'the black people', can be interpreted as a product of his recognition that *isiZulu* was, like Preller's Afrikaans, an 'intimate language' where English was the 'hard commercial language of the world' (Quoted in Hofmeyr, 1988: 530). There is potentially an argument to be made about whether such a comparison can be made at all and whether the 'populism' that Fuze was appealing to is in any way comparable to Preller's. Notwithstanding these limitations it is still worthwhile to consider the idea that Magesa Magwaza Fuze was also a popular historian, who attempted to write histories whose intimate resonances would not only appeal to his readers but also rouse their nationalistic sentiments.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> At different times in his life Magesa Fuze used different surnames and signed his name differently: he sometimes wrote as 'Magesa Magwaza' at other times as 'Magesa M. Fuze' and when he wrote for *Ilanga lase Natal* he signed his articles as 'M. M. Fuze'. In the notice about his death, published in *Ilanga*, his son Sol. M. Ngcobo called him 'u Magesa ka Magwaza ubaba wakwa Ngcobo' / 'Magesa Magwaza the father of the Ngcobo family' while also mentioning that 'Owaziwa kakulu ngokuti uFuze' / 'He is well-known as Fuze' (Ngcobo, 1922: 5). This suggests that Magesa Fuze could have at other times used the surname 'Ngcobo'; his own account of his genealogy suggests that the clan names 'Fuze' and 'Ngcobo' could be used interchangeably (Fuze, 1922a: iii). In compiling the bibliography I have used the surname 'Fuze', but have indicated in brackets when the surname Magwaza was used. I have also used the initials 'M. M.' when he used them and 'Magesa M.' when he signed himself in this way. I have also been unable to establish whether an original manuscript of *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* exists. Citations of the book therefore refer to the book published by City Printing Works in 1922.

<sup>2</sup> The term '*kholwa*' will be used frequently in the thesis to designate the nineteenth-century products of mission education and their collective attitudes, beliefs, and identity. It is sufficient, for now, to explain that the term derives from the Zulu word '*kholwa*' meaning 'to believe'; *ikholwa* is thus 'a believer' (plural *amakholwa*). Rather than systematically use the grammatically correct *ikholwa* and *amakholwa*, I have chosen to use both the terms *kholwa* and *amakholwa* as shorthand to describe both individual converts and their collective identities and ideals. Since contemporary Zulu-speakers often also speak of *ukholo* when they talk about Christianity, it should be noted that the Zulu root word '*kholwa*' does not imply religious belief and is used in everyday language to speak about all sorts of beliefs.

<sup>3</sup> With regard to the 'power of the written word', Goody argues for two aspects of this power.

The first is the power it gives to cultures that possess writing over purely oral ones, a power that enables the former to dominate the latter in many ways, the most important of which is the development and accumulation of knowledge about the world. (2000: 1)

The second aspect is,

...the power writing may endow upon various elements in a particular society. This involves not only the hegemonic power that the control of these means of communication provides to dominant groups, often religious ones; the dominated, too, may make use of this way of grappling with their social environment. (2000: 1)

<sup>4</sup> Whether the African Christian converts (*amakholwa*) were a 'class' in the traditional sense of a collective constituted through shared interests or deprivation and/or ideological positioning is difficult to assess. When a Marxist and class-oriented approach to *kholwa* identity was still in vogue, Shula Marks defined them as a dominated class. She argued that:

On the mission stations in Natal, American Board converts, Anglicans, and Methodists were ardent exponents of the Protestant work ethic and the virtues of private property and individual land tenure, because they had grown as a class out of precisely these institutions. Nor were the outward signs of petty bourgeois class identification lacking. (1986: 48-49)

<sup>5</sup> The term 'native informant' derives from the general concept of an 'informant' as used by social anthropologists and ethnographers. Cited below are two definitions of the function of an 'informant'; the first definition is from Clifford Geertz and the other from Gayatri Spivak.

In anthropology, or anyway social anthropology, what the practitioners do is ethnography. And it is in understanding what ethnography is, or more exactly *what doing ethnography is*, that a start can be made toward grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge. This, it must immediately be said, is not a matter of methods. From one point of view, that of the textbook, doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants... But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures, that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, "thick description." (Geertz, 1973: 5-6)

From Spivak one reads that:

I think of the “native informant” as a name for that mark of expulsion from the name of Man – a mark crossing out the impossibility of the ethical relation.

I borrow the term from ethnography, of course. In that discipline, the native informant, although denied autobiography as it is understood in the Northwestern European tradition (codename “West”), is taken with utmost seriousness. He (and occasionally she) is a blank, though generative of a text of cultural identity that only the West (or a Western-model discipline) could inscribe. The practice of some benevolent cultural nativist today can be compared to this, although the cover story there is of a fully self-present voice-consciousness. Increasingly, there is the self-marginalizing or self-consolidating migrant or postcolonial masquerading as a “native informant.” (1999: 6)

<sup>6</sup> On Tiyo Soga see for example David Attwell’s ‘Intimate Enmity in the Journal of Tiyo Soga’ (1997). On the Jabavus see Catherine Higg’s *The Ghost of Equality: The Public Lives of D.D.T. Jabavu of South Africa, 1885-1959* (1997), and also Deck’s ‘Autoethnography: Zora Neale Hurston, Noni Jabavu and Cross-Disciplinary Discourse’ (1990). Brian Willan’s writings on Sol Plaatje remain a standard reference point, but there are more recent revisions and revivals of Plaatje including Laura Chrisman’s *Rereading the Imperial Romance* (2000a) and Peter Limb’s ‘Sol Plaatje Reconsidered’ (2003).

<sup>7</sup> This dilemma over whose ‘voice’ deserved to be reflected in *kholwa* writing and public discourse was raised in the letter pages of *Ilanga lase Natal*; Magma Fuze posed the problem as being about the use of *isiZulu* in the newspaper, he stated that although he accepted that ‘English-educated’ and white people also read the paper, he could not believe that they enjoyed reading *Ilanga* more than they enjoyed reading their own newspapers. In an appeal to the readers to allow the editor of *Ilanga* to raise the price of the paper, so that more pages could be added to the weekly, Magma Fuze also took the opportunity to question the inclusion of English articles in the newspaper. He argued:

Elilodwa engilibeka kuwe, Mhleli ngiti: Yebo, siyawabona kambe amazwi lawa owafake pakati kwepepa letu akuluma isiNgisi, kepa akusibo bonke abantu abafundiswe isiNgisi ngaloko kawasijabulisi kakulu, noma ejabulisa inxenye yabalifundayo. Bekuyakuba ngcono ukuba ipepa lonke likulume ngolimi lwakiti, ngoba nasemapepeni abelungu alukulunywa olwakiti, engiti kambe, yiwona emaningi kunawakiti.

Ehe! wena Mhleli, usitshelile ukuthi bakona nabelungu abalitayayo ipepa leli. Po bona, loku benamapepa amaningi kakulu nje, bangaze bezwe kakulu ngoba befunda izindaba kuleli lakiti na? (1918: 3)

There is just one word I would like to put to you, Editor, I say: Yes, we can see the words that you include in our paper that speak English, but it is not everyone who has been taught in English and these words do not please us that much, even though they please a portion of those who read the paper. It would be better if the whole newspaper spoke our language, because even in the white papers they do not speak our language, and I would say, their papers are more numerous than ours.

Yes! Editor, you have told us that there are white people who take [purchase] this paper. But why is it that when they have so many of their own papers, they hear more by reading news in ours?

<sup>8</sup> In his article, ‘What is an Author?’, Michel Foucault connects the problem of the author with the problem of the ‘proliferation of meaning’ and argues that an author is a ‘functional principle’ by which ‘one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition of fiction.’ (1984: 119). In the case of the *kholwa* intellectuals who were not just writing fiction, the relevance of Foucault’s definition of an author is in the link he makes between an author’s name and the discourse/s they are participating in. He notes:

The author’s name serves to characterize a certain mode of discourse: the fact that the discourse has an author’s name, that one can say “this was written by so-and-so” or “so-and-so is its author,” shows that this discourse is not ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes, not something that is immediately consumable. On the contrary, it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status. (1984: 107)

<sup>9</sup> In her study of the power of the image of Shaka, the Zulu king, and what she terms ‘the constraints and limitations on white inventions and reinventions of Zulu history’, Carolyn Hamilton observes that:

...a clear view emerges of the various ways in which Africans engaged with, sometimes concurring with and sometimes challenging, colonial concerns with Shaka. A topic that awaits fuller investigation in its own right is the way in which ideas about the Zulu past have been taken up by African writers, and the way their works have affected and in turn been shaped by white writings. (1998: 6)

<sup>10</sup> A popular limerick summed up this reversal of roles:

A bishop there was of Natal,

Who took a Zulu for a pal,

Said the Native 'Look 'ere,

Ain't the Pentateuch queer?'

Which converted the Lord of Natal. (Quoted in Guy, 1983: 133)

<sup>11</sup> This edition of the book includes both the Zulu and the English text, but there is some evidence that the Zulu text may have been published separately. C. M. Doke and Harold Scheub state that the narrative accounts were published as *Inncwadi yamuhla uMbishopo was'eNatal ehambela kwa'Zulu'* (Doke, 1940: 234; Scheub, 1985: 494).

<sup>12</sup> Jeff Guy states that the correspondence between Fuze and Shepstones was confidential; la Hausse (2000: 100) states that Fuze was 'an *induna* to Theophilus Shepstone'. I have not found evidence to support either Guy or la Hausse, but Vilakazi identifies Magwaza, Fuze's father as 'one of Somsewu's [Shepstone's] *indunas* in Natal' (Vilakazi, 1945: 294). If however it is true that Fuze was an *induna* of one of the Shepstones, either Henrique or Theophilus, it could be a partial explanation for why he was writing to them. The content of the letter does not insinuate that Fuze was telling the Shepstones anything that was not public knowledge, namely that there was no authority in control in the Zulu Native Reserve. The letter to the SNA was dated June 5, 1885; in a letter dated on the same day Fuze repeated exactly the same complaint to Harriette Colenso (See Fuze (Magwaza), 1885a). The complaint was a personal one because Fuze stated that some of his relatives' cattle were stolen by Mehlokazulu, who was incidentally an *uSuthu* supporter (Guy, 1994 [1979]: 249).

<sup>13</sup> In a footnote in *Abantu Abamnyama* (1922a: 241), Fuze inserts what seems to be a direct quote from a letter or receipt which Harriette wrote to confirm that she had paid him. The date accompanying this extract is given as 24 February 1923, which makes it confusing to know when Harriette actually paid Fuze. By 1923 Fuze was dead, so he could not have received the said amount on that date.

<sup>14</sup> There is some uncertainty as to when Fuze actually made this trip, that is, was it 1877 or 1878. In his introduction to the article Colenso signed and dated it 'Oct. 29, 1877', at the end of the article the same date is included but in *The Black People and Whence They Came*, Fuze wrote that he had set off for the journey on the 15th of July 1878 (1979: 108). To deal with this uncertainty, references to the trip will state 1877 as the year in which it took place, and 1878 as the year in which the article was published.

<sup>15</sup> Although la Hausse (2000: 22) provides translations for the titles of Fuze's *Ilanga lase Natal* serials, I have altered some when I thought necessary. Also, some series like the 'Umntu Kafi Apele' were published over several years, and la Hausse only mentions the 1918 series.

<sup>16</sup> The role played by *Ilanga lase Natal* in the emergence of a *kholwa* historical consciousness is summarised by la Hausse thus:

If, as some have argued, the *kholwa* 'left [their] pre-colonial Zulu roots behind relatively quickly', then there are already signs that by the turn of the century they were stumbling towards some form of *rapprochement* with that past. Possibly the most illuminating evidence of this can be found in *Ilanga*, the newspaper founded in 1903 by Natal Native Congress leader, landowner and educationalist John Dube. In the early issues of *Ilanga*, beside articles on church history, reports on the elaborate gift giving associated with African Wesleyan weddings, and diaries of local mission communities, one can also find reports, for example, of Cetshwayo studying Zulu history whilst in England, the popularisation of the idea of Shaka as a 'Black Napoleon'... These tentative turn-of-the-century reflections on ethnic history and identity were not only the result of a deepening sense of pessimism about the future but also reflected a sagacious grasp of the politics of the history. (2000: 11-12)

<sup>17</sup> The other set of nineteenth-century texts that can be read in conjunction with Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* consists of travel and ethnographic writing which described and defined Zulu society for European audiences. One reason for noting these texts is that several of their authors were also implicated in the course of nineteenth-

century Zulu politics and therefore that as authors they were both 'informants' and 'participants' in the 'discovery' of Zulu culture and peoples. Examples of such texts include, Nathaniel Isaacs' 1836 *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa*; Reverend A. Gardiner's 1836 *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country*; and Reverend Francis Owen's 1838 *The Diary of the Rev. Francis Owen*. The other reason for mentioning this picaresque and travel writing is that some authors were also instrumental in introducing literacy to Zulu kings and subjects. Francis Owen was, for example, Dingane's scribe and tutor and his interactions with the king reveal the duplicity of literacy and the literate, since the presence of Owen enabled Dingane to interact with for example the trekker Piet Retief and yet the same literacy could not prevent his misunderstood decision to massacre Retief and his party.

<sup>18</sup> In a response to Louisa Mvemve of 116 Alexander Road, King Williams Town, Magera Fuze makes it clear that when he calls for *amadoda* (men), 'angikulumu ngamadoda awavata amabhulukwe awanesilevu odwa...' (Fuze, 1919c: 3). Trans. 'I am not talking about men who wear trousers and have beards only...' Unfortunately the quality of the microfilm, from which the letter was copied, is so poor that the rest of the letter is virtually illegible.

<sup>19</sup> Although Nyembezi uses the word 'uHlanga' twice in these sentences, each instance seems to mean something different. In the first sentence his use implies ancestry and genealogy and in this second sentence, he uses the term to refer to his contemporaries. This is why I have translated the term as 'ancestry' in the first instance and 'kin' in the second.

<sup>20</sup> The term 'indigenous', for lack of a more appropriate English equivalent, is used advisedly to convey the meaning of the Zulu phrase 'lwesintu'.

<sup>21</sup> My translation of 'amaBholomane' is based on the Doke et. al dictionary. The etymology of the word seems to be a transliteration of the English 'brown man' and Doke et.al give the following definition of '-bolomane': 'Cape half-caste, Coloured man, Eurafican', they however also add that 'to-day this is a disrespectful term' (1958: 43).

<sup>22</sup> Werner provides her own translation of the title of the book as, '*Abantu Abamnyama, lapa avela [sic] kona* ("The Black People, where they came from")' (1931: 36).

<sup>23</sup> Werner clearly distinguishes what she calls 'native literature' from missionary texts by stating that: 'Basutoland has, for one reason or another, led the van in the production of native literature, as distinguished from missionary translations' (1931: 36).

<sup>24</sup> Depending on the period in which the literary scholar wrote various terms are used to label 'African literature'. Terms like 'Bantu literature', 'Nguni literature' and 'Zulu literature' are used. For the purposes of this discussion my usage will generally follow that of the author being cited.

<sup>25</sup> In his analysis of Akiga Sai's *Akiga's Story: The Tiv Tribe as Seen by One of Its Members* (1939), Guarav Desai demonstrates how, in a manner similar to how Lugg treats Fuze's book, the translator of Akiga Sai's book, Rupert East focussed on its novelty as the first by a member of the Tiv, and downplayed the significance of its historical accounts (Desai, 2001: 119-121). In his assessment of East's interpretation of Sai, Desai warns that: '...although methods of oral history rightly deserve great respect for providing the intellectual backbone for much of the scholarship on precolonial as well as colonial Africa, we should not allow ourselves to be conversely sceptical of written documents, especially when they are authored by colonial African subjects.' (2001: 163).

<sup>26</sup> Dr. W. B. Rubusana (b. 1856) was educated at Lovedale and received his doctorate in philosophy from McKinley University. In 1906 he edited or compiled the classic Xhosa anthology 'Zemk'inkomo Magwalandini' / 'The cattle are gone, you cowards' (Vilakazi, 1945: 289 & 291).

<sup>27</sup> Partha Chatterjee's work on Indian nationalism is an example of this kind of approach. See for example his 'Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World' (1999 [1986]: 50-51).

<sup>28</sup> For a critical appraisal of the relationship between biography and the production of history see Rassool (2004).

<sup>29</sup> Ramachandra Guha laments the same underdevelopment of biography in South Asia. The article, titled 'A Bare Cupboard: Why Biography doesn't flourish in South Asia', argues that this paucity is surprising since 'biography lies at the intersection of history and literature, fields in which the region has made handsome contributions' (2002: 12). There is therefore room for a comparative approach in examining the question of the relationship between biography, as history, and postcolonial societies.

<sup>30</sup> I use the term 'matrix' here to mean 'the womb, a place where anything is generated or developed' (*Cassell Concise English Dictionary*, 1994: 832)

<sup>31</sup> The place of the fiction / non-fiction dichotomy in the *kholwa* and colonial creative imagination is central to Laura Chrisman's revision and re-examination of the work of Rider Haggard, Olive Schreiner and Sol Plaatje.

In comparing Haggard and Plaatje's 'turn to fiction', namely Haggard's writing of *Nada the Lily* and Plaatje's *Mhudi*, Chrisman makes the observation that:

**Through fiction, Haggard reconstitutes the Zulu as a consumable source of fantasy, creating an imaginary subplot as outlet for the most murderous aspects of that fantasy. Plaatje shares nothing with Haggard here except the timing of his turn to fiction. For he too turns to a fictional form only after completing his non-fictional analysis, *Native Life in South Africa*... Rather than retreat from and justify the current political situation, Plaatje's historical fiction confronts its genesis. (2000a: 166)**

<sup>32</sup> The other examples of histories written either by *amakhosha* writers or nineteenth and early twentieth century African intellectuals include, the *Short History of the Native Tribes of South Africa* (1899) by Francis Peregrino, Modiri Molema's *The Bantu Past and Present* (1920), John Henderson Soga's *The South-Eastern Bantu* (1930), *The Ama-Xhosa. Life and Customs* (1932) (See Saunders, 1988: 106-107; Starfield, 2001: 481, 482n).

<sup>33</sup> It should be added that Theal's early work was not 'settler' in the commonsensical meaning of the word; Saunders (1988:11) credits Theal with being 'a local pioneer in the collection of oral history'. Even if Theal is given credit for his pioneering work in oral history, the majority of his work seems to have focused on writing history for the purposes of colonial policy and administration rather than on the pre-colonial histories of the Xhosa, from whom he had recorded most of his oral history. In fact, he only published one 'oral history' book pejoratively titled 'Kaffir-Folklore' in 1882 (Saunders, 1988:11). It seems that even his interest in oral history was limited to the mythical and magical and not on correcting the historical and settler myths about the African societies he was familiar with.

<sup>34</sup> In the Zulu text, Fuze in fact uses the terms 'Abatwa' and 'Amalawu' to refer to the 'Bushmen and Hottentots'. Thus the terms 'Bushmen' and 'Hottentots' are the translator's and Saunders does not seem to appreciate that the fault is in the translation; he does not, in other words, investigate the possibility that when a Zulu speaker used the terms 'Abatwa' or 'Amalawu' they may not have been referring to a 'racial' group, as interpreted by Cope.

<sup>35</sup> Vansina's description of whom he considers an appropriate or reliable informant on oral traditions is particularly telling. In his description of which informants should be avoided, he argues: Another type of informant to be avoided is someone who has left his customary environment. Very often he is no longer familiar with the culture to which he formerly belonged, and what is of even more frequent occurrence is that people of this kind have acquired a foreign mentality which will profoundly distort their testimonies. (1965 [1961]: 191)

<sup>36</sup> This dialogue is quite extensive. After castigating Jan Vansina for what they believe to be an unprofessional review of their *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*, the Comaroffs turn to John Peel and Terence Ranger as a more 'serious dialogue' (1997: 42).

<sup>37</sup> In their replies to their critics, the Comaroffs do not mention why this definition of narrative is not worth a response, even though Peel demonstrates, contrary to their own definition, that narrative need not be teleological or 'realistic' to be valid. What they resort to is an underhanded denigration of Peel's inquiry into the early Tswana literati.

<sup>38</sup> Quayson states,

**In *The History*, unlike in the other accounts referred to, historical figures are often attended by the same discursive strategies that attend legendary and mythical ones, thus blurring the distinction between history and legend. The discourses of academic historians, on the other hand, entail the suppression of the legendary tendency in line with affixing historical 'facts' and figures in a rationalistic discourse that can be submitted to verificatory [sic] procedures. The urge of academic historians to establish a scale of factuality and to differentiate the probable from the less probable leads to a suppression of the cultural signification of *The History*, because apart from bracketing out the legendary elements they also ignore the discursive properties of the work that derive from a context of orality. (1997: 21-22).**

<sup>39</sup> White's work has been discussed and debated by many authors. Some useful summaries of the debates on narrativity, narration and narratives are contained in Kreiswirth's 'Trusting the Tale: The Narrativist Turn in the Human Sciences' (1992) and Cebik's 'Understanding Narrative Theory' (1986). See also Gayatri Spivak's definition of 'reading' the archives in which she compares her own critique of European historiography with Hayden White's (1999: 202-203).

<sup>40</sup> For a summary of the debates around the meaning of the term 'bourgeoisie' when used in the South African context see Switzer (1997: 6-10). Although written in the 1960s, Leo Kuper's *African Bourgeoisie* contains

some useful insights into how the term 'bourgeoisie' has been used to understand social stratification in African communities. He for example stated:

*Bourgeoisie* may seem a pompous word for the African professionals, traders, and senior government and municipal clerks who are the subject of this study... There has been some interest in the economic and political role of African professionals and traders, their wealth, patterns of consumption, style of life, and moderating or revolutionary tendencies. But this interest has been expressed in very general observation and speculation, or it has been colored by surprise and exaggeration, as if the emergence of strata differentiated from a general mass of impoverished and poorly educated African workers were a sport of evolution. (Kuper, 1965: ix)

<sup>41</sup> On John L. Dube, Marable for example states:

Dube rejected the *satyagraha* confrontation tactics of his Indian neighbor, Mohandas K. Gandhi, and encouraged Blacks to accept segregation. His "politics of segregation" and faith in private enterprise promoted the establishment of the apartheid state. The personal history of Dube is, more generally, the story of the defeat of the human spirit. The major goals which Dube and his political friends pursued and the short range tactics of Natal's small Black middle class helped to create the anti-humane regime in southern Africa. (Marable, 1976: iii)

<sup>42</sup> Incidentally, Limb's reconsideration of Plaatje's work as a historian and of his historical novel *Mhudi*, also refutes the Comaroffs' claims that, 'when Plaatje... wrote the first black South African novel, *Mhudi*, it bore no vernacular imprint.' (1997: 46). The latter assessment is again an example of how the literary products of the *khulwa* intellectuals are often misrepresented as 'inauthentic' because they articulate a 'borrowed' modernist discourse evidenced in their reliance on the English language or in their repeated pronunciations on 'progress' and 'improvement'.

<sup>43</sup> See for example the collection of essays edited by Carolyn Hamilton et. al. titled *Refiguring the Archives* (2002)

<sup>44</sup> Although he does not provide a definition for the term 'hybridity', it can be assumed that Gikandi is using the term, to mean the 'idea of occupying in-between spaces; that is, of being many, composite, or syncretic entities, new formations, creole, or intermixed peoples, *mestizaje*, *dingo*.' (Payne, 1996: 251)

<sup>45</sup> I have not been able to deduce the reason for the orthography used by Bryant for writing Zulu names; this is only an approximation of the actual letters he uses, which are vowels with hooks above them.

<sup>46</sup> In 1919 Modiri Molema was president of the African Races Association of Glasgow (ARA), an association of Glasgow's black colonial students. His Presidential address to ARA became a chapter, titled 'Intellectual Possibilities and Impossibilities', of his *The Bantu Past and Present*. Solomon Plaatje, was in the years 1895-1898, a member of the South African Improvement Society, a Kimberley-based discussion group to which he presented two papers titled 'The History of the Bechuanas' and 'Being a Bechuana' (Starfield, 2001: 479 & 480).

<sup>47</sup> Examples of the earliest travel writing and othering discourse are collected in Isaac Schapera's (1933) *The Early Cape Hottentots: described in the writing of Olfert Dapper (1668), Willem Ten Rhyne (1686) and Johannes Gulielmus de Grevembroek (1695)*. The Van Riebeeck Society: Cape Town.

<sup>48</sup> Ruth Edgecombe describes Callaway thus: 'Henry Callaway (1817-1890) was originally a member of the Society of Friends. After offering his services to Colenso he was ordained in Norwich cathedral on 13 August 1854. After three years in Pietermaritzburg he moved to the mission station, Springvale, where he remained until 1873, when he was consecrated Bishop of St John's, Kaffraria. He became an important translator of the scriptures into Zulu and was the author of textual and ethnological publications on the Zulus.' (1982: 25-26). See also Thornton (1988: 141-156).

<sup>49</sup> For a description of the nature of these arguments and disputes and some of the 'solutions' that were proposed and written about see Thornton (1988: v-xiii, 74-75, 161).

<sup>50</sup> On the mixed reception of missionaries by the Nguni of southern Africa see Etherington (1971: 83-84, 137ff.).

<sup>51</sup> In his *Savage Systems* (1996) Chidester designates all missionary theologians and ethnographers as comparativists. This is because his main objective is to understand the emergence of comparative religion, as a sub-discipline of theology, and how the foundations of this discipline were laid and concretised by the colonial subjugation of southern Africa's peoples. The terminology I am using seeks to distinguish between different kinds of comparativists, especially to distinguish the work of Henry Callaway from that of John W. Colenso.

<sup>52</sup> A concise summary of Bleek's contribution to colonial philology, and its relevance to the work of both Colenso and Callaway, is provided by Chidester (1996: 141-152).



<sup>53</sup> Thornton argues that Bleek coined the term in 1851, and that he applied his classification scheme for the first time in the years 1858 to 1859 when he published a catalogue of the philological and ethnographic works in Sir George Grey's library (Thornton, 1988: 25). Ricard states that the term was first used in 1857 (2004: 10).

<sup>54</sup> As a response to Vansina's review of their book, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*, John and Jean Comaroff report that Vansina criticised them for attributing 'one's own interpretations, rather than those of the historical agents (or actors), to the phenomena observed' (1997: 41). This may suggest that Vansina changed his approach to oral history – the review was published in 1993 – and therefore it may not be entirely accurate to associate the constructivist school of thought with his work.

<sup>55</sup> In 1862 Callaway wrote to Bishop Gray in Cape Town and claimed that,

...he had entered the Zulu religious system more deeply than any other European observer but that he had "entered far deeper, than the natives themselves could penetrate." (Chidester, 1996: 156)

<sup>56</sup> As a topic within the broader discourse of comparisons the notion that indigenous religions or folklore were derived from earlier or ancient religious beliefs and legends was common. The conclusion that these beliefs and lore had since been lost due to the degeneration of the people often followed this assumption. As Chidester notes of comparative religion,

In the discovery of indigenous religions, the two most prominent comparative procedures can be identified as genealogy and morphology. In the first procedure, the beliefs and practices of indigenous people were found to be derived from ancient sources, most often from the religion of ancient Israel...

As a matter of course, frontier comparativists presumed that such a historical derivation from an ancient religion was also a degeneration. During the course of history, the genealogical origin of indigenous religions had become distorted and corrupted. Sometimes, comparativists insisted that the "natives" had entirely forgotten their ancient religion. (1996: 17-18)

<sup>57</sup> See Hamilton (1998: 151) on how at least three orthography conferences were held in the years 1905, 1906 and 1907; the merits of the disjunctive versus the conjunctive method were discussed in the latter conferences. Advocates of the disjunctive orthography, like James Stuart, argued that it would make the Zulu language easier to use and learn for non-speakers and that it would facilitate translation.

<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, Colenso makes the following comment about the name he gives to the Zulu language: **Missionaries sometimes use the words isiZulu, isiXosa, &c., to express the language of the amaZulu, amaXosa, &c. It is convenient, of course, to employ such words: but they are not used by the natives themselves. (Colenso, 1904 [1859]: 1)**

<sup>59</sup> Ruth Edgcombe gives 1856 as the date of publication of the *Izindaba Zas'eNatal* (1982: 157n90).

<sup>60</sup> Colenso presented, to a meeting of the Anthropological Society, a paper later titled 'On the efforts of missionaries among savages' (16 March 1865). This paper was a response to Winwood Reade's paper on 'Efforts of missionaries among savages', read to the Society on 14 March 1865. Colenso's paper was subsequently published in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, III (1865), pp. ccxlviii-cclxxxix (Edgcombe, 1982: 234n4).

<sup>61</sup> Class played an important role in the emergence of missionary societies, the recruitment of missionaries and the 'ideology' of the missionary endeavour. Many of the missionaries who ended up at the colonial periphery were themselves scions of the dislocated English yeomanry and authors like John and Jean Comaroff have argued that such class backgrounds provided the intellectual and ideological scaffolding of missionary work (See Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991: 54ff.; Thorne, 1997: 251; Thornton, 1988: 3).

<sup>62</sup> Examples of these kinds of descriptions can be found in works like Shula Marks' *Ambiguities of Dependence* (1986) Herbert Mnguni's 'African Intellectuals and the Development of African Political Thought in the Twentieth Century' (1987) and Manning Marable's 'African Nationalist: The Life of John Langalibalele Dube' (1976)

<sup>63</sup> Of interest here is the rivalry between two Xhosa prophets of the early nineteenth century Ntsikana and Nxele which was conducted in the 'oral' style (See Hodgson, 1997: 71-73).

<sup>64</sup> On converts as *bricoleurs* see the Comaroffs (1991: 250); on bricolage and *kholwa* writing see David Attwell (1999: 270). On subalternity as a standard concept in postcolonial criticism see De Kock (2004: 117).

<sup>65</sup> For a descriptive account of Mbanda's contribution to Callaway's theology see Chidester (1996: 160-167). For his work in assisting Callaway translate the bible see Vilakazi (1945: 272).

<sup>66</sup> Desai uses the term 'native' anthropologist and in a footnote he explains that:



I use the term *native* anthropologist in accord with the conventional usage of this term in the great majority of anthropological literature. In this sense a “native” anthropologist is any anthropologist who chooses to study his or her own culture...the term remains a useful tool for distinguishing between the levels of remove of the traditionally Western anthropologists and the local ones. The term *indigenous* anthropologist could well be substituted here by those for whom the term *native* has negative connotations. (2001: 105n112)

<sup>67</sup> Demonstrating her own concerns with contemporary claims to subalternity, Spivak castigates those who claim to be ‘native informants’ by stating:

Certain members of the Indian elite are of course native informants for first world intellectuals interested in the voice of the Other. But one must nevertheless insist that the colonized subaltern *subject* is irretrievably heterogeneous. (1999: 270)

<sup>68</sup> In her *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Gayatri Spivak writes:

Such a reading is of course also “mistaken” because it attempts to engage the (im)possible perspective of the “native informant,” a figure who, in ethnography, can only provide data, to be interpreted by the knowing subject for reading. Indeed, there *can* be no correct scholarly model for this type of reading. It is, strictly speaking, “mistaken,” for it attempts to transform into a reading-position the site of the “native informant” in anthropology, a site that can only *be* read, by definition, for the production of definitive descriptions. It is an (im)possible perspective. (1999: 49)

<sup>69</sup> This was an itinerary of his 1896 trip to St. Helena. It documents the actual trip, that is, the various stops that the ship made between Durban and St. Helena. There is mention of some of the people he met on board (See Fuze (Magwaza), 1896d).

<sup>70</sup> Significantly, within the African-American tradition, literacy is interpreted as liberating. As Gates writes:

...there is an inextricable link in the Afro-American tradition between literacy and freedom. And this linkage originates in the slave narratives...the slave who learned to read and write was the first to run away. (Gates Jr., 1987 [2002]: 1)

<sup>71</sup> Cope (1979: 149) notes that the name Skelemu, is an ‘Afrikaans word meaning rascal’. Although I concur with this deduction, Cope does not mention that the Afrikaans word is ‘skelm’ and that therefore the nickname was essentially a Zululised version of the Afrikaans term. Of interest also is the paradox that in terms of Fuze’s childhood premonitions the white man who would be his master was *yet* to come whereas his family’s choice of nickname suggests that white men had already come in sufficient numbers for the family to know the term ‘skelm’. It could even be argued that these were no premonitions at all but a child’s first grasps of the reality of encroaching white presence, since even as a child Fuze was already demonstrating an understanding that black people *work* for white people and that this involves their leaving their homes to grow up somewhere else.

<sup>72</sup> See Chapter 1 on Paul Landau’s (1999: 22) argument about how the process of translating Christian doctrines into indigenous idioms inevitably involves the eliciting, naming, translation and systematisation of African analogies to Western religion.

<sup>73</sup> Gauri Viswanathan in her book *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief* (1998) undoes the secular-religious divide by arguing that religion-as-belief and religion-as-assent are essentially political and not religious projects. She states:

I shall offer as the principal argument of this book that conversion ranks among the most destabilizing activities in modern society, altering not only demographic patterns but also the characterization of belief as communally sanctioned assent to religious ideology. Although it is true that, in the context of majority-minority relations, conversion is typically regarded as an assimilative act – a form of incorporation into a dominant culture of belief – conversion’s role in restoring belief from the margins of secular society to a more worldly function is less readily conceded. The worldliness I have in mind relates to civil and political rights. Why, for instance, does history throw up so many instances of conversion movements accompanying the fight against racism, sexism, and colonialism? What might be the link between the struggle for basic rights and the adoption of religions typically characterized as minority religions? What limitations of secular ideologies in ensuring these rights do acts of conversion reveal? Does that act of exposure align conversion more closely with cultural criticism? (1998: xvi – xvii)

<sup>74</sup> In his article, 'Success and Failure of 'Sokululeka': Bishop Colenso and African Education', Patrick Kearney (2003) provides a useful and in-depth discussion of the type of education Colenso attempted to provide and the numerous problems he confronted in his endeavour.

<sup>75</sup> Samples of Fuze, and other *Ekukhanyeni* students' drawings are part of the Grey Collection, housed at the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town. The shelf number of the George Grey Album in which the paintings and drawings are lodged is ALBX19, INIL 15588/15847. Interestingly, Colenso must have sent these samples before Fuze's baptism, because all his drawings are signed as 'USkelemu'. Although the drawings are not themselves dated, Hermanson states that they were sent with a letter, dated 1 February 1857, from Colenso to Grey (2003: 12).

<sup>76</sup> Khumalo describes the drawings in detail and identifies them as *avant-garde* since they typify the movement that emerged in the 1830s when 'the 'sketch' acquired a new meaning that was associated with 'progressive tendencies'' (2003: 222).

<sup>77</sup> See Fuze (1979: iii). Kearney describes how Mr. Purcell who was charged with teaching some of *Ekukhanyeni*'s students to print, began practising 'an early form of 'job reservations'... [by] refusing to pass on his skills to Africans' (2003: 201).

<sup>78</sup> Fuze mentions that on his way to see Cetshwayo in 1877 he visited with the Rev. R. Robertson and that while there he played the harmonium in the chapel (1878: 423).

<sup>79</sup> In the essays sent to Sir George Grey, Magera ('Skelemu') describes how together with singing Sunday hymns, 'sihlabelela igama likaViktoria inkosikazi yaseNgilande' / 'we sing the word of Victoria the lady/queen of England' (Fuze, 1857: 3).

<sup>80</sup> All citations of original *isiZulu* texts have retained the orthography and spelling used by the author/s.

<sup>81</sup> The fact of the segregated church services should not however suggest that theologically and philosophically Colenso also held settler views. On the contrary, he seemed to have clashed from the moment he arrived in Natal, with the settlers, who seemed to have prided themselves in their freedom. Guy (1983: 56) notes,

There were two aspects to Colenso's public life in Natal: he was the head of the Church of England mission to the African population, and he was bishop to the colony's settlers. Colenso felt that it was the former role which offered the greatest challenge and which should absorb most of his time and energy, but from the moment he arrived in Natal he was dragged into colonial disputes and controversy over religious matters.

The initial quarrels between the Bishop and the laity were caused, in part at least, by anti-clerical feelings derived from religious and class antagonism which the colonists had experienced, directly or indirectly, when still in Britain. Their freedom from an established church and an Episcopal hierarchy was threatened.

<sup>82</sup> In the introduction to the *Three Native Accounts*, Colenso described this as an 'experiment'. He explained: I took with me, among others, on my recent visit to the Zulu King, a young man, William, and two of the elder lads of the Institution at Ekukanyeni, Undiane and Magera, all three of them able to read and write. They were told to keep journals of their daily doings, and these narratives are the result of the experiment.

As these narratives are written in simple idiomatic Zulu, they are particularly well adapted for any who are beginning to study the language. (See 'Introduction' 1901 [1860])

<sup>83</sup> In his discussion of primary orality, Ong (1982: 36-50) lists repetitiveness or redundancy, conservatism, an agonistic tone and situational and life world focus as some of the characteristics of orally based thought and expression.

<sup>84</sup> On the framework of categories used by early travel writers see Coetzee (1982: 1-2).

<sup>85</sup> Kearney (2003: 199) cites a letter by Colenso stating that he hoped that with the arrival of Dr. Robert James Mann in 1857 some of the boys would be trained as medical doctors. Colenso was apparently also considering training some as architects.

<sup>86</sup> Walter Ong, in the concluding remarks of *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* offers this assertion on consciousness:

The interaction between the orality that all human beings are born into and the technology of writing, which no one is born into, touches the depths of the psyche...it is the oral word that illuminates consciousness with articulate language, that first divides subject and predicate and then relates them to one another, and that ties human beings to one another in society. Writing

introduces division and alienation, but a higher unity as well. It intensifies the sense of self and fosters more conscious interaction between persons. Writing is consciousness-raising. (1982: 179).

<sup>87</sup> David Attwell's article provides an excellent summary and discussion of this emerging proto-nationalist discourse. Attwell aptly describes the common thread in these narratives as a 'desperate struggle with a sense of accelerated time' (1999: 267).

<sup>88</sup> The masthead of *Ilanga lase Natal* stated:

Ubusuku sebuyadhlula, ukusa seku sondele, ngako masiyintyinge imisebenzi yobumnyama, sihlome zikali zokukanya. – Rom. XIII, 12.

The night is passing, dawn is near; therefore let us discard the deeds of darkness, and arm ourselves with the weapons of light – Rom. XIII, 12. [My translation]

<sup>89</sup> The document is part of the Grey Collection (Shelf Number G10 C31) at the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town. The title of the piece is difficult to translate because the word 'amazwi' can mean 'voices' or 'words'; idiomatically the word can even mean 'a message'.

<sup>90</sup> The translations of the text provided below are mine, and because some of the orthography is different from present-day Zulu, I have had to guess the words and they will be indicated accordingly.

<sup>91</sup> For details of how this conflict between the two brothers, Cetshwayo and Mbulazi arose, see Fuze (1979: 4, 98, 99, 102). The conflict culminated in the battle of Ndondakusuka (1856) and the followers of Mbulazi became known as *iziGqoza* and those of Cetshwayo as *uSuthu*.

<sup>92</sup> Since the text is in Zulu and lengthy, the following analysis will be selective and the translations provided are my own. Where relevant I have made use of dictionaries and other reference books and they will be indicated accordingly. Also, in my translations I have opted for the contemporary orthography, especially when writing people's names.

<sup>93</sup> The x with a strikethrough is one of Colenso/*Ekukhanyeni* press' orthographic choices; it is used to represent the click that in present-day Zulu orthography is simply represented by an 'x'. The word '-xoshisile' means both to 'help to drive away' and to 'Present with, give a present to' (See Doke, et al., 1958: 868). The 'ty' sound is in the contemporary orthography written as 'tsh' or 'sh'.

<sup>94</sup> Guessing that 'uyitote' would today be written as 'uyithothe', I looked up the word 'thotha' and Doke et. al give its meaning as, 'Place closely together, pack tightly; bind tightly together' (1958: 802).

<sup>95</sup> The 'e' is represented in the modern orthography as 'c'. The word would in a modern text be written as 'incwadi', that is, without the double 'n' and the apostrophe.

<sup>96</sup> Vowels do not normally follow each other in the modern orthography. The 'au' would in a modern text be written as 'awu', the word would therefore be 'awubanele' (without an apostrophe).

<sup>97</sup> The word seems to be derived from the verb 'bakaza', for which Doke et. al give one of the definitions as, 'Move the eyes timorously, cast looks about through nervousness (or in presence of a superior)' (Doke, et al., 1958: 59).

<sup>98</sup> In Zulu the word 'incwadi' is used for both a printed book and a letter.

<sup>99</sup> In the Zulu language there are no gender pronouns, so it is often difficult, in a phrase like this one, to determine whether the subject is male or female.

<sup>100</sup> On this relation between text and speech Ricoeur states:

...the text is a discourse fixed by writing. What is fixed by writing is thus a discourse which could be said, of course, but which is written precisely because it is not said. Fixation by writing takes the very place of speech, occurring at the site where speech could have emerged. (1981: 146)

<sup>101</sup> As previously cited Colenso, on his 1859 trip to Zululand, at one point makes the following observation about his patriarchal relationship to his young converts:

I happened to call out to Undiane and Magema, "not to get wet in the rain – to go into the wagon." "So," said the girls, "he has consideration for his people," which seemed to them quite unusual in a chief. (1982 [1860]: 108)

<sup>102</sup> There are different and conflicting accounts of how Dingane died. This short phrase suggests that the young Magema preferred the version that pointed to the amaSwazi as Dingane's assassins. Etherington even goes as far as to state that the oral tradition version is that the men of Swazi king, Sobhuza, executed Dingane at the Lebombo mountains (2001: 285). See also Fuze's later version in *The Black People* (1979: 82-83).

<sup>103</sup> The strikethrough on the 'q' is one of the idiosyncratic features of the orthography of the *Ekukhanyeni* printing press. In the original, the strikethrough is actually on the tail of the letter, but this is impossible to reproduce.

<sup>104</sup> The spellings 'intulwa' and 'unwaba' are unusual. Normally the words are spelled as 'intulo' for the lizard and as 'unwabu' for the chameleon.

<sup>105</sup> The tale can also be used proverbially to tell a person that they cannot change their mind, that is, they cannot, for example, break a promise made.

<sup>106</sup> See la Hausse's (2000: 100-103) comparison of Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama* and Petros Lamula's *uZulukamaLandela*.

<sup>107</sup> The word 'Ekukhanyeni' means 'place of light'. The imagery of 'light' and 'enlightenment' was a recurrent theme at Bishopstowe. In his 1859 'First Steps of the Zulu Mission' Colenso explains, in a footnote comment on Ndiyane's story in which the latter writes of the 'believer's cottage' (orig. 'emzini wamakolwa'), that:

He means the little village formed by several of our married Christian natives, Jojo, Hlalelwa, &c. who have built themselves for the present huts in a somewhat improved style, in the hope of soon being able to exchange these for small European cottages. It lies full in sight from Ekukhanyeni, on the opposite side of a little brook; and being an offshoot from the chief establishment, whose name is "Light," (nom. ukukanya, light; dat. ekukhanyeni,) they have given it the name of Esibaneni from, nom. isibane, "torch" which has been kindled at the "light."  
(Colenso, 1982 [1860]: 53)

<sup>108</sup> This account is based on Brookes & Webb's *A History of Natal* and Magera Fuze's *The Black People and Whence They Came*. See Fuze (1979: 102).

<sup>109</sup> On Zonnebloem College, see Hodgson (1997) and Attwell (1999).

<sup>110</sup> Keletso Atkins (1993) offers in the book *The Moon is Dead! Give Us Our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, 1843-1900*, a labour based interpretation of the Natal refugee problem. The argument presented is that whereas Africans entered the colony of Natal for various reasons, personal and political, the main response of the colonial state was to attempt to harness, through apprenticeships and other enforced labour practices, the refugee population and make it into a colonial labour force.

<sup>111</sup> The trial was constituted as both a judicial trial and a court of inquiry. Two of the sixteen assessors were the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Benjamin Pine, sitting as Supreme Chief and the SNA, Theophilus Shepstone. Langalibalele was made to plead, but not allowed counsel, and all the witnesses were selected by the prosecution and not cross-examined (Guy, 1983: 206-207).

<sup>112</sup> The original reads:

Kwafika ubani, wati, Ngangezwe, uyabizwa uSomseu. (Fuze, 1859: xii)

A person arrived, and said, Ngangezwe, you are called by uSomseu.

<sup>113</sup> Colenso's exhaustive defence of Langalibalele and his interrogation of the evidence presented, or disallowed, at the trial was eventually published as a report to the British Houses of Parliament in 1875.

<sup>114</sup> Jeff Guy, first brought this petition to my attention. Magera Fuze printed on the 1875 petition the names of all those who had signed the 1863 one, including the names of those who had died. He was accused of fraud by the colonial government (personal communication, Jeff Guy & Vukile Khumalo). Sir Garnet Wolseley, the recipient of the petition, also blamed Harriette Colenso for instigating the petition (Guy, 2001: 47).

<sup>115</sup> This can be translated as 'Lament about John Khumalo ("To the Editor of iLanga")'.

<sup>116</sup> The actual law titled, 'Law for relieving certain Persons from the operation of Native Law', listed eight criteria that had to be submitted as a petition for exemption. These included, for example, a description of the petitioner's property, whether the petitioner could read or write and the petitioner's 'object' in applying for the letters of exemption. The successful applicant was also required to swear allegiance to Her Majesty and her heirs. As la Hausse argues, this petition for exemption 'served to fix *kholwa* biographical narratives in the most profound of ways' (2000: 12).

<sup>117</sup> 'Gumede' is a title of respect and a salutation.

<sup>118</sup> In his examination of the influence of oral traditions on African literatures, Quayson argues that writers like Rev. Johnson were in fact attempting to arrest oral traditions that were in flux. He writes:

It is clear that to speak of the oral background to literary writings is to implicitly invoke a notion of the intervention of writing in a conceptual arena of flux. Though it is important to demonstrate the specific strategic configurations of the oral traditions that each writer draws upon, it is useful to conceptualize this as a process by which writing attempts a stabilization of flux in oral traditions. This process is by no means a one-way street. It may be shown that the configurations in literary writings also feed back into the oral context even if not to the same degree. (1997: 13)

<sup>119</sup> Although the imperial government had agreed to restore Cetshwayo to a portion of his former kingdom, the splitting of Zululand into three was the innovation of Shepstone and Natal's colonial officials. The three territories were split between Cetshwayo, Zibhebhu and something the colonial officials called the 'Zulu Native Reserve' (Guy, 2001: 69-71). On Zibhebhu's claims to power and the cause of the civil war, see Guy (2001: 3 & 5).

<sup>120</sup> The verb 'embuka' means to desert. Doke et al. (1958: 494) also state that the nouns 'imbuka' and 'amambuka' refer, not just to a traitor or deserter, but also to the 'Followers of John Dunn during the reign of Cetshwayo.'

<sup>121</sup> The verb '*bulala*' (to kill) is used by Zulu-speakers to describe dispossession and destruction, and therefore it should not be interpreted literally. It is a misunderstanding of the use of the word when, for example, Trevor Cope, the editor of *The Black People*, notes of Fuze's statement that, 'He [Shepstone] went on to kill Langelibalele in 1873' (1979: 104), that 'Langelibalele was not actually killed. He was captured, brought to trial, sentenced, imprisoned, and finally exiled.' (1979: 174n4).

<sup>122</sup> He does mention that when Cetshwayo died in 1883, Sir Melmoth Osborn ('*Malimati*'), wanted him to be buried in Eshowe, where he was living under the supposed protection of Osborn as the British Resident, and that he tried to prevent the *uSuthu* from transporting the body to Mahlabathini, where the other Zulu kings are buried. Fuze described the encounter between Osborn and the *uSuthu* by stating: 'When the wagon arrived [to transport the body], Malimati had already assembled his force of traitors [*amambuka*]. A fight took place, but the traitors were routed' (1979: 121).

<sup>123</sup> I could not find the word '-ntshampuntshampu' in the dictionary. Since the word sounds like an onomatopoeic word in which '-ntshampu' is repeated I looked up a similar sounding word '-shampu', from which several words, including '-shampushampu' are derived. The latter word, when used as the noun 'ishampushampu' means amongst other things, 'Careless person; one who is not thorough, one who acts in a superficial way. / One who lacks interest in others; one lacking in expected feeling' (Doke, et al., 1958: 731).

<sup>124</sup> la Hausse (2000: 12) in his description of Fuze's book states that it 'languished unpublished for nearly two decades before the Zulu cultural revival carried it into print.' This suggests that the book preceded the *Ilanga lase Natal* articles. See also H.C. Lugg's preface to *The Black People* in which states that he met Fuze in 1902, and that he thought the book was already written or partially written since Fuze was a constant visitor, to the Native Affairs Department, with requests for financial support to publish the book (1979: xviii).

<sup>125</sup> The original title of the series was 'Ukuhlaselela kwabelungu kwaZulu' / 'The attack of the English [whites] on Zululand', but later Fuze altered the title to 'Ukuhlaselela kwabelungu kwaZulu ngo 1879 – Ukuqala Kokuhlupeka' / 'The attack of the English [whites] on Zululand in 1879 – the beginning of the troubles [suffering]'. The first instance of the first title was on January 31 (1919d); the second title is used for the first time on May 2 (1919e).

<sup>126</sup> Fuze repeated his support for this slogan 'ukuhlangana ku amandhla' / 'unity is power' in a letter to the editor titled 'Ukuhlangana Ku Amandhla' (1920b: 2).

<sup>127</sup> For an explanation of how and why Transvaal Boers were drawn into the conflict between the Zulu royal family and the colony of Natal, see Guy (2001: 92-97).

<sup>128</sup> According to Fuze, Dingiswayo (a.k.a. Godongwana) had fled his father's attempt to kill him and his brother, Tana. The father, Jobe was upset by his sons' quarrel over a piece of land, and the fighting made him suspect that his sons were his main rivals and that they would eventually kill him; he chose to kill them instead (1979: 14).

<sup>129</sup> E. A. Ritter gives an interesting account of how Dingiswayo acquired his horse and gun (Ritter, 1955: 24).

<sup>130</sup> Shaka became Zulu chief, in 1816, with the help of Dingiswayo; the latter was only assassinated by Zwide in 1818 (Cope, 1979: 166n5, 2).

<sup>131</sup> Harriette Colenso met Alice Werner on one of her trips to England. Werner was a journalist and later became the first Professor of African Languages at the University of London (Guy, 2001: 332-333). A.T. Cope, in his notes, in *The Black People*, states that Werner was appointed Professor of Swahili and Bantu Languages at the School of Oriental Studies (1979: 155n2). She developed a friendship with Magema Fuze as well; and in her article 'Some Native Writers in South Africa', she mentioned his *Abantu Abamnyama* and described him thus: 'My old friend the late Magema ka'Magwaza Fuze was encouraged by Miss Colenso to write his recollections...' (Werner, 1931: 36).

<sup>132</sup> The correct spelling should be 'esebenzela'.

<sup>133</sup> Although her article does not specifically refer to the arrival of a black British regiment, Loos' description of the seven years of the exiles' St. Helenian lives confirms that, not only were they accepted as members of the community, but they were also regularly treated as celebrities rather than as convicted persons. (See Loos, 1998)

<sup>134</sup> In Doke et. al (1958: 116) one of the meanings of 'chuma', the root word for the causative 'chumisa' is: 'Bear abundantly (as crops); multiply, increase largely (as cattle); prosper'.

<sup>135</sup> The full title of the book is *Izindatyana Zabantu Kanye Nezindaba ZaseNatal* (1859).

<sup>136</sup> As a response to the 1879 invasion of Zululand, Colenso began to publish, with Magema Fuze as the printer, a collection of documents titled 'Extracts from the Blue Books'. On the contribution of the 'Extracts' to the history of the conflict, Guy writes: 'Colenso was to close the 'Extracts from the Blue Books' at the end of 1880. It contained 855 pages of close analysis, a magnificent historiographical monument to Bishopstowe's intervention in imperial politics.' (2001: 55)

<sup>137</sup> Fuze stated that one of the reasons that he wrote *Abantu Abamnyama* is that when he asked his elders about where they had come from he was told the story of the dispersal of the Ngcobo, his own clan. He stated:

To proceed with this book, he had long begun questioning his people asking them, 'Where did we come from?', but they did not tell him exactly where they came from. But at a certain stage there came forward Mncindo kaDangadu kaMnyani kaNgqamuza kaNtomela of the Ngcobo people, to state that 'All of us Ngcobo stock sprang from the reed beds of the Umvoti river'. Such an account, of course, is like a fool with neither head nor foot. I feel strongly that our people should know that we did not originate here in Southern Africa. (1979: iv)

The myth that a particular clan had originated in the 'reeds' is common. The root noun '-hlanga' is therefore used to describe genealogy/ancestry/original stock, and in common speech to describe reeds or a reed bed.

<sup>138</sup> Compare Fuze's closing statement to that in *Abantu Abamnyama*: 'Yimi onilobelayo, \ Owakini onitandayo' (1922a: viii) / 'It is I who writes this to you (for you) \ One of your own who loves you'.

<sup>139</sup> An 'isivivane' was an accumulated heap of stones or a memorial of heaped stones; travellers and passers-by would throw a stone on the heap since it was believed this would bring luck (See Doke, et al., 1958: 836).

<sup>140</sup> Hofmeyr calls this phenomenon, where pieces of a text circulate and find an audience in a language community even before their printed version arrives, the "biography" of the text (2004: 80).

<sup>141</sup> In the case of newspapers, Switzer notes that although the circulation rates for many black newspapers were fairly low, 'carry-on readerships', the practice of 'literate reading to nonliterate or passing publications on to other literates', were much higher (1997: 1).

<sup>142</sup> This should perhaps be *Ubaqa*. In his paper 'Writing down words: Death and Political Imagination', Khumalo (2005: 1) analyses an article that was published in a newspaper called *Ubaqa Lwabantwana* / 'The Enlightener of Children'; my assumption is that Etherington is referring to the same newspaper.

<sup>143</sup> Les Switzer provides, in the introductory chapter of *South Africa's Alternative Press*, a comprehensive account of the emergence of what he terms the 'black protest press' (1997: 1); he identifies four stages in this emergence. For our purposes the most relevant of these are the first two, namely the 'African mission press (1830s-1880s)' and the 'independent protest press (1880s-1930s)' (1997: 3). On the history of *Ilanga lase Natal* and its pioneer founder and editor, John Langalibalele Dube see for example Davis Jr. (1997), Marks (1986: 44) and Vilakazi (1945: 280).

<sup>144</sup> Switzer notes that by 1891, *Inkanyiso* claimed that it had 2, 500 subscribers and he considers this to be a high number for a mission newspaper (1997: 49n35).

<sup>145</sup> For this newspaper, Khumalo states that in the first six months of publication 550 subscribers were registered and it also distributed 50 free copies to readers in the Cape Colony, Rhodesia, Beira, Delagoa Bay, Natal and Zululand Province (2004: 244)

<sup>146</sup> John L. Dube was the founder of the newspaper and he also edited it from 1903 to 1915 (Davis Jr., 1997: 83ff.; Saunders and Southey, 2001 [1998]: 59).

<sup>147</sup> On July 10, 1903 the newspaper, for example, published a letter and a notice written in *Sesotho*. The letter was from a Paulose Mohai who was writing from 'Mokema, Basutoland' (1903: 3).

<sup>148</sup> The notion that a newspaper, as a cultural text, is an expression of either a 'dialogic voice' or a 'monologic' one is developed in Switzer (1997: 13).

<sup>149</sup> Switzer uses Jurgen Habermas' definition of the public sphere as 'the domain in our social life' where 'public opinion can be formed' (1997: 11) to argue that 'the public sphere in South Africa's alternative press was represented mainly by the black petty bourgeoisie before the 1940s' (1997: 12-13).

<sup>150</sup> 'Injobo' is a 'strip of wild-cat's skin forming the loin-covering of a Native man' (Doke, et al., 1958: 362).

<sup>151</sup> Benedict Anderson actually argues that the newspaper is 'merely an 'extreme form' of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity' (1991: 34).

<sup>152</sup> See also Sanders' account of why African writers like Ezekiel Mphahlele rejected not only 'vernacular' literature but also the *négritude* movement and its call for a return to Africans' traditional pasts (2002: 93-96).

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