THE IBALI LIKANONGQAWUSE:
TRANSLATING THE ORAL INTO VISUAL EXPRESSIONS

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DEDICATION

To my family and my three children Elna, Sibuyiselwe (Sibu) and Azeaskhe (Libo). To my mother, Beauty Nhlangwini, for her continuous support.
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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the problem

As is well known, most African people still acknowledge an oral tradition, whereby knowledge is passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. Credo Mutwa the well-known keeper of oral tradition, visual artist and sangoma (Zulu term for a diviner and/or spiritual healer) states that,

Knowledge is controlled among the Bantu by the orders of the chosen ones. Only certain knowledge is passed on to particular high ones of the tribe, such as they are required to know how to execute their duties. Very little knowledge is passed on to the common people and nothing is ever disclosed to strangers (1965, p.530).

It is assumed here, that the chosen high ones were the people with ability; skills and creativity which were acquired in a formal way. Therefore they were taught knowledge of their history, beliefs, culture, religion, mythology, legends, stories of their tribe. In this regard, it may be considered that the oral tradition of a particular tribe was told by the keepers of tradition whom were aware of the artistic value of the oral tradition. Here, it should perhaps be accepted that the narrator of an oral tradition is an artist (Mutwa, 1965, p.530).

Now the Xhosa are a very good example of an African people who even now, make use of their oral traditions. Here, the nomenclature Xhosa is a generalized term which may be employed to cover the following diversity of eight proud clans, viz: The Tembu tribe, the Gcaleka tribe, the Mpondo tribe, the Bomvana tribe, the Mpondomise tribe, Fingo tribe, the Bhaca tribe and the Xesibe tribe.
The Xhosa territory (cf. Figure 1), situated in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, is split into two halves, separated by the great Kei River. The Transkei being in the North and the Ciskei in the South.

![Map of the Eastern Cape showing the traditional homelands of the various Xhosa chiefs and their tribes (Elliott 1970, p.19)](image)

Figure 1

*Map of the Eastern Cape showing the traditional homelands of the various Xhosa chiefs and their tribes (Elliott, 1970, p.19)*

Briefly, only a small number of the Xhosa people still retain their oral tradition in the Eastern Cape, because they are caught between western civilization and ancient tribal life. Traditionally, Xhosa tribal life has a rich oral tradition which may even be viewed as a form of genre as well as being a traditional means of education. Lee states that,

> These stories are current among the people living on the eastern border of the Cape Colony. They have been gathered chiefly from ancient times. They are the best narrators, and they will tell their stories only in the evening, when the belief in the supernatural is stronger than by day. The tales
are already becoming modified by recent story-tellers, because of the influx of modern ideas (1931, p.27).

In this regard, the oral traditions of the Xhosa people form a basic means of self-realization and it expands their knowledge of the past and the present. In this sense, their modern artistic skills and creativity originate from their oral traditions.

The effects of western civilization and also the apartheid era forced people to marginalize their tribal life and their traditions. The Xhosa men and women had to leave their rural areas for work in urban areas, often taking their oral traditions with them, which later got influenced by the new urban life style. The Xhosa people are now mostly urbanized, but one can still find the rich oral tradition in the rural areas of Ciskei and Transkei.

Seemingly, the Western civilization and the apartheid system did not only affect the movement of people from rural to urban area only, it affected and influenced the peoples’ oral tradition and their art, and their way of life. The socio-political and economic system divided people along racial lines and forced them to live their rural areas and move to towns and cities.

The Xhosa oral tradition may be categorized as follows:

- *Iintsomi* (imaginative narratives)
- *Izibongo* (poetry)
- *Iirayirayi* (riddles)
- *Amaghalo* (proverbs)
- *Amabali* (historical narratives)

All of the above forms of the narrative depend in some way on imagery that come out of the everyday life of the community and associated experiences, which are artistically tailored to function in contemporary life.
**Iintsomi (Imaginative Narratives)**

*Iintsomi* depend on images fashioned both by the artistic tradition and by contemporary life; performers blend these and structure them in various ways. The types of stories told to people differ according to the age of audiences. For example, there are stories targeted for children and stories for adolescents as well as adults (Scheub, 1975, p.5-6).

Stories with a moral purpose as well as those for pure amusement may be told to anybody, no matter how young or old they are but in most cases, amusing stories are aimed at the youth for entertainment (Finnegan, 1978, p.350).

The moral stories are educative and formative. The artist will take the original story and shape and model it to express the theme/core of the *iintsomi*, which is directed at the audience. The artist might blend together the original story with details taken from contemporary life. This is a world that the people have first hand knowledge of, in order for the audience to better enjoy and understand the moral of the story (Finnegan, 1970,p.328).

The artist depends largely on the audience for their participation, in order to make for a more entertaining experience. In this regard, the audience must take part in the story telling process and the artist will often use gestures, movement, body language, and mimicry, as his tools to better portray the imagery (Finnegan, 1970, p.385).

**Izibongo (Poetry)**

The art of *izibongo* is a flourishing practice among the Xhosa to this day. Many, but not all leaders have their own *imbongi* or courtly poets. Both children and adults may be poets, composing lyrics relating to kings, to themselves, to their cattle and their dogs. Certain images become tied to certain personalities or categories of leadership but the artistic characteristics of the form, remain constant (Scheub, 1975, p.22).
**Amabali (Historical Stories)**

*Amabali* are historical accounts composed of local events, which were passed down by family tradition, such as war, famine, drought etc.

In most cases, these narratives are more exact as regard to time and places mentioned in the story. In most instances, these narratives are supplemented further by means of fantasy (Kaschula, 2001, p.xv).

These narratives deal mainly with the history of past rulers, military leaders or folk heroes of the particular society. In some cases, there could be a belief that the whole community had once been saved from a disaster by a long-dead member of the tribe. This would form the basis for an historical narrative or *ibali*.

In some cases members of the community might be specifically chosen to memorize the genealogy of the nation and to transmit it to the next generation. Mutwa states that,

There are men and women, preferably with black birth-marks on either palm of the hands, with good memories and a great capacity to remember words and to repeat them exactly as they had them spoken. These people were told the history of the tribes, under oath never to alter, add or to subtract any word. Anyone who so much as thought of changing any of the stories of his tribe that he had been told fell immediately under a “high curse” which covered him, his children and his children’s children. These tribal storytellers were called guardians of the Umlando or Tribal History (1965, p.xiv).

The reason for telling amabali (historical stories) is not so much to entertain, but rather to educate people, to inform them about an important fact and to arm them against danger in their specific cultural environment (Finnegan, 1970, p.351). The aim of the amabali is to answer questions about our world. For example, Why
is something so? In this regard, an *ibali* explains an extraordinary phenomenon or recalls a memorable event. Generally, *amabali* have only content and little fixed form or style. They do not have a fixed framework such as fictitious tales. As has already been stated, Gabel and Bennett states that, the motive for telling a legend is not so much to entertain, but rather to educate (1976, p.57).

According to the Xhosa *Amabali* are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience and they are set in a period which is contextually accurate from the narrator’s point of view.

*Ibali likaNongqawuse*

One of the most important *ibali* to come down to us is the famous story of Nongqawuse. The story known to the Xhosa people as the *Ibali likaNongqawuse*, is related to an actual historical incident known as the Cattle-Killing event of 1856-7. According to the oral tradition, Nongqawuse was born in Kentani in the (Transkei) in about 1841 (Meintjes, 1971, p.240). thus at the time of the Cattle-Killing Event of 1856-7 she was about 15-16 years old. It is believed by many that Nongqawuse was Mhlakaza’s niece (i.e. his late brother’s, daughter). Regardless, she was taken care of by Mhlakaza. It is said that Nongqawuse was called by her ancestors to become initiated as an *igqirha* (what the Europeans would later term as being a witchdoctor) and she was undergoing her training at the time.

Depending on the version told, it is said that one day she either went to the fields or to the river together with her first cousin (i.e. Mhlakaza’s daughter), who was younger than her. She saw two strangers standing in the marsh or the reeds of a river. They called her name, and they spoke to her.

They gave her a message to tell Mhlakaza, that they were their long dead and forgotten heroes who lived in the world of the ancestors. They were aware of the people’s sufferings at the hands of the colonists. They told her to go and tell her
uncle to purify himself and come to the river so that they could tell him what
to do and to give their message to the King of the Xhosas, Sarhili and his people.
Mhlakaza later went down to the river to meet the messengers for himself. In this
version of the story, the ancestors in the river told him that the Xhosa people must
stop witchcraft, and blood shedding, and that they must kill all their cattle and
destroy both their corn fields and their storage pits and in addition milk sacks (milk
storage). Hereafter, they must wait for their ancestors to be resurrected physically as
an ancestral army who would defeat the colonists. In addition, strong winds would
blow the colonists into the sea. The old people would become young, and the loved
ones would come back to life, and a new stock of cattle would supernaturally re-
appear. It is quite apparent from the resurrection bias of this message that it had
strong Christian undertones.

According to the ancestors, on some future day after the slaughter of their stock, the
people must go to the river and witness the return of their ancestors who would rise
out of the sea with a brand new stock and a brave army.

The sign of the return of the ancestors would be that, the sun would rise in the east as
per usual but halfway through the day it would stop and move back to the east, where
it would set.

King Sarhili was instrumental in encouraging the people to believe the prophecy of
Nongqawuse. As a result of the fervor, the Xhosa actually slaughtered their stock and
burned their corn preparing for the day of miracle. When the day came, people from
the old Transkei flocked to the mouth of the Kei River, and those from the old Ciskei
looked to the Mpongo River. The sun rose from the east as usual and set in the west
as usual. The people did not see any brave soldiers, neither did they see any brand
new stock nor corn in their fields. After that, there was starvation, people died of
hunger because they had destroyed their cattle and corn. However, not all Xhosa
people died of hunger, only those who had heeded the prophecy.
New Policy Regarding Oral Tradition

The tribal life and the oral tradition of black South Africans have been marginalized. The consequence of the western civilization and the apartheid regime forced people to do away from their traditional heritage and culture; they adopted the western way of life. They buried their oral tradition and only a little has survived.

To save the dying culture of the art of the oral tradition we need to go out and record and document the surviving oral tradition as soon as possible. Since the art of the oral tradition is an art form conducted by an artist, it may be possible to tell the *ibali likaNongqawuse* by means of visual imagery.

Visual images can be read and be understood easily by the public because visual forms, sings, images can make up a language for both the literate as well as the illiterate.

1.2 The Problem

How can a visual artist best interpret/ translate/ transliterate/ the message of the oral tradition as it applies to the (*ibali*) historical story (event) of Nongqawuse as told by the Xhosa tribe in the Eastern Cape.

1.3 The Sub-problems

1.3.1 What importance do the Xhosa tribes under investigation give to the oral tradition of Nongqawuse at present?

1.3.2 What are the linguistic devices/visual imagery/symbols of the oral tradition of the Xhosa tribe’s in the Eastern Cape Region as they pertain to the story of Nongqawuse?
1.3.3 What are the visual corollaries to the linguistic signifiers, explained in the oral tradition under investigation?

1.4 Definition of terms

1.4.1 Phenomenology

Since I wish to take a phenomenological approach I was indebted to Littlejohn’s work (Theories of Human Communication) which deals with the factors concerning how, why, and what people communicate. In the same way I am concerned with how people experience their world and how they see it. Phenomenology entails the study of ways in which people experience the world they live in. The word phenomenon refers to the appearance of an object, event or condition. Phenomenology thus, looks at the object, events and conditions from the perspective of an individual who experiences them. It is then, the way an individual interprets his conscious experience (Littlejohn, 1992, p.215).

The actual lived experience of an individual, according to this approach, becomes the basic data of knowledge. Phenomenologists examine lived experiences to see what is there. For instance “if you want to know what love is, you would not ask the poets or psychologists; you would tap into your own consciousness of love in your life and in lives of others” (Littlejohn, 1992, p.216).

According to Stanley Deetz, phenomenology has three basic principles. The first is that knowledge is conscious in that it is not inferred from experience, but is expressed in conscious experience itself. The second concerns the fact that meanings are attributed to a phenomenon on the basis of the potential of those things or an individual’s actions. How a person relates to an object will then determine the meaning. Third, through language, meanings can arise through which we will experience the world. Labels can perhaps be attached to an object (Littlejohn, 1992, p.216).
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1.4.2 Witchdoctors

It is important to establish at the outset that the members of the Xhosa spiritual leadership were commonly referred to as “witchdoctors” by the British colonists (cf. 1.5, Delimitations). This term is still used by many writers (even fairly recently). Here they still refer to the shaman or spiritual leader of a non-European or non-Western culture as a “witchdoctor”. This reflects a very negative view and implies that because the indigenous religion is non-Christian it is somehow evil or inauthentic. In this dissertation the term “witchdoctor” will only appear when it is used by an authority who has been quoted. Therefore under normal circumstances specific terms such as “diviner” or more general terms such as “spiritual leadership” will be employed in this study. In most cases I will defer to the Xhosa term igqirha, the plural of which is amagqirha.

1.4.3 Xhosa

In these modern times (e.g. late twentieth and early twenty-first century), very few Xhosa people (if any) adhere to all the traditional beliefs and practices prevalent say in the nineteenth century. For example, today the Xhosa refer to themselves as being either “Red” Xhosa or so-called “Schooled” Xhosa. The “Red” Xhosa refers to the ever shrinking group of people that still believes in the more traditional Xhosa life style and the “Schooled” Xhosa refers to those people who have a strong Western influence. Pauw (1975, p.3) states that: “throughout the
Cape Nguni area conspicuous contrasts have developed between the conservative pagan Xhosa, called ‘Red’ people, and the ‘School’ people who are associated with churches and schools and have accepted many elements of Western culture which the Reds have not”. However, the “Red” Xhosas are often assumed to be those who stay in the rural areas and the “Schooled” Xhosa are the ones who stay in the Townships. In fact, in these modern times this does not apply in all cases. It must also be understood that the so-called “Red” and the “Schooled” Xhosa are no longer two distinct groups and many of them share common rituals, customs and traditions. Therefore when used in this dissertation, the terms “Red Xhosa” and “Schooled Xhosa” will refer to the general concept as presented by Pauw and not to specific situations.

![Figure 2](qaba_red_xhosa.jpg)

*Figure 2*

*Qaba “Red Xhosa” (1948) (Broster, 1967, p.2)*
1.5 Delimitations

It will not be possible to research the whole oral tradition of South Africa. Only selected Xhosa speaking tribes such as The Tembu tribe, the Gcaleka tribe, the Pondo tribe, the Bomvana tribe, the Mpondomise tribe, Fingo tribe, the Bhaca tribe and the Xesibe tribe from the Eastern Cape Region will be surveyed in this investigation from the oral tradition. In addition i will only investigate the historical event of Nongqawuse.

One is also very reliant on what meanings the Xhosa people ascribe to certain symbols and colours today and we must assume that some of these meanings, although they may once have had a traditional meaning this is now lost in some cases. In this regard, it is the more modern interpretations that will have relevance for Xhosa people alive today. In this context, these will have greater relevance when attempting to translate the oral tradition (as it exists today) into a visual form, which can be understood by the modern Xhosa. These modern interpretations will quite likely include many Western influences and nuances (albeit Africanized).

1.6 Rationale

This research should be considered important for at least three reasons, viz.: The colonial era brought civilization, industrialization, urbanization and technology that led to the negation of the validity of the oral tradition. This research intends to faithfully record an aspect of the oral tradition as an art form which has up until now been marginalized and may be in danger of dying. By drawing from and evaluating the various sources available, it may be possible to reasonably and faithfully video record and interpret the events surrounding the life of Nongqawuse in an objective and informed manner, unaffected by political interpretation and popular legends.

An interface may be created whereby the essence/linguistic purpose of the oral tradition may be translated successfully into a visual linguistic form.
1.7 Assumptions

1.7.1 The First Assumption

It is assumed that story telling is an art form, which is a product of artistry and knowledge.

1.7.2 The Second Assumption

When a storyteller is narrating, performing, illustrating and describing the events of Nongqawuse’s prophecies in story form, the listener (who may be an artist) will be able to visualize the images of the story as it is being told by the storyteller.

1.7.3 The Third Assumption

It is assumed that the oral tradition has many inter-related functions, e.g. it educates, moralizes, encourages self-knowledge and enriches one’s culture.

1.8 Review of related Literature

My own approach will rely on the insights offered by Dimbleby and Burton (More than words: an introduction to communication, 1985). In their research, they clearly explain how sign and words can affect the meaning of what people communicate. They inform us about the use of body language, paralanguage and dress, this tells us a lot about people’s “feelings, attitude and intentions” (Dimbleby and Burton, 1985, p.43).

My investigations will be concerned primarily with the Xhosa storytellers and the iimbongi usage of linguistic devices, visual imagery, gestures and symbols in relation to how the ibali likaNongqawuse is narrated. By employing both visual as well as
audio recording devices such as sound recordings and video, of the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*, I will carefully look at these various linguistic devices and ascertain their significance in an attempt to understand how they are interpreted by the majority of traditional Xhosa. If necessary, linguistic signifiers will also include such factors as (for example, the way a Xhosa imbongi dresses, which may say a lot about his/her personality, role, job and status as narrator in the community) and the use of traditional dress, costumes and fashion.

The authors Morris, Collett, Marsh, and O’Shaughnessy (*Gestures their origins and distribution*, 1979) have supplied me with an excellent methodological frame-work which can assist me with my field work. In this regard, their method (see below) will be applied to my search for the importance the Xhosa story tellers (*imbongi*) give to any gestures whilst telling the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*. In a similar context, they have conducted a field project on how people communicate by using gestures. They have examined the geographical, historical background to the local people of certain areas.

Subjects were selected at random in such places as squares, streets, parks, and bars. Interviews were conducted and the assistance of local interpreters sought depending on the particular location. They collected a sample of key gestures which, were normally considered to be of little importance since they were felt to be inferior and primitive. In this regard, they state that “In the first place, gestures have quite wrongly been considered a trivial, second-class form of human communication” (Morris, Collett, Marsh and O’Shaughnessy, 1979, p.iv). In order to inform my research apropos the historical data, relevant research concerning the cattle-killing of 1856-57 has been consulted. This historical background informs us about the people who took part in this event and the more plausible reasons for this event.

It must be noted that several historians have conducted research on the topic of the Xhosa oral tradition. Many of them have specifically focused on the historical event of Nongqawuse known as the Cattle-Killing of 1856-57. This event was the result
(indirectly or directly) of the frontier wars, which led to the conflicts between the Xhosa and the settlers in the Eastern Cape Colony. It was possibly initiated by a young girl known as Nongqawuse and her uncle Mhlakaza.

Researchers have recorded the Xhosa historians, tribal poets, and the keepers of oral tradition. Many books (see source list) have been written about Xhosa kings and chiefs and their kingdoms. Records of these kings and their lineage, their duties, traditions, culture and customs have been documented as well. Artists such as Frederick I Ons and Thomas Baines made excellent illustrations of the lives of the Xhosa and the Settlers from the time they started interacting. These illustrations depict the Xhosa Chiefs such as Sandile, Maqoma, and the life style of the Xhosa, as well as the wars that they fought.

Historians such as J. Meintjes, N. Mostert, A. Elliot, S. Thorpe and J.B. Peires did intensive research regarding the cattle killing of 1856-57.

Thorp’s dissertation only investigates the comparison of the North American Indians (Ghost dance of 1890) and the Xhosa cattle killing of 1856-57. Peires, a pioneer in the history of the Xhosa and the Frontier wars wrote a book called the Dead Will Arise (1998). He investigated intensively the history, the Xhosa prophets and the prophecies of Nongqawuse. All these historians gained their historical information from books as well as from oral traditionalists.

As I have already indicated in my statement of the problem my main focus will be different to these historians. In this regard my research will lead to an investigation of the possibilities it offers for a visual artist to interpret/transliterate/translate the message of the oral tradition as it applies to the historical event (ibali) of Nongqawuse as told by the Xhosa tribe in the Eastern Cape.

The story will be visualized in images explaining the event and what might actually have happened. This information will form the basis for my proposed images, which
I will gather from the related sources, mainly as told by the Xhosa people in the Eastern Cape.

1.9 Methodology

1.9.1 Research Design 1

In order to investigate the problem statement, the following methodology will apply:

A phenomenological approach will be taken in my research, where the task at hand will be to carefully examine the lived experience of the storytellers and their interpretation of *ibali likaNongqawuse* in order to better understand how the Xhosas perceive their own world. This interpretation of their experience will take place through the visual as well as the oral linguistic mediums. Firstly, I will find out who is a storyteller or *imboni* in the areas I will be visiting in the rural and urban areas. A questionnaire (see below) will be presented to them before I start recording the story. This questionnaire will be the survey of how many male and female *imboni* and storytellers I have interviewed and recorded in relation to the *ibali likaNongqawuse*. All the questions in the questionnaire will determine the percentage of how many people have heard and still tell the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*. Video recordings of *imboni* and oral traditionalists telling the historical event of Nongqawuse will be made. In this regard an attempt will be made to collect as many recordings of the story as possible in order to ascertain a range of the core story line. I will also conduct interviews with the local traditional oral historians. In my research I will be paying close attention to such factors as the use of linguistic devices, visual imagery and symbols if any.

Since the historical event being investigated is related to the Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape, visits to the Ciskei and the Transkei areas will be the priority. In the Ciskei and Transkei, attention will be given to towns on either side of the Kei River. Towns such as East London, King Williams Town and Stutterhem in the
Ciskei area and Butterworth, Idutwywa and Queenstown on the Transkei area will be concentrated on. Visits will be to both urban and rural areas, the aim being to find storytellers and *iimbongi* still in existence. Grouping of storytellers and *iimbongi* according to age and experience will then take place.

In this regard video recordings will be made of the actual storytelling process, which pertains to the particular storyteller. A formal analysis will be made of each storytelling performance. Comparisons will be drawn, in order to compare the commonality of the following.

**Linguistic devices**

- The body movement of the *iimbongi* when they tell the story.
- Communication of changing mood.
- Gestured information.
- Verbal exchanges.
- Emotional state.
- Posture.

**Storyline**

- I will investigate whether the story is told differently from town to town.
- Cultural factors which might impact significantly on the way the story is being told and understood.
- I will find out whether there are different versions of the story.

This will be done in order to determine whether the majority of the storytellers canvassed employ identical or similar imagery in their narration. This is important because the candidate’s proposed visual translation of the oral tradition must communicate to as broad a range of the Xhosa nation as possible.
As this research is based on translating oral to visual, the aim will be to find commonalities within the story as it is being told. From the different versions of the story, and from this data an attempt will be made to formulate a storyline, coupled with the recording of symbols and imagery which is universal to the Xhosa nation.

1.9.2 Research Design 2

A drafted questionnaire will enable the researcher to gather the information leading to the historical event. The event as told by Xhosa people in the Eastern Cape (cf. Appendix A)

1.9.3 Research Design 3

Before moving to the practical, that part of the research, stemming from the Questionnaire, will in fact evaluate the usefulness of the linguistic devices (cf. Appendix A) as visual clues for the paintings. For example the storytellers may see it in one way and the audience another way.

The researcher will find out from the audience by asking them as to whether their images they visualized are in accord with what the storyteller is portraying. The response and answers received from the audience will help to evaluate the right images, which will be communicated to the viewers.

1.9.4 Research Design 4

For the studio work component, after having established the core story, all of the above linguistic devices such as the visual images and symbols will then be included in the paintings.

I will then visualize the oral images compiled from the commonalities found in the process of storytelling. This will take the form of small preparatory paintings
(including modelli) depicting occurrences within the story which will form part of the research that will culminate with the composition of a main painting.

In this series of research paintings I will depict the traditional symbolic meanings of such linguistic signifiers as various colors, types of beads etc. The modelli, preliminary paintings and the final work will be implying visual realism. The investigation will attempt to concretize the concept expressed in the hypothesis of this research.

1.10 Hypothesis

It will be possible to visually translate the ibali lika Nongqawuse as told by the Xhosa tribe in the Eastern Cape in a series of narrative paintings by carefully examining the lived experience of the storytellers and their interpretation of ibali lika Nongqawuse.

1.11 Overview of the Research

The following is an overview of the proposed study.

Chapter One is the introduction. Wherein the research is placed in context, the problems of the research are stated and the parameters of the research are defined.

Chapter Two is a general background to the traditions, beliefs and symbolism of the Xhosa Nation. Here the historical facts (as they are known) will be discussed in relation to such things as the early history of the Xhosa nation, traditional customs and practices especially as these relate to land usage, ownership of cattle and ancestor worship.

Chapter Three is the historical background of the British occupation of the Eastern Cape Colony up to 1820. Here, the historical facts pertaining to the positive and negative effects of British culture and Christianization for the occupied Xhosa and
especially the resultant land disputes that took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century will be discussed.

**Chapter Four** will deal specifically with those key role players and factors which directly impacted on the Cattle-Killing event of 1856-7. Here, short biographies will be given for each role player as well as the historical facts relating to the British involvement which resulted either directly or indirectly with the Cattle-Killing event of 1856-7.

**Chapter Five** will attempt to determine the actual events which gave rise to the *ibali lika Nongqawuse* and furthermore will look at the four most likely interpretations possible given the historical information which is still available.

**Chapter Six** is a summary of the questionnaire employed to determine the Xhosa people’s contemporary understanding of the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*.

**Chapter Seven** is an analysis of the completed painted narratives which attempt to translate the *ibali lika Nongqawuse* in a visual medium.

**Chapter Eight** is the conclusion, where the research is evaluated and an analysis of the completed painted narratives which attempt to translate the *ibali lika* Nonqgawuse into a visual medium.
CHAPTER TWO

Xhosa Culture

A general background to the traditions, beliefs and symbolism of the Xhosa Nation

2.1 Preamble

This chapter is a general background to the traditions, beliefs and symbolism of the Xhosa Nation. Here the historical facts (as they are known) will be discussed in relation to such things as the early history of the Xhosa nation, traditional customs and practices especially as these relate to land usage, ownership of cattle and ancestor worship.

It must also be realised that strictly speaking, it is quite difficult to ascertain, with any real degree of accuracy, precise details pertaining to Xhosa religious beliefs, customs, dress codes and symbolism before the advent of European influence and modern documentation (cf. Delimitations 1.5). Certainly, the only written records we have from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were from European sources with obvious bias.

To support the existence of this bias, Fleming who is an authority mentions that, “The witchdoctors are generally chosen for their personal ugliness, combined with inherent cunning and deception” (1969, p.271).

2.2 Early history of the Xhosas

According to the Xhosa myths of creation, they believed that they inherited the land directly from their ancestors who received it from the uThixo (the creator). Their oral tradition is that they originated from Eluhlangeni (the place of reeds). Peires
mentioned that “it is a current belief among them, that far to the north of their country, there is a vast subterraneous cavern, from which their horned cattle originally came (1989, p.132).

In this regard, it is assumed by the Xhosa people that they came out from the river and marshes and others believe that they came out from subterranean caverns (as has already been mentioned). This belief is common with all the Black African peoples (Hodgson, 1982, p.19).

The nomenclature “Xhosa” is a generalised term which may be employed to cover the following diversity of eight clans: the Tembu tribe, the Gcaleka tribe, the Mpondo tribe, the Bomvana tribe, the Mpondo tribe, the Mfengu tribe, the Bhaca tribe and the Xesibe tribe. Their territory is situated in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, and it is split into two halves, separated by the Kei River. The Transkei being in the North and the Ciskei in the South (cf. Figure 1).

It is believed that the Xhosa were the third group of people who moved down to occupy the area of South Africa known as the Eastern Cape which later became a British colony (Tyrrel, 1968, p.183). Elliot informs us that, after the KhoiKhoi and the San, “The Xhosa were the first Bantu people (as opposed to Hottentots and Bushmen) to be encountered by the early white pioneers” (1970, p.11).

2.3 Land usage

The Xhosa life style depended mainly on their land for cultivation as well as for the grazing of their animals and their herds of cattle. For this the need for land was fundamental to these people which resulted in their migrating from their land of origin (Central Africa) to South Africa. According to the original Xhosa tradition the land belonged to the king who had jurisdiction over it and its people. He also had control over the crops and the cattle. He never owned the land personally as it was considered to be a communal property. Geen emphasizes this point well when he states that the chief “had no right to alienate the land; and ignorance of this fact
often led Europeans into making what they regarded as purchases of land from chiefs” (1958, p.12).

Thus we can see that the Xhosa regarded land as held in common by their community. This included other black nations who were conquered, and those who were running away from other stronger groups, who came to seek a place to stay. The fugitives were given a piece of land on which to cultivate their crops, and to graze their animals.

![Image of Xhosa women using agricultural implements](image_url)

*Figure 3*

*Xhosa women using agricultural implements (1970s) (Elliott, 1970, pg.36)*

They believed in sharing the land with other people who were in need of it. All this was done in a proper way by first asking the chief then consulting with the people of the neighbouring village in question. An example of this was the Mfengu who were refugees driven from Natal by the Zulu King Tshaka (Thompson, 1990, p.75). They never owned land for themselves, and therefore were given refuge by the Xhosa on their land.

The land was used by the chief, his councillors and his people. There was enough land for everybody, but could only be used with permission from the authority, in other words the chief or the king. Hull mentioned that, they cultivated crops such as “sorghum, (millets) beans, yams, pumpkins, and calabashes” (1981, p.24). When the
land proved to be dry or barren they would move on in search of a better land. Because of this habit they were considered to be a “purely pastoral” and “a nomadic race” (Fleming, 1969, p.214). If a stranger from another district wished to cultivate, he would pay for the piece of land he desired in the form of a cow or an ox, which would be given to the chief. This would later be slaughtered in rituals, either for the ancestors of the chief who, represented the whole nation, or the beast would be slaughtered when rituals for the harvest were performed.

2.4 The role of Cattle in Traditional Xhosa Society

According to Hodgson, the oral tradition recorded by Ayliff in 1846, the Xhosa believed that cattle “emerged” first, before mankind (cf. 2.2). As has already been mention that the Xhosa people believed that came out from the river, caves and holes they further assumed that they learned to domesticate cattle and other animals that came after him (1982, p.19).

Thorpe (1982, p.29) who is an authority on the Xhosa Cattle-killing (1856-57) confirms that:

Nguni people were herdsmen, cultivators and hunters. Perhaps their relationship to their cattle was one of the most outstanding characteristics noted by early European travellers among them, although their peaceful, law-abiding manners and their hospitality were also note-worthy (sic)

Seemingly, the Xhosa people were different to the former inhabitants of the Eastern Cape, particularly the San who were just hunters and gatherers. The Xhosa, unlike the KhoiKhoi, depended mainly on their herds of cattle and land for cultivation. This was again confirmed by Thorpe in her text about a report by Theal in one of his journals. It states that: “early recorders indicate that the cattle population was at least double the size of the human population” (1982, p.29).
To the Xhosa, cattle were very important in practically every aspect of their everyday life: They were a means of communicating with their ancestors. Cattle were also regarded as a basic element of their economy.

2.4.1 Economic aspects

Traditionally a herd of cattle would determine the wealth, dignity and the social stature of a man in the community, and what he could afford to pay: especially *lobola* (dowry) for a number of wives.

The cattle would also be used for the payment of fines and for bartering. Thorpe (1982, p.29) states that:

They lavished care on their cattle, each man training his herd to respond to whistles, bending the horns of oxen in shapes regarded as beautiful, displaying them at dances, making up poems about them, and identifying himself with a favourite ox...

As can be ascertained much care was taken as regard to cattle, which was a means of wealth to the family. They would be looked after, be given names, be trained to listen to their owners' whistles and be taken to shows to compete with other cattle. The head of the family would make sure that he treated any disease affecting his cattle. The Pondo, who are a Xhosa clan, used herbs to treat their cattle against diseases that were common during the spring season. They even used medicine to make their stock multiply and to keep them safe from the witchcraft that they believed was practised by their fellow people who wanted to kill their cattle or to make them barren (*cf*. 5.3). Cattle owners would go as far as buying medicine from a specialist in herbs. The recipe for the medicine was kept as a secret in the family, and they did not tell others what those herbal recipes consisted of. An example of ritualistic magic is given by Hunter (1936, p.67), who states that: “a generally known charm for increasing herds is to burn a tortoise in the kraal”.

Cattle were inherited mainly by males who were members of a family, who in turn used cattle to pay lobola for their brides. The birth of a baby girl in a family created a great deal of satisfaction because girls brought wealth to their fathers. On their marriage, they earned lobola for him from the husband who carried them off.

Female members of the family (daughters) represented cattle when they got married, because more cattle would come into the family. By this practice the Xhosa people exchanged their wealth, where wealth was determined by quantity and not the quality of the cattle (Hunter, 1936, p.68). No family could run out of cattle as long as there were men and women in the family, which kept the lineage going. When a girl was married she would be given a cow where she would get milk and the “hair from the tail” (Elliot, 1970, p.50) to protect her children. This cow would enable her to start a new herd in her new family. In addition if her new husband inherited from his father, it would mean even more wealth for the new family.

2.4.2 Religious aspects

Cattle were sacrificed as symbolic food for ancestors. This was a common practice of the Nguni people of the Eastern Cape. Here it is understood that the kraal was employed as an altar where a cow or ox would be slaughtered (Wilson, 1971 p.27). Furthermore, Hunter, (1936, p.243) explains that normally the men of the umzi (family) would be assisted by the neighbours to slaughter the beast inside the kraal.

To this day, part of the skull and the horns of a cow or bull are nailed onto a pole and are placed at the gate of the cattle kraal. This signifies that the animal slaughtered as requested by the ancestors.
2.5 Traditional Xhosa social structure

The Xhosa traditionally enjoyed a well-developed form of cultural society. They were also orderly, peace-loving people with a strong sense of justice.

2.5.1 Xhosa leadership

Knight informs us that important decisions had to be made in consultation with the chiefs (since no decision was binding if made by a subordinate chief) (1994, p.147). The Xhosa had one king and lesser chiefs who were supposed to be respected.

However, Xhosa society acknowledged the right of both commoners and chiefs to ignore the king’s rulings if he had proved himself unfit for the job. For the Xhosa, even though a chief held a high status in the tribe, he was only a “representative,” who was also subject to local law and could be tried and fined by his own people (Grutter and van Zyl, 1981, p.24).

Xhosa chiefs treated their subordinates well and decisions were binding. In this way there was peace between them and their communities.

2.5.2 Ubuntu

This quality of peace and harmony is what the Xhosa call ubuntu (humanity). The concept of ubuntu is explained well by Elliot (1970, p.27):

The Red blanket Xhosa are sociable people, they love the company of their fellow men and keep an open house to any stranger. A traveller, on his way, never has to worry where he will sleep or get the next meal, because any family he comes to will share with him what they have and give him a place by the fire to sleep. In the same way, when a kraal has a beer-drink or a feast, there is no suggestion of (who will we ask) because everyone who is near
enough is automatically invited, and is expected to stay until there is nothing left of the slaughter to eat and no more beer to drink.

2.5.3 Issues regarding status

According to the Xhosa people status and ranks played an important role in their culture and traditions. It must be realised that duties were allocated according to the following: sex, age, rank and status in the community. It is also acknowledged by Hunter that traditionally a group of men would sit apart from women, each in possession of a basket of beer. (1936, p.256)

For example traditionally men and women never sit and eat together. According to Hunter, “Men and women seated themselves on their respective sides of the hut” (1936, p.253). In this regard, men would sit in the kraal and women in a hut whilst they drank their beer. As regards eating, the men will normally make a fire and cook and eat their meat inside the kraal whilst the women cook and eat their meat in a hut. When they have eaten the meat, the bones are collected and burned.

Normally the herding of cattle is done by males only. Boys aged between six and seven train by first herding goats, sheep and horses. Later they are promoted to herding cattle. Normally the herding of cattle would be done until a boy was aged between 16 and 18 years of age but in families where there are no boys, young girls may herd up the cattle until they start menstruating i.e. (reach puberty)

2.6 Traditional Xhosa Beliefs

The Xhosa traditional beliefs were similar to those of all Africans. They believed in the same religion, customs and tradition as did their forefathers. They never questioned or disagreed with those beliefs, because they felt they were right for them. It helped them to survive as a nation, in families, in homes and as individuals. They
also survived for many centuries by using charms and medicine for good harvests for making rain, for winning battles, and for health.

The traditional Xhosa strongly believed in superstitions and also respected their ancestors, king and chiefs. They had to be loyal to the King whose “war cry they obey” (Fleming, 1969, p.212). He was regarded as a link between the ancestors and his people. Thorpe (1982, p.97) states that:

Because they (the ancestors) have crossed the borderland between this world and the super-sensible world, entering and living in the latter, they have become freed from the restrictions imposed by the physical world. They can now come to abide with their folk on earth invisibly, to aid or to hinder them, to promote prosperity or cause adversity. To some extent, they are intermediaries between Deity or the divinities and their own children: this is a continuation of their earthly function whereby they combined the headships of the families or communities with the office of family or community priests or priestesses. During their earthly days, it was their duty to help, to ensure domestic peace and the well-being of the community, to distribute favours, to exercise discipline or enforce penalties, to be guardians of community ethics and prevent anything that might cause disruption.

2.6.1 *uThixo (the Creator)*

The Xhosa believed that their ancestors gained their power from *uThixo* or the Supreme Being who aided them when they went into battle. They also believed that he had the power to bestow prosperity and a good harvest. Fleming tells us that traditionally, the Xhosa had a distinct belief in the Supreme Being who is often referred to as *uThixo* but he has other titles for example, the Xhosa acknowledge Him under the two-fold titles “of uNkulukulu (the great essence) and uMmvelinguange” (Zulu word for the first comer-out). Of him or his attributes they understand nothing, neither do they worship or invoke him. The only approach to reverence or veneration amongst them, is shown to their chiefs, both living and dead.” (1969, p.259).
The dead kings and chiefs were believed to be closer to *uThixo* than the other people. Thus, ancestors especially dead Kings and chiefs were seen as a link between the Supreme Being and the living.

### 2.6.2 Ancestors

For the Xhosa people, their ancestors were venerated but not worshipped as gods. They were only regarded as their forefathers who once lived on this earth as human beings, who had once loved and taken care of them. The Xhosa never believed that their forefathers were dead, in the sense of having no further existence. Rather they believed that they had passed to a new world where they were still alive, in the same way as they lived in this world.

When someone dies, the Xhosa say *usishiyiile* meaning that “he/she left us”, and went to another world where he/she carried on living the way he/she did on earth. Geen (1958, p.13) states that:

> Ancestor worship as a family cult was, perhaps, the most conspicuous element in the religion of the African, but apart from this the tribe as a whole also acknowledged the ancestors of the chief as a source of guidance. The chief alone could act as mediator between the tribe and his ancestral spirits.

Only beneficent people, mainly the kings or chiefs could become ancestors of the tribe because they had the wisdom and the power, which they received from their ancestors to be able to lead and guide their subjects.

Therefore, only malevolent people such as witches, who were believed to bring disease, and death could only become malevolent ancestors who would send evil to the tribe and their descendants. Moreover, as Harrell suggests Ancestors, linked to their descendents by a chain of ritual and remembrance, represent both
those-who-have-gone-before and those-who-shall-come-after: (World Anthropology. 1976, p.207)

In a similar vein, it is a Xhosa belief that if you quarrel with someone, you have to make peace with that person, before they die, because as an ancestor, they might send you bad luck. The Xhosa also believed that the ancestors aided them in destroying evil things in the community.

2.6.3 Communication with ancestors

The Xhosa offered food and talked to their ancestors, thanking them for good harvests and the multiplication of the animals. The Xhosa did not kill cattle for sport or enjoyment but did so for ritualistic purposes, such as for occasions like birth, initiation, marriage, and death. In addition, cattle could be killed only when the ancestors requested it. Ritual killings could also be done when someone in a particular family dreamed of an ancestor.

If there is sickness in the family the igqirha would be consulted. The igqirha would consult with the ancestors to hear what they want, if they ask for beer then the igqirha will tell the family that they want traditional beer. In some cases traditional beer is brewed for the ancestors just to thank them for giving good health to the family.

2.6.4 The realm of the ancestors

The ancestors are either invisible, dwell in the forest or dwell underwater in the river or the sea. According to Pauw (1975, p.130). “The association some clans have with particular rivers where they perform special sacrifices for their ancestors may be connected with this belief in a land of the ancestors below rivers” to support Pauw’s statement, Elliot (1970. p.97) further mentions that according to the Xhosa:
The People of the River are the same size as humans and have long hair down to their shoulder, like the white people, but their skin can be any colour...white, yellow or black. There are men, women and children and they have families and babies, but they do not wear clothes. Their wrists and ankles are ‘soft’ (a suggestion of flipper*).

Here, it is assumed that the “People of the River” refers to ancestors in general whereas “ancestor” more normally refers to members of a person’s own family, who are now dead. It is important to note here that only normal ancestors may appear to the living in a dream but the “People of the River” (who are apparently never seen in dreams) may be seen playing in a body of water, be it a lake, a river or the sea. It is also believed that the “People of the River” cause the waves, water spouts and the wind.

Regardless of the explanation (which is not always logical), only the “People of the River” can get married (and even procreate), have children as well as keep animals, whereas normal ancestors do not. The general opinion of most Xhosa living today is that the “People of the River” are not technically ancestors in the sense that they are never dead relatives. It is assumed that they have strong magic and they protect the homestead at night and also may give blessings and good fortune. According to Elliot the spirits of the ancient ancestors work through the “People of the River” (1970, p.100).

However, the dead relative’s spirits may also be found in the rivers and the sea. In this regard, it must also be noted that the Xhosa people believe that when somebody drowns in a river, that person is believed to have been called by the “People of the River”. In this context, it is believed that the drowned person is not in fact dead but merely living with the “people of the river”.

In the same vein, one of the Xhosa people who was interviewed (Rudolf Kholoza) further mentioned that, it is believed by some, that a person may be
called by the “People of the River” and will then spend some time (many years in extreme cases), underwater being trained as an igqirha. (cf. 2.6.5)

2.6.5 The manifestation of Ancestors

The ancestors (i.e. other than the “People of the River”) make their wishes known to the living through visitations or dreams whereby they may come in the form of an animal such as an elephant or a dog. Elliot even claims that the Xhosa have seen ancestors appear in the guise of non-African forms such as tigers, which strongly suggests a Western influence. The most common animal seen in dreams by modern Xhosa is a dog. In most cases when it appears in a person’s dream it either attacks or defends. Pauw (1975, p.153) states that “Diminutive elephants, small girls who change into dogs with huge fiery eyes, and a particular clan-snake” were all mentioned by one informant as the way ancestors appeared to him in his dreams.

One of the persons interviewed (Mpunza Dingani) noted that, a visitation by the ancestors does not happen to just anybody. There are chosen people in the family, through whom, the ancestors can communicate to the elders of the family. The elders of the family are normally the most expert at interpreting the meaning of the dream. However, if in doubt they must consult with the amagqirha for an explanation. Sometimes the dream indicates that the ancestors want food, drinks or the dream is a warning that either good fortune or misfortune will occur.

For example, if the dream predicts say a misfortune like illness, then the family elders must consult with the igqirha to find a way to prevent it.

They may be advised by the igqirha as to whether the dream is important or not. In some instances the dreams will be just a warning that something bad will occur if a ritual is not performed.
Traditionally, only the head of the family (who was always male) could take the lead in the performance of a ritual. However, Pauw (1975, p.182.), informs us that in modern times, where Xhosas have embraced Christianity, both male and females may be required to perform a particular ritual.

However it is a common practice for the “Red” Xhosa custom for males to perform the ritual called for the ancestors.

2.6.6 The role of the Xhosa spiritual leadership in the Xhosa society

The Xhosa have many different terms to denote those persons who are considered to be such things as traditional healers, igqirha (healer), igqwirha (witch) ixhwele (herbalist) seers and prophets.

![Xhosa spiritual healers (igqirha) (Broster, 1967, p.84)](image)

*Figure 4*

**Xhosa spiritual healers (igqirha) (Broster, 1967, p.84)**

It must also be acknowledged that the Xhosa people (including their kings and chiefs) were strong believers in the power of their spiritual leadership and their practices (Elliot, 1970, p.118). Their kings and chiefs were guided and advised,
cleansed and strengthen for battle by them. For example amaggirha had a strong influence through what they believed was the power from the spirit of the ancestors who were the link between the living and the dead. They had the power to “smell-out” the evil which brought diseases, misfortune and death to the people and the tribe. The Xhosas still have such an enormous amount of faith in their amaggirha, that they will go to great lengths to acquire their services. The mystery of their powers apparently commands a great deal of respect and often leaves the audience overawed. (Word of mouth Chief J. Mabandla of the Mfengu tribe in Alice).

Seemingly, the belief and trust the people had in their amaggirha (especially before the influence of Christianity) led the amaggirha to take chances by convincing people that they could be in the spirit world and in the material world too. Amaggirha were believed to be intermediaries between the living and the ancestors because of the powers they possessed and were believed by most to be able to communicate with the spirit world.

One person interviewed (Fezekile Tiso) tells that, for a nation or tribe to be strong, it was supposed to have strong spiritual leadership in the form of an iqqirha (healer), iqg wirha (witch) ixhwele (herbalist) seer and prophets etc. Even kings or chiefs had their strong amagqghira (healers), amagqquirha (witches) amaxhwele (herbalists) seers and prophets who communicated with ancestors for the whole tribe. Chiefs would also choose a “war-doctor” to cleanse and protect the impi (regiments) when they went to war.

2.6.7 Christian influences

It was only when the British missionaries criticized the amaggirha of being false to their people, that they became known as prophets by the Xhosa people. For the amaggirha to be accepted in the Christian communities they had to mix the Christian and the Xhosa traditional religions. A well- known Xhosa prophet who had a Christian influence was a diviner by the name of Mhlakaza (cf. 3.5). This
is the same Mhlakaza together with his niece Nongqawuse (who was still training to become a igqirha) were to play such a dominant role in the Cattle Killing event of 1856-57. (Interviews with Prof. S. Makalima).

It seems that the coming of the missionaries brought religious doubt to the Xhosa and a questioning of the powers of the amagqirha. Many people were expected to simply do away with their traditional Xhosa beliefs as well as the rituals relating to the ancestors. Pauw tells us that this included a moratorium many customs, such as witchcraft, sorcery, divining, medicine, traditional dancing, giving and receiving ikhazi (marriage goods), and even polygamy (1975, p.21). Also those who were “smelled-out” by the amagqirha for having Christian sympathies were discarded from the tribe and the communities. They sought shelter at the mission stations before they were converted to Christianity.

2.7 The Symbolism of colour in Xhosa society

As has been discussed already, there are many aspects to the way the different sub-groupings of the Xhosa may practice a particular ritual or custom, and although these are obviously not always well defined, they do impact on the way modern Xhosa people perform such things as funerals, marriage and births. If one considers for a moment the symbolism associated with say colour, even though a particular group may continue to have the same taboos and rites as their forefathers, the specific meanings of particular colours may be somewhat different from what it was in say the nineteenth century. Pauw explains that: “Most Christians [e.g. ‘Schooled’ Xhosas A.N.] strictly observe some form of mourning, but details vary considerably. An important set of observances involves wearing black, and avoiding white and shiny objects” (1975, p.129).

It is true, that today, the colour black is employed by most Xhosa people as symbolic of death. It would appear that only black may be used as a symbol of misfortune, disruption and of darkness, whereas “whiteness is identified with light and
brightness” (Pauw, 1975, p.127). Here, some Xhosa regard white and/or shiny objects as a symbol of purity, renewal and even holiness e.g. igqirha (cf. Figure 4).

This is the reason why white, is generally avoided by a Xhosa family where (considered by many to be a bad thing) death has occurred. They will even abstain from drinking milk and wearing anything shiny during times of mourning. However, the colour white is used by the amagqirha and the abakhwetha (male initiates) and for the ancestral rituals (Interview with Prof. S. Makalima).

The colour red is strictly avoided during the mourning of the death of a family member. This includes the “avoidance of red ochre as cosmetics and colouring for clothing” (Pauw, 1975, p.126) the colour red symbolises the termination of something or going back to normal. For example when the boys have finished their circumcision rite they apply red ochre. In many cases the red colour is used by the Xhosa for their decorative cosmetics. It is certain that the Christian influence on the Xhosa people made them give some new symbolic meanings to certain colours. Pauw states that some “Zionists consciously avoid using black in mourning and for coffins, preferring blue and white, colours that figure prominently in their regular ritual” (1975, p.129). The colour blue was brought to the Xhosa by the missionaries, which possibly explains why the Xhosa Zionists use it as a symbol of darkness rather than black.

2.8 Traditional Xhosa Costume and Dress

2.8.1 Beads

It must be realized that beads were brought to South Africa by the European traders - from the 1830s the Italians and the Czechoslovakians brought beads for trading. In the 1950s the beadwork in the Cape Colony had reached such perfection that it was used for craftwork by the Nguni. This love for beads
features in their personal decoration and their clothes e.g. their long skirts, smoking pipes, tobacco bags etc. (Tyrrell and Jurgens, 1983, p.237).

Beadwork was ostensibly a Xhosa women’s occupation and, until very recently, was an essential skill. A woman would make all her own traditional garments and bead ornaments - love tokens for her boy friend(s) and later for her husband (Hammond-Tooke and Nettleton, 1989, p.42) as well as a beaded insignia for her children. Beads are used mostly for decoration (cf. Figure 6a and Figure 6b). In the Eastern Cape two kinds of bead are popular: small beads, referred to as intsimbi, and the larger round glass bead which resembles an eye-ball and is thus called amaso (eyes). Intsimbi are used for all kinds of bead weaving, stranded beadwork and bead coverings. Sinew from goats and cows or fibers from aloes were used to make threads onto which the beads are threaded.

Beading was and still is used for artistic purpose and as a means of communication in Xhosa society. By the beginning of the twentieth century a study of the meaning of colours used for bead works was conducted amongst the Zulus and the Swazi people (Tyrrell and Jurgens, 1983, p.237). Seemingly, the Nguni speaking people including the Xhosa-speaking people have the same meanings which may vary just a little, but somebody would be able to understand the status, the area and the tribe where the wearer come from by the “talking beads” she is wearing (Broaster, 1967, p.171).

Tyrrell and Jurgens explain the symbolic meaning of the colours of the beads. They have tried to come up with the common meanings of the colours from many tribes. In this regard, most off the meaning of colours need to be placed in context in order to be understood: (Tyrrell and Jurgens, 1983, p.242).

- White is a basic colour symbolic for purity, truth, and virtue.
- Black, like every colour except white may be for good or for bad meanings.
- Pink, the symbol of royalty, may symbolize poverty as well.
Blue, with its many shades may symbolize a lot of things such as a pale, grayish-blue a messenger, blue-grey for unhappiness, deeper royal blue for loyal and true heart.

Different beadwork and garments define a person’s age group, marital status, place of birth, and position in the community. Married woman would wear more “elaborate necklaces” to show that she had grown in status, but her necklace pieces would be lesser than that of a man. Men normally wear lots of pieces to show their wealth and status. Elliott gives an account where he noticed a man by the name of Dumane in the Kei Road wearing seventy pieces of beads (1970, p.33).

Young Xhosa boys would normally wear more beads than young girls. Boys would receive more beads that carry messages of love from their girl friends and secret admirers (Tyrrell and Jurgens, 1983, p.237). Girls would normally wear a lesser number of beads as they are considered to be less important.

2.8.2 Dresses

Elliott explains that before western clothes were introduced to the Xhosa people, they would wear a skirt made from ox hide or sheepskin. In both cases the hairless side was worn on the outside (Hammond-Tooke and Nettleton, 1989, p.41). In more recent years (mid twentieth century), most men and women increasingly wear westernized dress and carry a blanket. Modern “traditional” skirts, shawls, turbans and beadwork are normally worn only on special occasions. The standard “traditional” costume as worn today consists of an ankle-length flaring skirt and breast cover; a flaring collar and a plain but extravagantly large turban is worn on the head. The style of these head-dresses differ from person to person, however, young girls tend to wear theirs more closely wrapped than the older women (cf. Figure 2 and Figure 6a). The skirt is cut on a semi-circle and braided at the hem.
Each outfit may include up to as many as seventy pieces of beadwork. These include many necklaces, headbands, armbands, belts, girdles and body harnesses (Elliot, 1970, p.31).

2.8.3 Smoking pipes and Tobacco bags

According to Tyrrell, the original Xhosa smoking pipes were long and beaded; they were like an instrument used daily by the Xhosa adults (cf. Figure 10). The Xhosa adults would carry their pipe and the tobacco bag for a special occasion (1968, p.185). Furthermore, Elliott describes the Xhosa tobacco bags as being adorned with “jingling bells and a tassel or two of red or green wool” to make it more decorative. The Xhosa women also attach hand mirrors and handkerchiefs to their pipes. The man’s bag has a different quality to that of the women; it is made of animal skin such as monkey or goat. In many cases, the Xhosa men have perfected the skill of making these tobacco bags - they take the inside of the animal out without cutting the whole animal’s body. To finish up the bag the fur side is turned inside out. Men and women carry the same things inside their bags, like dried homegrown tobacco leaves. Men would even include such items as a pocketknife and a spike to take out thorns from their feet.

Men and women smoke as part of their social life. Since they use homegrown tobacco leaves, the act of sharing their tobacco is considered to be a good gesture. Pipes were traditionally lit with a glowing ember from the fire. (Elliot, 1970, p.34-35.)
Figure 5
Xhosa women dressed in traditional woollen blankets (Elliott, 1970, p.20)

Figure 6a
A Xhosa female wearing colourful beads (1970s)

Figure 6b
A Xhosa male wearing colourful beads (1970s)
Figure 7

A Xhosa man and woman dressed for a special occasion
Figure 8a  
Male Thembu headgear  
(1950s and 1960s)

Figure 8b  
Female Thembu headgear  
(1950s and 1960s)

(Courtesy of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth)

Figure 9a
Thembu beads of the 1950s and 1960s

Figure 9b
Thembu beads of the 1950s and 1960s

(Courtesy of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth)
Figure 10

Thembu smoking pipes (1950s and 1960s)
(Courtesy of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth)

Figure 11a
Tobacco bag made from animal skins decorated with beadwork

CHAPTER THREE

Historical background of the British occupation of the Eastern Cape Colony up to 1820

3.1 Preamble

This chapter deals with the historical background of the British occupation of the Eastern Cape Colony up to 1820. Here, the historical facts pertaining to the positive and negative effects of British culture and Christianization for the occupied Xhosa and especially the resultant land disputes that took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

3.2 The Genesis of British Occupation in the Eastern Cape

The world’s unknown lands were given to Spain and Portugal by Pope Alexander in 1493. This led to such Portuguese explorers as Bartholomew Diaz exploring such places as the Cape of Good Hope and the Indian Ocean. In this regard the Portuguese explorers were the first to sail around the Cape of Good Hope in search for trade and to discover a route to India by sailing round Africa (Hull, 1981, p.26). After the discovery of the sea route to India, countries like England, France, and Holland were competing for control of the spice trade routes. After the defeat of the French by the English in the eighteenth century, the English and the Dutch had the only trading companies that made use of the Cape of Good Hope for commercial purposes and as a stopping off place on the sea route to India.

It was as early as July 1620 that the British thought of permanent settlement which was intended “Both for treasure and for military reasons” (Schreuder, 1980, p.21) and to make the Cape Colony the essential link for communication between East and West. Britain had a plan prepared beforehand when they occupied the Cape. They saw the Cape Colony as “the vital Afro-centric agency of white expansion during the
South African partition” (Schreuder, 1980, p.26). According to Hull, the Europeans saw South Africa as a “kind of post office” (Hull, 1981, p.27) a place where they could stop and get refreshments. Britain was one of the European countries that was expanding and colonising the weaker countries including the Cape, which she officially occupied on 10 June 1795 (Chase, 1967, p.7). The British occupied the Cape Colony permanently in 1806 (Hull, 1981, p.38).

In this regard, the Cape Colony was given permanently to Great Britain by the Dutch at the London Convention on 13 August 1814. Their ideas of colonisation brought changes to the lives of the people who were subjugated by them. The British way of living, whether good or bad was enforced on the people already living in the lands they had conquered and colonised. In this manner, it is assumed that, civilisation was brought by the British. The colony was under British military rule whose original aim was not for permanent settlement, but to settle for a short period of time. It was only later that they decided to stay permanently. Their main focus was to look upon the basic laws and the customs of the settlement between the Dutch Boere (farmers) who were settling in the frontiers, who constantly clashed with the “defenceless Khoi” and the Xhosa who also could not defend themselves against the Boers (Hull, 1981, p.38). Another aim was to make sure that the French, (who were the enemy of the British) were prevented from taking over the Cape Colony.

This new government consisted of a civil administration controlled by the British Colonial Office, which was temporary and military in character. They wanted to keep peace and to protect the settlers and farmers against the Xhosa on the frontiers (Grutter and van Zyl, 1981, p.17).

To keep peace and order between the Xhosa and the settlers who occupied the area that belonged to the Xhosa, the British deployed an army to protect the settlers who were farming in the area.
3.3 The benefits of British occupation and life style

The life style of the British in the Cape Colony could be regarded in two ways, both positive and negative. The more negative aspects are discussed in section 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

This section will deal with the more positive aspects of British occupation. The British were good in a sense that they brought change to the indigenous people of the Cape Colony who were the San, KhoiKhoi and Xhosa. Some of these people had been exploited as slaves who were brought for labour by the Dutch. The British abolished slavery that was practised by the Boers and promoted free trade. The British government believed “that all men are equal” (Wilson, 1975, p.91). Therefore, they abolished slavery and courts were set up by1812 to try people who were ill-treating slaves. Hottentots became freemen under the British government in the Cape for the first time. This was something the boers did not appreciate at all.

The 1820 settlers brought in agricultural implements and introduced new breeds of sheep such as Merino. Because of this, they were able to export wool and other kinds of farm products to other countries (Butler, 1974, p.68). Their boom in agriculture, trade and the “presence of the army led to the growth of towns such as Port Elizabeth, Cradock, Graham’s Town, King William’s Town and East London” (Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa volume 2, 1970, p.508).

The situation was successful despite the fact that some of the British Colonists were not really farmers. Previously they had been artisans and tradesmen with various skills in the trade, which did not necessarily include farming. Even so, some of those who started farming were not successful due to the weather, pests and diseases (Wilson and Thompson, 1982, p.244).

Missionaries, explorers, administrative personnel, military officers and Governors played a very important part in the development of the colony. They carried out the
mission and the plan of the British to establish the Cape Colony and to bring Western civilisation to the indigenous people. Many schools, missions, and churches were built to educate the children of the English and Dutch settlers as well as the Xhosa people in the Cape Colony (Wilson and Thompson, 1982, p.245).

3.4 Land disputes

There was also a very negative side to the British occupation. In 1820 the British government brought their thousands of British immigrants and settled them in the Eastern Cape inner and coastal regions.

![Figure 12](image)

*Figure 12*  
*Land lost by the Xhosa people (Peires, 1989, p.320)*

The flow of Europeans in large numbers to South Africa increased as time went on. Their movement inland caused further frontier confrontations. The Xhosa and KhoiKhoi people were losing their land to the Europeans who were coming into the country. Chief Mhontlo of the aMampondo remarked that he would “rather die than endure what is coming” (Schreuder, 1980, p.64). Mhontlo had a feeling that the
flow of settlers was going to cause problems such as the Xhosa losing power and authority over their land.

In addition, boundaries were set up to strengthen the division and to prevent the interaction between the Xhosa and the Dutch settlers, as this was causing problems between the Xhosa and Frontier Boers. Shirley Thorpe states that:

Distrust and confusion contributed to a sense of utter despair. In like manner, the gradual encroachment of European settlers onto land which had belonged to the amaXhosa, and previously to the San and the KhoiKhoi, was accompanied by promises and treaties, all of which were destroyed or broken (1982, p.138).

The British immigrants settled mainly in the Eastern part of the colony (e.g. the Zuurveld), in order to establish an English territory, which was centred on Graham’s Town (i.e. what is today known as Grahamstown). They wanted to create a “neutral territory” which resulted in the expulsion of the Xhosa from the Zuurveld, which eventually became known as Albany (Wilson and Thompson 1982, p.243). As a result of this expulsion the Xhosa were forced to move to the North East part of the Kei-river.

The European settlers under the protection of the British rulers moved inland and continued to invade the land and cattle that belonged to the Xhosa and the KhoiKhoi. Their only concern was to expand their farms and to get cheap labour (Leonard and Thompson, 1990, p.75). It seemed as if they did not respect the rights and the connections that the Xhosa people had to their land.

As has already been discussed (cf. 2.4) stock keeping formed part of Xhosa life, as they had been herders since the time they migrated from Central Africa to the present Eastern Cape. Land was very important for grazing and for cultivation. Boundaries were set up by the settlers and any cattle which grazed in the camp places that belonged to the settlers were confiscated. The settlers again created boundaries around hitherto communal land belonging to the Xhosa. The Xhosa would take back
the cattle and land, which they believed were rightfully theirs anyway. As a result of all this, wars broke out between the Xhosa and the settlers.

Indeed, the main reason for land disputes was the difference between the customs of the Xhosa and the Dutch and the British settlers. In this regard, each culture had its own agenda for example even the Dutch who were settling on the frontiers accused the British of not defending them but taking sides with the Xhosa.

Another reason why the British plan to keep peace and order between the settlers and the Xhosa was unsuccessful was due to the lack of a clear policy one which could bring peace between both English, Dutch settlers and the Xhosa.

As already been discussed (cf. 2.3) the Xhosa had their own particular methods of land tenure and arrangements for grazing land for their animals. These cultural differences led to conflict Cameron and Spies explains these differences as follows:

The Xhosa in the Zuurveld to the west of the Fish River encountered the eastwards thrust of the trekboers in the 1770s. Both Xhosa and trekboers were pastoralists and subsistence farmers, but they differed in customs of land tenure. The Xhosa regarded land as a community property, while the whites held it on an individual basis. It was competition for pasture in the Zuurveld which was the first grievance of the trekboers (1986, p.72).

The arrival of the trekboer (settlers) in 1770 and the British Settlers in1820 gave rise to a conflict over land in the area of the “Zuurveld east of the Sundays river”. According to the trekboere and the British settlers, the land seemed deserted as if it belonged to nobody, Whereas the Xhosa believed that the land did not belong to anyone in particular, as it was for sharing (Shillington, 1989, p.219).

Many agreements and treaties signed by the various chiefs and the settlers did not materialize (Thompson, 1990, p.76). The settlers thought that the chiefs had power over their people, and they made agreements with the chiefs who at a later stage did
not recognise the agreements (cf. 2.3). The Xhosa continued to lose their land, and
drought afflicted them in 1844 and again in 1846. On the one hand cattle theft and
unrest continued while on the other, Xhosa chiefs on both sides of the Kei River were
preparing for war with the settlers. The Xhosa people believed that they needed help
from their ancestors who were their guardians in order to destroy the settlers who
were taking the land which they had received from their forefathers. Not all the
British were indifferent to what was happening to the Xhosa.

For example Hallier says:

But, to be honest, let us ask ourselves if we have done these people
no evil? Remember, we have taken their country, we have
conquered them, made ourselves their rulers: we owe them some
recompense. And, to be frank, we must admit that our good is not
without some admixture of evil. That the good transcends the evil,
that it is far more than justifies our conquest, I believe; still it
behoes us to reduce the evils of civilisation among the natives to
the lowest possible point (1900, p.73).

John Barrows, who wrote “The Travels into the interior of Southern Africa” is well
known for his recollections of how the Xhosa people were treated. He mentioned the
Xhosa as “innocent barbarians” who were defenceless against the “heartless” colonist
(Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa, volume 5, 1972, p.53).

The final results of this led to the confrontation known today as the Frontier Wars,
which had an impact on the already tenuous relationship between both Black and
White in the Cape Colony. The first Frontier War had been in 1781 (Wilson, 1975,
p.55) under the command of a farmer known as Adriaan van Jaarsveld who wanted
revenge after the Xhosa killed one of his men. As a result many Xhosa men were
killed and some 5,000 cattle were captured by the whites. In 1793 a second war
broke out followed by a third and fourth war which both lasted for a number of years.
In 1834 the sixth war took place resulting in 456 homesteads being destroyed and 22
colonists killed. The seventh war took place from 1846-1847, the eight in 1850 and
the last in 1877 (Grutter and van Zyl, 1981, p.24).
3.5 The effects of Christianity on the more traditional religious beliefs of the Xhosa people (1795-1856-7)

During the period 1795-1856-7 the Xhosa chiefs were (on occasions) kind to the Dutch and English settlers and the *Mfengu* by giving them land to settle in. In this case they offered them a place to stay, the settlers in turn started farming, building missions and schools. The missionary Dr J.T van der Kemp was the first to evangelise the Xhosa from 1799 to the start of 1801. Joseph William founded a mission near present-day fort Beaufort in 1816 (Thompson, 1990, p75).

Missionaries started to spread the word of the Christian God, and the teaching of Christian beliefs about life after death, which influenced Xhosa prophets like Ntsikana whose conversion experience is thought to have taken place in1815.

The first well known Xhosa prophet who was exposed to the Christian teachings before Mhlakaza (*cf.* 4.2.8) was Ntsikana. Ntsikana was a chief advisor to Nqika in about 1819. He regarded himself as the great prophet who was even better than his predecessor Nxele, who is today regarded as a “leader of the black resistance” who was so called a war- doctor of the Ndlambe who were situated in the Zuurved in 1812, who were driven by the colonial forces to the east across the Fish River (*cf.* 4.2.6). They had powers to bring the Xhosa people together and revolt against the Whites (Hodgson, 1980, p.2).

Ntsikana was the opposite of Nxele in the sense that he regarded himself to be a teacher, who “reflected messianic ideas learned from Christian missionaries” (Monica, 1971, p.43). He interpreted the word of God and made it possible for people to understand it and make some sense of their traditional beliefs. In his teaching, “he drew on the words, concepts, symbols, music, myths, legends, and ritual of the African tradition to give authority to that which was new to them” (Hodgson, 1980, p.3).
He also forbade and condemned polygamy, *lobola*, and the wearing of traditional clothes. These practices were considered to be non-Christian, this he heard about from missionaries like Dr J.T van der Kemp, James Read and Joseph Williams.

Shirley Thorpe states that: “Ntsikana can be regarded as a prophet of the classical Biblical type, namely a wise man” (1982, p.103). All these prophets were looking for a way in which the stress, sufferings and the pain inflicted by the European settlers could be relieved albeit applying concerns which were in fact western to begin with.
CHAPTER FOUR

Role players and factors leading to the Cattle-killing event of 1856-7

4.  INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter, the main focus will be about the known facts that pertain to the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*. Major role players in the events which lead to the Cattle Killing event of 1856-7 will be discussed. Players such as Chief Ngqika, King Hintsa, King Sarhili, the Prophet Nxele, the Prophet Mlanjeni, Chief Maqoma, Chief Sandile, Sir Harry Smith, Sir George Grey, the Nongqawuse and Mhlakaza will also be discussed.

4.1  The key players involved in the lead up to the Cattle-Killing event of 1856-7

4.1.1  Chief Ngqika (1775 - 1829)

According to Meintjes, Chief Ngqika was the father of Chief Maqoma (died 1873) and Sandile (1821-1878), both of whom played a role in the Cattle Killing Event of 1856-7. He was a grandson of Chief Rarabe and his father was Mlawu the brother to Ndlambe. His tribe lived to the west of the Kei River. (1971, pp.1-2).

It is mentioned that he was well built and an attractive young man, but his language was coarse. Holt, further mentions that, Ngqika was friends with a boer called Coenraad De Buys who apart from being his adviser, later married Ngqika’s mother (1974, p. 58).

Chief Ndlambe (who died in 1828) was a regent for twelve years (*Dictionary of South Africa Biography vol 1*) mentions that for twenty years in the place of chief Ngqika whom in (1787) was still too young to rule the Rharhabe’s who were later
known as the Ngqika’s. Nash acknowledged that Ndlambe did not want to hand over
the reign to Ngqika whom later they were fighting for power that caused tribal wars

In this regard, the Dictionary of South Africa Biography vol 1. acknowledges that the
lesser chiefs did not recognize him, he was unable to stop the increasing stock theft
from a range of chiefs who lost respect for him. Unbelievably, despite his weakened
state he was asked by colonists to assist with the slagternek rebellion – an event
where they were attempting to drown the English in the sea. Ngqika, obviously
refused to assist because he was by then quite powerless (1968, p.590).

4.1.2 King Hintsa (ruling before 1809 and died in 1835)

King Hintsa was the leader of the Gcaleka who are situated to the north of the Kei
River in what was the former Transkei. He was the father of King Sarhili (died in
1893). It is believed that King Hintsa was killed by Sir Harry Smith in 1835.
However the person who actually killed King Hintsa (albeit under Sir Harry Smith)
was “George Southey who shot him in the act of hurling an assegai at his
pursuer” (Revett-Carnac, 1961. p. 98).

4.1.3 The Prophet Mlanjeni (1818 - 1853)

Mlanjeni was the son of the diviner called Kala. As has already been mentioned, it
was believed that he had powers from the ancestors. Strange as it sounds, according
to Lehmann, he could live under the water, and he could use his charms to change the
British soldiers into cattle and bullets into water (1977, p.320). Meintjes further tells
us that Mlanjeni was responsible for the war (1850) which was named after him.
(1971, p.181). In this regard he was the second prophet to come up with the idea of
chasing the White people into the sea.
4.1.4 Chief Maqoma (died 1873)

Chief Maqoma, was a son of Chief Ngqika, who was almost 20 years older than his half-brother, Sandile. According to the frontier war journal of Major John Crealock (1878) on his father’s death (1829), Maqoma held the chieftainship, until Sandile was old enough to rule (Metrowich. 1988, p.66).

According to Metrowich, Maqoma was either a mad person or pretending to be mad. He further says that Maqoma liked wine. Metrowich describes an incident related by Buck Adams where Maqoma drank “20 bottles of wine and 6 bottles of Cape Smoke” and acted stupidly in front of his wives and his subjects whilst, a drunk women was thrown into the river to sober up by Maqoma’s boys (1953, p.199).

It is believed that because Maqoma desired to be reinstated as chief of the Ngqika tribe and was jealous of his brother (Sandile), and as he was also Sandile’s highest general he may have deliberately caused a feud between the Ngqika tribe and the Ndlambe tribe. In this way he apparently destabilized his brother. One example of Maqoma’s political ambitions is explained by Le Cordeur such as, Maqoma wanted to stir up the Xhosa people against Sandile by accusing Sandile’s mother Queen Sutu of witchcraft. Specifically, she was accused of bewitching Chief Tyali and caused his death (1981, p.108).

4.1.5 Chief Sandile (1821-1878)

As has already been stated, Sandile was the chief of the Ngqika tribe at the time of the Cattle-Killing event of 1856-7 (Schreuder, 1980, p.67). Sandile first became chief of the Ngqika in 1840. In his early years he was the official heir to the chieftainship because Sutu (his mother) was Chief Ngqika’s first wife. Both Queen Sutu, Maqoma, Tyala, (chief councilor to Sandile), Soga (Sandile’s councilor) as well as Charles Brownlee (Sandile’s adviser) were his official councilors and advisers.
With the advice of Brownlee, King Sandle was reluctant to join in the Cattle-Killing event of 1856-7 but he finally joined the killing because his own mother (Queen Sutu), threatened to disown him because she believed that he was hindering the return of the ancestors and by default, her dead husband. From a political perspective, he could not be seen to go against the general will of the Xhosa people including his devious half-brother, Maqoma, who wanted to obey King Sarhili’s commands that the people must kill their cattle to fulfill the prophecy of Nongqawuse. (cf. 4.4 for a fuller explanation). He was shot and killed by Gumede, a Kuse chief and Nunga, a Zizi chief in 1878 (Meintjes, 1971. p. 297).

4.1.6 The Prophet Nxele a.k.a Makanda a.k.a Makana (died 1820)

According to Buttler, Nxele was a “war-doctor” in the fifth Frontier War of 1819 (1974. p.39). Furthermore, he also states that Nxele wanted to drive the Whites into the sea. Nxele might have influenced Mlanjeni (cf. 4.2.5) and Nongqawuse to the extent that they received this idea of chasing the Whites into the sea.

4.1.7 King Sarhili (1814 - 1893)

King Sarhili was the paramount chief of the Gcaleka tribe, and the son of King Hintsa. He was known by Sir Harry Smith as a fine young man who was left by his father Hintsa (May 1835) in the British camp as a hostage for the delivery of the cattle demanded by Sir Benjamin D'Urban. Sarhili and D’Urban made an agreement after the death of Hintsa that brought peace. As part of this agreement, the Tembu and the clan of the Rarabe were to be settled to the east of the Kei River. Sarhili further agreed with Sir Peregrine Maitland, who was the governor of the Cape at the time, to be paid 50 pounds sterling per annum (Dictionary of South Africa biography vol 1. 1968, p. 687).

Regardless of the treaties signed, Sarhili was still blamed for the actions of the minor chiefs who were warring with the colony. For example, during the Seventh Frontier
War (1846-47) the Nqika raided lower Albany, which Sarhili was blamed for. Furthermore he was accused of harboring fugitives such as the rebel Gqunukhwebe chief Phatho. He was also blamed for the stealing of cattle. Regardless of his actual involvement, in January 1848 peace was finally reached when both Sarhili and Phatho surrendered and were captured by Sir Andries Stockenström. Again Sarhili found himself in trouble when he involved his people (i.e. the Gcaleka), in the Eighth Frontier War of (1850-53).

4.1.8 The prophet Mhlakaza (active 1850s, died in 1857)

According to authorities such as Muller (1969, p.198) and others, Mhlakaza was known as a “medicine-man” whereas other authorities such as Peires refer to him as a “prophet”. Makin mentions that, Mhlakaza was responsible for spreading the news about the return of the ancestors (1971, p. 111). Both Mhlakaza and Nongqawuse were the major role players in the Cattle Killing event (cf. 3.5).

4.1.9 Nongqawuse (c. 1841 - 1898)

Nongqawuse was a girl of between 15-16 years old. Mhlakaza was (according to most sources) Nongqawuse,s father or uncle. According to Makin she had conversations with the spirit of the dead Xhosa heroes who wanted to use her and Mhlakaza to spread the news that, they wanted to come and help the Xhosa chase the Whites into the sea (1971, p.111) (cf. 4.4). Apparently Nongqawuse was influenced by the failed prophecy of Mlanjeni (cf. 4.1.3).

4.1.10 Sir Harry Smith (1787 - 1860)

Sir Harry Smith was a professional soldier and governor. He had also acquired a doctorate from Cambridge University. His military triumphs in India had brought him fame and because of his great standing he was appointed deputy quartermaster-general of Jamaica in 1827. For example, Picard emphasizes the great achievement
that Sir Harry Smith gained for Britain by saying “On 28 January 1846 he and his men crushed a superior force of Sikhs at Aliwal and gained one of the most glorious victories of British colonial history” (1974, p. 81).

He was appointed deputy quartermaster-general in 1829, at the Cape of Good Hope and was stationed there to the end of 1834.

After the arrival of Governor, Sir Benjamin D’Urban in 1834, Smith became his lieutenant (Muller, 1969. p.144). D’Urban left for Grahamstown and Smith was appointed to take charge of the Province of Queen Adelaide with his headquarters in King William’s Town.

In 1835 the news about the invasions by the Xhosa chiefs was received and Sir Benjamin D, Urban the Governor of the Cape Colony ordered Colonel Harry Smith to Grahamstown, where he landed after 6 days (Le Cordeur, 1981. p.69).

Picard further mentioned that, Smith was promoted to the rank of colonel on 10 January 1837 and in June 1840 he left the Cape for India to take up an appointment as adjutant-general to the British Forces (1974, p. 81)

Sir Harry Smith returned to the Cape for the second time when he was promoted to the rank of major-general in 1846. On 3 September 1847 he was appointed Governor of the Cape Colony and in 1854 he was promoted to lieutenant-general and in England he commanded the Northern military district from 1845 to 1859.

4.1.11 Sir George Grey (1812 - 1898)

Muller states that, Sir George Grey’s successful activities in Australia and New Zealand were instrumental in his coming to the Eastern Cape. He arrived at the Cape
in December 1854, replacing Sir Harry Smith as the Governor of the Eastern Cape only two years before the Xhosa Cattle-Killing event (1969, p. 196). It must be realized that before the advent of Sir George Grey, previous Governors had relied on military power to run the Cape Colony.

In this regard, he was known for his good approach to all people, be they white or nonwhite as long as they did not interfere with his plans. For example, Grey was not trusted by Sandile, as Grey himself saw Sandile as a stumbling block to his plans. His plans were as follows:

It was Grey’s intention to have a positive and progressive native policy, civilizing them under British rule and amalgamating them with the whites. Part of Sir Grey’s plans, but also his greatest dream, was a confederation of states and colonies (Meintjes, 1971. p. 232).

Furthermore, to support Meintjes, Picard mentions that Grey wanted to establish schools, civil institutions, hospitals and convert the Xhosa to the Christian religion as well as to employ them on public works. Some of the things he provided still exist today (1974, p.101).

Meintjes mentions that, in 1855, Sir Grey visited the frontier where he had a discussion with Sandile and his brother Maqoma (1971, p.234). He wanted to bring white settlers to the British Kaffraria to settle them so that they could mix with the Xhosa people who were to be “Europeanized”. Picard explains that, in 1856/7 an ugly tragedy happened in the frontier that is today known as the ibali lika Nongqawuse. He furthermore reckons that, this 1856-7 event brought an opportunity for Sir George Grey to carry out his plans in the Eastern Cape (1974. p.105).
4.2 The lead up to the Cattle Killing Event of 1856-7

4.2.1 The Governorship of Sir Harry Smith (1834-35)

The Xhosa have always considered Sir Harry Smith’s hands to be red with the blood of their beloved King Hintsa, who was the father of Sarhili the paramount chief of the Gcaleka (Gcaleka) and “who had entered Smith’s camp in 1835 with full assurances of his personal safety and never left it alive” (Peires, 1989, p.5). He was taken hostage by Sir Harry Smith and shot in the head when he attempted to escape. According to some sources, his head was cut off for a trophy whilst other claim that his ears were cut off, and his body was mutilated. Regardless, the inquiry into his death was never conclusive (Metrowich, 1968, p.113).

4.2.2 The Governorship of Sir Harry Smith (1847-54)

Sir Harry Smith arrived in the Eastern Cape on the 1 December 1847 for what was his second visit to the region since 1835. His first aim for the Cape Colony was to deal harshly with those who obstructed peace. King Hintsa, Maqoma and his half-brother Sandile were the first targets of his “treachery” (Meintjes, 1971, p.172).

To carry out his plan, Sir Harry abused his powers by tearing up the peace treaties signed by the Xhosa chiefs, and appointed himself “Inkosi kulu” “Great Chief of the Ama-Xhosa” (Meintjes, 1971, p.176). According to Baines he also “read and explained his proclamation abrogating previous treaties, annexing British Kaffraria” (1941, p.57). He also humiliated the chiefs in public. (Metrowich, 968, p.113).

Sir Harry Smith was known for calling a meeting of all the chiefs including Sandile. Where he intentionally humiliated Sandile in public by telling him to bend forward and kiss his boot (Thompson, 1990, p.76).
Another example of Sir Harry’s bad treatment of Sandile’s brother, Maqoma was that, he made fun of Chief Maqoma by pretending to pull out his “sword and attack and Maqoma moved backwards, indicating that he was afraid. This action made the soldiers laugh,” it is apparent that they approved of their governor’s behaviour.

Again he ordered Maqoma to kiss his oot, and he placed his boot on Maqoma’s neck (Thompson, 1990, p.76).

### 4.2.2 The Governorship of Sir George Grey (1854-1859)

Sir George Grey replaced Sir Harry Smith in 1854. In this regard, he had a great task ahead of him. He visited the British settlers and started to apply his civilization policy. His vision of civilizing the Xhosa people was about to be realized. He wanted to unite the Xhosa and the settlers. He wanted them to work together to create a civilization based on the European model. In 1855, he encouraged the Xhosas to develop their labour, hoping that this idea would strengthen the relationships between the different people in order to secure the frontier security. According to the *Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa volume 3*, Grey took advantage of the poverty caused by a cattle-sickness of 1856 by offering stipends to the chiefs on condition that they abandoned their rights to impose fines on tribesman and administered justice through resident white magistrate. Fines were in future to be paid in money not in cattle. Thus Grey hoped to undermine the power of the chiefs and replace tribal customs by British law. The chiefs eventually agreed to this and nine resident magistrates were appointed (1972, p. 345).

Meintjes furthermore explained that, to make a follow up on his plan, in 1855, Sir George Grey visited the frontier regions, where he had interviews with the officials, settlers, missionaries and Xhosa chiefs. He offered the chiefs salaries and asked them to stop collecting money from their subjects in the form of fines.
Grants were offered to the Anglican and Wesleyan mission stations for the establishment of schools, and to help them recover from the effects of the Eighth Frontier War. It is within this context that the famous cattle killing incident and the legend of Nongqawuse were forged (1971, p.235).

4.3 The possible impact of cattle disease in 1856-7

As has already been discussed in chapter two that, it was a common belief of the Xhosa that any sickness, diseases, and misfortune was caused by ancestors or by witchcraft. For example if there was sickness caused by ancestors it was a sign that they were not happy about something. To determine this people had to go to a diviner to find out the cause.

In this context, the possibility may exist that to a larger or lesser degree the cattle were not killed as sacrifices to the ancestors, but rather they were slaughtered because they were contaminated with diseases that had been brought by the colonists. The Xhosa were strong believers in their ancestral religion and they would certainly not have sacrificed diseased cattle to their ancestors. They knew very well how and when to offer sacrifices whether as food or just taking orders from their ancestors. They would always follow the right channels by consulting their diviners.

The diviners would never ask them to sacrifice sick cattle to their beloved forefathers who are supposed to look after them and to make them prosperous and wealthy.

It must be noted that the idea of slaughtering was practised by the Xhosa for a long time before the arrival of the Colonists. They used to slaughter cattle for different reasons and occasions. It was their custom to choose a beast that would be accepted by the ancestors. They would wait for a sign from the ancestors and the message would come from the diviner or through dreams. In this regard they would choose a healthy, fat beast for sacrifice, not a sick beast.

Now it is possible that during the period under investigation (1856-7) many cattle were killed because they were suffering from a disease such as lung sickness.
Mostert Noel says that, a form of bovine pneumonia known as lung-sickness had been landed in 1854 from Europe with a cargo of Friesland bulls. It was fatal to infected animals, which died an unpleasant, choking death. By the time a sick animal was diagnosed the entire herd could be infected. In this manner, the disease spread throughout the Cape Colony at a terrifying pace. It moved steadily, inexorably eastwards towards the Xhosa and by the early 1855 had advanced across British Kaffraria and leaped across the Kei River into the Gcaleka transkei (1992, p.1178).
In this regards, the Xhosa may have thought that it was a sign from the ancestors who wanted them to destroy the old stock and prepare for the new stock that was going to come with the ancestors. If the sickness was thought to be caused by witchcraft, it meant that somebody wanted to eliminate the herds of cattle belonging to his neighbours.

In short were the Xhosa merely killing sick cattle already infected by the lung diseases that was brought by the settlers or were the Xhosa people killing their healthy cattle as a form of rebelling against the settlers; or were they actually fulfilling the brief of the prophecy of Nongqawuse?.

In this regard, the people in Xhosa land were well armed with knowledge and strong medicine to cure their animals from different kinds of diseases, as has already been discussed in chapter 2.

Despite this knowledge and traditional practice the Xhosas were defenceless against the lung disease and resorted to killing diseased animals to halt the spread of the illness.

Many cattle were destroyed hoping that this would halt the sickness, but it didn’t stop. They turned and looked back into their spiritual world. Perhaps they felt the need to make sacrifices to their ancestors in this time of great need in order to gain some form of support from them.

In opposition to this, we know that in 1854 the cattle belonging to King Sarhili (Ngcapeka tribe) were attacked by the lung-sickness, which then crossed the Kei River, and attacked the cattle belonging to chief Sandile in the west (Peires, 1989. p.70). It is known that King Sarhili had a big influence on the other chiefs in his region and that he had a deep aversion to the white man’s ways and their culture. He became the main character in the cattle-killing saga. The evidence is that he believed everything that was said by prophets including Nongqawuse (Makin, 1971. p.112).
It has already been mentioned that the Xhosa were strong believers in ancestors, magic, and their diviners as well as *amagqirha*. Mhlakaza and his niece Nongqawuse were authorities about ancestors. The Xhosa Nation was under the influence of the prophecy where permission was given by Kings Sarhili (Kreli) and Sandile (and their lesser chiefs) to order people to slaughter and burn their crops (Meintjes, 1971, p.243). To support this Knight says,

In order to bring about this miracle, Nongqawuse urged the Xhosa to destroy their crops and kill their cattle. Curious as it sounds, Nongqawuse’s prophesy was consistent with Xhosa beliefs. Sacrifice was an essential part of their religious life, and it required no great leap of faith to see that an exceptional sacrifice was needed at a time of exceptional malaise (1994, p.174).

In this regard, Nongqawuse may have seen a chance to interfere and spur on the Xhosas to the well-known cattle-killing event. She was not the first prophet of the time to get ideas and influences from her predecessors Nxele and Mlanjeni.
CHAPTER FIVE

A review of the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*

5.1 Preamble

In this chapter, the evidence leading to the Cattle-Killing by the Xhosa people will be reviewed in an attempt to confirm whether or not the standard narrative of Nongqawuse is in any way historically accurate. The outcome of this investigation will be pivotal in deciding what iconography will need to be employed in the projected paintings based on the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*. Here, it is assumed that reasons are already acquired with the basic elements of the *ibali* (*cf.* 1.1).

In this chapter a number of important details have been reviewed concerning the events surrounding the story of Nongqawuse. Armed with this data, which has been collected from authoritative literature, an attempt will now be made to ascertain (if at all possible) what actually occurred in the years 1856-57.

It should be brought to the attention of the reader that based on the available evidence, the so-called cattle-killing of 1856-57 may be interpreted in at least four ways, namely:

- the Xhosa, being ancestor worshippers killed their own cattle because they genuinely believed the prophecy of Nongqawuse; or
- the Xhosas were merely destroying their diseased animals; or
- Sarhili and/or Mhlakaza manipulated their own people for personal reasons; or
- the British directly or indirectly influenced the Xhosa to kill their cattle.
5.2 First Possibility

The Xhosa, being ancestor worshippers killed their own cattle because they genuinely believed the prophecy of Nongqawuse.

The Xhosa believed strongly that when a person died he became an ancestor. Their ancestors communicated to them through a diviner or in their dreams, as well as in signs or symbols. They slaughtered goats and cattle for them if they were so asked. It is evident that the Xhosas strongly believed the prophesy of Nongqawuse. It seemed that she was making the prophesies of her predecessor Nxele and Mlanjeni come true. Mlanjeni had a vision that he was across the sea where he spoke to the long dead warriors and chiefs. The ancestors told Mlanjeni that they would come back to life. The Xhosa had slaughtered cattle on previous occasions. For example, Mlanjeni had cattle slaughtered to purify the warriors and to make sacrifices for the ancestors. This supports the evidence that the Xhosa slaughtered their cattle in a direct response to Nongqawuse’s prophecy.

5.2.1 Evidence

The Xhosas were largely unaware of the reality of the political situation in the mid-nineteenth century and outside of the Eastern Cape, and had no geographical knowledge of the rest of the world. Therefore, when they heard that the British were being attacked by Russians, they assumed that these were their ancestors rising up and fighting their enemy. This supported the facts as recounted by Nongqawuse.

Some believers, like Sandile’s mother, Queen Sutu, believed that she was going to become young when the dead ancestors rose up. She insisted that Sandile should join the killing. Mhlakaza also told the people that he saw his dead brother, Nongqawuse’s father. All these strengthen the evidence that people truly believed that their ancestors would really come back only if they slaughtered their cattle.
5.3 Second Possibility

The Xhosa were actually destroying diseased animals. A closer possibility could be that, with cattle infected by the lung-sickness, this would mean that if the people killed their cattle they would not be losing anything, but it would help them achieve their plan of getting the ancestors back to help them drive the British settlers back to the sea. It could be possible that even though the Xhosa had knowledge of various cattle sicknesses they did not know this new disease.

It has already been mentioned that they did have knowledge of making and mixing various charms to cure their sick animals (cf. 2.4.1). Therefore it is possible that Xhosa people (perhaps in certain regions) were destroying sick cattle, and that the dying cattle would not have lasted very long anyway. It could have given the Xhosa people a reason to destroy them. This could have sounded an alarm to the British settlers and their governors that the Xhosa were starting a revolution against them (Peires, 1989, p.70).

5.3.1 Evidence

The lung sickness was brought from Europe to the Cape colony in September 1853. It was landed in Mossel Bay. It spread rapidly covering almost the whole of the Xhosa territory in two years. At that time the lung sickness was claiming approximately 5000 cattle a month, and moved eastwards at a terrifying pace. By 1855 it had advanced across the Kei River up to the Gcaleka area. Xhosa cattle in the British Kaffraria were also dying in a large numbers (Peires, 1989, p.124).

5.4 Third Possibility

Sarhili and/or Mhlakaza manipulated their own people because of a personal vendetta. As already stated, it is possible that Nongqawuse and her uncle Mhlakaza were carrying on the prophesies of their predecessors such as Mlanjeni. However King Sarhili could have used these prophesies to his own advantage. Mhlakaza, the Christian apostate, might have enjoyed being the leader of the cattle-killing event
because he always insisted that he was interpreting the visions of Nongqawuse. It is also possible that he teamed up with Sarhili. It is interesting that a certain Christian subtext runs through the Nongqawuse prophecy, involving as it does hints at resurrection and the raising up of the dead on the last day. These latter interpretations may well have been due to Mhlakaza’s influence. Sarhili had every reason to hate and distrust the British, who had killed his father. However, we know that up until the cattle-killing incident he ruled peacefully, being careful not to upset the British.

With the possible influence of Mhlakaza, Sarhili may have used the prophecies as a means of getting revenge on the British. However, if this is true we must also believe that he was prepared to sacrifice his own people in the attempt (Meintjes, 1971, p. 262).

Xhosa people had respect for their King, whom they had to obey. It is possible that they obeyed his orders to kill their cattle, for they believed that he was the mouth-piece of the people’s ancestors.

5.4.1 Evidence

According to Peires, King Sarhili wanted to revenge the death of his father Hintsa. King Hintsa of the Xhosas resisted the encroachment of the settlers that resulted in wars which lasted for years. He was seen as a stumbling block by Sir Harry Smith, who shot and killed him (Revett-Carnac, 1961, p.98). Sarhili, his son, took over the throne. He was told by Sir Harry Smith that if he started a war against the British rule he would be sent to Robben Island or be killed, just like his father. Under the watchful eye of Sir Harry Smith he did not start a war, but under the rule of Sir George Grey, who seemed less harsh, he felt he might have a chance to start organising his people to wage a war.
Perhaps King Sarhili believed that the hunger that would have followed after the starvation resulting from the cattle-killing would force the Xhosa people to attack the settlers and he would have avenged his father’s death. In addition, if successful, this would mean he would not be personally held responsible for starting the wars.

5.5 Fourth Possibility

The British directly or indirectly influenced the Xhosa to kill their cattle. The British were expanding their colonial territories by forceful means, which could have made the Xhosas reluctant to become British subjects.

5.5.1 Evidence

Sir George Grey was a British governor who had been known for his activities in New Zealand and Australia (cf. 4.2.9). He succeeded in making the Aborigines and the Maoris subjects of the British colony. He came to the Eastern Cape with similar motives in mind. It may be possible that he made use of the tactics and the experiences that he had acquired in Australia to undertake a similar operation in the Eastern Cape. This notion is supported by Peires when he mentions that on the one hand Grey was a good man who wanted to civilize the “barbarians” but that on the other hand he was a liar and a manipulator because he accused a powerful but neutral Maori chief of conspiring to kill settlers and to rape their women. Some Maori people had been falsely accused and shot, whilst some were accused of witchcraft (Peires, 1989, p.51). This largely circumstantial evidence points to the possibility that the man who manipulated the helpless Maori people could have done the same to the Xhosa people.

Indeed, there are many similarities between certain events that took place in New Zealand and Australia to those that occurred in the Eastern Cape. In the Xhosa land for example, the missionaries had already documented and accused the Xhosa people of practising witchcraft. Peires, (1989, p.62) mentioned that only two
occurrences were mentioned in the Kaffraria before 1853. There are possibilities that the reports about witchcraft practices amongst the Xhosa (which were apparently rare), as supplied by the missionaries and Sir George Grey, were simply a way of undermining the Xhosa customs.

As far as the comparison between North America and South Africa, Shirley Thorpe has already shown how the British colonial movement overpowered the indigenous peoples of both North America, as well as the Eastern Cape (cf. 2.7.2). What is interesting here is that the North American Indians also have an oral tradition storyline runs along almost exactly the same lines as the official Nongqawuse’s story.

This raises the possibility, albeit impossible to prove, that Sir George Grey, well versed in these matters, used the North American Indian example as well as his experiences in Australia and New Zealand to orchestrate an elaborate plot which would end with the Xhosa people’s independence thus preparing them for easy assimilation into his colonial empire.

In this speculative scenario Sir George Grey’s successful activities in Australia made him the best candidate for governor of the Xhosa land where he could carry on with his imperialist ideals, so typical of the early Victorian age. The facts as they exist cannot be substantiated but it is certainly the case that after the downfall of the Xhosa people, certain chiefs were forced by their new circumstances to accept money and to work under the white magistrates.

We also know that Grey needed more space in the fertile land of British Kaffraria to accommodate 5,000 British ex-soldiers. He even wrote to the London press claiming that “a most favourable opportunity” existed, the very time when the cattle-killing was under way (Mostert, 1992, p.1178).
Peires also mentioned that:

“He [Grey] destroyed his European rivals with lies and smears, and his non-European victims with court-martials, transportations, summary justice and even, as we shall see, mass starvation. For all his rhetorical concern for the welfare of indigenous people, no Governor did more to break the independence and steal the land of the Maori and the Xhosa than Sir George Grey” (1989, p.46).

Regardless of Grey’s level of involvement, after the cattle-killing incident, when the Xhosa people were starving and dying, Sir George Grey's dream of creating an imperial colony was realised. The deserted land which belonged to the now helpless Xhosa people in the British Kaffraria was taken and redistributed to the settlers (Peires, 1989, p.290). It is evident that Grey had always intended to confiscate the land from the Xhosas and give it to the settlers. This course of action could not have taken place whilst the Xhosa were still operating successfully along traditional tribal grounds. It is therefore evident that the only way to weaken the Xhosas was by leading them to self-destruction - a course of action that certainly benefited Grey, his settlers as well as the British Empire.

5.6 Summary

To this day the Xhosa generally believe that Grey was the mastermind behind the vision seen by Nongqawuse at the Gxarha River. They still believe that white people took advantage of their belief in superstitions and ancestors. This belief led them to their downfall and the loss of their cattle, their land was subsequently sold to the settlers and their ancestral religion was ridiculed by the missionaries and the settlers. Thus it seems that the winner takes all in this scenario, where the settlers gain but the Xhosa lose everything. The finger has been pointed at Sir George Grey who was the hero of the settlers and the enemy of the Xhosa people. His plans brought the civilization that we have today.
It is possible that all four of the previously mentioned possibilities could be true simultaneously.

Based on the evidence, which is largely circumstantial, it is only possible to state that at the very least Sir George Grey benefited from the cattle-killing incident of 1856-57 and certainly used it to his advantage. It is not possible to state categorically that he initiated the incident.
CHAPTER SIX

Summary of the Questionnaire

6.1 Introduction

The questionnaire was divided into four parts, to enable people to answer those sections which they felt they were most familiar with. Furthermore, the questions were set out in such a way that should a respondent not be able to continue they could submit the questionnaire without wasting their time further (cf. Appendix A).

Section one dealt with the respondent's personal details such as their cultural background, age, sex, occupation and religious beliefs etc. Section two was concerned with the subject of ancestor worship. Only persons who believed in ancestors were able to complete this section. Section three dealt solely with the oral tradition and section four was reserved for information relating to the historical event itself (i.e. The cattle killing of 1856).

As was explained in the methodology (cf. 1.9.2) this questionnaire helped the researcher to address the main problem of this research, viz.:

How possible is it for a visual artist to interpret/ translate/ transliterate/ the message of the oral tradition as it applies to the (ibali) historical story (event) of Nongqawuse as told by the Xhosa tribe in the Eastern Cape?

By implication it also was used to gather data necessary to address the three sub-problems, viz.:

- What importance do the Xhosa tribes under investigation give to the oral tradition of Nongqawuse at present?
What are the linguistic devices/visual imagery/symbols of the oral tradition of the Xhosa tribe in the Eastern Cape Region as they pertain to the story of Nongqawuse?

What are the visual corollaries to the linguistic signifiers, explained in the oral tradition under investigation?

The questionnaire had two forms, one electronic version placed on the internet and one hard copy, printed, version suitable for visits to the rural areas. In the former case, the electronic questionnaire had the potential to be answered by most South Africans who were connected to the internet.

By using the manual, printed version of the questionnaire I did manage to interview people personally, which was important for obtaining video recordings of proficient story tellers who knew the story of Nongqawuse.

Only 92 persons from several different walks of life and age groups were interviewed in the final analysis. Considering the number of potential candidates for the Eastern Cape region alone is some 2.3 million people, the response was very poor.

In order to clarify and perhaps verify certain findings made with the original questionnaire, I employed a second questionnaire, which answers very specific questions.

6.2 Summary of Section 1: Personal details of respondents

As is evident from the following summary tables, by far the majority of the responses came from professionals and scholars. It must be noted as well, that more males than females answered the questionnaire with only six persons who not disclose their gender.

It should be noted that the number of respondents will vary in the tables below as some of the people had only responded to the sections they had information on.
The age groups of the respondents may be summarized as follows:

**TABLE 1: Summary of responses to question 1.2 (The age of the Respondents)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 89</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 99</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the respondents fell in the age group 20-29 and 30-39. Compared to the over 50 categories, the 10-19 group responded quite well, which shows that they had at least heard about this event. It seems that they could have heard the story from the parents, teachers, as well as the story tellers. The older age groups did not respond very well, only two respondents were found who were over 80.
TABLE 2: Summary of responses to questions 1.3 and 1.4 (The gender and occupation of the respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>DID NOT DISCLOSE GENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional African role</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business person</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholar / Student</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown of the various age groups according to gender may be summarized as follows:

TABLE 3: Summary of responses to questions 1.2 and 1.3 (The age and gender of the respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF MALES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF FEMALE</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE GROUPS</td>
<td>NUMBER OF MALES</td>
<td>NUMBER OF FEMALE</td>
<td>NO ANSWER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the questionnaire, two respondents between the age of 60 and 69 did not disclose their gender and four respondents did not disclose their gender or age group.

The respondents interviewed were born in 35 different towns or cities, all in South Africa. However, most of the respondents were born in the Eastern Cape, and a few were born in the Western Cape, Freestate and Kwazulu Natal.

Of the respondents interviewed, one currently lives in New York and three in Germany. The rest of the respondents live mainly in the Eastern Cape. However, some also live in Gauteng and Kwazulu Natal. Of the respondents living in the Eastern Cape, 40% currently stay in Port Elizabeth.

Out of the 92 respondents interviewed, 12 were white South Africans, the rest of the respondents were black South Africans. All the black South Africans interviewed were categorized under the Nguni group.

The Xhosas interviewed were then asked to say to which tribe they belong. A summary of the tribes the Xhosas belong to, is given in Table 4.
TABLE 4: Summary of responses to question 1.7.4 (The tribes of the Xhosa respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIBE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mpondo</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mfengu</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thembu</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhaca</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpondomise</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gqunukhwebe</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hlubi</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomvana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarabe</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndlambe</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xesibe</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngqika</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the questionnaire (cf. Appendix B) the Xhosa nation was categorized according to its various tribes and clans. This was done in order to help find out which tribe (if any) was most knowledgeable about this historical event. It is believed that this cattle killing affected the areas, which lie next to the Kei River (i.e. the river areas from the old Ciskei and Transkei. The Xhosa tribes found in the old Ciskei include the Ngqika, Gqunukhwebe, Mfengu and the Ndlambe, whilst the rest are all from the old Transkei region.

It should be noted that due to increased urbanization the Xhosa people are found all over South Africa today and in both the urban areas as well as the villages many tribes are fully integrated. With these qualifying points in mind, the Thembu people formed the largest group of the respondents whereas the Bomvana and the Bhaca people formed the smallest. It must also be noted that three respondents did not disclose their tribes.
The respondents were also asked to say to which religious group they belonged.

This information may be summarized by the following pie-chart graph.

**CHART 1: Summary of responses to question 1.5 (The religious beliefs of the respondents)**

From the above pie-chart, it is clear that most respondents considered themselves to be Christians, while 8% considered themselves to be the followers of a traditional African religion. The rest of the respondents were either a combination of Christian and traditional African whilst only 4% did not disclose their religion at all. The number of male and female respondents according to their religious persuasion can be summarized as follows:
TABLE 5: Summary of responses to questions 1.3 and 1.5 (The gender and religion of the respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIGIOUS GROUP</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional African</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian and Traditional African</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It must be noted that the number of Christian male and the female respondents is even, and also higher than the other religions. Seemingly the majority of the Xhosa people consider themselves to be Christians.

6.3 Summary of Section 2: Ancestor Worship

The respondents were then asked in question 2.1 whether they believed specifically in the possibility that you can communicate in any way with the ancestors.

12 respondents said that they did not believe in this possibility, therefore they did not have to continue with the questionnaire at this point. Six of the 12 respondents who did not believe in the possibility of communication with their ancestors were white South Africans. Four respondents did not say to what ethnic group they belonged to at this stage but by deduction I know they were in fact Xhosa. Only two respondents did not answer.

As a result of this fact, only 80 respondents went on to complete the rest of the questionnaire. Question 2.2 asked the respondents whether ancestors can do things for them. The results of this are summarized below.
TABLE 6: Summary of responses to questions 2.2 and 1.2 (with reference to age group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 80 respondents that felt that it is possible to communicate in some way with their ancestors, 52 also felt that their ancestors can do things for them (question 2.2) while only 26 respondent’s felt that ancestors cannot do things for them. Only two of these 80 respondents did not answer the question.

From the above summaries we can see that in total 52 respondents (65%) felt that their ancestors can do things for them whilst 26 respondents (32.5%) did not feel that their ancestors could not. Only two respondents did not answer this question. These two respondents were between the ages of 80 and 99.
TABLE 7: Summary of responses to questions 2.2 and 1.3 (with reference to gender)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown gender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can surmise that generally more male respondents felt that their ancestors can assist them. It is interesting to note that in the Xhosa culture, there are ancestral rituals to be performed in the family, the man is in charge. The statistics produced by the questionnaire seem to support this fact.

TABLE 8: Summary of responses to question 2.2 and 1.4 (with reference to professional background)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional African role</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business person</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholar / Student</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can also see that mostly positive responses (65%) came from the scholars, unemployed and professional people. Therefore, this seems to indicate that by and large a person’s profession has little bearing on their particular belief in ancestors.
TABLE 9: Summary of responses to questions 2.2 and 1.7.1 (with reference to cultural background)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/CULTURE</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black South African</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White South African</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data showed that 52 respondents (including one white South African!) or 56% of the sample believed that their ancestors could do things for them.

The respondents were then asked if in their opinion, it was common that ancestors appear to people (question 2.3). The summary of the results for this question are summarized below.

TABLE 10: Summary of responses to questions 2.3 and 1.2 (with reference to age group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26
Of the 52 people who believe that their ancestors can do things for them, 43 (or 47% of the sample) said it was common for them to appear.

**TABLE 11: Summary of responses to questions 2.3 and 1.3 (with reference to gender)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
<th>NO NEED TO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slightly more males than females seem to support the notion that it is common for ancestors to appear to people.

**TABLE 12: Summary of responses to questions 2.3 and 1.7.1 (with reference to cultural background)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/CULTURE</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
<th>NO NEED TO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black South African</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White South African</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the respondents who felt that it was common for ancestors to appear to people all were Xhosa. It is obvious that, based on this limited survey that white South Africans do not seem to think that this is a common occurrence.

### 6.4 Summary of Section 3: The Oral tradition

This section dealt exclusively with questions concerning the oral traditions and its relevancy in modern African society. From the 80 respondents who made it to section 3 of the questionnaire only 69 seemed to know what the oral tradition was. However I suspect that due to such things as language problems, some of the nine respondents who
answered no to question 3.1 which asked specifically “Do you know what the oral tradition (amabali) are?” did in fact have some knowledge concerning the oral tradition.

TABLE 13: Summary of responses to questions 3.1 and 1.2 (with reference to age groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table we can see that 69 of the respondents knew what oral tradition is, while only nine respondents did not know. Out of 80 respondents that had to answer this question, only two did not answer.

TABLE 14: Summary of responses to questions 3.1 and 1.3 (with reference to gender)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown gender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 69 respondents that knew what the oral tradition was, 34 were males, while 33 were female. Of those respondents that knew what the oral tradition was, only two did
not disclose their gender. Of the nine respondents that did not know what the oral tradition was, six were males while three were females.

**TABLE 15: Summary of responses to questions 3.1 and 1.4 (with reference to profession)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional African role</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business person</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholar / Student</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 69 respondents that knew what the oral tradition was, it would seem that scholars are the most uninformed group.

**TABLE 16: Summary of responses to questions 3.1 and 1.7.1 (with reference to cultural background)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/CULTURE</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black South African</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White South African</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table we can see that 61 black South Africans new what the oral tradition was, while nine black South Africans did not know. All eight white South Africans that had to answer the question knew what oral tradition was.
TABLE 17: Summary of responses to questions 3.1 and 1.7.4 (with reference to tribal background)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIBE</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mpondo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mfengu</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thembu</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhaca</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpondomise</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gqunukhwebe</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hlubi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomvana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarabe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndlambe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xesibe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngqika</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3.2 asked what the purpose of the oral tradition was. The 80 respondents that completed the questionnaire were given the following choices:

None of the respondents felt that oral tradition was a waste of time. However all other choices were selected and several combinations of these choices were also made. One respondent did not seem to know what oral tradition was. Allowing for the possibility that more than one purpose exists for the oral tradition, the following results were obtained.
TABLE 18: Summary of responses to question 3.2 (The purposes for the oral tradition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTERTAINMENT</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>WASTE OF TIME</th>
<th>PRESERVE HISTORY</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 19: Summary of responses to question 3.3 (The custodians of the oral tradition)

Question 3.3 asked the respondents who they thought had the right to tell traditional stories. Again all the possible choices that were given were selected as well as several combinations of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anybody</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imbongi</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keepers of tradition</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbalisi weentsomi</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who indicated that someone other than a teacher, imbongi, keepers of the tradition, umbalisi wee ntsomi etc was involved had to specify who this person might be.
TABLE 20: Summary of responses to question 3.4 (do you think that oral tradition should be taught as a subject at school)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 69 respondents that answered this question agreed that oral tradition must be taught at schools.

TABLE 21: Summary of responses to question 3.5 (When are stories told?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anytime</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3.5 asked when stories are usually told in the traditional villages. Again all the choices were selected, as well as combinations of these choices. However 35 of the respondents felt that stories are usually told during evenings in traditional villages.

TABLE 22: Summary of responses to question 3.6 (are all stories similar or are there different types of stories)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinction</th>
<th>DON’T KNOW</th>
<th>MANY TYPES</th>
<th>FEW TYPES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3.6 tested the respondent's knowledge concerning the type of stories that exist within the oral tradition. The respondents were specifically asked if all the stories are similar or if different types of stories are told, again all the possible choices were selected. 60 of the respondents felt that many types of stories are told while 17
respondents did not know. Only four said no distinction and six said that few types existed. This seems to indicate that the majority of respondents are generally aware of the diversity that exists within the oral tradition.

Question 3.7 attempted to get the respondent to volunteer their knowledge concerning the various types of the Xhosa stories they know. The responses were erratic, a few mentioned e.g. animal stories as an example of a typical story type, three mentioned imbongi, five mentioned keepers of the tradition and the majority (i.e. 67%) did not answer at all.

6.5 Summary of Section 4: The historical events (Cattle Killing of 1856-7)

The respondents were then asked in question 4.1 whether they had a favorite historical story.

**TABLE 23: Summary of responses to question 4.1 (respondents favorite historical events)**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nongqawuse</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical events</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most stories</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal stories</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t remember</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the questionnaire, 11 respondents mentioned the *ibali* (historical event) of Nongqawuse as their favorite story. Eight respondents mentioned the historical events that took place in the Eastern Cape as their favorite stories, such as King Hintsa, the prophet Ntsikana and the War of the Axe. It may seem that these eight respondents knew about Nonqawuse as she was part of the Eastern Cape history. Only two respondents had a lot of personal historical events such that they could not even mention
one, and only one who did not remember any at all. Only one mentioned the animal story.

Question 4.2 asks “Have you heard of the ibali likaNongqawuse?”

It must be noted that almost all respondents answered positively to this question. It seems that most respondents had heard about Nongqawuse or about her name in connection with other historical events of the Eastern Cape.

**TABLE 24: Summary of responses to question 4.3 (who first told the story to you)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t recall</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>imbongi</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keepers of tradition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Umbalisi weentsomi</em></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this question respondents found it difficult to remember exactly, who first told them this *ibali lika Nongqawuse*. The answers are closely related to each other. In this case, the teacher could be a parent and an *imbongi*. Also, a keeper of tradition could also be a storyteller (*umbalisi wee ntsomi*). It seems that the respondents answered truly according to who might had first told them. In this case ten respondents said that, they were first told by their parents. The *imbongi* were indicated by four respondents. Those respondents who could not recall, must surely have heard this story from one of the above, or perhaps they were told by friends, or heard it on the radio or read it in books etc.
TABLE 25 Summary of responses to question 4.4 (how old was Nongqawuse)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10-20</th>
<th>21-40</th>
<th>41-60</th>
<th>61-100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the respondents, six of them answered in the category that Nongqawuse’s age was between 10 - 20. Seven said that she was between 21 - 40 and five answered that she was between 41 - 60 the last five responded that she was between 61 - 100.

From these responses it must be noted that most of the respondents were guessing. Their verbal answers were that she was a girl, or a woman. Those who thought that Nongqawuse was 15 years of age might have learned this fact from the books or at school when studying this historical event. And those who were not sure about her exact age were those who responded that she was a youngish girl. It is surprising however, given the size of the sample that 21% felt, that Nongqawuse could be over 61 years of age. It seems that the exact age of Nongqawuse is not really known, some authorities write that she was between 12 and 15 years of age (Elliott, 1970, p.14) and (Meintjes, 1971, p.240).

TABLE 26: Summary of responses to question 4.5 (what was her profession / occupation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iggirha</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ixhwele</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophet</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeper/tradition</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herder</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most respondents said that Nongqawuse’s profession/occupation an was of igqirha. Whilst some authority says that she was still training to be an igqirha. (Peires, 1989, p.91) It seems that the respondents who said that she was an igqirha are well informed about this historical event. Seven responses indicate that she was a prophet. It should be mentioned at this stage that in contemporary times the Xhosa people very often use the expression “ngu Nongqawuse lo” meaning that “you lie, just like Nongqawuse” perhaps “other” was chosen to indicate a “liar”.

In this regard only two respondents said that her profession/occupation was “other”.

**TABLE 27: Summary of responses to question 4.6 (why is this story told to people)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>POLITICAL</th>
<th>AMUSEMENT</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL /STRAIGHT HISTORY</th>
<th>EDUCATION /MORALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest responses came from the respondents who felt that this story is told to people for political reasons. The least response came from the respondents who felt that this story is for amusement.

“Traditional/straight history” and “education/morals” have the same responses (six respectively) from the respondents. It seems that the respondents believe that this story is told for a good purpose. In this case the feeling could be that it must be told to people so that they can know what happened to their people during the cattle killing event of 1856-7.

A number of the ten respondents who felt that this story is told for political reasons pointed out that the British stole their land and cattle. They further mentioned that their traditional ancestral beliefs were ridiculed.
TABLE 28: Summary of responses to question 4.7 and 4.8 (is this story true, in your opinion specify)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>DON’T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this questionnaire, 20 respondents answered yes to the question, and only three did not know.

One of the reasons given by the respondents who said that the historical event of Nongqawuse was true was that, they know the site of her grave. They furthermore, mention that they know the British killed the Xhosa leaders such as King Hintsa, and took their land and cattle. One of the respondent even told me that he is related to Nongqawuse.

TABLE 29: Summary of responses to question 4.9 (have you ever heard about this “Cattle Killing” event?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this questionnaire, all respondents had heard about the Cattle Killing event of 1856 7, and that Nongqawuse and the British were involved. It must be noted that these respondents could have heard different versions of the story as it is told by people.

Some respondents when I questioned them mentioned the incidents in the historical event e.g. The burning of the crops, the ancestors rising from the dead, the starvation of the Xhosas by the amabhulu (whites). Few of them mentioned the year 1856, seemingly those who did, had learned about this at school.
TABLE 30: Summary of responses to question 4.10 (regardless of the Nonqgawuse’s existence, do you think the Cattle Killing would have occurred).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>DON’T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 respondents were positive that regardless of Nonqgawuse’s existence the Cattle Killing would still have occurred. Only two of the respondents did not know whether this incident could have occurred whether Nonqgawuse existed or not.

It seems that the majority of the respondents have a feeling that if Nonqgawuse was not there the British would have used somebody else. Some respondents even mentioned that the British could not fairly defeat the Xhosa Nation, thus they resorted to a plan by Colonel Sir George Grey.

TABLE 31: Summary of responses to question 4.11 (who was most responsible for the Cattle-Killing in your opinion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NONGQGAWUSE</th>
<th>KING SARHILI</th>
<th>BRITISH GOVERNMENT</th>
<th>ANCESTORS</th>
<th>DON’T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MHLAKAZA</th>
<th>NONKOSI</th>
<th>XHOSA</th>
<th>SIR GEORGE GREY</th>
<th>DON’T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all the respondents in this questionnaire, responded that the British Government is to be blamed for the Cattle Killing of 1856-7. Only three said that Colonel Sir George Grey was personally responsible. Seemingly to them the names of the people responsible are not that important, what they say is that the “Government”, includes all people who were part of that regime.

It seems that the respondents do not blame any of the Xhosa names on the questionnaire. This could indicate that they believe that the British sent generals and warriors to kill the
Xhosa leaders. An example is that Harry Smith is believed to have killed King Hintsa and cut off his head for a trophy (cf. 4.2.2 and 4.3.1).

In this regard none of the respondents think that Nongqawuse, her uncle Mhlakazi or King Sarhili were responsible, even though they all know very well that they were the main players in the Cattle Killing event of 1856-7.

**TABLE 32: Summary of responses to question 4.12 (if the British were responsible for the Cattle-Killing, how complicit was Nongqawuse)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENT OF THE BRITISH</th>
<th>SHE WAS USED BY THE BRITISH</th>
<th>BRITISH DID NOT USE HER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the respondents (19) indicated that Nongqawuse was used by the British. Only four respondents said that she was an agent of the British. In this case it seems that all of the respondents believed that the British were behind this Cattle Killing, no matter the extent of Nongqawuse’s involvement.

In this regard the Xhosa people furthermore mention the fact that the British *amabhulu* (whites) and specifically Sir George Grey himself, even pretended to be an ancestor at the river. Therefore when they narrate this story, they accuse Grey of having chosen Nongqawuse because her uncle Mhlakaza was a councilor of King Sarhili. Another fact seemingly was that, Grey knew that Nongqawuse was a *igqirha* trainee.

**TABLE 33: Summary of responses to question 4.13 (if you think the Xhosa were responsible for the Cattle-Killing, what was Nongqawuse’s specific role?)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHE WAS A WILLING AGENT OF HER UNCLE AND/OR SAHRILI</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All respondents (23) feel that she was used by her uncle Mhlakaza and/or Sarhili. In this case, it seems that the Xhosa do not blame King Sarhili as they believe that a King will never lead them to self-destruction. However, Mhlakaza is partly blamed by the people because they believe that after Nongqawuse heard the voices she told him.

It must be noted that some of the respondents raised the fact that women were not allowed to speak to the King, and for Sir George Grey to use Nongqawuse he must have known that his message must get to the King through Mhlakaza.

Furthermore, some respondents mentioned that, she could have been used by her uncle who might had been sent by the amabhulu (white).

**TABLE 34: Summary of responses to question 4.14 (if you think that there may have been more than one person called Nongqawuse).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seemingly, 17 respondents had doubts about this question, and six were positively sure that there was only one Nongqawuse. In this regard, from the respondents who were unsure about this question, they mention that they heard or know that there are as many as three known graves of Nongqawuse.

The location of these graves are, one across the Mbashe River, one in Kentani and one in Alexander. Some respondents know about the three graves, whilst other respondents have never heard of the other graves except the ones they know of near their own areas.

Furthermore some even accuse the British of making false graves to say to the decedents of the Xhosa people that this historical event was just made up by their people to blame the British.
TABLE 35: Summary of responses to question 4.15 (is it important to preserve the Nongqawuse’s story).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this questionnaire, all respondents feel that the historical event of 1856 known as the Xhosa Cattle Killing should be taught at schools.

6.6  Analysis of the respondents who answered the Questionnaire.

As has been discussed already the Questionnaire was divided into four sections. In section 4, it is assumed that, the respondents who carried on answering this section had the historical background, which could help the researcher. Their responses are worked out of 100% for the painter to be able to interpret and translate the word of mouth into visual images.

In this regard it must be noted that in some cases, the “no” answer column indicates people who did not necessarily say “no”. They simply forgot to tick the “yes” column. Therefore, where I have evidence to support my supposition, I have assumed that it is “yes”, since they carried on answering the whole of section 4.

The respondents were also asked if they had ever heard of the *ibali likaNongqawuse*. A summary of the percentages of the total number of respondents that had to answer this question as well as their age groups are given in Table 36.
TABLE 36: Summary of number of respondents that had to answer question 4.2 and their corresponding age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>YES (%)</th>
<th>NO ANSWER (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>YES (%)</th>
<th>NO ANSWER (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80 – 89</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the total number of respondents that had to answer question 4.2, 52% had heard of the *ibali likaNongqawuse*. None of the respondents that had to answer this question said that they never heard of the *ibali likaNongqawuse*, however 48% of the respondents that had to answer this question, chose not to answer it. However, they still answered the next questions.

A summary of the percentage (%) of respondents that had to answer question 4.2 as well as their gender is given in Table 37.
TABLE 37: Summary of gender of the respondents to the historical event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 37 it can be seen that 39% of males answered “yes” to question 4.2 while only 9% if females answered “yes” to this question. Of the respondents that answered “yes” to this question 4% did not want to disclose their gender.

A summary of the percentage (%) of respondents that had answered question 4.2 as well as their occupations are given in Table 38.

TABLE 38: Summary of the occupation of the respondents who heard about the *ibali likaNonqawuse*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional African role</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business person</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholar / Student</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A summary of the percentage (%) of respondents that had to answer question 4.2 as well as their religions are given in Table 39.
TABLE 39: Summary of the religions of the respondents who heard about the *ibali lika Nonqgawuse*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional African</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional African and Christian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>52%</strong></td>
<td><strong>48%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the respondents that had to answer question 4.2 were Xhosa. A summary of the tribes of the respondents that had to answer question 4.2 is given in Table 40.

TABLE 40: Summary of the tribes of the respondents who heard about the *ibali lika Nonqgawuse*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIBE</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Mfengu</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Thembu</em></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gqunukhwebe</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hlubi</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ndlambe</em></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ngqika</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>52%</strong></td>
<td><strong>48%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were also asked how old Nongqawuse was in 1856 according to the story they were originally told. The percentages of the number of respondents that felt she was a specific age is summarized in Table 41.
TABLE 41: Summary of the age groups of the respondents who heard about the *ibali likaNonqawuse*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No age given</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 41 most of the respondents (27%) felt that she was 15 years old while 9% felt that she was 16 years old.

The respondents were also asked, according to their version of the story, what Nongqawuse’s profession or occupation was. Out of all the respondents that answered this question, 65% felt that she was an *igqirha* while 26% felt that she was a prophet and 9% felt that she was a prophet and an *igqirha*,

Respondents were then asked why they felt the story of Nongqawuse was told to the people. A summary of these responses is given in Chart 3.
From the above pie chart it is evident that the highest percentage (35%) of the respondents feel that the story of Nongqawuse is told for political reasons only, while 17% feel that it is told as a traditional history. Of all the respondents answering this question 17% feel that the story is told for educational reasons.

Of all the respondents, 87% felt that the story of Nongqawuse was true while 13% did not know whether the story was true or not.

Of the respondents answering this question 87% said that they had heard about the cattle killing event of 1856, while 9% and 4% respectively either did not answer the question or did not have to answer the question.

The respondents were then asked if they thought the cattle killing event of 1856 or some similar event would have occurred, regardless of Nongqawuse’s existence. Of the
respondents answering this question 78% felt that it would have occurred regardless of Nongqawuse’s existence while only 9% felt that it would not have occurred. Of the respondents, 9% did not have to answer the question.

The respondents were also asked who they thought was most responsible for the cattle killing of 1856. Of the respondents answering this question, 83% felt that the British Government was responsible, while 9% felt that Colonel Sir George Grey was responsible for the cattle killing in 1856. Of all the respondents 4% did not have to answer the question.

The respondents then had to decide how complicit Nongqawuse was if they also thought the British were responsible for the cattle killing of 1856. Of the respondents answering this question, 13% felt that she was an agent of the British, while 79% felt that the British used her. Again 4% did not answer this question and 4% did not have to answer this question.

If the respondents felt that the AmaXhosa was responsible for their own problems, they then had to say what they thought Nongqawuse’s specific role in the cattle killing was. Of the respondents, 83% did not answer this question, either because they felt that the AmaXhosa were not responsible for their own problems or because they either did not answer the question or did not have to answer the question. However 9% felt that she worked independently of everyone and really believed in her own mind that she had seen a vision and then convinced her uncle and / or Sarhili to kill the cattle. Also, 4% felt that she was unknowingly used by her uncle and / or Sarhili.

The respondents were then asked if they thought that there was more than one person called Nongqawuse. Of the respondents, 74% said that there was, while 13% said that there was not. Also, 13% did not know if there was or was not more than one person called Nongqawuse.
Of all the respondents either interviewed or asked to complete the questionnaire, 96% felt that the story of Nongqawuse should be preserved, while 4% did not answer the question, and also did not know what the oral tradition was. It may be assumed that the 12 respondents did not know the specific meaning of the word “oral tradition” but in fact did know what this was under a different guise. This could have prevented them from continuing with the questionnaire and this may have been a shortfall with this instrument.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

7.1 Preamble

The problem of this research was to determine whether it was possible for a visual artist to interpret/translate/transliterate the message of the oral tradition as it applies to the (ibali) historical story (event) of Nongqawuse as told by the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape.

The sub-problems for this research were as follow:

- What importance do the Xhosa tribes under investigation give to the oral tradition of Nongqawuse at present?

- What are the linguistic devices/visual imagery/symbols of the oral tradition of the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape Region as they pertain to the story of Nongqawuse?

- What are the visual corollaries to the linguistic signifiers, explained in the oral tradition under investigation.

7.2 The First Sub-problem

What importance do the Xhosa tribes under investigation give to the oral tradition of Nongqawuse at present?
7.2.1 Methods applied

To acquire the information to address this issue, the following methods were used:

- A questionnaire;
- Interviews;
- Video recording of story-tellers.

7.2.2 Findings

It was confirmed that the old traditional Xhosa people passed down their knowledge through oral tradition. Traditionally it was very important because it was a means of passing on knowledge of the history of past rulers and events. For example, the history of their military leaders and folk heroes.

It was also important as a means to educate the communities, and families. The oral tradition is also told to the people for the presentation of moral messages, political purposes etc. by the imbongi and the keepers of tradition. It is clearly important even today, as regards the specific ibali of Nongqawuse to note the following.

Political purposes

The oral tradition is employed by the Xhosa as a way of making them aware of what happened or what is happening around them politically. For example when the questionnaire was used to survey whether amabali were told for political reasons, the respondents felt that, yes some were told for political reasons, specifically the ibali likaNongqawuse.
Contemporary political organizations (Pan African Congress) and politicians (the late Peter Mokaba) tended to support their political agendas with popular ideas which have been passed down through the oral tradition. For example the slogan “one settler one bullet” seems to echo the idea of chasing the white people into the sea comes from the sayings of Nxele (cf. 4.2.6 The Prophet Nxele a.k.a Makanda a.k.a Makana). Another example is that certain political events of the past e.g. (the Cattle-Killing event of 1856-7) may be used to underscore present–day issues for example the present-day killing of the white farmers etc.

It may be concluded that some political leaders of the twenty-first century seem to be politically influenced by the major role players of the nineteenth century in the Eastern Cape.

**Historical Purposes**

The history of the Xhosa people was and is still passed from generation to generation orally and more recently in a written form as well. Therefore, they know about their famous kings, chiefs and great warriors. Even though they don’t know their history systematically, they do know the names of their kings, chiefs and events that took place in their country. For example the *ibali likhlongqauwse*.

The Xhosa people also know about the Cattle-Killing event of 1856-7 and about their traditions and beliefs.

**The presentation of moral messages**

In order for people not to make the same mistakes as done by their predecessors. They also teach the people to understand and respect their religion, culture and traditions.
It would appear that most Xhosas have a negative attitude towards the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*. Indeed when one asks a Xhosa person about Nongqawuse they are likely to get angry. In fact most of the people interviewed, when asked, became and were reticent to talk about Nongqawuse. Some even refused to be interviewed and some of the responses included phrases like, Utsho *Unogqawuse I ntombi yaka Mhlakaza*, (you mean Nongqawuse, Mhlakaza’s daughter), *lo wathengwa ngamabhulu* (who was paid by whites), *wasibulala isizwe* (she killed the Xhosa nation). In this regard they keep on referring to Nongqawuse and Sir George Grey (*amabhulu*) as traitors.

The *limbongi* who were interviewed, seemingly saw their chance to give a voice to the collective feelings of their people. They took the interview as an opportunity to be on camera, because they knew that they were going to be recorded and what they had to say would be written in a book, which would be read by a wider audience.

### 7.3 The Second Sub-problem

What are the linguistic devices/ visual imagery/ symbols of the oral tradition of the Xhosa tribes.

#### 7.3.1 Methods applied

In this regard, video recordings were made of the actual storytelling process, which pertained to the particular storyteller. A formal analysis was made of each storytelling performance. Comparisons were drawn, in order to compare the commonality of the following: storyline, body movement, voices and poses. That voices and poses were used to convey meaning, which might ultimately offer sources for the series of narrative paintings.
7.3.2 Findings

The use of linguistic devices and linguistic signifiers

This investigation was concerned primarily with the Xhosa storytellers and the imbongi usage of linguistic devices, visual imagery, gestures and symbols in relation to how the ibali of Nongqawuse is narrated.

I looked carefully at these various linguistic devices and ascertained their significance in an attempt to understand how they are interpreted by the majority of the traditional Xhosa people. Here, linguistic signifiers also included such factors as (for example, the way the ama-Xhosa imbongi dresses which says a lot about his/her personality, role, job and status as narrator in the community) and the use of traditional dress, costume. The following are key examples of what was noted.

Voices

It has been noted already that the imbo nga who were interviewed and narrated the ibali likaNongqawuse from different places, narrate the story in almost the same way. They all have a similar way of introducing their story in a loud voice and make strange sounds to capture the audience. e.g. “Hoyi-i-na- a!, he-e-yo-o!” etc.

They all tend to use a series of sounds, some croaky, some high-pitched others low and soft or short-cut and which stress the important part of the message the story as it unfolds. Another unpleasant device used a lot by the imbongi is spitting.
This is commonly used to show how Nongqawuse and the amabhulu make them fill sick at heart. The sounds made by the imbongi are made simultaneously with the body movements.

**Gestures**

The imbongi yomthonyama believe that they are possessed. Their mood changes every time they narrate an ibali. They can be in a talking mode in one moment and suddenly in the next, change into a possessed state.

It must be noted that in the art of praise singing, a praise singer’s voice, movement of arms, hands, body and legs is important. A praise singer may start his performance with theatric body movements to emphasize what he is going to say for example a praise singer may peg his spear into the ground and take triumphant steps without saying a word.
They may be heard to shout things like “heoo!, heooo”! in a loud voice. On one occasion I noticed one peg his spear into the ground, slowly draw it out, and run his tongue along the blade of the spear (seemingly to gain strength from the ground). Afterwards he took a triumphant step forward into a victorious pose.
The *imbongi* do slow motion marching walks and swat away the evil spirits with a ceremonial fly swatter. They constantly move back and forth. Often taking a spear and a stick and using them to point and/or make hitting and stabbing movements at imaginary objects.

**Visual images and symbols**

In relation to how the *ibali likaNongqawuse* is narrated with the use of linguistic signifiers the common elements of the *ibali likaNongqawuse* are as follows:

- The British arrive.
- The Xhosa kill their cattle
- The Xhosa burn their crops
- The Ancestors promise to come back and to destroy the Settlers.
- The Xhosa wait for their abundance.
- The Xhosa die of hunger

**Key features of the *ibali likaNongqawuse***

The following is a summary of those more common features that epitomise the narration of the *ibali likaNongqawuse* by a more traditional *mbongi*. It should be noted that all the *imbongi* interviewed tended to keep to a similar story line. However, their approaches differ slightly. For example, such aspects as the length of the narration and its specific entertainment and/or educational emphasis varies according to the individual needs of a particular *imbongi*.

To highlight this range, I have tended to emphasize two specific *imbongi* who seem to summarize most approaches documented in this study. In this regard, the resultant narrative paintings were very dependant on these particular two
sources, viz.: Mayiselufa Mgomeni (Pedi) and David Mabalarane (Nqandu [Willowvale]).

The two *imbongi* in question were part of a group of ten who were individually interviewed and recorded whilst they narrated the *ibali likaNongqawuse*. It is interesting that despite the fact that Mayiselufa Mgomeni and David Mabalarane hail from different regions of the Eastern Cape, viz.: Peddie and Nqandu (Willowvale) respectively, they used similar techniques and formats to get their message across.

**The beginning of the *ibali likaNongqawuse***

Most of the interviewed *imbongi* would start by saying something like:

*Utsho intombi kaMhlakaza le yathengisa ilizwe lethu..... UNongqawuse lo wathi abantu mabatshise amasimi abo, ba bulale nemfiyo yabu...zinyanya zizobuya zizobulala amabhulu Amanye ayotshona elwendle* 

(“...you mean Mhlakaza’s daughter who sold our land ... she told the people to burn their crops and kill their cattle in order for the ancestors to come and drive the whites to the sea...”).

All *imbongi* seem to have a similar way of introducing their story in a loud voice and also make strange sounds to capture the audience’s attention (e.g. “Hoyi-i-naa!, he-e-yo-o!?” etc).

It was also noted that even the female *imbongi* introduce their stories the same way that the men do.
The young boys and girls imitate their elders by trying to make similar sounds like them.

The middle of the *ibal likaNongqawuse*

The *imboni* tend to stress the most important parts of the *ibali likaNongqawuse*. For example, they might talk softly and whisper and then suddenly raise their voices loud and shout to emphasize something.

Typical expressions form this stage of the narrative are as follows:

- *B fika ngezi* (“…the British arrived…”)
- *Batshisa amasimi abo amaXhosa* (“…the Xhosa burnt their crops…”)
- *Babulala inkomo zabo* (“…they killed their cattle…”)
- *Batya inyama* (“…they ate the meat…”)
- *Balamba yindlala* (“…they became hungry…”)
- *Isizwe samaXhosa safa yindlala* (“…the Xhosa nation starved to death…”)
The concluding statements of the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*

Most *iimbongi* interviewed tend to end the story by saying things like:

- *Andikuthandi Nongqawuse* (“I don’t like you Nongqawuse”).
- *Wathengisa ilizwe lika Xhosa* (“you [Nongqawuse] sold our land”)
- *Wabulalisa abantu abamnyama* (“you [Nongqawuse] sold out black people”)

The body language employed by the *iimbongi*

Most *iimbongi* use the following gestures when they emphasize the following scenes from the *ibali lika Nongqawuse*:

The British arriving in the Eastern Cape are mimicked by the *iimbongi* who imitates the act of walking.

The Xhosa burning their crops is demonstrated by exaggerated gestures of the arms indicating the extent of the destruction.

The way the Xhosa kill their cattle is emphasized with stabbing actions and clenched fists holding imaginary knives and spears.

The way the Xhosa eat the meat of the slaughtered cattle is depicted by the *imboni* bringing his hand to his mouth.

To show that the Xhosa became hungry, the *iimbongi* will depress their stomachs with their hands. Many will end the session with something like: *Isizwe samaXhosa saba yindlala* (“...the Xhosa nation starved to death”).
Traditional dresses

The Xhosa traditional costumes were looked at, specifically the modern clothes. It is common for the Xhosa people to wear colourful clothes with decorated strips on the bottom seams of their dresses (cf. 2.8).

The traditional costumes used in the paintings represent all the tribes that make up the Xhosa nation. Old women wear long skirts and cover their breasts with a light towel or a blanket, whereas a makoti will cover her body completely and her turban will be different from that of the older women. A young girl wears only a short skirt and nothing to cover her breasts (cf. 2.8).

In this regard the Xhosa traditional dresses in the paintings depict the different types of status, maturity and age found in a traditional village.

Headgear

Headgear from different Xhosa tribes were investigated and the most common trend was established as to how the member of the various communities wear them. In addition, the relationship between the styles of headgear and the status of the wearer. The Xhosa headgear was simplified, the only difference in that was styles depicted in my paintings.

Beads

Colourful beads are worn by the Xhosa people for special occasions. People of all different ages wear beads round their necks, elbows, waist and ankles. The wealth of an individual is determined by the number of beaded rings a person wears.
Smoking pipes

Pipe smoking is considered to be a sign of status for the old traditional Xhosa people. Only old males and old females smoke pipes, this is mostly noticeable in their leisure time and when they are having special meetings.

Tobacco bags

The old traditional Xhosa people always carry their tobacco bags with them when they go to the meetings. Their bags are made out of animal skins and are decorated with beadwork.

7.4 The Third Sub-problem

What are the visual corollaries to the linguistic signifiers, explained in the oral tradition under investigation.

7.4.1 Methods Applied

In this regard my historical survey, the information gathered from the questionnaire, (cf. Appendix A) and the recordings made of *iimbongi* (cf. Appendix B) are the primary sources of information, that will be used to interpret the oral tradition into visual images. The evidence collected helped me to understand the various characteristics of the story as told by the storytellers and specifically the *iimbongi*. As narrated it has already been determined (cf. Figure 11) that the characteristics of the story telling include signifying factors such as: the funny voices, body movement e.g. attacking movement, hands on their head, movement of hands showing hunger etc. Note was also taken of the special kind of headgear worn by the *iimbongi* such as animal skins, spear and shield etc.
7.4.2 Findings

Translating the oral into the visual

In order to translate the story into a visual narrative by using a series of paintings, which make use of narrative realism, the scenes could not be too naturalistic as it is impossible to recreate the event exactly the way it happened. However it was assumed that if the story was depicted in a realistic style, the Xhosa people would be able to interpret the story more easily.

However, there are obviously no photographs or videos taken to show this historical event as it really happened. For one example, we do not really have a clear idea of what Nongqawuse looked like nor do we know what she or her contemporaries wore. It is (for example) assumed that in 1856-7 the Xhosa people used to wear animal skins (Peires, 1989, p.160).

However, the modern Xhosa do not always relate to these issues and may imagine that their forefathers wore such things as patterned cotton materials, plastic or glass beads and blankets etc. However, these artifacts are mostly European in origin. In order to assist the Xhosa viewer in interpreting the images, the figures in the paintings were dressed as the Xhosa people dress “traditionally” today.

In the same way certain symbolic objects (which are strictly Western) but now used by the Modern Xhosa people as signifiers of a spiritual connection to the ancestors. e.g. tobacco, bottle of brandy, metal tins, etc. were also employed, regardless of the fact that the Xhosa in 1856 may not have had such objects.
The main characteristics of the Nongqawuse story

There are many versions of this historical event as told by different people in the Eastern Cape. For example (Meintjes, 1971, p.241) tells a particular story whereas (Peires, 1989, p.78) tells a different version of the story. However, the painted narratives needed either to remain true to one particular interpretation of what might have happened, but still based on the story as it is told by the Xhosa people as well as the iimboni or they needed to be painted in such way that more than one interpretation was possible.

Based on the data collected I chose the latter approach. In addition when relating the story, iimboni do not always tell the story sequentially, they often relate the story to an audience, which in most cases (cf. 7.2.2) already has the necessary knowledge of the story to fill in the gaps.

This particular story as typically told by an imboni today would appear to contain as many as ten key elements. Obviously, not every imboni relates to each and every one of these identified key aspects.

These key elements are as follows:

- The arrival of the British;
- Nongqawuse communicating the message of the ancestors to the Xhosa;
- The Xhosa make a decision;
- The cattle-killing event;
- The Xhosa burn their crops;
- The Xhosa ancestors at the river/sea;
- The Xhosa waiting for their ancestors to come out from the water;
- The Xhosa vision of abundance;
- The failure of Nongqawuse’s prophesy;
- The Xhosa are given food by the settlers.
7.4.3 Towards establishing the format for the paintings

Now the list of key aspects (above) may be represented by as few as seven images, where two or more of the key aspects are easily identified in a carefully planned single composition. The arrangement of these seven images also reflects, the structure of Nongqawuse’s story as well as the way the story is normally told.

The painted images need only depict scenes where each refers to one or more key aspects of the story. In the paintings, some information was deliberately left out in order to approximate the way the story is normally told (cf. Figure 20) only five cattle depicted representing all the cattle killed during the event). In addition these seven panels (of equal format) are intended to be set out in a closed circle in a sequential arrangement which runs from left to right. This will allow the viewer to interpret the scenes in one of the following ways:

- Sequentially from the beginning to the end of the story.
- Sequentially from the end to the beginning of the story.
- Sequentially using any scene at random.
- Sequentially using any scene at random and even leaving out other scenes where necessary.

The success of the interpretation and the translation of the story is dependent on the two foci of this event e.g. the interpreted historical event and the traditional prophetic visionary scenes of Nongqawuse. The first four paintings as well as the last painting represent interpreted historical events where as the other three paintings deal with the vision of the interpreted prophetic scenes. For example, Nongqawuse prophesied the following, viz: Ancestors coming out of the water, the scene of plenty; and the settlers drowning in the sea. These visionary paintings are identified by the strong use of the colour orange, which is also used as a symbol for a vision. Whilst blue was chosen as a symbol for reality/historical event. Here it can be taken as read that orange fulfils a similar function
as speaking in a strange voice does when an imbongi narrates the ibali lika Nongqawuse.

The final format

The final series of narratives, consisting of seven paintings on canvas, mounted on board as well as the oil paint, brushes, and turpentine are all in a sense “Western”.

The paintings are all narrative. The format of each painting is exactly 2.4 x 1.2 m. This rectangular format has allowed me to paint figures leading into the next panel. The figures are all between one-third and half life size. This should help the viewer to see the continuity of the story. This format size is chosen only for practical purposes and nothing else. These paintings each have a foreground, a middle ground and a background.

I have used a loose one-point perspective where necessary to assist the implied realism. In this regard, perspective does not play a major role in these paintings, as was the case with Maniera Greca, artists such as Duccio. The emphasis is solely on the paintings telling the story and not to produce overtly naturalistic interpretations of the historical event.

The General use of colours and their meaning

The Xhosa people are often called the “red blankets” (cf. Figure 2) because they are known for their use of red ochre on their animal skin coverings. Even in this modern age they still use bright colours many of which have symbolic meanings e.g. white for purity, black is associated with evil, blue and green for ancestors who live in the water. Red, black and white together symbolizes spiritual powers or somebody who is a link between the ancestors and the living (cf. 2.7).
In this body of work it must be realized that various colours were used only for aesthetic purposes. Other colours such as orange were used to symbolize the visions. This orange colour is derived from mixing red and yellow that, give us orange. It is an inbetween colour liked by the Xhosa people and it is assumed that they may relate to it on account of their being called the “Red blankets” or “umXhosa ubomvu/ngumXhosa oqaba imbola ebomvu yaye sithi uliqaba” (“the Xhosa people who come from the rural areas who still smear their faces with red ochre”). In this regard, the orange colour in these paintings can also be associated with a vision because when you close your eyes and position yourself in front of a strong light (e.g. the sun) you see red/orange colour from the blood in veins in the eyelid of your eyes.

The white colour used on the faces symbolizes that the person is an igqirha (diviner). In this regard the choice is based on Xhosa traditions. Red and red earth colours are used for expressing abundance.
SCENE ONE

Figure 18
The British arriving in the Xhosa land

Description of the scene

Generally, this physical representation is intended to communicate a mood that reflects interference of the Xhosa nation by the British led by Sir George Grey. Because there are many versions of what Nongqawuse may or may not have told her people including the possibilities that she was an instrument of Sir George Grey or Mhlakaza, I have deliberately not been specific in my depiction of Nongqawuse telling her story.

In this painting I have not shown exactly how the ancestors appeared to Nongqawuse. The reason for this is because it is not really possible to recreate what may or may not have happened. For example, as has already been explained (according to which interpretation is preferred) any one of a number of things may have occurred:

- Nongqawuse heard the voices of the ancestors.
- The possibility that Sir George Grey had somebody act as an ancestor in the river marsh.
• Mhlakaza planned the whole cattle-killing of 1856-7.

These few specific interpretations are not depicted in the paintings because they are all assumptions. Only the facts that are based on historical evidence are depicted in this painting. The depiction of the Xhosa on the left-hand side of the image are turning to their ancestors, and literally counteract the approaching British soldiers. A tension and a balance has been created in this image by juxtaposing the regimented British troops on the right with the more informal Xhosa on the left.

Format and subject mater

The dimensions of this painting are 1.2 x 2.4m, on a landscape format. Here the rectangular format is made up from two equal squares. This semi-realistic painting is the first of the seven panels. It depicts the encroachment of the British soldiers into the Xhosa land which led to the cattle killing of 1856-7.

This painting is loosely divided into three sections. The central large triangular section as well as two smaller triangular sections on the left and the right of the composition.

Central triangular section

In the center is a large triangular section. The base of this triangle takes up the whole length of the painting (2.4m). The head and the shoulders of Sir George Grey form the apex of this triangle as well as defining the top of the vertical axis which bisects the formal composition.

Nongqawuse, Mhlakaza, a Xhosa woman with a traditional beer tin and the left arm and lower torso of an isolated woman may be found inside this central triangular shape and placed in the foreground.
Nongqawuse

Nongqawuse is placed in the centre of the composition below Sir George Grey. The vertical central line and the middle horizontal line cross each other on her left breast. She is topless to emphasize that she is a young girl. In her left hand she is carrying a symbolic whisk (cf. Figure 18) as a symbol of ancestral connection. She is portrayed as having already related the story of her vision to Mhlakaza and the other members of her community.

The woman with headgear

The Xhosa woman to the left of Nongqawuse represents all the Xhosa makoti. She is carrying a beer tin in which the Xhosa people normally serve traditional beer known as Umgombothi. Her facial expression shows that she is doubtful and skeptical about the news from Nongqawuse.

Mhlakaza

Mhlakaza, crouching to the right of Nongqawuse is depicted showing interest in the story (as opposed to the response from the makoti) by the way he is holding his head. He is dressed in his best Xhosa traditional outfit (cf. Figure 18).

The pipe smoking woman

As previously mentioned, a pipe-smoking woman may be found to the right side of the central triangular shape. She represents all mature married Xhosa women. She is isolated from the group but still shows some interest. She represents those people who were not certain of the truth of Nongqawuse’s vision. As it is a symbol of status for her as a married woman she is depicted smoking a pipe (cf. Figure 12).
She also serves as a compositional device by directing the viewers’ eyes into the painting.

As has already been noted, this large triangular section is flanked by two equal smaller triangular sections; the left-hand section is made up by Xhosa women and the right hand section is made up by the British troops.

**Left triangular section**

This triangular section may be loosely divided into two smaller, yet equal areas: a inverted triangular section and trapezoidal section.

**Left inverted triangular section**

This section is concerned with Nongqawuse’s vision. The central message of Nongqawuse’s vision was that people must turn to their ancestors for redemption. This aspiration is represented by four figures, symbolizing the Xhosa nation, turning towards their ancestors. The ancestors are represented by the skeletons of a man holding the skull of an ox.

**Left hand trapezoidal section**

Inside the left hand trapezoid can be found two Xhosa women wearing orange and blue respectively.

**Right triangular section**

This triangular section may be loosely divided into two smaller, yet equal areas: a inverted triangular section and trapezoidal section.
Right inverted triangle section

The right triangular section that flanks the central triangular shape is composed of British troops. They appear to be coming out from the dark background. Because of their red uniforms and their rigid poses the British soldiers tend to dominate the middle ground.

The troops are holding their rifles vertically, this gives a contrast to the left triangular shape which is dominated by Xhosa women, who are less dominant by virtue of their softer outlines and subtler hues.

Right hand trapezoidal section

Inside the right hand trapezoid section can be found a pipe smoking woman who is taking a viewer into the painting. Behind the woman are two Soldiers carrying rifles.

Overlaying semi-circular shape

Overlaying the central triangular section may be found a semi–circular shape which consists of variously, the waist of the woman dressed in blue (second from the left) in the left triangular section; includes the head gear of the woman sitting to the left of Nongqawuse; includes the head of Mhlakaza; and encloses the left arm of the isolated figure smoking a pipe to the right of the composition.

Horizontals

Three equally spaced parallel horizontal lines dominate the composition. The central horizontal line bisects the format into two equal horizontal halves. It runs horizontally from the waist and the elbow of the second women on the left of the composition; and runs through the lips of the woman carrying a beer tin; and then along the hems of the soldiers’ red jackets on the right of the composition.
The top horizontal line connects the top of the headgear of the first women on the left, Sir George Grey’s head and the soldier’s helmets on the right.

The bottom horizontal line connects the bottom of the women’s dresses on the left of the composition and the feet of the soldier on the right.

**Light source**

There is a different light source for each of the three triangular sections. The figures in the left section appear to be backlit by an unspecified light source. The figures in the central triangular section are illuminated from the front. There is no definite light source for the soldiers in the right triangular section.

**Spatial depth**

There is no real spatial depth in this painting. This is deliberate and is a device intended to create a claustrophobic feeling. I wanted to show the looming presence of the British troops and their oppressive nature. A very limited space using some perspective has been created in some instances; the women facing the ancestors; the foreground figures and the pipe-smoking woman.

**The use of colour**

In this painting it must be realized that colours such as orange hues were used to symbolize the visions. Orange is also used on Mhlakaza’s loincloth.

The dark purple-blue colour in the background covers one-third of the painting. It brings out the red of the troops’ uniform jackets whereas the bright purple-blue of the Xhosa woman in the left triangular section tends to push the figures into the orange background.
Red hues are also used on some of the soldiers’ helmets. The blue and green employed for the soldiers’ trousers represents the different regiments. Various colours are used for the beds and traditional Xhosa dress for aesthetic purposes (cf. Figure 18).

**SCENE TWO**

![Figure 19](image)

*Figure 19*

*The Xhosa deciding whether or not to slaughter their cattle*

**Description of the scene**

This painting depicts the Xhosa people after they had heard the news from their ancestors through Nongqawuse. They have to make a decision whether to slaughter their cattle or not.

In the background, the Xhosa’s wealth is shown by the great number of cattle. The scene attempts to depict the interpretation that the Xhosa had many cattle and their kraals were full before the cattle-killing event of 1856-7 (cf. 2.4).
Format and subject matter

The dimensions of this painting are 1.2 x 2.4m, on a landscape format. The rectangular format is made up from two equal squares. This semi-realistic painting is the second of the seven panels. It depicts the Xhosa people gathered after they had heard Nongqawuse claim that the ancestors require them to slaughter their cattle.

This painting is loosely divided into five sections: a large central triangular section; flanked by two inverted triangular sections (on the left and the right); in addition, two smaller trapezoids (one to the extreme left and one to the extreme right of the painting) complete this composition.

Central triangular section

The base of this triangular section takes up almost the whole length of the painting (about 2m). This base includes the hands and knees of the seated man on the left side of the composition; the complete figure of Mhlakaza (holding a pipe); a large clay pot; and a seated Xhosa woman holding a tin. The makoti (who is placed slightly off center) to the right of the vertical axis, forms the apex of this triangular section as well as defining the top of the vertical axis, which bisects the formal composition.

The three Xhosa men (including Mhlakaza) sit to the left of the Makoti and two women sit to her right. Aspects of these elements all serve to form the triangular section.

In this regard, these figures are placed in the foreground. The seated women on the right are looking at each other, expressing their doubts about the story they have just been told. The men on the left are looking very thoughtful and confident about the decision they are about to make. The old man carrying a pipe is Mhlakaza (Nongqawuse’s uncle)
The focal point of this painting is a big clay pot from which traditional beer is being served. It brings people together during ancestral rituals. The sticks and pipes form diagonal lines, which direct the spectator’s eyes towards the beer pot. As has already been ascertained, it is a tradition amongst the Xhosa people that men and women do not normally sit together in a group, and do not share from a common beer pot. However, in this scene, men and women are drinking from a single beer pot. In this scene they are depicted drinking together because the beer is a metaphor for a common problem that they all share.

As has been pointed out already, Mhlakaza is seated to the left of the standing makoti. He is holding a pipe in his right hand. Furthermore, he is looking down at the clay beer pot because he is the elder in the group. He looks like he is thinking hard and ready to make a decision. His eyebrows are raised to emphasize that he is a thinker. In this regard, it must also be noted that it is a common belief amongst the Xhosa people that elders are the decision makers.

**Left triangular section**

This triangular section may be loosely divided into two smaller yet equal areas: a left inverted triangular section, and a trapezoidal section.

**Left inverted triangular section**

The left inverted triangular section is mostly composed of cattle. The colour of the cattle is yellow-ochre, sienna and umber. The cattle are facing in different directions. The depiction of the cattle symbolizes that they filled the kraals to capacity, meaning that the Xhosa people were originally well-off and never hungry. This triangular section is mirrored on the right hand side of the composition.
Left hand trapezoid triangular section

Inside this trapezoid section may be found a seated Xhosa man to the left corner in the composition. Behind him can be seen a hedge and cattle.

Right triangular section

This triangular section may be loosely divided into two smaller yet equal areas: a left inverted triangular section, an a trapezoidal section.

Right hand inverted triangular section

Here, Nongqawuse is depicted to the right side of the group. She is listening and waiting for the final decision to be taken by the Xhosa people. Behind her are the cattle coming forward to be slaughtered.

She is not glorified nor depicted as a heroin. The Xhosa people today hate her and accuse her of selling them out to the British. Even though the story revolves around her, the people only refer to her as a bad person who was either used by or worked with, Sir George Grey.

She is portrayed as a young Xhosa girl. She is wearing a red skirt, red headgear, white and green beads around her neck (cf. Figure 19). The colours of the beads symbolize that she is a trainee igaqirha. On her waist she is wearing colorful beads.

The headdresses of Nongqawuse and the Makoti headdresses are not the same as the style of headdress worn by older women. Only married and older people wear these latter headdresses. Men also wear headdresses but not the same style as the women (cf. 7.3).
Right trapezoidal section

Inside the right trapezoidal section can be found a seated woman to the right-hand side. Behind her can be seen Nongqawuse standing. A part of the hedge is noticeable as well as cattle.

Over laying semi-circular shape

A semi-circular shape with its convex side towards the base of the painting can be seen. It includes the cows from the left-hand inverted triangular section; the clay beer pot and Nongqawuse head in the right-hand trapezoid section.

The arc of this shape is also defined by such things as, the fence pole (to the left of the painting) the stick held by the Xhosa man sitting second from the left and the arm of the elderly woman holding a beer can.

Horizontals

Furthermore, three equally spaced parallel horizontal lines dominate the composition. The central horizontal line bisects the format into two equal horizontal halves. It runs horizontally from left to right behind the seated figures and is defined by the top of the hedge which separates the cattle from the Xhosa people.

The hedge (kraal) that runs horizontally divides the format into two equal horizontal parts; the top and the bottom part. The top horizontal line is defined by the horizon line and the backs of the cattle.

The bottom horizontal line runs from the left corner touching the left and right elbows of the two men on the left, it touches the brim of the clay beer pot, the beer tin, and ends at the bottom of Nongqawuse skirt.
Light source

There is no specific light source in this painting. It reflects an unhappy mood by the way minimal light is projected in the painting.

Spatial

This painting is divided into foreground, middle ground and background. The meeting of the Xhosa is taking place in the foreground, and the middle ground starts behind the makoti where the hedge is. The background is made up of the cattle from the front to where it vanishes into the horizon.

Colours

The earth colours (yellow ochre, umber and sienna) are a symbol of wealth. They are used to show the wealth of both the land (different yellows) and the cattle (in umber and sienna). The dark red sky with a hint of blue, gives a mood of what is going to happen in the next painting (i.e. the killing of the cattle and the burning of the crops).

The colour blue in the sky symbolizes reality as opposed to the orange of the vision scenes.
SCENE THREE

Figure 20
The cattle killing

Description of the scene

This may be seen as the core scene for the whole cattle-killing saga. Indeed, as has been noted already, when people narrate this event in most cases they start with the cattle-killing event or the crop-burning event. In this regard, this painting depicts the Xhosa people slaughtering their cattle and at the same time burning their crops.

An attempt has been made here, to show that the killing episode was out of the ordinary. Such things as the depiction of Mhlakaza stabbing wildly at the back of a cow are out of context to normal Xhosa tradition. In reality, Xhosa men only kill cattle ritualistically (cf. 2.4.2).

It must be noted that this scene is also an attempt to depict the ritualistic cleansing of the nation. Here, fire and blood are symbolized by red colours and are the strong elements in this scene. The burning crops in the background turn the sky red and this
colour reflects on the middle ground. The cattle and human figures are painted with earth
colours to represent the shedding of blood.
This scene depicts the event taking place over many days hence the allusion to both
night and day.

According to Xhosa customs it is unusual for a woman to participate in the killing of
goats or cattle and thus there are no females depicted in this cattle killing except for
Nongqawuse at the top right hand corner. She is not helping but rather expressing joy
by jumping and clapping her hands. She is facing away from the killing as she does
not have an important role in the killing.

According to the Xhosa custom, when cattle are slaughtered for the ancestors it is done
in the kraal (Broster, 1967, p.59). In this painting only a small section of the kraal is
visible with a pole and the cattle skull on it. This represents the important section of a
kraal where Xhosa families communicate with the ancestral spirit and this alludes to
Nongqawuse communication with the ancestors.

**Format and subject matter**

The size of this painting is 1.2 x 2.4m on a landscape format. The rectangular format
is made up from two equal squares. The semi-realistic painting is the third of seven
panels. It depicts the actual killing of the cattle by the Xhosa people in 1856-7.

This painting is loosely divided into five sections, the central large triangular section;
flanked by two inverted triangular sections on the left and on the right. These in turn
are framed by two trapezoidal sections.
Central triangular section

In the centre is a large triangular section. The base of this triangle takes up slightly less than the whole length of the painting (about 2m). In this regards there is a slight movement away from the strict formal composition found in painting one. Mhlakaza, seated on the back of a cow is placed in the center, he forms a vertical axis which bisects the formal composition. Mhlakaza’s (arms holding a spear) are stretched beyond this triangular section.

A secondary, inverted equilateral triangle on Mhlakaza’s head may be noted. The central triangular section is notably formed by three major elements: The man wearing a blue headdress, Mhlakaza on top of a cow and the bull in the foreground. This triangular section helps to direct the spectators eyes to the focal point in this painting, where Mhlakaza is piercing a cow. The large triangular section is flanked by two smaller inverted triangular sections.

Left hand triangular section

This triangular section may be loosely divided into two smaller, yet equal areas: an inverted triangular section and a trapezoidal section.

The left- hand inverted triangular section

To the left of the central triangular section may be seen an inverted triangular section. The left-hand side of this triangular section is loosely formed by a totem pole and the skulls (cf. 2.4.2). Inside the inverted triangular section may be found three men busy butchering a cow. In the background burning crops can be seen.
The left-hand trapezoidal section

To the left of the previously inverted triangular section may be found a trapezoidal area by the left-hand edge of the painting and the totem pole.

Right-hand triangular section

As with the left-hand triangular section, this triangular section may be loosely divided into two smaller, yet equal areas: an inverted triangular section and a trapezoidal section.

The right-hand inverted triangular section

A similar section, mirroring the left-hand inverted triangular section on the left, may be found on the right-hand side of the composition.

The top of this triangular section is formed by the top right edge of the painting and forms an inverted triangle.

Inside this inverted triangular section may be seen a man about to kill a cow with an axe. His arms holding the axe define the left side of this inverted triangular section. The other side of this triangular section is defined by the heads of a calf, a cow and Nongqawuse respectively.

Right-hand trapezoidal triangular section

To the right of the inverted triangular section may be found a smaller trapezoidal area formed on the left-hand side by the heads of a calf, a cow and Nongqawuse. The right-hand side is made up of the right edge of the composition and the bottom edge of the painting.
Overlying semi-circular shape

Overlying the central triangular section may be found a semi-circular shape which includes variously, the horn of the skull on the totem pole (to the left of the composition) a man dressed in a red loin cloth; a man with a blue turban who holds a bull by the horn; and the clapping figure of Nongqawuse.

Horizontals

Three equally spaced parallel horizontal lines dominate the composition. The central horizontal line bisects the format into two equal horizontals halves. It runs horizontally from the top of the skull on the totem pole through the middle of the man in a red loin cloth stabbing the cow, through the blue turban of the man holding the bull by the horn; through to the head of the cow standing in front of Nongqawuse.

The top horizontal line is defined by the horizon line, and runs from left to right behind Mhlakaza. The burning fields of crops create a vanishing point where the sky meets the ground.

The bottom horizontal line runs from left to right under the armpit of the man with the blue turban; in front and under the jawbone of the large cow in the foreground and through the ear and eye of the calf to the right of the composition.

Light source

There seems to be no specific light illuminating the subjects, except that the soft light comes from the front. The light from the burning fields seems to illuminate the skies.
Spatial depth

In this painting more spatial depth has been created than is found in painting one and two. The subjects inside the large central triangle are more illuminated to bring them forward. In the two flanking trapezoidal sections the subjects are toned down to create space between the foreground and the middle ground. The middle ground is brightly illuminated to depict the burning fields.

The use of colour

As it is noticeable that this painting is about the cattle killing, the emphasis is on the strong red and earth colours to symbolize blood and the burning fields.

Earth colours such as ochre’s, and umber are used for the skin colour on the figures, cattle and the ground.

For the sky, a limited use of blue as a reference to reality mixed with the dark symbolic purple and red tones, give the feeling of long day and night of cattle killing.
SCENE FOUR

Figure 21
The British drowning in the sea

Description of the scene

This painting depicts the visionary prophesy of Nongqawuse depending on which version of this story is told, informed the Xhosa people that after the cattle killing event their ancestors would return and would either kill or drive the whites into the sea.

In this prophetic painting, it must be noted that fantasy dominates the composition e.g. a white figure which symbolizes all Xhosa ancestors; a blue figure which symbolizes the water ancestors; and a green figure which symbolizes all the ancestral spirits that dwell in the forest (cf. 2.6.4).

Furthermore, It is assumed that the Xhosa warriors never used horses when they went to battle, but in this painting a skeleton as a symbol of death is portrayed riding a horse in the sea. It must also be noted that a skeleton as a symbol of death is assumed to be fairly universal. In this regard a skeleton is shown riding a horse which here represents the British. The figures in the composition are depicted fighting in the water and this
alludes to the fighting taking place in the rivers or the sea, depending on the version of the ibali told.

**Format and subject matter**

It must be noted that the composition has shifted to the left in this painting. This is done so as a way of showing that the prediction of this vision was that the British soldiers and the settlers were going to loose the war.

The dimensions of this painting are 1.2 x 2.4m, on a landscape format. The rectangular format is made up from two equal squares. This semi-realistic painting is the fourth of the seven panels. It attempts to depict the killing/fighting/drowning of the British soldiers and the settlers known as the “white people”, as prophesied by Nongqawuse.

This painting is loosely divided into three sections: a large central triangular section; flanked by trapezoidal sections (on the left and the right).

**The central triangular section**

In the center is a large triangular section. The base of this triangle takes up slightly less than the whole length of the painting (about 2m). The white painted figure of the main ancestor of the Xhosa people is placed in the center, is carrying two fighting sticks and shown about to strike a white man on the left-hand side of the composition.

He helps to form the vertical axis, which bisects the formal composition. The two sticks clearly demarcate the left and right sides of the central triangular section. The fighting sticks cross each other in front of the officer who is holding up his revolver. It helps to direct the spectator’s eyes to the focal point in this painting. Within this central triangular section, a white settler carrying a rifle, a blue “water” ancestor, the central white main ancestor and the lower torso of the green “tree” ancestor as well as
the hip of the skeleton and the rump of the horse may be seen. This large triangular section is flanked by two equal trapezoidal sections.

**The left-hand trapezoidal section**

This left-hand trapezoidal section is demarcated by the left-hand side of the composition (i.e. the left side) and such elements as, the raised revolver, the raised fighting stick held in the white ancestor’s right-hand, and the spine of the settler who is to the left of the blue ancestor.

**The right-hand trapezoidal section**

Inside the right-hand trapezoidal section may be found a British soldier at the back pointing the rifles to the green ancestor. Furthermore inside this trapezoid may be seen a skeleton carrying a totem pole with a cows skull at the end of the pole, as well as a green ancestor.

**Overlaying semi-circular shape**

Overlaying the central triangular section may be found a semi-circular shape which consists of variously, the head of the white man carrying a rifle on the left-hand side of the composition, the blue ancestor, the green ancestor’s head, the skeletons’ skull, and the totem pole.

**Horizontals**

Three, equally spaced, parallel, horizontal lines dominate the composition. The central horizontal line bisects the format into two equal horizontal halves. The middle horizontal line runs loosely from the left to the right touching the blue ancestor's neck and shoulder, the white painted ancestor’s face, and to the skeleton’s face and to the skull on the totem pole.
The bottom horizontal line runs from left to the right touching on the white settlers head, the white painted ancestor’s stomach and the top of the skeleton’s pelvis. The top horizontal line also runs from left to right loosely connecting the row of British soldiers, helmets.

**Light source**

In this painting, there is no direct light source. The light appears to illuminate the subjects from the front.

**Spatial depth**

This painting is divided into a foreground, middle-ground and a background.

**The use of colours**

As it is noticeable that this painting is about the killing, or drowning of the white people, red is used to emphasize the danger that was supposed to befall to the *Abelungu* (whites). The reddish orange skies symbolizes that this is a painting about a prophesy and the orange hues reflect upon the water. Obviously, the red emphasis could also allude to blood.
SCENE FIVE

Figure 22
Ancestors coming out from the water

Description of the scene

It must be realized that this painting is an attempt to visualize the ancestors coming out from the water. As the story has it, the ancestors were supposed to come out from the rivers, sea and from deep underground (cf. Figure 22).

In this painting the ancestors are depicted carrying bags of food and herding the new brand of cattle to the land. In the left-hand side of the composition may be seen four ancestors coming out from the sea. These figures represent the ancestors of all the Xhosa people. As this will be seen in the next painting, one is painted in white (main ancestor), the blue figure represent the ancestors that live in the water, either in the river or sea, the green figure represents all the ancestors that live in the forest and the last figure represent the Xhosa people coming out with the ancestors.
Format and subject matter

The dimensions of this painting are 1.2 x 2.4m, on a landscape format. The rectangular format is made up of two equal squares. This semi-realistic painting is the fifth of the seven panels. It portrays the ancestors bringing food and a new stock of cattle.

This painting is loosely divided into five sections: a large central triangular section; flanked by two inverted triangular sections (on the left and on the right); in addition two smaller trapezoids (one to the extreme left and one to the extreme right) complete this composition.

Central triangular section

The base of this triangular section takes up almost the whole length of the painting (about 2m). A Xhosa man standing in the middle ground, herding cattle is placed in the center of the composition. He defines the apex of the central triangular section.

The left-hand side of this triangular section may be seen a man caring a bag full of food. This figure acts as a repoussoir and takes the viewers eyes into the painting. His right arm forms the right-hand side of the central triangular section. The left-hand side of the central triangular section is formed by the two Xhosa figures, one who is bending forward and the other kneeling in the surf.

The left-hand triangular section

This triangular section may be loosely divided into two smaller, yet equal areas: An inverted triangular section and a trapezoidal section.
The right-hand inverted triangular section

To the right-hand side of the central triangular section may be seen an inverted triangular section. The right side of this inverted triangular section is loosely formed by an old woman with a walking stick whilst the left-hand side is loosely formed by the arm of the man herding a blue cow as well as the back of a woman bending forward.

Inside this inverted triangular section may be seen the head of a blue cow and a brown cow in the background.

The right-hand trapezoidal section

The right-hand trapezoidal section is formed by the right edge of the painting as well as the torso (the old woman) with a walking stick and the back, head and arms of the kneeling figure in the middle ground.

This right-hand trapezoidal section made up of a brown cow being herded to the dry land by means of a thorn tree thicket

The left-hand inverted triangular section

To the left side of the central triangular section may be seen another inverted triangular section. Within this section may be seen a Xhosa man blanket over his arm as well as the head of the repousoir figure.

The left-hand trapezoidal section

The left-hand trapezoidal section is formed by the left hand edge of the painting, and the right upper arm of the repousoir figure.
Inside this trapezoidal section may be seen a blue ancestor, and a white bag carried by the *repousoir* figure.

**Overlaying semi-circle**

A semi-circular shape with its convex side towards the base of the painting can be seen. It starts in the left-hand side of the composition from the blue ancestors’ head through to the Xhosa woman who learns forward and ends with the head of the woman carrying a walking stick situated to the right of the composition.

**Horizontals**

Furthermore, three equally spaced parallel horizontal lines dominate the composition. The central horizontal line bisects the format into two equal horizontals halves. It runs horizontally from left to right and connects the chin and the hand of the *repousoir* figure the head of a figure bending forward, and the breast plus left arm of the stick carrying female figure to the right of the composition.

The bottom horizontal line runs from the left-hand side of the composition to the right touching the elbow of the *repousoir* figure, includes the arms of the bending figure, and the head of the kneeling figure in the surf.

The top horizontal runs from the left hand side of the composition where the white painted ancestor is to the right where the woman with the walking stick is.

**Light source**

There is no specific and direct source of light in the composition. The figures and the cattle are illuminated evenly.
Spatial depth

This composition is divided into three the foreground, middle-ground and the background. In the foreground may be seen a Xhosa man carrying a bag of food which he is supporting by a stick, in the middle-ground is a group of figure and cattle and in the background is the water.

Colours

The orange and red symbolic colours are used in this composition to link it with the other visionary compositions that represent the visions. The bluish reddish colours of the cow in the middle symbolizes the magical cattle that were to be brought by the ancestors as replacement stock of the cattle which had been slaughtered.
SCENE SIX

Figure 23
Abundance

Description of the scene

This scene depicts the vision of abundance according to Nongqawuse predictions. It may be assumed that, this is how the Xhosa people would be enjoying their abundance. It was prophesized by Nongqawuse that the kraals would be full to capacity and food in the form of mealies, millets etc. would fill up the storages areas.

It must be realized also that this is an attempt to depict abundance according to how the modern Xhosa would see it. For this reason the representation of wealth in the form of cattle, mealies, chickens are depicted in this scene.

As has already been pointed out, that the wealth of the Xhosa revolves around cattle and crops (*cf.* 2.8 and 2.4). The scene attempts to depict the interpretation that the Xhosa expected to have wealth and live an easy life.
Format and subject matter

The dimensions of this painting are 1.2 x 2.4m, on a landscape format. The rectangular format is made up from two equal squares. This semi-realistic painting is the sixth of the seven panels. It depicts the abundance of the Xhosa people as it was prophesized by Nongqawuse.

This painting is loosely divided into five sections, the central large triangular section as well as two inverted triangular sections on the left and on the right. These in turn are framed by two trapezoidal sections both on the left and right.

Central triangular section

The base of this triangular section takes up almost the whole length of the painting (about 2m). This section is defined or framed by a seated man on the left-hand side of the composition; and a woman seated on the right-hand side. A figure carrying a large bag of mealies is placed in the center of the painting. He forms a vertical axis which bisects the formal composition. The rear hind quarter of a blue cow and a raised storage platform all serve to form the central triangular section.

This central triangular section helps to direct the spectator’s eyes to the Focal point. The focal point of this painting is the bag of mealies carried by the figure in the centre.

The right-hand triangular section

This triangular section may be loosely divided into smaller, yet equal areas: an inverted triangular section and a trapezoidal section.
The right-hand inverted triangular section

The right triangular section is mostly composed of the head of the blue cow, and some bluish brown cattle at the back. The right side of this same inverted triangular section is defined by the seated woman’s head and the head of a standing man.

The right-hand trapezoidal section

The right-hand trapezoidal section is formed by the right-hand side of the inverted triangular section as well as the right hand edge of the painting a white cockerel at its base. Inside the right-hand trapezoidal section may be found the seated woman grinding mealies.

The left-hand inverted triangular section

The left-hand inverted triangular section is mostly composed of mealies. Lying on a storage platform and cattle at the back and the head of the seated male figure who holds a tree branch.

The left-hand trapezoidal section

The left-hand trapezoidal section is made up by the left side of the inverted triangular section as well as the left- hand edge of the painting.

Inside the trapezoidal section may be found a seated man holds a tree branch who is busy erecting the mealie storage platform behind him.

Horizontals

Three equally spaced parallel horizontal lines dominate the composition. The central horizontal line bisects the format into two equal horizontal halves. It runs horizontally
from the left-hand side to the right-hand side connecting the man, the shoulders of the seated woman on the right-hand side of the composition.

The top horizontal line is defined by the horizon line that runs from the left hand side to the right hand side of the composition. This horizon line is defined by the backs of the cattle.

The bottom horizontal line runs from the left-hand side to the right-hand side of the composition. It runs horizontally from the bottom of the storage platform to the hooves of the blue cow to the white cocker.

**Light source**

There seems to be no specific light source. The only light evident comes from the front. It illuminates the faces of the figures.

**Spatial depth**

More spatial depth has been created in this painting. The foreground had been lightened to push the middle ground back. More space between the negative and positive areas has created an illusion of depth.

**Colours**

Visionary colours such as orange and different tones of yellows and reds have been applied. Bluish to purple colours have been used to paint the cattle. These cattle are symbolic in the sense that their colour blue signifies the colour of the water they came from.
SCENE SEVEN

Figure 24
Starvation and death

Description of the scene

This scene depicts the starving Xhosa people eating the marrow from old bones. On the right-hand side of the composition the British are providing food for the starving Xhosa people. A woman carrying a bag of mealies represents those few Xhosa who did not kill their cattle. In the background is an empty kraal showing that the Xhosa people have killed all their cattle.

Format and subject matter

The dimensions of this painting are 1.2 x 2.4m on a landscape format. The rectangular format is made up from two equal squares. This semi-realistic painting is the seventh panel: the last scene of the story of Nongqawuse.

This painting is loosely divided into five sections: The large central triangular section; flanked by two inverted triangular sections on either side. In addition, two
smaller trapezoids (one to the extreme left and one to the extreme right) complete this composition.

**Central triangular section**

The base of this triangular section takes up slightly less than the whole length of the painting (2m)

In this regard there is a slight movement away from the strict symmetry found in the other seven scenes. Unlike in the other scenes, where important characters are placed in the center or slightly off center to form a central axis, here a man representing the starving Xhosa people is placed noticeably off-center. He defines the apex of the central triangular section.

Within this large section can be found Mhlakaza on the left, and a man holding bread on the right side of the painting. The men represent different Xhosa tribes who made the decision to kill their cattle. Inside the central triangular section, there are bones of dead cattle killed by the Xhosa people.

**Left hand triangular section**

This triangular section may be loosely divided into smaller, yet equal areas: an inverted triangular section and a trapezoidal section.

**The Left-hand inverted triangular section**

On the left of the central triangular section may be seen an inverted triangular section. Here can be found Nongqawuse (holding a skull), a symbolic animal, a woman dressed in a blue blanket, and a woman carrying a huge bag of mealies. The symbolic animal is a hybrid based on the forms of both the hyena as well as a jackal scavenging on the old bones. The woman carrying the bag represents the few Xhosa
people who did not kill their cattle and destroy their crops. In the background is the empty kraal, devoid of all the cattle signifying hunger.

**The left-hand trapezoidal section**

The left-hand trapezoid is formed by the left-hand edge of the painting, a piece on the bottom and the left-hand side of the inverted triangular section. Inside this trapezoid may be found Nongqawuse holding a skull (a symbol of death) a woman dressed in blue and orange smoking a pipe. On the ground can be found bones and a scavenger.

**Right-hand triangular section**

This triangular section may be loosely divided into smaller, yet equal areas: an inverted triangular section and a trapezoidal section.

**The right hand inverted triangular section**

To the right of the central triangular section may be seen another inverted triangular section. Here may be found three starving Xhosa people. Sir George Grey; and a British soldier on the right-hand side of the composition.

Sir George Grey is depicted holding a book and a pair of binoculars. On his right-hand side are three figures, representing the staving Xhosa people. In the background, inside the empty hedge is a totem pole sans the cattle skulls depicted in scene three.

**The right-hand trapezoidal section**

The right hand trapezoid is formed by the right-hand edge of the painting. On the left-hand side of the inverted triangular section, the trapezoid is formed by a man holding bread in the front and Sir George Grey’s right arm. Inside the trapezoid can
be found loaves of bread (used as a metaphor for food) to be given to the starving Xhosa people.

**Overlaying semi-circle**

Overlaying the central triangular section may be found a semi-circular shape which consist of variously, starting from the left corner of the painting with the hybrid animal, Mhlakaza’s knees, his headdress, the hands of the man eating a bone, the headdresses of the of the starving figures in the background Sir George Grey’s right arm and the hem of the soldier’s jacket to the right of the composition.

**Horizontals**

Three equally spaced parallel horizontal lines dominate the composition. The central horizontal line bisects the format into two equal horizontal halves. It runs horizontally from the top of the human skull through Mhlakaza’s head touching the binoculars on the right side of the painting to the bottom of the soldier’s helmet.

The top horizontal line is defined by the horizon line, it runs from left to right, the back of the hedge creates a vanishing point where the sky meet the ground.

The bottom horizontal line runs from left to right, starting at the ears of the hybrid and running under the armpit of Mhlakaza. It touches the hand of the man holding bread (in the foreground) and ends at the heap of bread loaves to the extreme right of the composition.

**Light source**

There seems to be no direct light source, but the cast shadows on the ground suggest that the figures are illuminated from the right side.
Spatial depth

In this painting, depth has been created similarly to scene three. The figures are brought to the foreground, in the background is the hedge.

The use of colour

The sky has been painted in colours that symbolize natural scenes i.e. soft blues, and a touch of red and orange to connect the seventh and eighth painting visually. A touch of pink and a small amount of orange give the sky a feeling of sadness.

Inside the hedge the reflections of soft blues and pinks and orange colours on the ground as well as on the branches that makes up a hedge.

In the foreground the soil is painted bluish to brown reddish as well as pink colours. The bones are pinkish in order to make the standout from the ground.

The clothes on the Xhosa figures are painted in different favorite colours to the local people.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Iintsomi* is the Xhosa term for imaginative narratives.

*Izibongo* is the Xhosa term for poetry.

*Irayirayi* is the Xhosa term for riddles.

*Amaqhalo* is the Xhosa term for proverbs.

*Amabali* is the Xhosa term for history narratives.

*Xhosa* refers to the nation of African tribes which inhabits the present day Eastern Cape Province

*Ukuthkatha* is the Xhosa term for witchcraft or a bad magical act practiced by witches

*Usishiyile* is the Xhosa term for “he left us”, which is a euphemistic way of saying that “he/she is dead”.

*uMdali* is the Xhosa term for the Supreme Being

*Izinyanya* is the Xhosa term for ancestors or the good souls of the dead family relatives

*Ixhwele* is the Xhosa term for a herbalist

*umkhosi* is the Xhosa term for a regiment of soldiers or warriors

*Ikhazi* is the Xhosa term for marriage goods

*Lobola* is the Xhosa term for a dowry which is made up from a number of cattle or money given to the bride’s father.

*Iggirhâs* the Xhosa term for a traditional doctor

*Amayeza* is the Xhosa term for medicine

Frontier Wars refers to the series of wars which occurred between Xhosa and Settlers between 1795—1820. These were previously known in the literature as the so-called “Kaffir Wars”.

Diviner refers to a traditional healer who uses bones to tell the future and who gets his power from the ancestors.

Cattle Killing event refers to the historical event where certain of the Xhosa tribes destroyed their cattle and crops in 1856-7.
Red blanket Xhosa is a general term which indicates a Xhosa who is a non-believer in Christianity.

War-doctor is a European term for a igqirhra (diviner) who magically prepares the warriors for victory.

Xhosa prophet refers to a Xhosa who has embraced Christianity and who also prophecies.
SOURCE LIST


Gabel,


Lehmann J. (1977). Remember you are an Englishman. Jonathan Cape Ltd, 30 Bedford Square, London WC1


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</tr>
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<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Selected transcripts of video recordings made by Andrew Nhlangwini 2000 – 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>Digital copy of the thesis including 7 paintings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>People interviewed with special knowledge regarding the <em>Ibali likaNongqawuse</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX A

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Nongqawuse

Questionnaire no............................
Date of Interview:.........................
Place of Interview:.......................[/]
Time of Interview:......................[/]

### SECTION 1

**Personal Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1 Name</th>
<th>Prof, Rev, Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Age group</td>
<td>15 – 20  21 – 29  30 – 49  50 - 59  60 -79  Over 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Sex</td>
<td>Male  Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Occupation</td>
<td>Professional*  Traditional Role**  School Teacher  Clerical  Business Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed  Labourer***  Scholar/Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:**
- **Traditional Role** = amagqira, ikhwele, imbongi, imbalile
- ***Labourer*** = Any profession which is labour intensive

### Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.5 Religion</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Islam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>ZCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Apostolic Zion</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Dutch Reformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Place of origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.6 Place of origin</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Presently live</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.7 Culture</th>
<th>Black African</th>
<th>White African</th>
<th>Coloured African</th>
<th>Indian African</th>
<th>Other African</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.7.1 Culture</td>
<td>Nguni</td>
<td>Venda</td>
<td>Sotho/Twsana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.7.2 Tribe a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AmaXhosa</th>
<th>Zulu</th>
<th>Swazi</th>
<th>Ndebele</th>
<th>Sotho/Tswana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1.7.3 Tribe b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AmaPondo</th>
<th>AmaMPfengu</th>
<th>AmaTembu</th>
<th>Xesibe</th>
<th>Bhaca</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mpondomise</td>
<td>Gqunukhwebe</td>
<td>Amahlubi</td>
<td>Bomvana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION 2
Ancestral Beliefs

2.1 Regardless of your response in Section 1 (see above), do you believe specifically in the possibility that you can communicate in any way with your ancestors?

☐ Yes ☐ No

NB If the answer is no, move to Section 3 →

2.2 If yes, do you believe that ancestors can really communicate in any way, or help, or do things for you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2.3 In your opinion, is it common that ancestors appear to people?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify how ........................................................................................................................................

SECTION 3
Oral tradition (background)

3.1 Do you know what the oral tradition is or amabali?

☐ Yes ☐ No

NB If the answer is no, move to Section 4 →

3.2 If yes, what do you think is the purpose of the oral tradition?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entertainment</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Waste of time</th>
<th>Preserve history</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Who may tell a traditional story?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Anybody</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Imbongi</th>
<th>Keepers of tradition</th>
<th>Umbalisweentsomi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If other, specify: ........................................................................................................................................

3.4 Do you think that the oral tradition should be taught as a subject at school?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Reason
..................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................
..................................................................................................................................................

3.5 When are stories (oral tradition) normally told in the village?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anytime</th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Noon</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Evening</th>
<th>Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Are all stories similar or are there different types?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No distinction</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Many types</th>
<th>Few types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.7 If many types, what are they called?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amabali</th>
<th>lintsomi</th>
<th>Amaqhalo</th>
<th>Izbongo</th>
<th>Ilayirayi</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 4
Historical events (amabali)

4.1 What is your favourite ibali story?
........................................................................................................................................
Reason
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

SECTION 5
Nongqawuse

5.1 Have you heard of the ibali of Nongqawuse?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If the answer is no then end the interview here →

5.2 If yes, who first told it to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Anybody</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Imbongi</th>
<th>Keepers of tradition</th>
<th>Ubalisi we etsomi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If other,
specify:................................................................................................................................

5.3 How old was Nongqawuse?
☐ ☐ ☐ years

5.4 What was her profession?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Iqquirha</th>
<th>Ixwhale</th>
<th>Prophet</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Keeper of tradition</th>
<th>A herder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If other, specify:................................................................................................................................
5.5 Why is it told to people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Amusement</th>
<th>Traditional / Straight history</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If other, specify: ........................................................................................................

5.6 In your opinion is this story really true?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If the answer is no then go to Section 6 →

5.7 If yes, how do you know this to be true?

Specify

........................................................................................................................................

5.8 Do you think Nongqawuse was telling the truth?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5.9 Was Nongqawuse ultimately responsible for the Cattle Killing event of 1856?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If the answer is yes then go to Section 6 →

5.10 Who was responsible for the Cattle Killing in your opinion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King Sarhili</th>
<th>Mhalkaza</th>
<th>Nongqawu se’ uncle</th>
<th>Nonkosi</th>
<th>Colonel Sir George Grey</th>
<th>The British Government</th>
<th>The Ancestors</th>
<th>AmaXhosa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5.11 If you think the British were involved, was Nongqawuse complicit or an innocent dupe?

☐ She was an agent of the British ☐ She was used by the British

5.12 If you think the AmaXhosa were involved, was Nongqawuse complicit or an innocent dupe?

☐ She was a willing agent of her uncle and/or Sarhili ☐ She was used by her uncle and/or Sarhili
5.13 Do you think that they may have been more than one person called Nongqawuse?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes why?

................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................

5.14 Is it important to preserve the Nongqawuse story?

☐ Yes ☐ No

End the interview here. If the person is a professional storyteller (e.g. Imbongi or Umbaliswe ntsomi, oral traditionalist), and/or is a mature person who has recollections of the story as told to them by say a grandmother, grandfather or is perhaps themselves a very old person with good memory, then you may proceed to Section 6

SECTION 6
Record of the story (by storyteller)

Make a video tape at this point.

Questions for the Storyteller.

6.1 Did you tell this story (ibali lika Nongqawuse) much the same way it was told to you when you were a child. In short, has the oral tradition changed much since you were young person?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Specify

................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................
6.2 As an authority on the subject, do you believe that the ancestors wanted to destroy the Xhosa enemies (white men) by telling Nongqawuse to tell people to slaughter their cattle?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Specify

........................................................................................................................................

6.3 Do you believe that the ancestors really appeared to Nongqawuse?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Specify

........................................................................................................................................

6.4 If you were living during the time of the cattle killing, would you have joined the killing.

☐ Yes ☐ No

6.5. Any comment to make this research successful.
APPENDIX B

Selected transcripts of video recordings made by Andrew Nhlangwini 2000 – 2003

The following written transcripts are taken from ten selected iimbongi in order to show the more common themes and gestures employed during the oral presentation of the ibali lika Nongqawuse. These transcripts come from various iimbongi resident in the Eastern Cape: From Ngcobo in the north, to Port Elizabeth in the west, and Willowvale in the East. This common denominator (gestures and symbols) formed the basis for certain visual imagery found in the final paintings (cf. 7.8).

All translations into English are approximate only and attempt to capture the spirit of what is being said in Xhosa.

NAME OF IMBONGI: Thembile James Kahlwa
PLACE: Queenstown
DATE: 30 June 2003

- Before he speaks he wraps himself up with a blanket (made out of a cow skin) holding a spear and a stick in his hand. He is sitting in a chair.
- He stands up from the chair, saying “kwangena ukufa emzini” (“death came to the Xhosa family”) and moves his body from side to side.
- He uses a croaky voice.
- He smiles every time he finishes making a statement about Nongqawuse.
- He makes a cross using his stick and spear and says “abulaw’amadoda” (which means loosely “the British soldiers have died”).
- He waves his hand upwards saying ! “ tyhini na la madoda “! (exclamation).
NAME OF IMBONGI: Mawethu Xolani Sbefu
PLACE: Queenstown
DATE: 30 June 2003

- He moves his feather stick up and down and bends his legs as he speaks with his croaky voice.
- He bends his body forward saying “bakhal’abantu” (“the people cried”)
- He moves his stick around by pointing from side to side saying “namhlanje kusenjena kaloku” (“nothing is going right today”).
- He sits down with his eyes closed and then all of sudden he stands up raising his stick saying “kubi! kubi madoda”! (It’s bad! It’s bad! O man!) 
- He shakes his head from side to side and raises his hands straight up, exclaiming that “Noggawuse tried to help the people”.

NAME OF IMBONGI: Mlungisi Ndaba
PLACE: Queenstown
DATE: 31 June 2003

- He stands up wearing his formal suit and moves his hands around saying “amasimi mawavutheleke” (the fields were in flames).
- He uses his croaky voice as he speaks.
- He jumps up and down saying “sithini na madoda”? (O man! What must we do?).
- He smiles and moves his heavy body from side to side as he speaks.
- He closes his eyes and puts his hand on his head saying that “makabongwe uNoggawuse madoda” (O man! Nongqawuse must be spoken about).
NAME OF IMBONGI: Mayiselufu Mgomeni.
PLACE: Peddie
DATE: 2 July 2003

- He starts off with a poem of ritual preparation. He stands up.
- He throws a spear into the ground and then picks it up and licks the spearhead.
- He moves his head from side to side and says “inkomo ziyatshabalala” (the cattle were destroyed).
- He lifts his leg up and down as he speaks.
- When he says the “Xhosa were hungry” he put his hands on his stomach.
- He kneels down saying “namhlanje siyaphela yindlala” (“today we are all starving to death”).

NAME OF THE IMBONGI School Principal (refused to give his name)
PLACE: Peelton
DATE: 4 July 2003

- He first puts a book down saying “andazi ke mfanandini kudala undijaileza” (“I don’t know, young man, (you keep pressurizing me), but now I’ll praise sing for you.).
- He sits down and as he speaks he moves his hands close together and up and down.
- He uses a croaky voice and closes his eyes from time to time as speaks about Nongqawuse.
- He raises his hand up, smiling and saying “yiyo loo nto sohlala ezantsi” (“That is why we are like we are today”).
- He leans back and forward with his stiff body as he speaks.
NAME OF IMBONGI: Andile Sikho
PLACE: Nqobo
DATE: 6 July 2003

- When he starts to talk he first shakes his stick (adorned with feathers) and moves his head from side to side.
- He talks in a croaky voice.
- When he says: “imini uNongqawuse wazalwa ngayo kwakududuma” (“the day Nongqawuse was born it thundered”) he closes his eyes and bends forward.
- He moves side to side often while narrating the ibali.

NAME OF IMBONGI: David Mabalarane
PLACE: Nqadu (Willowvale)
DATE: 8 July 2003

- When he first speaks he clears his throat and then spits on the ground. In his hand he holds a stick, which he moves from side to side.
- He uses a croaky voice.
- He moves his head from side to side when he says “zonk’iinkomo ziphelile” (“all the cattle are dead”).
- He holds his stomach when he says “silambile” (“we are hungry”) looking very sad at the same time.
- He uses his hands often and closes his eyes a lot.
NAME OF IMBONGI: Phelokazi Ben
PLACE: Ebusila
DATE: 10 July 2003

- She starts with the word “tshini!” (exclamation) and she jumps up saying things like “ngoba, ngoba” (because, because)
- She moves from side to side and shakes her hands and then she moves her arms from side to side saying “wasithengisa uNongqawuse kubantu abamhlophe” (“Nongqawuse sold us to the whites”).
- She seems to be very angry.
- She bends forward and then she jumps up.
- When she says “wathint’umama wathint’imbokotho” (“you mess with a woman you mess with a rock”) she bends forward and waves her hands in the sky.
- Her last word are “Huntshu!” (exclamation). 
- She jumps high and then bends forward.

NAME OF IMBONGI: Asanda Ben
PLACE: Ebusila
DATE: 10 July 2003

- Before she starts she first smiles and then she clears her throat and then she uses a croaky voice.
- When she starts she says “hayi, hayi” (exclamations).
- She seems to be angry.
- She closes her eyes and then looks up at the sky.
- She jumps when she says “hoyi-hoyi” (exclamations)
- She covers her eyes saying “gawuuyo usigqible” (“you [Nongqawuse] have killed us”)
- When she says “singamathambo” (“we are just bones”) she waves her T-shirt in the air.
NAME OF IMBONGI: Nolitha Mevilli
PLACE: Gatyana
DATE: 12 July 2003
- She starts with these words “Ewe kaloku” (“Yes. O.K. lets start..”) in a croaky voice.
- She holds a stick in her hand, which she waves in the air.
- She closes her eyes a lot and smiles too.
- She closes her eyes saying “ilanga liyatshona” (“the sun is going down”).
- She waves her hands saying “zaphela incomo zethu” (“our cattle are dead”).
APPENDIX C

Digital copy of the thesis including 7 paintings
APPENDIX D

People interviewed with special knowledge regarding the *ibali likaNongqawuse*:

- Mpumza Dingani from Litha
- Fezeka Tiso from Berlin
- Chief Mabandla from Alice
- Rudolf Kholoza from Burnshill
- Prof S Makalima from Alice