

## *Umabatha*: Zulu play or Shakespeare translation?

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*If we look at things from an ethnological point of view, does that mean we are saying that philosophy is ethnology? No, it only means that we are taking up a position right outside so as to be able to see things more objectively – Wittgenstein*

Wittgenstein's brief colloquy from the *Nachlaß* for 1940<sup>1</sup> suggests a profound unhappiness with cultural relativism, perhaps a rejection of the perspectivalism lauded by Nietzsche as integral to his programme for the revaluation of all values.<sup>2</sup> Wittgenstein seems to be entertaining or even commending an outlook formed and conditioned by assimilating ethnological understandings fully, by exhausting them, so to speak, before taking up a position 'right outside' – '*weit draußen*'. Philosophy on this view aims to see things '*more objectively*'.

There can be few theatrical productions in greater need of such cautionary interpretative effort than Welcome Msomi's *Umabatha*. The piece is a hermeneutic hedgehog if ever there was one. Consider just a few of the paradoxes that mark the vehicle's critical reception.

Of first importance is the production's vexed relation to Shakespeare. The programme for the public premiere of *Umabatha* at the Open Air Theatre of the University of Natal in Durban in 1972, immediately prior to its translation overseas for Peter Daubeny's 1972 World Theatre Season at the Aldwych, carries the subtitle 'a Zulu drama on the theme of *Macbeth*' above the cast-listing.<sup>3</sup> Overleaf, we are informed outright that 'This is an original Zulu play by a Zulu writer', and then, even more robustly, that '**Umabatha** is not a Zulu version of *Macbeth*; it is a dramatization of a fierce and momentous epoch in South African history which uses the plotline and conventions of Shakespeare's play to give greater resonance to its fable of authority, assassination and treachery. The epic story of Msomi's play is rooted in real historical events.'<sup>4</sup>

The particular 'fierce and momentous epoch in South African history' associated specifically with the province of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) and the Zulu people *sui generis* is the series of knock-on power struggles and migrations in the early nineteenth century that followed the consolidation of Northern Nguni power in the region under Shaka, a phenomenon generally known as the *mfecane* (Xhosa) or *difiqane* (Sotho). For the largely white audience which saw this first production of *Umabatha*, such a reference gestured in an utterly undifferentiated fashion to the populist myth of King Shaka, an often lurid repertoire of legends shaped and consolidated in 'white writing' over previous generations, and which must be distinguished from later, more accurate and tentative historical constructions that have both dismantled and complicated our historical understanding of this early nineteenth century upheaval (see, for example, Wylie 2000, 2006 and Etherington 2001).

By the time the production gets to London for the 1972 World Theatre Season, it has acquired broad but very explicit linkage – at least in the programme notes – with the historical figure of Shaka. These notes, compiled by director Pieter Scholz, acknowledge the use of extracts from E.A. Ritter's *Shaka Zulu* (1955), and Barbara Tyrrell's then recently published and beautifully produced coffee table book, *Tribal Peoples of Southern Africa* (1968), which was a pioneering

effort to illustrate indigenous dress from life using line drawings and colour wash. So London audiences were supplied with an ‘appropriate’ cultural background. Both works, typical of their different times and genres, offer very ‘white’ perspectives on Zulu (or Northern Nguni) history and its relation to colonial incursion and expropriation. In the World Season programme, the bald assertion from the South African run that the show ‘is not a Zulu version of *Macbeth*’ has been toned down to the claim that in *Umabatha* ‘a Zulu version of MACBETH was born; not as a literal translation of Shakespeare’s tragedy, but rather as an original creation using MACBETH as a frame of reference.’<sup>5</sup>

London critics had every right to be puzzled. Several showed themselves impatient of the claim that *Umabatha* was anything more, or other than, a rather peculiar foreign version of Shakespeare’s play. The historicising gestures in the notes (and from time immemorial programme notes have been taken with a pinch of salt, evidence of directorial intention and wishful thinking more than an accurate guide to the theatrical experience on offer) by no means identified a specific sense in which the production could be received as anything other than a Zulu *Macbeth*: both plot and the English translation piped to the audience through earphones suggested that this is what it must be. Here, for instance, is B.A. Young writing in the London *Financial Times*:

*Umabatha*, written in the Zulu tongue by Welcome Msomi, follows Shakespeare’s plot so closely that you can almost put in the English words at any given moment.<sup>6</sup>

Or John Barber, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*:

It is remarkable that the author, Welcome Msomi, with Zulu history and his people’s experience in mind, should have been prompted not to disturb Shakespeare’s structure at any point. The language either paraphrases the original (I listened to a translation through a transistor) or in his version debased it.<sup>7</sup>

Or Harold Hobson, in the London *Sunday Times*:

It is not an original play, but a re-writing in Zulu of “Macbeth.” - - - Anyone who can carry the scenario of “Macbeth” in his head is able, without knowing a word of Zulu or making any use of those tiresome transistors, to follow “Umabatha” with absolute ease. - - - The moral impact of the production is all the greater for being uncomplicated by linguistic confusions.<sup>8</sup>

The denial could hardly be blunter. This central paradox, that the production claimed quite openly to be ‘an original play by a Zulu writer’, while to most metropolitan theatre critics it was obviously a Zulu interpretation of *Macbeth* has never been thoroughly explored. Allied with this paradox are several secondary questions, mostly of a political nature. From its inception debate has raged over the cultural status of the production: was it an authentic expression of Zulu culture, or a tacky piece of ‘blacksploitation’? – to use Russell Vandenbroucke’s term.<sup>9</sup> Was the production pleasing evidence of Shakespeare’s universality, a gift to the colonies returning joyfully to the motherland with interest accruing? Could it perhaps be a case of Zulu culture triumphing over Shakespeare, native invention swamping and overwhelming a colonially-

imposed 'high culture'? Was the show performing 'Africa' for the world and, if so, was this the way Africa ought to be represented in the twentieth century? Or were we perhaps looking at a fetishized theatrical commodity, wrenched from *any* authentic cultural roots, and circulating aimlessly but profitably through a globalised theatrical cosmopolis?

There were also some more narrowly political issues. With its roots in the dark days of apartheid, was this Zulu show a theatrical instance of 'separate development' – propaganda exemplifying the Nationalist government's policy of separating not only races, but often dubiously defined ethnic groups, corralling them in ill-resourced 'homelands' or 'bantustans' (unless their skills and labour were needed by white South Africa)? Could it even be an instance of resurgent Zulu nationalism, allied perhaps with Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's largely Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party, which at different times operated in a variable and uneasy relationship with the broad liberation struggle?

Such speculative questions – and there are many others – have regularly jostled each other in the bulky heritage of *Umabatha's* reception history. The central problem underlying this chapter is whether, following Wittgenstein's prompting, it might not be possible to define a basis for a more objective response to some of them, so that the issues involved no longer rest quite so slackly in the realm of mere critical opinion. To neglect such an effort would leave the tangle of responses where it stands now, as simply a matter of disparate critical articulations, of varying cogency, reflecting different audience responses. Surely scholarship should attempt something better than a *smorgasbord* of contrary views stemming from diverse critical and theatrical traditions; different politics, different cultural assumptions, different ontologies, all projecting themselves onto relevant aspects of this hapless theatrical object? Critical disagreement tends to locate the source of such disparate responses primarily in the facts of audience reception, rather than in the objectively realised dimensions of the theatrical vehicle itself.

There is more at stake here than just the intellectual goal of attempting a satisfyingly parsimonious interpretive synthesis. Where critical effort shrinks from the effort to understand widely differing responses, abjuring the task of seeking their inter-relatedness and explanation in the production itself, the possibility of fruitful human dialogue diminishes. This is not simply a matter of finding 'common ground'. Very often there isn't any. Nor is it merely a question of denying some points of view and valorising others – though obviously some opinions hold more water than others, and can be shown to do so. Rather it is a question of pursuing the implications of divergent perspectives to their sources, seeking solid evidence in the theatrical vehicle (or art-production, whatever it might be) to support or reject them. The answers do not lie in the perspectives, but in what we find when the perspectives have been laid bare, in their informing assumptions. Then we have a chance, not perhaps of understanding immediately or transparently, but of engaging in dialogue which progressively yields larger areas of agreement across perspectival differences; we become better able, in Wittgenstein's words, 'to see *more objectively*'.

## Who created *Umabatha*?

This is probably the place to start, because very often important clues to a work's meaning are traceable in its genesis, and there are certainly divergent accounts of how *Umabatha* came into being. It is common cause that *Umabatha* was written by Welcome Msomi: every production, from 1970 on, announces the fact. The archival evidence is there in the three school exercise books containing the original pencilled text in Msomi's hand which are lodged in the *Umabatha Collection* at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.<sup>10</sup> This text is derived very literally from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, as the London critics noted. To call it a translation would be unfair and inaccurate. It is a careful redaction of Shakespeare's text, written in Zulu, and focusing primarily on the action. *Macbeth* is noted for its concision, but even so the length here is greatly reduced. Whole scenes – mostly minor ones – are omitted. The proportion of what one might crassly call 'verbiage' to action within scenes is greatly reduced, so that the 'mental life', the interiority, of the characters is less prominent. (To talk of renaissance stage figures having 'mental life' sounds anachronistic if one thinks in terms of Romantic notions of consciousness; all I mean here is that we learn a great deal more about the stage personages in Shakespeare's play from what they say than we do in Msomi's; there is more detail, more *said*.) One example, taken from an English translation, must suffice. Where Shakespeare gives us that marvellous image of Pity personified as 'a naked new-born babe / Striding the blast, or heaven's Cherubins, hors'd / Upon the sightless couriers of the air' whose impact will be to 'blow the horrid deed in every eye, that tears shall drown the wind' (1.7.21-25), Msomi's text offers:

A thousand throats will howl his death  
And fall upon his murderer.

(2.3.16-17)

For a theatre-goer attuned to Shakespeare's original, such abrasive contrasts are palpable throughout the script, and gross, deliberate contraction ever present. John Barber's grumpy remarks about Msomi's text 'debasing' Shakespeare's poetry make perfect sense a) if your assumption is that *Umabatha* is meant as a translation of *Macbeth*, and b) if you interpret the play you have experienced as an instance of text-based drama, whereby a sacrosanct script serves as a blue-print for performance, the task of the director and cast being to flesh-out the meanings and emotions latent in the words on the page, to make them live on stage. This is indeed a very British, RSC, Harold Hobson way of looking at things. But what if neither of these assumptions happens to be appropriate? Welcome Msomi indeed wrote the script for the production, but this is by no means the same thing as saying that he created *Umabatha*. We need to further explore the production's genesis.

A few years back, Brian Pearce conducted a wide-ranging interview with Pieter Scholz, the original director of *Umabatha*, which appeared in *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* in 2002.<sup>11</sup> To confirm some factual content before publication, and simply out of collegial respect, Pearce sent the interview in proof to the show's producer, the late Professor Elizabeth Sneddon. The copy was returned with detailed annotations evidently meant as authoritative, because she initialled the final leaf, 'E.S.': then aged 94, with history looking over her shoulder, this was clearly something 'for the record'.<sup>12</sup>

These unpublished annotations, together with the content of the Scholz interview, throw interesting light on the origins of *Umabatha*. In sum, three people claim to have originated the production, while a fourth is introduced as having first put the idea forward. Taken at face value, this sounds like the perfect recipe for one of those classic *post hoc* artistic spats which so often enliven and debase the history of creativity. It is far from the case here. I have come to the conclusion that not only from their individual perspectives, but in actual fact, all three parties were indeed responsible in different ways for creating *Umabatha*, while a fourth may well have sparked the whole initiative. I see no reason not to accept that he did. Like so many complex theatrical vehicles, the production had multiple origins, and no one origin is *the* origin. The question centres then on the role played by each.

The ‘dialogue’ between the draft interview and Sneddon’s marginal annotations starts when Pearce asks Scholz what he feels about David Johnson’s 1996 book *Shakespeare and South Africa*, which makes no mention of *Umabatha*. (Actually, Johnson’s book explicitly eschews attention to Shakespeare on the stage – but no matter.) Scholz responds:

I think it is strange. I think it’s also strange that I am never credited with the production although it was my concept, it was my production, and the ideas in it were mine. I worked with Welcome Msomi as an assistant to me.

Then, after briefly recounting reasons for his break with the show after the 1972 Aldwych season, he continues:

Welcome [Msomi] has become identified with the production, doing three or four productions all over the world, annually, which is tremendous. I’m glad that it is going on as a production and that the tradition of *Umabatha* is being perpetuated in that way. What I am bitter about though is that there is never once any acknowledgment of the fact that it was my production, my concept, my idea, two years of sweat and tears, huge triumph at the Aldwych that Professor Sneddon and I initiated. I have to say it, Welcome has never once mentioned that in any of the productions or interviews that he’s had. I have to say it. Yes, I am bitter about that.

– to which Professor Sneddon’s pacific response is ‘No need to be bitter’. Of Scholz’s assertion that *Umabatha* was ‘my concept, it was my production, and the ideas in it were mine’ Sneddon simply remarks, ‘My version of this production is so different from Pieter’s that I have decided [I] should let this pass’. But she underlines both Scholz’s statement ‘it was my production’ (appending the marginal comment ‘It was not’), together with the next phrase, ‘my concept’, adding the intriguing remark that ‘P.P. Breytenbach ha[d] suggested it to me at a meeting of the Performing Arts Council’. So here we have an additional *fons et origo*, a source for the idea of *Umabatha*. P.P. Breytenbach was a leading figure in the drive to create a national (read ‘white’ national) theatre for South Africa under the Nationalist regime in the 50s and 60s, and Sneddon, with her drive and flair, was an obvious person to draw into the project to represent theatre in Natal. Towards the end of the Scholz interview she returns in a marginal note to the part played by Breytenbach in catalysing what eventually became *Umabatha*. At this point in the exchange, Scholz is ruefully recalling how an idea he once had for a new version of *The Tempest* had been pre-empted in the rock musical *Return to the Forbidden Planet*: ‘Oh bugger, that’s my concept!’

Sneddon comments: 'Just in the same sense Umabatha was my concept but P.P. Breytenbach - - years before had suggested it to me before I had the scope to implement it'.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps we can conclude, then, that P.P. Breytenbach casually sowed a seed which germinated as Elizabeth Sneddon's passion for the idea of an indigenised *Macbeth*. She then delegated the practical implementation of this project to a young director on her staff, Pieter Scholz, a senior lecturer in the drama department at the University of Natal, Durban. The sequence seems clear and uncontroversial, although it hardly appears in discussions of *Umabatha*. But what of Welcome Msomi? On every programme ever printed for the production, the title rubric reads 'Umabatha by Welcome Msomi', yet in Pearce's interview, Scholz describes him as an 'assistant'.

At the time, Msomi was a budding young playwright in Durban, with at least two productions to his credit, *Mntanami Nomhlangano* ('My Child Nomhlangano') and *Qondeni*, the latter a realist piece exploring the sociological impact of urbanization on people moving into the often violent black townships surrounding white Durban. He worked full-time as a market researcher for a pharmaceutical firm called Sterling Drug (S.A.) Pty Limited, a subsidiary of the US company of the same name.<sup>14</sup> *Qondeni* first toured provincially and then ran at the University of Natal's Howard College Theatre in Durban. Msomi had wanted to enrol at the University to study Speech and Drama, but this would have required permission from the Minister of the Interior to study at a 'white' institution. Elizabeth Sneddon naturally saw the *Qondeni* production and lighted on Msomi as a talent who could be recruited for her *Macbeth* project. A letter by Eve Stuart published in the *Christian Science Monitor* (3 February 1972) throws light on her thinking. Disliking the 'detrimental' portrayal of the Zulu people in *Qondani*, Sneddon 'suggested that Mr Msomi prepare a play that presented his people in a more worthy light - - and drew [his] notice to the many parallels existing between Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the tribal history of the Zulu.'<sup>15</sup> This seems to be how Msomi first came into the picture. Breytenbach and Sneddon shared a certain idea; Scholz and Msomi were enlisted to realise it.

The relation between the two 'implementers' seems initially to have been as unequal as Scholz claims. True, the initial group of actors came from Msomi's earlier productions, called in at Scholz's behest. But it was Scholz who auditioned dancers from the various dance teams at AE&CI (African Explosives and Chemical Industries) and African Breweries, who transported them to and fro for rehearsals, and who eventually put the production together. It was also Scholz who, through hard experience, came to see that an indigenized *Macbeth* working from Shakespeare's text was a non-starter.

The realisation came about like this. After two weeks of abortive rehearsals in Studio 5 in the Drama department, Scholz was close to despair. Things came to a head one Saturday morning. Here is his account in the Pearce interview:

We tried reading Shakespeare, reading some of the scenes, I tried paraphrasing, I explained what the language was about. I helped them, but it was stilted, it was wooden, it was terrible and after about three or four hours of improvisation and working – it was longer than that, it was virtually a whole day – I said, 'Right leave it. We will work tomorrow.' - - - I slept on it over night and I just thought 'The whole problem is the

language. There is no way I am ever going to get marvellous actors, marvellous movers, marvellous singers who are unable to master English let alone blank verse, to speak the language with any assurance and conviction.’ So the next day, we got there and I said, ‘Look let’s just try the opening witches scene, “when shall we three meet again”, but’, I said, ‘you do it for me as three sangomas coming together and you do it in Zulu. Here are the words, read it through, translate them to Zulu. See how it goes.’ Well it was an absolute revelation and a miracle. Suddenly it all happened - - - it was such a simple thing but it had taken me so long to reach the understanding and I thought, ‘This is what we’ve got to do, we’ve got to do it in Zulu.’\*

This seems to be the point at which the Breytenbach/Sneddon notion of an indigenised *Macbeth* changed definitively. The prospect of a text-based production evaporated, and for good reason. Like all Nguni languages, Zulu can be described as ‘syllable-timed’: in other words, in spoken language adjacent syllables are delivered evenly, each taking up the same amount of time. The rhythmical pulses are homogeneous, creating an effect that is often described as ‘machine-gun’ like. English, in contrast, relies heavily on nuances of stress and intonation to make meaning. All home-language Nguni-speakers have the greatest difficulty in approximating the sound systems of ordinary English. What the educationist Josie Levine calls the ‘tunes’ of the language are so different.<sup>16</sup> When one considers that the cast were attempting a four-hundred-year-old variety of the language, used idiosyncratically and at full stretch by an extraordinary poet and wordsmith, the project looks utterly implausible. Hardly *au fait* with the literal sense, how could cast members be expected to hear complex tensions between the underlying rhythmic beat of the language and a superior poetic counterpoint interacting delicately to create poetic verse *drama*? Given that few of them had learned contemporary English from so-called ‘native speakers’, and that the quality of education delivered to Africans under apartheid was deliberately abysmal, it is hardly surprising that Scholz struggled in vain to coax a text-based performance from his cast.

So the production took a different route, one far commoner today than it was then, that of workshopped improvisation based on dramatic situations in *Macbeth*, with Scholz gradually integrating various formal Zulu dances he had been observing for months with the factory-based dance teams into the performance to illustrate particular dramatic predicaments. Zulu dances are essentially set-pieces, part of a gradually evolving cultural repertoire, so it was relatively easy to adapt them to the crises in *Macbeth*. But Scholz went further: a Zulu-speaker himself, he searched the text of *Macbeth* to find strains of imagery for which Zulu counterparts existed. In her annotations to the Pearce interview, Sneddon writes, ‘Pieter Scholz took the European images and found equivalents for them in the Zulu experience of animal images.’<sup>17</sup> One might question the notion of ‘images’ operating in Zulu iconology in the way literary academics see them at work in written language, but certainly Scholz worked hard to seek out African *données* that would do the work of Shakespeare’s originals, not so much in the language, but in the staging and theatrical presentation of the emerging work.

But they still needed a Zulu script. This is where Msomi came in. *Umabatha* was indeed written by Welcome Msomi, as all the programmes proclaim. Permission was granted for him to have time off work, and he wrote the original Zulu text of *Umabatha* in the three school exercise books already described. He was commissioned by Elizabeth Sneddon and assisted Pieter Scholz with the production. The English translation audiences heard through their earphones or

‘transistors’ at the Aldwych during the World Theatre Season was written by Pieter Scholz, turning Msomi’s Zulu script back into English, and both the Zulu text and the English translation have gone through many subsequent changes. Msomi records in his Preface to the Via Afrika/Skotaville edition of *Umabatha* (1996) a sense of unease at the task he had been set:

It has been a long way since the birth of *uMabatha* in 1969 when I started writing the play. At first it was an idea I hated, employing Shakespeare’s work in a Zulu medium (although I must admit that my love for Shakespeare started when I was at St. Christopher’s School in Swaziland, where I even performed in *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth* and *The Merchant of Venice*) since I felt I was borrowing another writer’s ideas.<sup>18</sup>

Clearly, Msomi felt himself to be a scribe under orders, producing a Zulu script based on Shakespeare’s, but without the creative autonomy he might have enjoyed in writing an original play. The production was already taking shape under Scholz’s direction; he had to produce the words. And he did.

If the genesis of *Umabatha* was roughly as I have described it, perhaps Pieter Scholz is justified in feeling hard done by when the show goes on, year after year, with no mention of his name. The same goes for Elizabeth Sneddon – though she seems to have dismissed any such discourtesy with ineffable serenity – for she at some fundamental level initiated the whole thing, and certainly fought a battle royal to raise funds, to obtain governmental permission, and to coordinate the arrangements for that first momentous tour to London.<sup>19</sup> The question of who deserves the credit for *Umabatha* is a minor issue. What is much more important from a theatre history point of view is the matter of the show’s meaning.

### **What does *Umabatha* say to its audiences?**

Seen from one perspective, the script of *Umabatha* reduces Shakespeare’s text to almost comic-book simplicity. As mentioned earlier, the coarse physical action is there; but the poetic reflection, the self-awareness, and therefore the depth of human motivation, is almost entirely missing. The characters act, they respond emotionally, but they do not reflect, or agonise or meditate or ponder. This poverty in the script transfers to its realisation on stage. Movement and spectacle triumph over language: John Mortimer complained after viewing the 1972 Aldwych production, ‘we are left with a European vacuum surrounded by superb native dances’.<sup>20</sup> The late Peter Ustinov quipped, tongue-in-cheek, that this was the first time he had ‘ever understood what *Macbeth* [was] all about’.<sup>21</sup> Quite so. *Umabatha* wins no prizes for subtlety. Critics down the years have adverted to the issue, and have also drawn attention to a disturbing shift in tone. Derek Mahon noted of the 1972 production that the character Mabatha (Macbeth) ‘is so gentle and agreeable as to neutralise the evil supposedly inherent in the character—which would be just about workable if Daphne Hlomuka as his wife weren’t the very incarnation of comfortable good humour. Considering also that Lawrence Sithole plays Bhangane as a joker...and that the Witch-Doctors are for ever going off into peals of quite un-devilish laughter, what you’ve got isn’t a tragedy at all but a black comedy.’<sup>22</sup> Kate McKluskie wrote of the revival that helped open the new Globe in 1997 that ‘[The witches] performed their magic with giggling insouciance, a sort

of girlish trick on the heroic men. Lady Macbeth was a large and equally cheerful woman whose early encounters with Macbeth were more comic harangue than evil insinuation.’ (154)<sup>23</sup> Nick Curtis, viewing the same production, was drawn to the conclusion that ‘Throughout, Msomi keeps his tongue firmly in his cheek’.<sup>24</sup>

Msomi himself is utterly conscious of this change of tone and intent, commenting that ‘When you watch *Umabatha*, you will laugh. When I saw *Macbeth*, I never laughed. In [the] Zulu culture, we celebrate the death of a king, the ritual. We celebrate the deeds and contributions in life, and we remember the funny moments that were part of that individual’ (see Pacio 1997).<sup>25</sup> A theatrical vehicle which combines wanton murder and retributive violence with celebration and ubiquitously cheerful social emotion is far removed from Shakespeare; it inhabits another philosophical universe, one far more ethically disturbing and, dare I say it, more *modern* than that which Shakespeare knew. It is actually terrifying.

### **Protective perspectivalism**

There are a number of ways to avoid such a realisation, a number of *perspectives* which can be drawn on to save one from this unpleasant and disturbing conclusion. These perspectives leave the interpretation of *Umabatha* in the hands of its diverse audiences, working away to preserve their own view of the world, to fit the spectacle they have witnessed into some appropriate form of emotional quarantine. Perhaps the most obvious ruse is to muffle the seriousness of the piece. One way to achieve this is to link it securely to the pot-boiling tradition of ‘African spectacles’, shows such as *Umoja*, *African Footprint* or, notoriously, the original *IpiTombi* (its orthography subsequently corrected to *IpiNtombi*) – all instances of what Kate McKluskie dubs ‘tourist theatre’.<sup>26</sup> These make no claim to be other than ‘good fun’, exercises in transculturated exoticism whose sole aim is to put bums on seats. And to be sure, there was a large element of this response in the rapturous reception accorded *Umabatha* at the World Theatre Season in 1972. It would be hard to account for the show’s continuing success without registering this aspect of its appeal. The original *Umabatha* hit town just as ‘swinging London’ was losing its initial charm. With Carnaby Street experiencing a slight down-turn, what better way to pep things up than with bare-breasted Zulu ‘maidens’ (this was the era when the British red-banner press introduced the so-called ‘topless’ page 3 girls) and powerfully impressive assegai-bearing warriors. London audiences were captivated. In Frank Marcus’s words from the *Sunday Telegraph*:

It is not everyday that you sit in a West End theatre and have stamping, chanting, fearsomely-clad and armed warriors storming through the isles and brushing your arm with their shields and assegais.

(9 April, 1972)

Another way to neuter the impact of *Umabatha* is to reduce it to a relic of apartheid politics. Given that the overt aim of apartheid was to create separate ethnically-based 'homelands' in the service of a spurious programme of 'separate development' for ethnic groups, and that *Umabatha* made claims to being a theatrical platform introducing aspects of Zulu culture to international audiences, there was an ideological case to be made that the show exemplified apartheid in action. Indeed, the notion of *Umabatha* as somehow a showcase for 'Zulu-ness' continues to be part of the show's packaging. In his Director's Note for the production that appeared at the Natal Playhouse in Durban in 1996 Msomi wrote that the show fulfilled his desire 'to show the world our culture', offering an 'opportunity to take pride in the richness of our culture'.<sup>27</sup> But the very resort to representing an ethno-culture on stage could be seen as a form of essentialism aimed at holding Zulu identity to pre-modern forms, which was exactly the intention of apartheid's originators. Even Elizabeth Sneddon's implied preference for 'tribal' culture over the modernising stresses of township life portrayed in Msomi's early drama *Qondeni* could carry this inflection, and indeed the show was boycotted in New York in 1979 precisely because it was felt to fall within the ambit of apartheid cultural production.<sup>28</sup> Against this interpretation must be weighed the fact that the apartheid government initially opposed the move to take *Umabatha* to London in 1972, and that it was only through the vigorous campaigning of Elizabeth Sneddon that permission was reluctantly granted. Certainly no financial support was forthcoming from the Nationalist government, and Sneddon had to appeal to the private sector for funding to get the show to London. Private individuals contributed, several musical concerts were arranged, and the corporate sector was dunned, in order to finance the trip.<sup>29</sup> Having been through the files of pre-tour correspondence, the most obvious conclusion is that the Nationalists just didn't see the propaganda potential in the venture (nothing about the apartheid catastrophe is clearer than the intellectual dullness of many of its leading lights), so that while the show falls all too aptly into the category of an apartheid-style presentation, this appears to have been both inadvertent and not officially recognised or supported as such.

A third perspective effectively 'bracketing' the impact of *Umabatha* holds that the show is importantly a vehicle for Zulu nationalism and, specifically, for the Inkatha Freedom Party (the IFP) of Mangosuthu Buthelezi. *Umabatha* actually pre-dates the formation of this party, which was started in 1975, but there is clear evidence that Elizabeth Sneddon appealed to Buthelezi for support when the government proved less than helpful in sending the show abroad.<sup>30</sup> Relations between the IFP and the broad liberation movement have always been troubled. The vigorous young 'Black Consciousness' movement that emerged in the early 1970s rejected Buthelezi principally on the grounds of his programmatic anti-communist stance (which in their view put him on the same side as the Nationalists) and he was branded an apartheid collaborator. On the other hand, he never accepted the principle of homeland independence and steadfastly refused any overt political deals until the African National Congress was unbanned. He was a fan of *Umabatha* though there is no evidence that his support was effectual.<sup>31</sup> One very general point that lends force to this view of *Umabatha* is that the IFP has never succeeded in shedding the

label of being a Zulu nationalist organisation. This creates an adventitious but ineluctable linkage with a show that foregrounds ‘Zulu-ness’. The connection may be theatrically irrelevant, but it is structurally present and powerful, thanks to the nature of South African politics. Militating against such an interpretation, or at least diluting it, is the fact that the African National Congress has informally endorsed the show. The programme for the 1996 revival in Durban, already mentioned, carries an endorsement in the form of a ‘Letter to Welcome Msomi’ from none other than Nelson Mandela.<sup>32</sup>

A fourth possible means of insulating oneself from *Umabatha*’s impact is to rest in the comfortable notion that the show illustrates vague historical parallels between Scottish and Zulu history, thereby sanctioning a slack universalism which incidentally transfers the western ‘literary’ prestige of *Macbeth* to political upheavals in nineteenth century ‘Zululand’ – giving the territory its colonial name. With this strategy we hit a positive minefield of historiographical misprision.<sup>33</sup> To be sure, *Umabatha* programmes consistently invite such an approach. We are back to that ‘fierce and momentous epoch in South African history’ adverted to in the World Season programme, centring on the figure of Shaka, who is indeed immensely important in Zulu history and tradition. To invoke the memory of Shaka was a particularly powerful move during the period when *Umabatha* was devised. There is a sense in which Shaka was an emotional and ideological stay not only for Zulu-speaking South Africans, but for all black South Africans during the apartheid scourge, because of the powerful mythography surrounding him.<sup>34</sup> Shaka’s purportedly innovative state-craft and almost mystical powers of leadership were the supposed key to the great historical upheaval captured, at least in miniature, in the conflicts dramatised in *Umabatha*. Shakespeare’s cast was given Zulu names with a rough phonetic correspondence: Mabatha for Macbeth, Dangane for Duncan (unmistakeably reminiscent of Shaka’s half-brother, Dingane), Bhangane for Banquo, Makiwane for Malcolm and Donebane for Donalbein. Lady Macbeth became Kamadonsela (or kaMadonsela in today’s orthography) – more of her later.

Today not only has the precise configuration of this complex historical event, the so-called *mfecane* in which Shaka was both cause and explanation, been thrown into question, but as conventionally understood its very existence is substantively challenged. Thanks to a chain of enquiry sparked off by the historian Julian Cobbing, the *mfecane* is now widely regarded more as an historiographical phenomenon, tied to the history of ‘history’, than as a useful means of describing or explaining what actually happened in the region. The conception gained historical credence immediately prior to the creation of *Umabatha*, largely through the work of J.D. Omer-Cooper in *The Zulu Aftermath* (1966), building on A.T. Byant’s *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (1929) and the dubious reportage of Henry Francis Fynn and Nathaniel Isaacs.<sup>35</sup> It found its way into the programme notes for *Umabatha* not through any of these works, but as a consequence of Pieter Scholz’s reliance on E.A. Ritter’s *Shaka Zulu* (1955). Ritter’s book (which today would shelter incongruously under the rubric of ‘non-fiction novel’) was accepted as

authoritative by a large number of subsequent authors, but is in fact an outrageous collation of fabrication and mis-information.<sup>36</sup>

Ritter was an interesting character. Born in Dundee in 1890, the son of a German colonial magistrate in Natal, he claimed Zulu as his first language (which may well have been true). He was poorly educated, and after working for a period for the Native Affairs Department in Southern Rhodesia, in 1935 he wound up at Umhlanga Rocks, north of Durban, struggling to make his way as an amateur inventor: specifically, he developed a substitute for gun-cotton made from wattle-bark and banana stems. Dan Wylie writes that ‘within two years Ritter - - - was being photographed in front of the Reichstag in Berlin, where he was apparently wooing industrialists’ so that he might profit in the war that was soon to come.<sup>37</sup> His inventions were initially unsuccessful, and *Shaka Zulu* was his effort to counter financial distress and, according to his daughter, restore a measure of family honour.<sup>38</sup> The draft he produced was lengthy and turgid. It was turned into fluent, racy prose for Longmans by none other than the young Edward Hyams, who had no knowledge whatever of Africa or Zulu society. Hyams later became an **unusually** prolific author combining work as a gardening columnist for the *Spectator* with, **unusually** for a gardener, works on left-wing revolution.<sup>39</sup> Much of the material Ritter had borrowed from Bryant’s *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, and duly acknowledged, was anonymously assimilated by Hyams in his sweeping narrative re-write, so that Ritter’s uncertain attempts at scholarly integrity simply vanished. It would not be unfair to say that this unlikely combination of right and left, Hyams and Ritter, between them largely created the popular ‘white’ myth of Shaka. The influence of Ritter’s *Shaka Zulu* extends to such diverse works as the *Oxford History of South Africa*, Donald Morris’s *The Washing of the Spears* (1965), the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry for Shaka, which Morris wrote, and the notorious SABC television series of the same name, directed by William Faure.<sup>40</sup> The book still sells well today.

At the time Scholz’s reliance on Ritter was unexceptionable, but the effect of recent scholarship is to undermine the Ritter-based historical parallels which all *Umabatha* programmes subsequent to the 1972 London season strive to establish. The notes in that seminal programme tell us that while Msomi ‘does not draw on the incidents of Shaka’s life as a source for his play, there are many interesting parallels in the life of Shaka and the creation of the character and conflicts of Mabatha, which have facilitated the transition of the MACBETH story into a tribal context’ [3]. The parallels listed are three in number, and are worth quoting at length:

Shaka’s wife, Pampata, was an able and intelligent woman - - - . She had, from the first, a very high opinion of Shaka’s future, and prophesied that he would rule all the world they knew. Like Lady Macbeth or Kamadonsela in UMABATHA, she played a dominant role in encouraging his ambitious undertakings.

Shaka himself was a man who commanded immediate respect for his leadership and authority, and who performed prodigious feats in battle. Long before he became the

feared and respected leader of the Zulus, he encountered an ‘umtagati’ (wizard), who is said to have prophesied: ‘You are a man. Already I see a chief of chiefs.’ Like Mabatha, Shaka was later involved in confrontations with the “Isangomas,” but because he sensed their power to be a threat to his position, he defied the superstitious magic of the witch-doctors and emerged from these clashes with undisputed authority.

Like Duncan, Shaka was murdered by those close to him, in whom he placed absolute trust. Dingane and Mhlangana, Shaka’s half-brothers, together with Mbopa, an Induna (chief councillor) of the Royal Kraal, surrounded Shaka and stabbed him with their assegais. The assassination is almost a re-enactment of Caesar’s death in JULIUS CAESAR. Mbopa, who struck last, stabbed Shaka in the back, whereupon Shaka turned and exclaimed:

“Hau! Nawe Mbopa ka Sitayi, usungbulala” – (Hau! You, too, Mbopa, son of Sitayi, you, too, are killing me).

– which seems very much like Zulu for *Et tu, Brute.*<sup>41</sup>

None of the three ‘parallels’ put forward in the programme notes stands up in the light of contemporary historical knowledge. The love story between Shaka and Pampata, which supplies much of the narrative drive in Ritter’s book, receives a fatal blow because she probably never existed. There is only one mention of such a name in the James Stuart Archive, a vast collection of oral testimony upon which today’s scholarship is based, and absolutely nothing which confirms the elaborate fabrications which so enthrall us in *Shaka Zulu*.<sup>42</sup> Where the programme quotes ‘Shaka’s own words’ that Pampata ‘had a mind shrewder than that of a ring-headed councillor’, this comes from an invented moment in *Shaka Zulu* (see p.23) where, after his having first killed as a member of Dingeswayo’s *Izi-cwe* (Bushmen) regiment, young Shaka and Pampata make love on Shaka’s great shield of ox-hide, after which, we are told, ‘the girl prophesied that her lover would rule all the world they knew’ – another remark embodied verbatim in the programme notes. This is all made up. So there is no historical original for Pampata/Kamadonsela, and consequently no historical parallel for the Macbeth-Lady Macbeth relationship in *Umabatha*.

Not to labour the point, the specific encounters with the ‘umtagati’ [*umthagathi* – wizards and witches] and with the ‘Isangomas’ [*sangomas* – diviners and healers] are also high points in Ritter’s imagination, and there is no actual historical certainty about how Shaka died – but of course there is a fully-realised scenario in Ritter’s book. More strikingly still, though it does not impact on the veracity of the *Umabatha* programme notes, Ritter’s account of Shaka’s military prowess reaches a climax in the battle of Qokli Hill where his superior strategy and by implication intellectual capacity are decisively demonstrated. Unfortunately, in Wylie’s words, Ritter’s ‘account of *Qokli Hill* is based on little more than a hint and a name’: the conflict which in Ritter confirms Shaka’s legendary stature as a military genius ‘is essentially a fabrication’. Yet in terms of the Shaka legend, surely this is where any parallel with Macbeth’s prowess as a

soldier must be located, the Macbeth we meet in reputation as the play opens? A reading of Wylie's *Myth of Iron*, which presents a sceptical non-biography of this figure whom people once thought they somehow 'knew', is a devastating reminder of how little factual evidence there is, and how variable and contradictory oral testimony can be.<sup>43</sup>

But we could also take the line that perhaps the Zulu-speaking cast had a better sense of history than could ever be available through imposing the dodgy myths created in 'white writing'. Perhaps authenticity leaked into *Umabatha* surreptitiously, by osmosis? After all, there were already in existence a number of Zulu plays about Shaka when *Umabatha* was created.<sup>44</sup> They each approach Shakan legend and tradition from different perspectives, but it would seem that reliance on transmogrified Shakespeare as the basis of the *Umabatha* script effectively insulated the show from any such influence, and there has never been any suggestion that the cast contributed orally-transmitted Shakan legend to flesh out purported historical dimensions.

There might also be an argument for cultural authenticity enacted despite the overlay of intrusive western culture in the form of Shakespeare. On this view Msomi's Shakespearean script is inessential surplus, and the show stages a timeless mythic drama which encompasses history because it is 'ur-history', the essential stuff of life before we get to the detail. The narrative is carried not merely by the 'linguistic text' but by the full expressive potentialities unleashed on the stage. These are not merely theatrical, but deeply cultural. They take narrative beyond the literal meaning of the verbal text (beyond *Macbeth*) to evoke a spiritual dimension in which actors on stage are no longer naturalist mimics, but borderline supernatural figures, representatives of the shades or ancestors. They are enacting a particular story, which is also a 'type' of, or excerpt from, the universal story, because every participant present knows that story (if we can accept *pro tem* the paradox of a 'Zulu universal'), and can and does 'fill in' those parts that are missing or seem distorted by particularity. The patterned choreography, probably received by most western audiences as an exercise in consciously directed stage craft bodying forth the unfolding 'plot', is related to set cultural moments in the informing ethnographic world. The preponderance of 'song and dance' in the show does not represent some strange affinity for collective public musical theatre.<sup>45</sup> The eagerness with which the cast joins in as a body following key moments of crisis reflects the Zulu notion of *Ugqozi*, or collective inspiration, shared feeling, infused into a person or persons by circumstances, which demands collective expression in order to create sympathetic group meaning. It takes form in dancing, singing, clapping, praising, and ululation along seemingly spontaneous but culturally set lines.

That is another rather powerful way of disposing of the challenge of *Umabatha*, and it has its validity, as have the other perspectives I have sketched. Of course, a problem remains in that there is no pristine Zulu culture other than that which anthropologists strive to recreate. The original cast of *Umabatha* were not rustic sages; they were urban factory workers, township dwellers from the mid-twentieth century. The dances which are 'quoted' in the structure of

*Umabatha* originally belonged in the primal ethnoculture (which is a concept, not an actuality); and they were and are danced by people who have moved far from those life-ways. Efforts were made to costume the characters appropriately. Timothy Aitcheson, the show's publicist in 1972, records that skins, beads and other properties were gleaned throughout Natal to provide 'an authentic scenario of African tribal life [and] traditional styles'.<sup>46</sup> Costumes collected in this fashion are an assemblage, authentic in general, but not in any literal sense. Bead symbolism in Zulu dress is highly articulate, but this is sophisticated cultural knowledge, today fast slipping into desuetude, and in detail utterly inaccessible to ordinary modern-day Zulus, let alone international theatre audiences. In fact a final eviscerating approach to *Umabatha* would be to hype the ethnographic importance of the show, to characterise it as an informal exercise in transculturation whereby the story of *Macbeth* is re-interpreted from a Zulu cultural perspective: 'This is how *Macbeth*-like doings appear when translated into Zulu cosmology and society'. *Umabatha* becomes a full-on exercise in cultural otherness.

### **The flaw in 'protective perspectivalism'**

Each of these perspectives seems to me to hold a degree of plausibility; none can be dismissed. But such critical stances – and there may well be others – distance themselves from the primal impact of the show through reliance on specific analytical strategies. They use valid operations of the intellect to step back from the disturbing realisation that, as I intimated earlier, the show is absolutely terrifying. Derek Mahon called it a 'black comedy'; it is more than that. The central challenge posed by *Umabatha* is the great gulf between that extraordinary combination of social joy, the perennial up-welling of individual and communal vitality, humour and well-being which is the show's hallmark, and the utter absence of any sense of conscience or responsibility in any of the characters. *Macbeth* can in some measure be viewed as a counterpart to *Hamlet* in which 'conscience does make cowards of us all'. The scary thing about Macbeth is that he is substantially the same valiant soldier at the battle of Dunsinane as he is in the description conveyed by the 'bloody man' in Act 1. Conscience (or 'consciousness' – either word will do to designate a mental arena for conscientious introspection) has been fought against and defeated, at the cost of massive human devastation, literal, political, psychological and spiritual. But Macbeth has offended deeply, he has suffered, the very heavens have responded to his culpability. In *Umabatha* all representation of consciousness, of conscience, has been stripped away. We are left with a drama of action and *Ugqozi*, collective sympathetic feeling.

Which brings me back to Wittgenstein and the quest for seeing *more objectively*. How can *Umabatha* both be a version of *Macbeth*, and not be a version of *Macbeth*? The contrasting perceptions of *Umabatha* as text-based Renaissance theatre decked out in the "setting and style" (Mc Kluskie's words) of 'Africa', and *Umabatha* as a uniquely South African thematic and theatrical event loosely related to Shakespeare's play were there right from the start, and are inescapable. To be pedantic for a moment, according to Aristotle's logic, whatever is, is: nothing

can both be and not be *at the same time*; and for something to change, it must change from what it is, to what it is not (yet). The trouble is that, as Wittgenstein puts it, ‘If white turns into black some people say “Essentially still the same”. And others, if the colour becomes one degree darker, say “It has changed *completely*”’ (42e). It may be argued that in order to respond adequately to *Umabatha* we are metaphorically in need of an optical instrument familiar from the resolution to *Twelfth Night*, namely a “natural perspective, that is, and is not” (5.1.215). But we have seen from the kaleidoscope of defensive interpretations available, that to form an adequate response to *Umabatha* more is required than the ‘twin vision’ supplied by an optical stereoscope, more even than a facile retreat to the multiple standpoints of Nietzschean perspectivalism. It will not be sufficient to rest in the assumption that there is one range of dialogic apprehension available to informed South African audiences and another to global spectators. Nor can we accept that what we are investigating is the mundane phenomenon of ‘every audience being different’.

On the page preceding Wittgenstein’s thoughts on what is involved in seeing more objectively, which introduced this chapter, there is an intriguing comment about Schopenhauer: ‘One could say of Schopenhauer: he never searches his conscience.’ (The German reads ‘*Man könnte von Schopenhauer sagen: er geht nie in sich.*’) <sup>47</sup> Schopenhauer is, of course, a major influence on the *Tractatus*. <sup>48</sup> But what I take Wittgenstein to be getting at – and it is never easy to supply an incontrovertible context for his aphorisms – is Schopenhauer’s powerful sense that our animal well-being, the phenomenal expression of the World as Will welling up in each of us, takes precedence over our experience of consciousness and intellect. Consciousness rationalises and analyses what ‘Will’ has already determined. There is no stance ‘right outside’ – ‘*weit draußen*’ – as Wittgenstein knew all too well, but we can strive to explore relevant perspectives sufficiently to ask the question ‘What have we here?’, and do so meaningfully. What we have in *Umabatha* is a theatrical experience where the world as ‘Representation’ (in other words, the world of consciousness and conscience) is thoroughly subordinated to the world as ‘Will’. Schopenhauer would maintain that this is a truer, more objective, description of actual human motivation: not African, South African or early modern European motivation, but *all* human motivation. Moral and intellectual consciousness is an epi-phenomenon, which is why I think we should take seriously Harold Hobson’s devastating comment about *Umabatha*: ‘The moral impact of the production is all the greater for being uncomplicated by linguistic confusions.’ <sup>49</sup> The implication is that we should pay more attention to what actually happens in the world, than to what people say about it – even if Shakespeare’s poetry is traduced in the process. *Macbeth* is an infinitely greater work than *Umabatha*, but I hope I have made a case for responding to its vision directly, so that it stands in troubled relation to *Macbeth* rather as Heiner Müller’s *Die Hamletmaschine* does to *Hamlet*. We should shed the protective veils of ‘perspectivalism’ to confront what is actually there. As Wittgenstein remarks (and the key word is ‘justly’): ‘Don’t demand too much, and don’t be afraid that what you demand justly will melt into nothing’ (40e). <sup>50</sup>

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, Culture and Value, ed. G.H. von Wright (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 37.

<sup>2</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols (1889).

<sup>3</sup> The show was first performed on 3 July 1970 as entertainment for a conference entitled 'Communication in Action', chaired by Elizabeth Sneddon, at the University of Natal, Durban. The production was modified and developed further for the London season.

<sup>4</sup> *Umabatha* programme, Open Air theatre, University of Natal Durban, 1972.

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<sup>6</sup> B.A.Young, 'Umabatha,' Financial Times (London) 4 April 1972.

<sup>7</sup> John Barbour, 'Zulu *Macbeth* of simple excitement.' Daily Telegraph (London) 4 April 1972.

<sup>8</sup> Harold Hobson, 'Tribal splendours,' Sunday Times, 9 April, 1972.

<sup>9</sup> Russell Vandenbroucke, 'South African Blacksploitation,' Yale/Theatre 8.1 (1976): 68-71.

<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sterling Drug was purchased by Eastman Kodak in 1988, and in order to support international sanctions against the apartheid regime, the South African subsidiary was sold to Adcock Ingram. Eastman Kodak returned to South African after the demise of apartheid.

<sup>15</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Josie Levine, Developing Pedagogies in the Multilingual Classroom: The Writings of Josie Levine, ed. Margaret Meek, 54.

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<sup>20</sup> John Mortimer, 'Zulus on the Loose.' Observer, 9 April, 1972.

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<sup>26</sup> Kate McKluskie, 'Macbeth/Umabatha: Global Shakespeare in a Post-Colonial Market'. *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999), 155.

<sup>27</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Boycott

<sup>29</sup> Fundraising

<sup>30</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Buthelezi's support

<sup>32</sup> Natal Playhouse programme

<sup>33</sup> The show's most thorough scholar to date, Mervyn McMurtry, dismisses the Shakan historical parallels as 'specious publicity' (313). They are certainly problematic, much more so today than at the show's inception, but I would hesitate to deny their relevance either to *Umabatha*'s founding intentions, or to the meanings Scholz and Msomi tried to embody in the events represented.

<sup>34</sup> H. C. Groenewald writes: 'In the perilous times of apartheid, Zulu writers felt the need to restore the dignity of their people and they found an object of pride in Shaka and the Shakan state' (p.15).

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- <sup>35</sup> Formation of mfecane  
<sup>36</sup> Wylie on Ritter  
<sup>37</sup> Wylie 219.  
<sup>38</sup> Wylie  
<sup>39</sup> Hyams  
<sup>40</sup> Ritter influenced books  
<sup>41</sup> World season programme, 3-4.  
<sup>42</sup> Dan Wylie concludes that ‘*Shaka Zulu* is a palimpsest of two men’s – Ritter’s and Hyams’s – shabby scholarship, incomplete reading, personal predilections, conscious fictionalizing, and outright deceit’ (231).  
<sup>43</sup> Wylie concludes his study, *Myth of Iron*: ‘We have encountered many gaps and mysteries in this study of Shaka - - We do not know quite when he was born. We cannot be sure about the trajectory of his childhood. We know almost nothing of his career under Dingiswayo. We do not know much about the daily routines of his life. Maybe two times out of three, we cannot be sure that the anecdotes told about him are true. We can gain little solid insight into his ‘character’ – something that every biographer likes to be able to summarise - - - The material for a trustworthy ‘biography’ of Shaka simply does not exist’ (481).  
<sup>44</sup> Among them are L.L.J. Mncwango’s *Ngenzeni? (What have I done?)*, 1959; Elliot Zondi’s *Ukufa KukaShaka (The Death of Shaka)*, 1960; and S.B.L. Mbatha’s *Nawe Mbopha KaSithayi (You too, Mbopha, son of Sithayi.)*, 1971 – the title echoes *Et tu, Brute*. Several more have appeared subsequent to the inception of *Umabatha*.  
<sup>45</sup> Show girls  
<sup>46</sup> Aitcheson, ‘All Hail Umabatha’  
<sup>47</sup> Wittgenstein 36e  
<sup>48</sup> Magee  
<sup>49</sup> Hobson  
<sup>50</sup> Wittgenstein

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