

## Historicizing the Unspeakable: Legacies of Bad Death and Dangerous Sexuality in South Africa

*Benedict Carton*

George Mason University, Washington DC

*UNokufa*

Whenever I tried to visualize you, Death, ...  
I thought I saw you lurking in the darkness, ...

Then you appeared, and families were scattered  
And many alas, were lost to us forever! ...

Again I cry, alas! For have I not seen  
The children of Sihlonono  
Dying in their prime?

Have I not watched, behind a screen of shrubs,  
The daughters of our scattered tribes  
Abandon the struggle to keep their maidenhood  
And quench the lust of youths who were their kindred.

—Benedict (Bambatha) Wallet Vilakazi, *Ikondlo kaZulu* (1935).<sup>1</sup>

It has become a sad truism that black youths comprise one of the most vulnerable “risk groups” in South Africa. Their rising rate of HIV infection is ascribed, in part, to chronic unemployment, which afflicts post-apartheid society and frustrates their “pursuit of modernity.” In this milieu transactional sex becomes a vital source of income and commodities.<sup>2</sup> Such quests, in turn, stoke rumours that fertile women with multiple partners proliferate *ukufa* (“bad death” in Zulu) in provinces hit hard by AIDS like KwaZulu-Natal. This charge of promiscuity embodies a prominent concept in Zulu cosmology, dread of *umnyama*, “pollution” that can be transferred sexually. It also evokes a hackneyed colonial idea that African sexuality is debased and menacing. More than anything, the latter accusation triggers conspiracy theories that blame whites for hatching AIDS and injecting it into blacks.<sup>3</sup> Some observers of the pandemic have asserted that these attributions reflect

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<sup>1</sup> *Zulu Horizons*, translated by D. McK. Malcolm and J. Sikakana (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1973), 61.

<sup>2</sup> S. Leclerc-Madlala, “Transactional Sex and the Pursuit of Modernity,” *Social Dynamics*, 29, 2 (2003). M. Hunter, “Masculinities, Multiple-Sexual Partners, and AIDS: The Making and Unmaking of Isoka in KwaZulu-Natal,” *Transformation*, 54 (2004).

<sup>3</sup> S. Robins, “‘Long Live Zackie, Long Live’: AIDS Activism, Science and Citizenship after Apartheid,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, 3 (2004), 653-54; also: A. Ashforth, *Madumo: A Man Bewitched* (Chicago:

novel responses to an “unspeakable” scourge defying local explanation.<sup>1</sup> B. B. W. Vilakazi’s 1935 poem, mourning those “dying in their prime” and “the lust of youths,” begins to tell a different story.

A revered Zulu intellectual, Vilakazi grew up in colonial Natal learning the dramaturgies of “Africa of old.” A decade before his birth in 1906, his parents lived through the rinderpest epizootic that swept through eastern and southern Africa. By 1897, this virulent bovine virus had left the “velt strewn in carcasses and the cattle kraals emptied of every ox, cow or calf their owner possessed.”<sup>2</sup> Four decades later, B. B. W. Vilakazi helped compile a massive *Zulu-English Dictionary* that classified thousands of terms, among them (bad) “death” and “rinderpest.” The suffix *fa* (die) is followed by many definitions, alluding to plague, unseemly craving, diseased cattle, and “one vicious person [who] will infect a whole community.” One term for rinderpest, *umaqimulana*, describes how livestock perished “like flies,” an apocalyptic vision summarized in *ukufa* idiom, *zabulawa ngukufa zathi qimu*: “They were destroyed by epidemic, collapsing everywhere.”<sup>3</sup> Vilakazi’s etymologies confirm that notions of epochal misfortune and *ukufa* had already been enfolded into the Zulu language.

The similarities between AIDS and rinderpest extend beyond linguistics. Both outbreaks evolved from epi- to pan-phenomena, prompting the urgent attention of Western medical scientists.<sup>4</sup> They also highlighted the unremitting pressures on African families and restlessness of their youths. The epizootic, which originally leaped from Europe into Africa in the late nineteenth century, eradicated a prized source of exchange upholding customs regulating fertility. In the absence of bridewealth cattle that sealed nuptial negotiations sanctioning reproduction, Zulu-speaking youths at the turn of the twentieth century increasingly engaged in premarital intercourse. Such transgressions alarmed elders who safeguarded sexual norms to buoy their sinking world of domestic patriarchy. After the British conquest of Zululand in 1879, white authorities imposed heavier taxes on homesteads and appropriated more land from chiefdoms. Shrinking “native reserves” yielded fewer crops, which propelled youths to seek wages in the colonial economy. Their income helped to pay taxes and purchase family provisions; it also shifted their expectations.<sup>5</sup>

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University of Chicago Press, 2000). Fears of AIDS injected through needles elsewhere in Africa: L. White “‘They Could Make Their Victims Dull’: Genders and Genres, Fantasies and Cures in Colonial Southern Uganda,” *American Historical Review*, 100, 5 (1995), 1402. Sexual pollution as purveyor of AIDS in southern Africa: A. Mogenson, *AIDS is a Kind of Kahungo That Kills* (Oslo: Scandanavian University Press, 1995), 12, 85. Dread of pollution (like death) is an integral part of the human condition: M Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Purity, Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966). My study seeks to situate idiomatic and historical meanings of pollution in the context of social change in Zulu-speaking African societies.

<sup>1</sup> Trenchant critique of AIDS as an “unspeakable” scourge defying local explanation: H. Phillips, “AIDS in the Context of South Africa’s Epidemic History: Preliminary Historical Thoughts,” *South African Historical Journal* 45 (2001), 11; hereafter *South African Historical Journal* is *SAHJ*.

<sup>2</sup> Minute (Min.) Paper (P.) Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA), 21 Aug. 1897, 1645/1897, 1/1/252, 1/SNA, Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository (PAR), KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Vilakazi and “Africa of old”: B. Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries & African Intellectuals* (Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press, 2000), 95-99.

<sup>3</sup> Definitions of *fa*: 197; rinderpest: 707; in C. M. Doke and B. W. Vilakazi, compilers, *Zulu-English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1953), republished in C. M. Doke et al. compilers, *English Zulu, Zulu English Dictionary* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1990). The “Introduction” (xii) in the *Zulu-English Dictionary* (1953) applauds the etymological contributions of Dr. B. W. Vilakazi.

<sup>4</sup> Epi- to pan-phenomenon, biomedical intervention, and Western attitudes regarding cattle disease and AIDS: J. Fisher, “Cattle Plagues Past and Present: The Mystery of Mad Cow Disease,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, 2 (1998), 224, 215-167, 221.

<sup>5</sup> J. Lambert, *Betrayed Trust: Africans and the State in Colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995), Chps. 3-8.

When the *abasha* (“new or modern ones”) searched for better prospects, they exercised greater social autonomy, which apparently led to a rise in premarital “seduction (making pregnant).” At the centre of this era’s “loose morality” tales were *izinkhanuka*, so-called wayward children, but particularly young women, some of whom became prostitutes infected with *isimpantsolo*, gonorrhoea.<sup>1</sup> Forbidden sex, a source of hazardous bodily pollution, now coincided with strong *umnyama* conveyed by a killer disease, rinderpest, which colonists allegedly battled but appeared to abet. This confluence of circumstances haunted and inspired Vilakazi. While he bemoaned the dangerous symbiosis between unfettered sexuality and tragic mortality, he also sought regeneration.<sup>2</sup> Zulu nationalism, Vilakazi claimed, could revitalize a depleted people, halting the rampages of Western civilization that “delimit[ed] the social powers” of their kings and upset the moral compass of their “Nation.” In this sense he envisaged colonial modernity as a sexually transmitted disease, dissipating black victims in their prime, whether “daughters of our scattered tribes” or migrants “exploited in the mines.”<sup>3</sup>

Vilakazi’s Zulu-speaking cohorts similarly indicted injurious white rule. In a 1927 speech African National Congress (ANC) President Josiah Gumede denounced the “hopeless suppression” of Zulus yoked into industrial compounds, which incubated tuberculosis and silicosis. “What exploitation!” he declared, made possible by “diseases . . . introduced into South Africa which wiped out our cattle. We think this was done deliberately to force us to go down the mines.”<sup>4</sup> He confirmed his suspicions three decades ago in Natal, when he witnessed “misfortune maliciously” delivered. In 1897 he petitioned the Natal government to stop “any European who may try and advise us in our difficulties.” Citing “our downfall and the dead” herds, Gumede decried the “brutal domineering treatment” of colonial “rinderpest commissioners.” In the months following his letter, with the bovine virus running amok, whites injected vaccines in African cattle that spread, rather than arrested, *ukufa*.<sup>5</sup>

With such evocative evidence available, it is surprising that “reams of writing on AIDS in South Africa” have portrayed the pandemic as black people’s unprecedented and inscrutable tragedy. This perception, University of Cape Town historian Howard Phillips argues, rests on shallow memory. To be sure, his profession bears some responsibility for its failure to place catastrophic outbreaks in the “mainstream narrative of the country’s history.” AIDS could be better comprehended, he suggests, if “set comparatively against” previous “epidemic experiences.” This recommendation, I argue, should encompass plagues that leveled animals vital to human prosperity, reproduction, and cosmology. This chapter extends recent inquiries into the roots of sexual and etiological socialization underlying

<sup>1</sup> Testimony of Mabaso and Kumalo, 16 Dec. 1900, in C. de B. Webb and J. Wright, eds. *The James Stuart Archive*, vol. 1 (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1976), 236-237.

<sup>2</sup> Dangerous symbiosis: B. W. Vilakazi, “Ezinkompini,” in Malcolm and Sikakana (1973), 124-28. See his epic poem on Nongqawuse, “Inkelenkele YakwaXhoza,” the adolescent prophetess behind the millenarian 1856-57 Xhosa Cattle Killing. Vilakazi noted that “treacherous” girlhood shaped this Xhosa tragedy: (1973), 9. Colonial intrusions and Xhosa fears of pollution and dissipation, i.e., improprieties such as adultery, leading to the Cattle Killing: J. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-57* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Vilakazi embraced Romantic “discourses of civilization,” but deplored Enlightenment progress for destroying Zulu culture: Peterson (2000), 108, 104-107, 95-99; Vilakazi and Zulu nationalism: P. LaHousse, *Restless Identities: Signature of Nationalism, Zulu Ethnicity and History in the Lives of Petros Lamula (c. 1881-1948) and Lymon Maling (1889-c.1936)* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), 104; “exploited . . . mines”: Vilakazi, “Ezinkompini,” (1973), 124.

<sup>4</sup> Speech of J. T. Gumede: <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/speeches/1920s/gumedesp.htm>; see note 17.

<sup>5</sup> Petition by W. Gumede et al. to Government of Natal (Josiah Gumede admitted that he wrote this petition), Min. P. SNA, 29 Nov. 1897, 2704/1897, 1/1/267; background evidence: Min. P. SNA, 5 Aug. 1897, 1487/1897, 1/1/250; Min. P. SNA 10 Aug. 1897, 1642/1897, 1/1/252; 1/SNA, PAR.

“humanity’s deadliest cataclysm.”<sup>1</sup> To this end, I begin with topical debates that inform historians’ understanding of the unfolding pandemic, and introduce a neglected “ways of death” scholarship that could offer compelling insights. The narrative then examines mounting fears of untimely death and contaminating sexuality during rinderpest and AIDS. These two episodes of crisis mortality, triggered by the decimation of multitudes, spawned similar recriminations against perceived guilty parties. Such scapegoating reflected disempowering gender and racial dynamics, which at times dovetailed with ambivalent attitudes toward biomedical intervention.

The analysis of rinderpest primarily depends on archival sources. The section on AIDS is more ethnographic and exploratory in scope, using oral testimony I collected in South Africa from July 2002 to August 2003 and February 2004 to July 2004, with Zulu-speaking informants residing in the Midlands-Pietermaritzburg region, Thukela valley, and metropolitan Durban of KwaZulu-Natal province. In preparing for these face-to-face discussions, I re-examined field notes recorded in the early 1990s, when I conducted doctoral fieldwork. Ten years ago, I investigated power struggles in traditional Zulu communities enveloped by civil conflict. This testimony and some of the same informants clarified gender and generational perspectives of mortality and sexuality.<sup>2</sup>

### From Taboo to Topic

In the 1980s, as AIDS gripped the Sub-Saharan region, historians of South Africa expressed growing interest in biomedicine. Over the next decade, they examined past epidemics and health policies, but difficult questions soon arose about expanding this line of inquiry to investigate the current pandemic.<sup>3</sup> How could an oral historian, for example, study a scourge that stigmatizes gravely ill patients and silences their survivors? If a researcher could interview people with AIDS, could she broach the taboo subject of risky sex?<sup>4</sup> Such investigations invariably evoked a racial myth cultivated by European rulers in Africa, who claimed the Dark Continent writhed with reckless breeding and random dying.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, this indictment hovered over HIV-prevention efforts aligning race and sexuality on an axis of grim mortality.

However, two events encouraged historians to cross the minefield of blame and shame. The first was the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) shortly

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<sup>1</sup> Phillips, “AIDS in the Context of South Africa’s Epidemic History”, 11-12. P. Delius and C. Glaser, “Sexual Socialisation in South Africa: A Historical Perspective,” *African Studies* 61, 1 (2002); K. Jochelson, “Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century South Africa,” in P. Setel, et al. eds. *Histories of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999). Animal plague affecting humans: P. Phoofolo, “Epidemics and Revolutions: The Rinderpest Epidemic in Late Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa,” *Past and Present*, 138 (1993).

<sup>2</sup> I cite anonymous interviews, giving the informant’s initials, age, sex, and place of residence. Dr. P. Denis and researchers of Sinomlando (University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)), particularly N. Makiwane and S. Mafu, offered invaluable perspectives.

<sup>3</sup> S. Marks and N. Andersson, “Typhus and Social Control: South Africa, 1917-1950,” in R. Macleod and M. Lewis, eds. *Disease, Medicine and Empire: Perspectives on Western Medicine and the Experience of European Expansion* (London, Routledge, 1988); R. Packard, *White Plague, Black Labor: Tuberculosis and the Political Economy of Health and Disease in South Africa* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1989); D. Wylie, “The Changing Face of Hunger in Southern African History, 1800-1880,” *Past and Present* 122 (1989); E. Katz, *The White Death: Silicosis on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines, 1886-1910* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> M. Mchunu, “Zulu Fathers and their Sons: Sexual Taboos, Respect and their Relationship to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic”, unpublished paper, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2005, 14; this study is part of Mchunu’s MA thesis on “Zulu masculinities.” I thank Macingwane for his scholarship.

<sup>5</sup> M. Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Palo Alto, CA, Stanford University Press, 1991).

after the 1994 historic ballot ushered the ANC into power. Despite controversial amnesties and confessions, the TRC managed a post-mortem examination of human rights abuses committed between 1960 and the advent of democracy. While the TRC fostered restorative justice, revelations of twisted science came to light. White scientists in Roodeplatt Laboratory, for example, testified that they endeavored to manufacture drugs to destroy black fertility. Apartheid contraception campaigns had already reduced African birth rates; the Roodeplatt experiments merely amplified whispers that white supremacists deviously aimed to extinguish the majority.<sup>1</sup> The TRC disclosures and national debates they kindled converged in compelling ways to engage historians, some of whom started to reconsider the interlocking legacies of racial injustice and medical science.<sup>2</sup>

This historiographical turn accelerated with global efforts to combat HIV. In the late 1990s health NGOs placed South Africa near the top of their urgent intervention list. They posted bulletins in provinces with high infection rates admonishing individuals to avoid unsafe intercourse. Informed by “western-derived theories of . . . rational decision-making,” these messages sought to initiate behaviour change. In effect well-meaning “safe-sex” approaches overlooked crucial collective factors, i.e., the unequal gender relationships driving a “sugar daddy” phenomenon that lengthens the devastating reach of HIV.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, contrary to TRC hearings that explicitly promoted conciliation between perpetrator and victim, safe-sex campaigns preaching personal responsibility could spur rage and alienation. Outside Durban in 1998, an advocate of AIDS awareness, Gugu Dlamini, who had announced her HIV-positive status, was beaten by a crowd and died of her injuries. In KwaZulu-Natal youths were said to be expressing what anthropologist Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala chillingly called “infect one, infect all” fatalism.<sup>4</sup> The country’s attention was shifting from the subject of nation-building to public health.

In the new millennium several academic initiatives revealed just how significant this shift was. In a milestone 2001 “AIDS in Context” international conference at the University of the Witwatersrand, historians joined scholars from other disciplines to discuss a perspective “largely unrepresented” in biomedical approaches to the pandemic, the social factors fuelling the spread of HIV/AIDS.<sup>5</sup> A raft of presentations appeared in a 2001 *South African Historical Journal* edited by the historian Alan Jeeves. Additional conference papers became part of a special 2002 volume of *African Studies*. A central article in this issue, a two-century survey of “sexual socialisation in South Africa,” posed a crucial question: Why are black youths so susceptible to contracting HIV? The authors, historians Peter Delius and Clive Glaser, skillfully answered by tracing how Victorian Christianity and rapid urbanization

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<sup>1</sup> TRC and restorative justice: W. James and L. van de Vijver, eds. *After the TRC: Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000); Roodeplatt revelations and Dr. Wouter Basson: 20 June 2003, *The Mail & Guardian*. Apartheid-era contraception policies lowered black fertility rates: B. Brown, “Facing the ‘Black Peril’: The Politics of Population Control in South Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13 (1987); D. Potts and S. Marks, “Fertility in Southern Africa: The Quiet Revolution,” *ibid.*, 27 (2001).

<sup>2</sup> B. Carton, “The Forgotten Compass of Death: Apocalypse Then and Now in the Social History of South Africa,” *Journal of Social History* 37, 1 (2003), 200-201; H. Deacon, “Racism and Medical Science in South Africa’s Cape Colony in the Mid-to-late Nineteenth Century,” *Osiris* 15 (2000); D. Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach: Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in South Africa* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> “Western- . . . making”: Leclerc-Madlala, “Transactional Sex”, 23; M. Hunter, “The Materiality of Everyday Sex: Thinking Beyond ‘Prostitution,’” *African Studies* 61, 1 (2002).

<sup>4</sup> “[I]nfect . . . all”: S. Leclerc-Madlala, “Infect One, Infect All: Zulu Youth Response to the AIDS Epidemic in South Africa,” *Medical Anthropology* 17 (1999).

<sup>5</sup> *South African Historical Journal*, 45 (2001). The 2000 UNAIDS conference in Durban partly inspired “AIDS in Context.”

obstructed channels of communication on sexual issues within peer groups as well as between parents and children.<sup>1</sup>

The groundbreaking scholarship of Delius and Glaser could be extended to encompass bereavement customs that restricted intimacy.<sup>2</sup> To this end, scholars could consult a “ways of death” school that has yet to influence South African historiography. The “ways of death” *oeuvre* came of age in the 1970s, drawing on Phillippe Ariès’s analysis of Western eschatology from the Middle Ages to the last century, including funereal rites that distinguished between tainted and accepted mortality.<sup>3</sup> Ariès’s research spanned vast gaps in time, which subsequent historians filled. David Stannard, for one, adopted strands of Ariès’s framework, but concentrated on death anxiety in early New England. Stannard pinpointed two major factors in the “Puritan way of death,” the soaring mortality rates of English children and Christian rites that exalted in the salvation of devout elders. These determinants impelled fathers to withhold parental love, fearing that this affection would sap their children already weakened by Original Sin and the harsh New World environment.<sup>4</sup> The entwined relationship between patriarchal obligations, avoidance practices, and malignant pollution is not unique to the Puritans. Indeed, this interplay profoundly affected the ways in which Zulu-speaking Africans dealt with ruinous pestilence.

### “Does this cattle disease come from the brown people only?”

In 1896 rinderpest raced into South Africa, arriving in Natal and Zululand on the heels of disastrous droughts and locust swarms.<sup>5</sup> The bovine virus gutted herds fitfully recovering from searing heat and meager grazing; high fevers knocked them senseless; lesions clogged their insides; and diarrhea drained them of fluids. Death came in a fortnight to hundreds of thousands of cattle. Yet livestock were not the only victims of rinderpest. Mission doctor James McCord, whose “patients were Zulus,” recorded how “the wiping out of all but one per cent of their cattle deprived them of milk and meat.” Some children “showed the effects of a deficiency diet,” he observed, in “incipient tuberculosis, digestive troubles, . . . and acute fever resulting from lowered resistance.”<sup>6</sup> During this misfortune, Zulu-speaking people, particularly patriarchs responsible for the health of their homestead, implored the ancestors, *amadlozi*, not to forsake them.<sup>7</sup> Spiritual intervention involved penitential rituals, *ukuzila*, entailing the withdrawal from normal routines. *Ukuzila* overlapped with *ukuhlonipha* customs regulating deferential marital and sexual interactions in accordance with patriarchal prerogatives. A trio of Zulu-speaking homestead heads in 1900 described “*zila-ing*,” which contained the *umnyama* potent in women of childbearing age: “[W]hen a woman is

<sup>1</sup> Delius and Glaser (2002).

<sup>2</sup> The bereavement literature is vast: A-I. Berglund *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976); H. Ngubane, *Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); M. Gluckman, “Mortuary Customs and the Belief in the Survival after Death among South Eastern Bantu,” *Bantu Studies* 11 (1937).

<sup>3</sup> P. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, translated by H. Weaver, (New York: Knopf, 1981); this book drew on themes he developed in *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, translated by P. Ranum, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).

<sup>4</sup> D. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>5</sup> Rinderpest in South Africa: C. van Onselen, “Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa, 1896-7,” *Journal of African History* 8 (1972); Natal: C. Ballard, “The Repercussions of Rinderpest: Plague and Peasant Decline in Colonial Natal,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 19, 3 (1986).

<sup>6</sup> J. McCord, *My Patients Were Zulus* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1946), 54; related evidence, 110.

<sup>7</sup> Rinderpest as misfortune: *Report on International Rinderpest Congress, Pretoria, 2-13 Aug. 1897*, 18, Add 3, Natal Colonial Publications (1/NCP), PAR; hereafter *Rinderpest Congress*; “evil” ascribed to rinderpest: Letter Ndabuko to Attorney General (AG), 19 Sept. 1896, Min. P. SNA, 28 Sept. 1896, 1740/1896, 1/1/231; Petition W. Gumede et al.; Min. P. SNA, 29 Nov. 1897, 2704/1897, 1/1/267; *amadlozi* punishment: Min. P. SNA 19 Sept. 1897, 2030/1897, 1/1/256; 1/SNA PAR.

menstruating she will not for seven days sit on her husband's mat, nor will she take a pinch of snuff . . . [and] when men have been called out to fight [husbands will] not cohabit with their wives."<sup>1</sup>

With herds vanishing, however, male elders struggled to reinforce sacred *ukuzila* rites. For example, they found it difficult to call out sacred praises to *amadlozi* in crucial ceremonies ("the bringing back") that banished *ebumnyameni*, malevolent pollution. In the early twentieth century Ntshelile, a Zulu traditionalist, recalled how cattle propitiations enabled the "person who is calling out the praises" to proclaim "'Here is the beast with which we are bringing you back' . . . 'Let us leave off living in blackness (ebumnyameni) . . .'"<sup>2</sup> In the wake of rinderpest, the patriarch Mkando remarked that since he had "no cattle to kill," he did not "see amadhlozi" and could not say "where they have gone." He knew, however, that "they left us with death," for "[e]ven young people die off. The least thing kills them."<sup>3</sup> In addition to their diminished constitution, African youths suffered other disabilities. The sudden loss of cattle undermined the bridewealth negotiations of sons and daughters, who hoped to gain in standing as married, child-producing adults. Youths who obeyed *ukuzila* and *ukuhlonipha* believed their fealty would be rewarded. A homestead patriarch, for his part, granted loyal sons permission to offer bridewealth cattle, *ilobolo*, and take a wife. However, "there was no cattle left for lobola," chiefs Mabizela and Bande explained, and alternative nuptial gifts like cash failed to win wide endorsement.<sup>4</sup>

The corollary of "no cattle for lobola" meant some youths ignored norms of non-penetrative premarital sex, *ukuhlobonga*, and proceeded to full intercourse.<sup>5</sup> In keeping with the customary censure of assertive girls, a Zulu traditionalist named Qalizwe blamed female *izinkhanuka* for "allow[ing] their lovers to penetrate." Calling this "amount of seduction . . . abnormal," a group of Zulu-speaking male elders vented their misgivings. One of them, Ndukwana, lamented that "girls have defied their parents; formerly when admonished about their behaviour, they were obedient."<sup>6</sup> Some daughters were even said to be imbibing "unheard of drugs," which made them bellow and act impulsively. Their troubled state, the patriarch Majumba said, provoked boys "who had fallen in love ... to break off their

<sup>1</sup> Testimony of Kumalo, Mabaso, and Ndukwana, 30 Dec. 1900, *James Stuart Archive*, 1 (1976), 248; *ukuhlonipha* compelled children to show deep respect by avoiding senior men and other ranking elders; death customs: Ndukwana, 19 Dec. 1900, in *James Stuart Archive*, 4 (1986), 89. *Umnyama* destruction: H. Ngubane (1977), 77-99.

<sup>2</sup> Testimony of Ntshelile, 26 Feb. 1922, in *James Stuart Archive*, 5 (2001), 195-96. Case 41, *Mhlonhlo v. Mbonwa*, 2 April 1897, Cases Adjudicated by the Administrator of Native Law, Port Shepstone, 2/2/1/2/1/1/PTS, Durban Archives Repository (DAR). Patriarchal rituals: Testimony of Mkando, 12, 13 Aug. 1902, in *James Stuart Archive*, 3 (1982), 168-69, 171-72; Mtshapi, 9 May 1918, 89, *ibid.*, 4 (1986); Testimony of Kumalo, 19 Jan. 1907, *Evidence Natal Native Affairs Commission 1906-7*, 8/3/76, 1/NCP PAR; hereafter *Evidence 1906-7*; see also: M. Gluckman, "Mortuary Customs and the Belief in the Survival after Death among South Eastern Bantu," *Bantu Studies* 11 (1937).

<sup>3</sup> Testimony of Mkando, 13 Aug. 1902, in *James Stuart Archive*, 3 (1982), 171.

<sup>4</sup> Testimony of Ndukwana, 15 July 1900, *JSA4* (1986), 267-68; Mbovu, 7 Feb. 1904, *JSA1* (1976), 28; "there. . . lobola": Statement of Mabizela and Bande, Min. P. Magistrate (Mag.) Klip River to SNA, 23 Oct. 1897, 2375/1897, 1/1/254; collapse of *ilobolo*: Min. P. SNA 28 Sept. 1897, 2101/1897; Min. P. SNA 17 Nov. 1897, 2590/1897; *ilobolo* of "equivalent value": Min. AG, 10 Dec. 1897; Circular (USNA) for SNA, 17 Dec. 1897; Min. P. SNA, 10 Dec. 1897, 2858/1897, 1/1/268; 1/SNA PAR.

<sup>5</sup> Neither homestead heads nor colonial authorities believed they could prevent premarital sex, especially when daughters "deserted their parents to join their intended husbands": Statement of Mabizela and Bande, Min. P. Mag. Klip River to SNA, 23 Oct. 1897, 2375/1897, 1/1/254, 1/SNA. *Ukuhlobonga* leading to intercourse: Testimony of Mgqayi (relayed by Qalizwe), 22 June 1899, 227-28, in *James Stuart Archive*, 5 (2001); B. Carton, *Blood from Your Children: The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2000), Chp. 3.

<sup>6</sup> "[A]llow[ing] . . . penetrate": Testimony of Qalizwe, 28 June 1900, 229; "amount . . . abnormal": Testimony of Kumalo, Africa, and Ndukwana, 8 Dec. 1900, 225; *JSA5* (2001).

engagements,” indicating perhaps that young women could have parried unwelcome advances with peculiar behaviour in order to court a more alluring suitor. At this time single sons saved earnings from labour migrancy to purchase concertinas, which they played to woo girls “in the dark.”<sup>1</sup>

Zulu critics of *izinkhanuka* denounced the lure and illness of urbanization. One Zulu-speaking delegation singled out African town women as “the treacle [raw sugar] which draws our young men like flies.” Qalizwe condemned girls who “*bunguka* (become deserters) from home.” They embraced prostitution and contracted “‘*isimpantsolo*’ [gonorrhoea],” which made them “feel ... *that they are people of no worth (abase Bantu ba luto).*”<sup>2</sup> The incidence of gonorrhoea likely stoked anxieties over the build up of pollution-induced disease. Indeed, as white rule and ecological crises converged, *umnyama* appeared to thrive. The Zulu informants in anthropologist Harriet Ngubane’s study of unusual misfortune and death as well as the flouting of “correct behaviour (*ukuzila*)” described what happened to a woman if she violated sexual propriety when pollution attained “epidemic proportions.” If she did not remove herself from society, Ngubane relays, she could become “a sexual pervert, speak or sing when she should not, and be aggressive without any provocation.”<sup>3</sup>

Like African patriarchs, government authorities registered alarm over “loose morality.” The threat of so-called idle primitives lapsing further into degeneracy consumed Natal politicians and their white constituents.<sup>4</sup> It also appeared to motivate a conference on rinderpest convened by representatives of the four colonial South African territories in 1896. Early in the proceedings, they railed against the “ignorant kraal native” and his “straying” livestock. This clamour heralded a familiar purpose: To segregate decadent others (“indigenous to the Dark Continent”) who allegedly imperiled the “civilization of Europe.” Colonists predicted ruin if wandering “natives introducing the disease” were not “check[ed],” a contention that Natal settlers “in a position to see the ravages” repeated when portraying Africans as “too lazy to move themselves in the matter.”<sup>5</sup> To create a single infectious menace, native affairs officials, if not government veterinarians themselves, blurred distinctions between cattle and their African owners.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “[U]nheard . . . engagements”: Testimony of Majumba, *Evidence 1906-7*, 773, 8/3/76, 1/NCP PAR; “in the dark”: Testimony of Mabaso, 15 Dec. 1900, *JSAI* (1976), 232. Youth courting: Carton (2000), Chp. 2.

<sup>2</sup> “[T]he . . . flies”: Statement of Ziboni, 25 Oct. 1905, 985/1905, 1/1/328, 1/SNA PAR; “*bunguka* . . . contract”: Testimony of Qalizwe 17 June 1899, *JSA5* (2001), 225-26. Migrants and prostitutes in Natal: Sisekelo, 13 April 1902, *JSA* 5 (2001), 363-64; spread of sexual disease: J. Martens, “‘Almost a Public Calamity’: Prostitutes, ‘Nurseboys,’ and Attempts to Control Venereal Diseases in Colonial Natal, 1886-1890,” *South African Historical Journal*, 45 (2001).

<sup>3</sup> Ngubane (1977), 82. *Umnyama* and women: *ibid.*, 77-89; Berglund (1976), 328-29; Testimony of Kumalo, Africa, and Ndukwana, 8 Dec. 1900, *JSAI* (1976), 225; *umnyama* as a malevolent force loosed to upset patriarchal order: Mpatshana and Nsuze, 30 May 1912, *JSA3* (1982), 323. Scholarly analysis of *umnyama*: J. Parle, “Witchcraft or Madness? The Amandiki of Zululand, 1894-1914,” *JSAS* 29, 1 (2003).

<sup>4</sup> R. Clark, “The Native Problem: A Lecture,” 18 May 1894, vol. 142, Colenso Papers, A204, PAR; F. Tatham “The Race Conflict in South Africa,” 1894, Vol. 323, Natal Society Special Collection, Alan Paton Centre, UKZN, Pmb. Economic factors stoked colonial fears of rinderpest; the epizootic disrupted settler-owned meat and dairy production as well as an ox-wagon transport network.

<sup>5</sup> “[I]gnorant kraal native” was a composite description used by officials at the 1896 rinderpest conference, 14-15; colonial perceptions of black promiscuity (and jealousies) during rinderpest, 7, 21; *Cape of Good Hope Rinderpest Conference Vryburg, August 1896 Add 3/3*, 1/NCP, PAR; hereafter *Vryburg Conference*; “indigenous . . . Europe”: R. Clark, “The Native Problem: A Lecture,” 18 May 1894, vol. 142, Colenso Papers, A204, PAR; “wandering”: Letter Special Inoculator, Ndwedwe, to SNA, 28 Aug. 1897, SNA Min. P. 1737/1897; “natives . . . disease” and “check[ed]”: Letter Rinderpest Comm., New Hanover, to SNA, 26 Aug. 1897, SNA Min. P. 1775/1897; 1/1/253; “in a . . . matter”: Letter E. Northern (white farmer) to SNA, 23 Aug. 1897, SNA Min. P. 1678/1897, 1/1/252; 1/SNA PAR.

<sup>6</sup> A study of Cape colonial veterinary research and policy during rinderpest, presenting comparative insights: D. Gilfoyle, “Veterinary Research and the African Rinderpest Epizootic: The Cape Colony, 1896-1898,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29/1 (2003).

Soon after the conference, Natal authorities refurbished measures deployed during smallpox to fight rinderpest. The late-1890s cattle regulations included enforced isolation and mandatory “disinfecting,” not only of herds but also of Africans. The District Surgeon’s contagious disease guidelines were rephrased and issued to Veterinary Surgeons and their colleagues, principally magistrates and policemen.<sup>1</sup> They fanned out to corral Zulu ox-wagon drivers, who were quarantined for up to seven weeks, sometimes without sufficient food.<sup>2</sup> Duly appointed “rinderpest commissioners” arranged for “kraal natives,” deemed at risk of transmitting the contagion, to be doused in antiseptic. Border guards oversaw fumigation at railway stations, where African passengers were stripped before being drenched in chemicals.<sup>3</sup> In pass offices, barrels were converted into bathing vessels containing “Perfect Purifier,” about which archival documents disclose little. One white pass inspector in 1897 noted how “Native (Males) are required to wash, . . . [while] Native (Females) are . . . required to wash their feet and legs to the knees and their hands, and arms, also passing their hands over their hair.”<sup>4</sup>

When they could Africans openly objected to this treatment. A man known as Goba wrote the Native Affairs Department, inquiring why he was “troubled to this extent by being compelled to wash in evil-smelling preparations . . . ?” He recounted an exchange with border officers that began with his query: “Do the white people wash also?” They said ‘They do not.’ ‘I asked why not?’ They said ‘Because you are a native, you were born here.’” Goba then issued a challenge: “I see that the white people and the brown people live mingled together, why do you select the brown only? [D]oes this cattle disease come from the brown people only?”<sup>5</sup> Goba and other African men demanded a stop to their abuse. Their appeals were not without prior cause. Arbitrary dousing stirred memories of another dragnet three years earlier, when inhabitants of “kraals” suspected of harboring smallpox had to go “naked

<sup>1</sup> In the name of “public health and safety,” the government targeted Africans for “disinfecting” and quarantining during smallpox outbreaks: Report District Surgeon Procter, 23 July 1893, Min. P. CSO, 26 July 1893; Min. P. Mag. Klip River, 21 July 1893; vol. 1370; Min. P. CSO, 3 Feb. 1894, vol. 1387; Min. P. District Surgeon Inanda, 5 Feb. 1895, SNA 180/1895, vol. 1421; 1/CSO; smallpox and rinderpest “disinfecting station”: Min. P. USNA, 4 Mar. 1897, 419/1897, 1/1/240; Min. P. SNA, 30 Aug. 1899, Order Natal Governor (re: smallpox), 1/1/286, 1/SNA; PAR. Contagious disease regulations regarding Africans and their animals: *The Natal Civil Service List*, 15 Feb. 1897, CSO; Proclamation No. III., 1896 (31 Mar. 1896); Min. P. Mag. Entonjaneni, 3/2/7, 1/MEL; vaccination and infectious disease laws: Min. P. Mag. Upper Umkomazi, 2 Feb. 1894, vol. 1387, 1/CSO; parallel smallpox and rinderpest measures: Rules and Regulations Framed Under Law No. 2, 1884, Min. P. Mag. Upper Umkomazi, 2 Feb. 1894, vol. 1387, 1/CSO; see also: Min. P. Department of Public Health (DPH), 13 Sept. 1898, DPH 36/1898, vol. 6, 1/DPH; PAR. Colonial disinfecting elsewhere in Africa: Vaughan (1991), 40-42; White (1995), 1399.

<sup>2</sup> Enforcement of rinderpest prohibitions: Min. P. SNA, 1896, 1423/96; Min. P. SNA, 7 Nov. 1896, 1843/1896, 1/1/230; Min. P. SNA 1 Oct. 1897, 2110/1897, 1/1/257; early rinderpest control: killing and quarantining cattle in African reserves: *Vryburg Conference*, 11, 14, 15, 16-17, 19; PAR; “were . . . quarantine”: Reports Re: Lung Sickness, 22 Mar. 1897, E133A/1897, 3/2/2, 1/ESH, DAR; quarantining cattle and “natives” together: Telegram, 18 July 1896; Min. P. Mag. Ixopo, 18 July 1896, 4360/1896; Report Mag. Mapumulo, Min. P. SNA, 7 Nov. 1896, 1843/1896; 1/1/230; Africans confined to “infected kraals”: Min. P. SNA 24 Aug. 1897, 1/1/252; quarantined cattle: Min. P. SNA 28 Oct. 1896, 1793/1896, 1/1/230; 1/SNA, PAR; cattle disinfectant: Government Secretary to Mag. Entonjaneni, 28 July 1897, 34/97, 3/2/7 1/MEL, DAR. “Sanitation syndrome” underlying segregation: M. Swanson, “‘The Sanitation Syndrome’: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909,” *Journal of African History* 18, 3 (1977). Colonial authorities similarly violated Africans during a typhus outbreak in the 1930s: Marks and Andersson (1988).

<sup>3</sup> Letter, Superintendent Native Locations to Mag. Indwedwe, 14 Sept. 1897; Min. P. SNA, 15 July 1897, 1310/1897, 1/1/249; Letter W. Mtembu to SNA 7 Jan. 1897; Min. P. SNA, 7 Jan. 1897, 37/1897, 1/1/236 1/SNA, PAR. Border guards served the Native Affairs Department and Minister of Agriculture.

<sup>4</sup> Letter, Superintendent Border Guard, District 34, Umtwavuma Drift, 20 July 1897, Min. P. SNA, 8 July 1897, SNA 1233/1897, 1/1/249, 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>5</sup> Letter Thomas Hawes (Goba) to Natal Government, 8 Aug. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 1614/1897, 1/1/252, 1/SNA; see also: Aaron Thomas Hawes Goba, Death Notice, 250/1944, Master of the Supreme Court Estates; PAR.

with exception of men's 'muchas,'" a loin patch hung from the waist, ordered to surrender their "clothing and skins" to be burned, and assembled—"every man woman and child"—to wash "from head to foot" in chemical solution.<sup>1</sup>

By mid-1897, colonial officials had acknowledged that they not only failed to curb the epizootic, but aroused outrage. As a consequence, they turned to less invasive strategies, namely bacteriology and germ theory, which promised a laboratory remedy. The revolutionary potential of bacteriological methods enabled medical pioneers such as Dr. Robert Koch to culture bacillus and use a microscope to expose the "enemy in unmistakable terms."<sup>2</sup> European imperialists hailed his breakthroughs when justifying the Scramble for Africa as an altruistic trial of science in the Dark Continent.<sup>3</sup> This rhetoric inspired scientists in South Africa to track "the more obscure causes of disease in men and animals" at an "institute for the study of Bacteriology" in the Cape, founded in 1893 with funds from the Natal Governor. The institute's major goal was to obtain "virus for inoculation."<sup>4</sup> The Natal colony deployed inoculation to control "vagrancy" and "native labourers," with an 1894 Proclamation authorizing policemen to compel Africans looking for employment to get "vaccinated [for smallpox], or otherwise . . . submit themselves . . . for vaccination." Non-compliance brought a heavy fine.<sup>5</sup>

In the spring of 1897 Natal authorities developed a plan to vaccinate cattle throughout the colony by using a giant syringes wholly unfamiliar to Africans. While the Principal Veterinary Surgeon spearheaded this effort, he consulted counterparts in South Africa and visiting bacteriologists such as Dr. Koch, who accepted an invitation from Cape officials to set up a laboratory in Kimberley, where he tested a "bile" vaccine made from bovine "gall, and . . . contents of the bowels." He helped concoct this mixture, which optimally immunized cattle for three to four months, and invented a serum of blood drawn from a cow that recovered from rinderpest (called a "salted" beast).<sup>6</sup> Bile was initially favoured as a prophylactic by the Natal Department of Agriculture, which launched the vaccination campaign with the aid of magistrates, policemen, and a handful of white settlers and missionaries certified in "Dr. Koch's method." The veterinary staff could not speak Zulu and

<sup>1</sup> Report Mag. Weenen, 3 Feb. 1894; Telegrams, 8 Feb. 1894; Min. P. CSO, vol. 1387, 1/CSO, PAR.

<sup>2</sup> E. Fee and D. Porter, "Public Health, Preventive Medicine and Professionalization: England and America in the Nineteenth Century," in A. Wear, ed. *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 266. Koch's germ theory: S. Watts, *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power and Imperialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), xii, 169, 173, 198, 216; germ theory and cattle disease: Fisher (1998), 226.

<sup>3</sup> Bacteriology and imperialism: Watts (1997), 261-62; M. Worboys, "Manson, Ross and Colonial Medical Policy: Tropical Medicine in London and Liverpool, 1899-1914," in Macleod and Lewis, eds. (1988).

<sup>4</sup> "[T]he more . . . inoculation": Confidential Letter Cape Department of Lands, Mines and Agriculture to Natal Acting Governor, 9 Mar. 1893, CA 167/97; Letter Natal Under Secretary to Secretary Cape Prime Minister, 1 July 1897, 4460/97; Confidential Min. P. Cape CSO, 1892-1893, vol. 2570, 1/CSO; Grahamstown Bacteriological Institute, Cape Veterinarian, 1/43, 1/CVS; Cape Archives Repository (CAR), Cape Town.

<sup>5</sup> "Natives . . . Labourers": Bye-Laws, 1; Vaccination of Natives in Boroughs and Townships, Proclamation No. 12, 1894, *Government Gazette*, 11; Min. P. Native Affairs Department, 1079/1916, vol. 212, Chief Native Commissioner (1/CNC), PAR; the policemen were called "vaccination officers." In the twentieth century pass enforcers sent African migrants contagious disease examinations: K. Jochelson, *The Color of Disease: Syphilis and Racism in South Africa, 1910-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Koch's Reports on Experiments Conducted at Kimberley for Discovery of a Cure for Rinderpest, vol. 119, British Parliamentary Papers (1/BPP); Photographs of Koch's fieldwork: AG Collection, 9574, 9586, 9587; 9549; 9569; 9567; 9548, 9555, 9564, 9573, 9577, 9583; CAR. T. James, "Three Letters from Robert Koch to Wilhelm Kolle," *Adler Museum of the History of Medicine Bulletin*, 6, 2 (1980). Optimal immunization: Report Acting Mag. Mapumulo, 27 Aug. 1897; Min. P. SNA 1592/1897, 1/1/251; 1/SNA, PAR; "gall . . . bowels," 20; other colonial veterinarians helped devise the vaccines and presented their findings in the 1897 International Rinderpest Congress: 11, 15, 19, 43; bacteriologists: 8, 48-49; *Rinderpest Congress*. Natal's Principal Veterinary Surgeon and bile method: Lambert (1995), 148.

relied on native affairs authorities to carry out operations in African areas.<sup>1</sup> Border guards and pass inspectors assisted in the inoculations, along with African vaccination officers who patrolled District Surgeons' lazaretto, which sheltered smallpox patients. Most vaccinators had little medical knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Healthy cattle owned by colonists received the first wave of injections; then "natives who may desire to adopt this course" were proffered the syringe.<sup>3</sup> When given the option, some Zulu-speaking homestead heads were "most anxious to inoculate," according to one Natal official, especially when they mistakenly thought vaccination cured full-blown rinderpest.<sup>4</sup> However, large numbers of African stock owners were either cautiously watching the results or loath to treat "clean herds," if only because it seemed illogical to wilfully introduce illness in a healthy cow.<sup>5</sup> Africans' distrust of colonial intentions deepened when inoculators botched procedures, thereby elevating the already high rates of bovine morbidity and mortality.<sup>6</sup> Notoriously unstable, bile fluid and blood serum required careful preparation; if poorly blended, they could disintegrate into a brew of rinderpest pathogens. Unwieldy syringes aggravated the problem. One inoculator dubbed them "horrible things of no earthly use," with "three faults, first the brass needle would not penetrate the skin, the India rubber . . . bursts or is cut by the string tied round and then the bile gets behind the plunger." Faulty instruments and lethal vaccines confirmed African beliefs that "if they inoculate their cattle, they will only die."<sup>7</sup> Inoculators heard more and more Africans ask: If the white man says he shields cattle from harm, why is he "bringing the disease nearer?" Some Zulu stock owners went a step further and resisted the needle. They circulated rumours of "natives rising," effectively scaring away veterinary personnel. Not surprisingly, when

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<sup>1</sup> "Dr. Koch's method": Letter Trappist Missionary to SNA, 21 Aug. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 1671/1897, 1/1/252; Min. P. SNA, 13 Aug. 1897, 1539/1897, 1/1/251; by late 1897 more "native assistants" assisted the vaccination process: Min. P. SNA, 26 Dec. 1897, 2914/1897, 1/1/269; 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>2</sup> There were perhaps two dozen experienced bovine inoculators. Border guards: Letter G. Daniel, 13 Aug. 1897 to SNA, Min. P. SNA, 1541/1897, 1/1/251; Letter A. Ball to SNA, 31 Aug. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 1810/1897, 1/1/254; vaccination officers doubling as lazaretto guards: Min. P. Mag. Weenen, 16 Sept. 1897, 3/2/2, 1/WEN; one of the thirteen government veterinarians or their assistants usually certified rinderpest inoculators; their operations: Min. P. SNA 12 Oct. 1897, 2206/1897, 1/1/258; 1/SNA; PAR. The lazaretto derived its name from Lazarus, the pauper with boils who reached salvation in Abraham's bosom: S. Lock, et al. eds. *The Oxford Illustrated Companion to Medicine*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 471.

<sup>3</sup> European-owned cattle vaccinated first and "natives who . . . course": Min. P. SNA, 16 Aug. 1897, 1784/1897, 1/1/253; Min. P. SNA, 5 Aug. 1897, 1483/1897, 1/1/250; vaccines were monopolized by white farmers: Min. P. SNA 16 Dec. 1897, 2933/1897, 1/1/267; some white farmers believed that African cattle required inoculation: Min. P. SNA, 19 Nov. 1897, 2645/1897, 1/1/266; 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>4</sup> The Africans who requested inoculation during bile and blood vaccine phases were in the minority; "most . . . inoculate": Min. P. SNA 30 Aug. 1897, 1766/1897, 1/1/253; also: Min. P. SNA, 5 Aug. 1897, 1487/1897, 1/1/250; support for vaccinating African cattle came from settlers seeking work as paid inoculators: Letter G. Francis ("natives are now clamouring"), 14 Aug. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 1550/1897, 1/1/251; Africans believing the bile method cured rinderpest: Min. P. Mag. Weenen, 21 Aug. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 1645/1897, 1/1/252; 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>5</sup> African distrust of prophylactic injection: Letter Rinderpest Commissioner, Umlazi, to SNA, 9 Sept. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 9 Sept. 1897, 1967/1897, 1/255; African ambivalence toward inoculation and vaccination results: Min. P. SNA 16 Aug. 1897, 1725/1897, 1/1/253; Min. P. SNA, 4 Sept. 1897, 1893/1897, 1/1/254; 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>6</sup> High rates of bovine morbidity and mortality among vaccinated African cattle: Min. P. SNA, 14 Aug. 1897, 1582/1897, 1/1/251; Diary of Supervisor Native Locations and Rinderpest Inoculator, Umgeni, Min. P. SNA, 2 Nov. 1897, 2236/1897, 1/1/258; white farmers lost far fewer inoculated cattle; colonists "experimenting among the kafir herds": Report of Inoculator Ixopo, 7 Dec. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 2837/1897, 1/1/268; Letter M. Stewart to SNA, 26 Aug. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 1747/1897, 1/1/253; 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>7</sup> "[H]orrible . . . plunger": Letter Brother Nivard to USNA, 4 Sept. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 8 Sept. 1897, 1900/1897, 1/1/254; flawed syringes jeopardized inoculation: Min. P. SNA 25 Aug. 1897, 1906/1897, 1/1/255; Letter Rinderpest Commissioner Royston to SNA, 28 Aug. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 1761/1897; "if . . . die": Report Inoculator Umlazi, 17 Nov. 1897; Min. P. SNA, 2547/1897, 1/1/264; 1/SNA, PAR.

smallpox re-emerged in late 1897 and District Surgeons bungled “native [human] vaccinations,” African children were kept from the ominously familiar inoculator.<sup>1</sup>

These varied responses reveal how Africans brought “their own epistemologies of causation and cure” as well as a degree of openness to encounters with European biomedicine. Their receptivity to colonial remedy, however, plummeted when the syringe conveyed contagions. Some Africans scorned veterinarians by calling vaccinator’s instruments the embodiments of “witchcraft,” *umthakathi*.<sup>2</sup> When bile extraction required the dissection of a rinderpest-infected cow, African suspicion could multiply; post-mortem procedures exposed massive internal deformities. Accusations of witchcraft could be validated by the existence of mutilation. Other confirmations of *umthakathi* probably occurred when Africans saw a pass official perform *ukugcaba*, lancing the cow skin, in this case near the jugular vein. Other synonymous phrases for *ukugcaba* were “to inject vaccine” and “to deliver abuse.”<sup>3</sup> Months earlier, this same official might have harangued onlookers to move into a disinfecting room, where after eyeing the “Perfect Purifier,” one government observer commented, they exhibited “their first fear of . . . ‘Umtagati [sic].’”<sup>4</sup> Zulu folklore told of intimates of *umthakathi*, the dwarf-like *imikhovu*, appearing around “the outbreak of rinderpest,” seizing travelers, and sometimes slicing their skin.<sup>5</sup>

Unease about bovine vaccination resonated in the Zulu language. The common verb to “inoculate, vaccinate, inject,” *ukujova*, likely entered speech at the time of rinderpest, when a sinister term, *ujovela*, had currency.<sup>6</sup> In Reverend Colenso’s classic *Zulu-English Dictionary*—completed in 1861, re-published in 1884 and then updated in 1905—*jovela* merits an entry but, significantly, (*uku*)*jova* does not yet appear. Even more telling, *jovela* is defined as a range of toxins, often conjured by an *umthakathi*, which convey a sexually transmitted disease. This malady, like rinderpest and AIDS, visibly wastes its victims. *Jovela* afflicts “an adulterer by his having intercourse with another man’s wife, after the husband, suspecting her infidelity, has taken *umsizi* [medicinal powder linked to *iZembe*] and lain with her. The woman in this case will not be diseased, but yet is supposed to communicate disease to her paramour, who grows weak in his limbs, falls away in his flesh, and dies.”<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> “[B]ringing . . . nearer”: Min. P. SNA, 11 Sept. 1897, 1972/97, 1/1/255, 1/SNA, PAR; Phoofofo (1993), 119-21. African resistance to vaccination: Meeting with Chiefs and Headmen Ipolela, 2 Sept. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 25 Aug. 1897, 1677/1897, 1/1/252, 1/SNA PAR; Report Inoculator Ndwedwe, 11 Dec. 1897; 15 Jan. 1898, Min. P. SNA, 12 Oct. 1897 2236/1897, 1/1/258; “natives rising”: Letter Mag. Ixopo to SNA, 29 Aug. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 1848/1897, 1/1/254; smallpox vaccinations and children: Min. P. SNA, 1 Dec. 1897, 1/1/267; 1/SNA; Min. P. DPH, 23 Sept. 1898, 37/1898, vol. 6, 1/DPH; PAR.

<sup>2</sup> Vaccination instruments as *umthakathi*: Report of Inoculator Ndwedwe, 12 Feb. 1898 (14 Feb. 1898), Min. P. SNA, 12 Oct. 1897, 2236/1897, 1/1/258, 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>3</sup> *Ukugcaba*: Statement of Khumalo, 14 Dec. 1897; other Zulu statements: Min. P. SNA, 29 Nov. 1897, 1/1/267; 1/SNA, PAR; Rev. C. Roberts, *The Zulu-Kafir Language*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1909), 246; *gcaba* and HIV transmission: F. Jolles and S. Jolles, “Zulu Ritual Immunisation in Perspective,” *Africa* 70, 2 (2000). Jugular vein: Report Inoculator Upper Tugela, 13 Nov. 1897, Min. P. SNA, 17 Oct. 1897, 2282/1897, 1/1/259, 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>4</sup> Letter Superintendent Border Guard, District 34, Umtwavuma Drift, 20 July 1897, Min. P. SNA 8 July 1897, SNA 1233//1897, 1/1/249, 1/SNA, PAR.

<sup>5</sup> Testimony of Mkando, 13 Aug. 1902, in *James Stuart Archive*, 3 (1982), 170; Testimony of Mageza, 21 Feb. 1909, *ibid.*, 2 (1979), 78. In the 1850s, supernatural dwarfs supposedly appeared during cattle lung sickness and smallpox outbreaks in the Zulu kingdom: Testimony of Mtshayankomo, 10 Jan. 1922, *ibid.*, 4 (1986), 107-109.

<sup>6</sup> Doke, et al. (*Zulu-English*, 1990), 364. A retired Zulu health educator, Mrs. Audrey (Sabela) Bennie, said that Africans seeking medical treatment in southern Natal in the 1940s used “jova” to describe salutary care, particularly penicillin injections: Interview with Mrs. Audrey Bennie (Ms. Louise Vis, co-interviewer), 23 June 2003, Pholela, KwaZulu-Natal. African desire for injections in colonial Africa: White (2000), 95; T. Ranger, “Godly Medicine: The Ambiguities of Medical Mission in Southeastern Tanzania, 1900-1945,” in Feierman and Janzen, eds. (1992), 268-69.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. J. W. Colenso, *Zulu-English Dictionary* (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis & Sons, 1884), 230, 519, 659; *ibid* (Pietermaritzburg: Munro Bros., 1905), 243. See also relevant evidence: Testimony of Mkando, 17 Aug. 1902, in

compiler of another comprehensive *Zulu-English Dictionary* (1905), missionary-ethnographer A.T. Bryant, noted the “recent” origins of *ukujova*. The next term listed, *ujovela*, is followed by one synonym, *i-Zembe*.<sup>1</sup>

### “People Have Lost Respect for the Taboos”

Today, Pentecostal movements in KwaZulu-Natal pulse with calls to build a moral bulwark against deadly sexual pollution. In late August 2001, for example, an African minister of a revivalist church near Pietermaritzburg opened her sermon with an admonition. She advised worshippers, particularly mothers and daughters, that true healing and life-giving power sprung from penitence, *ukuzila*, which kept “death [from] stalking everyone.” After denouncing the sins of fornication, she laid out a path of proper conduct, *ukujwayezayo umthetho*, and cleansing, *ukuhlanza*; unmarried congregants were told to be abstinent; husbands and wives were implored to be faithful and go forth and multiply. She also broached the matter of “immoral” interference with fertility, reflecting broader African apprehensions about birth control.<sup>2</sup> The geographer Mark Hunter is exploring this discourse in KwaZulu-Natal, charting the popular hostility toward condoms and, strikingly in light of rinderpest inoculation, “men’s attempts to prevent women from jova-ing,” i.e., to inject the contraceptive Depo Provera.<sup>3</sup>

The preacher then turned to the subject of mortality. She spoke of a sorrowful trinity made up of women, children and bereavement, proclaiming, “women and children mourn, while men carry on”; she also cautioned against giving in to “mourning fatigue” (*sakhathala ukuzila*).<sup>4</sup> In her pioneering investigation of Africans “living and dying with AIDS,” the sociologist Tessa Marcus examined similar sentiments in KwaZulu-Natal, which revealed the exacting toll of bereavement on families. Widows were required to wear black clothes in the heat and enter virtual seclusion for months at a time, Marcus reported; during this solemn period children were also commanded “not to make any noise” or “go out with their friends.” By contrast, older men were largely relieved of these everyday avoidance prohibitions. A widower within months of his wife dying of AIDS, for example, could be presented with “someone else,” a partner secured by women in his own family. The new companion understood that she was to restore his domestic equilibrium by affirming his masculine prerogatives in the public and private spheres.<sup>5</sup>

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*James Stuart Archive*, 3 (1982), 182; Nombango, 20 April 1903, *ibid.*, 5 (2001), 139. Nombango was an elderly Zulu woman.

<sup>1</sup> A.T. Bryant, *A Zulu-English Dictionary* (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis & Sons, 1905), 5-6, 281, 725. Bryant acknowledges his debt to Colenso’s *Dictionary*. Vilakazi defines *jova* and *ujovela* as kindred terms linked to *gcaba*, a synonym of *iZembe*: Doke, et al. (*Zulu-English*, 1990), 364.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with S. M., a middle-aged woman from a township on the western edge of Pietermaritzburg; S.M. is a member of the preacher’s congregation: 25 Nov. 2002, Pietermaritzburg. Interview with J. K., a middle-aged woman from a township on the western outskirts of Pietermaritzburg: 14 Jan. 2003, Pietermaritzburg. Interview with N. K., a middle-aged woman from a township south of Durban; she attends the preacher’s church; N.K. is J.K.’s younger sister: 14 Jan. 2003, Pietermaritzburg.

<sup>3</sup> M. Hunter, “The Disempowered Provider: Fathers without Amandla?” *ChildrenFIRST*, 58 (2004) [www.childrenfirst.org](http://www.childrenfirst.org), 11, 6; A. Harrison and E. Montgomery, “Life Histories, Reproductive Histories: Rural South African Women’s Narratives of Fertility, Reproductive Health and Illness,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27/2 (2001), 323-24.

<sup>4</sup> Carton, “The Forgotten Compass of Death”, 205-206.

<sup>5</sup> “[N]o ... noise” and “go friend. T. Marcus, *Wo Zaphela izingane. “It is Destroying the Children”. Living and Dying with AIDS* (Pietermaritzburg, CINDI, 1999), 46. Interview with S.M., 25 Nov. 2002, Pmb; Interview with J.K., 14 Jan. 2003, Pietermaritzburg. Widowers taking a female companion: Interview with C. M. who is from Makhabeleni, 28 Oct. 2002, Makhabeleni, Thukela valley; Interview with F. N, who is from Makhabeleni, 28 Oct. 2002, Makhabeleni; Interview with M. J., a middle-aged man from Eshowe: 21 Nov. 2002, Eshowe.

Elderly informants in the Midlands-Pietermaritzburg region and Thukela valley told me that more rigid bereavement obligation could kindle generational discord. Some youths vented their impatience with *ukuzila*, raising anxieties among their guardians that rituals of remembrance were not respected. Moreover, relationships between parents and children could become frayed during funerals. One adolescent informant recalled that during a 2002 night vigil for a peer (and victim of AIDS) in Umlazi south of Durban, the deceased's friends arrived in scanty dress. They left just before morning with boyfriends to attend a nearby "after tears" bash, where they "carried on," contravening the solemn mood of *ukuzila*. The informant was confronted a day later by her aunt, who felt the loud revelers "insulted the family . . . and had no discipline."<sup>1</sup> Between 2002 and 2003, the older fathers I interviewed invariably saw "after tears" parties as a sign of joblessness. They pointed to idle young people who spend the little cash they have on *sebenza*, partying, and monetary gifts for lovers. Such pursuits not only breach *ukuzila*; they drain scarce family resources that fund burials. In this sense youths were faulted for bringing shame and misfortune precisely because they ignored customary discipline, *inkuliso*.<sup>2</sup>

In a study of how several male generations envisage *inkuliso* and AIDS, the historian Mxolisi Mchunu explains what could happen to a young Zulu man who did not "behave [with respect] . . . amongst other people, amongst his peers (*Ontanga*), and amongst elderly people." Disappointed guardians could berate the transgressor as "a growth or tumour" who emerged from his mother's womb.<sup>3</sup> Those who breach *inkuliso* by engaging in premarital intercourse could incur harsher censure. A father who lost his son to AIDS in rural KwaShange (Midlands-Pietermaritzburg region) told Mchunu that the deceased was heedless of ancestral teachings and "sexually irresponsible." Mchunu observed that other parents "who know about AIDS are not sympathetic towards the dying child." If the stricken person was a young man, they denounced his lovers: "We warned you not to behave anyhow with girls but you wouldn't listen—look, you are causing us problems now—we have to look after you like a baby, and where are your girlfriends now (they have run away)." This rebuke articulates a "belief of older Zulu informants that HIV/AIDS is only killing the African younger generation, and not older people or white people, because these young people have lost respect for the taboos associated with the correct behaviour regarding sexual matters."<sup>4</sup>

A Zulu-speaking widow in Pietermaritzburg told me that "promiscuity and *ukufa*" are rife because "no one marries anymore." In her opinion, if a couple could afford to formalize its relationship, fidelity would be more important. The pandemic, however, places this

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<sup>1</sup>"After tears": Interview with M.S., female university student from Durban, 9 Nov. 2002, Pietermaritzburg. The "after tears" phenomenon could be viewed as an outgrowth of political foment in the 1980s (sparked in large measure by the Soweto Uprising of 1976), when African youths known as comrades asserted themselves more forcefully, celebrating their virility in battles with apartheid security forces and engaging more freely in sex (forced and consensual), an act they hailed as "building soldiers" for liberation: I. Niehaus, "Towards a Dubious Liberation: Masculinity, Sexuality and Power in South African Lowveld School, 1953-1999," in *James Stuart Archive*, 6, 3 (2000); T. Xaba, "Masculinity and its Malcontents: The Confrontation between 'Struggle Masculinity' and 'Post-Struggle Masculinity' (1990-1997)," in R. Morrell, ed. *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001); youth assertion in liberation politics: I. van Kessel, *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams: The United Democratic Front and the Transformation of South Africa* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Gift-relationships: Hunter, "The Disempowered Provider: Fathers without Amandla?", 7; "Masculinities, Multiple-Sexual Partners, and AIDS". See note 73 for relevant interviews.

<sup>3</sup> M. Mchunu, "Zulu Fathers and Their Sons: Sexual Taboos, Respect and their Relationship to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic", unpublished paper, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2005, 5.

<sup>4</sup> "[B]ehaviour . . . manner," 15-16; "who . . . away)," 22; "belief . . . matters," 21: *ibid.* Author interview with S.M., 25 Nov. 2002, Pietermaritzburg; Interview with M. S., a middle-aged man from the Thukela valley: 31 Dec. 2002, Makhabeleni; Interview with X. M., an elderly man from a township just north of Pietermaritzburg: 14 Oct. 2002.

possibility out of reach. “With so many people passing,” she lamented, “we now worry that we will become [even] poorer,” which will “make marriage even less likely.” When asked whether she thought family life might disintegrate, she replied: “I don’t know, truly. We are made quiet by this ‘annihilation.’”<sup>1</sup> KwaShange residents interviewed by Mxolisi Mchunu elaborated on their dread of *ububane*, meaning to “suffer annihilation.” One informant relayed that older “people dying in the rural area are said to die from other causes, like heart attacks, cancer and the like.” Yet mortality among young people is attributed to “taboo breaking and the curse of death via HIV/AIDS.”<sup>2</sup>

A Zulu-speaking grandfather in Makhabeleni (Thukela valley) echoed these views and suggested another dimension to *ububane*. “Death was always the result of odd misfortune,” he explained in an interview with me, “or when ‘ripeness’ [advanced age] . . . called elders home” to “a good death,” *ukugoduka*. Now, he asked rhetorically, “Why had death become a matter of ‘extinction?’” He answered by recounting memories of radio programmes in the late 1990s that chronicled a sordid confessor (*umvumi onamanyala*), a white doctor who planned to release poison on black people (*ukudlisa abantu noma ukubulala ngobuthi*). Older men in the grandfather’s district considered this “doctor of death” (referring to Wouter Basson, head of apartheid biological warfare projects) to be the mastermind of AIDS. The rural grandfather dismissed “this kind of gossip,” but his neighbors found it jarringly odd that the pandemic emerged after democracy only to strike “*abantu*, the (black) people, moving freely for the first time,” while “whites (*abelungu*) . . . were untouched.”<sup>3</sup> A parallel sentiment reverberated in KwaShange. In a haunting dream recollected for Mxolisi Mchunu, a young male informant described “giant glittering black and white snakes and a horse with an upper body of a white person.” “The community understanding of his vision,” Mchunu writes, “is that the snakes are his brother, who died of AIDS and his mother who died more or less at the same time (of unknown causes), who had come back in anger at his having not been there while they were sick.” But “to see a white person is indicative of misfortune.”<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusions

Mchunu’s path-breaking inquiry into Zulu perceptions of discipline, sex, and mortality suggests that historians could usefully compare rinderpest-era expressions of shame and blame to the stigmas of AIDS, thereby gaining insight into the “unspeakable” dynamics of the current pandemic. Yet caution should also be exercised, if only because from at least the late nineteenth century to the present, fatal outbreaks necessitating Western intervention did not engender uniform hostility from Africans. While many saw white treatment as a forerunner of malevolence, others welcomed modern medical care, which sometimes integrated elements of traditional healing and scientific principle.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “[N]o . . . ‘annihilation’”: Interview with N.S., a middle-aged woman from Pmb: 11 Dec. 2002, Pietermaritzburg; also: Hunter, “The Disempowered Provider: Fathers without Amandla?”

<sup>2</sup> “[P]eople . . . HIV/AIDS”: Mchunu, “Zulu Fathers and Their Sons: Sexual Taboos, Respect and their Relationship to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic”, unpublished paper, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2005, 21; *ububane*: Doke, et al. (*Zulu-English*, 1990), 47; “build a home”: Hunter, “The Disempowered Provider: Fathers without Amandla?”, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with F.N., 28 Oct. 2002, Makhabeleni; see note 20.

<sup>4</sup> Mchunu, “Zulu Fathers and Their Sons: Sexual Taboos, Respect and their Relationship to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic”, 23.

<sup>5</sup> For example, in the late 1930s Zulu medical aid Edward Jali (who later joined public health pioneers Drs. Sidney and Emily Kark) recommended preventive care in rural Natal reserves racked by typhoid and tuberculosis: L. Vis, “‘We Sow the Seed’: Perspectives of Health Educators at the Institute of Family and Community Health in Durban in the 1940s and 1950s,” (MMSC thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal Medical School, 2005), 110. Jali’s explanations of disease causality, couched in the language of Kochian bacteriology

Finally in the quest to expand existing knowledge of the continuities between rinderpest and AIDS, for example, one could look no further than today's headlines about Western-sponsored health campaigns. Elsewhere in the Sub-Saharan region, like Nigeria and Burkina Faso, where Islam threads moral, political, and spiritual life, the World Health Organization effort to eradicate polio has met resistance. This immunization plan is seen as a conduit for Western evildoers to inject AIDS, not a polio vaccine, into Africans.<sup>1</sup>

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and Zulu cosmology, were summarized in a letter to James McCord, the doctor who cataloged the human costs of rinderpest. Jali's Zulu origins and association with Dr. McCord: Form of Application, South African Native College, 22 Jan. 1924, Jali Student File, Registrar's Office, Fort Hare University, Eastern Cape. I thank Prof. Robert Edgar for this reference.

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, 5 May 2005.