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Colonial Encounters through the Prism of Music: A Southern African Perspective

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COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS THROUGH THE PRISM OF MUSIC

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Abstract — Résumé

It is possible to use records of music in the historic encounter of Europeans and North Americans with southern African inhabitants to show different levels of human interaction, and to investigate their typology in the details of such meetings. Using both casual and more sustained instances, this article examines how music sharpens the profile of the early encounters between maritime explorers and Khoi culture, the attempts (c.1840) of missionaries to evangelize the Zulu, and the late-nineteenth-century collision of pioneer settlers and Ndebele people. In each case, the evidence of music mediates a particular form of colonial subjectivity (*mentalité*), without excluding the persistence in time and across varied circumstances of typical responses to music and its ascribed meanings. In each case, the 'value' of music has to be interpreted both as an emanation of human desires and a social fact that confronts the displaced northerners.

The following seeks to contribute to the broad theme of the interface between alien and indigene, settler and settled.[1] The specific concern is with European colonisation in southern Africa, and the examples will focus chiefly on the nineteenth century, with some reference to the late-fifteenth and seventeenth centuries as well. The 'music' in question will emerge as the argument proceeds; it would be premature to attempt specification at the outset.

[1] This is a revised and expanded version of a lecture given to the Croatian Musicological Society in Zagreb in April 2001. I am most grateful to Prof. Stanislav Tuksar for both the invitation and his encouragement to pursue this theme.

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Introductory

The theme of colonial encounters as an item of intellectual history is hardly a recent one: in fact, its roots stretch back to the very earliest such encounters themselves, as they are reflected in the literatures especially associated with colonisation — travel writings, administrative records, early scientific observation, missionary documents, as well as the more informal evidence issuing from individual players in the game. Special qualities seem to attach themselves to these accounts of meetings of Europeans with a particular form of the Other. Of course, as has often been noted, reliance on documentation has meant that the view has been largely, if not exclusively, that seen through European eyes. Oral traditions among the colonised have not been sufficient to provide a thorough counter-perspective. Yet, it would be wrong to consider the European view as a homogeneous one, monolithic and internally consistent. Given its often restrictive ideological operation, we can find in the historical record both consistency and distortion, subtlety and clumsiness, appreciation and disgust.

This article treats a selection of three 'situations', the purpose being to ask whether a consideration of musical references adds in any way to the core encounter and reveals aspects of the situations that may not be otherwise apparent. By 'core encounter' is intended not only the conscious purpose of the meeting (as proposed by at least one of its participants), but also the typological content and constraints of each contact. In this, we acknowledge the work of Urs Bitterli, whose studies of a broad range of colonial meeting-points have led him to define the possible types of encounter broadly as follows:

1. Fleeting and superficial contact between Europeans and non-Europeans. Such contact was typical of the period of maritime exploration and expansion, beginning in the late fifteenth century.

2. More sustained contact occasioned by slave-trading or by missionary endeavours. Ethnocentrism was the guiding principle in much of this activity.

3. Collision, and the resultant subjugation of the weaker party. The spectrum of such collisions ranges from genocide to the absorption of the surviving members of the 'conquered' group into the economic and cultural life of the invasive party.[2]

Epic Experience, Pastoral Dreams

To begin with the earliest of these encounters — arguably the very first between modern explorers and the inhabitants of the southern African region. These are selected not so much for their chronological priority, but because music is present

[2] Ritchie ROBERTSON, Introduction to Urs BITTERLI, *Cultures in Conflict: Encounters between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492-1800*, trans. R. Robertson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 4. This is a summary in nuce of Part 2 of Bitterli's major study *Die 'Wilden' und die 'Zivilisierten': Grundzüge einer Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte der europäisch-überseeischen Begegnungen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1976).

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from the very start. The accounts of the Portuguese maritime explorers remind us that musical gestures belong, by and large, to what most people consider a phenomenologically self-evident category. The recognisability of much music *qua* music is presumably a reassuring fact when people are entering *terra incognita*. Such reassurance may be at the root of the platitude about music as a 'universal language'; the reality, however, is much more opaque.

The southern African coast was first explored in 1487-88 by Bartolomeu Dias, in search of India, of 'a powerful king called Prester John of the Indies', and of gold and spices.[3] The single account that survives (first drafted in the 1530s) describes a rather desperate voyage, whose great achievement was the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope. The contact with the inhabitants was not propitious: the Khoi herdsmen, 'negroes with woolly hair like those of Guinea' (3), took fright and drove their cattle inland. A different account of the voyage, transmitted earlier in the 1500s, mentions that, as Dias's people were drawing fresh water from a spring by the sea, they were stoned by the inhabitants from an overlooking hill, and that in return Dias (or one of his men) fired a crossbow and killed one of the natives.[4]

It took a while for another attempt at the sea route to India to be mounted. By 1497, the next great Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, was in southern coastal waters. The only first-hand account of the voyage, written probably by Álvaro Velho, mentions two encounters.[5] Among the various observations on the Khoi of the Great Berg River is an account of 'trading', though informal barter is really what it was, since there was obviously no agreed system of values. It may be that the swapping of material items had ritual significance for the Khoi; for the Europeans, it was a way of discovering the cheapest means of establishing the circulation of goods. The mariners liked better the Khoi of Mossel Bay, though they also armed themselves heavily this time. After preliminary barter, this curious encounter took place:

> On Saturday about two hundred negroes, large and small among them, arrived, bringing with them about twelve head of cattle (made up of oxen and cows) and four or five sheep; and when we saw them we went ashore at once. They at once began to play on four or five flutes, and some of them played high and others played low, harmonising together very well for negroes in whom music is not to be expected; and they danced like negroes. The Commander-in-Chief ordered the trumpets to be played and we in the boats danced, and so too did the Commander-in-Chief when he rejoined us. When

[3] All quotations are from: The Voyage of Bartolomeu Dias, 1487-88, according to João de Barros, in *Dias and his Successors*, ed. Eric Axelson (Cape Town: Saayman and Weber, 1988), 2-4. The translation, with minor changes, is in turn taken from G. M. Theal's translation (1900) of passages from Barros.

[4] See following note for the source.

[5] Vasco da Gama in south African Waters, 1497, in *Dias and his Successors*, 5-9. Axelson's translation was originally published in 1954. The diary has been transmitted in a single sixteenth-century copy, and is far from being a daily log, containing gaps of days and even weeks between some entries. See Eric AXELSON, *Vasco da Gama: The Diary of his Travels through African Waters, 1497-99* (Somerset West: Stephan Phillips, 1998), 19.

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Figure 1a. [Plate 12] *Khoi dancers and musical instruments* (left part of the plate). Top and centre: Face-painting designs. Bottom: Female playing on a »rommelpot« (earthenware drum); the gom-gom, a mouth-bow reserved for males, is mentioned in the text. (Ref. no. INIL 6261; National Library of South Africa, Cape Town)

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Figure 1b. [Plate 12] *Khoi dancers and musical instruments* (right part of the plate).
Top: Dancing figures. Bottom: Attempt at notation of a Khoi song.
(Ref. no. INIL 6261; National Library of South Africa, Cape Town)

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Figure 2. [Plate 13] *Khoi women dancing*
(Ref. no. INIL 6263; National Library of South Africa, Cape Town)

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> this festivity was ended we went ashore where we had been before, and there we traded a black ox for three bracelets.[6]

The next day began in much the same way — with more piping and dancing on the beach — but then things soured, evidently for the same reason as they had when Dias visited: the inhabitants objected to the visitors helping themselves to the fresh spring water. It was perhaps not surprising, once the natives had been cowed by firing the bombards on board ship, that the contact ceased, and that the wooden cross and stone *padrão* erected by the Portuguese should be thrown over by the natives just before the ships sailed.

The artlessness of this piece of prose, its sense of providing a utilitarian chronicle, makes the reconstitution of these scenes heavily dependent on later reports and understandings. From these, it is possible to recognize cultural practices central to the Cape Khoi. Reed pipes, distributed singly among a group of dancers and played 'hocket-style', may well have been the earliest organological crystallization at the tip of the continent. A handful of dancer-players seems to have sufficed here, but there are late seventeenth-century accounts that mention (albeit among Khoi groups living at a considerable distance) a 'welcoming' dance performed before Europeans involving about a hundred 'musicians' arranged in a ring around a central time-beater.[7] Of special interest in this later narrative is the unusual comparison of the reed-pipe sound with that of the *tromba marina* (trumpet marine).

It would seem that the performance on the beach was a makeshift one, performed by relatively few men and interrupted by the 'musical diplomacy' of the Portuguese.[8]

Characteristic is of course the close union of music and dance, or better, of audible and kinetic gestures fundamental to numerous sub-Saharan genres. The meaning of this reed-pipe-dance, which (as we have seen) was repeated the next day in the presence of an even larger group of Khoi, including women and children, cannot be established with certainty. These early European accounts assumed such performance to be festive, evidence of *vrolijkeit*. But more detailed accounts of Khoi life link music and dancing to important seasonal occasions, to lunar cycles, and to mythic beliefs.[9] There is no way of determining whether these encoun-

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[7] O. DAPPER, *Kaffraria, or Land of the Hottentots* (1668), trans. I. Schapera, in *The Early Cape Hottentots* ed. I. Schapera (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1933), 35.

[8] Ordinarily, reed dances might last two to three hours, when they did not extend throughout an entire night. According to SCHAPERA, »a full Hottentot orchestra has at least nine performers« (*The Khoisan Peoples* [1930], 402).

[9] Schapera (see n. 7) notes that both new and full moon were occasions for nightlong 'dancing, singing and merrymaking'. Theophilus HAHN noted the importance of these activities as attested by place names such as !Gaĩ||nais, 'Good, pleasant singing', and !Gaĩ||naχis, 'Reed-dance' (*Tsuni-||Goam: The Supreme Being of the Khoi-Khoi* [London, 1881], 24). Further references are collected in Hahn, 41 (dancing and sung address to the new moon), 43 (Hessaqua dance-song at the appearance of the Pleiades), 44 (a Namaqua moon dance). Schapera is circumspect about the evidence of moon worship,

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ters relied on a 'profane', i.e. non-numinous framework, or whether they might not have been invocations of transcendent help or protection. Given the overall tenor of Velho's account — these transactions included a great deal of uncertainty and tenuous communication — we cannot exclude the thought that the music was a means, not simply of contact, but of self-assertion — and from both sides.[10]

Southern Africa has no document like the *Visíon de los vencidos*, a written record of the reactions of the Aztecs to their submission.[11] But there is little comfort to be drawn from descriptions like this:

> [The Spaniards] advanced cautiously, with their standard-bearer in the lead, and they beat their drums and played their chirimías as they came.[12] The Tlaxcaltecas [a neighbouring group with whom the Aztecs had difficult relations] and the other allies [of Cortez] followed close behind. ... They sang songs as they marched, but the Aztecs were also singing. It was as if both sides were challenging each other with their songs. They sang whatever they happened to remember and the music strengthened their hearts.[13]

Though these situations, the south African and the central American, are separated by only thirty years in time, they must be kept apart. The Spaniards were already pursuing their forcible conquest, whereas the Portuguese, with India as their goal, had orders to avoid conflict en route, though they armed themselves heavily. What we cannot determine is the type of anticipation in the host people. There are passages in the Aztec accounts that portray the indigenes as trusting people, despite their extensive experience of local conflict. Something of the same may be read into the Khoi reaction. Lacking completely the panoply and style of the Aztecs, the Khoi may nonetheless have 'sworn to dance [before the visitors] ... with all their hearts'.[14]

So the interpreters of this scene have underlined its suggestion of human pleasure and contentment. But what gives pleasure, and the comfort of relief, may just as well be the recognition of music as a useful item, a possible counter in an uncertain diplomacy. It is instructive, therefore, to read a Dutch seafarer's account of 1605: clearly, barter had become a more difficult business by then, though the Europeans still managed to buy livestock at what they thought were ridiculously low

though not dismissive. For Hahn, 'that the Moon is identical with Tsũi||goab, as the »Lord of Light and Life,« can ... be no longer doubtful' (132). It is understandable that his evidence would be more uniformly positive.

[10] The problems of cultural 'mis-reading' among European explorers have been usefully opened up by Suzanne YOUNGERMAN, Maori Dancing since the Eighteenth Century, *Ethnomusicology* 18 (January 1974), 75-100.

[11] *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, expanded edition, trans. Lysander Kemp (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

[12] These were double-reed woodwinds, forerunners of the oboe (the name is Spanish for shawm), and were borrowed from Arabic military music, a usage that remained unchanged in Europe.

[13] *The Broken Spears*, 105-6.

[14] *Ibid.*, 73.

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prices. But to get hold of cattle involved an extended courting of the Khoi people of the Cape, who apparently had become extremely cautious of visitors from the sea.

> Thus everything turned out well [wrote Cornelis Matelief], though it would be hard to tell all the game we had before they would be brought to trade. They whistled, the Admiral joining in; they danced, and so did he; and in short it was a real monkey-business.[15]

To return to the Portuguese excerpt, first published in that language in 1838. I cite it not only for its contents but also for the fact that, like its mariner-heroes, it has circled much of the earth, as a brief episode in the famous Renaissance epic poem *Os Lusíadas* by Luis Vaz de Camões (c.1524-1580). Historical sources like Velho and Barros are easily detectable in this later version (published in 1562); at the same time, Camões has selected his details to fit the literary conventions of his vehicle, which was a neo-classical national epic, Virgilian in structure and combining, in the way typical of the Renaissance, humanist and Christian mythology.[16]

Responding to the rural scene and especially the musical elements, Camões fashioned a redaction of markedly pastoral character (in Canto 5, stanzas 62-64). Here we find all the bucolic motifs: the abundance of the countryside, its peaceable inhabitants, and their poetry, singing and playing on pipes:

> They came toward us on the sandy beach
> With dancing and an air of festival,
> Their wives along with them, and they were driving
> Humped cattle which looked sleek and thriving
>
> ......
>
> They sang pastoral songs in their own
> Tongue, sweetly and in harmony,
> Whether rhymed, or in prose, we could not gauge
> But like the pipes of Virgil's golden age.[17]

Wherever a measure of classical-biblical learning met the early southern African scene, it seemed to produce, spontaneously, a version of pastoral. Page after page of Grevenbroek's *An Elegant and Accurate Account of the African Race ... commonly called Hottentots*, dated 1695, reads like a paean 'to the Cape's natural beauty

[15] From Matelief's *Journaal*, published in Amsterdam in 1648. Excerpts translated in R. RAVEN-HART, *Before Van Riebeeck: Callers at South Africa from 1488 to 1652* (Cape Town: Struik, 1967), 37-41.

[16] Landeg White's introduction to his recent verse translation compactly discusses the various issues germane to grasping the significance of the poem. See L. V. de CAMÕES, *The Lusiads* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), ix-xxii.

[17] *Ibid.*, 110. William Atkinson's prose translation of *The Lusiads* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1952, 133) clearly shows that the flutes were mentioned as being played, not merely in simile: »sang pastoral songs ... to the accompaniment of rustic flutes«.

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and fruitfulness'.[18] Not surprisingly, his short description of Khoi music-making — generally accurate — is clothed in a distancing Latin prose, and larded with tags from Roman poets and unfamiliar words from Roman prose-writers. It is a very modest achievement next to that of Camões, yet it is also rooted in personal experience, and issues in the same vision:

> The male musicians among those who on the hither side of the mountains shew great ingenuity in bending a stick with their great strength, stretching a string upon it, and fumbling continually upon the same; and they are skilled to breathe an air upon the oaten flute, sport upon the rustic reed, or wake the music of such pipes as land or sea affords.[19]

He continues in a disapproving vein about the female vocal art, thus providing a useful index of gender roles. The women accompanied themselves on pot-drums (see below) or with hand-clapping.

A serious question remains: to what extent may the foregoing reports be considered reliable as evidence of historical practices? Travel writing is by no means a straightforward practice itself; the need of alternative records is always keenly felt. One welcomes, therefore, the iconographic witness of contemporary illustrators, in particular the contents of a folio of twenty-seven original drawings that was found, uncatalogued, among the pictorial collections of the South African Library in 1986.[20]

These ink drawings by an anonymous artist contain chiefly depictions of Khoi people at the Cape, engaged in a variety of activities, including interaction with European settlers. They have been dated before 1713; as such, they are of special value, since most of the surviving representations of the Khoi from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suffer from having passed through an interpretive filter in the process of being engraved. This happened in Europe, where publishers' engravers worked up their own versions of the Cape Khoi from (at best) rough sketches made on the spot by an author.[21]

These particular drawings from life are highly competent examples of work within the lightly stylised parameters of the Dutch school of the seventeenth century. They are marked by qualities of spontaneity and even sympathy for their subjects, a reason (it has been suggested) why they were never published in Europe.[22] They include depictions of immediate relevance to the arguments advanced so far.

[18] SCHAPERA, introduction to GREVENBROEK's *A Short Account of the Cape of Good Hope and of the Hottentots who Inhabit that Region*, in *The Early Cape Hottentots* (see n. 7), 166.

[19] GREVENBROEK, 213. Barrington, the translator, renders *oberrare* as 'fumbling' on the bow; 'wandering', 'roving' in a transferred sense seem to me better suited to the context as well as the intimate manner in which bows are played.

[20] Andrew B. SMITH and Roy H. PHEIFFER, *The Khoikhoi at the Cape of Good Hope: Seventeenth-Century Drawings in the South African Library* (Cape Town: South African Library, 1993).

[21] SMITH and PHEIFFER, 12-16.

[22] *Ibid.*, 20.

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First, the harmonious pastoral vision captured in Camões's description of 'the dusky women [riding] on the backs of lazy oxen, the most esteemed of all their domestic animals' (Canto 5, stanza 63, Atkinson translation) is precisely reflected in a drawing, originating some two hundred years later, showing 'Khoikhoi with cattle' (Plate 15).[23] The apparent penchant of the Khoi for dancing and making music is also circumstantially represented on two of the sheets (Plate 12, 'Khoi dancers and musical instruments', and Plate 13, 'Khoi women dancing'). The original annotations to these drawings are clear as to the gender distinctions involved: the *rommelpot*, an earthenware drum with a sheepskin membrane, was the province of women, while men alone played the *gomgom*, a mouthbow also known as the *gorah*.[24]

In concluding this report on some early visions of music in the south African landscape, it needs to be stressed that this Golden-Age view of a newly discovered (and freshly settled) country, while it was perhaps inevitable, was full of foreboding for the future. If the imaginative response to a locale is pastoral (however innocent that may seem), the active or instrumental equivalent is agriculture. The farming of southern Africa has, from the 1660s onwards, been one of the most anguished threads in the region's history. It has involved not only ongoing dispossession of the native populations, but also, in the case of the San and the Khoi peoples, their corruption, enslavement and virtual extinction. While the present South African government distances itself from the reckless land seizures that have been perpetrated in Zimbabwe recently, there is no avoiding the fact that South Africa has an immense problem in its 'land question'. South Africans who were dispossessed of land, whether in living memory or in the times of their ancestors, are now determined to emerge from the countrified fancy-dress of historical discourse, from their prolonged suffering, to insist on their own pastoral vision. What music will sound therein remains to be determined.

Missionaries and Their Monologues

In order to launch this aspect of colonial encounter, I will presently offer two brief 'testimonies' by missionaries working in what was to become the most heavily evangelised region of southern Africa in the nineteenth century, viz. Zululand. This part of the south-eastern seaboard had not attracted the interest of colonisers until the early decades of the 1800s, when, under the rule of Shaka kaSenzangakhona (c.1787-1828), the Zulu polity had emerged as the most powerful in the subcontinent.

[23] Interestingly, the illustration includes all the domesticated animals of the Khoi: oxen, sheep, goats, dogs.

[24] Grevenbroek's description is so vague that one cannot be sure the *gomgom* is intended, though he clearly means a musical bow of some kind.

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Whites first appeared on the scene as traders, establishing themselves at Port Natal (later Durban) in the mid-1820s. But it was the overland incursion of Afrikaner *trekboers* into the area and their short-lived attempt to set up the Republic of Natalia that roused into action the British authorities already ruling the Cape Colony. Sensing that the *boer* republic would be able to use Port Natal as an entrepôt, and seeing the advantages of having a port on the rim of the Indian Ocean, Britain annexed Port Natal and its surrounding areas in 1843. With the Afrikaner farmers moving once again to put themselves beyond British jurisdiction, the British authorities began to bring in their own immigrants, the first group of 5 000 arriving between 1849 and 1851.

The subsequent consolidation of Europeans first as townspeople (in Pietermaritzburg and Durban) and then as farmers saw the black inhabitants pushed into reserves. Indentured labour for the sugar industry came from India from 1860 onwards, and the inevitable expansion of the colony in a north-easterly direction signalled confrontation between the British and the Zulu kingdom, which itself had suffered internal division in the 1850s and was considerably weakened as a result. In 1879, British troops finally invaded Zululand and broke the power of its king, Cetshwayo, and of the Zulus as a political force. Zululand was henceforward incorporated into Natal. It was in this turbulent period that British and north American Protestant missionaries first imposed themselves, to be followed by a host of other missionary efforts, both Catholic and Protestant.

The first 'testimony' is drawn from the journal of an early American missionary, Reverend George Champion, who was among the first evangelizing Christians to have contact with the Zulus in the mid-1830s:

> Sab[bath]. Services as usual. The Zulus assembled in a half moon under the trees by my hut are ever attentive listeners. They learn to sing very rapidly, & have fine voices.[25]

The second 'testimony' comes from the correspondence of a Norwegian Lutheran missionary, Pastor Hans Paludan Smith Schreuder, the first Norwegian missionary to work in South Africa. He arrived at Port Natal in 1844, and this excerpt concerns his work at a mission on the Umhluti River two years later, i.e. ten years after Champion's account:

> With regard to song, one can remark in passing that as a rule these natives have only very mediocre voices for singing, but some attempt to sing the few melodies that I,

[25] *Journal of the Rev. George Champion: American Missionary in Zululand, 1835-9*, ed. Alan R. Booth (Cape Town: Struik, 1967), 58. Entry for 20th March 1836.

[26] *Norwegian Missionaries in Natal and Zululand: Selected Correspondence 1844-1900*, ed. Frederick Hale. Second Series, No. 27 (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1997 for 1996), 27.

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myself an extremely mediocre singer, know and have sought to use with the translated hymns.[26]

Needless to say, this does not constitute a 'debate' about the musicality of Zulus, but it seems necessary to put into some sort of perspective the apparently contradictory truths presented here. I can find no better way of doing that than by quoting another missionary's comment, recording an experience he had more than a century later:

> In 1958, living for some time with a small village congregation in one of the Zululand valleys, I compared the worship of the mission flock with that of the adjacent 'Separatist' groups.[27] The obviously foreign tunes made the singing of the former heavy and hesitant, while the 'Separatists' apparently found much joy and satisfaction in their lively worship.[28]

Starting from Sundkler's remarks, one might wish to produce an historical explanation for the experiences of Champion and Schreuder, reasons for 'fine singing' and 'mediocre singing'. It would be easy to mention that these early missionaries, despite their own often considerable education, had little idea of black cultural patterns and practices until they were confronted by them in the flesh. Even then, they rejected many of them. Not four days after writing his approving remarks on Zulu singing and teachability, Champion recorded the following reaction:

> [March] 24. Scenes of heathenism. On occasion of a girl's arriving at a certain age the youth around assemble. Dancing it is called, but it was such a scene of confused noise clapping & shouting continued all last night, & a part of today that Satan seemed to rule the hour. Some of the songs are very indecent. This evening it began as usual for the night, but a little reasoning ended it, & I have my time in peace.[29]

As one looks further into Champion's journal, it becomes clear that musical abilities are not really the issue, even when music is the subject under discussion. The issue is: what music? The answer, from excerpts like the following, is perfectly clear:

> [March 6, 1837] I began with the [Sabbath] meeting. Assembling as we do in the open air the least circumstance attracts attention, or excites laughter. Sometimes we are interrupted by the cackling fowls, sometimes by the barking dogs, at others by Zulus singing as they come to meeting. Singing & praying were services so new and strange to them at first that they always excited laughter … .[30]

[27] Many are the labels given to churches founded and directed by black Africans themselves: Ethiopian, Zionist, prophetic, African Independent Churches and — most recently — African-Initiated Churches (AICs).

[28] Bengt SUNDKLER, *The Christian Mission in Africa* (London: SCM Press, 1960), 299.

[29] *Journal*, 58.

[30] *Ibid.*, 87-88.

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Clearly, there are two sorts of singing here: the walking songs that are a feature of rural life in many parts of Africa, and the songs of the divine service which fell so oddly on these Zulu ears. The conflict between the existing vocal culture and the Christian singing is focussed even more clearly in this report:

> [April 5, 1836] A rainy day. All are confined at home ... Hence all the usual noise in & around the kraal is today confined to a narrow space, & we hear thro' the thin thatch almost all that is said about us. Here we hear children playing now one crying, & the mother using all her powers of vociferation to quell it. In another place amid the chat & noise of the village, I hear some humming their monotonous song, & now above it the pleasant sound of psalm singing from a house in which are my two interpreters.[31]

The distinction between these sorts of singing — a traditional melody for self-delectation and a song in praise of God, a 'monotonous'/deadening and 'pleasant'/inspiring music — resides primarily in the consciousness of the missionary, which is notably Manichean. The reasons for this, and for the cultural negativism in this sort of missionary, may be sought both in long-standing habits of the colonising consciousness and in a specific theological background.

The immediate impetus that sent American Protestant missionaries to Africa had its roots in late-eighteenth-century millenarian revivalism. A belief in the imminent Second Coming of Christ was the spur to various reform movements in the USA — temperance, abolitionism, utopian experiments, anti-Masonic trends, and the challenge of world evangelization.[32] The need to overcome the enemies of Christ explains the persistent reaction to Zulu culture as heathenism and 'darkness'. Furthermore, the urgency of preaching to the entire world before the millennial reign of Christ led directly to the elevation of preaching above all other liturgical elements. Thus, the role of music in these Sabbath meetings of the 1830s and '40s was limited to hymns, sung at the opening and closing of the service.

It is not to be expected, given their theological bias, the rigidity of their cultural assumptions and the urgency with which they sought to evangelize, that these early missionaries would have coped well within their chosen circumstances. In fact, the history of missions shows that their early efforts were often comparatively fruitless, being rebuffed by those they sought to reach, or being overtaken by greater regional developments.

In addition, the point has been made that these early missionaries to the Zulu placed a double burden on those they sought to attract to Christ. They insisted that conversion be exhibited both in thorough conversancy with a body of doctrinal knowledge and in radical re-orientation of the individual convert's life along the

[31] *Ibid.*, 59.

[32] Alan R. BOOTH, *Americans in South Africa, 1784-1870*. PhD dissertation, Boston University. Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1964), 72.

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ethical lines approved by the missionaries. No wonder that the early years of their efforts bore such meagre fruit! No wonder, too, that there was so little opportunity to sing the faith![33]

There is some evidence that individual missionaries responded more flexibly to unexpected developments: for example, incorporating into their devotions the musico-theological creation of a man whose Christian experience had not been moulded and guided by missionaries:

> In particular he contrived to compose a Native hymn, which in the main contains sound divinity, and having himself set it to a plain tune of very affecting air, he sung and taught it to the people. This hymn is frequently sung at the beginning of our services at Wesleyville. Wherever we have travelled, we have found a knowledge of Links' hymn and tune has been preserved.[34]

This act of respect for a fledgling native tradition was observed among Ntsikana's own language-group, the amaXhosa. I have not discovered anything similar in the early evangelisation of the Zulu.[35]

Forgetting — or possibly failing even to notice — that the Zulu had their own religious forms and non-literate ways of expressing them, these book-bound evangelists both ignored the usefulness of oral performance and suppressed the very cultural means by which their converts could make a significant contribution to divine service, and even exercise leadership. The fact that white missionaries, with their unyielding cultural forms, continued to rule over their converts is generally

[33] It is worth noting that, in the face of fruitless labour, there was a reconsideration of the missionary position on such central problems as polygamy. But, while acceptance of the wives already married to a man and support for the idea of bride-price (*lobolo*) did help to lessen the burden on converts, it led to division among the missionaries, some of whom remained adamantly opposed to the practices.

[34] Hildegarde H. Fast (ed.), *The Journal and Selected Letters of Rev. William J. Shrewsbury, 1826-1835: First Missionary to the Transkei*. Graham's Town Series. (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press for Rhodes University, 1994), 48. Fast notes a confusion in Shrewsbury's mind between Links (Nxele, d. 1820, the chief Ndlambe's war-doctor and poet) and Ntsikana, whose hymn is undoubtedly referred to here.

[35] Nineteenth-century comment held that Ntsikana's hymn evaded the dead hand of Western metrical restrictions and rhyming patterns that are alien to the spirit of oral improvisation as reflected in the poem.

> It is sung to a wild, plaintive air — irregular like the words, but without misaccentuation — and the Kaffirs from the circumstances of its composition, look on it with a kind of national feeling, especially now that they droop their heads from the loss of national freedom, and the dominance of the white man.

Kaffir Express (monthly broadsheet), 1 August 1874, quoted in Jeff OPLAND, *Xhosa Oral Poetry: Aspects of a Black South African Tradition*, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 212. It is interesting to read the sympathetic John Philip's remarks on the hymn, published in 1828, which mention that 'the people are still accustomed to sing [it] in a low monotonous native air' (OPLAND, 214).

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recognised as the root cause of the 'separatist' black churches that began to emerge in South Africa from the 1880s onwards.

What is not so often emphasised is that hymnody has played a vital role in the spearheading of such movements. This fact could be demonstrated from other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, but it will suffice to point to the centrality of hymnody and sacred music more generally in the most distinctive of the Zulu 'separatist' churches, that of the Nazarenes (*amaNazaretha*) founded by Isaiah Shembe in the 1920s.

Everything about this hymnody is suggestive. It sometimes came to the founder through 'auditions' of a girl's voice singing the music.[36] One of the theological motifs of the hymns is that of a black Christ, the figure of Shembe himself. The hymns, whose music often shows the influence of Western-style hymnody, also include dance-songs and praises that closely resemble traditional Zulu composition. Drums were incorporated into worship, as were low-pitched, single-note pipes created from lengths of bamboo. Apparel embraced contemporary colonial items — for example, men's kilts, and black umbrellas — as well as the (by this time) deeply indigenised beadwork in whose colours and shapes devotional meanings are expressed.

But this more fluid cultural matrix had nothing to do with missionaries. In fact, it presents us with a reconstituted Zulu group-identity arising from the ashes of military defeat and colonial deculturation.

The lack of understanding in these fundamental matters — issues of religious anthropology — persists to the present day. Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo of Zambia, whose conception of African spirituality has thoroughly alarmed the Vatican, but whose teaching has power in its own right, sums up, in a few pungent lines, some of the liturgical issues over which church leadership in Africa argues:

> In the field of liturgy, we have been surprised that those who have specialised in African liturgical adaptations are the Westerners. They have come to teach Africans accepted gestures, movements and drums. What they approve, we Africans must approve. What they do not like, we must give up. ... They tell me that I have no discipline since I do not send away from the church all the ladies with crying babies during my sermon. During baptism I must tell all the mothers to hide their breasts when they bring their babies. ... As I wait for the people to come in before Mass I am told, 'This is not good education. When will the people learn to be on time?' As we come together to pray I am told, 'Will you teach them to sing quietly? Singing is also prayer, why do they have to shout? Moreover they are singing at every moment which is left free. They should learn to have some silent moments ... .'[37]

In this complaint, we hear among other things an echo of that missionary voice seeking to 'have my time in peace'.

[36] It is interesting to note that hymns communicated to Shembe's son and successor came in dreams. This time, however, the words appeared on a blackboard lowered before his gaze. The inroads of literacy seem quite obvious. See B. SUNDKLER, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, 2d. edn (1961), 194.

[37] E. MILINGO, *The World in Between: Christian Healing and the Struggle for Spiritual Survival*, ed. Mona Macmillan (London: C. Hurst, 1984), 73-74.

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Immigrant Illusions: The Noise of the Colony

The third and last musical prism is located in Southern African 'frontier literature'. I do not insist that the reflections here are utterly distinctive: something of what has already been observed will re-appear. But it does so within a context that is expressly concerned with the process of penetrating the interior, 'opening up the country', with a view to settling and exploiting it. Agricultural and mineral possibilities are the keynotes in the writings of the Burnham family, whose leading figures had already lived through one frontier, the American West and the Californian gold-rush, before they set out from Durban in 1893 for the uncharted southern African territories of Mashonaland and Matabeleland.[38]

Music plays a very minor role in their accounts of the three years that they spent trying to gain a family foothold in the country of the Matopos. It is precisely because of its humble position in their narrative that I think it invites consideration. Far from being a topic on which they dilate with the wisdom of experience, music is almost an inadvertent and certainly a transitory factor in their lives. It may be deemed a less 'loaded' item — not ideologically, as we will see, but in terms of the significance ascribed to it. It is the very casualness of its treatment that encourages me to view music on the frontier as a relatively unexamined item from the settler viewpoint and (hopefully) revealing for that very reason.

In order to interpret the musical references in this extended discourse of trekking, scouting, staking and working claims, and intermittently taking up arms against the resistant indigenes, it is useful to sketch out what can be gleaned of the writers' own cultural background. From the documents, it is clear that they possessed considerable literary abilities in the 'plain speech' tradition of American letters. They were Confederate in their sympathies (6), and probably Episcopalian (5), but not at all pietistic. They admired Hereford Cathedral, and thought 'the great organ and [the] fine choir' to be 'grand':

> We have nothing like it in America. It beats the opera and I do not wonder so much now why the [British] nation will stand the taxes of the established church. (9)

And they have a taste for the defining monuments of European culture:

> In Westminster Abbey lays the sacred dust and a fitting place it is and very peaceful, only the footfall of the pilgrim and the music of the great organ to break the silence. But in the Louvre stand out the works in marble and bronze and gold, or worked in tapestries, or painted on canvas, is portrayed every human thought from the creation down. The tomb of Napoleon, massive, peculiar and in harmony with that wonderful man. (14)

[38] *An American Family on the African Frontier, 1893-96: The Burnham Family Letters*, ed. Mary and Richard Bradford (Durban: Bok Books, 1993). Bracketed numerals in the following section refer to page numbers in this collection.

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The names of Chaucer and Gibbon crop up, but their centre of literary gravity is in reality much more concerned with movement and adventure: travellers' guidebooks (18), the novels of H. Rider Haggard, and (one feels) their own writings, beginning as daily journals (39, 48), then detailed family letters and finally issuing in books such as Fredrick Burnham's *Scouting on Two Continents* (1926).

A little of their musical culture is also observable: they enjoy the familiar operas, in whose absence an impromptu rendering of unaccompanied melodies from *Faust* and *Carmen* by a former opera-singer, now a surveyor in Bulawayo, gives the women great pleasure (224). They would have a parlour-piano — that symbol of middle-class solidity — if they could (179). While on a visit to Cape Town, they take in the outdoor concerts (196). Their young son sings the familiar American airs 'Ta-ra, Clementine or Georgia' (48), and Blanche (his mother) overhears another grass widow singing 'Come oh come my love to me' (213).[39]

Given their dismissive views of the natives and their culture, it is not surprising that an early encounter with East African music is couched in terms borrowed from North America:

> I did not attend the service but went to a grand powwow of the natives and heard for the first time the weird sound of the tom-tom and the original darky melodies. It was rather pleasant music, though monotonous. (25)[40]

This is at the settlement of Tanga, in German East Africa, overlooked by a German fort. It would seem that any music emanating from black African people qualifies in Fred's mind as the *fons et origo* of southern negro 'melody'. Having behind him a career in the pacification of native American 'Indians' (in particular Apache), he borrows freely from the frontiersman's vocabulary — a telling prophecy of his role in Africa.[41]

Blanche observes the native ways in a letter from Delagoa Bay (now Maputo):

> We have a regular circus every once in a while when they are loading or unloading cargo. While waiting for the next consignment they will sing, clap hands, dance, imitate animals, roll each other in blankets and all the while the perspiration will just be rolling off them. At Zanzibar they did everything by music. They seem to need some incentive to help along the work. (29-30)[42]

[39] She gets this wrong, as her sister Grace points out: it should be 'Come my love, Oh come my love home'. Comments Blanche, 'I never could keep a tune' (213).

[40] Both these terms are colonial products. The word 'powwow' came into English in the seventeenth century from Algonquian usage; but it was originally 'pow-waa', English speakers assimilating the two syllables. Its etymological relations with Natick and Narrangansett usage indicate a root in 'one who practises magic', and thus an application to magical or shamanistic ceremonies accompanied by feasting and dancing. (See *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. P. Hanks [London: Collins, 1979], 1150.) 'Tom-tom', by contrast, comes from the East Indian sphere of operations. The Hindi *tamtam*, the Malaysian *tongtong*, are obviously all 'of imitative origin'. In colonial usage, 'tom-tom' referred to drumming among any 'barbarous people' (as the Oxford English Dictionary has it).

[41] Burnham's role in quelling the Ndebele uprising of 1896-97 has been the subject of some dispute. See the discussion in *An American Family*, xxi-xxiv.

[42] Letter to John Blick, 26.3.1893.

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The condescension of her conclusion fails, I think, to conceal her puzzlement over this uninhibited behaviour. In fact, what one might call expressive behaviour of a kind foreign to Anglo-Saxons crops up at various points in their journey, and calls forth uncomprehending reactions.

> [A]s the Kaffir is by nature a boisterous and noisy being nothing delights him more to while away a midnight trek than to swing that terrible whip and give voice to a series of yells, groans, and fiendish screeches that would put a band of coyotes and Apaches in the shade. (57)[43]

The sheer volume of sound associated with wagon driving in South Africa was something that impressed other travellers. But the more recognizably cultural forms of behaviour seemed no less unusual:

> His belly full, he [i.e. 'the Kaffir', any representative of the black race] sleeps an hour or two and then the African traits loom up strongest. They will, when all alone, dance and go through the strangest contortions and motions with every part of the body, whirl round and round till giddy seeming to enjoy the sensation, laugh and sing, groan, roar, and shriek, in fact act like a crazy person. That a savage should do this when alone way out on the veldt and on food that would make a white man weep shows that happiness is not denied to the heathen... (57)[44]

The suggestion of dementia is what comes to the writer's mind. It may suffice to remark that we are dealing here with ascribed notions, and that the 'crazed' dance of the native is nothing less than a central trope in travel and pseudo-ethnographic writing. As Curt Sachs has noted,

> Again and again travellers report that natives gesticulate in their dance 'like lunatics,' that their bodies jerk as though in a convulsion; all parts of the body tremble even to the fingertips, only the whites of their eyes show, the throat forms wild, animal-like sounds, until the dancer rolls unconscious on the ground. The passion of the transport can be so intense that during the Boer War the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert often let themselves be surrounded in the midst of their moonlight dance and shot down in hordes.[45]

[43] Fred Burnham to Josiah Russell, 24.5.1893.

[44] *Ibid*. The consistently ironic tone of C. E. FINLASON's *A Nobody in Mashonaland* (1893) nonetheless includes details worth preserving. On the question of porters' rations:

> I had for some time been curious as to how our bearers managed to live: for they got very little from us, as may be imagined, and they carried nothing in the way of food. Here it was that I became enlightened. Directly they had got the fire fairly alight they disappeared among the undergrowth, and in half an hour returned, each with a double handful of big hairy caterpillars. One had a leaf on which was a little honey [collected at the cost of several beestings] ... Then they put their caterpillars, all hairy and quivering, on to the red hot embers, and when they had done twisting, lo, they were done! ... I should now be glad to know how that entree tasted, but at the time I had not the courage to try. (260)

[45] *World History of the Dance*, trans. Bessie Schönberg (New York: Norton, 1937), 50.

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Sachs argues that these gesticulations are uninhibited reactions to stimulus, involving the supersession of thinking and willing. His account leans immediately towards ecstatic states, towards possession and transport. One has therefore to note every instance that confounds this.[46] It is surely fair to ask whether 'happiness' is really what the solo in the veld is about. These dance-songs seemed to cause the Burnhams considerable uneasiness, as this mention by Blanche testifies:

> The old Hottentot woman here on the ranch made some beer last week and the whole family [the woman's] drank for several days. They always dance on such occasions and sing. The old woman is so comical. Wish you could see her dancing, such queer motions and such a silly smile on her face. (150)[47]

If there is a happiness that the foreigners cannot fathom, there is also a mood of evening contentment and reflection into which native music-making seems to fit with all the aptness of a piece of incidental music for a play. Here is Blanche writing about a bivouac on the Brak River:

> We sat around the campfire last night and wished for you and Judd. ... Bright moonlight, campfires gleaming, men talking and laughing and Kaffirs singing and playing the concertina, and just before bedtime a big outfit [i.e. wagon train] pulled in from the north. You can hear them a mile away, whips popping, dogs barking and those queer indescribable yells, shrieks and groans, which are considered necessary to make the oxen move. (70)[48]

Here are the two topics run together: the evening calm, embroidered by local music, and the wild eruption of gratuitous aural gestures. At root, it is the juxtaposition of two important colonial themes: the idyll of the undiscovered country, and the grotesquerie of the savage life. In a letter written by Blanche much later in their stay in Matabeleland, the early evening theme is again linked with subjectively gentle music:

> I like Ponto [a Shona youth she had contracted to work for her]. He is one of the rare boys whom you can treat kindly and he does not take advantage of your kindness. He plays most wonderfully sweet music on a hollow gourd fastened on to a bow and sings a variety of songs, especially for an hour or so after dark. He has built him such a pretty little hut of closely woven branches out under a cluster of trees. It looks very pretty. (232)[49]

[46] Consider this precise reflection of 'trembling' in the Nyanja language of what was Nyasaland: *'Njenje*, quivering, shaking; ... ***Abvina njenje***, they dance *with intentional quivering of the body. Ngwa manjenje*, his hand shakes, etc [palsy]; or, he dances thus.' *'Manjenjeza*, bells; rattles, such as are worn in dancing.' D. C. SCOTT, *Dictionary of the Nyanja Language* (London: Religious Tract Society, n.d.), 387, 268 (emphasis added).

[47] Blanche Burnham to her family, May 1894.

[48] Blanche Burnham to John Blick, 22.6.1893.

[49] Letter to Rebecca Burnham, 23.7.1895.

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Though the Burnhams had virtually no understanding of the African languages, they clearly felt that these songs were a part of their own contentment. A better example of projection onto the indistinct screen of their new environment would be hard to find.

In order to illustrate how fixed some of these topoi became in settler accounts, reference will be made to two unrelated moments in the colonisation of eastern South Africa as reflected in typical write-ups of Zulu life and manners.

The first, taken from a narrative of landing and trekking in Natal in the year 1850, recalls the situation of a small group of newly arrived immigrants, who have had to battle against virtual shipwreck to get themselves and their goods to shore.

> The day's cares being now over, and the cravings of hunger appeased, we began to contemplate the peculiarly romantic situation of our snug little evening party. [Being shipwrecked in Durban bay, they had erected a canvas shelter for themselves in the nearby bush.] ... Without — everything was still, excepting the occasional rustle of the night wind in the foliage of the trees, the distant roar of the surf, as it dashed itself upon the rocky bluff, and the laughing jabber of a dozen Caffres sitting close-huddled in a ring, about the still-blazing fire at the tent door, wrapped up in cotton blankets, devouring the remnants of our late meal, and sipping a basin of coffee, bestowed on them by one of the kind ladies.
>
> It was a pretty sight to watch the expression of countenance displayed by the different heads that formed the sable ring, as the sparkling flame shot up on high, throwing a momentary glare on all around, revealing their jet-black visages, their snow-white teeth, and sparkling eyes, together with the sharp-edged 'assegais' (Caffre spears) with which each one was armed.[50]

This is an earlier idyll. Though music is not present, the sense of peacefulness and pictorial 'perspective' clearly is. The scene is 'pretty' in its particularity, the romance of a world lit by fire.[51] But the selfsame setting is also available for the evocation of the grotesque:

> I am writing at 10 o'clock at night, and my ears are assailed by the Kaffirs singing, by all the world like a chorus of porkers — the old ones grunting, and the young ones squeaking — they would damage your tympanum in less than no time. You look in at the door of their beehive-looking hut, and you see them hard at work, perspiring at the music — some singing the words of the song, the others shouting, screaming, whis-

[50] G. H. MASON, *Life with the Zulus of Natal, South Africa* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), 73.

[51] One writer was specific about the feelings aroused in this scene:

You must be out in the wilderness in Africa to understand the joy of a real good fire at night. It is always cold after sunset [in the interior], and the happiness experienced by merely gazing at the cheery blaze of a first-class camp fire cannot be expressed in words. When you have had a good supper ..., you lie back on the ground, with your head raised by a rolled up blanket, just high enough to look at the fire, and smoke slowly in a state of perfect contentment, which can be experienced under no other conditions that I know of. (C. E. FINLASON, *A Nobody in Mashonaland* [1893], 316-7.)

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tling, and making other unearthly noises — but all done in the most perfect time, ... and all this seen by the uncertain light of the fire which, fitfully gleaming on their dark and excited faces and figures, makes them look like a parcel of —, and gives you a sort of phantasmagoric vidimus of pandemonium.[52]

What pandemonium meant to Leslie is surely not far from this account of evening revelry by Mason. I quote it at some length, in order to highlight the remarkable parallels between these accounts:

By the light of a small oil lamp I was completing my English journal, ready for the mail which sailed next day; and, while thus busily employed, time stole away so softly that it was late ere I closed and sealed it up. A fearful shout now burst from the recesses of the surrounding jungle, ...
At first we were alarmed, ... but ... I concluded that it must be part of some Caffre festival, and determined on ascertaining its meaning ...
I discovered a large, newly erected Caffre hut, with a huge fire blazing at its centre, just visible through the dense smoke ...
I ... stooped down, and thrust my head into the open doorway, where a most interesting spectacle presented itself. Fancy three rows of jet-black Caffres, ranged in circles around the interior of the hut, sitting 'knees and nose altogether,' waving their well-oiled strongly built frames backwards and forwards, to keep time in their favourite 'Dingaan's war song,' throwing their arms about, and brandishing the glittering assegai, singing and shouting, uttering a shrill piercing whistle, beating the ground to imitate the heavy tramp of marching men, ...
In an instant, the whole phalanx of glaring eyes was turned to the doorway; and silence reigned throughout the demoniac-looking group. A simultaneous exclamation of Molonga! Molonga! ... was succeeded by a universal beckon for me to come in and take a place in the ring. This, of course, I complied with; and, having seen me comfortably seated, they fell to work again more vociferously than ever, ...[53]

So the strangeness of their singing and dancing does not exclude practised precision of execution; and the appearance of devilish inspiration goes hand in hand with ready hospitality. The 'animal-like' sounds of the Zulu turn out to be part of an individual's preference for one tribal style over another.[54]

The excerpts adduced will have indicated the general direction of my argument. The references to music in them are a helpful index to two themes of the colonial *mentalité*. They are not the only constituent attitudes, but they seem to me to be crucial.

[52] David LESLIE, Natal Scenery - Kaffir Music and a Tiger Hunt, in *Among the Zulus and Amatongas: With Sketches of the Natives, their Language and Customs; and the Country, Products, Climate, Wild Animals, &c.*, ed. W. H. Drummond (Edinburgh: Edmonton and Douglas, 1875), 218. The date of writing is not given. Judging from the other materials in the book, it probably dates from the early 1870s.

[53] MASON, *Life with the Zulus*, 119-21.

[54] Leslie repeats his condemnation of Zulu vocal style, in contrast with the more appealing music of the Tonga, in an account of a journey undertaken in 1871 (published 1875; see *Among the Zulus and Amatongas*, 245.) The latter, he says, 'keep good time, and in their tunes there is melody; whereas [the singing] of the Zulus is a series of shrieks, grunts, and bellowing, great sound, good time, but not the slightest approach to harmony'.

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The first may be called *visionary absorption,* and I deduce it especially from the scenes of contentment, of fellowship, good humour, and bodily rest. The core experience is consolatory and often calls up a contrasted picture of the society left behind: that is viewed as deficient in vitality, colourless, crowded and alienating. The exaltation involved in this construction of experience is signalled by words like 'romantic', 'sweet', 'grand', even 'old-fashioned' (in an approving sense).[55] And the music of these scenes, whatever its actual significance to the performers, accords with this: it is *musical* music.

The second psychosocial reality I will call *resistant categorising*. Here, the scenes are generally crowded and animated, the social setting formalised, even ritualistic. The reactive language includes 'strange', 'weird', 'different', 'savage', 'queer', 'crazy'. Once again, the music associated with these moments accords with the principal psychological impulse, which may be described as involuntary execration. It strikes the narrators as grotesque and abhorrent, and they are quick to classify it as *unmusical* music.

In framing these two stances as models of colonial experience, I do not wish to appear as a dichotomist, charting 'open' and 'closed' outlooks. It is true that some individuals seem consistently more open and receptive than others, and it is also obvious that individuals have their tolerant and intolerant phases. What I have called visionary absorption and resistant categorising are only two factors that do not exhaust the possibilities. Both of them involve forms of psychological stimulus, and both involve ignorance and distortion. Both also belong to a still larger colonial process that is often called 'domestication'.

The will to inhabit a home, to belong among kin and familiar objects is arguably universal in different degrees. In the colonial setting, the idea of home takes on the strong flavour of master-servant relations, of control, the command of respect and obedience, and the exaction of labour. Everything that falls within that purview is both useful and pleasing, and that extends always to the humans involved. It is well known that a basic ploy in colonial relations is the diminishment of the colonised in language. They are never men, but 'boys'.[56] No one insists on indigenous names: nicknames and slang will do just as well. And, in contrast to the formal address of fellow-immigrants (Capt White, Mr Cumming, Mrs Hines, etc.), the male indigenes have only first names, and they are a mixture of Nguni, missionary and 'pet' names. The utter reliance of the whites on black labour is matched only by the complete indifference to their lives as social beings.

Music fits into these categories, naturally; perhaps it sharpens them. In visionary absorption, it serves as a consolation, as part of human company for lonely pioneers, as a metaphor for the softening moments in their rigours, and a sign of

[55] '[The soil of Africa] is the area of action and nation building and is the only spot left, over which hangs mystery and romance and unknown possibilities.' (200) — Fred Burnham to Josiah Russell, 18.12.1894.

[56] As Blanche succinctly puts it, 'No one except blacks are called boys here'. (117) — Letter to Blick family, 6.2.1894.

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acceptation. In resistant categorising, music and dancing serve to 'set the teeth on edge', be they ever so discreet.

What do these vexing phenomena mean for the white consciousness? The monotony heard in the native songs prefigures the routine of labour that must inevitably replace the highly coloured dangers and adventures of pioneering; perhaps it also betokens the stagnation of the colonial mind. The strange dancing echoes the European expectations of the unpredictable and the incomprehensible. Together they represent a reflection of settler uncertainty, the cost of upheaval and wandering, the fragile purchase on their new country — in a word, their vulnerability. And, since that reminder is hardly welcome to pioneers, there is a tendency — rationalised by appeals to morality or to taste — to excuse themselves from such performance.

Perhaps the clearest example of the mingling of these two — the potentially restful night-music and the unsettling isolation of a settler woman whose husband has gone on a surveying trip — occurs in a long letter from Blanche to her mother. It is another southern African soundscape:

> We have a comfortable lined hut and are very cosy. Mr Smith and his son, old friends of Mr Cumming, are staying with him in a hut a few yards from mine, so I do not feel at all nervous at night.
>
> ...
>
> Roderick is sound asleep, our friends are also quiet. Can only hear the thrum, thrum of a Kaffir guitar and a few voices singing a monotonous song. Occasionally the dozen or more dogs rush out and bark at the moonlight. A rat is walking around over my ceiling. Mr Dawson is going to give me a cat, but I will not take it until we move for fear if I should move we would have bad luck, and I am getting sleepy.... .
>
> The wind is sighing among the trees and around the huts. It sounds gloomy and I am glad that I have friends so near. Oh some of the nigs are still awake. I can hear them. But I am sleepy so good night my dear ones.... . (145-46)[57]

The comforts and anxieties of the settler mind could not be more clearly demonstrated. Deprived of the solace of music alongside people who actually possess it, Blanche — 'white woman' — stands emblematically for the persistent melancholy of the colonial enterprise.

[57] Letter of 13.4.1894.

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Sažetak

KOLONIJALNI SUSRETI KROZ PRIZMU GLAZBE

Upotrebljavajući tri sloja susreta između Europljana i Sjeveroamerikanaca s domaćim stanovništvom južne Afrike u članku se ispituje jesu li svjedočanstva o glazbi, sačuvana u dokumentaciji o kulturnoj razmjeni i sukobima, donijela neki posebni uvid u prirodu tih susreta.

Razmatraju se pojedinosti o tri pojedinačne situacije: približavanja obali portugalskih pomorskih istraživača oko 1490. godine, iskustva nekih od najranijih pokrstiteljskih misionara među Zulu narodom 1830-ih i 1840-ih, te kulturni sustav i reakcija bijelih naseljenika među Ndebele narodom tijekom 1890-ih.

Najraniji slučaj pokazuje kako su glazbene aktivnosti služile kao jednostavni oblik jezika i novca prije nego su se ta sredstva interakcije razvila po sebi samima. U kasnijem i rafiniranijem obliku promatranje urođeničke glazbe veže se uz književni diskurs pastorale. Dokumentirane zabilježbe također dokazuju dugovječnost i važnost pjevanja, sviranja svirale i plesnih rituala među Khoi narodom.

Za početne misionarske napore u Natalu može se ustanoviti da su se oblikovali na etnocentričkim i teološkim pretpostavkama. Shvatiti glazbeno sudjelovanje Zulua kao kazalo privlačnosti te kršćanske prisutnosti i otuđenja od nje omogućuje nam da bolje razumijemo reakcije i kasnijih europskih naseljenika i novijih vjerskih poslanika u Zulua na kulturu Drugoga.

Na pozadini svjesne imperijalne ekspanzije pioniri pojedinci iz Britanije i SAD-a pridružili su se 1890-ih groznici za zemljom i rudnim bogatstvima u južnoj Africi. Na temelju pisama jedne američke pionirske obitelji u zemlji Matabele ispituje se neke psihosocijalne impulse u kasnoj kolonijalnoj podložnosti upućujući pozornost na način na koji se glazba prilagođivala ili kao utjeha u kulturnoj izolaciji ili kao prokletstvo i znamen urođeničkog divljaštva.

U svakome ovom slučaju svjedočanstvo o glazbi posreduje zaseban oblik kolonijalnog mentaliteta, a 'vrijednost' glazbe valja interpretirati i kao emanaciju ljudskih želja i kao društvenu činjenicu s kojom su suočeni raseljeni sjevernjaci.

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