

# **The “Last Zulu Warrior Standing,” A Case Study in the Cultural History of Sport:**

## **Cricketer Lance Klusener, Racial Stereotyping and Ethno-branding in South Africa**

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In a pivotal match of the 1999 ICC World Cup Lance Klusener crouched with bat in hand, ready to battle Australia at Edgbaston in Birmingham, England [told by cricketers/fans that Edgbaston suffices—no ‘Cricket Ground’ needed]. Radio and television across the world hummed with anticipation. In previous fixtures Klusener led South Africa to hard-fought victories while sportscasters regaled listeners with stories of how his hitting evoked his childhood nickname “Zulu.” His immersion in Shaka’s culture as a white boy from Natal, they said, was the secret of his prowess at the crease. During the Edgbaston semifinal he was unbeaten, “pounding Aussie bowlers with his baseball-style backlift.” By the ninth wicket, he was rousing cheerful “mayhem” in the packed oval. Zulu brought his squad level with their arch-rival but during the final over he could not achieve “His godly act.” Disaster struck, one run from elevating his team, the Proteas, to the pinnacle of cricket. Klusener stroked the ball to mid-off and

sprinted. Not watching, his partner Alan Donald was run out, leaving the match drawn and ending his country's hopes of making the final. Despite this devastating outcome, Klusener sealed his reputation. From South Asia to the West Indies, he became the one and only "last Zulu warrior standing" in global sport.<sup>1</sup>

The all-rounder Klusener rose to glory by making "legendary bowlers Glenn McGrath, Shoaib Akhtar, Shane Warne, Wasim Akram and Javagal Srinath seem as threatening as a five year old with a sponge ball." On "the biggest cricketing stage of the world" Klusener "had the time of his life." Along the way he earned Player of the Series in the 1999 World Cup.<sup>2</sup> Landing back home in June of that year, he stepped from the largest throng "ever [to] welcome back a hero" in a Johannesburg airport. He had arrived as "the man they call Zulu," pursued by corporate sponsors seeking new rainbow-nation pitchmen.<sup>3</sup>

Months later, after commanding performances in Tests and more One-Day Internationals (ODI), he won Wisden's coveted 2000 International Cricketer of the Year. "Zulu" would then compete for the Proteas in the 2003 ICC World Cup, hosted by South Africa. He finished his domestic career with provincial KwaZulu/Natal in 2004, the year he signed a contract with Northamptonshire to play county cricket in England. In 2007 he performed professionally for the last time in the amped-up 20/20 game, slogging for the Kolkata/Royal Bengal Tigers in India. In total, the left-handed Klusener averaged 41.10 runs per innings in 171

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<sup>1</sup>DNA Jaipur article of 14 February 2011.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.iol.co.za/sport/zulu-swaps-bat-for-fishing-rod-1.324396?ot=inmsa.ArticlePrintPageLayout.ot>, June 22 1999.

<sup>3</sup>*Sunday Tribune*, 26 June 1999.

one-day international matches (ODI). His strike rate was nearly one run per ball. This percentage is among the best ever recorded; it ranks higher than his Test average (32.86) by nearly nine runs per innings. With an aggressive swing suited for ODIs, Klusener became the “one-day wrecker.” While he could awe spectators with cover drives, his swat was something to behold. His sixes soared. Some crashed into the pavilion, heralded by the announcer’s praise, “Zulu clops one!” Klusener’s bowling was formidable too. His off-cutters could collapse the batting order. He took 192 one-day wickets and 80 wickets in 49 Tests, with a best of 8 for 64.



**Lance “Zulu” Klusener**

The 1999 World Cup vaulted the twenty-one-year-old Klusener to stardom in India, Pakistan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Caribbean islands. His celebrity revealed, yet again, that cricket is the Victorian Empire's prized export, aside from tea. *Beyond a Boundary* explained why millions subjugated by racial and class divisions of British colonialism, with every reason to reject the elite English pastime, embraced cricket instead. They yearned to show, C.L.R. James concluded, that they could beat the oppressor at his own game. When South Africa was banned from international sport, Caribbean stars such as Viv Richards voiced James' revolutionary argument. "I would like to think," the West Indies captain declared, "I carried my bat for the liberation of African . . . people everywhere." Yet in the 1980s and early 1990s his struggle against white supremacy did not reach every oval. Richards would "never play cricket in South Africa."<sup>4</sup> A powerhouse with 24 Test centuries and the admiration of Buckingham Palace, Richards learned of his knighthood as news of Zulu Klusener's "warrior" play (broadcast through print, radio and television) reached the West Indies, suggesting that a white boy born into racist privilege could carry his bat for African people too. Even the township "comrades," who associated cricket with apartheid, were following Zulu's World Cup exploits.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Richards' quotes from Jack Williams, *Race and Cricket* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2001), 135, 90; C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Stanley Paul & Co, 1963); Gordon Rohlehr, "C. L. R. James and the Legacy of *Beyond a Boundary*," in Hillary Beckles, ed. *A Spirit of Dominance: Cricket and Nationalism in the West Indies* 138-155.

<sup>5</sup> Klusener's embodiment of "Zuluness" was an important signifier that inclusive democracy was working in the post-apartheid era. For "Zuluness" as a signifier of the New South Africa, see: Benedict Carton, "Zuluness in the Post and Neo Worlds," in Benedict Carton, John Laband, and Jabulani Sithole, eds. *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3-22. The historical roots of and admiration for soccer in black South African

Beyond the townships, Klusener's Zulu-speaking fans in rural KwaZulu-Natal province truly reveled in his homeboy status. They admired his fluency in their mother tongue, familiar *ngoma* stomp (which resembled his baseball-style backlift), and *inkunzi* (bull-like) physique. His bodily build was preferred by Shaka's soldiers; their symbols of national unity were the royal black bull, *inkunz'emnyama*, and the shield backcrossed with short-stabbing spears. They drilled for combat in martial competitions such as fencing with wooden sticks and conducting mock maneuvers in *ngoma* (war) dances.<sup>6</sup> Klusener came from a hallowed place in the Zulu kingdom: Gingindlovu in the Thukela Valley.

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communities is outlined in Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> The symbolic power of the *inkunzi* build in the making of Zulu masculinity and warrior sport in South Africa: Benedict Carton and Robert Morrell, "Zulu Masculinities, Warrior Culture and Stick Fighting: Reassessing Male Violence and Virtue in South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38:1 (2012), 31-53.



**Klusner's baseball-style backlift**





**Backlift stomp in *ngoma***

This geographic region is known for Zulu cattle-keeping, stick-fighting and *ngoma* performance.<sup>7</sup> In the late nineteenth century Gingingdlovu was rechristened cane country by white sugar planters from Natal who appropriated land from area chiefdoms. Military history buffs also know Gingingdlovu; it was

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<sup>7</sup> For more on cattle-keeping, stick-fighting and *ngoma* performance in Thukela Valley Zulu culture, see Carton and Morrell, "Zulu Masculinities."

a battlefield in the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War pitting King Cetshwayo's regiments against Queen Victoria's troops. The invading British claimed they were protecting Natal settlers from Zulu "savages" that Shaka had drilled into "man-slaying" conquerors.<sup>8</sup>

These overlapping Zulu cultural, British imperial and Natal colonial histories stamped two markers on Klusener's persona. In *Citizen and Subject* Mahmood Mamdani called such markers—one racial, the other ethnic—"the cutting edge of social life" in white-ruled South Africa, when the "alternative to racism—as the main way of defining the social, legal, and political status of the colonized—was tribalism." Tribe, he argued, "had none of the disadvantages that race did. In fact, its advantages were obvious: unlike race, tribe would dissolve the majority of the colonized into several tribal minorities."<sup>9</sup> At the dawn of the post-apartheid era Klusener's cutting-edge tribalism epitomized another minority at play. His cricket identity—"(re)invented" by sportscaster and sponsor—impressed the rainbow nation, especially promoters of reconciliation marketing the evocatively familiar with a twist: the warrior inspiring unity, not with spear but with bat.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>John Laband, *Historical Dictionary of the Zulu Wars* (Scarecrow Press, 2009), 6. The imperial politics leading up to the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War, including the hype in Great Britain and colonial Natal that "savage" Zulus powered a "man-slaying" war machine, are critically examined in Richard Cope, *Ploughshares of War: The Origins of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1999), pp. 236-241.

<sup>9</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 90.

<sup>10</sup> In contemporary South Africa the stereotypical Zulu warrior has been a stand in for primordial aggression. From the late 1980s to early 1990s, this stereotype was again marshaled, or re-invented, by the Inkatha Freedom Party, which unleashed its "warriors" on comrades of the ANC during a civil war over the political control of Natal and Transvaal provinces: Shula Marks,



There was one major reason national boosters of cricket and rugby took notice of the “Zulu” in whites. They wanted to change negative perceptions of their racially exclusive sports. Until Klusener came along, there had never been a renowned “Zulu” cricketer, though “non-white” players had excelled on the pitch. For example, the Coloured cricketer Krom Hendricks enjoyed a reputation as the best fast bowler in South Africa in the late 1890s. Yet colonial selectors snubbed him because they said he was not fully “European.”<sup>11</sup> Between 1900 and the 1970s, the most recognized cricketers in South Africa emerged from whites-only federations endorsed by the Imperial Cricket Council and, later, International Cricket Council. In the global arena it was accepted that South Africa’s sports officials were telling the truth when they asserted, without evidence, that “non-Europeans” did not possess the temperament or constitution to excel in the gentlemen’s game. This claim was conveniently ignored from the 1960s to 1980s, when Pretoria sponsored multi-racial sides in hopes of national cricket teams playing overseas. Spreading cultural boycotts barred these squads from lucrative international competition. This trend ended in 1994, as President Mandela began to preside over a free nation where South Africans could go anywhere and welcome anyone. He invited the world to his country, hosting the 1995 Rugby World Cup and 1996 Africa Cup of Nations; these marquee events intended to

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“Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness,” in Leroy Vail (ed.) *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 215-40; Nicholas Cope, “The Zulu Petit Bourgeoisie and Zulu Nationalism in the 1920s: Origins of Inkatha,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, 3 (1990), 433-35. Marks and Cope drew on the seminal work of Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 211-262.

<sup>11</sup> The cases of Hendricks and other black cricketers are examined in John Nauright, *Long Run to Freedom: Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa* (Morgantown: Fitness Information Technology, 2010); Bruce Murray and Christopher Merrett, *Caught Behind: Race and Politics in Springbok Cricket* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2004).

increase direct foreign investment. Indeed, Mandela's triumphant bid for the 2010 FIFA World Cup remains South Africa's mega-accomplishment, along with the first democratic election.

These momentous developments, however, stopped at the edge of most manicured fields. A white minority still controlled country's professional sports, other than soccer. To be sure, the transition to democracy in the early 1990s included the mandated selection of racially and ethnically inclusive cricket and rugby squads. Yet only one Coloured competitor, Paul Adams, played for the Proteas at this time. He was followed by the batsman Herschelle Gibbs. Then the paceman Makhaya Ntini won a spot at decade's end, becoming the first eminent African cricketer to represent democratic South Africa. In rugby a similar situation unfolded, with Coloured wing Chester Williams being called up to the Springboks in 1993. He would not see another capped "non-white" player until Breyton Paulse debuted six years later. With the dearth of such athletes at the upper echelons of cricket and rugby, sport marketers trumpeted Bafana Bafana's Mark Fish and Neil Tovey whose team spirit, it was hoped, would show the world that white footballers loved the black pastime. Yet Bafana Bafana shined most vibrantly in the home country, not in stadiums abroad.

In South Africa only two cricketers ascended to global celebrity, and they were neither Gibbs nor Ntini. One was Klusener's urban (Pietermaritzburg-born) teammate Jonty Rhodes, a fielder who made diving stabs much like star goalies in the township leagues. Cricket fans were amazed by his spectacular lunges but South African advertisers knew this athlete lacked "tribal" luster. Thus, Klusener

stood out in the opening chapter of post-apartheid sport. He was an athlete hailed throughout the British Commonwealth as the white man who personified the Zulu warrior.



**Protea Jonty Rhodes making a stabbing stop (above); Orlando Pirates [goalie name] making a stabbing stop (below)**



Klusener's "Zulu" reputation was ripe for exploitation in a capitalist complex called "Ethnicity Inc.," the title of Jean and John Comaroffs' recent book on the "marketing [of] vernacular lifeways" of "ethno-nations." Their analysis examines, among other subjects, the commoditization of Zulu heritage in South Africa.<sup>12</sup> The Comaroffs trace the emergence of Ethnicity Inc. from divide-and-rule colonialism to "neo-liberal" black economic empowerment (BEE), a new source of capital for recreation and leisure industries in the post-apartheid era.<sup>13</sup> We situate our analysis of Zulu Klusener in the context of Ethnicity Inc. In the late 1990s, sponsors of BEE championed "uplift" capitalism,<sup>14</sup> which entailed the transfer of ANC government revenue to black financiers.<sup>15</sup> Hailed by Thabo Mbeki as a panacea, BEE promised to restore vigor to limp South African entrepreneurialism and fuel an African Renaissance. Mbeki's plan for macro-economic vitality included the promotion of "indigenous knowledge" that encouraged companies to consider the strategic benefits of "tribal" achievements such as Shaka's "globally revered" military discipline. Not surprisingly, the martial Zulu paradigm became gristle for the mill of motivational gurus. Before

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<sup>12</sup> John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity Inc.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 6-7, 11-13, 24.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53, 104-108, 118, 123. See also: Roger Tangri and Roger Southall, "The Politics of Black Empowerment," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34, 3 (2008): 699-716.

<sup>14</sup> ANC support for BEE initiative: *Black Economic Empowerment Commission: A National Integrated Black Economic Empowerment Strategy* (Skotaville: Johannesburg, 2001). The historical legacies of capitalist "uplift" in black South Africa: Amanda Kemp and Robert Vinson, "'Poking Holes in the Sky': Professor James Thaele, American Negroes, and Modernity in 1920s Segregationist South Africa", *African Studies Review* 43, 1 (2000), 143-144, 146-51.

<sup>15</sup> Roger Southall, "The ANC and Black Capitalism in South Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 31, 100 (2004): 313-328; Paul Williams and Ian Taylor, "Neoliberalism and the Political Economy of the 'New' South Africa," *New Political Economy* 5, 1 (2000): 21-40.

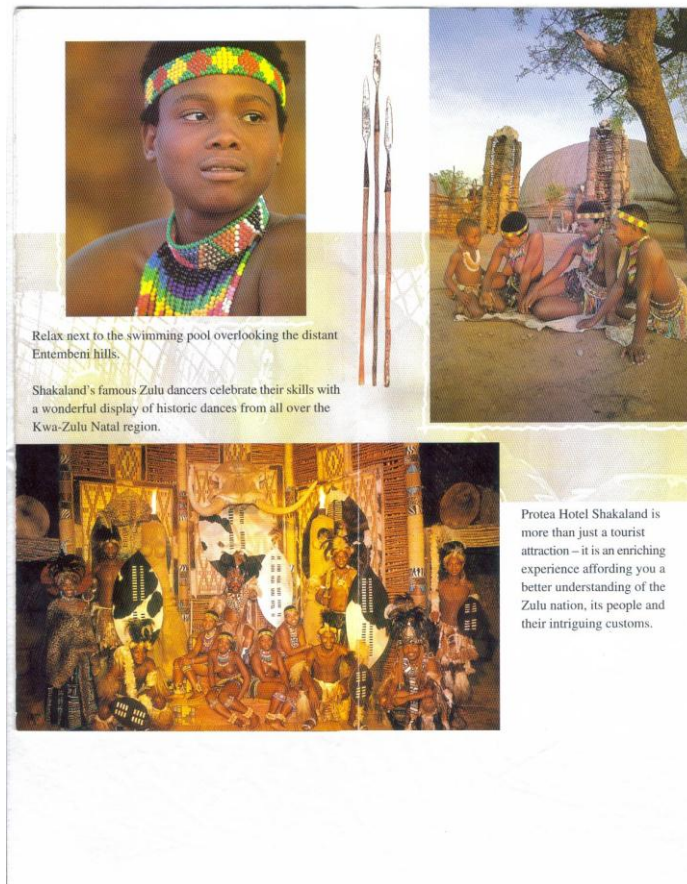
long they advised executives to embrace the “proudly South African” ambitions that once inspired Shaka to forge his powerful “empire.”<sup>16</sup>

Klusener’s feats hit the sports pages as BEE deal-making took off. In April 1997, the month Klusener won Man of the Match in South Africa’s ODI against Australia at Bloemfontein, ANC Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism Pallo Jordan urged white-owned businesses to partner with black equity firms. At the Johannesburg Sandton Sun Hotel, Jordan applauded the formation of Tourvest, a BEE-supported conglomerate that advertised its premier destination, Shakaland. Today this heritage resort just north of Durban, a prestigious Protea Hotel, makes a profit re-enacting the military structure, household dynamics, and “intriguing customs” of the Zulu kingdom. Some of Shakaland’s employees, who impersonate Zulu warriors and maidens, come from rural communities near Gingingdlovu.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Phinda Madi, *Leadership Lessons from Emperor Shaka Zulu the Great* (Randburg, 2000), x, xii-xiii, 24-25, 42-43, 117; Michael MacDonald, *Why Race Matters in South Africa* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 153-57. Peter Vale and Siphos Maseko, “South Africa and the African Renaissance,” *International Affairs*, 74, 2 (1998): 271-89. Mbeki evoked “proudly South African” rhetoric in a 2006 presidential speech headlining “A Season of Hope!” It drew on the “IziCwe Code,” a motivational guru’s creed highlighting the “limitless possibilities” created by Shaka Zulu’s “army of champions”: *The 7-Secrets of the Izi-Cwe: How to Unleash your Army of Champions & Become the Architect of your Personal Empire*, <http://www.izi-cwe.net>.

<sup>17</sup> Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 187-204. Shakaland is the global destination in a constellation of South African heritage tourism sites. On this constellation, see: Leslie Witz, Ciraj Rassool, and Gary Minkley, “Repackaging the Past for South African Tourism,” *Daedalus* 130, 1 (2001), 279-280; L.M. Magi and T.A. Nzama, “Perspectives on Recreation and Tourism Geographies in South Africa,” *South African Geographical Journal* 84, 1 (2002): 67-76; Orli Bass, “Adventure, Paradise, Indigenous Culture: ‘The Kingdom of the Zulu’ Campaign,” *Current Writing*, 14, 1 (2002): 85-105.



**Shakaland brochure, 1999, the year Klusener won Player of the Series in the ICC World Cup**

Jordan not only lauded Tourvest's indigenous initiative, but also thanked its chairperson Mr. P. (Pat) Retief for his contributions to the "new South Africa, home of the rainbow nation." Such praise revealed something else: an astonishing name coincidence.<sup>18</sup> In 1837 Zulu king Dingane mustered his regiments to halt Voortrekker encroachment by executing the Boer leader P. (Piet) Retief and his band of migrants. Using unguarded language, Minister Jordan

<sup>18</sup> "Address by Minister Pallo Jordan to Tourvest, Sandton Sun Hotel, Johannesburg, 2 April 1997," South African Government Information, <http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/1997/04070x85697.htm>. Accessed 19 March 2005. Tourvest's vital role in South Africa's hospitality industry: *Business Day*, 20 Aug. 2001; *Sunday Times*, 17 Aug. 2003. Tourvest's BEE partners and their holdings: *Tourvest Annual Report 2004*.



commended Tourvest's Retief for "spear-heading" an endeavor to bring "disadvantaged communities into the tourism" sector.<sup>19</sup>

Other corporate groups hoped to broaden popular participation in the hospitality industry. They represented cricket and rugby teams—and their product sponsors who peddled the Big Five and famous tribes.<sup>20</sup> Soon travel agencies promoting South African professional sport were packaging, as well, the game park and "Zulu experience," which *Africa Geographic* in 2002 dubbed a must-see.<sup>21</sup> "It is said that the safari set like the Big Four," the magazine boasted, meaning "pygmies, the Maasai, the Zulu and the San or Bushmen." *Africa Geographic* assured "the Zulu are probably South Africa's most famous ethnic group," and "happily they are very accessible . . . in rural kraals or villages, as well as more formal cultural villages and centres," topmost among them Shakaland.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "Address by Minister Pallo Jordan."

<sup>20</sup> Nauright, following MacC; Benedict Carton and Malcolm Draper, "Bulls in the Boardroom: The Zulu Warrior Ethic and the Spirit of South African Capitalism," in Benedict Carton, John Laband, and Jabulani Sithole, eds. *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 591-605.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Pryke, "Searching from A to Zulu: Travels in Zululand," *Africa Geographic*, February 2006. The magazine describes "[s]urveys in the United States and across Europe . . . [indicating] the word most often associated with Africa is 'Zulu,' . . . [which] suggests that there should be something exploitable in the combination of 'Zulu' and international tourism. And indeed there is." For decades, the hospitality industry has lucratively advertised "South Africa as a world in one country," even during tumultuous township protests and crippling international sanctions in the late-apartheid period: Gerhard Schutte, "Tourists and Tribes in the 'New' South Africa," *Ethnohistory*, 50, 3 (2003): 473-487.

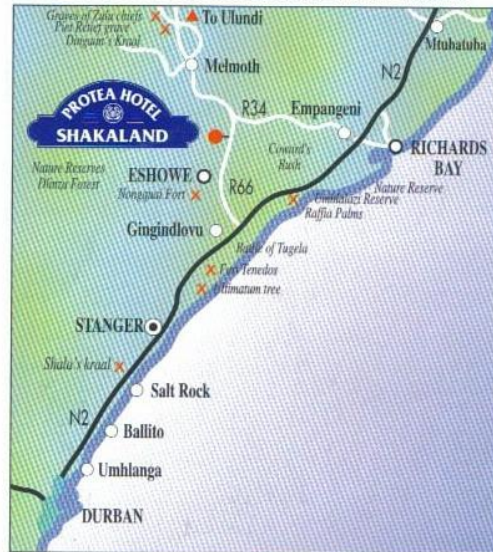
<sup>22</sup> David Holt-Biddle, "Ecotourism in South Africa," May 2002, <http://www.southafrica.net/satourism/media/getFeaturedArticleDetail.cfm?FeatureArticleID=76>; Carton and Draper, "Bulls in the Boardroom."



# SHAKALAND

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### Shakaland brochure, the year Klusener won the Wisden's International Cricketer award

The highway from Durban to Shakaland passes through Gingindlovu, where Klusener learned to bat and speak Zulu. When he left home for higher education, he traveled this road but in the other direction, to Durban High School, his sports proving ground. Yet the young Klusener's proximity to Shakaland does little to explain why he acquired retail value in the capitalist complex dubbed Ethnicity Inc. Understanding how he became cricket's "tribal" sensation requires an analysis of martial Zulu stereotypes, which originated in Shaka's kingdom and then animated imperial and colonial spectacles. These stereotypes profoundly

influenced “warrior” cricket and the Klusener family in South Africa. In advancing this line of inquiry we seek the deeper inclusion of sport in histories of South African ethnicity and race, and the closer alignment of ethnicity and race in histories of South African sport.

### **Sourcing Martial Zulu Stereotypes**

The Zulu warrior has been depicted as ruthlessly expert in combat. His stereotypical image took shape during the first decade of the 1800s, when Shaka kaSenzangakhona founded a militarized kingdom. His royal praises, *izibongo*, celebrate his prowess and success. Not surprisingly these verses contain phrases that have been used by announcers to describe Klusener’s play on the pitch. Shaka’s *izibongo* portray this Zulu king as unbeaten; he “beats but is not beaten, unlike water.” He, like Klusener, was heralded as a one-day wrecker. Shaka, the competitive combatant, “raged among the large kraals, [s]o that until dawn the huts were being turned upside-down.”<sup>23</sup> Since the 1960s, historians have focused on Shaka’s instrumental role in a process called the *mfecane*, meaning the violent dispersions of chieftaincies in southeast Africa which accompanied the rise of the Zulu kingdom. By the 1980s, Julian Cobbing, John Wright, Elizabeth Eldredge, and Carolyn Hamilton had disentangled Shaka’s political objectives from the embellished portrayals of his “devastations.” These researchers presented different counter narratives but tended to agree on one interpretation: while Shaka could punish and kill he did not annihilate all opponents. Moreover, he absorbed some of those he vanquished, including rivals who adopted a Zulu identity, in

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<sup>23</sup> Trevor Cope, ed. *Izibongo: Zulu Praise Poems* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 88.

order to expand his power.<sup>24</sup> Such critiques of the *mfecane* inform our evaluation of Klusener, the cricketer renowned for “pounding bowlers” and being incorporated into the Zulu warrior fold.

Beyond Shaka’s legacies, another historical phenomenon informed Klusener’s Zulu identity. The event occurred shortly after British troops invaded the Zulu kingdom in early 1879. They underestimated their foe and split into separate columns; one detachment pitched tents on a plain near Isandlwana hill. On 22 January, tens of thousands of Zulu soldiers charged the camp. Their overwhelming assault dealt a shocking defeat to the British military—there were no white survivors. Thereafter, Queen Victoria’s commanders adjusted their field tactics and operations. In a skirmish at close by Rorke’s Drift, hours after Isandlwana, a tiny British unit fortified its position. From behind barriers in a mission-trading station, they repulsed waves of Zulu fighters, slaying hundreds without taking many casualties. After Rorke’s Drift, British firepower eventually overwhelmed Zulu resistance by July 1879, the month Cetshwayo fled into hiding. He was quickly found and deposed; then his regiments were disbanded. Lastly, the subjugated kingdom was turned into a British dominion.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>John Wright, “Revisiting the Stereotypes of Shaka’s ‘Devastations,’” in Carton et al. eds. *Zulu Identities*; Julian Cobbing, “The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolombo,” *Journal of African History*, 29, 3 (1988): 487-519; John Wright, “Political Mythology and the Making of Natal’s Mfecane,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 23, 2 (1989): 272-291; Carolyn Hamilton, ed. *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995); Elizabeth Eldredge, “Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa, c. 1800-1830: The ‘Mfecane’ Reconsidered,” *Journal of African History*, 33, 1 (1992): 1-35.

<sup>25</sup> John Laband and Paul Thompson, *The Illustrated Guide to the Anglo-Zulu War* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000), pp. 9-19; Ian Knight, *The Anatomy of the Zulu Army from Shaka to Cetshwayo 1818-1879* (London: Greenhill Books, 1995); John Laband and Paul Thompson, *Kingdom and Colony at War* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1990); Jeff Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom* (London: Longmans, 1979), 54-61.

### **Pioneering “Shakaland”: Tribal Spectacle, *Ngoma* and Royal Tours**

The Anglo-Zulu War seized the world’s imagination and never let go. For one, it inspired an extraordinary tribal spectacle widely popularized in literature, theatre, and movies, among them *Zulu* (1964) and *Zulu Dawn* (1979).<sup>26</sup> The cinematic couplet, focusing on battles of Rorke’s Drift and Isandlwana respectively, dramatized courageous Europeans fighting ferocious Zulus. Apartheid rulers immediately recognized the propagandistic value of this film genre. In the 1980s they authorized the state-controlled South African Broadcasting Company to produce an epic mini-series titled, *Shaka Zulu*. In *Terrific Majesty* Carolyn Hamilton depicts this “historical drama” as a morality tale of the “earliest encounter between blacks and whites in southeast Africa.” The white lead is an imperial officer “commissioned by . . . London . . . to make contact with Shaka Zulu . . . [who] is presented as poised for an attack on the British colony of the Cape some 300 miles to the south of his domain. Because the British government is unable to provide the forces to defend the Cape, an alternative plan is to send out ‘A solitary Caucasian’” to befriend the Zulu king, implying “that whoever controlled the leader controlled the people.”<sup>27</sup> In the combat scenes Shaka’s soldiers demonstrate supreme strength and skill. Originally screened in 1987, this television program has done more than any headline to flesh out an image of the preternaturally fit and assertive Zulu warrior, which Klusener came to personify. *Shaka Zulu* generated spinoffs, none bigger than Shakaland, Tourvest’s resort built on location of the blockbuster film.<sup>28</sup>

What is far less known is that the 1879 war helped inspire heritage tourism in South Africa. In fact this industry got its boost fielding “domesticated” Zulu warriors, not as hostile

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<sup>26</sup> Peter Davis, *In Darkest Hollywood: Exploring the Jungles of Cinema’s South Africa* (Athens, PH: Ohio University Press, 1996), 154-168. Anne McClintock, *Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 232-257.

<sup>27</sup> *Terrific Majesty*, 171-172.

<sup>28</sup> Carton and Draper, “Bulls in the Boardroom: The Zulu Warrior Ethic and the Spirit of South African Capitalism.”

enemies but as athletic entertainers.<sup>29</sup> By the twentieth century, local commerce associations (much like chambers of commerce and rotary clubs) and their railway partners were offering outings to Natal settlers eager to see, at a distance, grand Zulu ceremonies and war (*ngoma*) dances. *Ngoma* rhythms revolved around the fighting stick. It was whacked on the ground during kicks, and thrust in the air when combat maneuvers were simulated on a narrow runway. These routines will be explored more and later compared to Klusener's batting and bowling.



As Peter Limb has argued, by the end of the nineteenth century imperial identity permeated every British dominion. In South Africa the Union Jack flew over colonial cricket and Royal Tours. Hilary Sapire reaffirms Limb's analysis in her study of the "Royal [T]ours . . . which originated in the visit of Queen Victoria's son Prince Alfred to the Cape and Natal in

<sup>29</sup> A seminal study of the "domestication" of Zulu warriors in cultural performance for colonial audiences: Veit Erlmann, "'Horses in the Race Course': The Domestication of Ingoma Dancing in South Africa, 1929–39", *Popular Music*, 8, 3 (October 1989), pp. 259–273.

1860” and thereafter evolved “to provide a means of . . . parad[ing] the symbols of imperial hierarchy before the subjects of empire, and allow[ing] them the chance to display their loyalty. In its modern incarnation, the royal tour drew on the vision of George V who, in 1901, had visited South Africa as part of one of the longest world-wide tours.”<sup>30</sup> His stopover at the Pietermaritzburg Oval, where Klusener batted a century later, included colonial men in military uniform circling the stumps and an *ngoma* dance on the boundary line, directed by Zulus in full regalia. The English King would leave behind an impression captured in two photographs. These images depict the “imperial cult of adventure” fusing “virile” Zulu performance with the “homosocial club” called cricket.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Peter Limb, “No People Can Be Expected to Be Loyal under Such Difficulties”: Ambiguities and Identities of Early African National Congress Leaders in South Africa,” *Social Dynamics* 29, 1 (2003), 9-10; Hilary Sapire, “African Loyalism and its Discontents: The Royal Tour of South Africa, 1947,” *The Historical Journal*, 54,1 (2011), 222. See also: P. Buckner, “The Royal Tour of 1901 and the Construction of an Imperial Identity in South Africa”. *South African Historical Journal* 41 (1999): 324-48.

<sup>31</sup> The linkages between the masculine cult of imperial adventure and homosocial clubs such as cricket teams are explored in Timothy Keegan, “Gender, Degeneration and Sexual Danger: Imagining Race and Class in South Africa, ca. 1912,” *Journal of South African Studies*, 27, 3 (2001), 460-461.



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NATIVE CHIEFS AND FOLLOWERS AT THE OVAL,  
PIETERMARITZBURG



*Native Chiefs and Followers. Presentation of address. The Oval, Pietermaritzburg.*





After 1910, the Natal Native Affairs Department of the Union of South Africa would organize other martial performances on ovals during subsequent Royal Tours.<sup>32</sup> Sometimes cricket grounds were too small to hold the crowds, so other venues were found. In 1923 Prince Arthur of Connaught, South Africa's Governor-General and the grandson of Queen Victoria, visited Natal and Zululand; he was returning to old stomping ground for in 1899 he lived in

<sup>32</sup> Letter, Chief Staff Officer, to Officer Commanding, Natal Carbineers, Militia Headquarters, Pietermaritzburg, 23 Nov. 1910, Minute Paper V 2266/11, Natal Militia Correspondence, Natal Defence Records (1911), Vol. 5/19; Minute Paper, Acting Secretary for Public Works, Pretoria, 17 August 1910, PWD 1242/1910, 2/196, Minute Papers Public Works Department, 1/PWD; PAR, KZN. Scholarship on imperial pageantry in colonial Africa: David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Andrew Apter, "On Imperial Spectacle: The Dialectics of Seeing in Colonial Nigeria," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 44, 3 (2002): 564-596.

Pietermaritzburg near the Oval and officially toured Natal in 1906 during a poll tax rebellion in southern Zululand.<sup>33</sup> After traveling through Gingindlovu, Prince Arthur's 1923 entourage planned to hold court at an Eshowe cricket ground until the municipal golf course was identified as a bigger site. There, the Governor-General greeted Zulu chiefs in "old time war-trappings." White South Africans drove great distances to witness this meeting between British monarchy and "barbaric splendor." The special assembly culminated in *ngoma*,<sup>34</sup> which probably pleased the Prince who was an aficionado of the "War Dance."<sup>35</sup> Thousands of Zulus "brandishing their sticks" walked to see the Governor-General, as well, and gathered in areas designated for "natives only." To proponents of segregation fearing that the "warlike tribal" masses were beyond physical control, this Royal Tour offered an opportunity to assess the value of "domesticated" warrior entertainment. The *ngoma* routine at Eshowe was regulated by officials, which sent a comforting message to the viewing "European crowd."<sup>36</sup> The *Zululand Times*, a colonial mouthpiece, commented on this feeling of security: "The truth must be told to the native that the white man is here to stay; that he is very strong, far stronger than the native, especially in his well-developed brain. If the native generally follows sound counsel such as this, and the European on their side recognise their responsibilities, the native problem, difficult though it may be, need no longer be regarded as a menace."<sup>37</sup> Reassured, a year later sugar planters,

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<sup>33</sup>*Zululand Times*, 21 June, 28 June, and 5 July 1923; *Natal Witness*, 26 July 1924; G.S. Moberly, *A City Set on a Hill: A History of Eshowe* (Eshowe: Eshowe Rotary Club, 1970), 74-85. Prince Arthur's itinerary may have been a dry run for a subsequent Royal Tour of the Prince of Wales: Minute Paper, Office of the Governor-General of South Africa, 18 December 1923, 75/8, Vol. 2183, 1/GG, Pretoria State Archives (SAB), South Africa. Prince Arthur's 1906 tour of Natal (during an infamous rebellion that ended with thousands of Zulu men killed by the colonial militia after they forcefully protested having to pay a new onerous poll tax): Minute Paper, General Manager Natal Government Railways, 12 June 1906, TX 4201/1905, Minute Papers Colonial Secretary's Office, 1906, Vol. 1813, 1/CSO, PAR.

<sup>34</sup> *Zululand Times* 19 July 1923; "Account of the visit of HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught, Governor-General of the Union, etc., etc., to Zululand, 15-23/7/1923," p. 3, Box 12/29, Carl Faye Papers, Accessions, Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository (PAR), KZN, South Africa. See also: 17 July 1923, *Natal Mercury*.

<sup>35</sup> *South African Pictorial*, 15 January 1921.

<sup>36</sup> "Account of the visit of HRH Prince Arthur of Connaught"; *Zululand Times* 19 July 1923.

<sup>37</sup> *Zululand Times*, 12 July 1923.

including white farmers of Gingindlovu sponsored a “Native War Dance” (at a Tongaat-area cricket pitch) for distinguished members of the Empire Parliamentary Association. Also in the offing was another heritage experience, namely “visits [to] kraals,”<sup>38</sup> where dignitaries were to observe Zulu customs in action. Henceforth, a maiden mobile version of Shakaland was born.

Settler-endorsed *ngoma* validated the marketability of the Zulu warrior and his performance in a space established for competitive batting and bowling. Tickets for one-day competitions were coveted by Natal whites, with *ngoma* team championships held at Kingsmead, Durban’s Oval. From the pavilion, magistrates judged “Zulu standards,” awarding marks for martial movement and, above all, athletic coordination. Regardless of whether Klusener understood these deeper origins his sporting identity, he was seen to embody the Zulu masculinity and militarism of *ngoma*.

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<sup>38</sup> “Visit to South Africa of Delegations from Empire Parliaments, August-October 1924,” Empire Parliamentary Association, O’Brien Collection, EMP 328.41, Natal Society Library, Pietermaritzburg, KZN; *Zululand Times*, 7 August, 14 August, and 11 September 1924. The Delegations from Empire Parliaments were an offshoot of the 1924 Wembley Empire Exhibit in London.

The Championship Trophies are carved staffs specially designed for the purpose. The designs are all based upon African carving. The name of the winning team is inscribed upon the silver bands.

The Committee would be glad of any contributions from the public towards the welfare of the Zulu Dance Teams, which are under the direct care of the Native Welfare Officer.

Hon. Secretary: A. C. D. WILLIAMS, c/o Publicity Bureau, Durban.

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Should there be a little delay in starting, we beg your indulgence. The members of the teams are mostly house boys who have had to wash up the dishes after lunch before being allowed off.

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While George V brought *ngoma* and cricket together in Natal, his Royal Tour coincided with white worries that all the King's men were being emasculated in the Second South African War (1899-1902). In this imperial faceoff against Boer challengers playing cricket (and rugby) would be promoted as a way to bolster Anglo-Saxon masculinity and, by extension, British prospects on the battlefields of the Transvaal, Orange Free State, Cape and Natal.

## **Zulu, Brit, and Boer: Warrior Cricket and the Second South African War**

The first chapter of “warrior cricket” opened with British coverage of the Second South African War. The tabloid press portrayed Boer commandos as muscular killers, comparing some of them to the “West African Negro, with a dash of Jack the Ripper thrown in.”<sup>39</sup> Other journalists noted how burly Afrikaner men easily dwarfed conscripts from London and Birmingham. At the turn of the twentieth century the enlisted Englishman barely stood five feet tall, weighed around 120 pounds, and suffered debilitating maladies.<sup>40</sup> They had passed the medical examination that failed two-thirds of all volunteers.<sup>41</sup> This “under-bred” pool heightened British anxiety that the core of Empire was degenerating fast—corroded as it was by city dwellers “limp in body and mind.”<sup>42</sup> It was as if Max Nordau’s *Degeneration*, England’s bestselling polemic against urban ills, was coming true.<sup>43</sup> Could these foot soldiers from industrial warrens overcome their deficits on the fighting pitch? An army memo expressed

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<sup>39</sup> “West . . . thrown in”: “Stop the War! The Trail of the Financial Serpent,” John Burns, M.P. House of Commons, 6 Feb. 1900, 3, C. 1284/43, Vol. 148; colonial newspapers (from Rhodesia to South Africa) inflamed British jingo opinion with portrayals of Boers “savagery” in South Africa: J.A. Hobson, *How the Press was Worked Before the War* (1900), 12, Vol. 142; Colenso Papers, A204, Accessions, PAR; A. Methuen, *Peace or War in South Africa* (London: Methuen & Co., 1901), 73.

<sup>40</sup> Sheldon Watts, *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power and Imperialism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 147-48. The recruiting pressures prompted the British army to lower the minimum height requirement for the infantrymen to 5 feet 3 inches: D. Judd and K. Surrige, *The Boer War*, 60. See also Anthony S. Wohl, *Endangered Lives*, 333; Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality*, 74.

<sup>41</sup> These rates of rejection would have been higher had recruiters not filtered out the “appallingly large” numbers of unfit men cleared for examination: Anthony S. Wohl, *Endangered Lives*, 332.

<sup>42</sup> “[U]nder-bred”: William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 191; “limp”: Gareth Steadman Jones, *Outcast London*, 11. British fears of degeneration increased with nineteenth-century urbanization, as far more people settled in “stunting” cities as opposed to “healthy” countrysides. The fear of British degeneration influenced South African politics at the end of the nineteenth century: Anne McClintock, “Maidens, Maps and Mines: *King Solomon’s Mines* and the Reinvention of Patriarchy in Colonial Africa,” in Cheryl Walker, ed. *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990), 99-103. The degeneration crisis is outlined in the British “Report of the Committee on Physical Deterioration of 1904”: John Nauright, “Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind: British Physical Deterioration Debates and Colonial Sporting Tours, 1878-1906,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 23, 2 (1992); 54-71; John Nauright, “Colonial manhood and imperial race virility: British responses to colonial rugby tours,” in John Nauright and Timothy J.L. Chandler (eds), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*: 121-139 (London: Routledge).

<sup>43</sup> Jeal, Baden-Powell, 359.



doubts. The class of volunteers, it warned, “was not at all satisfactory.” Some officers were more candid, “refer[ing] to physical defects due to the modern necessity of recruiting chiefly in the poorest districts of crowded towns.” One General “thought that, ‘taking the Army as a whole,’ it did not fairly represent the manhood of Empire, physically speaking.”” *A Report by His Majesty’s Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Military Preparations . . . in South Africa* presented a rather blunt assessment: many of the troops were “very inferior,” diseased “boys and weeds.”<sup>44</sup>

In 1900 the African “Jack the Ripper” captured the imagination of Winston Churchill, a war correspondent for the *Morning Post* in Natal. That year his father’s friend, former Prime Minister and Boer foe Lord Rosebery, proclaimed “[h]ealth of mind and body exalt a nation . . . [when] survival of the fittest is an absolute truth in the conditions of the modern world.”<sup>45</sup> The aristocratic Churchill shared sentiments with Rosebery, a keen sportsman. They admired the inexorable advance of imperial cricket through imperial war. Before heading to South Africa, Churchill covered an 1895 rebellion against Spanish Empire in baseball-loving Cuba, an island primed, in his estimation, to adopt his favourite pastimes: commerce, batting and bowling. Soon

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<sup>44</sup> “[C]lass . . . satisfactory”: Evidence of Field Marshal Wolseley and Major-General Grove, 28 Nov. 1902, Minutes of Evidence, Vol. 1, 385; “Lieutenant . . . speaking” and “men . . . disease”: Report, 42-43; see also similar testimony: Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen, Report, 47; Major General G. Barton, 20 Feb. 1903; Major-General R.G. Kekewich, 10 June 1903, 564; Minutes of Evidence, vol. 2, 256: *Report and Minutes of Evidence of His Majesty’s Commissioners on War in South Africa, 1903*, vol. 61, 1/BPP, PAR. It should be noted that top officers also recounted the exemplary conduct of British soldiers in South Africa, with professional soldiers receiving the lion’s share of praise: General Sir Redvers Buller, 18 Feb. 1903, 212; Major General G. Barton, 20 Feb. 1903, 256; Evidence, vol. 2; *ibid.* The witnesses before the *Commission* either praised or vilified the manhood of the British military by referring to watchwords such as chivalry and bravery—the code language of proper manliness inculcated in late-Victorian public schools and popular literature: J. A. Mangan and James Walvin, “Introduction,” *Manliness and Morality*; Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities*, 14; John Springhall, “Building Character in the British Boy” in *Manliness and Morality*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality*, 74.

“cigars of Havana” would be replaced by “cottons of Lancashire,” he predicted, with a “free and prosperous” Cuba soon sending “her cricketers to Lord’s.”<sup>46</sup>

Rosebery’s “survival of the fittest” boast was never realized in South Africa, much to Churchill’s chagrin. Besides surrendering to the enemy, Churchill witnessed firsthand what His Majesty’s Commissioners lamented. He described one skirmish that ended with Boer commandos overrunning British ramparts on Spion Kop. In the “ghastly” retreat that followed Churchill watched countrymen “crawling on their hands and knees.” The beaten troops, some with schoolboy cricket experience, abandoned their position near Isandlwana, the battleground mythologized in the British imagination as the last stand of redcoats who bravely died in a Zulu onslaught.<sup>47</sup>

British commander Lord Kitchener responded to Boer routs by deploying hardy irregulars from far-flung dominions, such as the cricket-playing Australian Bushveldt Carbineers. He mobilized club- and spear-wielding Zulu regiments, as well.<sup>48</sup> Some imperial authorities thought young Zulu men should be offered an “outlet for the[ir] adventurous and . . . warlike characteristics.” Yet their critics worried that once selected the Zulu would “take a hand in the game” and make it exceedingly hard for “the British . . . to induce them to go home to

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<sup>46</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 1991), p.60.

<sup>47</sup> Churchill’s account of Spion Kop quoted in Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912* (Johannesburg: Johnathan Ball, 1991), 573. British reverses made headlines in American newspapers, which seemed to adopt Churchill’s post-Spion Kop tone: 22 April 1900, *New York Times*. For a candid exchange between imperial authorities who debated whether the Spion Kop defeat and subsequent Boer siege of Ladysmith heralded a decline in British manhood, see: Lieutenant-General Sir Hunter, 13 Feb. 1903, *Report and Minutes of Evidence of His Majesty’s Commissioners on War in South Africa, 1903*, Vol. 2, 135, 1/BPP, PAR.

<sup>48</sup> When the South African War erupted in 1899, military commanders claimed that Africans would be bystanders. This long-held notion that only whites were combatants has undergone a thoroughgoing critique. See: Phillip Bonner, “African Participation in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902,” (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of London, 1967); John Comaroff, ed. *The Boer War Diary of Sol T. Plaatjie: A Black Man’s View of a White Man’s War* (Southern Publishers: Johannesburg, 1973); Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1983); Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau’s War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1991); John Gooch, ed. *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (Frank Cass: London, 2000); Christopher Saunders, “Historiographical Reflections on the Significance of the South African War,” *Kleio* 33 (2001): 4-16.



bed.”<sup>49</sup> By 1901, armed Zulus led by Colonel Bottomley had driven Boers commandos from northern Natal.<sup>50</sup>

British army reports immediately after the Second South African War confirmed that colonial men were a cut above their metropolitan counterparts. Increasingly this was proved on the sports ground as well. The early 1900s saw New Zealand and Australian rugby teams establish their superiority against English counterparts. South Africa national squads (increasingly dominated by Afrikaner backs and forwards) similarly battered British opponents. Emulating the Maori haka staged by the 1905 All Blacks, the Springboks adopted *ngoma* steps during their tour of Britain in 1906. However after Union, when racial lines were fast hardening in segregationist South Africa, this Zulu dance would be dropped from Springbok pre-match preparations. Elsewhere in the Commonwealth and decades earlier Australian cricket teams were defeating English sides. For their part, South African bowlers and batsmen were playing on equal terms with mother-country rivals by 1900. English-speaking whites would continue to control (segregated) elite cricket until the end of the twentieth century, though captains Kepler Wessels and Hansie Cronje infused a sense of Afrikaner toughness that created openings for different South African masculinities in this racialised sport.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> “[O]utlet . . . race”: Minute Resident Commissioner, Zululand, to Natal Governor, 25 June 1894, Zululand Correspondence Nos: Z.456-566, 1894, Vol. 758, 1/ZGH, PAR; colonial objections to this plan: *Times of Natal*, 25 September 1895. The newspaper grumbled that the “[a]lleged arming of natives” signaled to Natal whites that “all is not well in Zululand.” See also: Minute Paper Resident Commissioner, Zululand, 30 September 1895, Z807/95, Zululand Correspondence Nos: Z719-964 1895, Vol. 766, 1/ZGH, PAR. “If a warlike . . . to bed”: *Wall Street Journal*, 29 November 1899.

<sup>50</sup> “Miscellaneous Papers Regarding Bottomley’s Actions 1901-1902,” 1/6/25, 1/SNA; Ladysmith Minute Paper 1900, 3/3/14, 1/LDS; PAR. Zulu military involvement in the Second South African War: John Laband, “Zulus and the War,” in John Gooch, ed. *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (London: Frank Cass, 2000). Zulu loyalty to the imperial war effort: Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-1908 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1970), 105-113.

<sup>51</sup> Albert Grundling: “From J.J. ‘Boerjong’ Kotze to Hansie Cronje: Afrikaners and Cricket in Twentieth-Century South Africa -- Diffusion and Representation,” *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 28, 1 (2011), 98-114.

### **Klusener in KwaZulu-Natal: Pasts and Places**

Less well known is just how historically embedded the Klusener clan is in Zulu-speaking communities, especially in colonial Natal where Lance's South African relations settled in the nineteenth century. In 1848 his founding patriarchs—Heinrich, Friedrich and Wilhelm Klüsener—sailed to South Africa from Bramsche, Lower Saxony (a region in Germany), aided by an immigration scheme of Jonas Bergtheil, who represented the Natal Cotton Company. Though this agricultural venture failed, Bergtheil maintained the livelihoods of Bramsche settlers while taking a keen interest in the African customs of Natal. Similar to Anglican Bishop John Colenso, Bergtheil believed that enlightened Zulu people—along with open-minded European newcomers—would strengthen Natal colonial society. The German colonists set up a farming hamlet in Westville several miles inland from Durban (then Port Natal). In the second half of the nineteenth century they spoke Natalerdeutsch, a Lüneburger Heide dialect infused with Zulu words. Subsequent generations moved to the interior capital of Pietermaritzburg and Umvoti region (agricultural districts of New Hanover and Hermannsburg). Others settled in coastal belts north of Durban, particularly Gingindlovu and Empangeni, and also Port Shepstone, a hub of the Klusener clan, on the Natal south coast.<sup>52</sup> In these regions colonists and Africans communicated in the Zulu language while negotiating a range of matters, from commercial transactions and employment on white-owned farms to legal procedures.

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<sup>52</sup> For a considerable period of time, the Klusener clan was based in the Port Shepstone area. See a Klusener family address at 27 Bazley Street, South Port Shepstone, in the 1902 records of the Natal Surveyor General's Office: Minute SG 2045/1902, III/1/154, 1/SGO, PAR. Some Kluseners were part of the Zotsha community, which worshipped at Bethanien Evangelical Lutheran Church: Gravestone Records, Maria Klusener (nee Norden), 1866-1940; Wilhelm Klusener, 1885-1966; Hermann Klusener, 1898-1958; Genealogical Society of South Africa, PAR. See also: "Plough and planter exhibit at agricultural show, Port Shepstone, featuring G. North and Son's agricultural implements and machinery," 1905, C507, Photo Accessions, PAR. See also: Hans-Juergen Oschadleus, "Lutherans, Germans, Hermannsburgers," *Natalia* 22 (1992): 30-31; [http://www.safrika.org/natal\\_en.html](http://www.safrika.org/natal_en.html) and <http://www.safrika.org/Names/NatalerNamenK-L.html> accessed 10 Jan. 2013.

By the turn of the twentieth century several Klusener men earned their livelihood in Natal where Zulu fluency secured opportunity and income. Archival records reveal that Mr. W. Klusener, most probably Wilhlem Jr. collected “match wood,” *umgegisa*, for wholesalers; this Zulu term, *umgegisa*, was recorded at his insistence on the colonial permit. He harvested this commodity in the Port Shepstone area from the *izifunda* (districts) of an African headman named Fynn, a scion of Natal’s famous “mixed race” clan founded by Henry Francis Fynn. Around this time the Zulu oral historian Mcotoyi remembered Fynn as a “no-account” who came to Zululand eager to tap into Shaka’s royal, kinship-based commerce. In 1824 Fynn and several other English merchants under the leadership of Francis Farewell had sailed to Port Natal (present-day Durban), down the coast a few score miles from Gingingndlovu.<sup>53</sup> On the look out for a settlement from which to conduct trade with Delagoa Bay in Mozambique, then an emporium of ivory, skins, corn, and weapons. Fynn and his cohorts presented themselves as Zulu clients subordinate to Shaka, who rewarded them with land and cattle in exchange for their fealty.<sup>54</sup> Fynn promptly accepted the privileges of Zulu patriarchy as well, including the exchange of bridewealth cattle for brides and creating an African family with his wives and children in

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<sup>53</sup> The 1820s white Zulus were not the first Europeans to live for extended periods in African communities. From the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, whites sailing on the Indian Ocean washed ashore in stormy weather in the Eastern Cape and Natal. They were nursed back to health and incorporated into chiefdoms. Patchy evidence indicates that some survivors accepted African patriarchal protection and its gender hierarchies, developing strong customary loyalties, especially where shipwrecked white women raised children with African fathers. One example, an excerpt from the 1791 seafarer Jacob van Reenen’s journal, “mentions the discovery of three white women in Kafirland (probably the relics of the wreck of the ‘Grosvenor’), who refused to come to the colony unless accompanied by their families, which had then increased to about 400. This must have been in the country in the vicinity of Natal”: “Mr. Borchers’ notes respecting the eastern coast of Natal,” *Annals of Natal* vol. 1, 272. Examples of shipwrecked survivors marrying Africans in precolonial Natal: Testimony of Mcotoyi, 16 April 1904, *JSA*, vol 3, pp. 62-63. See also: T.V. Bulpin, *Natal and the Zulu Country* (Cape Town, 1966), chapter 2.

<sup>54</sup> Historiographical disputes over early 1800s trade from Delagoa Bay to Port Natal: John Wright, “Beyond the Concept of the ‘Zulu Explosion,’” in Carolyn Hamilton, ed., *Mfecane Aftermath* (Johannesburg, 1995); Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*, 36-48.

different polygamous homesteads.<sup>55</sup> The great Protea batsman's ancestor, Wilhelm Klusener Jr., made his living in African communities forged by the white Zulu ally of Shaka.

Wilhelm and his relative, Mr. B. Klusener, also worked as stock inspectors in Zulu-speaking communities, fostering cattle husbandry in chiefdoms that recognized warrior manhood in rituals that celebrated the prowess of bulls, *izinkunzi*. The Klusener men immersed themselves in this milieu when fellow colonist favored increasing segregation. They spent weeks in Lower Umzimkulu magistrate's division working for the Principal Veterinary Surgeon's office (PVS), which was responsible for dipping the livestock of homesteads in prophylactic chemicals that warded off diseases. The measures of the PVS could stir popular hostility as well, for example during the ultra-lethal Rinderpest, a bovine contagion (1896-1898). This epidemic prompted the Natal government to halt the transportation of cattle, cull sick beasts, and hastily immunize herds in operations that often failed.<sup>56</sup> Not long after such defective vaccinations killed cattle and stirred "rumours of natives rising" in the Umzimkulu region, one Klusener man took leave from the PVS to serve as a volunteer for the colonial military on the eve of the Second South African War.<sup>57</sup>

### **Klusener's Schooling and Sporting History**

As a teenager, Klusener attended the whites-only Durban High School (DHS). This government institution for boys groomed a number of great "White Zulu" rugby and cricket stars, some of

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<sup>55</sup> Testimony of Mcotoyi, *JSA*, vol 3, p. 57; Testimony of Jantshi, *JSA*, vol 1, p.200; Testimony of Dinya, *ibid*, p.111; Testimony of Christian Cane, *ibid.*, p.77; Testimony of Mkando, *JSA*, vol. 3, p.194; Testimony of Ndongeni, *JSA*, vol. 4, p.240; Testimony of Dinya, *JSA*, vol. 1, p.111.

<sup>56</sup> Minute Paper, Secretary for Native Affairs, 4 April 1897, 2514/1897, 1/1/242, SNA Minute Papers, 1/SNA, PAR; Benedict Carton, "We Are Made Quiet by This Annihilation': Historicizing Concepts of Bodily Pollution and Dangerous Sexuality in South Africa" *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39 1 (2006), 85–99.

<sup>57</sup> Minute Paper, Principal Veterinary Surgeon, 1899, 501/1899, Vol. 3; see also Principal Veterinary Surgeon's Minute Papers, 97/1899 and 130/1899, Vol. 2; 1/PVS, PAR. African unrest in Umzimkulu region over defective Rinderpest vaccinations contaminating cattle in chiefdoms: Minute Paper, Secretary for Native Affairs, 29 August 1897, 1848/1897, 1/1/254, SNA Minute Papers, 1/SNA, PAR.

them among the best Springboks and Proteas ever to don a national uniform. The batting and bowling greats include Barry Richards, Trevor Goddard, Geoff Griffin, and Robert (Mike) Kirkwood. Their triumphs are easily evoked today, as a recent personal communication with Kirkwood, a DHS student from 1956 to 1959, confirmed. He vividly recalled Geoff Griffin's exploits: "He wasn't the standard Zulu package – no farming background, etc. so far as I know. . . [and yet he] was an amazing, instinctive athlete . . . [able to] high jump 6 feet four inches using the old-fashioned scissors jump and run the hundred yards in ten seconds. Complete fly-half. But cricket!" On this point, Griffin circled his own high orbit:

Glenwood were our Durban rivals. He bowled them out for 12, taking all the wickets. Soon he was touring England with the Boks. A good bat, too. Then he did the hat-trick at Lord's and the MCC had had enough. Griffin's bowling arm was slightly bent. It had been injured in a childhood accident and he couldn't actually straighten it. They called him and he ended his test career bowling the last few balls underarm. Never played again. . . . What if that childhood accident had been in a [traditional Zulu] stick-fight?<sup>58</sup>

DHS students like Klusener usually boarded on campus in Blackmore, a dormitory with a different purpose from the day houses Swales and Langley. With special home rules regarding weekend family visits, Blackmore accommodated boarders who "deeply bonded" with one another in that "tribal" mode, according to Kirkwood. "Sports-wise," he recalled, Blackmore was "where the [white] Zulus" and warrior athletes lived. "[I]n my day, Klusener might easily have been known as 'Kaffir,'" Kirkwood said, using this epithet as "a term of strong approbation." Kirkwood said "Going kaffir" . . . expressed the kind of energy on the rugby

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<sup>58</sup> Personal communication between Benedict Carton and R. Mike Kirkwood, 20 Dec. 2012.

field that stopped just short of violence. There was a special rapport between the rural Zulu cleaners – who had their own quarters adjacent to ours, a ghetto within the red brick of the ‘old school’ – and the white Zulu contingent.” In Blackmore, “the [Zulu] cleaners were avid rugby supporters, and would shout out the number of any Blackmore’s boy who performed heroically. They particularly relished uncompromising tackles.”<sup>59</sup>

Built like a centre, Klusener could have excelled at rugby but he concentrated on cricket. Soon after graduating from DHS, Klusener would perform his national service in military intelligence. Little is known about this episode. One wonders if his language and physical skills enhanced made him valuable to the Pretoria regime in African communities engulfed by a deadly rivalry between the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front/ANC and Inkatha, the Zulu cultural nationalist organization. This period of bloodletting fueled anti-tribal radicalism among Zulu youths in the townships, who rejected the homeland rule of Inkatha leader Mangosutho Buthelezi. By contrast, older Inkatha supporters supported the cultural chauvinism and patriarchal pride of Zulu nationalism.<sup>60</sup> Having endured a conflict that nearly wrecked South Africa’s transition, Klusener emerged from war-torn Natal with bat and ball in hand. Following the country’s first democratic election, he would debut in 1996 for the Proteas, South Africa’s all-white cricket team.

Klusener won fans everywhere he competed, including the most unlikely cricket admirers back home. Rural Zulu people, who simply do not play the gentleman’s game, praised delighted in Klusener’s public relationship with fast-bowler teammate Makhaya Ntini, as it was apparent

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. On the issue of stopping short of violence in martial Zulu play like stick-fighting, i.e., mastering physical aggression as much as doling it out, see: Carton and Morrell.

<sup>60</sup> Debby Bonnin, Georgina Hamilton, Robert Morrell and Ari Sitas, “The Struggle for Natal and KwaZulu: Workers, Township Dwellers and Inkatha, 1972-1985”, 173, 172, 174; Bill Freund, “The Violence in Natal, 1985-90”; in Robert Morrell, ed. *Political Economies and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal* (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996).

on television that “the two took an instant liking to each other . . . cracking jokes and teasing each other.” Ntini told reporters that Klusener was “my kind of man and we understand each other. `Lance speaks my language and we sometimes talk in either Zulu or Xhosa when we don't want the rest of the team to hear that we are taking the Mickey out of them.”<sup>61</sup>

A phenomenon among Zulu fans, Klusener inherited the status of *iqhawe*. He was a traditional hero who commanded the national spectacle, much like Shaka's favoured regimental commanders when they expertly wielded the short-stabbing spear and positioned their soldiers. Of course in democratic peacetime Klusener handled a more blunt, if no less potent weapon, the cricket bat. Media outlets played up this evocative comparison. In the late 1990s *South African Sports Illustrated* called Klusener the latest, greatest “Zulu Warrior.” Britain's *Independent* also celebrated his “ability to master Zulu before English” and his martial upbringing “among the sugar-cane plantations” in “Gingindlovu to be precise,” a town near one Shaka's royal barracks. In fact, the *Independent* devoted extensive coverage to Klusener's 1998 Tests in the United Kingdom. Was “Zulu” targeting to “beat England,” the newspaper asked, not at his Isandlwana but at Lord's, “the home of cricket”? Klusener hinted as much. He told the *Independent* that he would “give my all to accomplish” that “wonderful thing,” absolute victory. This prediction prompted the newspaper to forewarn: “Like the Zulu warriors of a century ago, it sounds as if he does not intend taking any English prisoners this summer.”<sup>62</sup>

On English ovals, Klusener looked every ounce the big hitter and serious bowler. But how did he appear back home, particularly to black audiences? “Zulu” was the embodiment of

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<sup>61</sup> *City Press*, Dec 7, 1997 (<http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/citypress/1997/12/07/9/14.html>). The City Press exultantly reported that Lance Klusener stood at the crease communicating with Makhaya Ntini in Zulu and Xhosa during a cricket match. See also: *The Wynberg Boys' High School Magazine* (Cape Town: Wynburg High School, 2001), 60.

<sup>62</sup>*Independent*, 1998.



Gingindlovu, a place correctly known as uMgungundlovu (“great elephant”), a turning point in the ambitions of the “great elephant” King Cetshwayo, whose Zulu regiments destroyed British forces at Isandlwana. In the early 1850s under Mpande’s reign, then-prince Cetshwayo competed with his brother Mbuyazi to be the royal heir. By 1856 their fraternal hostility had fueled a civil war. Mbuyazi established his military base in Gingindlovu while summer downpours swelled the Thukela River. Attacked by Cetshwayo, Mbuyazi faction was trapped by flood waters, and then slaughtered. Local memories of this clash were still alive as “Zulu” burst onto the Natal sporting scene. A fan of Klusener’s named Malombo Dube, an older man who grew up near the 1856 massacre site, recounted how his grandfather saw Mbuyazi’s fighters drown in the Thukela while trying to escape Cetshwayo. Their corpses dammed a bend in the river, which Dube called *emathanjeni*, the “place of the bones.”<sup>63</sup> Young Klusener lived up the road from *emathanjeni*. When he engaged with Zulu children in martial play, he pursued a boyhood sport that once conditioned warring Zulu princes near *emathanjeni*. Indeed, as a boy Lance wielded the *induku*, a hardwood rod used in *ukudlalisa induku*, stick fighting, a pastime of Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi as well as the sons of white sugar plantations and Zulu farm workers.<sup>64</sup>

Klusener’s play represented other dimensions of the modern-day *iqhawe*. After “Zulu” clubbed the ball, his follow-through was said to mimic an *ngoma* dancer’s knee-rising stomp.

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<sup>63</sup>Interview between Benedict Carton and Malombo Dube, 17 September 1992 and 22 June 1999, Thukela River Mouth, Eshowe District. Mr. Dube, his father, and grandfather had lived at *Dlokweni*. See also Benedict Carton, *Blood from Your Children*, 28.

<sup>64</sup>“Zulu Masculinities, Warrior Culture and Stick Fighting,” 46.





When Klusener bowled, his motion was eerily familiar too. Tourist brochures from the Segregation-era Natal captured this “traditional” technique (below). Zulu boys and men from Ginglindlovu knew well that the locked-elbow, three-quarter side-arm delivery in competitive “spear-throwing” mirrored cricket bowling.





Zulu spear-throwing, Natal Tourism Bureau brochure, ca. 1930s



Zulu bowling

### Conclusion

[Still to be finalized but we will end with Klusener identified as Shakan warrior with cricket bat, over other distillable identities such as DHS old boy or military intelligence man. We intend to suggest that his “Zulu” identity, unburdened from Bantustan politics and late-apartheid civil violence, sold widely for a time in newly democratic South Africa and beyond].

Our story concludes with Klusener’s most disappointing moment [**perhaps this should change, as we need to justify why. Could the ‘why’ be Zulu Klusener’s ultimately fleeting moment on the stage of the New South Africa as we pivot to another world-famous celebrity athlete, Oscar Pistorius and what his homicide trial says about whether white men can run . . . from justice**]:

Lance Klusener, the Zulu, was pounding Aussie bowlers with his baseball-style backlift in a ninth wicket stand with hopeless Alan Donald. His godly act had the commentators singing to his praise, “It’s mayhem in the commentary box. It’s mayhem outside”. But a hero’s call can’t be without tragedy. Zulu had belted boundaries by the balls to get his team to the finishing line but could not score 1 run in the calamitous draw that got Aussies a berth in the finals and the Cup.

Donald, known as “white lightning” for being the fastest white bowler in the world, was as feeble with the bat as he was ferocious with the ball. “Zulu” Klusener carried the day, saving the “hopeless” white man, only to be foiled in this match, if not the project called the new ethnoscapes of post-apartheid South Africa.

The last Zulu warrior standing is a story of cultural history and media hype intersecting with sport celebrity and market-branding in ways that offer further promise and further distortion.