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## **The Colonial Dynamic: The Xhosa Cattle Killing and the American Indian Ghost Dance**

Aaron McArthur

In 1856, a fourteen year old girl named Nongqawuse (non-see) had a vision on the banks of the Gxarha River in southern Africa. Entranced, she saw dearly departed ancestors, their cattle hiding in the rushes, and she heard other cattle underground waiting to come forth. She was told that if her people would but kill all their cattle, their ancestors would arise from the dead, the cattle lowing in the subterranean passages would come forth, and all the whites would be swept into the sea. Nongqawuse's prophecy provoked the colonially embittered Xhosa (cōe-sǎh) people to rise up and kill their cattle. As the movement drew to a close, around 400,000 cattle had been slaughtered and an estimated 80,000 Xhosa died of starvation. Those that remained were reduced to working as laborers throughout the Cape Colony after being pushed off some 600,000 acres of their ancestral lands.

Just over thirty years later, in 1888, and half a world away, a Paiute named Wovoka fell sick with scarlet fever. He died and traveled to heaven. Returning to the earth, he said he was commanded to tell his people to love one another, live in peace with the whites and devote themselves to work. If they followed these instructions and danced a dance that the Supreme Being taught him, the messiah would come, they would be reunited with the dead, death would be no more, and the whites would disappear forever.<sup>1</sup> News of the Indian Messiah spread and as

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<sup>1</sup> This apparent contradiction of living in peace with the whites and them then being swept away is explained two ways. One, Wovoka sugar coated the account to the whites he talked to, and two, his apostles introduced the doctrine to garner support for the dance among their various tribes.

Indians came from great distances to hear the good news, they spread the Ghost Dance across the country, clear to the reservations of Oklahoma. Encouraged by promises of the renewal of buffalo herds, fish, and traditional ways of life, tribes alarmed settlers and government officials by joining in the dance. Efficiently suppressed by the dominant whites, the Ghost Dance led to the ruthless massacre of Big Foot's band of Sioux at Wounded Knee which effectively conveyed the message to Indians everywhere that open resistance to whites and their agenda would not be tolerated.

Both of these experiences are recognized as classic millenarian or revitalization movements. In addition to this, I became intrigued by the many common threads that appear tie these two movements together and extending our understanding of what happened to the Native Americans during westward migration with experiences of other native peoples in other parts of the world.

Both movements began as colonized groups were robbed of traditional resources that had previously ensured their survival. By 1856, the Xhosa had been involved in nearly a half century of conflicts with colonial powers. In 1853, they were defeated in the Riverman's War, and lost a huge portion of their homeland, the Amathole Mountains. They were left without enough land and resources to survive. In America, the Ghost Dance became a cause for concern to whites when the Sioux embraced it. Commissioner Morgan of the Bureau of Indian Affairs recognized the reasons for Sioux discontent, among many others, to be the loss of large portions of their land, including the sacred Black Hills and the cutting in half of their beef rations in 1889. That along with crop failures in 1889 led many to kill breeding stock and steal from whites to avoid starvation. The loss of land and resultant inability to feed themselves led both the Xhosa and Indians to carry on their struggles with whites.

Now, this may explain why the Cattle-Killing and the Ghost Dance occurred, why Nongqawuse and Wovoka were impelled to prophesy as they did, but they do not explain why there were so many other similarities between the two movements. This research uncovered that responses by both native and colonial leaders to the prophecies paralleled one another. When those responses are analyzed, a colonial dynamic emerges - a series of interchanges and decisions by both the colonizers and the colonized that colored the movements and gave them their character.<sup>2</sup>

Understanding the interplay between colonial power structures and the choices of individuals is best understood by examining the roles that individuals can have within a state. According to political scientists that subscribe to the theory of historical institutionalism, the “state” is considered as more than the “government.” It is the administrative, legal, bureaucratic, and coercive systems that attempt to structure relationships between civil society and public authority as well as many crucial relationships within civil society as well.<sup>3</sup> Individuals, such as the President, the Secretary of State, kings, prime ministers, colonial governors, and chiefs all are able to exercise the authority requisite to be considered acting for the state.<sup>4</sup> Theda Skocpol

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<sup>2</sup> There are several excellent works that attempt to explain why both movements happened. For the Ghost Dance, the best is a dissertation by Gregory Ellis Smoak, entitled “Ghost Dances and Identity: Ethnogenesis and Racial Identity Among Shoshones and Bannocks in the Nineteenth Century,” University of Utah, 1999. Smoak gives a detailed analysis on each of the theories that explain the Ghost Dance. For the Cattle Killing, the primary work is: J. B. Peires. The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). Filling in some of the gaps left by Peires is Timothy J. Stapleton in ““They No Longer Care for Their Chiefs”: Another Look at the Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-1857,” The International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 24 (Summer 1991): 383-392, and “Reluctant Slaughter: Rethinking Maqoma’s Role in the Xhosa Cattle-Killing (1856-1857),” The International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 26 (Summer 1993), 345-369.

<sup>3</sup> Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In,” in Bringing the State Back In, eds. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Chambers characterizes the roles of the state as “establishing and maintaining authority and legitimacy, managing the demands and stresses of popular participation, achieving a workable measure of national integration, expressing and resolving conflicts of interests and meeting the issue of opposition, recruiting and training leaders for popular politics, policymaking and the distributing of values in the political process, and maintaining national independence and autonomy,” in Chambers, William Nisbet, and Walter Dean Burnham, eds. The American Party Systems: Stages of Political Development, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 18-19. Leaders of colonial

notes that “states necessarily stand at the intersections between domestic sociopolitical orders and the transnational relations within which they must maneuver for survival and advantage in relation to other states.”<sup>5</sup> States succeed or fail because of their efficacy in manipulating their situation to their advantage.<sup>6</sup> Skocpol argued that these states, or individuals that are capable of exercising the coercive powers of the state, “may formulate and pursue goals that are not simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes, or society.”<sup>7</sup> In order to understand the colonial dynamic and why so many similarities exist in both movements, it is essential that we explore the actions of some of the principal players involved in the movements, the representatives of the state that were responsible for directing public policy.<sup>8</sup>

Personality has a great deal to do with how an imperial, colonizing power relates to indigenous peoples. One of the best exemplars of this is Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape Colony in southern Africa from 1854 to 1861. Grey was a master at manipulating people and the situations that he found himself in to his own benefit. It is a skill that he practiced throughout his career. Grey’s first two attempts to make a name for himself by the exploration of Australia were unmitigated disasters. Attempting to create victory in defeat Grey wrote Explorations in Western Australia (1841). Modeled after the writings of James Fennimore Cooper, he “cast himself in the role of an antipodean Deerslayer to emerge as a great explorer-hero.”<sup>9</sup> The book was a great success and helped him to obtain his first colonial appointment as governor of the fledgling colony of Southern Australia. His penchant for putting himself in the best light possible was a

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enterprises as well as indigenous leaders fulfill these roles, though the processes by which indigenous leaders do this are seldom formalized.

<sup>5</sup> Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In,” 8.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Skowronek, Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), ix.

<sup>7</sup> Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In,” 9.

<sup>8</sup> Some may object to referring to American Indian tribes as states, despite the fact that most of those tribes refer to themselves as a “nation.”

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Obviously this assimilationist policy further robbed the natives of needed resources.

hallmark of his career; his biographer noted “As a writer of misleading dispatches, Grey stands in a class of his own...[his] ruthless egotism, to which he would sacrifice anything and anybody, [shows] his contempt for truth.”<sup>10</sup>

Grey’s initial reaction to the Cattle-Killing was to deny its existence. As the movement progressed and he was no longer able to keep Parliament in the dark, Grey shifted tactics and used the situation to get additional funding for internal improvements, saying that his works program could prevent another even more costly frontier war. By the end of the movement, his dispatches showed another change in tactics, as he talked about a “chief’s plot” as being the reason for the Cattle-Killing.<sup>11</sup>

Grey was an ardent assimilationist, who pushed for economic and cultural integration. He put a European magistrate with each Xhosa chief in British Kaffraria to properly “advise” the chiefs. Fines that were formerly levied by chiefs were now appropriated for the crown and chiefs were supported by a stipend from the crown.<sup>12</sup> The Chiefs were forbidden from repossessing cattle from commoners and from executing people for witchcraft. They were stripped of most of their economic and coercive controls, which they had used to keep people within the bounds of Xhosa culture. Lung sickness and the Cattle-Killing provided Governor Grey with an opportunity to accelerate the erosion of Xhosa chiefly power and the further assimilation of their followers. The colonial agents began passing out presents of seed and agricultural implements to the Xhosa people, subtly undermining the reliance of commoners on aristocratic cattle. As the Xhosa began to starve, Grey increased his efforts. He forbade private charities from aiding the starving Xhosa. Some charitable whites who attempted to set up a

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<sup>10</sup> B. J. Dalton, *War and Politics in New Zealand: 1855-1870* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1967), 259.

<sup>11</sup> “The Late Caffre Plot,” *The Times*, March 5, 1858.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

Relief Committee were told that “private benevolence is not requisite”<sup>13</sup> and their modest soup kitchen was immediately shut down. Grey had stockpiled food to meet the anticipated starvation having instructed his commissioners to purchase as much food from the Xhosa who were sacrificing as possible, distributing it only to those who signed labor contracts for farm labor or public works projects in the Cape Colony.<sup>14</sup> “We should try and make them (Africans) a part of ourselves, useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue; in short, a source of strength and wealth for this colony, such as Providence designed them to be.”<sup>15</sup> Nearly 30,000 of those who survived were removed from the Xhosaland in this way. Historian J. B. Pieres said, “Not only did he fail to help them in their hour of need, but he went out of his way to kick them when they were down.”<sup>16</sup>

By early 1858, when the movement was essentially over, Grey told the *Graham’s Town Journal* that the intention of the Xhosa chiefs was to cause their people to destroy their cattle, and the people, being left without any other means of support, “would be driven to such an extensive course of depredation that war would be the inevitable result.”<sup>17</sup> For this supposed plotting, the chiefs most opposed to colonial expansion, were imprisoned on Robben Island. Grey’s pursuit of the Chiefs’ Plot was more than an act of retributive justice; it was an integral part of his future colonial policy. Whatever Grey had done, he had done in the best interests of the Colony. His expenses and indiscretions were born from necessity and were made to seem cheap in comparison with the cost of yet another frontier war. Almost single-handedly, he had

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<sup>13</sup> J.B. Pieres. “Suicide or Genocide: Xhosa Perceptions of the Nongqawuse Catastrophe.” *Radical History Review*, 46 (Summer 1990), 47-57.

<sup>14</sup> “The Cape of Good Hope,” *The Times*, May 27, 1857.

<sup>15</sup> B.B. Keller. “Millenarianism and Resistance: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing.” *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 13(Spring 1978), 102.

<sup>16</sup> Pieres, “Suicide or Genocide,” 49.

<sup>17</sup> “The Late Caffre Plot,” *The Times*, March 5, 1858. It is worth pointing out that this argument is the same that newspaper men advanced in explaining the Ghost Dance. Anything that was not understood by the whites was taken to be a sign of aggression. In the case of the Xhosa, the more they starved, the less war-like they became.

saved the Cape from the monstrous conspiracy hatched by the Xhosa chiefs. Any interfering with his wise measures would only bring ruin and chaos on southern Africa.<sup>18</sup>

The Ghost Dance was also greatly influenced by one person in the colonial power structure. General Nelson A. Miles was, to use vast understatement, a very ambitious person. He reached the pinnacle of commissioned power as the Major General Commanding of the United States Army. Though he never openly admitted it, many felt that he aspired to the presidency of the United States. On his climb to the top, Miles stepped on many toes. He disagreed and struggled with anyone who seemed to be a rival for military preferment. Dogmatic, vain, and pompous, he tainted each military achievement by attempting to take sole credit. “A vain peacock,” was how Theodore Roosevelt described him. As a man well experienced in fighting Indians, Miles seemed the logical choice to quiet down Native Americans participating in the Ghost Dance. Ironically, the Ghost dance may have become the issue it did because of Miles’ actions.

Indian affairs had been under the Department of War, until 1849, when the department gladly transferred that responsibility to the Department of the Interior. In the late 1860’s and 1870’s, conflict between the U.S. and Native Americans increased, and the army moved to regain control over Indian affairs. General Miles was very vocal in his support of the move, even taking the issue to the American public in an article in the *North American Review* in 1879. He said that the Bureau’s program of rapid assimilation was ill-conceived and that the Army was better equipped to deal with a warrior society than a group of sedentary administrators. Whatever his reasoning was, some of his doubts about the Indian Bureau’s ability to govern reservations were well founded. One scholar has noted that

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<sup>18</sup> Peries, “The Late Great Plot,” 273-275.



The Indian Office, a sink-hole of influence peddling, was captive to bald-faced political intrigue so thinly veiled that even career bureaucrats winced at its practices. Senator James H. Kyle observed in 1894 that federal employees often considered Indian work “a license to filch and rob the Indian.”... Often staffed by hacks and incompetents, many agencies suffered repeated episodes of fraud and near collapse. [One agency] was little more than an “asylum for relatives and friends who cannot earn a support elsewhere.”<sup>19</sup>

At best, these civilian agents were ignorant and inexperienced. At worst, they were ignorant, inexperienced, and thoroughly corrupt.<sup>20</sup>

When General Miles visited the Pine Ridge reservation in October of 1890, he was advised by Ghost Dance leader Red Cloud that if the dance is true the people would “go on with the dance, and it will go all over the world before it stops; on the other hand, if it is false, there is nothing in it, and it will go away like the snow under the hot sun.” Miles responded by saying that he “had no objection to the dancing, and they could dance until they get tired.” In the meantime, he urged Red Cloud and Little Wound not to allow their people to get carried away into trouble. Miles sent a telegram to General John M. Schofield, commanding General of the Army indicating that there was no danger of an outbreak on the Standing Rock agency. Many reporters, Indian Bureau officials, and military personnel further expressed confidence in the non-violent nature of the dance and a belief that it would amount to nothing.

When that is taken into consideration, it may seem puzzling why Miles responded to the Ghost Dance the way that he did. When ordered to prevent an outbreak, Miles began the largest mobilization of the armed forces in over two decades. Despite the lack of concern he previously

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<sup>19</sup> Clyde Ellis. ““We Don’t Want Your Rations, We Want This Dance”: The Changing Use of Song and Dance on the Southern Plains.” *Western Historical Quarterly* 30 (Summer 1999), 133-154. See also by Clyde Ellis, ““There is No Doubt...the Dances Should Be Curtailed”: Indian Danced and Federal Policy on the Southern Plains, 1880-1930.” *Pacific Historical Review* 70, (Fall 2001), 543-569.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Ostler. “Conquest and State: Why the United States Employed Massive Military Force to Suppress the Lakota Ghost Dance.” *Pacific Historical Review* (1996), 217-248.

displayed, General Miles immediately began to paint the situation as grave.<sup>21</sup> In a letter to Washington on November 17, he said that his fourteen hundred troops were not enough to prevent another Indian war in the face of a vast territory occupied by thirty thousand disgruntled Indians with six thousand warriors. There is no doubt that he wanted to awe the Indians into submission<sup>22</sup> and thus put a speedy and efficient end to the nascent uprising, proving once and for all that the army was better equipped to deal with Indians than the Department of the Interior, which had asked for the military intervention. Were it not for the massive buildup of army strength on the plains of South Dakota, remnants of Custer's Seventh Cavalry may not have been collecting firearms from Indians at a place called Wounded Knee,<sup>23</sup> and the movement would have melted "away like the snow under the hot sun" when the promised millennium did not come.

Despite the fact that the distribution of power was so uneven, North American Indians and the South African Xhosa were not passive victims, but retained their agency. Whether acting out of political expediency or a real belief in the efficacy of dancing or killing cattle, these natives maintained the ability to make important choices in the face of constraints.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> If Miles required any help convincing Washington that action was needed, he certainly could count on some members of the press to give it. One correspondent recorded that "The hostiles have decided to move their camp into the 'Bad Lands'...which the best scouts describe as being worse than the lava beds in which the Modocs took shelter." "Moving to the Bad Lands," New York Times, December 2, 1890.

<sup>22</sup> There can be no doubt that Miles felt that he was master of the situation. Artist Frederick Remington, who spent time in the field with General Miles, noted that "After the commission had talked to a ring of drowsy old chiefs, and the general had reminded them that he had thrashed them once, and was perfectly willing to do it again, if they did not keep in the middle of the big road..." Fredrick Remington, "Chasing a Major General," Harper's Weekly, December 3, 1890.

<sup>23</sup> Feelings about the Sioux ran deep for many in the army. The November 29, 1890 issue of the New York Times contains a human interest story in the article "To Disarm the Hostiles." It reads "With the Ninth there will ride a man who has sworn eternal vengeance on the Sioux, and he is Col. Guy V. Henry, who was frightfully disfigured by an Indian bullet in a battle on the Rosebud River eight days before Custer met his fate." According to some sources, almost three hundred Indians died at Wounded Knee, including women and children. Some were found as far as two miles away, gunned down in the act of fleeing the onslaught.

<sup>24</sup> Scholar B. B. Keller said "millenarian movements may come to include instrumental political goals...The political aim of a seemingly religious movement may be deeply buried and not overtly expressed in the beginning...Religion becomes to a certain extent a smokescreen for politics" in "Millenarianism and Resistance: The Xhosa Cattle-Killing." Journal of Asian and African Studies 13, No (Spring 1978), 97. One enlightened

Maqoma was a chief of the Xhosa who was most assuredly motivated by political factors. Strong and intelligent, he never backed down in defending Xhosa tradition in the face of white encroachment. Traditionally, Xhosa chieftains wielded a great amount of political and economic power. The main source of their power was their ownership of cattle. Owning up to 87 percent of Xhosa cattle, the chief would distribute them out to his sub-chiefs on an increase-sharing basis. Those under the sub-chiefs cared for the cattle in return for milk.<sup>25</sup> Maqoma had fought in three grueling frontier wars to retain the control of his chiefly class over the all-important cattle and land. Were it not for his attempted manipulation of the Cattle-Killing for personal gain, his support of it would seem odd indeed.

The Cattle-Killing was also an act of rebellion by the Xhosa commoners. They chiefs had not suffered to the degree the common people had because when times got hard, they could always take back the cattle that they had lent out to others. The movement was also a push to compel the chiefs and aristocrats to take responsibility for the harsh conditions. As thousands of Xhosa slaughtered cattle, they were striking out against a failed political class. Religious leaders from the masses sought to seize the initiative from the impotent chiefs and sub-chiefs.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the rebellious nature of their subjects, chiefs were in a position to manipulate the Cattle-Killing to their own ends. Maqoma, his cattle having been hit hard with lungsickness, supported the movement in order to retain his position of authority. Maqoma told Mhala, another chief, that the movement had far too much mass support for them to use coercion against it. Both were later categorized as zealous believers in the prophecies despite the fact that both

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individual recognized that the Sioux may be partially justified in their disgruntlement. In an editorial to the New York Times on December 19, 1890, he wrote "But apart from the certainty that a general Indian war will cost the lives of many gallant soldiers and officers which are a hundred times more valuable than those of the Indians they pursue, we ought to be very sure that the Indians are not suffering from such grievances as actually drive them into insurrection." What an amazing display of tolerance.

<sup>25</sup> Timothy J. Stapleton. "'They No Longer Care for Their Chiefs': Another Look at the Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-1857." The International Journal of African Historical Studies 24 (Summer 1991), 383-392.

<sup>26</sup> Stapleton, "They No Longer Care," 387. Mlanjeni was the leader of a rebellion in Xhosaland in 1853.

were seeking covertly to undermine the Cattle-Killing.<sup>27</sup> South African historian Jack Lewis goes as far as to say that Maqoma and other supporting chiefs seized upon the movement in an attempt to unite the Xhosa under Sarhili, the Xhosa paramount, to present a united front to the Cape Colony.<sup>28</sup>

Maqoma went about trying to turn the Cattle-Killing to his advantage. Acting like one wholly converted, he stressed the parts of the prophecies that forbid the growing of crops and never publicly mentioned the killing of cattle. By so doing, he hoped to divert attention from the slaughtering of livestock and thus save some royal cattle and make his subjects lose faith in the prophecies by causing them to destroy their own crops. While he worked to undermine the prophecies, he attempted to simultaneously use them as a lever to gain government land concessions, an attempt that was a dismal failure.<sup>29</sup>

Sitting Bull appears to have similarly politically motivated during the Ghost Dance. Born about 1831, Sitting Bull was the leading chief and holy man of the Hunkpapa, a group of Teton Sioux. He had a reputation for utter fearlessness and was the leader of the Strong Heart warrior society. From his youth on, he was an implacable enemy of the whites, utterly devoted to the traditions and customs of his people. An unreserved cultural purist, he resented the perversion and weakening of Sioux culture from contact with whites.

It is interesting that of all the Native Americans involved in the Ghost Dance, from Wovoka to his disciples Porcupine and the Arapaho Sitting Bull, none were nearly as well known as the Hunkpapa Sitting Bull, who was only circumstantially tied to the Ghost Dance. His mere endorsement was enough to brand the Ghost Dance as a prelude to war. Nearly

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<sup>27</sup> Timothy J. Stapleton. "Reluctant Slaughter: Rethinking Maqoma's Role in the Xhosa Cattle-Killing (1856-1857)." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, (Spring 1993), 345-369.

<sup>28</sup> Jack Lewis. "Materialism and Idealism in the Historiography of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement, 1856-7." *Suid-Afrikaanse Historiese Joernaal* XXV (1991), 244-268.

<sup>29</sup> Stapleton, "Reluctant Slaughter," 359,

everything Sitting Bull did was perceived as threatening to whites. Buffalo Bill Cody, whom Sitting Bull spent time with as a cast member of Bill's Wild West Show, said of the chief "Of all the bad Indians, Sitting Bull is the worst. He can always be found with the disturbing element, and if there is no disturbance he will foment one. He is a dangerous Indian, and his conduct now portends trouble."<sup>30</sup>

Sitting Bull felt it extremely important that the Sioux maintain their distinct culture. The Ghost dance presented another way to carry on the struggle with whites for cultural hegemony. Whether Sitting Bull was in fact an adherent to the Ghost Dance religion is unclear. There is no record of his ever participating in any of the dances, but he certainly did not discourage them either. Certainly he would have been grateful for the promised deliverance in the milieu of traditional Indian forms. His mere association with the movement was enough in the minds of many whites make the Ghost Dance a threatening prelude to war, regardless of any reservations he may have harbored toward it.

Whether Sitting Bull's or Maqoma's or any other leader's efforts reached their goals, their efforts had a great impact on the results of the movements. The reasons that the Cattle-Killing and the Ghost Dance took the forms they did and played out as they did had a great deal to do with their actions. Both Sitting Bull and Maqoma endorsed a religious movement at least partly for political reasons, exerting their influence to cause others to believe in a movement they may not have been converted to themselves.

If the process of colonialism is what we are talking about, you may ask why this study places such a heavy emphasis on individuals. It would be easy to say that the actions of the people that I have discussed are anomalies, but this is not the case. Thinking of nations and

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<sup>30</sup> "The Worst Indian of Them All," New York Times, November 25, 1890. Bear in mind that Cody made a living by portraying Indians as savages.

tribes as monolithic obscures the fact that they are made up of individual people. Even if a group of people act in perfect concert, each person may be acting for a slightly different reason. Because of that, if those tribes or nations are being affected by colonialism, whether as the colonizer or the colonized, the actions of individual people don't just make a difference, they can define the movements. When discussing movements that involve large numbers of people, it is easy to forget the actions of individual people in the historical narrative. This holds true when opposing groups are caught up in a colonial confrontation. These two movements show that the dynamics of colonialism involves the interplay of individual people and their ideologies, agendas, and egos.

This is further reinforced when we examine the roles that these leaders played as representatives of their states. Room for autonomous and influential action was common to Grey, Miles, Maqoma, and Sitting Bull. Grey was several thousand miles away from London with a mandate to keep order and promote colonial interests. Miles was ordered by his superior to "take such action as...may be necessary... to prevent an outbreak on the part of the Indians..."<sup>31</sup> Maqoma was a chief, and Sitting Bull had been chosen in 1868 as the head chief for all the Teton Sioux, the only man who could command the respect necessary for the position.<sup>32</sup> Each of these men had a specific agenda. Scholar Thomas Lowi said that at key historical junctures, new policies transform politics. "The types of policies that were put into place...determined the style of politics in any given era regardless of the character of the men or the party"<sup>33</sup> that held the position of power. The colonial dynamic was such that the individuals pursuing their agendas, namely colonial domination and resistance to that domination, were

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<sup>31</sup> Ostler, "Conquest and State," 235.

<sup>32</sup> "Sitting Bull," in *The Readers Encyclopedia of the American West*, Howard Lamar, ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1977), 1119.

<sup>33</sup> Julian E. Zelizer, "Roundtable: Twenty Years after *Building a New American State*," *Social Science History* 27 (Fall 2003), 429.

integral in producing the events that occurred. As with other states, it is certain that Grey, Miles, and Maqoma used their positions to mask policies formulated to achieve their desired ends,<sup>34</sup> and to affect the timing, goals, and forms of the movements.<sup>35</sup>

The Xhosa Cattle-Killing and the American Indian Ghost Dance are very complex movements. There are many layers of motivations in carrying the movements out and in responding to them. Historical institutionalism, a colonial dynamic, and individual motivations are just a few of the explanations for them, and further research is required to really get at all of the reasons for why they happened. Be that as it may, because everyone involved maintained their capacity for autonomous action and were free to exercise that autonomy, these factors are a needed corrective for the study of these events formerly framed solely in terms of conquest.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 23.