WORD AND IMAGE: ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE THROUGH THE ILLUSTRATION OF A SPECIFIC LITERARY TEXT

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Documentation and commentary on the body of practical work submitted to meet the requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Art, University of Cape Town.

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For my parents

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1

INTRODUCTION

2

ART HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

3

CREATIVE METHOD

13

THE PAINTINGS:
DOCUMENTATION OF WORKS

16

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

31

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INTRODUCTION

The paintings and graphic works that comprise the practical component of this project are illustrations that accompany the text of Mike Nicol's novel, *Horseman* (published by Bloomsbury in 1994). This document explores aspects of interconnecting historical and theoretical influences that shape the making of illustrations. I have approached this with a view to developing an understanding of the function of illustration—that is the relationship between word and image—within the context of my body of work.

ART HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

In providing an art historical and theoretical context for the *Horseman* illustrations, it is necessary to explore the development of the illustrated novel and the broader historical relationship between word and image. Also relevant to my experience of reading and illustrating *Horseman*, is the question of how the illustrator is to respond to the theme of violence.

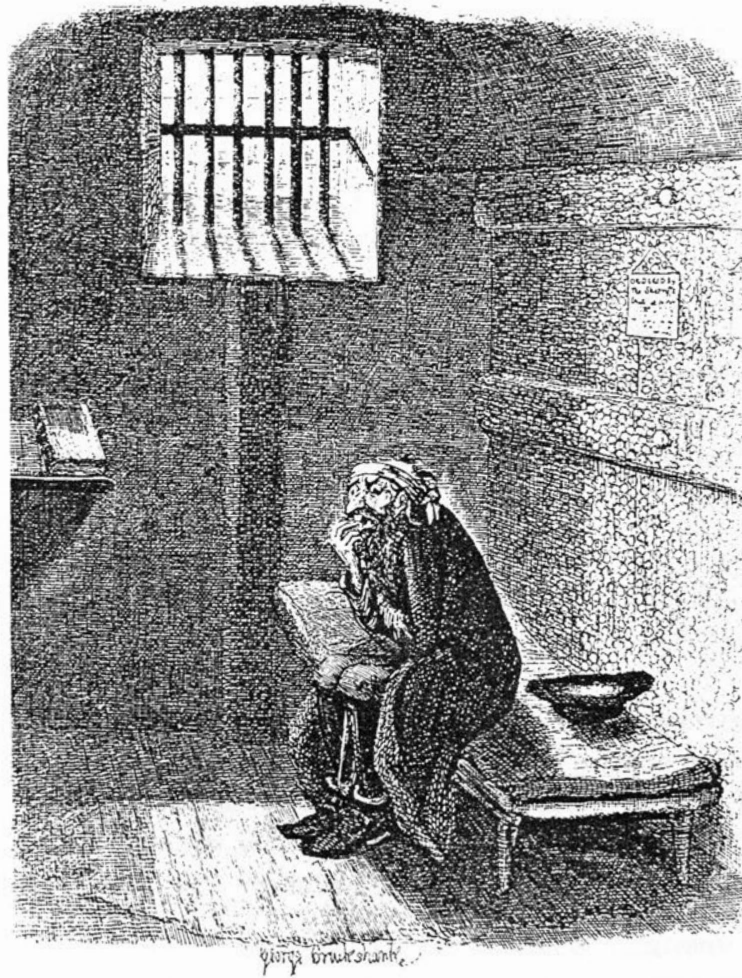
To begin, I consider the development of the nineteenth-century illustrated novel to be of particular significance, since the emergence of the Victorian novel gave rise to a series of questions dealing with the function and relevance of illustration. As will be further discussed in the chapter dealing with creative method, I have found that the nineteenth-century novel and its illustration is a subject that pertains directly to the making of the illustrations in *Horseman*.

The development of illustration during the course of the nineteenth century was marked by the realization that it had potential as a means of mass communication. Accordingly, that development was linked to technological advances in printing techniques, which occurred in the 1830s in England (De Maré 1980: 48). Before then, novels were available only to a small literate public and were largely borrowed from libraries (Lamb 1962: 46). A growing public literacy, associated with, and attributable to, the emergence of a middle class, necessitated the demand for the mass publication of reading material. The publishing industry thus became a highly profitable enterprise and devised new strategies to present (and popularize) reading material. This was to have a direct influence upon the formats of the Victorian novel and illustrated periodical, and signified the large-scale commercialization of illustration. In its commercialization, its popular appeal, and, most significantly, its increasing subservience to the written text, illustration became dislocated from the fine art tradition.

In the 1840s and 1850s, novels were published in serialized form. Consequently, illustrations regularly accompanied written works and the reading public associated certain authors with particular illustrators. The inception of what has come to be called the Victorian novel changed perceptions of the relationship between author and illustrator and, consequently, between image and text.

This shift can be observed in an examination of the relationship between word and image contained in the novels of Charles Dickens (1812–70). Dickens collaborated with the illustrator George Cruikshank (1792–1878) on *Sketches by Boz* (1833) and *Oliver Twist* (1837). In *Sketches by Boz,* an investigation of aspects of London society, Cruikshank's illustrations were instrumental in establishing the visual images of what became known as 'Dickens's London' (Lamb 1962: 42).

The illustrations of both *Sketches by Boz* and *Oliver Twist* (Figure 1) show the



(Figure 1) George Cruikshank, *Fagin in the Condemned Cell*, from Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837).

influence of a well-established genre in British art: social comment and satire, exemplified by the pictorial narratives of William Hogarth (1697–1764), and Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827). Dickens's writing found a large readership in the newly literate Victorian middle class that had been familiarized with that (above-mentioned) illustrative tradition. Accordingly, Cruikshank's illustrations were praised as an effective foil for Dickens's text.

Where the visual tradition had dominated, Dickens's writings succeeded in displacing it. By making the subject of his popular novels (the human social condition) that which was previously illustrated only in pictorial narrative, Dickens was effectively transferring the imagery of the illustrative tradition into literary form, allowing the text to supersede and subordinate the image (Sutherland 1980: 116). Vincent van Gogh (1853–90), who was influenced by Victorian illustration, wrote of Dickens:

> For me the English black-and-white artists are to art what Dickens is to literature ... There is no writer in my opinion, who is so much a painter and a black-and-white artist as Dickens. His figures are resurrections (De Maré 1980: 19).

The growing perception that text was steadily encroaching upon the realm of illustration led to animosity between author and illustrator. Upon reflection, for example, Cruikshank claimed that a series of his sketches had inspired Dickens to write *Oliver Twist,* and that the text of the novel was the outcome of a collaborative effort between himself and the author (De Maré 1980: 129).

In Hablot Knight Browne (1815–82), Dickens found an illustrator more diligent in following his notoriously precise specifications (he occasionally instructed Browne to redo 'unsatisfactory' plates) (Hillis Miller 1992: 111). Adopting the pseudonym 'Phiz', Browne illustrated *The Pickwick Papers* (1836), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Little Dorrit* (1857) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859).

While Browne's illustrations are effective in providing an illustrated narrative, they were generally perceived as a subsidiary to the text, fulfilling an essentially servile function. However, Browne's occasional independence from the confines of Dickens' writing has been noted, more specifically, his incorporation of iconographic details which the text does not encompass.

The idiosyncratic visualizations of characters and locales contained in Browne's illustrations follow the iconographic tradition of Hogarth, Rowlandson and Cruikshank (Hillis Miller 1992: 96). That Browne achieved this relative independence without deviating from the essential narrative of the text is an indication of how illustration can successfully extend (or, alternatively, subvert) meaning contained in the text.

In its interference with the text, however, the capacity of illustration to extend

(Figure 2) Rembrant van Rijn, *Abraham and Isaac* (1645), etching.

meaning can constitute, for the writer, a threat to the descriptive power of the written word. This descriptive power of text is one of evocation (Hillis Miller 1992: 62). The reader's imaginative response to what are essentially black marks on a page evokes meaning (and visualization). Illustration does more than distract the reader in this process; it goes so far as to circumvent it by presenting a ready-made (visual) interpretation of the text, short-circuiting, in effect, the evocative power of the word. A dual reading—of image and text—is required from the reader. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the duality inherent in those separate (yet often inseparable) words: image and text.

The image and the text share a common origin in the paintings, drawings and oral tradition of pre-literate societies where shamans incorporated (oral) text with singing and dancing. This culminates in the works of priests and scribes—hieroglyphics—which present *images functioning as text.* The development of writing saw the transmutation of images into letters, separating image and text into different functions, requiring different modes of reading (Hillis Miller 1992: 74).

In the Dutch tradition of narrative painting, various modes of pictorial representation of text(s) were explored. With particular reference to Biblical images, it has been noted that the illustrative tradition of the northern Dutch painters differed from their Italian contemporaries in that their images assumed a different relationship between word and image. Figures were represented in the act of conversing. The spoken word, as opposed to violent spectacle, was the favoured source of inspiration. Since the images were derived from a tradition of printed illustration, the dominant assumption was that the viewer would be familiar with the represented passages. It is as if the image were to appear (if only hypothetically) opposite a printed page of text. The viewer is expected to supply missing words, as a means of captioning (Figure 2). This captioning has derivatives in nineteenth-century graphic satire, with the incorporation of the 'word bubble' and the contemporary comic book (Alpers 1983: 211).

Where narrative paintings are visual representations of the text and require the viewer to provide captioning, printed book illustrations have the advantage of being presented on a printed page. Here the caption (a quote from the text) is printed to accompany the image on the same page, presenting words to the viewer/reader to attach to the image (Figure 3).

This pairing of word and image on the printed page is closely related to the tradition of emblematic art, where the text (usually a proverb) is printed alongside the image and read as its caption (Alpers 1983: 218). A dual reading, where text and image are simultaneously deciphered, produces meaning. It is in this manner that illustrations become visual extensions of the text.

Mark Twain (1835–1910) has emphasized the omnipotence of word in relation to image by showing an artwork to be incomprehensible without some form of ver-

(Figure 3) Howard Pyle, *He strode forward into the room and laid his hand heavily on the boy's shoulder*, illustration from *Otto of the Silver Hand* (1888).

bal labelling or captioning (Hillis Miller 1992: 62). Twain refers exclusively to a narrative (history) painting in this regard, which is essentially an illustration of a story. Without verbal explication, he asserts, a viewer is deprived of a means of contextualizing an image within the framework of an historical narrative. The captioning of an image establishes a dialogue between word and image. The image is a visual representation of a caption, while the caption is a verbal representation of the text, with each mode of representation encompassing that which the other cannot.

In an essay entitled 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936), Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) describes how the mass reproduction of images has transformed the nature of art by demystifying it and removing its aura of uniqueness by giving the masses access (and familiarizing them) with it. The illustration can arguably be encompassed by that which Benjamin describes as '... the work of art reproduced [which] becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility' (Benjamin 1969: 224).

Benjamin argues that in the wake of the mass reproduction of images exemplified by photography, and culminating in the sound film, the relationship between text and image is becoming increasingly inseparable. In discussing the significance of photography and film as pictorial narrative, Benjamin states:

> For the first time, captions become obligatory. And it is clear that they have an altogether different character than the title of a painting. The directives which captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines soon become even more explicit and more imperative in film where the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of preceding ones (Benjamin 1969: 226).

It can be argued, then, that an illustration, accompanied by a caption from its adjacent text, is a compromise between writing and the pictorial narrative of the cinema. In an age where television and film are so prevalent in mass communication, today's illustrator cannot avoid the influence of film. Late twentieth-century digital reproduction techniques offer the individual access to any number of images which can be scanned, stored, retrieved, manipulated and integrated with text(s) to appear as the artwork specifically '... designed for reproducibility' (Figure 4) to which Benjamin refers (Hillis Miller 1992: 21).

In its reproduction, however, Benjamin notes that the work of art loses its 'aura' of uniqueness, but gains a reactivation of the object (work of art) produced, thus: '... permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder ... in his own particular situation' (Benjamin 1969: 221).

The possibilities of a (reproduced) work of art reaching a numerically wider audience appealed to avant-garde artists early in this century, and to those with more propagandistic intentions. In revolutionary Russia, Mikhail Larionov (1882–1964) and Natalia Gontcharova (1881–1962) produced pamphlet books, while Kasimir

(Figure 4) *Time Magazine* (1991) cover, detail of Raphael's *Madonna del Graduca* (c. 1506).

Malevich (1878–1935), Alexander Rodchenko (1821–1956), and El Lissitsky (1890–1947), found in book design a means of explicating the revolutionary theories and graphics of constructivism and suprematism. Often pocket sized and cheaply (if not crudely) produced, they were intended for the widest possible distribution (Hogben and Watson 1985: 13).

For the Berlin Dadaists, mass reproduction provided a platform from which to satirize the social conditions and political corruption of Weimar Germany. George Grosz (1893–1959) illustrated periodicals such as the weekly *Die Pleite* (Figure 5), and John Heartfield (1891–1968) designed posters and magazines like the *AIZ (Arbeite Illustriede Zeitung)*. A volume of Heartfield's photomontages, *Deutschland, Deutschland, Uber Alles* (1929), was printed initially in an edition of 20,000 in both paperback and hardcover. Sold cheaply and distributed widely, Heartfield had clearly aimed at the mass market (Hogben and Watson 1985: 215).

The development of colour lithography in the 1890s provided artists such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901), Edouard Manet (1832–83) and Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) with opportunities to illustrate music sheets, posters and books, but it was the avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century that initiated a move away from the notion of the illustration as a mere decorative and ornamental adjunct to a text.

The Surrealists (1924–), for example, were interested in exploring possibilities of illustration invoking extended meaning(s) or what Riese Hubert refers to as 'complimentary experience' (Riese Hubert 1988: 182). In 1969, Salvador Dali (1904–89) illustrated Lewis Carrol's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), and Max Ernst (1891–1976) made books consisting of collaged images, such as *Une Semaine de bonté (A Week of Bounty)* in 1934, which dispensed with text altogether. This notion of the 'ready-made' (collage, culling images from various sources) anticipated the work of the Pop artists of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Allen Jones (b. 1937) and Eduardo Paolozzi (b. 1924). They appropriated images from a wealth of sources yielded by the mass media (comics, magazines and paperbacks) and produced limited edition artists books.

Contemporary artists and illustrators are aware, however, that limited editions attract limited audiences. Some have made the transition from creating limited editions on small, privately-owned presses to large-scale commercial publishing, where mainstream publishers are approached with a portfolio of graphic work. Today, the chances of getting published are similar to those of any aspirant novelist. This approaches the realm of the 'graphic novel'.

Marshall Arisman and Sue Coe are artists/illustrators whose output vacillates between personal and commercial work (in their terms, this is the only identifiable distinction between 'fine' and 'commercial' art). Their works deal with contemporary issues. In terms of subject matter, it is the theme of violence that surfaces

(Figure 5) George Grosz, *The Owners*, frontispiece for the weekly *Die Pleite* (1920).

most often.

Marshall Arisman (b. 1938) is chairman of the Master of Fine Arts degree programme, Illustration and Visual Essay, at the School of Visual Arts, New York. His illustrations have been published in *The New York Times, Playboy, The Nation, Omni* and *Time* magazines. Arisman's illustrative style is derivative of the tradition of graphic reportage of Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) and the acrid social comment of George Grosz. In viewing his work (Figure 6), it becomes apparent that Arisman is most interested in the violence and capacity for evil inherent in contemporary society. He is especially selective in accepting commissions, describing his work as 'very editorial' (Heller 1979: 364).

Arisman produced a book of drawings in 1973, entitled *Frozen Images,* which he described as a reaction to a media saturated with images of violence, and the apparent complacency this instilled in the viewer/reader:

> Yukio Mishima, the Japanese writer, committed hara-kiri and *Time* published a photograph of a number of officials viewing his severed head. I flipped past that photo as if it were an ad for Ivory Snow, later becoming absolutely astonished by that response (Heller 1979: 364).

Interestingly, Arisman is a frequent contributor to *Time Magazine,* having executed several covers, which raises the important question(s): To what extent does the illustrator participate in this apparent consumption of violence, by embellishing the media coverage that processes it? Perhaps it would be more appropriate to question to what extent such images are merely gratuitous or sensationalist. These questions might be asked of the work of many illustrators. If one accepts the universality of the term 'text'—as applying to any number of (printed or other) media—and that the text provided is one dealing with 'violence' (to be interpreted equally broadly), then how is the illustrator or artist to respond? Perhaps the response is one of both repulsion and attraction—the illustrator/artist is as much repelled by attraction as he or she is attracted by repulsion.

Sue Coe (b. 1952) is a British-born artist working in the United States whose work has appeared in *The New York Times, Time Magazine*, and other American and European periodicals. Coe is interested solely in art as socio-political comment and is consistently selective in accepting related assignments. Coe maintains that she is primarily influenced by the (visual and print) media, and that her images, like those of Arisman's, are a response to a violent urban and political landscape, mirrored by the media (Brooks 1981: 49). Donald Kuspit has characterized her work as 'psychotic realism' (Kuspit 1985: 129).

Coe does not think of herself as an illustrator, but is interested in the potential of mass-market publication(s) as a forum for the dissemination of her views. This agenda, of reaching the most people by employing the easiest means (her works are mostly mixed media on paper, occasionally incorporating collage and typography) via mass reproduction, is similar to that of the Weimar Berlin artists.

(Figure 6) Marshall Arisman, illustration for *Time Magazine* cover (1984) on the subject of *'The Curse of Crime'*.

Coe believes this to be more effective than conventional means of exhibition and presentation:

> Fine art and illustration, especially American, are too much involved in creating a mystique which the common person cannot understand. I feel my typography, calligraphy or whatever you want to call it is not only an important visual element, but provides the layman [sic] with a way of seeing and interpreting an artwork, thus demystifying it (Sommese 1979: 350).

Besides her newspaper and magazine work, Coe has been involved in the production of graphic novels, although they are documentaries, and not 'novels' in the conventional sense. In these, the artworks are supplemented by extensive commentary, more akin to the format found in magazines than the captioning that conventionally accompanies an artwork.

Porkopolis (1992) was a graphic novel published in *Raw* magazine. It comprises a series of illustrations supplemented by text which documents the activities involved in animal slaughter houses in the United States and Europe (Figure 7).A gallery exhibition, containing artworks and text from the book was held. The most disturbing reactions to the depictions of animal slaughter were the associations made between the industrialized killing of animals in the meat factories and those of humans in the death camps of the holocaust era (Heller 1992: 112). In focusing upon the brutalization of animals by humans, Coe communicates the human capacity for inhumanity. Stephen Heller, a lecturer at the School of Visual Arts in New York, invited Coe to deliver a lecture before his MFA class on the *Porkopolis* exhibition. He questioned the necessity of talking and writing about a series of images that, in their narrative power, seemed to speak for themselves. However, he concluded that

> perhaps we [I?] ask too much of art or design. How many times has art all by itself really altered behavior? In fact, Coe's art isn't in the picture alone, but in the combination of images and words, which convey the full panoply of information (Heller 1992: 114).

The significance, for Coe, of having her work published in book form is omnipotent:

> I can control the means of production. In fact, the printed page is the primary motive for my daily work. The gallery situation is a by-product. When it ceases, which it probably will, I still have the printed page. The book is special. Someone gets a book and they have a private relationship with it (Yau 1986: 47).

And so one arrives at the graphic novel, which requires, as an introduction, considerable definition.

The graphic novel is an example of intertextuality, where the 'complimentary experience' (Riese Hubert 1988: 182) of the image is accorded a status that is often superior to that of the (written) text. It secures illustration in a prominent storytelling role, where the augmented text is the elucidator. The word 'graphic novel', like 'visual essay', implies a supplanting of image—as text; a textual role

(Figure 7) Sue Coe, illustaton from *Porkopolis: Sweeping the Kill Floor, Hatfield, PA* (1992).

reversal perhaps, but essentially a space co-habited by image and text.

The simultaneity of image and text contained in the graphic novel invokes what Lyotard has referred to as 'blocking together'. Using the metaphor of an 'over-printing', two images (visual and textual 'images') share the same space, where it cannot be said which 'image' is superimposed over the other. They occupy the same space while remaining distinct (Readings 1991: 25).

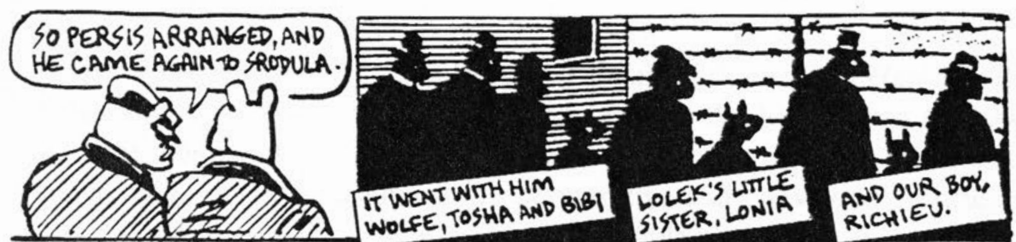
Sabin, in referring to narrative devices found in the graphic novel (the comic 'strip' format), implies that this superimposition or simultaneity is that which best defines the graphic novel medium:

> a strip does not 'happen' in the words or pictures but somewhere in-between, in what is sometimes known as 'the marriage of text and image'. The strips may just be a mixture of words and pictures, but the permutations of the two are almost endless ... strips have their own aesthetic: they are a language with their own grammar, syntax and punctuation. They are not some hybrid form halfway between 'literature' and 'art', but a medium in their own right (Sabin 1993: 9).

The narrative devices encoded in the comic strip format are inherited from those found in images that span the history of art-making: from ancient hieroglyphics to Dutch genre painting to the graphic satire of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Moreover, because its narrative is derived from a constructed sequence (that is, a series of 'frames' or 'panels'), the most obvious influence upon what has now come to be called the 'graphic novel' comes from the cinema. There are other recognizable conventions—a comics language—that are unique to comics, such as word balloons, thought balloons and various other forms of graphic symbolism.

Originally, 'comic book' implied precisely what a dictionary may presently define it as: 'a children's magazine containing stories told mainly through pictures' (*Oxford English Dictionary,* 1992). Comics were, and largely still are, associated with cheap, mass-produced escapist entertainment, not intended for an adult readership. However, comics have increasingly been shown to be capable of exploring the same range of subject matter as other media. Their potential as a means of mass communication is being considered seriously, because they (potentially) appeal to adults as much as they do to children. Hence, the more sophisticated term 'graphic novel' is preferable. Graphic novels are generally bound in the trade paperback format, but sometimes they are larger. Although they are mass produced, they are hardly cheap and few, today, deal with subjects intended specifically for the child reader. Conceptually, though, the graphic novel is no more, and no less, than what is generally accepted to be a comic book.

Maus (1989–92) and *Barefoot Gen* (1990) are recent examples of graphic novels intended for a broad readership, and are gaining recognition. The particular ways in which these two titles address and communicate aspects of violence is pertinent to this discussion.



(Figure 8) Art Spiegelman, panel from *Maus* (1989).

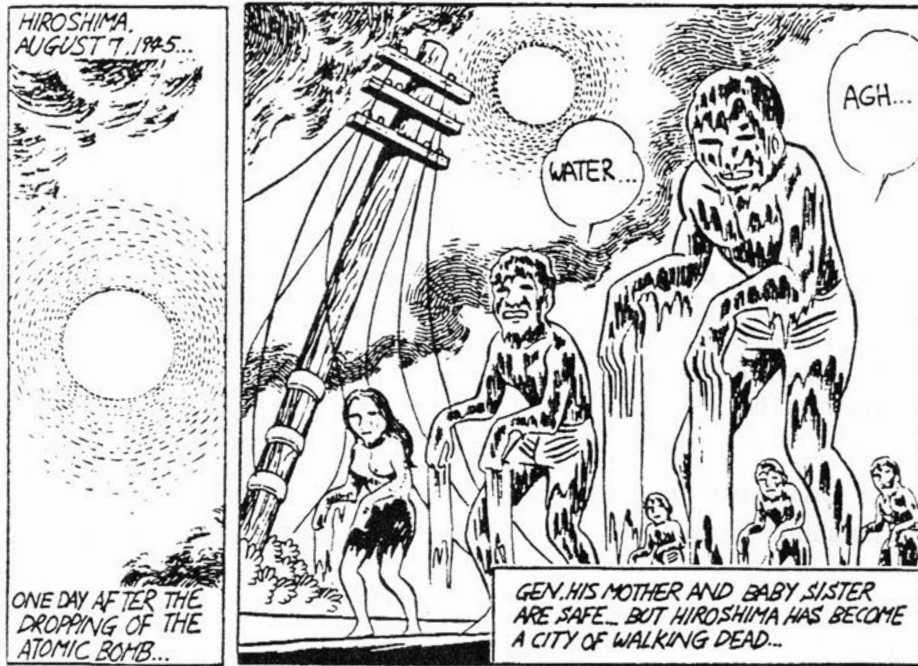
Maus: A Survivor's Tale (1989) and its companion volume, *And Here My Troubles Began* (1992), are the creation of writer/illustrator Art Spiegelman (b. 1948) and are published by Penguin Books. The work is autobiographical, in the sense that Spiegelman locates himself within the narrative and conveys the difficulties he experiences in relating, in graphic terms, the holocaust experiences of his father, Vladek. Stylistically, this story-within-a-story is told with deceptive naivety, but this serves to heighten the immediacy and seriousness of a theme rarely dealt with in the comics medium.

Maus: A Survivor's Tale is prefaced by a quote by Adolf Hitler: 'The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but they are not human.' This contextualizes, for Spiegelman, the socio-political scenario for Hitler's Europe. Hence, he substitutes animals for human protagonists and antagonists: Jews are mice, Germans are cats, Poles are pigs and Americans are dogs. Like George Orwell's *Animal Farm* of 1945 (where 'all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others'), and Sue Coe's *Porkopolis,* the victimization and brutalization of animals parallels that of humans. This zoomorphism allows Spiegelman to depict hitherto 'unthinkable' subject matter in his story. Although it is not a human child being dashed against a wall by an SS guard (Figure 8), it visually represents an actual historical occurrence, as recounted by the storyteller (Spiegelman's father). Similarly, in disguising themselves as Poles, the Jews (mice) are not shown receiving false identity documents, but donning pig masks. This is Spiegelman's idiosyncratic comics language. It is a means of interceding the actual historical narrative without disrupting it. It serves instead, to reinforce it.

In his introduction to *Barefoot Gen: The Day After* by Keji Nakazawa (b. 1938), Spiegelman emphasizes the immediacy of the comic medium and its effectiveness in telling a story. For him, the graphic process involved in creating and reading comics is a metaphor for the thought-process:

> Comics are a highly charged medium, delivering densely concentrated information in relatively few words and simplified code-images. It seems to me that this is a model of how the brain formulates thoughts and remembers. We think in cartoons (Spiegelman 1990: 11).

Barefoot Gen was first serialized in Japan in 1972–3 and was published in two parts by Penguin books in 1990. Like *Maus*, it is an autobiographical work, although Gen is more of an alter ego for Nakazawa. It is based on Nakazawa's actual experience of witnessing and surviving the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August , 1945. Again, as in *Maus*, there is a stylistic naivety in the illustrations. The Japanese protagonists of the story (Gen and the survivors he encounters) barely look Japanese. Spiegelman describes them as having '... Disney-like oversized Caucasian eyes' (Spiegelman 1990: 13). This is, seemingly, the influence of a predominantly western cartoon style to be found in children's comics. Located within the context of the atomic holocaust, the result is especially harrowing. Nakazawa illustrates this with unflinching and uncompromising clarity



(Figure 9) Keji Nakazawa, panel from *Barefoot Gen* (1990).

(Figure 9).

Mike Nicol writes of reinvesting the language of violence with meaning. He argues that it is only through the *graphic* description of acts of violence that meaning can be effected:

> ... the vocabulary used to describe the violence becomes devalued and we no longer allow the mental picture of a person being necklaced to be summoned up by the word. We read it quickly and we do not pause to think of the life taken and how that life ended. I think that if we are to regain our humanity then we have to reinvest these words with the meaning they should carry. And I think the only way to do this is to focus carefully, exactly and constantly on the way people kill and the way people die (Nicol 1995: 103).

This statement serves as a counterpoint, in contextualizing my illustrative approach to the narrative of *Horseman,* as will be further explicated in the following chapter.

CREATIVE METHOD

In *The Waiting Country* (1995), Mike Nicol writes:

> When Bloomsbury received the manuscript of my novel, *Horseman,* they were appalled by the violence which was, I hope, graphically told and ever present. It was too much for the reader, they felt, a response elicited from other publishing houses as well. David Phillip in South Africa said he never expected such a book to come out of this country. He said you needed a strong stomach to read it. I thought you needed a strong stomach to live in South Africa. Bloomsbury, however, accepted it but they still wanted to know what my intention was. And although I thought my intention was obvious I wrote back to tell them I was trying to show what words like 'killing' and 'brutal' and 'hate' and 'revenge' and 'misery' meant. And that they could only regain their meaning if they were depicted without gloss (Nicol 1995: 103).

I have found the word 'graphic' to be especially appropriate, in the case of the thirteen illustrations that accompany each chapter of *Horseman.* While I have graphically elucidated Nicol's text, the 'care' and 'exactness' (with reference to the quote from Nicol's text in the previous chapter) with which he reinvests the language of violence with meaning have not been consistently adhered to in visual terms. This is because I am allowed (and have allowed myself) to be *selective.* To be able to cast shadow, hide and obscure are as important as the ability to illuminate, reveal and clarify. This allows for subtlety.

Horseman is set in the latter half of the nineteenth century and concerns the exploits of one who is initially referred to only as a 'youth', and later as 'Daupus' meaning 'Death'. The youth is an outcast of a European village and finds himself-becoming a renegade. Captured by monks, he is taken to the catacombs of a monastery where a mysterious hooded monk prophesizes that the youth is a harbinger of death. However, the youth escapes, meets up with a former companion and boards a ship bound for Africa (although, in the style of Nicol's writing, few places are named). After a series of misadventures, he comes to be known as 'Daupus', the 'horseman' of the title, and enacts, as a mercenary (with a band of accomplices), the foretold prophecy.

According to its author, the novel '... thematically deals with the current violence in our society—most particularly that of hit squads of private armies—while relying on the second half of the nineteenth century for its imagery and narrative. The text concerns a journey—a rite of passage—from middle Europe to South Africa and explores some of the insidious consequences of colonialism among the underclasses.'

Visually, the text offers much in terms of a variety of landscape: from wintery middle Europe to the South-West African coast, and from the early Transvaal goldfields to a region south-east. The writing abounds with metaphorical imagery which I, as illustrator, found particularly inspiring: a 'sea of blood' (p. 93) or '...

(Figure 10)

aloe that loomed forth like alien warriors, many armed or in spiked headdress' (pp. 189-90). It is also resplendent with dramatic 'set-pieces' (a term derived from the cinema). According to Nicol, the novel parodies literary genres of the nineteenth century, such as the gothic novel, the exotic adventure novel, and the western. Accordingly, there is much imagery associated with these genres to be found in nineteenth and early twentieth-century novels and periodicals, which were often lavishly illustrated, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The *Horseman* illustrations are derivative of—and influenced by—these sources.

This can be viewed as one of the reasons for the publisher's decision to publish the illustrations. The primary reason is, I believe, best described by *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*'s (1992) definition of 'illustration' which reads as follows: 'Illustration is often more useful than definition for showing what words mean.' If the text is indeed hard to stomach (I refer to my quotation from Nicol), the illustrations hopefully provide some kind of counterpoint or a frame of reference.

My practical body of work comprises thirteen gouache drawings, executed on paper and thirteen corresponding oil paintings, executed on canvas. Having read the manuscript, I made several thumbnail sketches (Figs. 10–12) which were expanded into twenty-six possible 'scenes', from which thirteen were ultimately selected.

The black-and-white gouache illustrations were created as preparatory studies for the series of paintings. I intended that they be used to establish compositional and tonal arrangements prior to painting, although they function as an independent series of finished artworks. This was necessary because they were chosen for publication. Thirteen of the twenty-six were therefore 'repeated', and executed on fabriano paper for this purpose.

Stylistically, the works imitate woodcuts or linocuts. This is deliberate, because of their nineteenth-century influences, but it is also a style which evolved from the necessity of creating illusionistic space and form, while working in a relatively fast-drying and opaque medium, widely used in commercial illustration.

In the published novel, each chapter is introduced by an illustration accompanying a passage of text that serves to contextualize the following narrative. The illustrations depict imagery and events from particular passages in the novel, and their number and sequential arrangement have been determined by their function as chapter illustrations. In preceding the text of each chapter, the illustrations anticipate events and imagery that follows. While the introductory passages accompanying the illustrations provide a *verbal* contextualization, the illustrations are their *visual* or *graphic* equivalent. The parity of text and image is the outcome of their function as an additional textuality, referred to by Riese Hubert, who states that:

> ... as long as we adhere to the same terminology for the verbal as well as the visual, we can

(Figure 11)

(2) Youth leaves village

> legitimately regard illustration as a metatext—a means of writing upon another text that makes it legible in different ways and increases its visibility. Illustration imposes a grid upon the initial text by translating it into another language as well as by supplementing it with commentary (Riese Hubert 1988: 23).

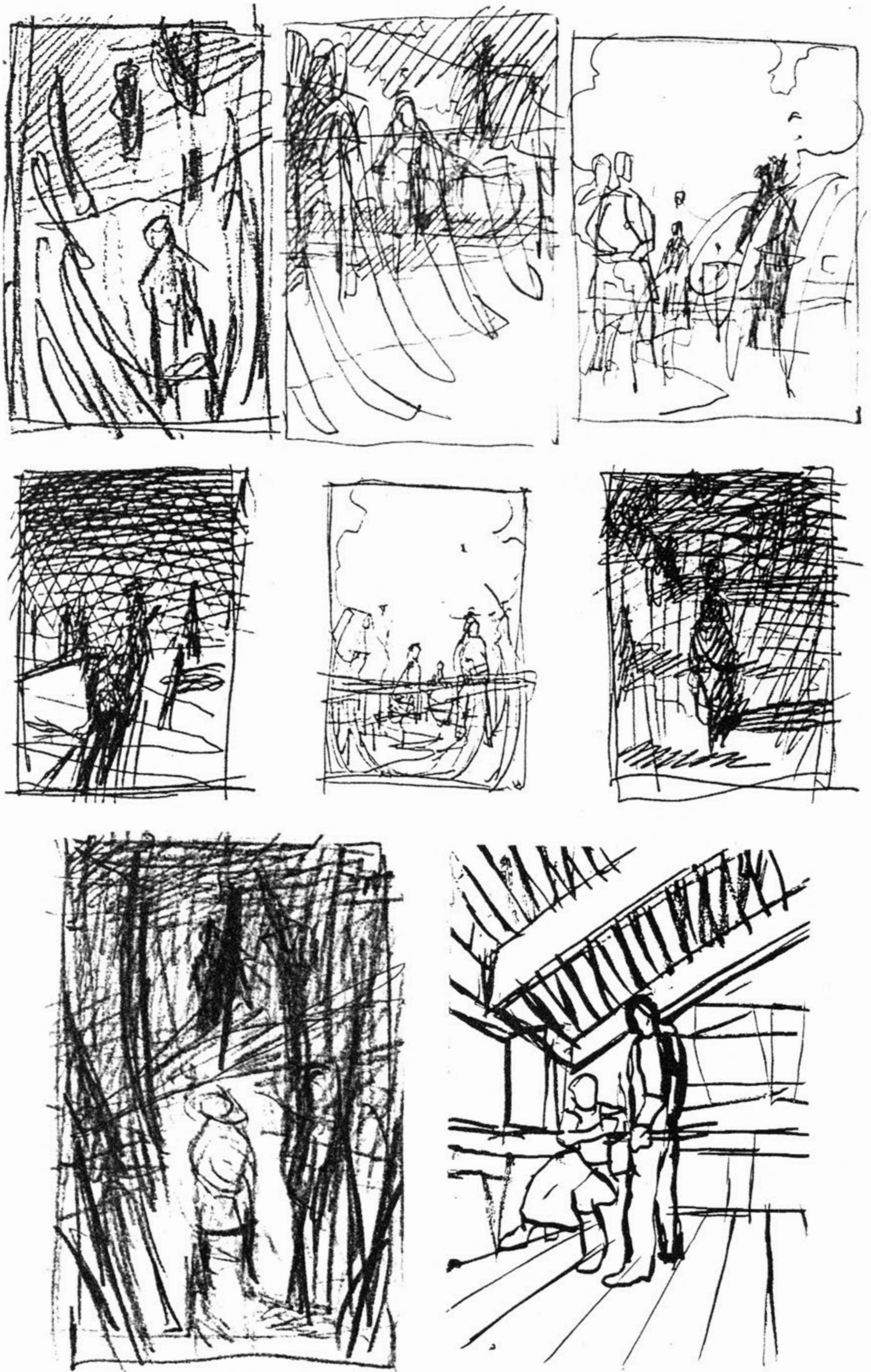
This act of 'writing upon another text' is further compounded in the colour paintings, which encompass aspects of the text which the black-and-white works cannot. Again, the style is necessitated by the medium. Painting presented the opportunity to clarify my original visualization of the text. Thus, the paintings make the text yet more 'legible' and 'visible'.

However, I acknowledge that the relative 'obscurity' of the black-and-white medium is successful, so as not to constitute a 'threat' to the descriptive power of the text. The paintings, therefore, present an alternative reading of the text. Accordingly, they are titled differently, by means of captioning. For this purpose I selected the sections of the text that most appropriately describe the 'moments' or 'scenes' that the paintings illustrate.

Since the novel deals thematically (and, indeed, most palpably) with the notion of violence, I have found that my visual response is one of *suggestion* rather than the direct representation of a particular extremity. In being visually selective, I have most often chosen to anticipate an event or *suggest* its outcome. The act of violence, or, more specifically, the exact moment of its occurrence is left to the reader's imagination. In doing so, I have consciously disallowed the illustrations to graphically displace or supersede the brutal finality of the text. Thus, the painting entitled:

He raised his rifle in one hand until it was an extension of his hand and was inches from the man's head, and no one stopped him (p. 144)

is not quite the same, in inference, as: ' Daupus fired ', which occurs two sentences after the above quotation.



(Figure 12)

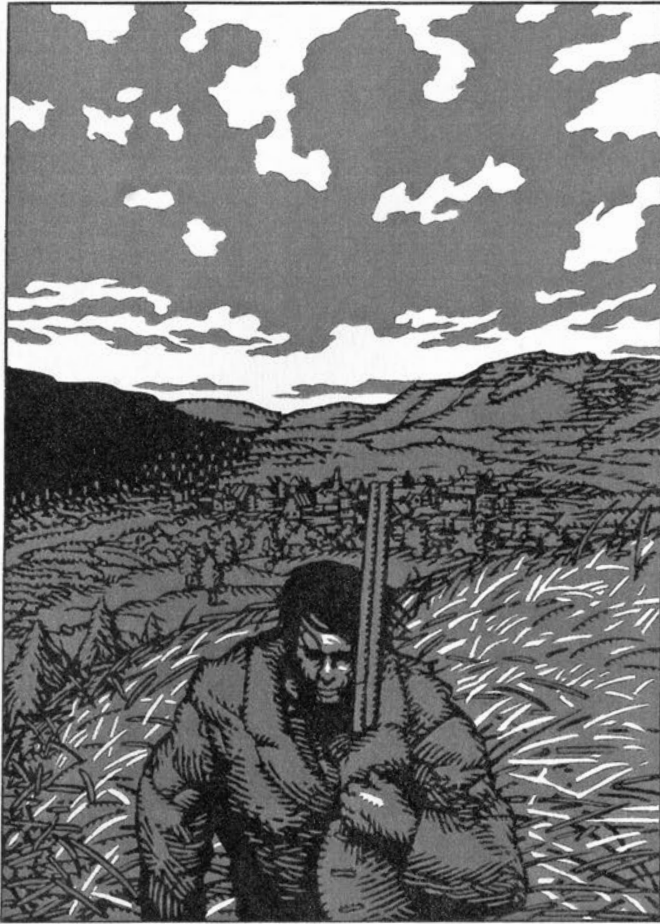
THE PAINTINGS: DOCUMENTATION OF WORKS

i) *Horseman*

1995

831 x 593 mm

The title work depicts Daupus—meaning Death—as the figure foretold in the book of Revelation. With a skull at his belt, he rides a pale horse across the veld.



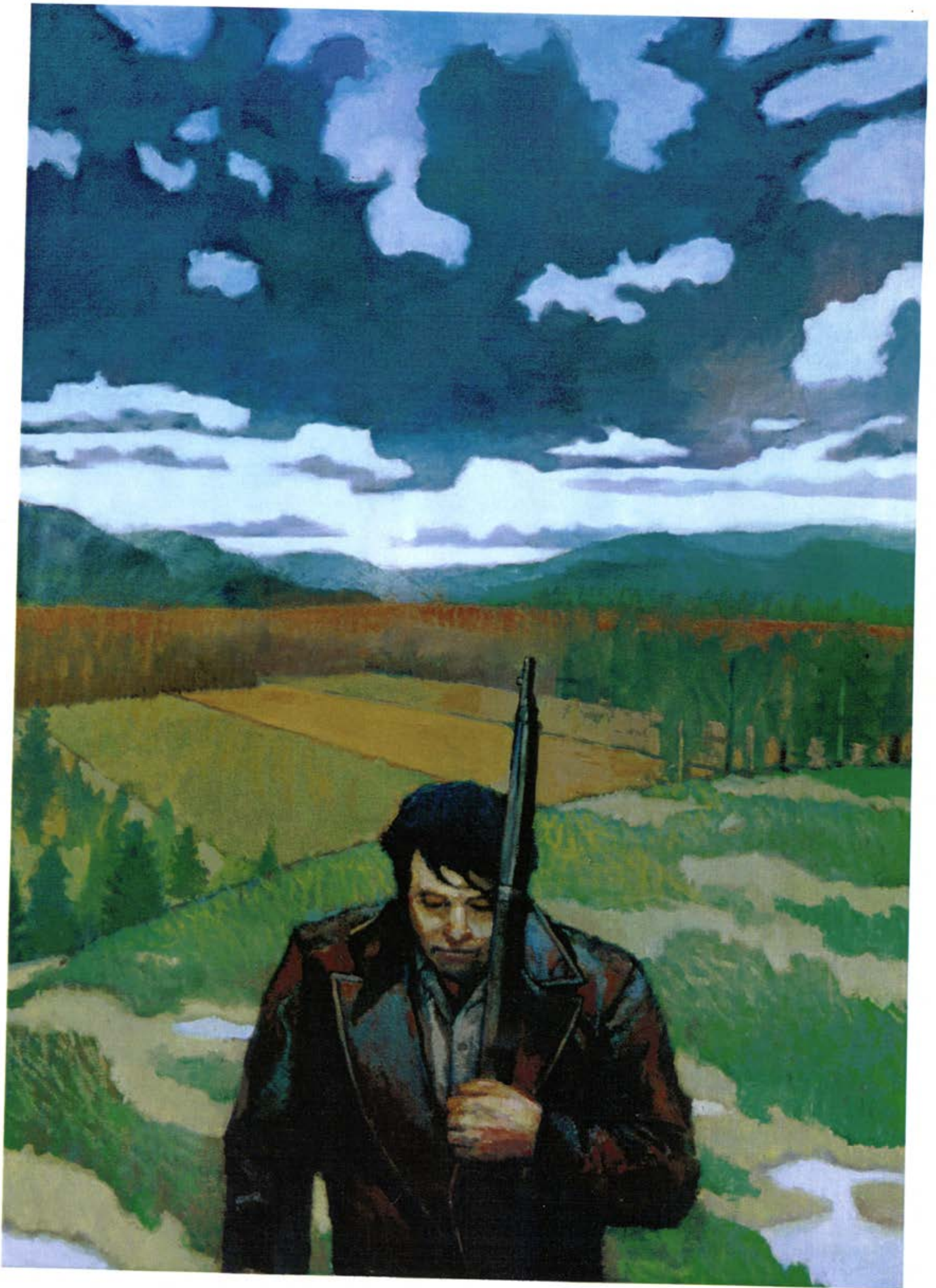
ii) *He went bowed against the drizzle, the rifle clasped tightly under his coat* (p. 3)

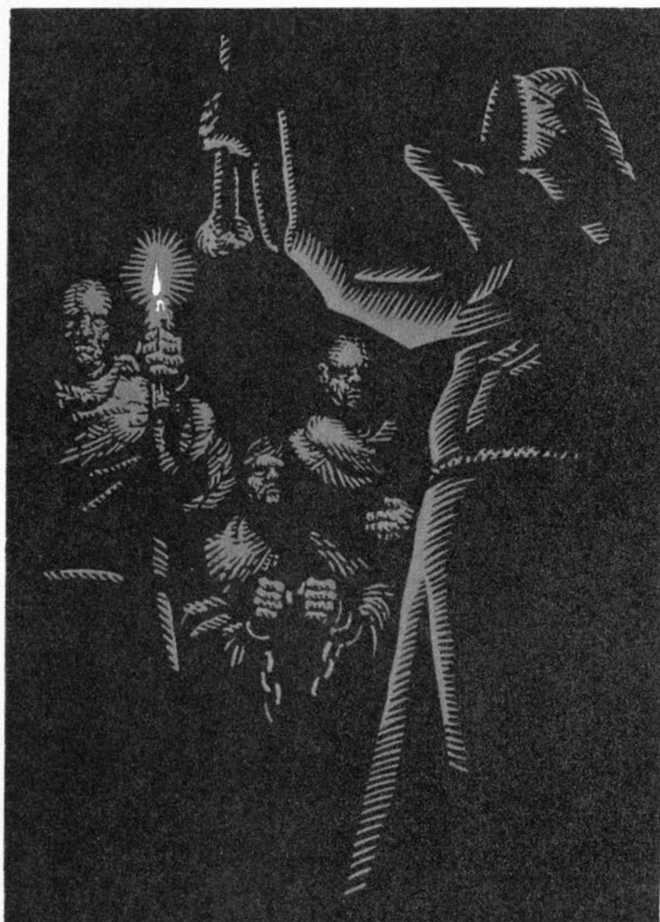
1995

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

Because his father had been arrested and charged with murder by a bailiff, the youth feels compelled to leave his village and becomes an outcast in the hills .





iii) *Stop! he commanded. Stop.*
Hold the light closer. See this! (p. 45)

1995

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

Eventually he is trapped and apprehended and taken into custody by an order of monks. In the catacombs of their monastery, a hooded monk, holding a femur bone, contemplates inevitability of death, and contracts the youth as a perpetrator of God's wrath.

iv) *You! he exclaimed. You!* (p. 64)

1995

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

The youth escapes from the monastery and returns to his village where he seeks out the school teacher who had betrayed him to the monks. It is dawn. He awakens the school teacher, startling him.

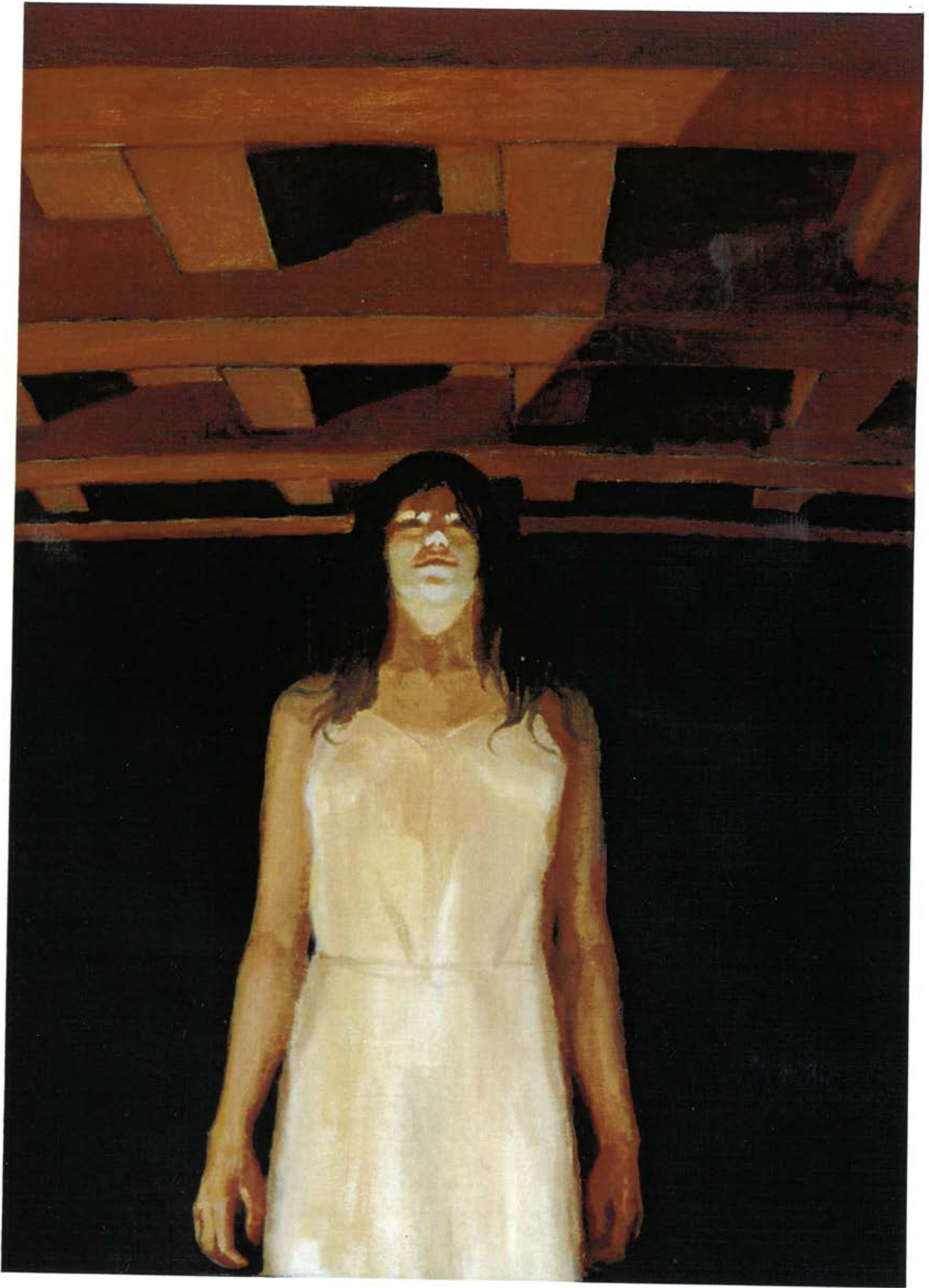
v) *Upon the floor she placed a lamp;*
turned towards him smiling what was
no smile but the mask of Nyx (p. 89)

1995

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

The youth and his companion from the forest, Madach, travel south and board a ship bound for Africa. On board is a prostitute named Lizzie, in whom the youth arouses an uncontrollable lust.



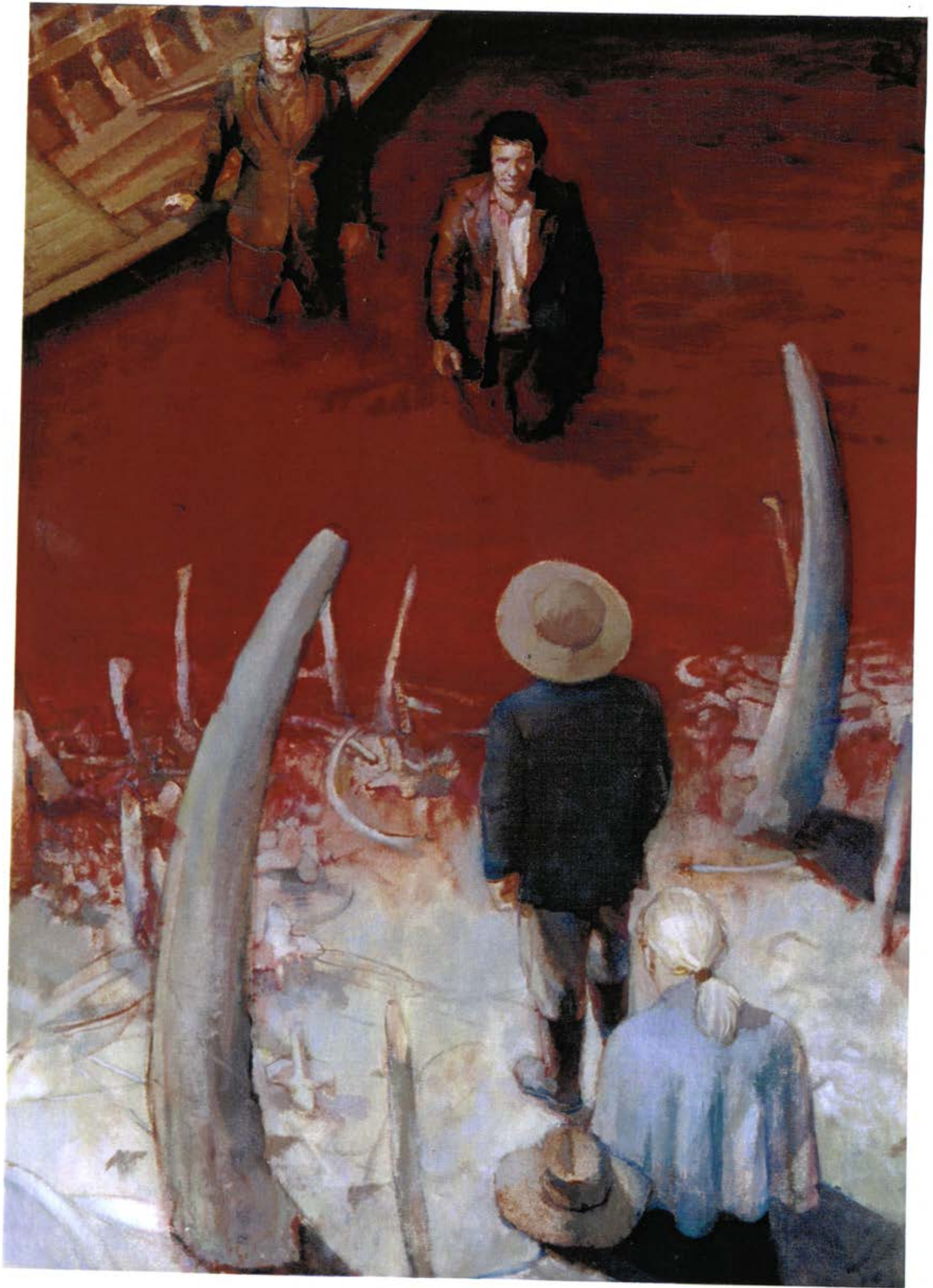
vi) *The people came up and bunched on the shore which was strewn with the bones of whales, their entrails and the mess of this enterprise* (p. 93)

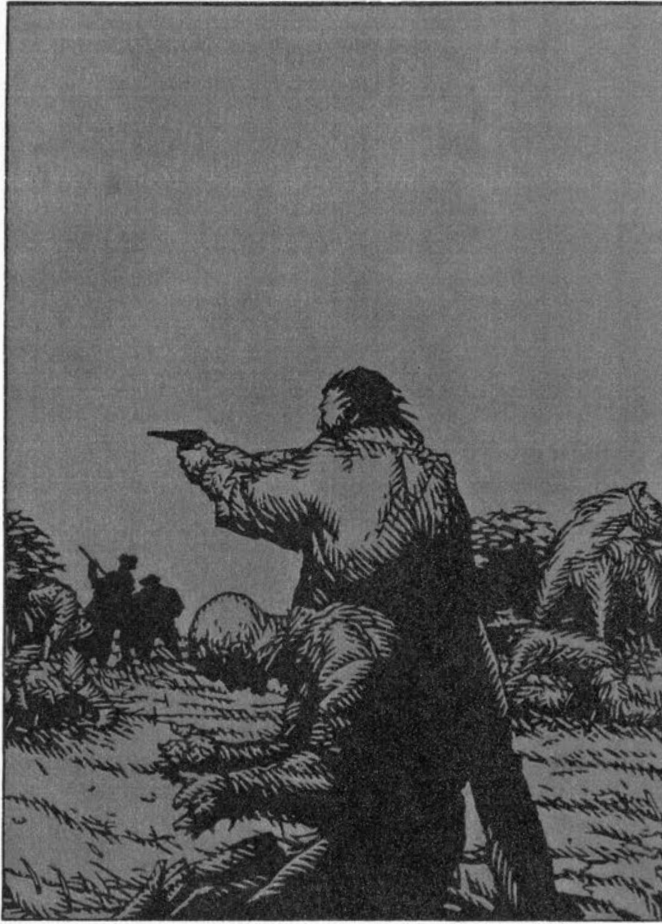
1994

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

The youth and Madach are forced to go ashore at an isolated whaling station on the west coast. They wade through 'shallows of blood' that leak from four half-flensed carcasses. Here they are greeted by the whaler, Hansen, his wife and representatives of the community.





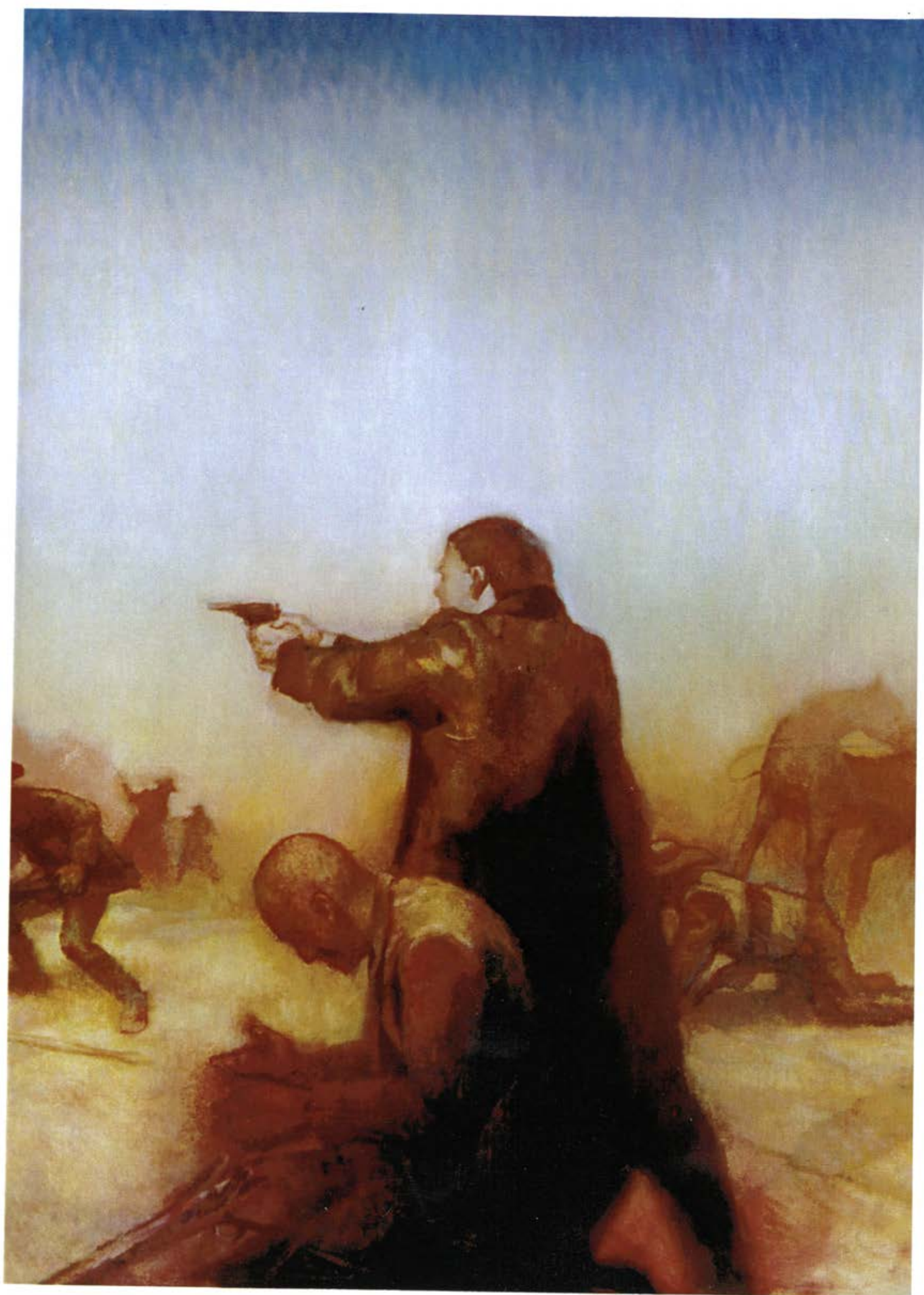
vii) *He clasped the butt of the Adams with both hands and raised it, but he did not shoot* (p. 102)

1994

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

After enlisting with a band of mercenaries, the youth and Madach are ambushed by a 'horde of warriors'. In the tumult, Madach's gun explodes in his hands, causing a wound which later proves to be fatal.



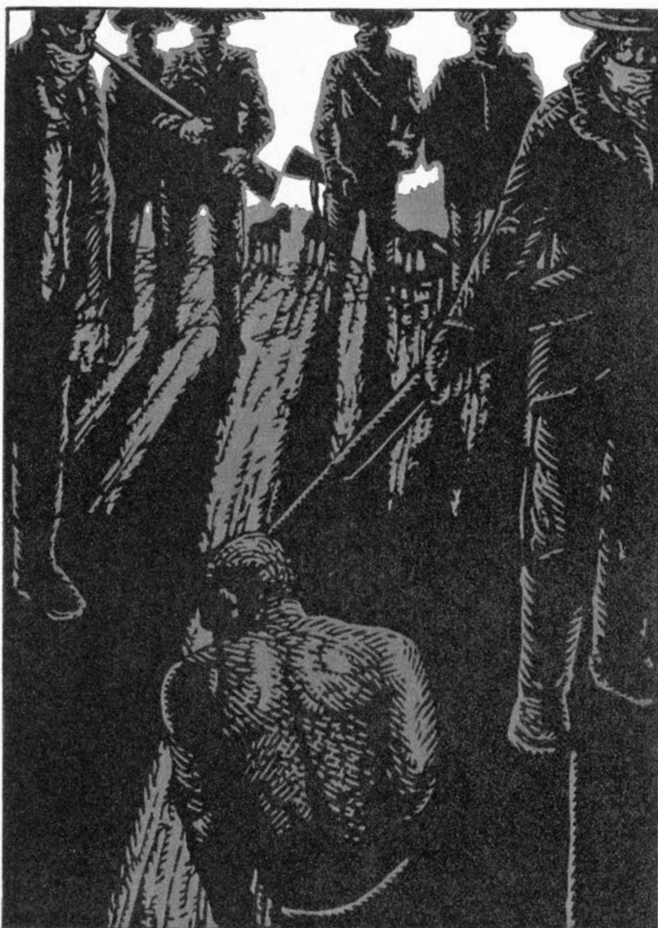
viii) *They all stood; those with firearms pulled their weapons; the others drew out of the blaze* (p. 117)

1994

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

The youth, now become the 'horseman' of the title, wanders alone through inhospitable wastes, until, one night, he encounters a 'dispirate company of men'. They are startled at his approach. He introduces himself as 'Daupus'.



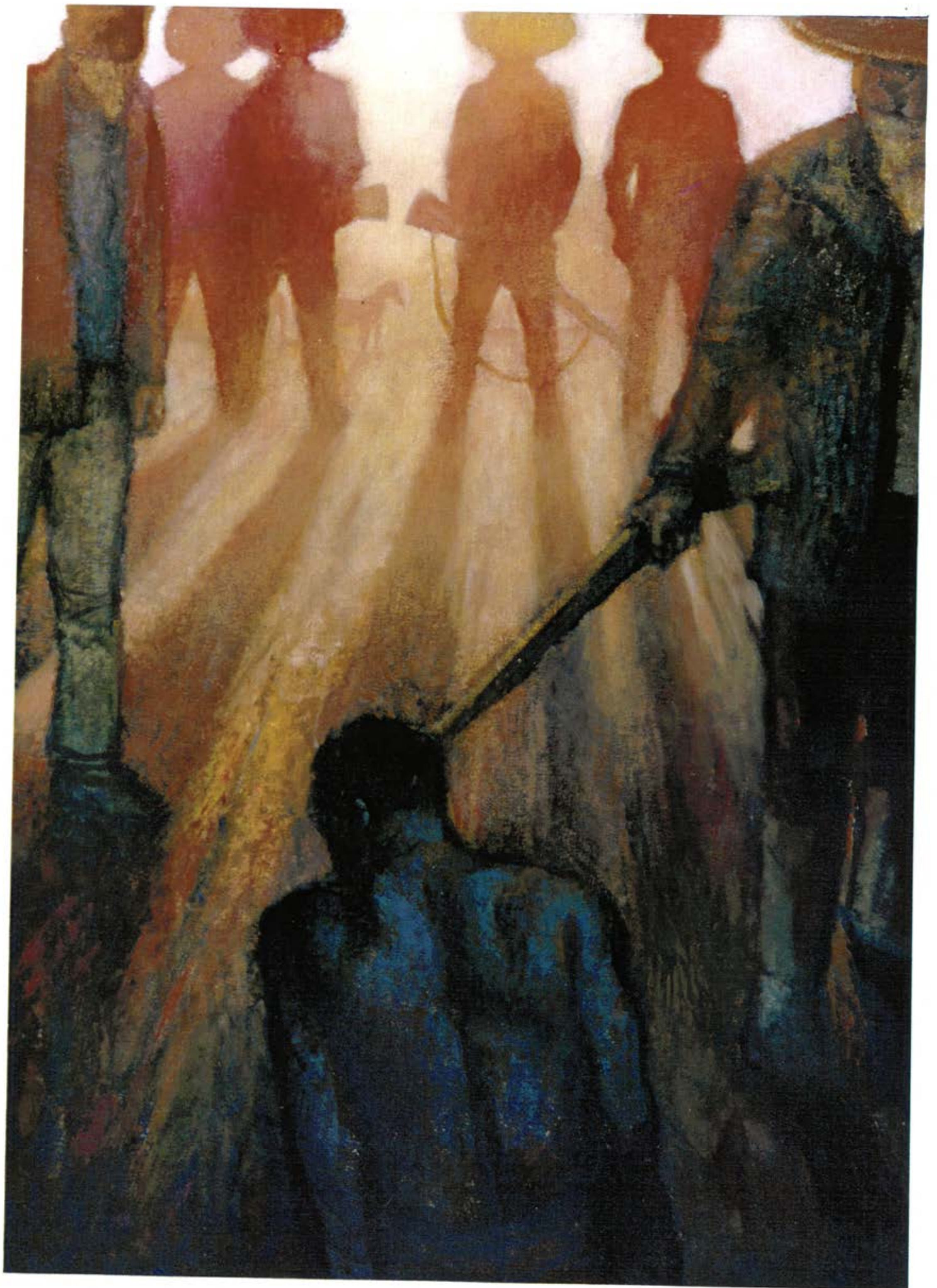
ix) *He raised his rifle in one hand
until it was an extension of his
arm and was inches from the
man's head, and no one stopped him* (p. 144)

1994

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

The band of men, now led by Daupus, come across a lone miner, who is attempting to escape from the diamond diggings. Gratuitously, they execute him.



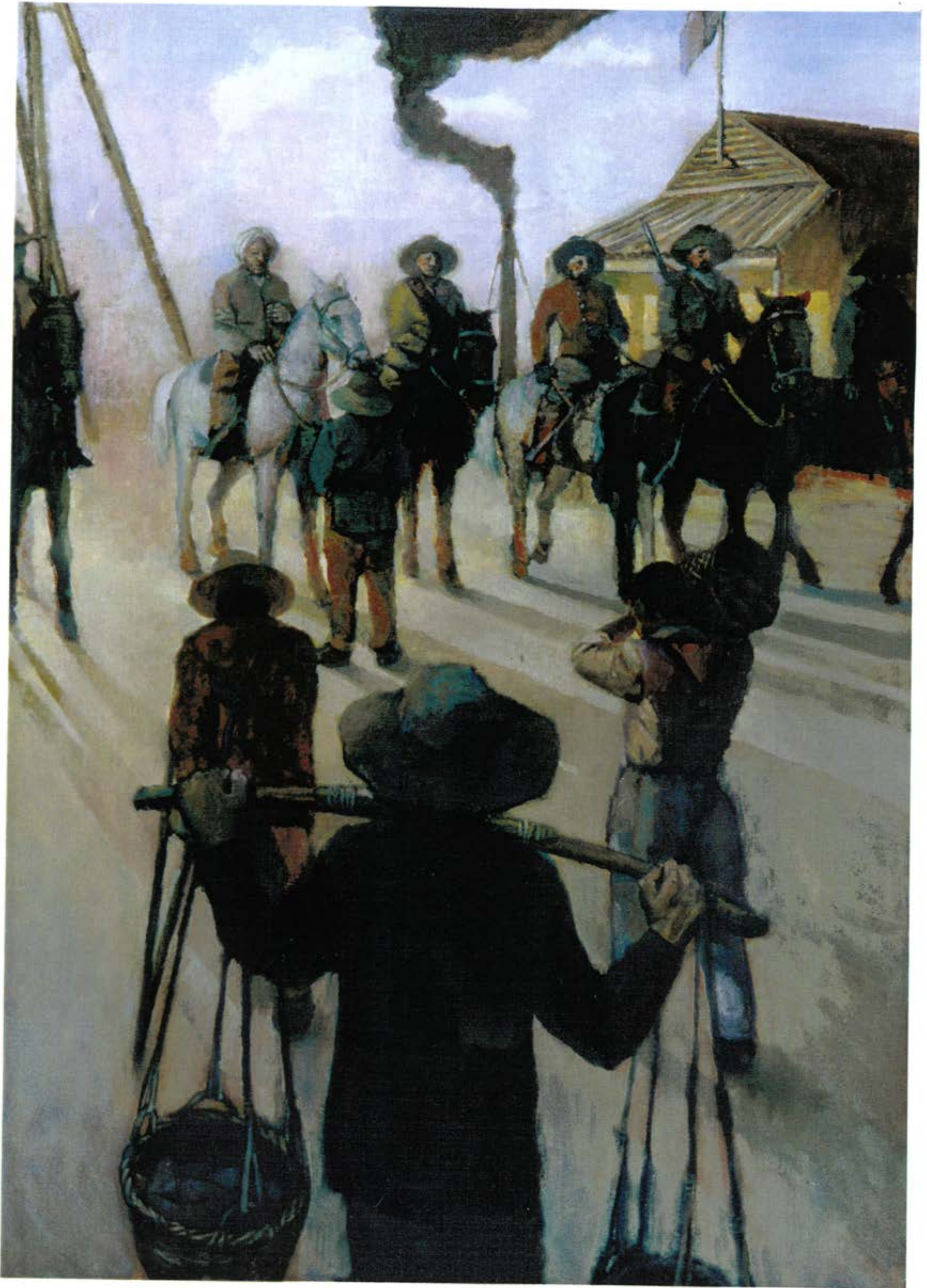
x) *In time they came among mining concerns where chimneys gave off a foul pollution* (p. 145)

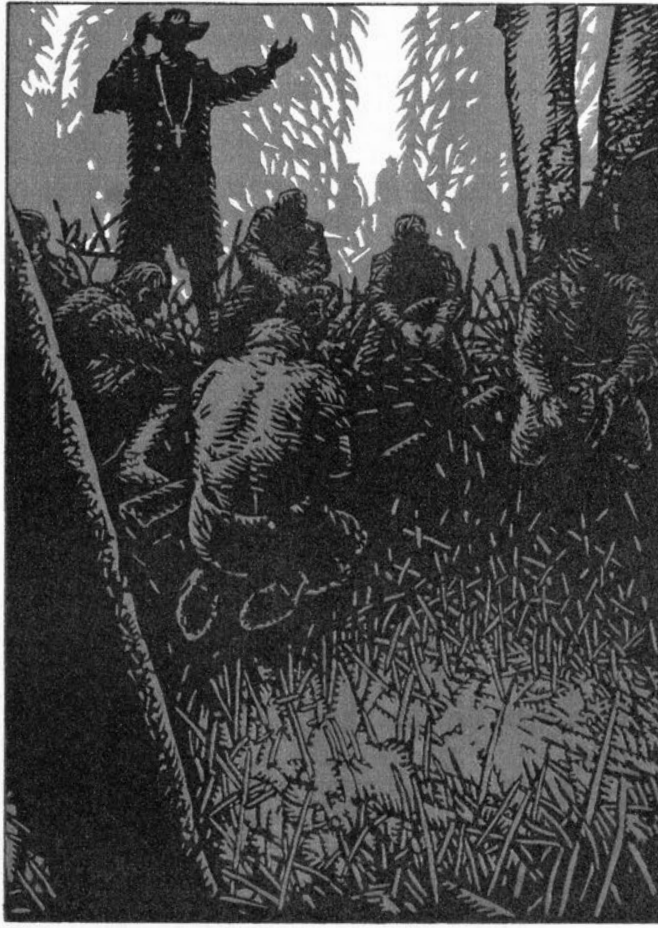
1995

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

The horsemen enter a mining town, where they seek boarding. They are approached by touts and vendors.





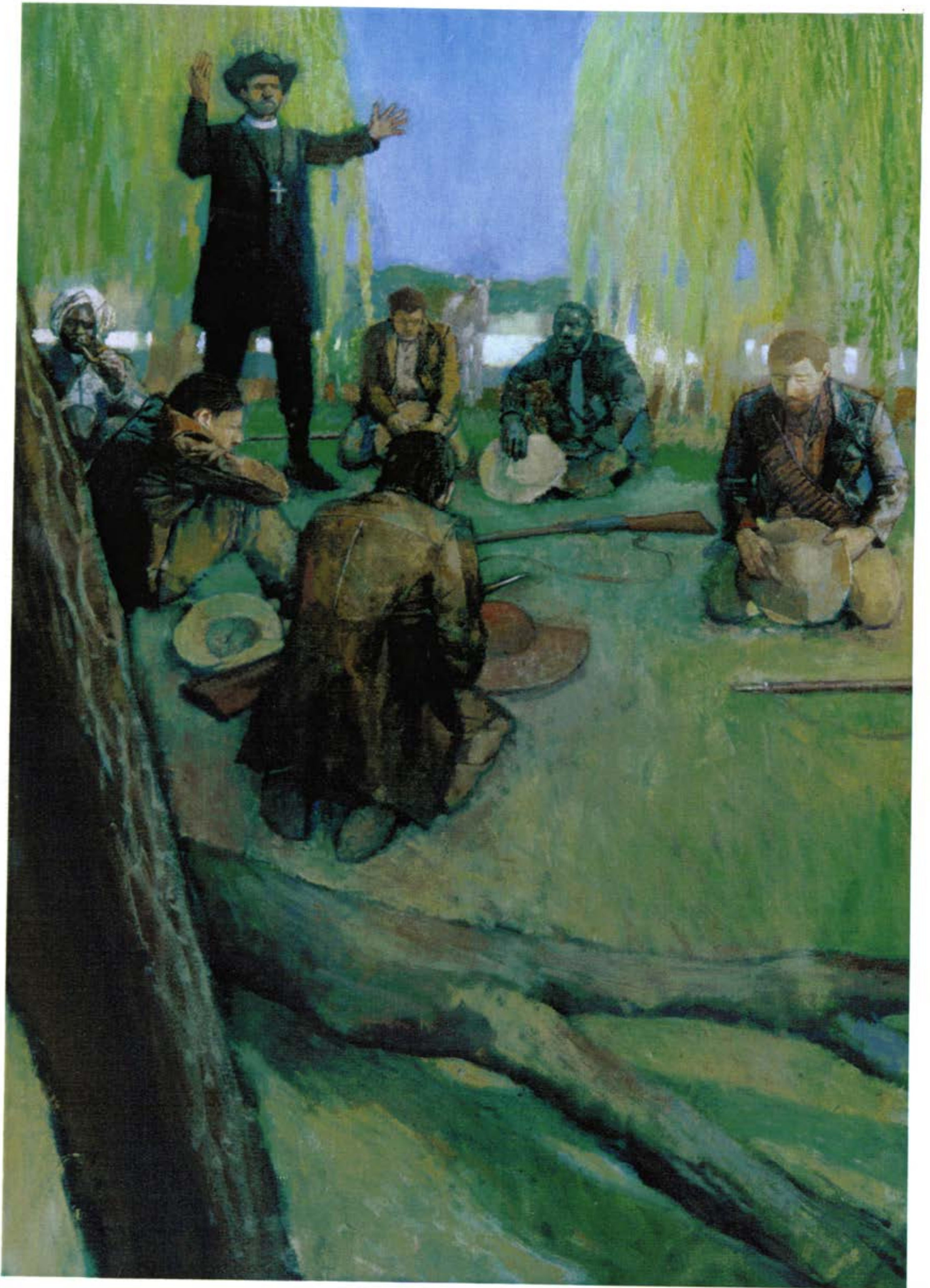
xi) *Then Thorne asked them to bare their heads and kneel* (p. 165)

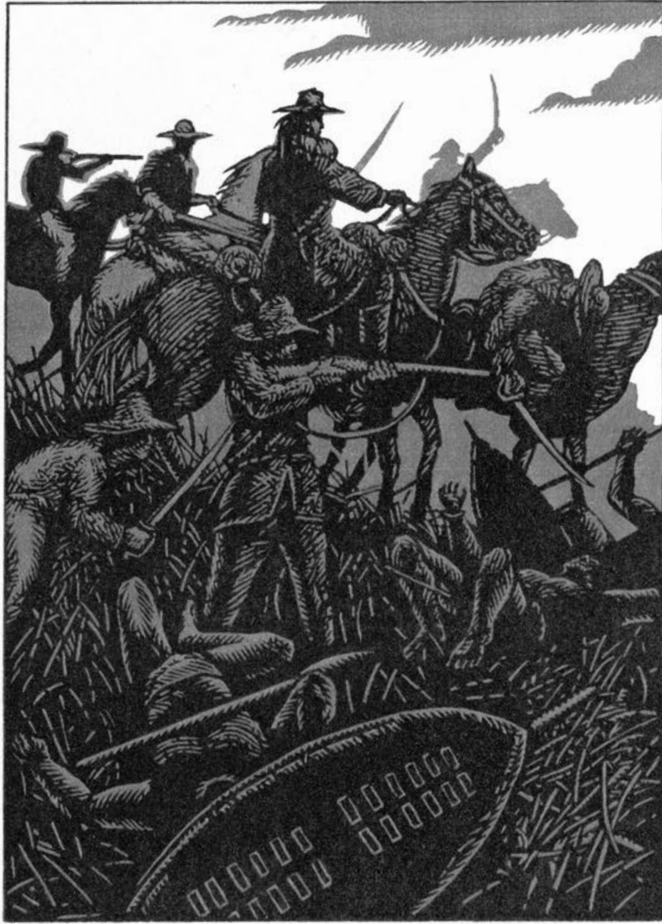
1995

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

Thorne, a missionary, contracts the band of men to assist him in defending his mission against marauding tribes. Before embarking, Thorne prays over them, and asks for Divine protection.





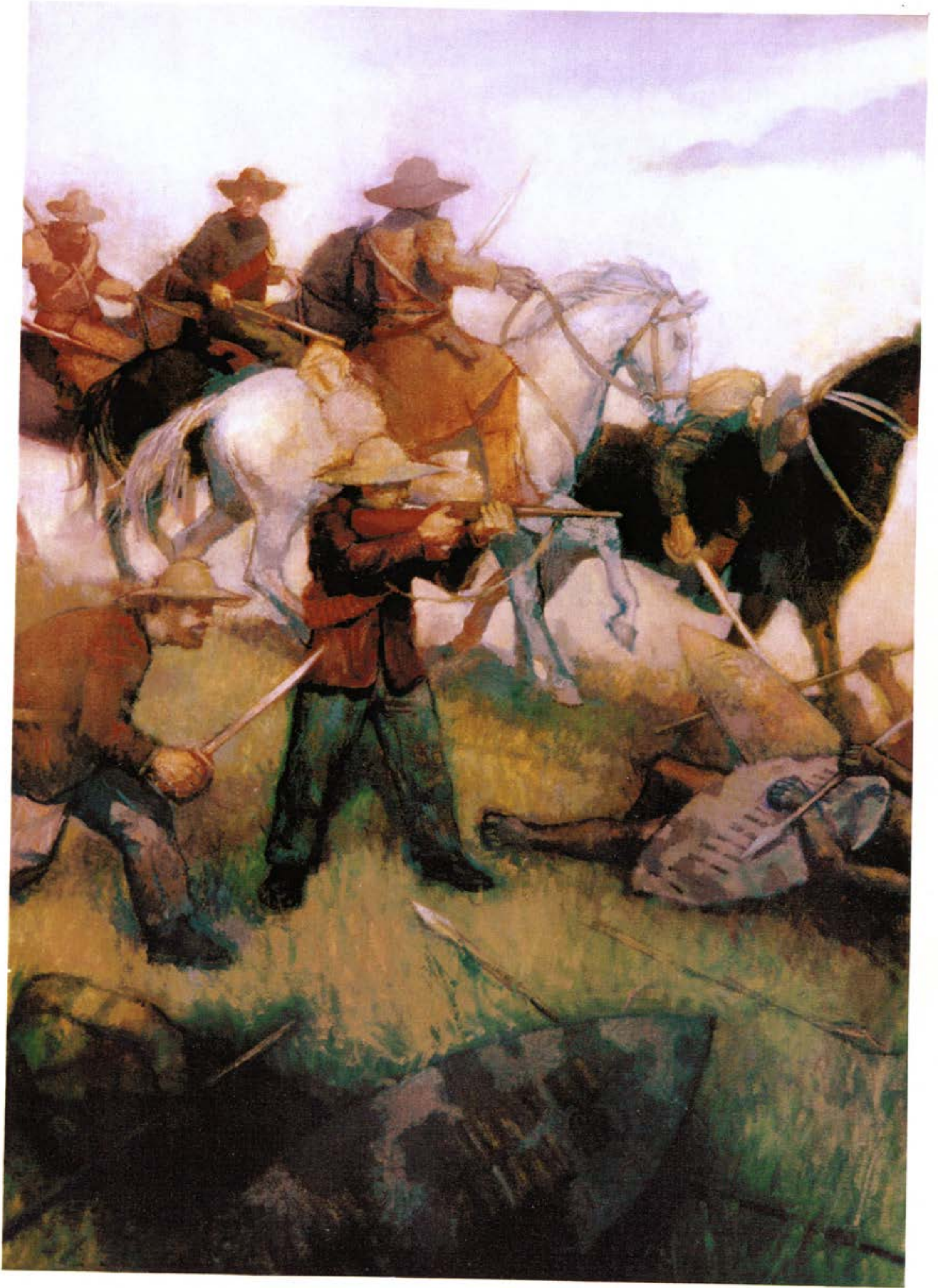
xii) *Then the group went after those upon the flats and enacted a vast carnage* (p. 178)

1994

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

At Thorne and Daupus' command, the enlisted men and others from Thorne's mission attack the missionary's enemy.



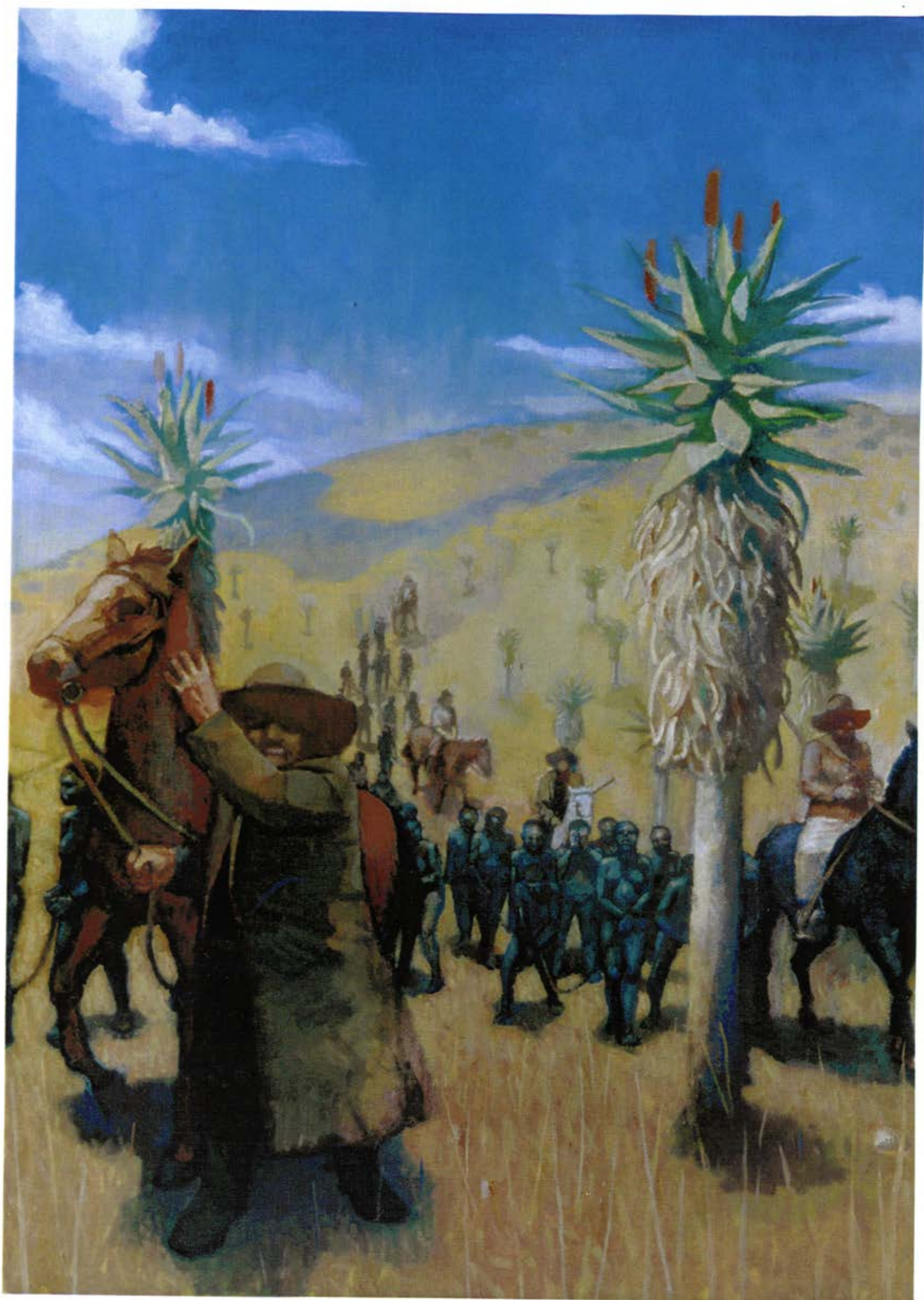
xiii) *Then the Portuguese dropped from his horse, cowered beside it, wild with the fright in him* (p. 190)

1994

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

Nunez, a slave trader, is transporting the remaining women of the massacred tribe to rendezvous with slave ships at the coast. Daupus and his men are contracted to provide an escort. However, they are increasingly aware of being watched.



xiv) *He left in the shadowed hours* ...(p. 196)

1995

593 x 831 mm

Oil on canvas

The group are attacked by bandits who kill the slavedriver and leave all the escorts—bar Daupus—dead or dying. They make off with the slaves. Daupus, ignoring the pitiful cries of the dying, walks away through the aloes, his contract fulfilled.

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