

University of KwaZulu-Natal

“Kof’ Abantu, Kosal’ Izibongo?”:
Contested Histories of Shaka, Phungashe
and Zwide in *Izibongo* and *Izithakazelo*

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by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work.



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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my mother, Gcazile Buthelezi, whose unfulfilled desire to attain an education has been my inspiration.

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I argue that there is a pressing need in post-apartheid KwaZulu-Natal to re-assess the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century histories of the region from the perspectives of people whose ancestry was dispossessed and/or displaced in the wars that took place in that period, particularly those that elevated Shaka to dominance. I suggest that because of their retrospective manipulation by the vested interests of power politics, historical processes over the past two centuries, and in the last century in particular, have invested the figure of King Shaka and 'Zulu' ethnic identities with unitary meanings that have made them close to inescapable for most people who are considered 'Zulu'. I argue that there is, therefore, a need to recuperate the histories of the clans which were defeated by the Zulu and welded into the Zulu 'nation'. Following British-Jamaican novelist Caryl Phillips' strategy, I begin to conduct this recuperation through a process of subverting history by writing back into historical records people and events that have been written and spoken out of them. I argue that literary texts, *izibongo* ('personal' praises) and *izithakazelo* (clan praises) in this case, offer a useful starting point in recovering the suppressed or marginalised histories of some of the once-significant clans in the region.

In the three chapters of this dissertation, I examine the *izibongo* of three late eighteenth-/early nineteenth-century *amakhosi* (kings) in the present KwaZulu-Natal region, Shaka kaSenzangakhona of the Zulu clan, Phungashe kaNgwane of the Buthelezi and Zwide kaLanga of the Ndwandwe. In the first chapter, I read Shaka's *izibongo* as an instance of empire-building discourse in which I trace the belittling representations granted Phungashe and Zwide. In the second and third chapters, I set Phungashe's and Zwide's *izibongo*, respectively, as well as the histories carried in and alluded to by these texts, and the clans' *izithakazelo*, alongside Shaka's and examine the extent to which the two *amakhosi*'s *izibongo* talk back to Shaka's imperialism. I also follow the later histories of the two *amakhosi*'s clans to determine which individuals became prominent in the Zulu kingdom under Shaka and after, as well as point to the revisions of the past that are being conducted in the present by people of the two clans. The versions of the *izibongo* I study and the hypotheses of history I present are drawn from sources that

include the James Stuart Archive, A.T. Bryant, and oral historical accounts from several people I interviewed.

Given the present imperatives in South Africa of bringing justice to the various peoples who were dispossessed under colonial and apartheid domination, I argue that recuperating the histories of the clans that were conquered by the Zulu under Shaka's leadership problematises questions of justice in KwaZulu-Natal: if it is legitimate to claim reparation for colonialism and apartheid, then the Zulu kingdom should be viewed under the same spotlight because of the similar suffering it visited on many inhabitants of the region. In that way, we can transcend divisive colonial, apartheid and Zulu nationalist histories that continue to have strong, often negative, effects on the crossing of identity boundaries constructed under those systems of domination.

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Vezi, kof' abantu,
Kosal' izibongo;
Izona zosala zibadabula,
Izona zosala zibalilel' emanxiweni.
(Dingane's *izibongo* quoted in Nyembezi, 1982:2)

Vezi, people will die,
The *izibongo* will remain,
It is they which will remain championing them,
It is they which will remain mourning them at the old sites of their homes.
(my translation)

INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of democratic government, there have been continued attempts to define South African society as a unified nation which has moved beyond a divisive colonial and apartheid history. In the print and broadcast media, we are bombarded with discourse issuing from politicians, as well as religious and civic leaders, who claim that South Africa is now either a united nation or that all its citizens have the common goal of establishing a united nation. At the same time, there has been rigorous interrogation by people in all spheres of South African public and private life of the meanings of nationality, nationhood, democracy and civic rights in the changed and changing environment of a decade of democratic rule.

In the KwaZulu-Natal region, as in several other parts of the country, questions of nation are complicated by politics of ethnicity. The area north of the Thukela River was a Zulu 'homeland' governed during the apartheid era by Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe/Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement (which in 1990 changed its name to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)). In that time, Zulu identity became closely tied to Inkatha political ideology, and its leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi sought legitimation and sanction through a reinvented and manipulated vision of Zulu cultural identity.¹ His vision mobilised the figure of King Shaka as an ancestor of all the 'Zulu' people. Into this political identity of KwaZulu was dragged the Zulu monarchy so that the Zulu kingdom became coterminous with the Inkatha-led Zulu nationalist government.² Inkatha's alignment of the Zulu kingdom with its Zulu nationalist ideology was conducted under the guise of preserving the proud history of the Zulu people in the face of colonialism and apartheid, in particular the undermining of the Zulu kingdom after the Anglo-Zulu war. This political project was given legitimacy by Buthelezi's position as *uNdunankulu wesizwe* (traditional prime minister) of the Zulu: he claimed authority as Zulu leader through the Buthelezis' historical association with the Zulu royal family since the time of Shaka, rather than through the Buthelezi clan in its own right.³

As a consequence of this historical association, the identification of 'Zuluness' with IFP politics continues to this day, particularly because northern KwaZulu-Natal remains an IFP stronghold and also the area with the highest concentration of 'Zulu' people. There is, therefore, a pressing need to question the conjunction of 'Zuluness' with IFP politics, and to open other possibilities for Zulu identification in the present national formation. This involves interrogating the meanings of 'Zuluness' that have gained some stability: in particular the

identification of all the people whose clans were forcefully welded together, as well as some that were not conquered, generically as *isizwe samaZulu* ('the Zulu nation'). This thesis initiates such an interrogation by recuperating and reinvigorating the histories of the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe clans. These two are clans whose *amakhosi's* (kings') armies, Phungashe kaNgwane and Zwide kaLanga respectively, were defeated by King Shaka's.

Through a rigorous engagement with Shaka's, Phungashe's and Zwide's *izibongo* (praises) and the *izithakazelo* (clan praises) of the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe, this project aims to begin calling into question the suppression of some significant histories and figures in the region: to look through and beyond the silence in discourse that surrounds the defeat of Phungashe and Zwide. Their representation in oral discourse among the 'Zulu' people has been mainly in *izithakazelo*, less so in the case of Phungashe than Zwide because the most commonly used *isithakazelo* of the Buthelezi is "*Shenge*" whereas that of the Ndwandwe is "*Zwide kaLanga*". In addition to the *izithakazelo*, Phungashe and Zwide have been represented in Shaka's *izibongo*, which have been performed frequently, and more recently studied, since his death.⁴ In his *izibongo*, Shaka is eulogised for having defeated both Phungashe and Zwide. Because historical discourse, both written and oral, has focused strongly on Shaka, little is generally known about Phungashe and Zwide in their own right. One of the implications of the neglect or suppression of these two key figures in discourse is that Buthelezi and Ndwandwe histories have been silenced to the point that even among the people of the two clans, very few have a cohesive sense of their histories. Consequently, there is a need in post-apartheid South Africa for projects like this one that contribute to filling the void left by the displacement of certain histories by others over the last two centuries.

Attempts to move beyond the divisions of South Africa's past require more coherent and complex histories than are currently available. For various reasons, there is insufficient and, often, fragmented knowledge of the cultural, intellectual, social, economic and military histories of the various peoples whose presence predates the colonial invention of 'South Africa'. Key among these reasons is that by displacing people and fracturing the societies that existed relatively independently of one another in the geographic area that is now South Africa, colonial intrusion disrupted and undermined the institutions through which those histories would have been transmitted over generations. At the same time, the invention of South Africa as a country, and, in particular, the labour demands of a capitalist economy, precipitated the urban interaction of people of different indigenous ethnic groups under

circumstances of dispossession and oppression that offered little opportunity for them to interrelate with a secure sense of their respective cultural histories and identities.

The long history of legislated segregation has impeded intercultural understanding and created ignorance, suspicion and animosity between the cultural groups inhabiting South Africa.⁵ In addition to disrupting traditional indigenous cultural and social institutions, colonial and apartheid practices deliberately suppressed indigenous intellectual and cultural histories. Local modes of knowledge production and transmission were, to a large extent, replaced by colonial and apartheid ones, so that continuity with precolonial cultural traditions was disrupted. In view of this, a larger project of post-apartheid reconstruction and revaluation of previously suppressed histories and cultural traditions is under way, and is accompanying the current socio-political and economic transition that the country is undergoing.⁶

The KwaZulu-Natal region is problematic in this regard. On the one hand, the discourse of 'the nation' propounded by the South African political leadership and cultural institutions such as the music and broadcasting industries is predominantly geared towards transcending narrow ethnic identities. On the other hand, the region is politically controlled by the IFP, which continues to invoke Zulu ethnicity to maintain its power. In addition, the construction of a regional identity to market KwaZulu-Natal globally as a tourist and business destination perpetuates an ethnic-centred identity for the region. This identity is ironic insofar as it sells the region as a post-apartheid place, yet at the same time harks back to an ethnic identity the manipulation of which has been the cause of exclusion and occlusion in the past. Whether the selling of the province as "The Zulu Kingdom" seeks deliberately to coincide with political power in the province and hence gain political sanction for the marketing drive, or whether this is entirely coincidental is unclear. Nevertheless, this regional identity trades on the easy world-wide association of the province with Zulu history and culture, and the figure of King Shaka. The international association of the province with the figure of King Shaka is a result of recorded histories dating back to colonial intrusion into the region. Such a marketing strategy for the region upholds the partial view of the history of the 'Zulu' people that locates King Shaka as the single most significant historical figure prior to the encroachment of British colonialism. Although the significance of Shaka's conquests is undeniable, such partiality in recorded and oral histories continues to suppress or displace other significant histories of the region.

The historical and literary traditions of the region, both oral and written, have dealt the Buthelezi and Ndwandwe histories that I am considering here a double blow in discourse. First, written records of history have only included these clans as footnotes to the major imperial narrative of King Shaka and the line of Zulu kings after him. Secondly, among 'Zulu' people themselves, official Zulu 'national' oral history and literature have continued to highlight Shaka. Even Mangosuthu Buthelezi, as I have shown, claims legitimacy, authority and royal association through that part of his lineage which gained influence through Shaka after Phungashe's defeat, suppressing Phungashe's significance and the subsequent direction the history of Phungashe's lineage took.

As regards perceptions of the history of the region among 'Zulu' people, there are two broad groupings, each with a different relationship to past history. One group encompasses mainly rural and some peri-urban communities, and the other begins in the peri-urban and includes most urban 'Zulu' people. The first group maintains stronger continuity with traditional precolonial social and political structures, and it is not infrequent to hear them referred to, often derisively, as *uZulu wangempela* (real Zulu). This is a group that is more in line with Duncan Brown's assessment of traditional Zulu society where power is centralised in the *inkosi* and devolved through local *abanumzane* and *izinduna* (1998:76).⁷ Also, traditional relationships between individuals, families and clans are more closely observed as they are understood in the present, with all the mutations they have undergone over time. The second grouping - predominantly urban dwellers - is characterised by more discontinuity from traditional institutions of authority than the first group. People in this group are often much less knowledgeable about the relationships that are observed in the more rural settings and about the histories of their families and clans. They are less prone than rural communities, in northern KwaZulu-Natal in particular, to being coerced into easy identification with King Shaka because political and cultural identities are more fluid in these communities.

As a result of these nuances and discrepancies in the apprehension of past history and present cultural practice issuing from, among others, King Shaka's conquests as well as colonial displacement and subjection, it is only as satellites to the history of the Zulu clan that these other histories, such as those of the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe, are considered. Still, vestiges of the hierarchical structure of clans that built up after the unification of the Zulu nation under Shaka remain today, and are the source of Buthelezi's claim to being *uNdunankulu wesizwe*. Consequently, it is in the unofficial spaces of conversations between people as well as in official spaces of family and clan meetings, predominantly in rural areas,

that the histories of the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe find space for articulation. The official articulations at family and clan meetings have always remained limited in their ability to reverse the suppression of the clans' histories under ruling hegemonies. Official discourse maintains affinities with the larger Zulu 'national' discourse, suggesting that people of the clans that were assimilated into the Zulu 'nation' for the most part consider themselves unproblematically Zulu. The kind of 'revisionist' discourses I have encountered in my research and in conversations with people who are known to me, which would be considered subversive in Zulu, and even Buthelezi and Ndwandwe, officialdom, remain peripheral. One of the reasons for this is that in a 'Zulu' society in which remain some of the residues of the unified and martial entity into which Shaka transformed his nation, there is a real possibility of suffering physical attack from people who disapprove of dissent. Hence counterhegemonic discourses remain silent in public spaces.

{ In the present, there is a need for the recovery of what histories and knowledges can still be rescued from insubstantial representations like those given to Phungashe and Zwide in Shaka's *izibongo*, as well as in *izithakazelo*. The recovery of such histories and knowledges can contribute to a more coherent and complex understanding of our history in KwaZulu-Natal and ultimately in the larger South Africa. } Two such projects are already under way among the people with whose histories I am concerned here. There was a meeting of Ndwandwe and Nxumalo people on 20 September 2003 in Nongoma, which, according to Mzomusha Ndwandwe, sought to trace the histories of the Ndwandwe and the Nxumalo people in order to construct a more coherent sense of their past and also to investigate reinstating part of the Ndwandwe kingdom that was destroyed by Shaka (Buthelezi, 2003d: interview). A similar project is under way among the Buthelezi people. A meeting, which I attended as part of this research and to which I return in Chapter Two, was held in Mcakwini (Babanango) on 3-5 October 2003 to discuss strategies to recuperate the history of the Buthelezi clan.

In scholarship, several interventions to recover lost or suppressed histories have been made in disciplines such as history, English/literary studies, linguistics and African languages (isiZulu in our KwaZulu-Natal context). The study of oral literary texts like *izibongo* offers many possibilities for bridging some of the gaps that exist in the history of the KwaZulu-Natal region. Brown reminds us that "the nature or status of many oral texts... is at best ambiguous" (1999:4), and yet despite their instability, a point to which I return below, the *izibongo* and the *izithakazelo* I engage with offer a useful starting point in attempting to gain

deeper insights into how some histories have been written and spoken out of significance, and how they may be returned to attention.

To this end, this investigation takes the following form. Chapter One traces the almost two century-long genealogy of representations of Shaka. It considers representations of him in recent 'revisionist' historical discourse as well as in the literary study of his *izibongo*. It then undertakes an analysis of the imperial narrative contained in the *izibongo*, with particular focus on the representation of Phungashe and Zwide. I use versions of the *izibongo* recorded by Trevor Cope, C.T. Msimang and Ncamisile Makhambeni in my analysis, which are all slightly different from one another.

Chapter Two considers whether Phungashe can be rescued from obscurity and reinserted into the imperatives of the present. I then discuss his representation in his own *izibongo*, a version of which has been provided to me by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Buthelezi clan and National Minister of Home Affairs. Basing my discussion on interviews with some Buthelezi people located in the Makhosini area of Mahlabathini, I reconstruct some of the history of the Buthelezi clan. I specifically examine what the Buthelezi experiences of assimilation into the Zulu kingdom were. This provides an opportunity to evaluate whether the socio-political environment following assimilation provided any possibility for the articulation of counterdiscourses against Shaka's hegemony. I also examine the *izithakazelo* of the Buthelezi people I have heard used, as well as those contained in Thamsanqa Sithole's *Izithakazelo Nezibongo ZakwaZulu* (1982), and establish which members of the clan became prominent in generations following that of Phungashe and in what capacities they became influential. I investigate the reasons for the close association and collusion of some of the Buthelezi leaders, mainly Nqengelele (Mangosuthu's great-great-grandfather), with the Zulu monarchy and question how this association has influenced perceptions of Zulu and Buthelezi history since the defeat of Phungashe.

Chapter Three examines the *izibongo* of Zwide kaLanga drawn from the James Stuart Archive in the Killie Campbell Africana Library and from an interview with the Ndwandwe imbongi, Mzomusha, whom I interviewed in his home in Mngamundi, Nongoma. In this chapter, I consider accounts of the destruction of a powerful *inkosi* and the subsequent scattering of his progeny all over southern Africa, as related to me by Philemon, Anthony and Nicholas Ndwandwe of Nengeni in Nongoma, where Zwide's seat of power was once located, and by Mzomusha. I also investigate the *izithakazelo* and the histories of individuals who succeeded Zwide to determine what became of the Ndwandwe clan in the new Zulu 'nation'.

Finally, I consider in my Conclusion why the figure of King Shaka has become an almost unassailable source of Zulu and African pride. I suggest some of the implications of calling into question the dominant assumptions about a Zulu history that has been told from the perspective of the victor, King Shaka. Tied to this suggestion is a consideration of how, by virtue of its being conducted from a position of scholarly interest by a ‘Zulu’ insider and a member of the Buthelezi clan, my project attempts to position itself in such a way as to avoid serving any imperial, neo-colonial or Zulu separatist agendas, but contributes towards a more critically informed understanding of the history of KwaZulu-Natal. But the appropriate place to begin is the contextualisation of the study of *izibongo* by tracing its evolution over the last two centuries.

* * *

Much writing on Zulu history and oral literature has appeared in the last century and a half. Initially, the writings of traders, travel writers and colonial officials were read as often for their sensational content as for the (dubious) information they contained. There has been a tendency in scholarly work produced in the three main disciplines that have concerned themselves with earlier writings of travel writers like Allen Gardiner and Nathaniel Isaacs on ‘Zulu’ people (history, anthropology and literary studies) to treat these early texts as if they were written from specific disciplinary perspectives. Leroy Vail and Landeg White, in their incisive book, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History* (1991), trace the anthropological and the literary lines of writing about African oral literature, while in her PhD thesis, *Ukubonga Nezibongo: Zulu Praising and Praises* (1984), Elizabeth (Liz) Gunner sketches the history of the more literary-critical study of *izibongo*. There has also been interest from the perspective of historians that has touched the genre of *izibongo* to which I return in Chapter One when I consider specifically the long interest that has been taken in the figure of King Shaka, recounted in Carolyn Hamilton’s *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (1998), and Dan Wylie’s *Savage Delight: White Myths of Shaka* (2000).

A brief overview of the field of written history shows that King Shaka has been historicised in three stages. First, the earliest eye-witness accounts of Shaka’s rule are those of Nathaniel Isaacs and Henry Francis Fynn, who painted Shaka as a figure of “satanic monstrosity” in line with the colonial discourse current at the time geared towards discrediting Africans as savages (Wylie, 2000:137). In the mid-nineteenth century,

missionaries followed the trend of empire-building discourse begun by Isaacs in relation to Shaka. The second stage was one of more sympathetic representations of Shaka begun by colonial collectors of Zulu literature like James Stuart. However, as Carolyn Hamilton maintains, Stuart's project was to further the aims of the colonial vision of native administration first propounded by Theophilus Shepstone (1998:166). Hamilton's thesis is that the colonial discourse propagated by the writers discussed above was informed by the narratives of the people who were displaced by King Shaka's conquests from the land they had historically occupied, and that it intersected with the discourses of Zulu officialdom at various stages in the Zulu succession depending on each monarch's claim to legitimacy. Via this argument she demonstrates that the indigenous population was not silent in discourse. I concur with Hamilton's point that the indigenous voices that were assimilated into the surviving written records of settler discourse can to some extent be reconstructed with the careful reading of those records. Nonetheless, even the complex intermingling of indigenous and settler discourses did little to grant the figures and histories I am considering here their due significance. The 1920s saw a continuation of the second phase of the historicisation of King Shaka when he was valorised by Zulu and African nationalists: a valorisation which catalysed the formation of Inkatha in 1923, and reverberated as far as Paris and the Negritude movement.⁸ It was also later taken up by the Black Consciousness movement within South Africa. This valorisation continues in the present in celebrations of King Shaka day held in September of each year at Kwadukuza. The third stage is the 'revisionist' historiography conducted since the late 1960s by, among others, Shula Marks and John B. Wright. The most recent representatives of this trend are Hamilton and Wylie. 'Revisionist' historiography is also under way in some clans, as noted above with regard to the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe. I return to the contribution of the 'revisionist' trend in Chapter One when I consider how Shaka has come to be understood as he is in the present in spite of the imperial nature of his achievements.

The study of oral poetry has also come a long way to where it stands today, with disparate influences propelling it over the past century and a half. Vail and White maintain that,

From the late nineteenth century until the 1960s anthropology was associated with both imperialism and colonialism because of its self-declared privileged expertise in explaining non-Western peoples to Westerners. As Western hegemony over colonial areas crumbled after World War II, as the hitherto colonised peoples

refused to accept their status as dumb objects interpreted by anthropologists and as the realisation grew that even non-Western peoples had histories and were not chained by timeless 'traditions' and 'customs', the discipline was thrown into a prolonged crisis from which it has not yet emerged. (1991:xi)

What preceded the realisation of the inadequacy of colonial definitions of colonised people issuing from Departments of Anthropology in Europe and America, where scholars became experts on 'oral societies' from their armchairs without coming into contact with the people they were studying, was the invention of "oral man" (Vail and White, 1991:1). The evolutionist model and the methods of comparing cultural texts from European and colonised countries led scholars from Edward Tylor through Lucien Levy-Bruhl to argue that "oral man" was an earlier version of what the literate European of the time had become through evolution (Vail and White, 1991:4-8). The main shortcoming of this model and method was that the data anthropologists worked with was collected by travel writers and was often highly romanticised. The generalised conclusions reached by anthropologists proved inadequate for specific colonial situations and thus prompted a methodological shift (1991:10). This shift resulted in the cultural relativist method which departed from the racism of earlier anthropology and maintained that 'the natives' should be studied in their rural contexts where they were at their purest, because the cohesive 'tribes' in which they existed had remained unchanged by time and new influences (12).

Into this discourse explaining the inhabitants of the colonies to people in the metropolitan centres of Europe and America, Milman Parry inserted his theory of oral literature in the 1920s. His thesis, endorsed and perpetuated by many other scholars, was that "oral poetry is formulaic and traditional" (Vail and White, 1991: 16), and that people in 'oral societies' lacked individual definition and depended on group identities that are communally determined (1991:21).

When the study of oral literature in its varied forms was picked up with more seriousness in literary studies, it was again on terms determined by scholars whose assumptions drew from little empirical knowledge of the texts and traditions they were studying. It was in the 1960s that Albert Lord popularised Parry's conclusions, beginning a trend in scholarship the most influential proponent of which was later to become Walter J. Ong with the publication in 1982 of *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. What is notable is that the line discussed above was of (mostly white) scholars in the north,

i.e. Europe and North America, drawing simplistic and presumptuous conclusions about societies about which they knew little. This was largely a consequence of precolonial travel writing and colonial discursive traditions that constructed Europe's 'Others' as predictable, knowable and unchangeable, as Homi Bhabha argues in *The Location of Culture* (1994). However, as Vail and White suggest in the extract quoted above, the end of colonialism brought about the demise of the privileging of anthropology and a new era in the study of African oral literature by northern scholars was born. Ruth Finnegan's *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970) heralded the birth of a critical theory that looked away from anthropology for its methodology towards an interdisciplinarity which included reference to literary studies, history, archeology and African languages. I shall return to this below.

Over the same period, the study of *izibongo* and other closely related southern African oral genres was growing, as explicated by Gunner (1984:12-24). Gunner locates the genesis of this tradition in 1836 with Captain Allen Gardiner who made several visits to King Dingane's courts at "Gungundlovu" (eMgungundlovu) and "Congella" (kwaKhangel'amankengane) (1984:12). Thomas Arbousset, the Reverend George Champion, Henry Francis Fynn and Nathaniel Isaacs followed Gardiner, and provided the earliest written commentary on the nature of *izibongo*, the *izimbongi's* performance strategies and their dress. These commentators were travel writers or traders who remarked more on the cultural practices they observed in terms of how they differed from the cultural practices of 'home' in Europe than in their own right. It is upon commentary like that of these writers that the anthropological theories of 'oral societies' were for the most part built. Historical and literary scholarship in the last century and a half has repeatedly returned to their writings, and continues to do so in the present, as they present some of the few surviving accounts of mid-nineteenth century history and culture in KwaZulu-Natal. However, because they based their writings on limited contact with 'Zulu' people, their commentary on *izibongo* created the myth that *izibongo* were a form reserved for the aristocracy. It was to be over a century later that this myth began to be challenged when B.W. Vilakazi wrote his doctoral thesis, *The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni* (1942), in which he "insisted on the basic, important and neglected point that *izibongo* had a very broad base in Zulu society and were by no means the preserve of kings, chiefs and aristocracy" (Gunner, 1984:18).

Vilakazi's work was preceded, at the beginning of the twentieth century, by the writings of A.T. Bryant, R.C.A. Samuelson and E.W. Grant, whose interests were in historical records rather than sensational accounts. Hence they were "far more detailed in

their accounts of *izibongo*” (Gunner, 1984:13). They still held at worst dismissive and at best detached colonial attitudes towards *izibongo*, while maintaining a strong intellectual interest in the literary curiosities belonging to ‘the natives’ with whom they were dealing. Yet the detail in which these writers presented their findings paved the way for later criticism of *izibongo* that began to engage with more than just the written recordings, and to delve deeper to consider the social contexts and the performance aspects. The most influential contribution to the field of the study of *izibongo* came from James Stuart who collected “oral testimony and *izibongo* from Zulu informants” over a period of more than thirty years from 1888 to 1922 (Gunner, 1984:15). To date, Stuart’s methodology and the volume of the *izibongo* he collected, accompanied by explanatory notes, remain a touchstone in the field. His collection, archived in the Killie Campbell Africana Library and published in six edited volumes thus far, is a standard source of reference in research on *izibongo*. My dissertation is no exception as it will draw from Stuart in all three of its chapters.

Following the initial impetus to conduct work of a more scholarly nature in the early twentieth century discussed above, G.P. Lestrade wrote on form in southern African praise poetry in the 1930s (Gunner, 1984:18). He was followed by one of the first recognised African writers to conduct research on Zulu *izibongo*, B.W. Vilakazi, referred to above. A few years after Vilakazi’s thesis, in 1945, H.I.E. Dhlomo also offered some comments on *izibongo*. The field seemed to have been redefined with the entry of more Zulu scholars into the discourse on their own cultures. C.L.S. Nyembezi’s *Izibongo Zamakhosi* (1958), recognised as the first work in isiZulu that attempted to contextualise *izibongo* for a modern literate Zulu audience, seemed to confirm this turn of the tide. However, as implied by Isabel Hofmeyr with regard to scholarship on oral texts more generally, most of the work of this vanguard of Zulu scholars, particularly Dhlomo, tended to fossilise the oral tradition (1999:19). The continuing trend was largely to attempt to explain *izibongo* from the perspectives of Zulu cultural insiders to academic audiences dominated by white scholars. The intellectual climate in which these writers worked was still influenced by the preceding anthropological legacy. In the case of Nyembezi, the impetus seems to have been to preserve and explain ‘tradition’ to ‘Zulu’ people cut off from cultural continuity with the past because of changes in the organisation of Zulu society over the preceding century. What is noticeable about the interventions of these scholars is that, with the exception of Nyembezi, none seems to have sustained his contribution to the study of *izibongo*. What Nyembezi’s book achieved

though was to give more impetus to written literature, poetry in particular, in isiZulu that derived from a rediscovered but idealised and fossilised past.

Finnegan's momentous intervention in 1960 marked a moment to which present scholarship is highly indebted, even though her book still followed earlier anthropology in explaining "non-Western people to Westerners" (Vail and White, 1991:xi). In debunking earlier anthropology's simplistic assertions on oral literature, Finnegan opened the path for much more sophisticated theories that scholars, influenced by her work, started constructing. Another defining moment followed when *Izibongo: Zulu Praise Poetry* (1968), edited by Trevor Cope, carried James Stuart's work into the centre of scholarship on *izibongo*. C.T. Msimang also published a book along the same lines as Bryant's influential *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (1929) in the form of *Kusadliwa Ngoludala* (1975), a work which presented a more informed and detailed view, written in isiZulu, of a Zulu cultural insider.

The above is the discursive tradition that subsequent scholarship has inherited. Although it does not follow the neat chronological line that I have constructed here, as Hofmeyr reminds us (1999:19), the stream of commentary discussed above is the direct predecessor of the more recent research. Contemporary scholars like Jeff Opland, Russell Kaschula (both working on Xhosa oral literature), Mazisi Kunene, Gunner, Hofmeyr and Brown (and even Karin Barber working on Yoruba praise poetry) have all been, arguably, directly influenced by Finnegan. Some have continued their adherence to the Parry and Lord school of criticism, as is the case with a confessed loyalist like Opland (1998:x-xi). There has, however, continued to be a disjuncture between scholarship conducted in isiZulu and in English because of the obliviousness of scholars in one language of the need to work in the other language. In this project, I shall take some steps towards bridging that gap by making use of criticism conducted in both isiZulu and English. I now turn to a consideration of the present state of the field as a way of introducing the theoretical framework on which this research is based.

The stream of criticism on *izibongo* has continued to grow steadily, if sometimes somewhat hesitantly, over almost a century and a half since the first writings. The last two decades, however, have seen the most prolific and sustained development of literary theory to deal specifically with oral poetry. Karin Barber has been profoundly influential in the field.⁹ Although not as geared towards developing theory as Barber is, Finnegan, Gunner, Opland and Kaschula have made important contributions that have fed into the development of oral literature research. Also, the comments of various anthologists and chroniclers of South

African literature who have touched on oral literature at various points have helped develop the field. However, two recent occasions stand out as highly significant nodal points in the oral theoretical field. The first is the 1989 colloquium at the Centre for West African Studies, University of Birmingham, out of which came *Discourse and its Disguises: The Interpretation of African Oral Texts* (1989). This colloquium and the resulting publication marked the consolidation of the study of oral poetry throughout the African continent, as scholars working in diverse forms assembled to take stock of the field and map the way forward. The second occasion was the publication of *Oral Literature and Performance in Southern Africa* (1999), edited by Duncan Brown, which brought together work informed by and contributing to the theoretical developments in the field of oral literature that had taken place over the preceding three decades.

Two broad modern schools of oral literary study have manifested in recent times. The first school follows what Jeff Opland views as his role in the study of oral poetry, i.e. “collecting, presenting and explaining, if at all possible with insights gathered from the poets themselves” (1998:ix). This school ranges, at worst, from maintaining what Duncan Brown refers to as an anthropological-classificatory approach (1999:6) to, at best, arguing for the place of *izibongo* in academic discourse by explaining their past and present contexts as a way of challenging and departing from dismissive colonial readings. Into this school fall Msimang (1991a, 1991b), Ncamisile Makhambeni (1999), C.L.S. Nyembezi and O.E.H.M. Nxumalo (2002), A.C. Nkabinde (1976) (all writing in isiZulu), Opland (1983, 1992, 1998), Kaschula (2001, 2002), and D.K. Rycroft and A.B. Ngcobo (1988). Gunner, who demonstrates an awareness of developments in literary theory (1994, 1999, and in her collaboration with Mafika Gwala (1991)), can be placed at the borderlines of this school where it overlaps with the second school.

Departing from earlier literary-formalist criticism, the second school approaches oral literature with literary critical paradigms. It has availed itself of developments in poststructuralist theory to enhance its ability to deal with oral texts, as Brown informs us (1999:7). Although not always explicitly, it has also taken heed of developments in postcolonial theory, with Brown providing one of the first instances of the direct employment of postcolonial theory to theorise the field of oral literature (1999:1-15). Along with Brown, this school includes, among others, Barber (1992, 1997), Vail and White, Michael Chapman (1996), and Hofmeyr. It is on the critical debate advanced by this second school that this thesis draws most strongly for its theoretical framework.

To borrow from Brown, it may be claimed that studies of oral literature world-wide have progressed beyond their earlier anthropological-classificatory and literary-formalist bent. Brown maintains that until fairly recently “anthropological studies have emphasised the role of the text as a carrier of cultural information and paid little attention to poetic form, while literary studies have tended to remove forms from the time, place and circumstances out of which they have emerged” (1999:6). However, recent studies demonstrate, if not strong location in, then at least awareness of, more contemporary concern with combining a sociology with a poetics of oral literature through simultaneously acknowledging the textuality and the historicity of the oral texts, as argued for by Barber and Moraes Farias (1989:1).

Consequently, in studies of *izibongo*, one of the ways in which scholars have combined a sociology and a poetics is to explore the contexts of the *izibongo* more fully. Several scholars, including Opland, Gunner, Brown and Hofmeyr, have been at pains in recent years to demonstrate that the *izibongo* are not only limited to *izibongo zamakhosi* (royal *izibongo*) that have been highlighted for most of the history of oral literary studies. There are the *izibongo* of ‘ordinary’ people, women’s *izibongo*, the *izibongo* of animals and objects, etc. which require as much attention as the *izibongo zamakhosi*. But for the purpose of this argument, I confine my focus to the *izibongo zamakhosi* as Shaka, Phungashe and Zwide were all *amakhosi*.

It has also been established that *izibongo*, both Xhosa and Zulu, are only one genre in the field of what C.T. Msimang terms *ubuciko bomlomo* (oral art) (1991a:1). *Izibongo* are interrelated with and draw from a range of other forms. It is important to locate *izibongo*, in the way that Msimang does in *Inkosi Yinkosi Ngabantu*, in close proximity with the following forms: i) *izangelo* (sung narratives of the mother’s experience of marriage and/or pregnancy); ii) *imilolozelo/izidunduzelo* (lullabies); iii) *izilandelo* (children’s songs); iv) *imilozi* (bird sounds and songs); v) *izithakazelo* (clan praises); vi) *amahubo* (hymns); vii) *izaga neziqubulo* (chants and war cries) (1991a:4). Other oral forms that he discusses at some length in his book and which bear relation to the *izibongo* are *izinganekwane* (folktales), *izaga* (idioms), *izisho* (sayings) and *iziphicaphicwano* (riddles). Msimang’s discussion of these genres exposes the isolation from other forms which studies of *izibongo* have maintained. Although increasing attention has been paid to those forms that co-exist with the *izibongo*, there is a need for the study of the *izibongo* to pay more heed to the other forms that surround the *izibongo* and from which they draw in a way that studies like those of Msimang and

Makhambeni have gestured towards. The study of English translations of the *izibongo*, in particular, flattens them into two-dimensional texts lifted out of the 'Zulu' epistemologies which inform their creation and articulation. Studies that, while located strongly in the literary theory that continues to be developed, put the *izibongo* into stronger dialogue with the *izithakazelo*, *izaga*, *izisho*, and other forms might be better able to combine the poetics of the form with its sociology. Such studies can enter into more detail and be more accurate interpretations than most studies conducted in English.

In this regard, Karin Barber's theory of obscurity and exegesis in oral texts is instructive. Following Mikhail Bakhtin, Barber considers every oral text to be oriented towards an addressee, revealing an expectation that it will be interpreted (1999:27). She suggests that, as a result of oral texts being what Brown calls "shaped utterances" (1999:7), in studying these texts it is crucial to map out the discursive possibilities and constraints within which the act of communication represented by the text took place. "Meanings' are secreted in, attached to, or even withheld by, such texts through mechanisms that are not transparent and could not be deciphered without specialist knowledge" (1999:29). In the case of the *izibongo*, this implies that their meanings are cushioned in a range of other modes of oral communication, some of which have been introduced above. In the *izibongo*,

almost every attribution leads into its own world of reference – so that, from line to line, the arrow points in different directions, to different hinterlands of expansion and completion. The exegesis often journeys out from the condensed or truncated fragment across wide tracts of narrative territory – sometimes leaping across gaps to fasten another nodal point to its edges. (1999:35)

Izibongo use obscurity to differing ends depending on the contexts of their composition and performance. Given that the *izibongo* I consider in the next three chapters are amalgamations of different *izimbongi*'s views of their subjects at different times in each subject's life, obscurity and exegesis may serve the purposes of offering criticism in publicly acceptable ways, satirising the subject, and undermining people who were defeated by his forces. The texts are then interpreted in terms of these conventions of the genre by the listeners who experience their delivery. As C.T. Msimang reminds us, "*izinkondlo ziqukethe umlando. Zisichazela ngobunjalo bamaqhawe abongwayo. Zisifundisa amasu okuhlaba nokugxeka ube ubonga*" (2003:3) (Poems carry history. They explain to us the nature of the heroes being praised. They teach us ways to criticise while praising.) Gunner and Gwala suggest in the

same vein that “the textuality of *izibongo* allows for wildly disparate elements to come together both in performance of the praises, and how they are remembered, and that these constitute a discourse of the self that may be partly dissident or subversive of the dominant or official ideology” (1991:44). It is for this reason that Zulu-English translations of the *izibongo* are sometimes inaccurate when they attempt to carry across cultural meanings the equivalent of which does not exist in English.¹⁰

This is a challenge I face as a first-language isiZulu speaker conducting research on texts that are in isiZulu and also translated into English (Shaka’s *izibongo*) as well as making my own translations (Phungashe’s and Zwide’s *izibongo*). The paradigm shifts that I have to undergo as I travel back and forth between isiZulu and English mean that I commit epistemic violence against the texts and against the traditions that I am attempting to recuperate and fit into modern systems of knowledge. For me, working in the English language on ‘Zulu’ texts is already a paradigm shift. Because of, among other reasons, a shift of cultural referent, I inadvertently find myself approaching the texts from a distance that is informed by an epistemology that is no longer as strongly located in Zulu culture as it would be if I was working in isiZulu. Nevertheless, it is in literary studies conducted in English that theory has been developed to cope with the *izibongo*. The value of the theory having been developed mainly by non-Zulu speakers is that, though it does reveal significant shortcomings, it is alert to certain possibilities of which we speakers of isiZulu may not be aware precisely due to our linguistic and epistemological closeness to the texts.¹¹

Even the texts that undergo ‘cultural translation’ are unstable in their source language, i.e. isiZulu. In their performance, they are already mediated as each performance bears the imprint of the performer. When they are collected, they are altered from spoken to written texts and then translated, almost always into English, to make them more widely accessible. As Brown maintains, such texts “are generally transferred from an oral to a printed form through the agency of a literate intermediary” (1999:4).

The above point is illustrated by the texts with which I am working. Firstly, the three versions of Shaka’s *izibongo* I consider in Chapter One are heavily mediated. Trevor Cope’s version, titled “Shaka”, bears a lengthy history of mediation. James Stuart collected and amalgamated his isiZulu version of the *izibongo* from thirty-three different performances that were conducted at his request (Brown, 1998:81-2). This was followed by Daniel Malcolm’s translation of Stuart’s version, which was later ‘polished’ and published by Cope who made his own editorial intervention. Makhambeni’s and Msimang’s versions seem to draw from

Stuart/Cope's version but with a few lines that are absent from the former. Secondly, I attempted to gather Phungashe's *izibongo* by interviewing several senior members of the Buthelezi clan, but to no avail. I eventually contacted Mangosuthu Buthelezi after encountering an article in which he gives a brief analysis of the *izibongo*. The version with which he provided me and which I analyse in Chapter Two is brief and was dismissed as incomplete by a number of people I interviewed after I had received it. Yet none of them could offer any other version or direct me to anybody who knew Phungashe's *izibongo*. Finally, the first versions of Zwide's *izibongo* I encountered were in the James Stuart Archive at the Killie Campbell Africana Library. There were five versions. The earliest recorded version consists of twenty lines. Subsequent versions contain the same lines either in a different order or with certain lines omitted. A different and lengthier version was recited to me by Mzomusha Ndwandwe at his home, after which I transcribed and translated it to make the *izibongo* available for literary analysis. The value of 'cultural translation', therefore, is in making available articulations that enable our histories in South Africa to address one another beyond linguistic and cultural divides. This is crucial in a society that is trying to redefine itself away from historical exclusion and occlusion.

Brown also points out that "the printed form may... give performance genres a fixity that obviates their very significance as oral performance" (1999:7). However, these interventions, despite altering the ontology of the texts, are necessary in the recuperation of literary traditions that are now obscure. In order to recover suppressed histories and to become aware of which ones are now irrecoverably lost, it is necessary to preserve oral texts in the modern technologies of print, sound and video recordings.

In recovering texts from the past, most of the work conducted thus far has attempted to comprehend the significance of the texts in their past contexts. The central question informing this recovery is posed thus by Brown: "what does the text seek to accomplish in the spheres of political and social action, and how does it accomplish this (by what rhetorical features/formal strategies)?" (1999:7). The first step to this end proposed by Barber is to "establish as accurately as possible (always bearing in mind the impossibility of certainty or completeness in any such account) what the text *could have meant* or, rather, *could have been taken to mean*, in the context of its double relationship to its original author and audience" (1999:27). It is also important to be mindful, as Barber and Moraes Farias insist, that there are three ways in which texts bear history: i) they are produced in specific historical circumstances and hence bear the imprint of those circumstances; ii) they are transmitted

through time and hence undergo a process of erasure and layering as they are refashioned in accordance with new concerns; and, iii) many are about the past and its relation to the present (1989:2).

Yet a project like this one which seeks to reread King Shaka's *izibongo* and set them in dialogue with the more obscure *izibongo* of Phungashe and Zwide, while acknowledging the poetics and the sociology of the *izibongo*, takes as its strategy a hermeneutics that remains interdisciplinary but focuses on re-evaluating history through the reading of literature. My interest in questioning the major discourse of Zulu history stems from my attempts to reconstruct the history of my family. I have been alarmed to discover how little knowledge exists on Buthelezi history even among the elders of my family. They appear to know more about the history of the Zulu royal lineage than that of their own family. This demonstrates that there has been insufficient discussion, both oral and written, about clans other than the Zulu thus far.

The reason for such scanty discussion is twofold. Firstly, it proves that histories that have been passed down orally are highly selective. Because of the displacement of people dating back to Shaka's reign and exacerbated by colonial and apartheid fracturing of indigenous societies, clans and families have become dispersed all over South Africa. Hence little passing down of coherent Buthelezi history has taken place as that history became subsumed under the discourse of the Zulu nation with the collapse of Phungashe's power. A similar fate befell Ndwandwe history after Zwide. Secondly, written histories that have found their way into modern education curricula are also highly selective, drawing as they do from official recorded sources. The end result is that most people who have been through the education system, as well as those who have been told oral histories, have a very fragmented sense of even their own family and personal histories. There is therefore a need for a record of history that begins to construct the complex network of 'Zulu' clans and how they are historically interrelated. This would feed into the post-apartheid project of giving voice to silenced histories dating back beyond the relatively recent intervention of colonialism in the history of the region.

My interest lies in the deconstruction of the imperial history of Shaka, which has overshadowed all other significant histories in historiographic as well as literary scholarship of the Kwazulu-Natal region, through the study of *izibongo* and *izithakazelo*. It is evident from the above survey of the field of oral literature that most of the critical debate has been conducted by white scholars. This state of affairs is a reflection of the historical and material

conditions of the majority of African people in South Africa. As C.L.S. Nyembezi maintains, “*Phela uZulu wayengenalo ulwazi lokuloba phansi ngomsizi noma ulwazi lokuloba ngokuqopha ematsheni.*” (1982:1) (It should be remembered that the Zulu possessed no knowledge of writing either by pencil or by inscribing on rocks). Hence it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the Zulu language was given a written form by missionaries (Cope, 1968:23). As a result, white missionaries, colonial administrators and academics had the monopoly on writing. Almost all the surviving written accounts of the history of the region were the products of white writers. The continuing representation of African people’s histories and literary traditions by white historians, anthropologists and literary theorists is a result of a relatively low number of black people who have attained high levels of education in literary scholarship and in history since African people started having access to education of the literate mode. Also, the impoverished apartheid scholarship in African language departments of tertiary institutions, which was designed to further the aims of Bantu Education and produce African graduates who were largely qualified to become reproducers of apartheid discourses, has left a problematic legacy. Literary studies in isiZulu, for example, have failed to keep abreast of developments in theory which would enable scholars to better handle the texts on which they focus. Indeed, that the histories of African people continue to be written mostly by white scholars is a cause of embarrassment for many because it is seen as a failure to transcend colonial and apartheid legacies of ‘their’ claim to be experts on ‘us’. As Peter Childs and Patrick Williams suggest in a discussion of Homi Bhabha, “Colonial rule is necessarily enmeshed with a system of representation and, as an apparatus of power, its discourse constructs a knowledge of ‘subject peoples’ through which it variously authorizes that rule, installs racial differences, and produces the colonized as entirely knowable” (1997: 123). After colonialism, attitudes and perceptions located in the colonial relationship persist. In South Africa, this is evident in the impulse of many black readers to dismiss the work of white scholars on African people’s histories and cultures.

This project is thus a contribution to the shift towards increased self-representation by the formerly colonised of South Africa. This I do through a strategy that Caryl Phillips, a British-Jamaican novelist, sees as subverting history. In an interview with Maya Jaggi, Phillips argues for a need to subvert commonly-held views of history in the postcolonial era. He says, “[Y]ou take something which people presume they know about... and you make them look again from the point of view of people who have been written out [of that history]” (Jaggi, 1994:26). In a similar way, I aim to take nineteenth-century Zulu history and look at

its intersections with other histories that are significant to the more nuanced understanding of the history of the region for which present circumstances call. It is from the perspectives of the people who have been spoken and written out of these histories for the most part, like Phungashe and Zwide, that I want to examine Shaka's imperial history. Postcolonial discourse is enabling in this regard, and a useful starting point in subverting history is the notion Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin borrow from Salman Rushdie to title their book: that in postcolonial literature "the empire writes back" to the imperial centre (1989). The proposition that the empire articulates itself back to the imperial centre in postcolonial literature is useful insofar as it can lead us into a discussion of whether any counter-hegemonic discourses were articulated in the *izibongo* of the leaders of defeated and assimilated clans. Hence in this thesis, I am going to examine whether and how (some of) 'the empire talks back' at King Shaka in the *izibongo* of the leaders whose clans were defeated.

Where I depart from the limited view of literature taken by Ashcroft *et al* is in inserting formerly suppressed histories into dominant discourse using *izibongo*, a type of literature which they, along with many other scholars, continue to suppress by being blind to it. In the same vein, Brown exposes the myth perpetuated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) that colonised peoples were silenced by the colonisers. Brown concludes that "it is not that the colonised has been unable to speak, but that the coloniser (and too often the postcolonial critic) has been unable to hear" as a result of not being unable to understand the language of the colonised (1999:10). In the case of Phungashe and Zwide, and their clans, the language of the victor and the defeated was the same. It was a matter of the presence and absence of spaces in which to articulate subversive narratives against King Shaka. Therefore, the questions to ask for an investigation such as this one are the following: Could the conquered speak? Was there space to articulate subversive narratives through *izibongo* in the time of King Shaka? What spaces were available for articulation in later times? What shifts of identity and self-image occurred to the defeated after defeat and what were (some of) their responses to them? How did the arrival of the white colonisers alter the identities/narratives of those who had already been assimilated into the Zulu 'nation'? (i.e. were there any assimilated peoples who still harboured hopes of regaining their destabilised/altered/lost identities and did they simply join forces with their former conquerors when European colonialism began?).

In the following chapters, I investigate whether there were any instances of the empire 'talking back' to King Shaka in Phungashe's and Zwide's *izibongo* after the two *amakhosi*

had been defeated and their *izizwe* ('nations'/clans)¹² assimilated into the Zulu 'nation'. Hence my project takes the next step in the criticism of oral genres. It begins the unpacking of 'Zulu' history through the culture's *izibongo* that has been made possible by the theorisation and criticism of the *izibongo* that has been done by scholars thus far. Taking as its backdrop the work that has gone before it, which is acknowledged above, I enter into criticism of Zulu imperialism that has been suppressed by unitary, but shallow, definitions of 'Zuluness', critics of which are often dismissed as neo-colonialists if they are white and if they are black as having been co-opted into white neo-colonialist ideologies. Such critics of Zulu imperialism have also been accused of affiliation to the African National Congress (ANC) by IFP ideologues. This is thus a project that goes against the grain of simplistic unitary Zulu nationalist readings of history that are tied to IFP ideology. It begins to challenge the silencing of the defeated that has characterised 'Zulu' history, recognising that in the current post-apartheid space local history and identity can be fruitfully put in dialogue with wider unitary discourses such as that of the South African nation. Despite the seeming acceptance of the excision of defeated peoples' histories from public discourse stemming from Shaka's conquests, a project such as this calls into question the idea that the silence should continue. Perhaps self-censorship in the Buthelezi and Ndwandwe clans following their respective defeats has been one of the historical factors in the subsuming of the histories of these two clans. Political affiliation and division since the 1920s have also had an effect on articulation and silence, with Inkatha playing a key role in the elevation of the Zulu monarchy and hence the history of the Zulu clan. In the present, then, challenges to the bias of recorded history are in order. Conducted by Zulu people who no longer fall into the easy political categorisation that characterised the period of political struggle, such projects can contribute to a better understanding of the history of 'Zulu' society. Although problematising 'Zuluness', a project such as this one can also lead to the tracing of historical connections between present 'Zulu' society and other ethnic groups that were penetrated by people displaced by King Shaka's conquests in different parts of South Africa and in neighbouring countries like Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

NOTES

¹ For a discussion of the invention and manipulation of ethnicity through Inkatha politics in KwaZulu (Zululand) and Natal in the apartheid era see, for example, Shula Marks (1986a, 1987), Gerard Mare and Georgina Hamilton (1987) and Carolyn Hamilton (1998).

² Attempts by the Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini, to extricate the monarchy from its historical association with the IFP and redefine it in terms of political non-alignment have led to high tension between the King and the IFP leader. Carolyn Hamilton discusses the clash between the two leaders superbly in the introduction to her book cited above.

³ This claim was called into question in the feud between King Goodwill Zwelithini's spokesperson, Sifiso Zulu, and Buthelezi in 1994 (Hamilton, 1998:2). Zulu argued that such a position was not hereditary, as has come to be claimed in Buthelezi's lineage. Zulu's argument exposes the way in which the past has been manipulated to serve political interests and how such manipulated versions of history have been accorded authority.

⁴ See Hamilton (1998) for a discussion of the performance of the *izibongo* at Shaka day celebrations, and Brown (1998) for a study of the text.

⁵ An example of the suspicion harboured against people of other ethnic groups is the constant lamenting one hears among people in northern KwaZulu-Natal about how the situation has deteriorated since *amaXhosa* (the Xhosa people) took over the governance of the country: evidence of the ethnic-centred identity that is still mobilised from time to time to maintain IFP power in the region.

⁶ My project is funded by the National Research Foundation in its rigorous drive to promote indigenous knowledge systems. Other state funding bodies like the National Arts Council are promoting indigenous performance forms, as is the Department of Education through curriculum and institutional reforms that are geared towards redressing imbalances such as the prominence of cultures that are a legacy of apartheid. Land restitution through the Department of Land Affairs' Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights is another manifestation of reform.

⁷ I use Zulu terminology for traditional leaders in favour of the colonial terms like 'chief' and 'headman' used by Brown that were used to undermine indigenous authority. Power is centralised in the *Ingonyama* (King), a term that seems to have become established since appearing in King Shaka's *izibongo*. It is devolved through local *amakhosi* (sing. *inkosi*) and the *izinduna* (sing. *induna*) who report to the *amakhosi*. Since the end of apartheid, however, this traditional structure of authority has become increasingly infused with local government structures trickling down from the national government.

⁸ See, for example, Leopold Senghor's "Chaka", as well as Wylie's discussion of it (1998:239).

⁹ See Barber (1992, 1997).

¹⁰ My own translations are guided by two seminal texts in Translation Studies, Susan Bassnett McGuire's *Translation Studies* (1990), and Basil Hatim and Ian Mason's *Discourse and the Translator* (1990).

¹¹ Such alertness to a wide range of possibilities is demonstrated, for example, by Brown's reading of Shaka's *izibongo* which supersedes the linguistic-classificatory bent or the explication of past performance contexts of the majority of the work conducted on the *izibongo* in isiZulu.

¹² The term *isizwe* (plural *izizwe*) is used loosely to mean clan, nation or race. For the sake of clarity, I have retained the term 'clan' in this dissertation, which was first popularised by Bryant, to refer to collectives of people such as the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe.

Chapter One: “*USishaka kasishayeki kanjengamanzi*”¹: Deposing King

Shaka from Discursive Dominance

The rise of the Zulu state in the early nineteenth century under its most famous king, Shaka, is probably the best known event in the precolonial history of southern Africa. (Hamilton, 1985:1)

King Shaka is undeniably the most prominent figure in any discussion of the precolonial history of southern Africa. Viewed from the present, his rise in fame appears to be closely tied to currents that preceded, and led to, the advent of British colonial rule in the eastern part of the area that is South Africa today. Although the surviving records of ‘Zulu’ history were written by travel writers, traders and amateur historians whose work, when subjected to serious scrutiny in the last fifty years, has been found wanting, it is clear that King Shaka had already become, as his *izibongo* suggest, “*Unodumehlezi kaMenzi*” (He who is famous as he sits, son of Menzi) by the time the first written representations of him appeared in the early 1820s. His fame was encapsulated in local oral discourses that ranged from valorisation through ambivalence to demonisation. These are the narratives on which Nathaniel Isaacs (1970), Henry Francis Fynn (1950), and others claim to have based their written representations of Shaka. That claim has been disputed vociferously in recent ‘revisionist’ writing, which I discuss below.

The representation of King Shaka in these early writings precipitated the spread of his fame as far as Britain and the wider British empire, though that image was appropriated and manipulated to serve various political causes. In this chapter, I want to trace the historical representation of King Shaka that has cast him as a pervasive presence in discourse from the 1820s to the present. I limit my focus to some of the makings and remakings of Shaka in amateur and academic history, and in popular politically-oriented discourse.² I go on to offer my own view of how Shaka’s image needs to be modified when reconsidering the past in order to give a higher profile to the histories that have been considered as merely adjunct to the history of the Zulu clan for almost two centuries. Finally, I analyse the narrative of imperialism contained in King Shaka’s *izibongo*, recorded by James Stuart, C.T. Msimang

and Ncamisile Makhambeni, by focusing on the representations of Phungashe and Zwide in those *izibongo*.

Carolyn Hamilton maintains that “historical processes... have invested one particular historical symbol, that of Shaka Zulu, with such potency and with a powerful and insistent contemporary presence” (1998:3). When we examine those historical processes we can trace two genealogies of representations of Shaka that have brought him to the present as a historical symbol and a myth: one oral and often formally authorised by filtering it into written discourses; and the other documentary and predominantly hegemonic. The two genealogies of representation are not entirely distinct from each other. They intersect very markedly in places, making it difficult to decide whether some of the current meanings of Shaka have their historical roots in the oral or the written representations, as I show below.

According to Hamilton, by 1823 British traders who were trading with Delagoa Bay from their base in the Cape received reports of the prospects of trade with the Zulu kingdom. Francis Farewell, with Henry Francis Fynn and James Saunders King among his party, attempted to open trade with the kingdom. They were unsuccessful in their first attempt, failing to land on the coast of Natal (1998: 37). Their second attempt in 1824 succeeded, and Fynn and Farewell travelled to meet King Shaka (38). In Dan Wylie’s account, Nathaniel Isaacs was also a member of Farewell’s party that ran aground in the first attempt to land in Port Natal (2000:12). Out of this initial contact with the Zulu kingdom and King Shaka, Farewell, Fynn, King and Isaacs produced the first documented images of the Zulu king when they reported on him to their base. To this list, Wylie adds another adventurer and fortune seeker who lived in Natal, ‘John Ross’. Wylie claims that “... [t]he historiography of Shaka has depended on the scanty reports of this handful of disreputable adventurers”, and suggests that “[t]heir accounts are a dubious collection of documents, but they have enjoyed an almost unshakeable reputation” (67). In particular, Fynn³ and Isaacs have gone on to become central sources in studies of Shaka and his so-called ‘mfecane wars’.

The initial portrayals of King Shaka by these adventurers presented him as a “benign patron” (Hamilton, 1998: 36) in whose kingdom they acquired ivory successfully. Hamilton goes on to demonstrate that it was not until King’s commercial enterprise floundered and he could not secure the finances for a new venture that he changed his stance on King Shaka in 1826. His failure followed the shipwreck in 1825 in which he had lost his cargo and, along with it, his prospects of establishing himself as a trader independent of Farewell in whose employ he had previously been. Consequently, in a desperate attempt to gain support from the

Cape administration and from funders, King posed as a good Samaritan attempting to rescue the small band of traders who, he maintained, were stranded at Port Natal without any means to escape from the threat of the despotic and cruel monster, Shaka. King was therefore the only writer who portrayed Shaka negatively during Shaka's lifetime, contradicting his own earlier pronouncements on the king. He repeated his contradictions of his initial portrayal in 1828 when his enterprise was again under threat (Hamilton, 1998:44-5).

Hamilton suggests that the death of King Shaka in 1828 made it possible for the traders based in Natal, particularly Farewell and his party, to use him as an excuse for their involvement in the wars which had taken place within reach of the Zulu kingdom when they had to justify their actions to the Cape administration (46-8). It is thus that the image of Shaka as a cruel monster began to gain momentum, mobilised as it was to provide a justification for activities in which the traders had willingly engaged in order to maintain their commercial relations with the Zulu kingdom.

The appearance of Isaacs' *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* in 1836 (first published in London) earned wider recognition for the portrait of Shaka as a figure of unparalleled monstrosity, partially paving the way for the versions of Shaka as a bloodthirsty and despotic ruler that became current in white writing from South Africa to Britain and to other parts of the British empire. Wylie claims that

the 1840s saw the formal imposition of colonial rule over the Natal region.

The sense of looming threat from a relatively cohesive Zulu polity to the north remained a pervasive white fear... [The 1879 Anglo-Zulu War and the 1906 (so-called Bhambatha) uprising], the lesser flurries of violence in between, and the almost continuous friction of 'civil' strife within the 'Zulu' polity, served adequately to entrench Isaacs' and his immediate successors' images of "the natives'" 'endemic disorderliness and threat to white-engineered peace.' (2000:137)

Isaacs' representation of Shaka, along with Allen Gardiner's missionary account published in the same year, entrenched the image of a demonic Shaka whose moral degeneracy was a manifestation of the propensity for violence latent in every 'native'. These two accounts gave impetus to the proliferation of missionary work that complemented colonial intrusion while parading itself as bringing 'light' to 'the natives' who were steeped in savage customs. The abundance of writings by missionaries⁴ from this period using the same portrayal of King Shaka popularised by Isaacs points to the pervasive influence of his images on a colonial

culture trying to establish its roots in a new environment. Religious doctrine was deployed in the service of imperialism and provided a good motivation for establishing colonial administrative control in order to support the expanding capitalist economy. (This collusion of colonial administration, commercial interests and religious doctrine carried its discursive representations into the twentieth century.)

Portrayals of Shaka and the 'Zulu' people by missionaries were soon operating alongside visions of colonial rule that once again harnessed the monstrous Shaka to an ideology of state propounded by Theophilus Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal. For Shepstone and the Natal Native Administration, Shaka's autocratic rule provided a model for ruling the indigenous population once they had established their control over KwaZulu, where power was centralised in Shepstone (playing the role of Shaka) (Hamilton, 1998:93), and devolved through local *amakhosi* and *izinduna* as it had been under Shaka. This model of administration was eventually imposed with the defeat of the Zulu army in the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879 and the subsequent division of the Zulu kingdom into thirteen chiefdoms (57). Another writer who emerged at the end of the nineteenth century was the historian George McCall Theal⁵, who began the trend towards more scholarly studies of 'Zulu' history but maintained Isaacs' version of Shaka. However, the figure who stands out in the representation of Shaka, both because of the nature of his work and the extent of his subsequent influence, is James Stuart.

Posted for some time as acting magistrate to Ladysmith and later as assistant magistrate in Durban, Stuart conducted extensive research through conversations with many persons who were considered knowledgeable on the subject of Zulu history and cultural traditions: "Stuart pursued this subject diligently and enthusiastically in a score of interviews with African informants between 1903 and 1905 [in particular], accumulating hundreds of pages of closely written notes on the topic" (Hamilton, 1998:142). Stuart's work is an example of the intersection of the discourses of the indigenous population with colonial ideologies. Like Shepstone's researching of precolonial 'Zulu' history, Stuart's work was designed to equip him and the colonial administration with a better understanding of the 'Zulu' people in order to make colonial rule more effective. The irony of this is that Stuart has left us with an invaluable collection of data that has become central to almost all research into precolonial as well as colonial history, in particular into resistant narratives of African nationalism.

Another prominent figure to emerge alongside Stuart was A.T. Bryant who published the influential *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* and the less influential *History of the Zulu People and Neighbouring Tribes* (1964). Wylie insists that “[I]f Nathaniel Isaacs dominated the nineteenth century, less in facts than in attitudes, Bryant dominates the twentieth less in terms of attitude than in what he entrenched as ‘fact’” (2000:163). Bryant “went a long way towards solidifying Isaacs’ demonic portrait of Shaka, largely by enveloping it in an unprecedentedly dense matrix of ethnographic and linguistic detail” (163). Bryant’s *Olden Times* gained more influence than Stuart’s work because Stuart did not publish a comprehensive and cohesive consolidation of his research. In contrast, *Olden Times*, published in book form, was readily available. It was Bryant’s attempt to construct a prehistory of the various peoples inhabiting southern Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century, with a particular focus on the ‘Zulus’. Viewed differently, it was a consolidation and extension of all the stereotypes about the ‘Zulu’ people and kings, in particular Shaka, that had pervaded the preceding century. Bryant’s Shaka was the same bloodthirsty, capricious despot that had first been popularised by Isaacs and used as justification for colonial invasion.

After Bryant came a succession of historians, anthropologists and ethnographers all pursuing ‘Zulu’ history and culture, and either explicitly or implicitly calling up Isaacs’ and Bryant’s image of Shaka. This stage of Shaka’s representation reached its peak in the 1950s when, as Hamilton points out, precolonial ‘Zulu’ history was the subject of renewed interest for the apartheid government pursuing a policy of ‘retribalisation’ accompanied by the creation of ‘homelands’ for various ethnic groups (1985:2). This crop of writers includes, among others, N.J. van Warmelo, I. Schapera, and Eileen Krige.⁶

The 1960s saw the beginnings of a revolution in the historicisation of the Zulu kingdom and along with it the images of Shaka that were authored. This revolution was initiated by the end of colonial rule in several African countries, which set the stage for introducing the perspectives and narratives of African populations into written history. The distinct change was that studies were no longer conducted with the view to facilitate better control of African populations. Rather, they constituted the beginnings of the revision of records of history from the preceding century and a half. In this regard, John Omer-Cooper’s *The Zulu Aftermath* (1966) stands out as one of the texts that mark the beginning of the revision of Zulu history, a trend which has continued to the present. According to Hamilton, Omer-Cooper was one of the scholars who began the move away from ‘the great man’ conception of African history that focused almost exclusively on the significant leaders, to a

concern with the rise of states and the growth of interstate wars (1985:2). Omer-Cooper, however, fails to “question any aspect of the accepted, which is to say highly fictionalised, portrayal of Shaka” (Wylie, 2000: 193). Nevertheless, he began the trend that seeks to rescue King Shaka from the pervasive demonisation that has its roots in the colonial encounter, and to vindicate him by explaining his actions in the light of the struggle for control of the region that took place in the early nineteenth century.⁷

Shula Marks, John Wright, and Jeff Guy⁸ have all contributed to the momentum gained by the ‘revisionist’ trend of historiography that lasted through the 1970s, shifted into the ‘mfecane’ debate with Julian Cobbing’s probing in the 1980s, and has produced Hamilton’s and Wylie’s books in the last six years. Cobbing’s contribution has been to question the invention of the ‘mfecane’, i.e. the series of wars in the early nineteenth century and the resultant displacement of large numbers of people in southern Africa, and to suggest that the ‘mfecane’ was an alibi for the activities of white traders and settlers in South Africa, including trading in slaves.⁹ Wright has also been at the forefront of the ‘mfecane’ debate. Cobbing provoked a shift towards unprecedented ambivalence to the images of Shaka that had been available throughout the preceding century and a half. This shift was manifested most visibly in the papers presented at a workshop held in 1990 at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, that produced *The Debate on Zulu Origins* (1992), and a colloquium held at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1992 which resulted in the appearance of *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (1995). King Shaka has since become no longer either a military genius and great nation builder nor a bloodthirsty tyrant who murdered thousands willy-nilly. Instead, it has been demonstrated that from the inaccurate records that we possess, we cannot conclude with any authority which perceptions of Shaka are more accurate than others. Hence in scholarly discourses, Shaka is now a much more fluid figure, and representations of him are more uncertain than those that had dominated for over a century and a half prior to the advent of the ‘revisionist’ trend.

The object of ‘revisionist’ Zulu history, since its genesis in the 1960s, has been to look beyond Shaka for explanations of historical events in the making of the Zulu kingdom. Yet Hamilton and Wylie have returned to focusing squarely on King Shaka, not to offer new explanations of who he was, but to use his portrayals to critique our conceptions of the history of the KwaZulu-Natal region, and of South Africa more broadly. Both Hamilton and Wylie challenge the portraits of Shaka that have abounded since the first traders made contact with his kingdom. Hamilton’s central thesis is that the oral narratives on Shaka that predate the

arrival of traders in the region, which were both positive and negative depending on Shaka's impact on the groups who told them, were assimilated into the discourses produced by the traders and travel writers, some of which I have considered above (1998: 48-50). This thesis runs counter to that of Wylie who, while recognising that "neither Zulu nor colonial identities, nor their literary productions were forged in absolute isolation from one another" (2000:4), insists that portrayals of Shaka by white writers were totally fictional inventions designed in the interests of power (36). What both Hamilton's and Wylie's work achieves, however, is sufficiently to release Shaka from the self-assured security of the readings that he has been granted by political persuasions seeking either to vilify or to lionise him. They have, therefore, laid the ground for a project such as mine that begins to move beyond Shaka to a way of viewing history in which Shaka is not the only subject possessing agency, nor is his empire seen only through his subjects who *bonga* (praise) him, but also from the perspectives of those he defeated, in this instance Phungashe and Zwide. Space is now opened to allow a more careful recognition of the role played by figures other than Shaka and their respective clans in the making of the history of KwaZulu-Natal, as well as Shaka's role in obliterating that history and replacing it with his own and that of the Zulu clan.

As well as colonial written records, a second, 'primordial', genealogy of Shaka's representation, which is more impermanent and hence more difficult to trace, exists. It is primordial in the sense that it predates the beginning of the authored portrayals of King Shaka discussed above. The oral tradition dates back beyond the times that have been illuminated by the printed histories that are available to us. Where we connect with fragments of the tradition is in that "the Shaka in different European perorations took cognizance of the many Shakas that were heard in African voices" (Hamilton, 1998:37). Hamilton goes on to insist that if we listen closely enough to the voices in those white discourses, we can begin to distinguish those African voices from the white inventions and attitudes (50). Therefore, the oral genealogy of representations of Shaka first appears, extremely faintly, if at all, where it is co-opted and corrupted in the fictionalisation of the local political and cultural environment by King, Isaacs, and various colonial administrators and missionaries. Later, oral portrayals are given prominence in James Stuart's collection of oral testimonies, though to what degree they have been corrupted is still a subject for debate. Stuart's work exemplifies the authorisation of oral narratives through writing and through European regimes of knowledge since the white writers held a monopoly on writing, as discussed in the Introduction. In Bryant's books African voices fade to near inaudibility once again, despite his own claims of having based

his construction of southern African prehistory on oral testimonies, a claim that has been disputed by Marks, Wright and Wylie.

The formation of Inkatha in 1923 figures as an interesting moment of the intersection of portraits of Shaka deriving from the oral tradition and those available in documentary sources. Hamilton informs us that

[B]y the 1920s, Zulu nationalists were constructing a Zulu ethnic identity manifest in a Zulu cultural revival which drew on the history of the Zulu kingdom and on the story of its establishment by Shaka... This period saw the publication of a variety of writings about Zulu history through which black intellectuals began to contest the versions produced by missionaries and members of the colonial bureaucracy. (1998:17-18)

What is curious about texts produced in this time, like Magera Fuze's *Abantu Abamnyama, Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (1922), is that the views on King Shaka they present are a conflation of knowledge which appears to have been gleaned from the oral narratives that surrounded them with the views gained from written sources through their writers' mission education. Inkatha then popularised the trend of lionising Shaka as a way of rejecting colonial definitions of indigenous populations. That trend was subsequently picked up in other contexts by the Negritude, and later the Black Consciousness movements (as well as by some prominent members of the ANC, like Albert Luthuli in what was then Natal), mobilising simplistic images of Shaka as a symbol of military organisation and discipline as well as a great statesman. In a similar way, the later, more politically-oriented Inkatha used Shaka's image in reaction to apartheid rule as a way of revaluing a Zulu identity that had been undermined since the advent of colonialism. The contemporary incarnation of Inkatha as the Inkatha Freedom Party continues to harness the figure of King Shaka to serve political ends, as I have indicated in the Introduction.

However, in the final analysis, even as they purport to provide a record of the past 'as it was', oral sources can only be a reinvention of that past in the present. They bear the imprint of the ideological reworkings of events over time from their occurrence to the present. Therefore, the authority with which oral records can be invested rests on seeing them as views of the world that are held in some sectors of any society, both unofficial and without access to space in which to be articulated within hegemonic discourses, and at the official centres. This authority is complicated by the complex layering of oral-print influences that 'oral' records

often reflect: from oral origins, to being assimilated into written discourses, and then returned to oral form, by which time they bear the imprint of attitudes and (sometimes inaccurate) conclusions reached by the literate intermediaries. The complexity of oral records is hinted at by Leonard Thompson when he suggests that “[T]here is, for example, a prodigious feed-back into the living traditions from the published works: the most illiterate informant is liable to cite as tradition facts and interpretations that he has derived at second hand from Bryant, or Soga, or Ellenberger” (1969:5). For this reason, I have defined my project as an attempt to recuperate suppressed histories from the perspective, and for the purposes, of the present concerns of our society, using some aspects of written records of history as well as oral histories that are available now. And since many written records from the past claim to have absorbed oral discourses, it makes almost impossible the task of distinguishing facts from fiction created either by the ‘informants’ who were interviewed by the likes of James Stuart or by missionaries and colonial writers, and absorbed back into popular oral history. In the end, this undermines the insistence by some scholars that oral records of history should be checked against written sources in order to isolate the ‘facts’. It also makes what we know about the past more fluid, with the implication that the images of Shaka, Phungashe and Zwide that will emerge out of this dissertation are constructs based on stories that offer different versions of these figures in each of the contexts from which the information has been drawn.

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From the above discussion, it is clear that although the symbol, myth and images of King Shaka are often dogmatically stabilised by political groupings like the IFP, the figure of King Shaka remains available for questioning and reinvention. My own consideration of Shaka in this thesis is limited to the views on him carried in one form of public discourse, i.e. his *izibongo*, which no doubt had his own sanction. Through engagement with the narrative of imperialism that celebrates Shaka’s defeat of Phungashe kaNgwane and Zwide kaLanga, among others, I want to suggest that the Zulu culture that was imposed on all the peoples who were defeated by Shaka was a totalising culture that absorbed some elements of the cultures of the defeated peoples and obliterated those that were of no use to it. Hence the silencing, and subsequent erasure and replacement with the history of the Zulu clan, of the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe histories with which I am concerned here.

There are many parallels between British colonialism and Zulu imperialism, as they were experienced in the present KwaZulu-Natal region, that we have not yet come to fully appreciate. In an introduction to Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, Dan Jacobson says that,

A colonial culture is one which has no memory. The discontinuities of colonial experience make it almost inevitable that this should be so. A political entity which has been brought into existence by the actions of an external power; a population consisting of the descendants of conquerors;... and of dispossessed aboriginals;... a prolonged economic and psychological subservience to a metropolitan centre... One hardly needs to labour the point that such conditions make it extremely difficult for any section of the population to develop a vital, effective belief in the past as a present concern, and in the present as a consequence of the past's concerns. (1971:7)

He goes on to state that “[p]recisely because the sense of history is so deficient, [the historical enmities between the coloniser and the colonised] tend to be regarded as so many given, unalterable facts of life, phenomena of nature,... little open to human change or question...” (7). With minor alterations, Jacobson could well be describing the relationship between Shaka's Zulu kingdom and its conquests.

Present 'Zulu' society is an entity consisting of descendants of conquerors alongside descendants of the conquered and those elevated by the conquerors to positions of authority (e.g. Mangosuthu Buthelezi's lineage). The coherence of this entity is predicated on a porous historical record that easily lends itself to manipulation in order to generate a centripetal narrative, espoused most vocally by Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the IFP, that maintains hierarchies of privilege and suffocates dissension. The intervention of British colonialism has, in some ways, served to maintain these hierarchies of privilege by shifting attention away from the contestations of power, culture and history that would presumably have taken place had attention not shifted to resisting intrusion by British settlers and Boers in the Zulu kingdom in the mid-nineteenth century. Moreover, the simplistic assertions about Zulu history and King Shaka that continue to be advanced even in the present to rebuff white versions of local history have been made possible by the discontinuities in the histories of families and clans wrought by both Zulu and colonial conquest, each in its own way. Hence the ability of the IFP-sponsored version of Zulu history to offer itself as the only alternative to missionary, colonial and all critical ('white') versions. The deficiency of the historical record

thus leaves people whose personal or clan histories were erased and replaced with Shaka's history and the singular history of the Zulu clan incapable of rejecting either of these alternatives and offering contesting versions instead. Where alternative versions exist, as I explored briefly in the Introduction, they are minor discourses in unofficial spaces. In that way, then, the maintenance of privileged positions like that of Buthelezi as *uNdunankulu wesizwe* (traditional prime minister) perpetuates itself through exploiting the gaps in history to the point where he can dispute aspects of the Zulu clan's own traditional cultural institutions. The case in point here is the occasion that is discussed briefly by Hamilton when Buthelezi was challenged by the spokesperson for the Zulu monarchy, Sifiso Zulu, that the office of *uNdunankulu* was not hereditary in earlier Zulu society, as Buthelezi has always claimed (1998:2). It is clear, therefore, that cultural traditions of a people without a systematic record of their past are open to reinvention, and new versions are able to be passed off as 'tradition' and 'custom', words that are often employed to shore up conservative agendas based precisely on successfully inventing the past to fill gaps in the culture's memory. With this as a backdrop, let us then consider the imperial narrative in King Shaka's *izibongo* as it relates to Phungashe kaNgwane wakwaButhelezi and Zwide kaLanga wakwaNdwandwe.

Sibusiso Nyembezi maintains that “[I]zibongo ziyincwadi kaZulu. Phela uZulu wayengenalo ulwazi lokuloba phansi ngomsizi noma ulwazi lokuloba ngokuqopha ematsheni. Izigigaba ezibalulekile zazibekiswa ekhanda. Kulula-ke uma zibekiswa njengezibongo” (1982:1) (*Izibongo* are the book of the Zulu. It must be remembered that the Zulu possessed no knowledge of writing by pencil or writing by inscribing on rocks. Important events were kept in the head (memory). It is easier then if they are kept as *izibongo*). Nyembezi goes on to explain (royal) *izibongo* as a form of biography of an *inkosi*, chronicling his life from childhood through his rule, informing the listener/reader about his *amabutho* (regiments), his *imizi* (residences), his enemies and his battles. Focusing on the aspect of history in *izibongo*, C.T. Msimang argues that “[O]lalele imbongi igedeza, angafunda wonke umlando wesikhathi leso inkosi eyayibusa ngaso” (1991b:367) (Anyone who is listening to the *imbongi* praising can learn the entire history of the period in which the *inkosi* reigned). When we look at Shaka's *izibongo* in particular, we notice that they “evoke the power, majesty, and achievements of the king; [they] establish the lines of his legitimacy [by tracing his ancestry], explore the nature of his rule... and evoke pride in the growth of a powerful nation” (Brown, 1998: 97). Nyembezi offers a succinct discussion of the image of King Shaka evoked in his *izibongo*: he struck terror in the populace of his kingdom, in his enemies and in the *amakhosi*

of neighbouring groups that were his potential conquests (1982:30-32). Nyembezi views this image as heroic and admirable. His Shaka is the imperial Shaka that I explore here, firstly by considering the general persona of Shaka and secondly the way Phungashe and Zwide are represented.

In his *izibongo*, Shaka is “*Ilembe eleq’ amany’ amalemba ngokukhalipha*” (“Axe that surpasses other axes in sharpness”) (line 7)¹⁰. Nyembezi’s interpretation is that Shaka was named thus “...*lapho...ehlabana ezimpini, kungekho ngwazi edla ubhedu kuye... Nangempela wayekhaliphile, ephehlwe weva, enjengomlilo. Wayekhaliphe ngaphezu kwamanye amalemba... NawoZwide nabo babekhaliphile, kodwa lonke labacekela phansi*” (1982:30) (...when [he] was succeeding in battles, when there was no ‘stabber’ that could surmount him. Indeed Shaka was sharp, having been stirred until he was potent, being like fire. He was sharper than other hoes.¹¹ Even the Zwides who were also sharp were brought to ground by it (the hoe)). Nyembezi goes on to offer further interpretations of fragments of Shaka’s *izibongo* that demonstrate his might:

*Ozulu lizayo khwezan’ abantwana,
Ngabadala bodwa abazozibalekela.*

He who is an oncoming storm, pick up the children,
For it is only the adults who will flee by themselves. (63-4)

Nyembezi explains these lines as referring to that “[u]kuzo kwalo ilembe, beliza lingasadle nkobe zamuntu, lapho lifika khona lisizile, liqothe imbokode nesisekelo... ubeqhamuka kubande amathumbu, ukuqhamuka kwakhe kufana nokuqhamuka kwesilo: USilwane helele emizini yabantu” (1982:31) (When the hoe came [to attack], he came at great speed, when he arrived he killed obsessively, killing all in sight... when he came into sight [people’s] intestines went cold, his appearance was like that of a lion: The animal who appears in people’s homes). This suggests that Shaka overwhelmed his opponents and killed great masses of people; and that his appearance was like that of a wild animal to the people he attacked.

Nyembezi further discusses Shaka as having struck terror in people’s hearts. He suggests that his temper made people shake with fear. The example he cites is:

*Odabule kuNdima noMgovu,
Abafaz’ abanendeni baphuluza;
Imikhubulo bayishiy’ izinqindi.
Imbewu bayishiya semahlangeni.*

He who travelled across Ndimma and Mgovu,
 And women who were with child gave birth easily;
 The newly planted crops they left still short,
 The seed they left amongst the maize-stalks.¹² (49-52)

Other examples of lines that construct the imperial Shaka in his *izibongo*, which appear in Ncamisile Makhambeni's version of Shaka's *izibongo* but not in Stuart/Cope's, and which I have translated, include:

Amanz' omthombo wakwaNobamba,
Engiphuze kuwo ngagangatheka,
Ngaphos' ukudliwa zimamba. (99-101)

Waters of the spring of Nobamba,
 At which I drank and went mad,
 And nearly got eaten by mambas.

and

Indlondlo yakithi kwaNobamba
Indlondl' ehamba yenza amacala. (158-9)

Snake of our home at Nobamba
 Snake that goes about committing crimes.

The point I wish to make here is that the view of Shaka that was disseminated through his *izibongo* was one that Buthelezi and Ndwandwe people, whose *amakhosi* Shaka had defeated, had to buy into. Along with this view of Shaka as a supremely heroic leader were articulated the reasons why he was such: he defeated Phungashe and Zwide, among others. Hence the successful construction of Shaka's majesty was achieved through pitting him against Phungashe, Zwide and the other *amakhosi* he defeated. When his 'trophies' were enumerated, his supremacy became unquestionable, rendering these *amakhosi* simply weak. Shaka dwarfs them when presented through grand epithets like "*uDlungwana*" (Ferocious one) (line 2), "*uNomashovushovu*" (Voracious one) (14), and "*uSiphepho-shunguza*" (Rushing wind) (244), as well as in metaphors that cast him as various types of fierce animals and birds, e.g. "*indlovu*" (elephant) (211), "*Inyon' edl' ezinye*" (Bird that eats others) (279), "*ingwe*" (leopard) and "*ingonyama*" (lion) (306).

When we turn to the two 'trophies' with which I am concerned, Phungashe and Zwide, we see that they are represented in the *izibongo* in disparaging terms. Phungashe, who was one of Shaka's early conquests, does not seem to have been a conquest of much

significance, which suggests that he was one of the minor leaders in the region. He is considered only briefly in the following lines of Shaka's *izibongo* that appear in Stuart/Cope's version:

[UShaka] Obesixhosho *singamatsh' aseNkandla,*
Abephephel' izindlovu uba liphendule,
Aphephel' uPhungashe wakwaButhelezi.

He [Shaka] was a pile of rocks at Nkandla,
 Which was a shelter for the elephants in bad weather,
 Which sheltered Phungashe of the Buthelezi clan. (87-89)

...

UGasane kade lubagasela:
Lwagasel'Phungashe wakwaButhelezi.

The attacker who has long been attacking them:
 He attacked Phungashe of the Buthelezi clan. (121-2)

...

Uhelele engimbon' ukwehla kwezikaMangcengeza;
Kwathi kwezikaPhungashe wanyamalala.

Hawk that I saw descending from the hills of Mangcengeza,
 And from those of Phungashe he disappeared. (155-6)

He is also represented in these further lines that appear in Msimang's version:

Uthi lwempundu oluhlal' izikhova,
Ngoba luhlale uPhungashe wakwaButhelezi. (81-2)

Gatepost on which owls sit,
 Because Phungashe of the Buthelezi sat on it.

The above lines confirm that Shaka's victory over Phungashe was not of great significance. They pass glancing commentary on where Phungashe is said to have escaped to when he had been defeated, i.e. Nkandla; to Shaka's attack on him and his people up in the hills of Babanango; and they present Shaka as a gatepost on which Phungashe sat. The emphasis in these lines is on Shaka's superiority over Phungashe.

Zwide, on the other hand, was a highly prized conquest as he was one of the major rulers in the region alongside Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa, with whom he was competing for dominance. Zwide defeated Dingiswayo and subsequently moved against Shaka, who had taken power in the Zulu clan after the death of his father, Senzangakhona, and in the

Mthethwa clan after Dingiswayo's death at the hands of Zwide. Zwide's defeat is therefore greatly celebrated in Shaka's *izibongo*:

*UBholokoqa bazalukanisile,
Zalukaniswe uNoju noNgqengenyeye,
EyakwaNtombazi neyakwaNandi;
Yayikhiph' eshoba libomvu,
Ikhishwa elimhlophe lakwaNandi...*

The open-handed one, they have matched the regiments,
They were matched by Noju and Ngqengenyeye,
The one belonging to Ntombazi and the other to Nandi,
He brought out the one with the red bush,
Brought out by the white one of Nandi... (16-19)

This is a retrospective look at the pitting of Shaka's and Zwide's armies against each other in the lengthy and devastating war that was fought in three battles, according to Nyembezi (1982:33). Noju was "one of Zwide's councillors who conspired with Shaka to betray him" (Cope, 1968:89), whom I discuss at more length in Chapter Three from the perspective of some Ndwandwe people, and Ngqengenyeye was one of Shaka's generals. The metaphor used, which is translated inaccurately, is that of two bulls squaring against each other, one being from the home of Ntombazi (Zwide's mother) and the other from that of Nandi (Shaka's mother). In the end, the bull with the red tail (Zwide's *impi*) is "brought out", i.e. gored, by the one with a white tail (Shaka's *impi*) according to Stuart's interviewee, Baleka kaMpithikazi, who recreates Shaka's words (Webb and Wright, 1976:12). Cope suggests that this metaphor alludes to Shaka's luring of Zwide's *impi* into Zulu territory where it was finally defeated. This, according to Nyembezi, occurred when, after the first two battles between the Ndwandwe and the Zulu *izimpi* (armies), Shaka and his advisers devised a strategy to beat a retreat across the Thukela river, feigning flight. When Zwide's *impi* was finally tired and hungry after tracking Shaka's over extensive tracts of land, the latter turned on the Ndwandwe and *bagwaz' ibhece* (meaning they routed the Ndwandwe with ease) (1982:34).

It was after this battle that Shaka became:

*Umxoshi womuntu amxoshele futhi;
Ngimthand' exosh' uZwide ozalwa uLanga,
Emthabatha lapha liphuma khona,
Emsingisa lapha lishona khona;
UZwide wampheq' amahlonjan' omabili.*

Pursuer of a person and he pursues him unceasingly;
 I liked him when he pursued Zwide son of Langa,
 Taking him from where the sun rises
 And sending him to where it sets;
 As for Zwide, he folded his two little shoulders together. (100-4)

This is a celebration of Shaka's routing of the Ndwandwe and Zwide's escape northwards, according to Mzomusha Ndwandwe (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview), even though Zwide's flight is presented as being from the east to the west. I also give this incident fuller discussion in Chapter Three. The next image of Shaka in relation to Zwide is of his being:

UMagongobala!
Ophekwe ngembiz' ende yakwaNtombazi
Waphekwa wagongobala.

He who gets stiff!
 He was cooked in the deep pot of Ntombazi,
 He was cooked and got stiff. (171-3)

According to Mzomusha,¹³ this refers to Shaka having used Zwide's *intelezi* (medicine), which he acquired with the collusion of Noju and Zwide's sister, Maqinase, to win the final battle against the Ndwandwe. He was therefore cooked in Ntombazi's pot, an allusion to having been treated with the *intelezi* Ntombazi used to brew for Zwide and which was the key reason behind his successes in the battle (2003d:interview).

Shaka is further eulogised for his success over Zwide in a lengthy section in Stuart/Cope's version of his *izibongo*:

UMaswezisela wakithi kwaBulawayo,
Oswezisel' uZwide ngamagqanqula.
Izulu elimagwagwaba likaMageba,
Elidume phezulu kuNomangci,
Laduma' emva kwomuzi eKuhobokeni laqanda,
Lazithath' izihlangu zaMaphela naMankayiya,
Amabheqan' ezimpaka asal' ezihlahleni...

Our own bringer of poverty at Bulawayo,
 Who made Zwide destitute by great strides.
 The sky that rumbled, the sky of Mageba,
 That thundered above Nomangci mountain,
 It thundered behind the kraal at Kuhobokeni and struck,
 It took the shields of the Maphela and the Mankayiya,

And the little melons of the Zimpaka were left on the vines... (178-184)

Here Shaka is celebrated for having subdued Zwide with his great power. He is then referred to as the thunder of Mageba (his great-great-grandfather), not “sky” as Malcolm has translated it, that thundered above Nomangci (near Nkandla) (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview) and took the shields of Zwide’s *amabutho*, aMaphela and aMankayiya. This happened at the final battle where the two *amabutho* suffered heavy losses. As a result of the languor with which they fought, the above lines suggest that it seemed as if their *izihlangu* (shields) had been swept out of their hands by thunder, leaving them defenceless. Hence the Zulu army could rout them with ease. In Mzomusha’s interpretation, the Izimpaka took flight and their *amabheshu* were left hanging off the trees where they snagged as they ran past (line 184). Malcolm seems to have confused *ibhekle* (a young pumpkin/melon) and *ibheqe* (*ibheshu*), and has hence mistranslated the image.

The lines discussed above are followed by a litany of Zwide’s sons who were killed in the war: Nomahlanjana, Mphepha, Nombengula, Dayingubo, Sonsukwana; as well as other people who were close to Zwide: Mtimona, Mpondo-phumela-kwezinde, Sikloloba-singamabele, and others. Shaka is then advised to cease waging war against the Ndwandwe in what seems like a rhetorical savouring of the victories that Shaka has been credited with in the preceding lines:

*Buya Mgengi phela indaba usuyenzile,
UZwide umphendul’ isigcwelegcwele,
Namuhla futhi usuphendul’ indodana.
USikhunyana uyintombi ukuganile
Ekufunyanis’ uhlez’ enkundlen’ esibayen’ eNkandla,
Engaz’ ukuth’ amabuth’ akho anomgombolozelo.*

Return, Trickster, you have finished this matter,
As for Zwide, you have made him into a homeless criminal,
And now today you have done the same to the son,
Sikhunyana is a girl and he has married you,
He found you sitting in council in the cattle-fold at Nkandla,
Not knowing that your soldiers had a cross-questioning. (198-204)

Nyembezi suggests that these lines refer to Sikhunyana’s, Zwide’s son’s, conduct after Zwide’s defeat: after Zwide’s death in the north where he had fled, Sikhunyana took over the leadership of the Ndwandwe and sought to avenge his father’s ousting. He was easily defeated by Shaka and again fled to seek refuge, this time among the Thonga people

(1982:34-5). The above lines, therefore, are a reference to Sikhunyana's attack on Shaka and the ease with which his army was repelled by that of Shaka. I return to Sikhunyana's party's defeat in Chapter Three.

This long section devoted to Zwide concludes with another allusion to Ntombazi's nefarious use of medicines, suggesting also that the Ndwandwe people used witchcraft to achieve their ends:

*Inkonyan' ekhwele phezu kwendlu kwaNtombazi,
Bathi iyahlola,
Kanti yibo bezaz' ukuhlola...*

Calf that climbed on top of a hut at Ntombazi's kraal,
They said it was scouting,
But it was they who prided themselves on scouting... (208-210)

These lines are also inaccurately translated. They refer to what Nicholas Ndwandwe says was an inexplicable occurrence that took place when *umuzi kaZwide* (Zwide's homestead) woke up to find a calf on top of Ntombazi's house (2003c: interview). Line 209 implies that the response of the people of Zwide's *umuzi* was that the calf was a harbinger of disaster. This response is seized on in line 210 with a suggestion that it is the Ndwandwe who knew themselves to be agents of disaster (with their use of witchcraft). Several other references to Zwide, Ntombazi and Zwide's people are made in the remainder of the *izibongo* (lines 211-212, 288-9, 346-7 and 385-388), but these lines are repetitions of what has already been established in the lines discussed above.

The representations granted Phungashe and Zwide in Shaka's *izibongo* that I have discussed above lead me to the conclusion that these *izibongo* are an instance of empire-building discourse that silences and obliterates a sense of pride in Buthelezi and Ndwandwe people, rupturing continuity with their pasts, a phenomenon that has lasted from Shaka's time to the present. After defeating a group he waged war against, Shaka would, according to Theophilus Shepstone, "intermingle [the people] as much as possible, and so rule them as to destroy their old associations..." (quoted in Hamilton, 1998:93). Although we need to accept Shepstone's comments with extreme caution given the disrepute of the discourses of the British empire, it appears that with this reorganisation of social structures, the establishment of *amakhanda* (military headquarters) into which all young to middle-aged men were conscripted, and ideological manipulation through discourses like his *izibongo* that painted a heroic image of him, Shaka effectively silenced the histories of defeated peoples. The rupture

of historical continuity for the people who were assimilated into the Zulu nation was completed through discursive substitution of the past of the Zulu clan for their 'national' pasts. In this case, even the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe ancestries were erased and replaced with the Zulu ancestry as the mythical religious figures on whom the nation's prosperity depended. The new nation was *isizwe sikaPhunga noMageba* (the nation of Phunga and Mageba), that of Shaka's great-great-grandfathers (who were twins). The hegemonic position of Zulu history has subsequently been passed down from Shaka's time to the present: all 'Zulu' people are now addressed as "*Mabandla kaMjokwana kaNdaba*", "*nina bakaMalandela*" and "*nina bakaMthaniya*", confirming that Shaka's ancestors, like Ndaba, Malandela and Shaka's grandmother, Mthaniya, have replaced other clans' ancestors. Even "Zulu" was the name of one of Shaka's early ancestors. The history of the Zulu clan has therefore confirmed its place as the common history of all the so-called Zulu people.

When returning to the *izibongo* discussed above, it can be understood how this substitution has been achieved. The optic of Shaka's *izibongo* sees him as the supreme hero and, as mentioned above, the leaders he is said to have defeated as objects of scorn and ridicule. The *izibongo* then ask Buthelezi and Ndwandwe people to view their own leaders as simply weak and defeated. Consent to accept Shaka as superior to both Phungashe and Zwide was either voluntary or generated through coercion, as many of the writers discussed in the genealogy of representations of Shaka above have obsessively repeated. After the initial stages when coercion would be required, with the stabilisation of the new social formation the erasure and replacement of Phungashe and Zwide and the histories of their respective clans would have become self-perpetuating as people sought to attain security in the new nation. Security would have been attained by assimilating the hegemonic discourses of the new nation, which presented the history of the Zulu clan as the common national history. Therefore Shaka's *izibongo* "served as a discursive means of stabilising society and creating social cohesion" (Brown, 1998:91). The distinctive cultural practices that people of various clan backgrounds brought with them into the geographic areas they came to inhabit once most of present day KwaZulu-Natal had become Shaka's kingdom were therefore assimilated into Zulu culture. Hence they became mutations of 'Zulu' culture rather than cultural practices with their original clan identities.

In conclusion, if the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe people surrendered their land to Shaka's control thus diminishing their sense of home; if Zulu heroes were substituted for their own clans' heroes; and if their cultural practices and symbols (including their *amahubo*) were

either assimilated into Zulu national culture or discarded and replaced with new ones: then the versions of Shaka that have come down to us through the two genealogies of representation traced above are not sufficient. They fail to capture the complexity of Shaka by insufficiently putting this figure into dialogue with views of him from the perspectives of the people (and their progeny) his *amabutho* defeated. Consequently, they continue to maintain Shaka in a position of discursive dominance, keeping figures like Phungashe and Zwide subservient. In particular, the publicly-available popular images of Shaka that are a reaction to white historical representations too easily accept the historical record as immutable and beyond question. Indeed Shaka's discursive dominance is understandable given that he was the ultimate victor in the history of the present KwaZulu-Natal region from the early nineteenth-century. Also, after his death his image lent itself easily to manipulation for various sorts of political expedience. But then one of the consequences of Shaka's continued dominance is the suppression of other significant histories of KwaZulu-Natal, which are crucial to the present reshaping of South African society at large. Therefore, the argument that Shaka's dominance should be maintained because he was the victor becomes untenable. This confirms the need for hearing other voices in history and setting them in dialogue with the versions of Shaka we have available to us today through his *izibongo* and other forms of representation. In that way, we may begin to recover some of the histories that have, until now, been hidden under the various versions of the history of the Zulu clan masquerading as the common history of 'Zulu' people. In the next two chapters, I set Phungashe's and Zwide's *izibongo*, respectively, in dialogue with Shaka's and the versions of Shaka that have come down to us. Through this, I begin to recoup Buthelezi and Ndwandwe histories: the empire begins to speak back.

NOTES

¹ "He who beats but is not beaten, unlike water" (Cope, 1968:19). This translation is inaccurate. Daniel Malcolm's translation of King Shaka's *izibongo* is littered with inaccuracies, but I do not offer my own translations of the same lines in this dissertation for two reasons: i) as a way of 'throwing my arms up' at the presumptuousness of people like Stuart, Malcolm and Cope in thinking they could translate Zulu cultural texts into English with authority; and ii) as a way of claiming a cultural space that cannot be fully translated and hence letting the *izibongo* resist readers who are not proficient in isiZulu. Yet despite their shortcomings, Stuart, Malcolm and Cope have made available and accessible voices that would otherwise not have been heard had Stuart not conducted his research. Also, Stuart's own rationale for his work notwithstanding, the articulations he made available have transcended the narrow confines of informing colonial rule for which they were originally intended. Instead, they have been variously taken up to resist and subvert official authority.

² My tracing of this genealogy is by no means exhaustive, but simply highlights the moments and texts that have had a lasting influence up to the present. Also, the limitations of space have necessitated my excluding representations of Shaka in fiction.

³ Fynn has only been influential since the 1950 publication of his *Diary*, which Patrick Brantlinger maintains was “cobbled together” by its editors (in Wylie, 2000:ii).

⁴ For examples of the copious missionary writings following on from Isaacs see Wylie (2000:138-142).

⁵ See especially *History of South Africa* (vol. 3) (1900).

⁶ See van Warmelo (1935), Schapera (1937, 1956), and Krige (1950).

⁷ For a recent rendition of this argument see Ngubane (2003).

⁸ See Marks (1969, 1986b), Wright (1989, 1992), and Guy (1980).

⁹ See Cobbing (1988).

¹⁰ My line references are based on James Stuart/Trevor Cope’s version of the *izibongo*. However, Nyembezi’s discussion draws from his own version, which contains some lines that are not in Stuart/Cope’s text. In instances where I refer to such lines, I use Nyembezi’s line references.

¹¹ For Nyembezi an *ilembe* is a hoe whereas Malcolm translated it as an axe in the Stuart/Cope version.

¹² The translation fails to capture the allusion contained in these lines. The lines suggest that upon Shaka’s invasion it was terror that caused pregnant women to go into premature labour and that people took to their heels and deserted their fields and homes.

¹³ From here onwards, I use the first names of my sources where there is more than one person with the same surname being referred to in the chapter.

Chapter Two: Hearing the Subaltern: Phungashe Spoken and Written Back into History

“Can the subaltern speak?” asks Gayatri Charkravorty Spivak in an essay in which she discusses the problem of representation and the unrepresentability of some subject positions in imperial and post-colonial discursive practices (1988:283). For Spivak, following Ranajit Guha and the Subaltern Studies Group’s definition, ‘subaltern’ is a term used “as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (Guha quoted in Childs and Williams, 1997:161). For this discussion, I use ‘subaltern’ analogously to refer to particular individuals and groups in Zulu society which experienced military defeat and subordination in the period of the expansion of the Zulu kingdom in the early nineteenth century. Recasting Spivak’s question for the purpose of this project then, I wish to ask: If people who have been effectively marginalised, suppressed and silenced by the long traditions of imperial political, economic and discursive practices are to be rescued from obscurity, can their voices be recovered and allowed to speak in altered contexts after the end of imperial domination?

In this chapter, I want first to explore the question of whether and how articulations by people who have been silenced can be made available again. I begin by testing the limitations of Spivak’s ideas around representation and the subaltern. I then go on to attempt a retrieval of discourse that was marginalised within the Zulu nation following King Shaka’s conquests as well as suppressed by official colonial and apartheid discursive practices, i.e. Phungashe’s *izibongo*. This discussion is followed by a consideration of Buthelezi history after their conquer via the *izithakazelo* of the Buthelezi clan. I conclude this chapter by pointing to some of the revisions of Buthelezi history and the concomitant social mobilisation that are taking place among Buthelezi people.

Spivak’s answer to her question of whether the subaltern can speak is negative because “in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak” (1988:287). If the subaltern cannot speak, then the trap that postcolonial, feminist and other theorists often fall into is to presume to be able to represent (to either stand in for or to portray) the subaltern. Yet, Spivak argues, the subaltern, as in the case of the participants in the various uprisings against the Raj in India, is totally unrepresentable in colonial discourse. This unrepresentability results from the subaltern being

only produced by the subject effects, the inscriptions, found in colonial

historiography: 'the peasant' is marked only as a pointer to an irretrievable consciousness. There is no subaltern voice that can be retrieved or made to speak, only the designations of texts that construct the peasant resisters as 'criminals' or 'mutineers'... [Hence] critics should resist the desire to retrieve the voices silenced by imperialism, first because they are irretrievable and secondly because such a move would subscribe once more to the humanist notion of the voice as the free expression of an 'authentic' individuality. (Childs and Williams, 1997:163)

For Spivak, then, the solution is twofold: first the critic must not seek to recover the subaltern's voice, but must, instead, point to the silence of the subaltern that s/he cannot undo; and secondly, in pointing to that silence the most important thing is that the critic should maintain a precise awareness of her/his subject position.

The problem with Spivak's methodology is that it limits the possibilities of hearing silenced voices in history by the same gesture through which it seeks to give subalterns prominence in discourse. Drawing as it does from poststructuralism, the methodology insists on the writing critic as a subject who is unable to understand any but her/his own subject position. If the starting point for the postcolonial critic, as Spivak's formulation suggests, should be the disabling position that s/he is incapable of revitalising articulations that were not recorded at the time of their enunciation, then this diminishes the critic's ability to recover previously marginalised or suppressed histories. Pushed this far, Spivak's ideas result in a contradiction: while she acknowledges that there is a distinction and a distance between theory and political strategy, her theorising curtails the critic's ability to access the discourse of the subaltern in order, through that discourse, to write back into history people that have been written out, a political strategy utilised by Caryl Phillips.¹ Given Duncan Brown's suggestion, touched on in the Introduction, that it is "increasingly clear that it is not that the colonised has been unable to speak, but that the coloniser (*and too often the postcolonial critic*) has been unable to hear" (1999:10) (my emphasis), then the recovery of silenced and marginalised voices in history is possible. Such a project of recovering obscure discourses undermines the popular myth of the 'silence' of dominated peoples in the era of imperialism, as Brown argues (9-10). And the recovery of the discourses of previously subjugated peoples (where it is possible) makes available articulations that would otherwise be lost if we followed Spivak's line that the role of the postcolonial critic is simply to point to the silences and the absences of the subaltern in discourse. In the end, it is only in the areas where

marginalisation and suppression have eroded subjugated peoples' discourses to the point where there is nobody left who possesses knowledge of those historical and cultural discourses that the memory of a culture is finally lost, although even then, written records may offer limited possibilities of recuperation.² At this point, perhaps, subjugated discourses become irrecoverable and the critic's best possible intervention is to employ Spivak's strategy of pointing to the silences and the absences.

When applied to my central concern in this particular chapter, the questions prompted by Spivak's ideas can be phrased thus: Did the Buthelezi people (and Phungashe) have a voice in societal discourse after their defeat? Given the role of King Shaka's *izibongo* as a discursive means of stabilising his new polity by suppressing other clans' histories, only small fragments of Buthelezi 'national' discourse have survived. Is it possible to recover some (sense) of the silent voices in history? And what are the difficulties that attend attempts to recover Phungashe's *izibongo* and, through him, to begin to recover Buthelezi histories?

The first complication with using Phungashe as a starting point in recovering a clan's history that appears, along with histories of other conquered clans, to have acquired fugitive status, is that I return to the 'big man' conception of the history of the KwaZulu-Natal region that historians have abandoned. This is a slight contradiction in my project in that at the same time as I challenge King Shaka's dominance in discourse, as well as the concentration of power in the king, I reinstate the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe monarchs, prior to their conquer by Shaka, at the apexes of their own societies. However, the usefulness of such a strategy derives from the conception of past and present society among the majority of the people I have interviewed for this project. As discussed in the Introduction, certain (in some areas large) pockets of 'Zulu' people maintain their allegiance to traditional political structures and hence to the Zulu monarchy. The conception of history that prevails among the people I interviewed is centred on granting the *inkosi* a position at the vanguard in the making of the history of their society. Hence, in a similar way to King Shaka being credited in his *izibongo* with all the victories achieved by his armies, Phungashe is foregrounded in reconstructions of some versions of the Buthelezi past. Therefore, I use the figure of Phungashe as a starting point in my own recovery of marginalised Buthelezi histories with the full understanding of the need eventually to extend beyond the 'big man' and attempt to recover the discourses of Buthelezi subalterns, i.e. the people who had low or no status in the Buthelezi socio-political order before the clan was subjugated by Shaka, especially women.

The second complication is precisely the concern about whether the conquered could maintain a presence in discourse and just how subversive that presence could be. If Shaka was the hero figure in the new nation, was the recital of Phungashe's *izibongo* subversive in its speaking back, though not in an openly challenging way, to Shaka? How effectively was Phungashe (and, in my discussion in the next chapter, Zwide) suppressed in discourse?

The residue of knowledge on Phungashe is scanty, but the information I was able to collect through interviewees supports Brown's point that the colonised, in this case the conquered, were not unable to speak. That Mangosuthu Buthelezi was able to provide me with a version of Phungashe's *izibongo* points to the survival and passing down of these *izibongo* from Phungashe's time to the present, despite his ousting and subsequent criminalisation once he had literally been made a fugitive as I discuss below. Apart from Mangosuthu, Jethro Buthelezi was the only other person who had any knowledge of fragments of Phungashe's *izibongo* via a reshaped version in Lizwi Buthelezi's book *Ithunga likaNondlini*³. Hence the *izibongo* have been available in mediated form both at the centre and at the margins of 'Zulu' society. On the one hand, as the *inkosi* of the Buthelezi lineage that has historically been associated with the Zulu monarchy following Phungashe's defeat, Mangosuthu has been doubly at the centre of his society both as a traditional leader, where he acquired his version of the *izibongo*, and as the Prime Minister of the apartheid era 'bantustan' of Zululand. On the other hand, Lizwi's published poem into which the *izibongo* have been incorporated has made available to more marginal figures like Jethro fragments of Phungashe's *izibongo* and history.

However, the main weakness of historical discourses and literature propounded by Mangosuthu, and other figures in whom authority is vested, is that these figures tend dogmatically to present their versions of history as authoritative. These versions are often their own synthesis of various fragmented versions that they have encountered, and are often presented in manipulated form for ideological purposes. A case in point is Mangosuthu's article, "The Early History of the Buthelezi Clan" (1978), which I discuss below. My strategy, therefore, is to put various conflicting versions of the same history side by side, and point out the similarities and the controversies. In that way, I highlight the 'constructedness' of that history and hence point to the function of ideology in the telling of Buthelezi history. But more significantly, via that process, I want to note that once one has a more nuanced sense of the past, one can then choose one's history, or, in any case, a version of history that serves one's present purposes and vision for the future. These are precisely the dynamics that have

been at play in the constructions, erasures and reinventions of the past that have shaped the variety of present perceptions.

If the previous chapter continues to situate King Shaka as the focal point of discourse on the early nineteenth century, then this chapter and the next project backwards into history, beyond Shaka's rise to prominence, and write Phungashe and Zwide into earlier history more strongly than has thus far been done. John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton provide a succinct background to Shaka's military campaigns against both Phungashe and Zwide in their article "Traditions and Transformations in the Phongolo-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late and Early Nineteenth Centuries" (1989). They dispense with A.T. Bryant's 'great man' model of history (1989:57), as well as the two main hypotheses of late eighteenth-century history of south-east Africa: that "political change... was a product of intensified conflict over resources consequent on the growth of the region's human population," and a variant of this explanation, which is that "the causes of intensified conflict over resources [lay] not so much in a increase of population as in a decline of grazing and agricultural land resulting from centuries of unscientific farming practices" (61). Instead, they propose the growth of trade in the Delagoa Bay-Thukela river region, spanning the Mabhudu, Ndwandwe, Mthethwa and other kingdoms, as central to the instability that occurred in the region, and which historians, until fairly recently, have simply attributed to the military genius, statesmanship and despotism of King Shaka. The growth of trade set in motion a scramble for dominance in the region between influential leaders, the most prominent of whom became Zwide of the Ndwandwe and Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa, so as to be able to establish control over trade in ivory and, later, cattle. Whereas the Mthethwa, particularly in the late stages of their expansion under Dingiswayo, were building their strength through a tributary system where smaller groupings who submitted to them would retain their autonomy, Wright and Hamilton suggest that the Ndwandwe under Zwide would forcefully subordinate neighbouring groups (1989:62). Hence there emerged two major states, with rapidly growing apparatuses in the form of diplomatic ties (consolidated through distributing cattle as largess to influential neighbouring *amakhosi*), armies in the form of *amabutho*, and increasingly sophisticated administrations.

At the same time as the Mabhudu, Mthethwa and Ndwandwe kingdoms were expanding, smaller groups, such as the Qwabe, the Hlubi and the Dlamini-Ngwane, were also consolidating and expanding their power as defence against the increasing power of the Mthethwa and Ndwandwe states (65). At this time, the Zulu state under Shaka was budding,

growing, with Dingiswayo's approval, from the minor clan it had previously been either by incorporating its smaller neighbours through friendly alliance, with the Zulu ruling house acting as overlords, or through coercion.⁴ One of the casualties of Zulu expansion was the Buthelezi clan, which neighboured Nobamba, the seat of Zulu power, situated as it was in the Mcakwini heights to the north-west of the Zulu residence. Having observed the belittling representation granted Phungashe in Shaka's *izibongo* in the previous chapter, let us then consider a short version of his own *izibongo* to contrast the way he is represented in Shaka's *izibongo* before proceeding to attempting to construct, from the available data, a coherent narrative of the events around Phungashe's *impi's* defeat at the hands of Shaka's, and his subsequent flight and death.

Phungashe's *izibongo*, as mentioned in the Introduction, seem for the most part to be irretrievably lost. The only versions that I have managed to salvage have been preserved by Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Yet almost all my Buthelezi interviewees unanimously agree that the amalgamated version of the *izibongo* that I read to them, which I set out below, is too brief and partial to be an authoritative account of an *inkosi* as significant as Phungashe was, as suggested in the Introduction. Whether the significance granted Phungashe by most of the interviewees is simply a nostalgic romanticisation of their clan's past, or whether Phungashe was indeed significant but has been rendered insignificant through suppression in discourse, are questions that are central to the discussion of contesting versions of that past that I put into dialogue with one another at length below. However, the inability of any of my interviewees, and of any of the people who attended the 3-5 October 2003 meeting of the Buthelezi clan in Mcakwini from as far as Ulundi, Ladysmith, Bergville, Durban and Johannesburg, to provide any other version of the *izibongo*, or to identify anyone who knows a different version, points to a serious erosion of the Buthelezi past that I have explored in the preceding chapter. This point is also supported by the extremely cursory mention that Phungashe received from Stuart's interviewees.⁵ The brevity of mention suggests that by the time Stuart conducted his interviews in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Phungashe had been almost entirely forgotten among the inhabitants of the region, although to what extent this is so we cannot ascertain because of the limited range of people Stuart interviewed.

The version of the *izibongo* I am working with in this chapter is as follows:

Isiphungaphunga esiphungwe ngabasekhaya
Saphungwa ngabasekwendeni.

<i>Ibamba elibambe uJama lamyekelela</i>	
<i>Wahlengwa ngezimagodla</i>	
<i>Labamba uMenzi lamyekelela</i>	5
<i>Wahlengwa ngezimagodla</i>	
<i>Labamba uMalambule eNgonyameni.</i>	
<i>Inyathi yakithi emhlophe</i>	
<i>Ebisembethe izikhumba zezingwe neziNgonyama.</i>	
<i>Inhlabathi yoNdi noThukela</i>	10
<i>Engifice beyihlela ngaze ngajubalala.</i>	
<i>Imvukazi yakithi eMcakweni</i>	
<i>Imaxhukazi mabili.</i>	
<i>Inyathi yakithi emhlophe</i>	
<i>Ibisembethe izikhumba zezingwe neziNgonyama.</i>	15
<i>Odle uQwangubane waseMaphiseni</i>	
<i>Amakhubalo adliwa nguMabhedla.</i>	

The driven one who is driven off by those of the family
 And is driven off by those who have married.
 The captor who seized Jama and then let him go
 He was freed with oxen having long, winding horns.
 He seized Menzi [Senzangakhona] and let him go
 When he was ransomed with oxen with long, bending horns.
 He seized Malambule of Ngonyameni.

The white buffalo of our home
 Which wore the skins of leopards and lions
 The soil of uNdi and uThukela
 Which I found them arranging until I went away for a long time.
 The ewe of our home at Mcakweni
 It has two lambs.
 The white buffalo of our home
 Which was covered in the skins of leopards and lions
 Who ate up Qwangubane of Maphiseni
 And the medicines were eaten by Mabhedla.

The first ‘stanza’ of these *izibongo* and its translation appear in Mangosuthu’s article. It also appears in the handwritten version, with the title “Izibongo zikaPhungashe kaNgwane Inkosi YakwaButhelezi”, which he made available to me, but without lines 5 and 6 of my line-numbered text. The second ‘stanza’ only appears in the unpublished version, and hence I have translated it myself. Also, the arrangement into stanzas is not my imposition, but Mangosuthu’s. Having presented the text above, and pointed out the mediations it has undergone, the questions that I now turn to grappling with are the following: what image of

Phungashe do the above *izibongo* convey?; and, what interpretation of the *inkosi*, and of his society, can we legitimately derive from these limited *izibongo*?

In his reading of the first ‘stanza’, Mangosuthu situates Phungashe’s capture of Jama and Senzangakhona, Shaka’s grandfather and father respectively, as well as Malumbule, the Chunu *inkosi* at the time, in the mode of interaction and the protocols of warfare between clans that predate the routing that Phungashe and other *amakhosi* were to suffer at the hands of Shaka’s Zulu forces:

[T]hose were fairly peaceful days when ‘wars’ between tribes were almost like the modern sport of javelin-throwing. In such ‘wars’, the enemies gathered and flung long spears in each other’s direction. Cheering supporters stood in the background behind each faction ranged against the other; in those days it was even possible for women to join the cheering crowds. (1978:19)

He sees these lines of the *izibongo* as continuous with those of Phungashe’s father and predecessor, Ngwane, in which Shaka’s grandfather, Jama, is captured and released numerous times. He maintains that “numerous... skirmishes took place between the Zulu and the Buthelezi, particularly under the leadership of Ngwane... and Jama; they also occurred during the reign of Phungashe who ruled the Buthelezi during the time of Jama’s son, Senzangakhona” (19). Mangosuthu’s statement is corroborated by Mkebeni kaDabulamanzi, one of Stuart’s interviewees (Webb and Wright, 1982:196). Mangosuthu goes on to inform us that the Zulu clan was defeated repeatedly by the Buthelezi and Jama captured. But because of the protocols of combat current at the time, he was not killed, only kept until the Zulu paid the required ransom in the form of cattle to have him released (1978:19).

The image of Phungashe we derive from the first ‘stanza’, therefore, is of an *inkosi* whose only significant achievements, for which he is *bonga’d* (praised), are the capture of Jama, Senzangakhona and Malumbule, and the extraction of cattle from the Zulu and the Chunu clans. There is a slight inconsistency in Mangosuthu’s claim that Phungashe ruled the Buthelezi during Senzangakhona’s reign among the Zulu. The appearance of Jama’s name in line 3, when read in the context of the whole text, suggests that Phungashe’s rule lasted for a period spanning some of Jama’s reign, the whole of Senzangakhona’s as well as the early part of Shaka’s rule in the Zulu *ubukhosi* (‘kingdom’) parallel to his.

The image painted by Mangosuthu is in line with the picture of late eighteenth-century life in the Phongolo-Mzikhulu area constructed by Wright and Hamilton, where

confrontations between neighbouring societies were relatively mild and the scramble for power was yet to intensify (1989:57-8). Hence the ransom of captured *amakhosi* rather than their death, and a return to tranquil relations after confrontations where there were friendly *amajadu*, which were competitive displays of dance and dress, between the clans, according to Mangosuthu (1978:21).

The second ‘stanza’ is considerably more obscure than the first, and all the attempts to decode it offered by my interviewees were extremely vague and unsatisfactory. In line 8, Phungashe is referred to as “the white buffalo of our home”. Asserting the kinship bond between the speaker/*imbongi*, as well as his audience, and Phungashe would have served as a means of stabilising a society that had limited means to maintain its coherence, by fostering loyalty born of blood ties. This was necessary since, as Wright and Hamilton point out, in the mid- to late-eighteenth century societies they call ‘chiefdoms’

were made up of a fluctuating number of local communities which were themselves composed of shifting clusters of homesteads. Ties of neighbourhood, of kinship (real or fictive), of clientship, and of marriage operated to bond communities, while at the level of the chiefdom a measure of political cohesion was provided through acts of allegiance made by people to the chief, and through the partial redistribution of accumulated tribute from chief to favoured or politically important adherents. (1989:58)

In line 9, the “buffalo” is wearing the skins of leopards and lions, signalling Phungashe’s position as the *inkosi* for whom were reserved the luxurious hides of big game, like the leopards and the lions, killed during *inqina* (hunting parties). The metaphor taps into the pride taken in, and pleasure derived from, the apparently frequent hunting parties engaged in, sometimes jointly, by the Buthelezi and the Zulu people, as implied by both Ntungelezi Buthelezi and Musa Buthelezi, respectively, in commenting on how some Buthelezi leaders were tricked into vulnerability by Shaka so that they could then be killed without much resistance. Enacting a conversation between Shaka and Nokokela, a Buthelezi refugee among the Zulu people, on whom more below, Ntungelezi says, “*Uthi-ke lo uNokokela, ...’Wena ungayocel’ amabutho’...* Uthi-ke, “*Wen’ uzothum’ iy’ndun’ ezaziwayo, ubusuyocel’ amabutho kuyozingelwa.*” *Kade kukhon’ iy’nyamazane zonke leziy’ndawo, zonk’ iy’nhlobo zey’nyamazane...*” (2003g: interview) (This one, Nokokela, says, “You can go and ask for the *amabutho* (warriors).” He says, “You are going to send well-known *izinduna*, and go and ask

for the *amabutho* to go hunting.” There has been [until recently] game in all these areas, all sorts of game...).

Why Phungashe is referred to as “the soil of uNdi and uThukela/Until I went away for a long time” (lines 10 and 11) or what is meant by referring to him as “the ewe of our home at Mcakweni/It has two lambs” (lines 12 and 13) is unclear. The best explanation for lines 10 and 11 I received was a generalised answer from Bonginkosi Buthelezi, saying, “*Angithi ilaph’ ababelwa khon’ izimpi phela lapha kuze kuyofik’ oNdini. Kuliw’ izimpi, kuhamba namabutho...*” (2003f: interview) (That is where they were fighting battles, here all the way to oNdini. Battles fought, *amabutho* travelling...). The penultimate line of the ‘stanza’ celebrates Phungashe’s victory over Qwangubane of Maphiseni. However, who Qwangubane was or under what circumstances Phungashe scored a victory over him is obscure. So is the related closing line, which links the taking of medicines by Mabhedla to Phungashe’s victory. However, the taking of *amakhubalo* after someone’s death is explained by Stuart quoting Bryant: “Amak[h]ubalo are always taken upon the death of one of the family in order to strengthen against ill-effects that might otherwise follow” (Webb and Wright, 1982:42). This suggests that Mabhedla was closely related to Qwangubane. It is not possible to determine whether these lines are concerned with a conflict of relatively little ferocity like the ones described above, or whether it suggests an increased ferocity during the scramble to build politically and economically stronger societies as security against Ndwandwe and Mthethwa expansion. The latter hypothesis is given credence as a possibility by Ntandoni Biyela’s point: “According to the Zulu Dictionary of Samuelson (1923:72) ‘-dla’ means to seize by force, as when an army takes cattle or property from an enemy...” (1998:83). This might suggest that the last two lines of Phungashe’s *izibongo*, with the verb *odle* (who ate up), belong to the time when militarisation was gaining momentum and warfare was increasing in ferocity. The use of the verb “-dla” reaches its peak in Shaka’s *izibongo*, where it appears with astounding frequency to build the image of a ferocious leader.

Reading the second ‘stanza’ of the available *izibongo* in today’s context, away from the original context of its composition and performance, renders much of its meaning lost to us. Yet, when we read the *izibongo* as a coherent whole, we can discern an image of Phungashe that is composed of metaphors of a mild temperament, projecting a portrait of an *inkosi* who possessed might with restraint – not aggressive like the all-powerful, all-conquering Shaka presented in his own *izibongo*. It is this Phungashe who has remained in muted dialogue with his conqueror, Shaka, and that we can then put into more pronounced

dialogue with Shaka, as I do shortly. But then, it is at points where the knowledge that we have available to us falters that Spivak's insistence on pointing to the silences and absences where there are unbridgeable gaps becomes important. What we are left with at the end of the few lines that constitute the remainder, in memory, of Phungashe's *izibongo* is an insubstantial portrait that is riddled with too many holes, too many unknowns, and indeed unknowables. Consequently, one of the only ways, if not the only way, to retain the integrity of the endeavour to recuperate Phungashe is to admit that there are unknowables, as I have done above, and that the knowledge and information that generations of past people have taken to their graves is irrevocably lost. In that way we have avoided the paralysis and the despair of not being able to begin piecing together the past that is implied the subaltern's inability to speak - an enabled, and further enabling, position to be in, no doubt.

I wish to move now from the relative tranquillity of the context of the above *izibongo* to the Zulu invasion and defeat of the Buthelezi clan: tracking Phungashe's representation in discourse, and setting him in more direct dialogue with Shaka. This is necessary since Phungashe's *izibongo* themselves do not articulate any direct talking back to Shaka, leading me to the conclusion that the version we have predates Shaka's conquest of the Buthelezi clan.

Available evidence suggests that Phungashe was one of the Zulu expansion's earliest casualties. According to one of Stuart's interviewees, Baleka kaMpit[h]ikazi, "[Shaka] began with Macingwane, chief of the C[h]unu... After this he went to attack Phungashe, chief of the But[h]elezi, and also attacked other chiefs" (Webb and Wright, 1976:5). In A.T. Bryant's chronology, the Zulu attack also came quite early on in Shaka's career at the head of the Zulu clan: "Having successfully dealt with the Elangeni, to the south, by roasting them alive, and the emaQungebeni, to the north, by friendly beer-drinks, Shaka now veered around the west and beheld P[h]ungashe, of the But[h]elezis" (1929: 131). Hereafter, in Bryant's account, Shaka goes on to declare war on Phungashe. In an interview I conducted with him, the *imbongi* Mzomusha Ndwandwe offered his own sense of the history of Shaka's conquests. He maintained that "*Laph' aqala khona ukuhlasela wahlasela kwaButhelezi uShaka. Wahlaselana noPhungashe*" (2003d) (When he started attacking, he attacked at the Buthelezi, Shaka. He and Phungashe attacked each other). Despite the conflicting chronologies of Shaka's campaigns, the sense we derive from the three accounts above is indeed that a campaign against the Buthelezi clan was one of Shaka's earliest military

outings. Mangosuthu's conclusion is the same when he says that "[T]he Buthelezi were... amongst the first tribes to experience the devastating warfare of Shaka" (1978:29).

Conflicting accounts of Shaka's motivation for the campaign exist. Bryant suggests that when Shaka had been installed as the *inkosi* of the Zulu clan, "Phungashe referred to [him] jeeringly as 'Dingiswayo's poor-man'. This came to Shaka's knowledge, and the insult decided forthwith for him his future course of action" (1929:131). Similar explanations have also been offered by Mzomusha Ndwandwe and Reggie Khumalo, the well-respected Zulu oral historian, whose information is, in places, derived directly from Bryant's highly questionable but indispensable accounts. Ndwandwe and Khumalo, respectively, have suggested that Phungashe, and other established *amakhosi* at the time, including Zwide, deridingly called Shaka "*ibhoxongwane likaSenzangakhona*" (Senzangakhona's hothead) and "*ivukana likaSenzangakhona*" (Senzangakhona's upstart). A further similar explanation, tying Shaka's actions to his father's tribulations, is provided by Mangosuthu:

...Phungashe referred to Senzangakhona as "Dingiswayo's underling" and also a "nonentity who earned a living by selling tobacco and medicinal plants"... These gross insults were noted by the young Shaka, who never forgave Phungashe for his arrogance, and when Shaka came to power, Phungashe paid heavily for them. (1978:21-2)

If these accounts seem insubstantial and unconvincing explanations of the motivation for the Zulu aggression against the Buthelezi clan, it is because they are in the mould of the 'great man' conception of history that was popularised by Bryant following the stream of writers before him. Moreover, oral historical accounts, more often than not, tend to retain only the major moments of history because of their reliance on memory. In those great moments, often only the main role players are captured, and the finer details of their actions, as well as the more minor figures, are invented each time that history comes under review, as we are going to observe more pointedly below. Bryant's, Ndwandwe's, Khumalo's and Buthelezi's accounts, therefore, belong with the portrayals of Shaka invented by British traders that viewed him as a pugnacious, depraved monster, who could declare war at the slightest whim and would be obeyed at all costs. A more persuasive, because better reasoned, explanation is the one advanced by Wright and Hamilton that sees Shaka's campaigns as a necessary buffer, created in tandem with the Mthethwa kingdom under Dingiswayo, against the expansion of the Ndwandwe state (1989:67). Nevertheless, the explanations offered by Bryant, Ndwandwe,

Khumalo and Buthelezi cannot be discounted as they provide a glimpse into Shaka's personal motivations that may have operated alongside his wider political and economic aspirations.

Phungashe's complacency was to be his undoing, according to Mangosuthu, as "when Shaka came to declare war against the Buthelezi, Phungashe reacted as if it was going to be a picnic and let his contempt for the Zulu tribe surface again" (1978:30). A dramatic narrative of the battle between the Zulu and the Buthelezi is provided by Bryant:

The opposing forces faced each other at the appointed trysting-place in battle array; the women hard by 'to enjoy the fun.' Shaka generalled his troops in person... the But[h]elezi chief...remained... an interested spectator from some distant point of vantage... What must now have been P[h]ungashe's dismay and the consternation of his braves, when the 'poor man's' army, with a blood-curdling howl, charged without warning and like a pack of ravenous wolves right home on the inertly wondering But[h]elezis. Universal panic ensued, and the latter were dispersed in headlong flight without even a semblance of resistance, with the ferocious enemy pressing at their heels, stabbing indiscriminately men, women and children as they ran, rounding up their herds and finally celebrating their victory in a mighty blaze of But[h]elezi homes. (1929:133)

Given the literary sensationalism that is the feature of Bryant's writing, it is hard to determine how much credibility the above passage can be granted. Another account, which seems to borrow heavily from Bryant, was narrated to me by Khumalo. In it, he suggests that the battle against the Buthelezi was Shaka's first opportunity to test his new battle strategy of the *izimpondo nesifuba* (the horns and the chest). Bryant's "distant point of vantage" is for Khumalo the Mcakwini heights where Phungashe sat with women and *utshwala* (beer) and watched his *impi* fighting on the plains down below (Buthelezi, 2003a: interview). Khumalo goes on to say that when Shaka's *impi* engulfed Phungashe's, the *amabutho* that had hung back to give the impression that Shaka's *impi* was small joined in: "[uPhungashe] *wayelokhu ebuka impi yakhe incipha, yand' ekaShaka, incipha yand' ekaShaka. Uthe eyibon' impi yakhe yay' isithe giminci, isivalwe yimpi kaShaka. La aqala khona ukuthi nyelele abaleke-ke*" (Buthelezi, 2003a: interview) ([Phungashe] kept watching his army decreasing and Shaka's increasing, decreasing and Shaka's increasing. Suddenly he saw his army engulfed by Shaka's. This is when he quietly withdrew and ran off).

Almost all the sources I have consulted, oral and written, are agreed that Phungashe fled to the Ndwandwe capital of Nongoma and sought refuge with his friend, the Ndwandwe *inkosi* Zwide, after his defeat.⁶ The only different version was offered by Ntungelezi Buthelezi, who is adamant that there was no battle between the Zulu and the Buthelezi clans. He insists that according to the information he received from his grandmothers, Phungashe was assassinated in his home by *izinjoli* (accomplished warriors) sent by Shaka after Phungashe's *amabutho* had been lured away from Mcakwini by inviting them to *phuma inqina* (go on a hunting spree) with the Zulu *amabutho* (Buthelezi, 2003g: interview). The other minor deviation from the standard account of Phungashe's flight is Khumalo's assertion that "*inkosi afika kuyona kwaba yinkosi yaseMatshalini uHlabangane. Wath' ucela ukuthi acashe khona uHlabangane wakhuz' umhlola. Wathi, "Cha, mus' ukungilethela uza luzile. Uma uhlulwe uShaka uyinkos' ungaka angikwaz' ukukugcina." Wabaleka-ke wawel' iMfoloz' eMnyama*" (Buthelezi, 2003a: interview) (the *inkosi* he got to was the Matshalini *inkosi*, Hlabangane. When he asked for refuge, Hlabangane disclaimed with dismay. He said, "No, don't bring me trouble. If you, as an *inkosi* of such calibre, have been defeated by Shaka, I cannot keep you." He then fled across the Black Mfolozi). Controversy arises when my interviewees try to explain what transpired once Phungashe had requested refuge from Zwide.

Khumalo claims that Zwide had already defeated Dingiswayo by the time Phungashe fled to him, and the only *inkosi* left for him to defeat was Shaka. When Phungashe told him the story of what happened to his people, Zwide would laugh in disbelief at the defeat of an *inkosi* he respected highly at the hands of a mere boy, Shaka. Zwide was unnerved by Phungashe's defeat, which he thought augured badly for his own security. Khumalo goes on to say that "*...ukumbulala kwakhe, wambulala ngoba wayethi um' exoxa ngendlel' uShak' amhlule ngayo kumcasul' uZwide, kumenze njalo luhlale lukhul' uvalo lwakhe lokuthi uShaka uyogcina naye emhlasele. Naye-ke wambulula-ke wamnqum' ikhanda-ke...*" (interview) (... killing him, [Zwide] killed [Phungashe] because when he told of how Shaka defeated him it annoyed Zwide, it made his fear grow that Shaka would one day attack him. So he killed him and cut off his head...). The general consensus, as per accounts gleaned in separate interviews with Bonginkosi, Jethro and Musa, supports Khumalo's point that Phungashe was killed by the Ndwandwe and his head cut off and used by Zwide's mother, Ntombazi, in her *imithi* (medicines) through which she had made Zwide powerful.

The people who maintain that Phungashe was killed at Zwide's bidding qualify their position by pointing out that Phungashe's grave does not exist among the graves of Buthelezi

amakhosi in the Mcakwini area, a point that is disputed by Ntungelezi who says that in his youth he was shown a grave said to be Phungashe's. But Jethro Buthelezi, who is an *induna* in the Koweyezulu area of Makhosini, and who is active in the dialogue to revive Phungashe's line of Buthelezi power, claims that

Kuze kwathi nje, kulonyaka emva kwalo ophelile, kwapholofid' uShembe. Wathi hhayi, kanti vele bese sikwazi-ke, wathi kufanel' ukuba ayokwenz' umlando. Wacel' ukuthi laba bakwaButhelezi kufanele bayomnikelela, sekush' uShembe-ke, lilandw' ikhanda lilethwe lapha. Wathandazelwa-ke [uPhungashe]. Lalandw' ikhanda ngasoPhongolo ...Emagudu. (Buthelezi, 2003h: interview)

It was only in the year before the last that Shembe prophesied. He said, which we already knew, that he needs to go and do *umlando* (a ceremony to right historical wrongs). He asked the people of Buthelezi that they should go and give offering, said Shembe, and the head be fetched and brought here [to Mcakwini]. [Phungashe] was then prayed for. And the head was fetched from near Phongolo... from Magudu.

Musa, who formerly worked for the Museum Services and for the KwaZulu Monument Council, and has encountered a range a versions of the history of Buthelezi people, supports Jethro's claim, saying Phungashe's head was buried in Magudu in a place where respected Ndwandwe people were interred because he was regarded highly by the Ndwandwe (Buthelezi, 2003i: interview).

Even more controversial is the question of what became of the Buthelezi clan's power structures after Phungashe's flight. The general assumption, based on the routine course of action Shaka took with defeated clans, and into which I have tapped above, is that he incorporated the remaining Buthelezi *amabutho* into his *impi* by assigning them to different *amakhanda* in order to forestall resistance against the defeat of their clan. Controversy arises on the issue of the Buthelezi succession thereafter. Mangosuthu contends that

Phungashe left a general heir called Msicwa, but it seems that he was soon eliminated. This happened after Mzilikazi Khumalo had been sent on a raiding expedition by King Shaka and then fled with the booty. Nzobo, of the Ntombela clan, was therefore instructed to raise a regiment from the remnants of the Buthelezi which was sent to follow Mzilikazi. While all the able-bodied Buthelezi were away on this wild-goose

chase after Mzilikazi, Shaka sent the same Nzobo to murder Msicwa. He arrived at Msicwa's place hiding a spear under his *isiphuku* (skin blanket). Nzobo then pretended to be giving snuff to Msicwa, who put his hand out to receive it, whereupon Nzobo killed him. There is controversy about whether it was Msicwa or his brother, Mevana, who was thus killed by Nzobo. (1978:30-1)

The story of a Buthelezi *inkosi* being murdered in his home appears in three separate accounts of Buthelezi succession. Ntungelezi, who is referred to above insisting that Phungashe was murdered in his home, tells a very similar story of Phungashe being approached by men wearing *iziphuku* under which they were hiding the spears with which they stabbed Phungashe to death (Buthelezi, 2003g: interview). Jethro also pointed out that some people believe that it was Phungashe that Nzobo was sent to kill, but that he failed to kill him, stabbing his *inceku* (attendant) instead (Buthelezi, 2003h:interview). Musa confirms the controversy pointed out by Mangosuthu when he maintains that it was Mevana who was murdered by Nzobo kaSobahle (or Sobadle) wakwaNtombela (of the Ntombela people) (Buthelezi, 2003i: interview).

Nevertheless, it is a matter of general agreement among the few people who have any knowledge of nineteenth-century Buthelezi history that Phungashe's defeat marked the beginning of the end of the holding of power in Phungashe's line of the Buthelezi clan. Mangosuthu suggests that "as the fortunes of [Phungashe's] own people, the Buthelezi *indlunkulu* ['great house'] at Mcakweni, waned, those of Nqengelele [of the *ikhohlwa* ('left hand house')] were in the ascendant" (1978:27). The controversy laid out above continues at this juncture: some claim that Phungashe's brother's son by the name of Nokokela was installed as the new *inkosi*, while others maintain that it was Msicwa, and yet another section insists that Mevana took over the reins.

Ntungelezi and Bonginkosi both hold that Nokokela came to be installed as the ruler of the Buthelezi. Ntungelezi's elaborate story, a shorter version of which was told by Bonginkosi, is that there were Buthelezi brothers named Dlakadla and Nokokela who quarrelled over their sister, Khondlo's, livestock. The three of them were the children of Jobe, who was "*ikhohlwa likaPhungashe*" (Phungashe's junior house, i.e. the son of Ngwane's second most senior wife), meaning Jobe was Phungashe's half-brother.⁷ Khondlo was a farmer and used to barter her produce for goats and also barter goats for cows with neighbours. In that way she built a considerable amount of wealth. The quarrel between the

brothers occurred when Khondlo developed *izilonda* (sores) on her legs when she was living independently in her own home next to her eldest brother, Dlakadla's. Nokokela made an *ikhambi* (herbal medicine) which cured Khondlo's illness where Dlakadla had failed to help her. Thereafter, Khondlo relocated to Nokokela's residence, where she continued with her work. It was Khondlo's slaughtering of her cattle in Nokokela's home that stirred some of her brothers to agitate for Dlakadla to demand that Khondlo's wealth be brought to his residence because he was the *inkosana* (oldest son). Dlakadla eventually sent a delegation to bring this demand to Nokokela. Both Nokokela and Khondlo refused to comply, whereupon Dlakadla raised a band of fighters among his adherents and attacked Nokokela's residence. Nokokela was able to gather a force among his neighbours and from the young men who were 'employed' to herd his and Khondlo's numerous cattle. He repelled Dlakadla's attack, causing Dlakadla to take the matter to Phungashe, the *inkosi*, for arbitration. Phungashe's verdict favoured Dlakadla, and when Nokokela refused to comply with it, he was once again attacked by a force that now comprised Dlakadla's adherents as well as a group dispatched by Phungashe. Nokokela's force was defeated, and Nokokela withdrew and went to *khonza* (seek refuge) in the Zulu clan. He was given land in Ezindumeni in the present-day Babanango area where he settled.

He distinguished himself as a member of Senzangakhona's party that went to Dingiswayo's residence when Dingiswayo had invited Senzangakhona to come and see his son, Shaka. Senzangakhona was asked to point out his son among Dingiswayo's *amabutho* when *izinsizwa zisina* (the young men were dancing). Once Senzangakhona had pointed him out, Shaka danced all the way up to him and asked him for *umkhonto wobukhosi* (the special spear that demarcated the *inkosi's* position). Senzangakhona declined, saying the spear was meant for Sigujana, whereupon Shaka returned to dancing, eventually injuring his father with a spear while dancing vigorously, surreptitiously driving home his point that he wanted his father's position. It was Nokokela who came to Senzangakhona's rescue, stopping Shaka dead in his tracks with a show of a strength that matched Shaka's own, a feat of which no other person was capable. Shaka was to remember Nokokela's heroic display when he was at the head of the Zulu clan. Nokokela came to occupy a position of influence, in which he was able to devise the plan to eliminate Phungashe in the way Ntungelezi contends Phungashe was killed, as discussed above. Later, upon Shaka's relocation from Nobamba to Dukuza, and prior to Mevana's installation as Phungashe's successor in the Buthelezi clan, Shaka said, "*Liphathe Nokokela, elakithi nelakini [kwaButhelezi]*" (Buthelezi, 2003g: interview) (Rule it,

Nokokela, [the land] of my home and that of your home [Buthelezi]). Hence, Nokokela came to be in charge of the country that was occupied by the Buthelezi people.

A conflicting account of the succession is offered by Musa who holds that “*UMevana uyena owasala wathatha over. Wabusa isikhathi esifushane*” (Buthelezi, 2003i: interview) (Mevana is the one who remained and took over. He reigned for a short time). Soon after Mevana was installed, Shaka sent Nzobo to kill him, as discussed above. Ntungelezi also admits, very uncertainly, that in the Buthelezi throne “*kwase kubuye kubekek’ uMevana*” (Buthelezi, 2003g: interview) (somehow Mevana was later installed). I have not personally encountered anyone who thinks that Msicwa, Mevana’s brother, succeeded Phungashe.

My assessment of the controversy about Buthelezi succession is that it stems, in part, from the family alliances of the people who hold knowledge of the various conflicting histories. Firstly, Ntungelezi, Bonginkosi and Jethro each refers to himself as *ikhohlwa*, with both Ntungelezi and Jethro claiming kinship with Mangosuthu’s influential lineage when they each intimate that Mangosuthu is their brother. Ntungelezi and Bonginkosi are descended from Nokokela’s line of the Buthelezi clan, hence their highlighting of Nokokela, who does not feature at all in any official Buthelezi discourses. These two men trace their history through Nokokela and then connect that history, which is closely aligned with Shaka and the Zulu clan, with that of the Buthelezi clan as a whole. Secondly, the presently dominant Buthelezi line, i.e. Mangosuthu’s, analogously traces its history backwards through Mnyamana, his father Nqengelele, and Nqengelele’s father and Phungashe’s brother, Mvulane. For them, as evidenced by Mangosuthu’s article, Phungashe features in their history insofar as their ancestor, Nqengelele, suffered under Phungashe, eventually choosing to leave the Buthelezi clan along with his brother Khoboyela. I return to this incident below. Hence it is as a result of Nqengelele and Khoboyela’s ordeal that Mangosuthu begins his article with a discussion of Phungashe when he canonises his own lineage in writing, as indicated by the subtle bias that is discernible in his narrative. Finally, the line that traces its history through Mevana and Phungashe has no record of its ancestors after Mevana. This was evident at the Buthelezi clan meeting that I attended, where the narrative of history underpinning the gathering centred on Phungashe’s line, but none of the people present could trace the succession beyond Mevana, who was presented as having been Phungashe’s successor.

From the above discussion, therefore, three lines of Buthelezi history are evident: the *indlunkulu* line, the currently dominant *ikhohlwa* line, and the third line that also lays claim to being the *ikhohlwa*. However, the only two contesting lines when it comes to the canonisation

of significant figures in *izithakazelo* are Phungashe's and Mvulane's (Mangosuthu's in the present), which are the *indlunkulu* and the *ikhohlwa* among Ngwane's sons according to the genealogy drawn by Mangosuthu (Buthelezi, 1978:23). The version of Buthelezi *izithakazelo* compiled by Thamsanqa Sithole in his book, *Izithakazelo Nezibongo ZakwaZulu* (1982), seems to be an amalgamation of different versions and contains lines all my interviewees say they have never heard.⁸ Sithole's *izithakazelo* bring together the histories traced through Phungashe and through Mvulane, and possibly more, but that is not verifiable. Sithole's amalgamation is faulty in that, in its attempt to present a complete version of the Buthelezi *izithakazelo*, it fails to take into account the fact that the people who trace their histories through the above figures do not mention the ancestors of the other line of history in their *izithakazelo*. Again, this was evident at the Mcakwini gathering where, in *thakazela'ing* one another, not once did I hear any of the people gathered mentioning the names of members of Nqengelele's lineage, which was treated with hostility when it was referred to because it was considered to have colluded with the leadership of the Zulu clan to destroy 'legitimate' Buthelezi power that was due to be passed down in Phungashe's lineage. Moreover, in my own family, which claims to be descended from Phungashe, every time *impepho* is burnt and the ancestors are called up, the *izithakazelo* recited mention Phungashe and none of the members of the other line. The *izithakazelo* used are: *Shenge, Sokalisa, Phungashe, Mnandingamondi ngokudliwa zindlovu zakwaNobamba*. But, in the end, the most dominant line is Nqengelele's. This is attested to by the fact the most widely used *izithakazelo* are: *Shenge, Sokalisa, Mnyamana kaNqengelele, Mvulane, Mlambo kaNyathi*.⁹ Many outsiders to the Buthelezi clan and people of the Buthelezi clan who are unaware of the nuances of meaning in the *izithakazelo*, as I was not until very recently when I analysed the data I had gathered, *thakazela* all Buthelezi people by the second set of *izithakazelo*. This, along with its being closely aligned with the Zulu royal house through Mangosuthu, maintains the hegemony of Nqengelele's line of the clan.

My attempt to make sense of the contesting versions of Buthelezi history examined above, based on the generally better-known historical figures who have been canonised in *izithakazelo*, yields the following: Nokokela, whose name does not appear in the different lineages' *izithakazelo* was probably not an *inkosi*. Instead, he was, most likely, elevated by Shaka, as claimed by Ntungelezi, as a result of further distinguishing himself. If he did indeed go on to oversee part of Shaka's territory, it was in a capacity as Shaka's *induna* or as an *umnumzane* (King's representative), not as the Buthelezi *inkosi*. My speculation here is

strengthened by Ntungelezi's choice of words when he narrated the story of Nokokela's accession: "*Yena loNokokela-ke uselokh' ehambisana noShaka. Encike kuShaka njalo...[Esebekiwe] [u]sehlala-ke uNokokela elusa lamazw' omabili*" (2003g: interview) (This Nokokela keeps walking with Shaka. Leaning on [staying close to] Shaka all the time... [Once he has been installed] [h]e looks after these two territories [the Zulu and the Buthelezi]). The verb "*elusa*" betrays that Nokokela was not reigning as a sovereign *inkosi*, but merely as Shaka's representative. With this, it becomes possible for all three of the contesting histories discussed above to have operated without infringing on one another. Nokokela was only an *induna* or *mnumzane*, and either Mevana or Msicwa was therefore installed on the Buthelezi clan's own throne after Phungashe, perhaps after Shaka's intimidating presence had been removed with his relocation to Dukuza, as Ntungelezi insinuates. In an interview with Stuart, a certain Ndukwana gives a strong indication of the much reduced power and status of the leaders of the clans which were incorporated into the Zulu clan during Shaka's reign. He says of Msicwa kaPhungashe (whom he understands to have succeeded Phungashe), Somaphunga kaZwide (discussed in the next chapter) and Myandeya of the Mthethwa clan: "none of these sang their *ingoma*, nor did they hold their *umk[h]osi* according to previous custom, for it would be said they wished to make kings of themselves. They were not allowed to *but[h]a* people; they became mere *abanumzana* of the king" (Webb and Wright, 1986:363). In the Buthelezi clan, the *ikhohlwa* of Phungashe's generation, represented by Nqengelele, went on to ascend to dominance as a result of Nqengelele's gaining favour with Shaka, as I discuss shortly.

How Nokokela's and Nqengelele's lineages each claim to be the *ikhohlwa* house stemming from the same generation when Phungashe was the *indlunkulu* can be understood when we consider what Bonginkosi has said about assigning status to *izindlu* (houses, i.e. a single man's wives' offspring):

Amakhosan' imvama abant' abakhulu abafakwa la ey'thakazelweni. Ngoba ngisho ningakha la kuthiw' umuz' omkhulu iloya. Uwena munt' ozochuma-ke. Noma ngisho ningaba baningi kanjan' ekhaya, ngisho ningawu-10 nizalwa umam' oyedwa, kukhon' inkosana, kukhon' ikhohlwa, kukhon' ithunjana. Lab' abany' abanakwa abanamagama lab' abanye. (2003f: interview)

It is often the oldest sons who are the big people who are included in the *izithakazelo*. Even if you build [your homes] here, the main house is that one.

You are the person who is going to dominate. No matter how many you are at home, even if there are ten of you born of the same mother, there is the *inkosana* (oldest son), the *ikhohlwa* (left hand house) and the *ithunjana* (lastborn son), the rest are not paid much attention, they don't have names.

Hence the above claims by two the lineages to being the *ikhohlwa* do not necessarily mean that both Nokokela and Mvulane were *amakhohlwa* of Phungashe's generation, but that the ancestors of one of the lines belonged to a junior house that was not the *ikhohlwa* but one of the 'insignificant' houses. The term *ikhohlwa* is thus used by the descendants of that house to claim status for themselves, perhaps unwittingly, as a result of the scarcity of information in historical records. That Mvulane was the *ikhohlwa* is more feasible because of the appearance of his name in the record of significant members of the clan, i.e. the *izithakazelo*. Given Mangosuthu's claim that the *indlunkulu* and the *ikhohlwa* used to be the two most significant houses in a family, going as far as being divided in succession disputes because none wanted to be dominated by the other (1978:22), it further becomes conceivable that Mvulane was the *ikhohlwa*. But then again, when we take into consideration Bryant's statement that "[T]he genealogy of the But[h]elezi clan is already practically forgotten" (1929:135), this may also be a fiction constructed in later years to claim kinship with Phungashe and the Buthelezi ruling house for the line that later became dominant.¹⁰

When we return to the progression of Buthelezi history, we come back to Nqengelele's rise that is narrated by Mangosuthu and confirmed by all my interviewees. Mangosuthu narrates that after the death of Mvulane, Phungashe started the habit of slaughtering cattle that belonged to the *ikhohlwa* house of which Nqengelele and his elder brother, Khoboyela, were the heirs. When the gossip about their complaints reached Phungashe, he wanted to "eliminate them", but they got wind of it and escaped, fleeing northwards. Years later they returned and went to *khonza* at Nobamba (Buthelezi, 1978:23-4). It is here, during Senzangakhona's reign, that Nqengelele's rise in status commenced. His career began with collecting *amalongwe* (dried dung used as fuel) for Senzangakhona's mother, Mthaniya, according to Mangosuthu, as well as looking after children and cooking for Mthaniya, according to one of Stuart's interviewees, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (Webb and Wright, 1986:282). He performed several other tasks that led to his elevation, including introducing a cure for tapeworm, introducing the recipe for *utshwala* (beer) and offering suggestions that improved the general hygiene in the ruling house's residence.¹¹ He was also

involved in smuggling the infant Shaka to and from his grandmother's hut at the time when Nandi was alienated because of her out of wedlock sexual encounter with the royal heir, Senzangakhona, that had yielded Shaka (Buthelezi, 1978:28-9). But Nqengelele's most notable achievement was his use of *amakhambi* (herbs), according to Khumalo (Buthelezi, 2003a: interview). All these ensured Nqengelele's steady rise in status and influence, under first Senzangakhona and then Shaka, so that by the time Shaka came to declare war on Phungashe, Nqengelele had risen to being one of his closest military advisers (Buthelezi, 1978:31).¹²

Mangosuthu maintains that "Nqengelele's own status was enhanced by his part in the defeat of the mighty Ndwandwe... In recognition of [his] services, Shaka gave him a stretch of land from what is now the Mahlabathini district through Vryheid, Louwsburg and right across the Phongol[o] river into what is today the Piet Rietief district in the Transvaal" (Buthelezi, 1978:32). Nqengelele's lineage's control over this territory has continued through the succession of Mnyamana, Tshanibezwe, Mathole and, in the present, Mangosuthu, spanning the succession of Zulu kings with whom Nqengelele's line has remained associated until now.

Mangosuthu recognises that "the position accorded to Nqengelele by Shaka marked the supersession of the senior house of the Buthelezi by a junior house" (1978:32) that has continued to the present. Historically, therefore, the authority vested in Nqengelele's lineage goes back to its association with Zulu hegemony at the dawn of the era of the rise of the Zulu kingdom. The lineage has been complicit in the suppression and marginalisation of Phungashe's lineage that was heir to the Buthelezi *ubukhosi* (throne). This suppression was achieved, in part, through the fracture of Buthelezi society by absorbing the Buthelezi *amabutho* into Shaka's, and, discursively, through Shaka's *izibongo*, among others, that undermined the Buthelezi people's self-image by erasing their past and replacing it with that of the Zulu clan, as discussed in the previous chapter. By being assimilated into the Zulu clan, this lineage has displaced Phungashe's lineage not through an *umbango* (succession dispute) as used to happen in many ruling houses (Buthelezi, 1978:22), but rather through a change of alliance from a family bond to alignment with what was then an emerging hegemony. This change has partly been responsible for the state of affairs that persists in the present in which there is grossly insufficient knowledge about Buthelezi history that is not aligned with Zulu power.

A vigorous process of revising Buthelezi history and authority is currently under way in northern KwaZulu-Natal in order to try to reclaim the heritage lost by the Buthelezi people, particularly those associated with the former Buthelezi seat of power at Mcakwini, under the Zulu monarchy, British colonialism and apartheid. This revision is at once historical, literary, political and economic, as well as personal (i.e. spiritual and emotional) for many of the people who are involved in it. My claim was demonstrated at the meeting that took place on the site where Phungashe's residence is said once to have stood, which is now part of a large white-owned farm. The meeting was held from the 3rd to the 5th of October 2003 and the proceedings in the first two days included reporting (*ukubika*) the gathering to Phungashe, Mevana and other earlier Buthelezi leaders, slaughtering two cows, and a tour of some of the sites that it is hoped will be marked as heritage sites as the process progresses. For many of us, who had travelled from various parts of KwaZulu-Natal and from Gauteng, it was a journey to discover our roots as we possessed little knowledge of our ancestors' past, even though I personally was also there as a researcher.

When addressing the gathering, the leaders of this 'revisionist' movement, one of whom is Musa, informed us that a land claim has been lodged for twenty-five farms around Babanango that cover the territory Buthelezi people were dispossessed of, particularly under colonial legislation. For many, it was an emotional moment when we were informed that most of the farms are owned by Afrikaans farmers and that some of those farms have been leased to Sappi, the major paper-producing company, to plant timber. It is hoped that if the land claim is successful, the land will continue to be leased out and a trust fund will be established to administer the proceeds for educating the children of people whose ancestors were driven off that land. The gathering was also informed that committees have been set up in Mcakwini and in Johannesburg to coordinate the revision process, and people from other parts of the country were challenged to do the same.

However, the most controversial part of the process of revising the Buthelezi past is the historical. Musa informed me in the interview I conducted with him in the evening after the second day of the meeting that the Mcakwini committee had decided to defer discussion of the process of appointing an *inkosi* because of the realisation that it is going to cause a great deal of tension and conflict (Buthelezi, 2003i: interview). From what Musa himself, Bonginkosi, Dede, Ntungelezi and Jethro said in interviews, the controversy stems from various lineages claiming that their candidate should be installed as the *inkosi*.¹³

On the one hand, there seems to be the Nokokela line which lays claim to the Buthelezi throne. Bonginkosi pointed out that “*sekuhamb’ uNokokela-ke akekho owaphinda waphatha ngo. Kwakukhunjwa nje kuthiwa nayi inkosana yakhe...*” (Buthelezi, 2003f: interview) (After Nokokela had departed [this world] no one ever ruled directly. [People] would just point and say this is his heir). Bonginkosi traces the succeeding generations of heirs who ought to have been in power following Nokokela as Soswela, Sankunya, Felaphakathi and Fungwephika. He maintains that government authorities in the Babanango magistracy attempted to install his own grandfather, Felaphakathi, on the Buthelezi throne, but Felaphakathi absconded and went to live in the Nkonjeni area of Mahlabathini, fearing that he would be killed by his *uzalo* (kin) who may have wanted a different candidate installed. Later, Felaphakathi’s son, Fungwephika, was also summoned from Nkonjeni to be installed but he also absconded. Ntungelezi tells a similar, but more uncertain, story.

On the other hand, there are the direct descendants of Phungashe who are making a case for their own candidate. In this lineage, the succession has been the following, according to Mangosuthu’s genealogy: Msicwa (Mevana’s descendants are not presented), Mandulo, Mthunzini and Zakhele (who died in 1975) (1978:23). Mthunzini also moved to Nkonjeni in Mangosuthu’s and Musa’s (less certain about who precisely moved) accounts. That both Felaphakathi and Mthunzini moved to Nkonjeni, Mthunzini to Kwaphindangene, an area named after Mangosuthu’s residence, and Felaphakathi to a little further off in Empolweni means that the three lineages I have postulated finally converged again in territory where Mangosuthu is the leader. Hence the contest for power now would be between the other two genealogies as well as segments that identify other descendents of those genealogies as the heirs to the throne rather than the ones that belong to the specific lines I have traced above. It is also interesting to note that the Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelithini, as well as Mangosuthu are behind attempts to reinstate the Buthelezi *ubukhosi*, according to Bonginkosi (Buthelezi, 2003f: interview).

In the end, the dominance of Nqengelele’s lineage is a result of historical processes that were set in motion by Nokokela’s, and Nqengelele and Khoboyela’s flights in order to survive. And survive they did, and lived to tell the tales of their trials and tribulations as well as get their own back, scoring victories that have wrought havoc with Buthelezi history, causing controversy even in the present. The victory of Nqengelele’s line has been the most long-lasting as its legacy has seen the placing of his great-great-grandson, Mangosuthu, at the peak of Buthelezi society.

Finally, to conclude, can a subaltern *inkosi* speak then? The above discussion has demonstrated that Phungashe can be recovered and utilised as a vehicle towards recuperating obscure aspects of Buthelezi history, and, by extension, other clans' histories. This ultimately proves Brown's point that the subaltern has always been able to speak, often in incomprehensible ways to the ruling hegemonies in their societies. In this manner, Phungashe, as a subaltern *inkosi*, has, in ways that are now mainly lost to us, continuously maintained his speaking back to Shaka for almost two centuries. Therefore, despite, or in spite of, its inability to offer either armed or discursive resistance to Shaka in official discourse, Buthelezi history, and with it Phungashe, has continued to provide an instance of resistance to the totalising narrative of the Zulu 'nation'. Further, in the present, Phungashe can be recovered through a textual political strategy that does not seek to recover his voice, but that mobilises his image towards recuperating aspects of the previously suppressed and marginalised Buthelezi history. This recuperation is for the purposes of constructing a nuanced understanding of our past in a changed, and changing, South Africa.

NOTES

¹ See Introduction for a discussion of Phillips' notion of writing back into history people who have been written out of that history.

² It is important to remember here, as argued in the previous chapter, that marginalised and suppressed discourses continue to exist in/as memory in a constantly reinvented form to fit the concerns of their historical present. Writing back into history, in the present, people that have been written and spoken out, therefore, also entails attempting to uncover the reinventions of the past that have taken place over time.

³ Lizwi Buthelezi celebrates Phungashe in a poem with the title "NgoPhungashe Buthelezi", which is his poetic creation infused with Phungashe's *izibongo*. However, apart from the lines that appear in the version of Phungashe's *izibongo* provided by Mangosuthu, it is difficult to work out which of the lines in the poem might be lines of Phungashe's *izibongo* that Lizwi managed to gather but which nobody I have interviewed knows.

⁴ I return to Wright and Hamilton's argument in more detail in the next chapter because of the pertinence of their argument for a recuperation of the history of the Ndwandwe people.

⁵ See Webb and Wright (1976:5, 1979:255, 1986:331).

⁶ See Bryant (1929:133) and Buthelezi (1978:30). The Buthelezi interviewees, Dede, Bongani, Jethro and Musa, as well as Mzomusha Ndwandwe have all confirmed this. Ndwandwe only disagrees when it comes to later events. He maintains that Zwide did not order Phungashe's execution, but allowed him to live among the Ndwandwe until Shaka's attack on them.

⁷ Ntungelezi is uncertain about precisely how Jobe was related to Phungashe, and, in any case, the concept of half-brotherhood is non-existent in isiZulu. Therefore even if they were half-brothers, they would be called brothers from different houses.

⁸ It appears as if Sithole has subject the *izithakazelo* to a similar process of mediation and amalgamation to that conducted by Stuart, Malcolm and Cope on Shaka's *izibongo*.

⁹ It is not clear, however, who Mlambo and Nyathi were, nor how they fit into the genealogy drawn by Mangosuthu. Bryant offers a different genealogy where he does not connect Mvulane with Phungashe as both being the sons of Ngwane. Instead, he traces Mlambo, whose father was Nyathi, as being Mvulane's father (1929:135).

¹⁰ It is possible that Bryant did not gain access to people who had knowledge of the history that was passed down to Mangosuthu and hence based his conclusion on limited information.

¹¹ The hygiene matter is a contentious one as it is regarded by Jethro and others to mean that Nqengelele was tasked with emptying the night-pots at Nobamba, a story related with sadness by Jethro (Buthelezi, 2003h: interview). As a result, the territory under Mangosuthu's rule is derisively referred to as "*izwe lesikigi*" (the land of the night-pot), meaning that it was earned through emptying night-pots.

¹² He was also to be influential in the war against the Ndwandwe, first misleading and then consorting with Zwide's *undunankulu* (chief commander) to devise the strategy that resulted in the defeat of the Ndwandwe, prompting Philemon Ndwandwe partly to blame the Buthelezi people for the Ndwandwe defeat by Shaka's army (Buthelezi, 2003b: interview).

¹³ All my interviewees agree that this controversy does not involve Mangosuthu because he rules over territory that was given to Nqengelele by Shaka and does not infringe on the territory that concerns Phungashe's lineage.

Chapter Three: “UZwide Akayanga kwaSoshangane”¹: Recovering Ndwandwe History through Zwide

If, as I have argued in the previous chapter, Buthelezi history has continually offered muffled resistance to Shaka’s history and that of the Zulu clan from the time of the Buthelezi clan’s defeat during Phungashe’s reign until the present, then Zwide’s history and that of the Ndwandwe clan have remained a more strongly resistant narrative to Zulu hegemony. Zwide’s stature during his reign, the strength of the Ndwandwe kingdom at the height of its power, as well as the magnitude of the devastation suffered by the Ndwandwe people when their state splintered after their defeat have cast Zwide and the Ndwandwe clan in a position of significance in any discussion of the early-nineteenth century history of the present KwaZulu-Natal region. The extent to which Ndwandwe and Zwide’s history figures in both the oral records recorded by James Stuart and in A.T. Bryant’s *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* attests to Zwide’s significance in the history of the region. It also suggests that Ndwandwe history from Zwide’s reign through his clan’s defeat and its aftermath, in comparison with Buthelezi and Phungashe’s history, was still relatively alive in memory and in discourse by the time Stuart and Bryant conducted their research in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This hypothesis is supported by the strong similarity between Bryant’s account of Ndwandwe history and the version narrated by the elderly Ndwandwe *imbongi*, Mzomusha, who maintains that he accumulated his knowledge from his grandfathers who fought in Cetshwayo’s war, i.e. the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879. This means that the versions of Ndwandwe history Stuart, Bryant and Mzomusha Ndwandwe had access to contained similar information overall. If Zwide’s history was alive in memory at the beginning of the twentieth century, what then has subsequently rendered that history and the Ndwandwe people as obscure as they are at this stage in the KwaZulu-Natal region?

In this chapter, I begin by tracing the rise and fall of the Ndwandwe kingdom in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I then briefly return to the question I considered in the discussion of King Shaka’s *izibongo* of how history and oral literature, *izibongo* and *izithakazelo* in particular, were ideological and manipulated in order to maintain the coherence of societies. I proceed to an analysis of Zwide’s *izibongo* and Ndwandwe *izithakazelo*, which are sites of more articulate resistance to Zulu hegemony. I engage with these *izibongo* and *izithakazelo* as a means of literary recovery of the history of the Ndwandwe clan that has faded from significance over the last century, I wish to set that

history in stronger dialogue with the history of the Zulu clan that superseded it in the aftermath of the defeat of the Ndwandwe clan. I then proceed to trace aspects of Ndwandwe history resulting from the fracturing of the kingdom after their defeat by Shaka's forces both under Zwibe and again under his son Sikhunyana. I close this chapter by considering some of the revisions of their history being conducted by the Ndwandwe and their close relatives, the Nxumalo people.

As suggested in the preceding chapter, "the inhabitants of the Phongolo-Mzimkhulu region lived in numerous, small-scale political units" in which the position of rulers ranged from exercising "a lightly-felt 'managerial' and ritual authority over the people who recognised [their] rule, to aggregations of chiefdoms, or 'paramountcies'... in which the dominant chief's power was to a greater extent based on the organisation and deployment of physical force" (Wright and Hamilton, 1989:57-8). Wright and Hamilton maintain that these 'chiefdoms' were loosely structured societies in which cohesion was maintained either through kinship ties (real or invented), or through acts of allegiance made by the ruled to the ruler and the partial redistribution of accumulated tribute by the ruler to favoured or politically important adherents. Armed following was controlled by local community leaders who could resist the authority of regional leaders through arms, failing which they could relocate to other regional leaders' areas with their followers (1989:58). 'Paramountcies' formed when one leader succeeded in subordinating others through conquest, the manipulation of rights to local resources or the control of strategic points along trading routes (59).

I also mentioned in the previous chapter that the rise in the ivory trade between the local populations of southern Africa and the English merchants, in particular, operating from Delagoa Bay precipitated the rise of the Mabhudu, Ndwandwe and Mthethwa kingdoms, according to Wright and Hamilton (61). Their argument is corroborated, in part, by Phillip Bonner in his discussion of the Ngwane clan's coming into contact with the Ndwandwe kingdom (1983:23-29). Although they admit that evidence of the link of the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa states to the Delagoa Bay trade is tenuous, Wright and Hamilton claim that there is no other hypothesis that adequately explains the political centralisation and external expansion that the emerging Ndwandwe and Mthethwa states underwent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They go on to argue that the rise of these states also saw a change in the functions performed by the *amabutho*, who, they maintain, seem to have originally constituted circumcision schools (1989: 62). The *amabutho* were increasingly

employed in hunting elephant from which ivory was traded for prestige imported goods that would then be distributed among the *amabutho* and neighbouring leaders in order to increase the *inkosi's* influence and coercive power. Consequently, with their increased coercive power, the *amakhosi* turned to using the *amabutho* in conflicts with other *amakhosi* (63). Notable states in this regard were, among others, the Mabhudu, the Dlamini-Ngwane, the Hlubi, the Ndwandwe, the Mthethwa and the Qwabe, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

This appears to be how the Ndwandwe kingdom under the leadership of Zwide kaLanga rose to dominance in what is now the KwaZulu-Natal region from its seat of power in Magudu between the Mkhuze and the Phongolo Rivers. According to Wright and Hamilton, the Delagoa Bay trade went into decline in the last years of the eighteenth century and was replaced by trade in cattle with British and American whalers who were based at the bay. The cattle trade heightened conflict between the various states in the region as competition shifted from control over access to travel routes to Delagoa Bay and areas where elephant were abundant, to control over cattle and land that was ecologically more favourable for rearing them. This conflict was further exacerbated by “the effects of major drought, still remembered a hundred years later as the *Madlathule* (‘let him eat and remain silent’)” (1989:66). However, “[b]y the 1810s the rivalry between the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa was gradually coming to overshadow other conflicts, with the Ndwandwe expanding southward across the Mkhuze towards the Black Mfolozi, and the Mthethwa pushing inland up the valley of the White Mfolozi” (66). By that time, the Ndwandwe state was more centralised and militarised than any other in the region, “enlarging the territory under its control by means of ferocious conquest. The Mthethwa state under Dingiswayo was less tightly knit, with subordinate chiefs retaining a considerable measure of autonomy...” provided they acknowledged Dingiswayo’s overlordship (66). Among the clans, or minor states, which the Ndwandwe defeated, Bonner counts the Ngwane, the Matiwane and the Khumalo (1983:10). I return to these clans below when I discuss Zwide’s *izibongo*.

The struggle for the domination of the region came to a head when, in 1817, “the Ndwandwe launched an attack on the Mthethwa, defeated their main army and captured and killed their king Dingiswayo” (Wright and Hamilton, 1989:66-7). This defeat of the Mthethwa brought the Ndwandwe to the threshold of complete dominance of the Phongolo-Thukela region. The last obstacle standing in the way of achieving this aspiration was “the budding Zulu state, whose chief, Shaka kaSenzangakhona, had come to power with Mthethwa assistance and, as a tributary of Dingiswayo, had been encouraged to create a firm regional

basis of resistance to the Ndwandwe” (67). I have hinted in the previous two chapters at how Shaka consolidated and strengthened his power: through what, with hindsight, appears to have been a combination of Dingiswayo’s and Zwide’s methods, i.e. he coerced neighbouring clans into accepting Zulu overlordship, and those that offered resistance were forcefully destroyed, as was the case with the Buthelezi.

The Ndwandwe proceeded to launch their first attack on the Zulu state in about 1818, which Shaka’s forces successfully resisted. A second attack by the Ndwandwe was also beaten off by the Zulu army, leading to a fierce clash fought on the banks of the Mhlathuze River in which the Ndwandwe charges were finally overcome through superior Zulu war tactics, to which I return below. Immediately after the battle, the Zulu counterattacked, devastated Ndwandwe territory and sent the Ndwandwe people fleeing (67). According to Bonner,

[a]fter the Ndwandwe’s defeat by Shaka’s forces their state splintered and collapsed, fragments flying out all over east and central Africa... Little is known of the background to these events which were to have such profound repercussions... on the region as a whole... The Ndwandwe, as a result, are at once one of the most important and one of the most shadowy actors in this drama... (1983:10)

To this day, sizeable populations that trace their ancestry to the Ndwandwe kingdom are said to exist in the Limpopo province, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Nevertheless, even though both the written and oral evidence of Ndwandwe historical experiences is tenuous, having predominantly been recorded almost a century after the collapse of the Ndwandwe kingdom, what information there is recognises the significance of the Ndwandwe state, its leader and his adherents in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Zwide and the Ndwandwe people are credited with being significant role-players in the making of the history of the KwaZulu-Natal region in most accounts of history that extend beyond recognising only Shaka, as most publicly propagated, politically expedient accounts tend to do.

However, I want to suggest, as hinted at above, that the defeat of the Ndwandwe, of Zwide, as it continues to be characterised in oral historical accounts, was widely remembered for most of the first century after the collapse of Ndwandwe power. It is only in the last century, with more recent major events like the Anglo-Zulu war, the succession disputes between Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi, and the clash between groupings within the Zulu ‘nation’

led by Dinuzulu and Zibhebhu replacing the major events of earlier times in historical memory, that the memory of the Ndwandwe defeat has faded. In other words, the gradual intrusion of Zulu and, later, colonial authority, in the present KwaZulu-Natal region at least, where most of the Ndwandwe people belong to the line that traces its history through Zwide's son Somaphunga, catalysed events that have resulted in the erosion of one significant strand in the history of this region. I arrived at this conclusion to some extent after having observed the detail about Zwide, his rule and his clan's defeat contained in Stuart's and Bryant's work and comparing it with the knowledge possessed by the Ndwandwe people I interviewed. On the one hand, the first three people I interviewed, Anthony, Philemon and Nicholas, knew small fragments of Ndwandwe history, blaming their lack of knowledge on having spent little time with their fathers and grandfathers as young men because of labour migrancy that took them to Johannesburg. None of the above people knew even a single line of Zwide's *izibongo*. On the other hand, Mzomusha, who is older than the other interviewees and who has never been a migrant worker, provided a much more comprehensive account of Ndwandwe and Zwide's history as well as Zwide's *izibongo* and Ndwandwe *izithakazelo*. It seems that the circulation of Ndwandwe historical knowledge and literary texts has been less prolific in more recent years than would have been the case in the first century after the Ndwandwe clan was defeated by the Zulu, as I have suggested at the beginning of this chapter.

Nevertheless, using a similar methodology to that used in the previous chapter, it is possible to recover something of the figure of Zwide for present purposes. Through him, Ndwandwe history can be recuperated and the significance of past Ndwandwe power in this region reinserted into paradigms for the present economic, political and cultural reshaping of the region. To begin recovering Zwide and Ndwandwe history through his *izibongo* and Ndwandwe *izithakazelo*, we should recall the arguments about the function of oral literature in society.

In *Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom*, Carolyn Hamilton shows at length how "in non-literate societies... history, and data of origins in particular, were key areas where ideological restructuring occurred; and... oral testimony was the primary means whereby new ideas about society were circulated and became entrenched" (1985:24). She argues that

while [oral] traditions may contain some direct information on precolonial ideologies, the bulk of the historical evidence on past ideologies is to be obtained through the

deconstruction of the ideological artefact, the oral tradition itself... [T]he oral tradition can provide information not only, as has been generally assumed, on the ideological intervention of the powerholders of a historical society, but also on the signs of struggle in which they engaged, and of the resistance and opposition of subaltern cultures. (24-5)

Zwide's *izibongo*, which I have gathered from the James Stuart files in the Campbell Collections and from recording a performance by Mzomusha Ndwandwe, are one such instance of ideological manipulation and restructuring. On the one hand, because of the absence of references to the Ndwandwe defeat in Stuart's version, I would argue that it dates from the time when Zwide was still in power, before his kingdom was shattered by the Zulu clan under Shaka's leadership. On the other hand, Mzomusha's version appears to be from after Zwide's flight from his seat of power. The two versions contain a combination of praising and upholding of Zwide as the Ndwandwe figurehead, and lamenting Ndwandwe defeat. These two thrusts in the *izibongo* point to a re-evaluation of the Ndwandwe past and a reinvention of 'national' discourse as a section of the Ndwandwe clan regrouped in the new area to which they had fled after being defeated. Although no mention of Shaka is made in either version of the *izibongo*, each can be read as establishing strong dialogue with Shaka's *izibongo* and the history of the Zulu clan.

For the Ndwandwe people, these *izibongo* were one means of remembering the clan's lost past in which they were once powerful. They formed part of the expression of nostalgia for home for those who were establishing themselves in new areas and, later, nostalgia for lost power and subtle resistance to Zulu hegemony for those who returned to the Zulu kingdom under Somaphunga, as I show below. Therefore, the ideological artefact, i.e. Zwide's *izibongo*, can provide information on the discursive resistance to Shaka and the Zulu clan's dominance which the Ndwandwe people articulated. Consequently, the analysis of these *izibongo* provides a way of beginning to hear other voices in history and ultimately seeing the region's past through slightly altered lenses.

Zwide's *izibongo* have thus far been obscure because, as Mzomusha says in recognition of Zwide's obscurity, "*Azizange zibebikho izibongo zikaZwide lapha emaphepheni ngoba uZwide akazange aziwe ngumuntu*" (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview) (Zwide's *izibongo* have never been in the papers because Zwide was never known by people). The only version of Zwide's *izibongo* which is recorded in writing that I have encountered

appears in one of James Stuart's files in the James Stuart Archive in the Killie Campbell Africana Library. A slightly edited version of the same text is published in C.T. Msimang's *Kusadliwa Ngoludala* where it is also discussed (1991b). Mzomusha recited, to me and the small audience present at the interview, a lengthier version which he maintained afterwards was incomplete because he was overtaken by emotion in the middle of his performance. I have translated both versions of the *izibongo* and have also organised Mzomusha's version to make reading and analysis more convenient. I have carried out this mediation in accordance with the way in which some researchers have transcribed *izibongo* for the printed page thus far in the history of oral literary studies.² However, I have not amalgamated the two versions in the way I did with the two different versions in the previous chapter as the versions I am working with have no logical link between them.

The version of Zwide's *izibongo* that was recorded by Stuart, with my minor editorial alterations to update the orthography, is as follows:

Zwide kaLanga

UZwide kaLanga!

Unonkok[h]el' abantu bahlatshwe

Kuhlatshw' iminyang' enesisila

Yena bangamhlabi.

Ezindleleni ufana nayip[h]i na --

5

Ufana nevundlayo.

Emithini ufana namup[h]i na --

Ufana nomnyamathi.

Ezinyokeni lapha ufana nayip[h]i na --

Ufana nenyandezulu.

10

Isik[h]ova sikaMk[h]onto noLanga!

Umashesh' afike kuMashobana,

Noyis' uLanga engazang' aza' afike.

Iqili abalihlabe lashon' ilanga

Zingakahlatshwa izibabayiyana.

15

Umak[h]ubalo kawadliwa nganguba yankomo,

Akliwa ngenguba yengonyama.

Izibuk' elimadwala abushelelezi,

Lishelel' uMalusi waseNgoleleni

Lashelel' uDingiswayo waseLuyengweni.

20

I have translated these *izibongo* as follows:

Zwide son of Langa!

The threatener of people with weapons until they are stabbed

Until the houses with bad luck are stabbed

And they do not stab him.

Among the paths which one is he like?

5

He is like the one that goes at a distance.
 Among the trees which one is he like?
 He is like *umnyamathi* (a very strong medicine).
 Among the snakes which one is he like?
 He is like *inyandezulu* (a mythical snake). 10
 The owl of Mkhonto and Langa!
 The quick one to get to Mashobana
 When even his father didn't get to him.
 The deceiver who was stabbed until the sun went down
 Before the nobodies were stabbed. 15
 Medicines that are not eaten with a cow's skin
 They are eaten with a lion's.
 The ford with smooth rocks
 It made Malusi of Ngoleleni slip
 And made Dingiswayo of Luyengweni slip. 20

In his brief discussion of these *izibongo*, Msimang sees lines 2-4 as criticism of Zwide. He states that “[z]isuka nje imbongi ihlaba isenzo [sikaZwide] sokubulala ngobuqili amakhosi akhelene nawo njengoDingiswayo kaJobe, ewagolela emzini wakhe eLangeni...” (1991a:374) (at the outset, the *imbongi* criticises [Zwide’s] act of deceptively killing *amakhosi* who neighboured him like Dingiswayo son of Jobe, luring them to his residence at eLangeni...). Msimang’s point about Zwide luring other *amakhosi* to his home is corroborated by Mzomusha, who offers an elaborate narrative of Zwide’s *modus operandi* for eliminating his rivals. Fragments of this narrative were also mentioned by Nicholas. Mzomusha maintains that Zwide was an *inkosi* who made all the *izizwe* (‘nations’/clans) bow down before him. If anybody offered resistance he would launch an attack and bring that *inkosi*’s clan under his control using force. Otherwise he generally used *umuthi* (witchcraft) to surmount his rivals in the struggle to dominate the region, which I have discussed above. Together with his mother, Ntombazi, who is regarded by almost all the written and oral sources I have used as a great *inyanga-mthakathi* (traditional healer-cum-witch) in Nicholas Ndwandwe’s words, Zwide would send his sister, Maqinase, to befriend the *izintombi* (maidens) of the clan whose *inkosi* Zwide was targeting. Through Ntombazi’s *imithi* (medicines), with which Maqinase would be treated before embarking on her missions, the targeted *inkosi* would become attracted to Maqinase. Thereafter, the *inkosi* would *hlobonga* (have sex without penetrating) with Maqinase, whereupon she would collect his semen (in an *umfece*, commonly used as a snuffbox, according to one of Stuarts interviewees, Jantshi kaNongila (Webb and Wright, 1976:177)), and a bat called Balande would collect it and take it back to Ntombazi to use in her *umuthi* (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview).

The target *inkosi* would then be invited to Zwide's residence
izibona izintombi zamaNdwandwe zisina esibayeni ececeni... Uma efika amabutho
[aphelezela inkosi] laphaya azofike ahlale, inkosi-ke ibisiya enkosini uZwide...
Isizothi la ingena laph' endlini izinduna zikaZwide sezizayibamba lenkosi,
ziyinqamul' ikhanda, zilithathe zilichom' endlini kaNtombazi. Kuthathw'
isidumbu siphoswe endlini kaNtombazi sidliwe zimpisi [ezazihlala endlini
kaNtombazi]. Wayengababulal' abantu uZwide, wayebulal' amakhosi...
 (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview)

(to see the *izintombi* of the Ndwandwe dancing at an *icece* (dancing display)...
 When the *amabutho* [who were escorting the *inkosi*] arrived they would sit and the
inkosi would go to king Zwide. When he entered the house Zwide's *izinduna*
 (generals) would catch him, cut his head off and pin it to Ntombazi's house. The body
 would be taken and thrown into Ntombazi's house and be eaten by hyenas [which
 lived in the house]. Zwide did not kill people, he only killed *amakhosi*...)

Zwide would then take over the leadership of the dead *inkosi's* clan and incorporate the clan's
amabutho into his *impi*.

However, I disagree with Msimang's interpretation of the speaker/*imbongi's* intention
 in the opening lines of the *izibongo*. The overall mood of this version of the *izibongo* seems
 rather to be celebratory. Zwide is being celebrated for his achievements, and his trickery is
 seen as constituting part of his overall shrewdness, for which he is praised in the entire text.
 After introducing his subject and establishing his descent from Langa in the first line, which
 is repeated in line 11 (even though it is unclear who Mkhonto was), the speaker/*imbongi*
 proceeds to praise Zwide throughout the *izibongo*. The lines discussed above are followed by
 three rhetorical questions, each of which is asked and answered, in turn, with similes. Zwide
 is compared to a path *evundlayo* (that goes at a distance) (line 6), a word often used when
 someone travels on routes where s/he will avoid encountering people s/he is double-crossing.
 This, therefore, alludes to Zwide's devious behaviour. His might is celebrated when he is
 referred to as being like the *umnyamathi* plant (line 8) and the mythical snake, *inyanda*
yezulu/ inyandezulu (line 10). Mzomusha maintains that *umnyamathi* is considered to be very
 powerful *umuthi* used by *amakhosi* to *phalaza* ('vomit' - a method of administering
 traditional medicine). It creates *isithunzi* (an aura of respectability) for them

(2003d:interview). According to Msimang, as a result of his devious acts, Zwide rapidly rose to become the mythical snake, *inyandezulu* (line 10). This snake is believed to be very powerful in Zulu mythology. Devastating thunderstorms and cyclones are often attributed to the *nyandezulu*, which is said to cause them when it travels from one place to another.

Therefore, a highly embellished image of Zwide as a mighty *inkosi* is constructed using mythical symbols with which Zwide is equated. This image rivals, or even surpasses, that of Shaka created in his *izibongo*, as discussed in Chapter One. Here Zwide is mythologised by being located predominantly in the supernatural through being compared to highly symbolic objects, *umnyamathi* and *inyandezulu*, both of which possess supernatural powers. It is only in the second half of this text that Zwide is praised referring to particular people over whom he triumphed and less aggrandised images of the natural world. In lines 11 and 12 he is praised for defeating Mashobana who, according to Bryant, was the leader of one of the two branches of the Khumalo people at the time (1929:172). Here Zwide is presented as a mightier and more ambitious *inkosi* than his father, Langa, before him. After this, the *imbongi* returns to Zwide's deviousness, directly naming him a deceiver (line 14). Mzomusha hinted that Zwide was thus named for having been the prime candidate for attack by the other *amakhosi* in the region who saw his relatively quick rise by overcoming other *amakhosi*, discussed above, as a threat (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview). Hence they always attempted to conquer him first before waging war against the less powerful *amakhosi* that are seen as *izibabayiyana* (nobodies) in Zwide's *izibongo*. However, he always marshalled his forces to fierce resistance and was thus "stabbed [at] until the sun went down" (line 14).

The image of Zwide as a deceptive strategist is further enhanced in the final three lines of the above version of his *izibongo*. He is called a ford that has smooth rocks and is praised for having made Malusi and Dingiswayo slip. Significantly, Malusi and Dingiswayo are linked together by the logic that runs through the concluding lines of these *izibongo*. According to Bryant, Malusi was Zwide's "cousin" (Zwide's brother in the 'Zulu' lexicon of kinship) by virtue of being of the *ikhohlwa* (junior house) in the Ndwandwe succession dating four generations back from Malusi and Zwide's time (Bryant, 1929:163). Malusi was married to Dingiswayo's sister, Nomathuli, and their daughter accompanied Zwide's sister, Ntombazana in Bryant's version, on the mission to collect Dingiswayo's semen for Zwide's *umuthi* (163-4). There is a contradiction in Bryant's version in that he says that Malusi's daughter won Dingiswayo's affection over Maqinase (or Ntombazana), which is highly doubtful as Dingiswayo would have been Malusi's daughter's uncle. In any case, Malusi fell

out with Zwide after the two women's return and was then accused of having reported Zwide's plot to Dingiswayo. Hence he was killed. This angered Dingiswayo who demanded from Zwide that Malusi be produced alive. When Zwide expressed his inability to comply, Dingiswayo declared the battle that led to his demise.

Overall, the image constructed of Zwide is that of a mighty and shrewd leader who was superior to his adversaries (in the race for dominating the region) in intelligence, always out-thinking and outmanoeuvring them. This shrewdness is thus offered as the reason for his rapid rise to prominence. When read in the present against the backdrop of a long history of Shaka's prominence in discourse, this can be seen as an instance of Zwide speaking back to the dominant figure of Shaka through the image of him constructed by the various *izimbongi* who were responsible for coining the above *izibongo*. The *izibongo* set him alongside Shaka as an equal, thus subverting the image of Zwide as a weak *inkosi* who was easily overcome by Shaka (through his army), as he is represented in Shaka's *izibongo*. Therefore, these *izibongo* provide us with a text that lends itself well to the project I am conducting here of reinserting into history people who have been written out of it by the various ruling hegemonies of the last two centuries. Moreover, if these *izibongo*, as I have suggested above, represent Zwide as he was seen before his defeat by Shaka, then the version recited by Mzomusha sits interestingly alongside the above version to present a view of Zwide, and the Ndwandwe people more widely, after Shaka's war against them and at the time of their attempts to rebuild their lost pride and identity. Mzomusha's version also possibly includes minor revisions of Zwide and Ndwandwe history which have been introduced over successive generations by various *izimbongi* who had occasion to use Zwide's *izibongo*.

The version of Zwide's *izibongo* recited by Mzomusha is the following, in my transcription:

*Uchakide kaMnjololo, umgob' usin' etsheni, umagwaca ngezidinjana, umphephethi
wezinduku zabafo.* 1

*Unonkokhel' abantu behlatshwe njengezinkomo,
abanye behlatshwe emazibukweni.*

*Imambana yakithi eGudunkomo eyazibuth' emagudu amabili,
izibuthe kwelincane yaye yazibutha kwelikhulu.* 5

Unoshosh' ahambe ez' eyefike kwaSoshangane.

*Utho olubonwe ngabafazi behlakula babaleka bawashiy' amageja, bathi sibon' utho
lukaZwide benoLanga.*

*UZwide bath' wayekwaSoshangane kanti uZwide akayanga kwaSoshangane,
izinyoni zodwa ezaya kwaSoshangane.*

Inhlendla kaNonyanda ephumela kweziny' izinhlendla.

- Wadl' uMatiwane wasemaNdebeleni wamqumba phansi koludumayo [uthuli]
kwandaba kazalutho.* 10
- Umgwazi kaqhaqhwa uqhaqhwa zinkonjane.*
- Waye wadl' uBhungane ezalwa kwaHadebe wamqumba phansi koludumayo
kwandaba zalutho.*
- Udwal' elibushelelezi ngoba lishelise kabi lishelisis' amadoda agund' izicoco
azibeka phansi ngoba lashelelis' uDingiswayo ezalwa kwaMthethwa
ezalwa nguJobe wamqumba phansi koludumayo, wamenzel' izinyoni zezulu,
wamnik' iziqabo zezinkomo zezithole wambamba wamjika ngapha wamjika ngapha
wamnikel' izithole ezazimabal' amhlophe zameqa zamxovaxova.*
- UNdwardwe bathi asiyekumbona.* 15
- Umgwaz' akaqhaqhwa uqhaqhwa zinkonjane ngoba zona zazingaphakelwa muntu
yena wayephakelwa kwabo ngoba wayephakelw' endlini kwabo,
ngoba wayephakelwa ngunina uNtombazi intombi yasemaNdlovini, izinyoni
zazingenamphakeli.*
- Dlana simuke siye kwelakithi kwaSoshangane
siyothola izinyembezi zamadod' amadala agund' izicoco azinikela kwelikaMdolomba
kwelakwangwenyakazi.* 20
- Uabantu abaholwa abanjengamahlahla... (Ayi uzobuy' ungi phinde ngoba sekuthi
angikhale. Kube sekuthi kangikhale. [Ibinda nkosi]).*
- Uabantu abaholwa (kabanjengezinkomo) abanjengamahlahla.*
- Unonkokhel' abantu behlatshwe emazibukweni bebe njengezinkomo.*
- Abanye abantu behlaba izinkomo zamadoda, umambana evuke ezihosheni
yaphelel' ezihlangwini zabafokazana.*
- Usixhumo sampunzi esavuk' eminceleni... (Ewu, sengibindiwe bafana ngiyekani.
[ayiqedw' inkosi] ngizawuyiqeda... awu zinde).* 25
- Bathi wadl' uMatiwane ezalw' emaNdebeleni,
wadl' uMbulazi ezalwa kwaKhumalo,
wadl' uMashobana ezalwa kwaKhumalo,
waye wadl' uDingiswayo ezalwa kwaMthethwa.*
- Udwala lalibushelelezi lashelelis' amadoda,* 30
- amadoda azigundi izicoco azibek' emsamo... (Sengibuyele khona lapho)*
- The mongoose of Mnjololo, bender that dances on a rock, who hides behind little
clumps of grass, the blower away of strangers' weapons. 1
- Threatener of people with weapons until they get stabbed like cattle,
and others are stabbed at the fords.
- The little mamba of our home at Gudunkomo that collected them [cattle] at the two
Gudus,
it collected them at the small one and collected them at the big one. 5
- The one who stalks all the way to the place of Soshangane.
- The thing that was seen by women when they were weeding the fields and they ran
away and left the hoes, and said we saw the thing of Zwide and Langa.
- Zwide they said he was at the place of Soshangane but Zwide did not go to the place
of Soshangane, only the birds went to the place of Soshangane.
- Barbed spear of Nonyanda that succeeds over other barbed spears.
- He ate up Matiwane of the Ndebele and brought him down to that [the dust] which
buzzes where everything crumbles to insignificance. 10

The stabber who is not unstitched, he is only unstitched by swallows.

He even ate up Bhungane of the Hadebe by birth and brought him down to that which buzzes where everything crumbles to insignificance.

The rock that is smooth because it made [them] slip badly, it made men slip and they cut off their head-rings, because it made slip Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa by birth, born of Jobe, and brought him down to that which buzzes, and left him for the birds of the heavens [swallows],

and gave him to the heifers, and grabbed him and threw him this way and that, and gave him to the heifers with white spots and they jumped over him and trod on him.

Ndwandwe they say let us go and see him. 15

The stabber who is not unstitched he is only unstitched by swallows because nobody dishes food for them

but he was fed at home because he was fed at his house,

because he was fed by his mother Ntombazi, maiden of the Ndlovu people, the birds had no feeder.

Eat and let us hasten to the land of our people at the place of Soshangane

to receive the tears of old men who cut off their head-rings and offered them to that [the land] of Mdolomba, the place of the large crocodile. 20

People are not dragged they are not like branches of trees... (*voice breaks, becomes emotional, says he feels like crying*).

People are not dragged they are not like (cattle) branches of trees.

The threatener who threatens people with weapons until they are stabbed at the fords, until they become like cattle.

Other people were stabbing the cattle of men, the little mamba that suddenly appeared in the ravines and ended on the shields of insignificant little strangers.

The young buck that suddenly appeared at the boundaries [of fields]... (*voice breaks again*)... 25

They say he ate up Matiwane of the Ndebele by birth,

and ate up Mbulazi of the Khumalo,

and ate up Mashobana of the Khumalo,

and eventually ate up Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa.

The smooth rock that made men slip, 30

and the men shaved their head-rings and put them at the backs of houses...

(*realises he is repeating himself, is now distracted*)

I want to suggest that this version of Zwide's *izibongo* combines two main thrusts: the reaffirmation of Zwide as the Ndwandwe *inkosi*; and the lament of the loss of home for the Ndwandwe people. The *izibongo* are a retrospective re-evaluation of their history through the revaluation of the former symbol of 'national' pride, Zwide, whose image was being tarnished in the Zulu clan's version of the region's history, as we have seen in the representation granted Zwide in Shaka's *izibongo*, and as evident in Mzomusha's distress in the performance. Hence the melancholy mood of this version of the *izibongo*. I also want to suggest that this particular version of the *izibongo* was passed down in Somaphunga's branch

of the Ndwandwe clan, which is the branch that returned to *khonza* under Shaka, as I show below. This, therefore, constitutes a strong case for reading these *izibongo* against Shaka's as an instance of speaking back to Zulu hegemony from unofficial, marginal spaces.

The *izibongo* open with a continuous flow of praise that spans the first five lines. In a series of epithets, Zwide is praised for his intelligence and deceptiveness, his toughness and his triumphs. His intelligence and deceptiveness are celebrated when he is referred to as *uchakide* (mongoose) (line 1) and *imambana* (little mamba) (line 4). A mongoose is an animal which appears in many *izinganekwane* (folktales) in isiZulu. Its main characteristic is its ability to get itself out of the mischief it constantly gets into by outwitting human beings when they attempt to punish it for its misdeeds. The term *imambana* is often used to refer to a mischievous young person who also always tries to get herself/himself out of trouble through trickery. Hence Zwide is being celebrated for his shrewdness through the use of commonly-known epithets that represent him as wily. These epithets combine with the celebration of strength and the ability to achieve the almost unachievable when he is named “*umgob' usin' etsheni*” (bender that dances on a rock) and “*umagwaca ngezidinjana*” (he who hides behind small clumps of grass) (line 1). He is seen as being able to coerce (“bend”) almost anyone to doing his will, as well as to *sina* (do the ‘Zulu’ dance) on a rock and to hide his *impi* behind small clumps of grass when he attacks before surprising the enemy, the last two of which are almost impossible. The raiding of cattle at his behest among the clans neighbouring the Ndwandwe people at Magudu, whom the Ndwandwe clan came to completely dominate, is also praised (lines 4-5). The name Gudunkomo is highly significant among the Ndwandwe people because it refers to Magudu, which they consider their place of origin according to Mzomusha (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview).

The reaffirmation of Zwide by lauding him is sustained throughout the text, but it is tempered with the lament thrust of this version of the *izibongo*, which confirms my point that these *izibongo* are an instance of the revaluation of the Ndwandwe past conducted from the perspective of people who were dispossessed and needed to revive their pride. The reaffirmation of Zwide is continued with the invoking of his majesty and might: the mere sight of him frightens women and sends them fleeing (line 7) in a similar way to Shaka's terrifying of women, in the view of his *imbongi*, so much so that the fear induced labour in those with child (Cope, 1968:20). He is also called *inhlendla* (barbed spear) that succeeds over other *izinhlendla* (line 9), and those other *izinhlendla* over whom he succeeded are then detailed, interspersed with other views of Zwide: *Matiwane* (line 10), *Bhungane* (line 12), and

Dingiswayo (line 13). In his recital, Mzomusha returned to detailing Zwide's successes after pausing to collect himself following an emotional outburst before realising that he was 'repeating' himself. Although he saw it as repeating himself, he had added Mbulazi and Mashobana to the list of Zwide's conquests (lines 27 and 28). These conquests are embellished by qualification with phrases that emphasise Zwide's supremacy. He is said to have brought the *amakhosi* over whom he triumphed down to the dust that buzzes where everything comes to nothing. This particular qualification of Zwide's success reduces to weakness the leaders he defeated in a manner analogous to the way he and other *amakhosi* are presented as easily surmountable in Shaka's *izibongo*. Consequently, when pitted against views of Shaka in his own *izibongo*, this view of Zwide challenges his undermining in Shaka's *izibongo*. It also undermines the perception that it is only the victors in past struggles for control whose stories are told and which remain the legitimate narratives of history, as has mainly been the case with the history of the 'Zulu' people until recently and remains the case in some ethnically-centred political persuasions.³

Zwide's conquest of the *amakhosi* whom he is praised for defeating is significant because of its place in the struggle for the dominance of the region, which eventually led to the downfall of the Ndwandwe people. Bryant discusses Zwide's offensives against Matiwane, Mashobana and Dingiswayo. These offensives are only a selection, possibly of the Ndwandwe clan's most significant successes, as other victories discussed by Bryant and Bonner are not included: against the emaNtshalini under Mlotha, Donda's branch of the Khumalo, and the Dlamini-Ngwane under Sobhuza. In Bryant's highly embellished account, the Ngwane were attacked by the Ndwandwe following Dingiswayo's

severe castigation of... Matiwane... beyond Ntabankulu mount; but in his usual way [Dingiswayo] had left him as contumacious and perverse as ever... Zwide resolved to correct the error and complete the cure... he threw his *amaNkayiya* regiment on the unexpectant foe, and, in one frenzied swoop, swept the emaNgwaneni pell-mell out of the land. (1929:163)

Mashobana's branch of the Khumalo people, which dwelt between the Isikhwebezi and the Mkhuze Rivers, was also conquered by the Ndwandwe immediately after the defeat of the branch headed by Donda (1929:172). But the Ndwandwe's most significant victory was against the Mthethwa, as is hinted at in the qualification of Dingiswayo's defeat in Zwide's *izibongo* (line 13-14 and line 29). Having subdued all the clans mentioned above, Zwide's

remaining challenge was to overcome Dingiswayo's confederacy and finally add the areas under Dingiswayo's overlordship to his territory. According to Mzomusha, at that stage Shaka was not an issue for Zwide: "*UZwide wayengamnakile uShaka, ethi ngeke mina ngilwe nalelibhoxongwane ngingahlekwa izitha zami...*" (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview) (Zwide was not paying any attention to Shaka saying, 'I won't fight with this hothead, I would get laughed at by my enemies'...).

There are conflicting accounts of why Dingiswayo took up arms against the Ndwandwe clan. Above, I have mentioned Bryant's version which is that Zwide had had Malusi, Dingiswayo's brother-in-law, murdered. But according to Mzomusha, Dingiswayo and Zwide had a confrontation over Bhungane's cattle. Bhungane, the *inkosi* of the Hadebe clan, is represented in Zwide's *izibongo* as one of his conquests. It seems, therefore, that there was conflict over the cattle looted by the Ndwandwe from the Hadebe people, with Dingiswayo maintaining that he was entitled to a portion of the loot. It is on this pretext then that he declared war on Zwide in Mzomusha's account (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview). The reason for the conflict advanced by Mzomusha fits with Wright and Hamilton's hypothesis of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century history of the Phongolo-Thukela region discussed above. As Wright and Hamilton suggest, the rise in the cattle trade prompted conflict among the expanding states like the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa. Hence it is plausible that the confrontation between Zwide and Dingiswayo was over cattle.

In any case, once war was declared, Dingiswayo "dispatched word to his vassal, Shaka, to [mobilise his *impi*, and for] both armies to invade Ndwandweland simultaneously" (Bryant, 1929:164). The Mthethwa *impi* launched an attack on the Ndwandwe, entering Ndwandwe territory at Mpukunyoni near Hlulhuwe according to Reggie Khumalo (Buthelezi, 2003a:interview), and marching undetected all the way to the vicinity of Zwide's seat of power in Nongoma in Bryant's account (1929:164). They then halted, waiting to no avail for Shaka's *impi* to join the attack on the Ndwandwe. At that stage, Ntombazi's spell took its toll on Dingiswayo, according to Bryant (1929:164) and one of Stuart's interviewees, Makhuza kaMkomoyi (Webb and Wright, 1979:170). Dingiswayo, with a group of girls who had come along with the *impi* to wait on the king, then "sauntered gaily over the open veld towards kwaMbuzi hill, and walked into the Ndwandwe platoon there awaiting him" (Bryant, 1929:164-5). Nicholas Ndwandwe offered a very similar account (Buthelezi, 2003c:interview). Makhuza's version is slightly different. He maintains that Dingiswayo and his *impi* were so overcome by Zwide's *umuthi* that Zwide sent a dispatch of *amabutho* to find

Dingiswayo and bring him back to his kwaDlovunga residence, which they accomplished without the slightest resistance from the Mthethwa *impi*.

Nevertheless, according to Bryant and another one of Stuart's sources, Jantshi kaNongila (Webb and Wright, 1976:183), after Dingiswayo had proceeded to Zwide's residence, his *impi* became alarmed when time passed and he did not return. An attack on the Ndwandwe *impi* was then launched in which the Mthethwa *impi* was heavily defeated and sent fleeing as far as the Amatigulu River (Bryant, 1929:166). Jantshi states that "Zwide had a mind to let Dingiswayo go, but Ntombaze said, 'Kill him, or he will kill you'. Zwide allowed Dingiswayo to live for three days and on the fourth day put him to death" (Webb and Wright, 1979:183-4). Ndlovu kaThimuni narrates that Dingiswayo was trampled to death by cattle: "[The Ndwandwe people] caused cattle to trample him. He had stakes driven through his hands and feet, and was placed face upwards on the ground. Then cattle were driven over him while he was still alive; they trampled his chest and stomach" (Webb and Wright, 1986:230). This incident appears in Mzomusha's version of Zwide's *izibongo*: "[uDingiswayo] wamenzel' izinyoni zezulu/ wamnik' iziqabo zezinkomo zezithole wambamba wamjika ngapha wamjika ngaphawamnikel' izithole ezazimabal' amhlophe zameqa zamxovaxova" (lines 13-14) ("[Zwide] left [Dingiswayo] for the birds of the heavens [swallows]/ and gave him to the heifers, and grabbed him and threw him this way and that, and gave him to the heifers with white spots and they jumped over him and trod on him"). Dingiswayo's head joined those arrayed on top of Ntombazi's house according to Bryant, Nicholas and Mzomusha.

Dingiswayo's death prompted Shaka to expand his power rapidly in order to bolster his *impi* in anticipation of an attack by Zwide's *impi*, and he incorporated neighbouring clans into his state and assumed the leadership of his late 'father', Dingiswayo's, clan. According to Wright and Hamilton, as discussed above, Zwide then launched his campaign against Shaka's polity. In almost all the oral accounts of this campaign available today as well as in the accounts of Stuart's sources, the first two battles discussed in Wright and Hamilton's hypothesis are remembered in little detail and often mentioned together in passing, if not spoken of as one battle. This was the case in interviews with all my Ndwandwe interviewees. It is thus not clear to me whether the war was fought over three battles, or whether this is simply an invention that has been taken up by historians.⁴ Hence I focus on the final encounter on the banks of the Mhlathuze River.

The standard account of this battle, the bulk of which is practically the same in Bryant's and Mzomusha's accounts, and fragments of which are known to Philemon,

Nicholas, Anthony and Reggie, is that Noluju (or Noju, the name means the same in either form) colluded with the Zulu people to bring about the Ndwandwe's downfall. According to Mangosuthu Buthelezi, as discussed in the previous chapter, Nqengelele Buthelezi was responsible for getting Noluju to collaborate with the Zulu military strategists. Noluju was Manqayini (of the Manqayini clan) was Zwide's main *inzwebeli* (spy), i.e. head of intelligence, who was disenchanted with Zwide's delay in allotting him a piece of land, as Mzomusha puts it. He was originally of Mashobana's branch of the Khumalo clan and had *khonza'd* under Zwide (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview). He was sent by Zwide to ask Shaka to pay his father, Senzangakhona's, 'debt' to Zwide. The 'debt' was three women, according to Bryant, and two in Mzomusha's version, whom Senzangakhona had undertaken to give to Zwide in marriage. Since Senzangakhona had died before he had fulfilled his undertaking, his debt was deferred to his successor (Bryant, 1929:174, and Buthelezi, 2003d:interview). It was on his mission to Shaka that Noluju asked to be given a piece of land in return for all the Ndwandwe military secrets, as Mzomusha says. Shaka acquiesced, promising Noluju to grant his request once the battle against the Ndwandwe clan had been won. Mzomusha also includes Mzilikazi kaMashobana of the Khumalo clan in the planning of the downfall of the Ndwandwe clan, since he had run off from his uncle, Zwide, some time after Zwide had killed his father, Mashobana, and had given his allegiance to Shaka. Hence Mzomusha suggests that the original plan to lure the Ndwandwe *impi* out of its territory and away from all sources of food was first conceived by Mzilikazi. Two other collaborators who had insider information on Ndwandwe strategies are said also to have been involved in passing Ndwandwe secrets to Shaka and his advisers: a member of the Mncwango clan, which had strong ties with the Ndwandwe clan (was descended from Ndwandwe people according to Mzomusha) and lived in the Nongoma area, Ncumbatha (or Cumbathi) in Mzomusha's narrative and Ncumbatha's son, Mpangazitha, according to both Philemon and Nicholas; as well as Zwide's sister, Maqinase in some accounts and Ntombazana in others.

In any case, when the decisive final confrontation came, the strategies collaborated on by (none, some of, or even all) the people suggested in the various accounts were put to use by the Zulu *impi*. When the Ndwandwe *impi* launched its attack, all the Zulu people retreated as far as the Thukela River, taking with them all the food that could be carried, having buried all that could not be carried and burning their fields as they went. The Ndwandwe *impi* followed in pursuit but eventually turned back in confusion, uncertain whether the Zulu retreat was their fighting strategy or whether they were indeed running away (Buthelezi,

2003d:interview). By this time the Ndwandwe *impi*, who “had left their homes bearing a solitary day’s rations of sorghum-bread [had] long devoured [all their food] hoping by sundown to be resting in a land rich with meat and millet” (Bryant, 1929:194). The knowledge that they carried little food when they went into battle had been central to the Zulu plan to retreat, having been communicated to the Zulu leadership by Noluju according to Mzomusha (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview).

The Ndwandwe *impi*, hungry and exhausted, came to rest in “a place called kwaNomveve, between the eNtumeni heights and the eMvuzane River” where they were attacked by a young dispatch of Shaka’s *amabutho*, as Bryant claims (1929:194). Bryant maintains that Shaka’s *ibutho* was matched for strength by the Ndwandwe *impi* and eventually retired having achieved no decisive result (194). In his sometimes confused account, Bryant first claims that a second *ibutho* was sent that night to attack the Ndwandwe *impi* as they slept (194), but later asserts that there were two battles, one after the other, on the same day followed by a retreat of the Ndwandwe *impi* to the Mhlathuze valley where the Zulu *amabutho* encountered them in the final battle the following day. Philemon’s, Mzomusha’s and Nicholas’ accounts simply speak of a major battle between the two forces without the finer details of how the battle was fought. Nevertheless, all the available written and oral accounts are unanimous in stating that the Ndwandwe *impi* was comprehensively defeated in a fierce battle on the banks of the Mhlathuze River. As they retreated home, the Zulu *impi* counterattacked, overtaking the Ndwandwe *impi* near the Dumbe Hill (Bryant, 1929:208).

Both Bryant and Mzomusha also claim that Shaka sent an *iviyo* (platoon) to Zwide’s residence to capture him. The *iviyo* arrived at Zwide’s residence, it is unclear which one, singing the Ndwandwe anthem which was sung by the Ndwandwe *amabutho* when they returned from war victorious (Bryant, 1929:208, and Buthelezi, 2003d:interview). Ululating women and children ran to meet the *impi* and celebrate their success only to be attacked by the Zulu *iviyo*. Zwide managed to escape and the retreating Ndwandwe *impi* was pursued by the Zulu across the Phongolo River. Thereafter, the Ndwandwe people scattered throughout southern Africa. Bonner claims that “[a]fter Zwide’s second defeat, splinters of the Ndwandwe state flew off in all directions, lodging in some cases as far away as Lakes Tanzania and Victoria” (1983:29). The defeat of Zwide’s army and flight of his people marked the end of the once-powerful Ndwandwe state. It precipitated Shaka’s domination of the Phongolo-Thukela region (and beyond) that was to result in his dominance in all discourse on the region’s past up to the present.

In the Ndwandwe account of their forebears' defeat, the success of the Zulu *impi* is attributed to two things: Mzilikazi, Ncumbatha and Noluju's disclosure of Ndwandwe war intelligence; and Zwide's *izintelezi* finally working against him following Noluju and Maqinase's (alias Ntombazana's) betrayal of Zwide and, by extension, the Ndwandwe people. Noluju and Maqinase are said to have taken Zwide's *amakhothamo* (grass from above the doorway believed to take away a person's strength when mixed in the making of a certain *umuthi*) and other types of body dirt to Shaka's *izinyanga*. The end result, according to Mzomusha, was that Ntombazi's bat, Balande, which had the power of fetching the enemy and luring them to the Ndwandwe *impi* in the end did the opposite, luring the Ndwandwe to the Zulu *impi*: "*Lulwane hamb' ubalande, hamb' ubalande, ilulwane alisalandi muntu. Selilanda bona laba bakwaNdwandwe libabhekisa le*" (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview) (Bat, go and fetch them, go and fetch them, the bat no longer fetches anybody. Instead it fetches the very Ndwandwe people and leads them that way [towards the Zulu *impi*]). Noluju's role is acknowledged in these lines of Shaka's *izibongo*: "*UBholokoqa bazalukanisile/ Zalukaniswe uNoju noNgqengenyane* (The open-handed one, they have matched the regiments/ They were matched by Noju and Ngqengenyane) (Cope, 1968:19).

Moreover, the defeat of the Ndwandwe clan and the role played by the collaborators who betrayed them, as well as the suppression of the once-powerful Ndwandwe by the Zulu clan, is a source of pain for the Ndwandwe people I interviewed. Zwide's *izibongo*, as recited by Mzomusha, give the impression that the defeat of the Ndwandwe clan has been a sore point ever since its occurrence. This point is strongly supported by the second thrust in Mzomusha's version of Zwide's *izibongo*, i.e. the lament of Zwide's defeat. The lament thrust of the *izibongo* is first expressed in line 6 where a seemingly meaningless line is inserted between lines in which Zwide is praised: "*Unoshosh' ahambe ez' eyefike kwaSoshangane*" (The one who stalks all the way to the place of Soshangane). The meaning of this line only begins to emerge once it is read in conjunction with other lines with which it interconnects even as it stands apart from them. The thread of meaning introduced in the above line is picked up in line 8: "*UZwide bath' wayekwaSoshangane kanti uZwide akayanga kwaSoshangane, izinyoni zodwa ezaya kwaSoshangane*" (Zwide they said he was at the place of Soshangane but Zwide did not go to the place of Soshangane, only the birds went to the place of Soshangane). In these lines lies the hint that these *izibongo* date from a time after a section of the Ndwandwe people had regrouped where Zwide re-established himself near the Komati River in the present-day Limpopo Province, as we shall see below. The hint is given,

first, by the tense used in line 8, which leads to the second aspect of the same hint, i.e. the point of view from which the composer(s) of these lines, as well as others whose meaning is closely linked to them and to which I return below, assessed Zwide and Ndwandwe history. The *imbongi*/speaker uses the past tense in suggesting that Zwide was at the place of Soshangane (line 6), but goes on to dispute that Zwide went to the place of Soshangane (line 8). This suggests that in these lines he is, therefore, assessing the rumour or the commonly-held notion that Zwide had followed Soshangane to Delagoa Bay in his flight after the Ndwandwe *impi*'s loss to the Zulu *impi*. Such a notion would most likely have been held among the people who remained behind in former Ndwandwe territory as others fled, as well as those who fled to other parts of southern Africa.

There are various conflicting accounts with regard to the directions taken by the various splinters of the Ndwandwe grouping that fled from their former territory. Philip Bonner claims that

[a]ccording to Mamba historians, Zwide had first tried to retreat to Mamba territory, but had been forced to withdraw by the resistance they put up. Whether this was so, or whether the forces the Mamba encountered were other displaced elements of the defeated Ndwandwe state [is unclear]... Zwide regrouped his forces at amaNzabomvu, the northern tributary of the Komati [River]. (1983:29)

He goes on to state that Soshangane fled to Delagoa Bay where, with his small band of followers, he began incorporating the local Tsonga communities into the nucleus of the Shangane state. Luzipho kaNomageje, one of James Stuart's interviewees, maintains that Soshangane was the son of Zikode kaLanga (Webb and Wright, 1976:354), which means he was Zwide's son in the 'Zulu' scheme of kinship. Nicholas Ndwandwe also recorded the same in his written notes, which he says were dictated to him by his father (1994:3). It appears that Soshangane ranked highly in the Ndwandwe *impi*, given that Bryant, Philemon, Nicholas and Mzomusha all state that he was in charge of the *impi* when it went into the final battle with Shaka's forces.

Soshangane was followed by another splinter group under Zwangendaba at approximately the same time as another splinter under Nxaba skirted the western borderlands of the Ngwane territory in what is today southern Swaziland. Shemane, who had ascended to being Zwide's heir after the death of Nomahlanjana⁵ and other sons of Zwide in the first confrontation between the Ndwandwe and the Zulu *izimpi*, "begged refuge from Sobhuza, as did sections

under Ngolotsheni and Sihalahala Nxumalo...” (Bonner, 1983:29). Bryant also discusses Zwide’s flight to Nkomazane or Komati and Soshangane’s to Delagoa Bay. He claims that Zwide was accompanied by two of his sons, Sikhunyana and Somaphunga, and re-established himself by waging war against the Sotho inhabitants of the area which his splinter group came to occupy (1929:209). He offers a different account of Shemane’s pathway after the Mhlathuze battle, suggesting that he retreated to rebuild Magudu and remained there until he discovered where Zwide had fled. This discovery occurred when a party returned to bury Zwide at Magudu. Soon after, Shemane followed the departed party to Komati where there was an impasse between Sikhunyana and Somaphunga as to who would succeed Zwide. Shemane showed no interest in power and, as a result, Sikhunyana suspected that Somaphunga would gain Shemane’s favour against him and hence he had some of Somaphunga’s backers murdered. This sent Somaphunga into flight back to KwaZulu to *khonza* under Shaka. To dispel the danger of Ndwandwe reprisals, Shaka appointed one of his *izinduna* to police Somaphunga. He was only released from this custody by Dingane and allowed to return to Nongoma and build at Nengeni⁶ (Bryant, 1929:213). Reggie, Philemon, Nicholas and Mzomusha all offered similar but less detailed versions of Somaphunga’s return to KwaZulu.

Mzomusha acknowledges that the people who re-established themselves in Nongoma trace their history through Somaphunga. He says “[b]aphela [ubukhosi bakwaNdwandwe emva kukuZwide] kwase kuthi lo uSomaphunga wase eba yinduna yakwaZulu esejike le ngaseMalol’asmati [Komati?], wajika waqhamuka waphikelela kwaHlabisa. Wazokhonza kwaZulu” (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview) (The Ndwandwe kingship vanished after Zwide and this one, Somaphunga, became an *induna* of the Zulu people after he had come back from there at Malol’ asmati [Komati?] and gone to Hlabisa. And then came and *khonza’d* at the place of the Zulu). Mzomusha traces his ancestry through Somaphunga, maintaining in a discussion on the later history of the Ndwandwe people that “UMankulumane wawela sekulwa oY’bhebhu. Ozalwa nguSomaphunga. Ozala lab’ obabamkhulu” (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview) (Mankulumane crossed when Zibhebhu and them were fighting. [Mankulumane] [w]ho was born of Somaphunga. [Mankulumane] [w]ho bore my forefathers). Hence my argument above that the *izibongo* recited by Mzomusha were an instance of revaluation of the past by a branch that was trying to establish itself in their new home at Gazankulu, in Reggie’s account (Buthelezi, 2003a:interview). Those *izibongo*

subsequently travelled back to the Zulu kingdom with Somaphunga's party that returned to their old home.

When we return to Zwide's *izibongo*, my argument is further substantiated by lines 19-20, which continue the thread of meaning contained in lines 6 and 8: "*Dlana simuke siye kwelakithi kwaSoshangane/siyothola izinyembezi zamadod' amadala agund' izicoco azinikela kwelikaMdolomba kwelakwangwenyakazi*" (Eat and let us hasten to the land of our people at the place of Soshangane/ to receive the tears of old men who cut off their head-rings and offered them to that [the land] of Mdolomba, the place of the large crocodile). Here the *imbongi* exhorts the listener to eat in preparation for a lengthy trip to the place of Soshangane, who had established himself at Delagoa Bay, as I have shown above, to receive the tears of old men who shaved their *izicoco* (head-rings). An *isicoco* (plural *izicoco*) is a ring worn on the head, sewn into the hair, by an elderly man as a sign of being of mature age. The above line suggests that elderly men cut off their *izicoco* (i.e. hair along with the *izicoco*) as a result of the defeat of the Ndwandwe clan, and that this removal was accompanied by high emotion. The *izicoco* were a sign of status, and when something undermined the wisdom and accomplishment of the men who had reached ages to *khehla izicoco* (make and wear *izicoco*), the removal of the *izicoco* would be an expression of their humiliation, according to Nhlanhla Mathonsi (Buthelezi, 2004:interview). The *imbongi* suggests, therefore, that the elderly men of Soshangane's splinter group rid themselves of their *izicoco* in humiliation after the Ndwandwe were defeated. Hence the tears with which the speaker and the addressee would be greeted by the men upon arrival in Soshangane's territory, which is viewed as another home of the Ndwandwe people who were establishing themselves near the Komati River.

A final image in Zwide's *izibongo* that would have been crucial in a society that was reconstructing itself is carried in line 11 and picked up again in line 16-18. Zwide is called "*umgwaz' akaqhaqhwa uqhaqhwa zinkonjane*" (stabber that is not unstitched, he is only unstitched by the birds) (line 11). Here, in a confluence of very disparate images, Zwide is seen as unbeatable, "*qhaqhwa*" (unstitched) being a word used in the past to refer to the stabbing of a person with a spear so that his/her internal organs spill out. Zwide is only unstitched by swallows because they migrate to where food is more abundantly available as seasons change. It is suggested, then, that Zwide migrated, albeit in flight, in mimicry of the swallows, which had to migrate because they had no feeder whereas he was fed in his mother's house. Therefore, he was outdone by the birds. This is, once again, a metaphor that

retains Zwide as a praiseworthy Ndwandwe *inkosi* while taking cognisance of the painful collapse of his state.

In the end, because of their use after Somaphunga's splinter group's return to become Shaka's subjects again, these *izibongo* are an instance of resistance to Zulu narratives of history which substituted the Ndwandwe clans' histories in the new Zulu nation. That Somaphunga's descendent, Mzomusha, is the only person I have encountered who has knowledge of a comprehensive version of the *izibongo* suggests their continued use by people who took up residence within the Zulu state to celebrate Zwide and lament the fall of the Ndwandwe people from dominance. This made the text available for Mzomusha to learn as recently as just over half a century ago. In addition to resisting the Zulu clan's history, these *izibongo* talk back to Shaka in a more direct, yet still obscure, way than those of Phungashe. Resistance had to be couched in obscure language in the new political milieu in which the articulation of resistance could have led to any person whose allegiance was to the new rulers or who had a gripe with the person expressing dissent *eyomotha komkhulu* (going to report him/her to the king).

In order to understand the subtlety of the talking back in Zwide's *izibongo*, we need to recall Karin Barber's theory of obscurity and exegesis discussed in the Introduction. Barber suggests that "Meanings' are secreted in, attached to, or even withheld by... texts through mechanisms that are not transparent" (1999:29). In the case of the *izibongo*, this implies that their meanings are cushioned in the metaphors and other means of *ukukhuluma ugigiyele* (expressing oneself indirectly) for political reasons that I have discussed above. Hence the Ndwandwe people managed through the *izibongo* to retain a memory of their history, possibly without themselves realising the subversive potential of utterances like these, and remaining safe from accusations of treason and their potential consequences.

The memory of Zwide was thus made durable compared, for example, to that of Phungashe, which was almost entirely eroded by the end of the nineteenth century, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. This sustained remembrance of Zwide can be attributed to the continued use of his *izibongo* to recall the clan's past, his canonisation in the *izithakazelo*, as well as the fact that all the splinters of the Ndwandwe clan, most significantly Somaphunga's group in the case of this argument, trace their history back to Zwide. Hence the collapse of the Ndwandwe state that changed the course of Ndwandwe history is remembered through Zwide, who is positioned as its central protagonist. He has been canonised in the *isithakazelo* "*Zwide kaLanga*", which is shared by the Ndwandwe and the

Nxumalo people. What is notable in the Ndwandwe *izithakazelo* is that no historical figures after Zwide have been canonised.

The Ndwandwe *izithakazelo* I have encountered in social settings, as well as those recited by Mzomusha, mention a few Ndwandwe ancestors up to Zwide. The commonly used *izithakazelo* are: *Mkhatshwa, Mnguni, Nkabanhle, Zwide*. Those who are respected for being knowledgeable on history recite longer versions of the *izithakazelo*, which are embellished by adding some lines of the *izibongo* of the historical figures the clan is *thakazela*'d through. The version Mzomusha recited belongs in this mould: “*Ndwandwe, Mkhatshwa, Nkabanhle, wena waseGudunkomo, wena okaMnguni ngubande kwezendlovu kumandl' ezendlovu zimagqumasholo, wena okaMnguni akali muntu uyena abamalayo. Wena okaNdwandwe wakithi eGudunkomo mgezeni izinyawo ngoba kade kwasa ehamba phezu kwamadlinza abathakathi. UNdwandw' akangakanani ngoba nasentendeni yesandla uyahlala*” (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview) (Ndwandwe, Mkhatshwa, Nkabanhle, you of Mnguni with the long blanket in those of the elephant, the power of the elephant is large, you of Mnguni who doesn't reject anyone he is the one they reject. You of Ndwandwe of our home at Gudunkomo wash his feet because he has long been treading on the graves of witches and wizards. Ndwandwe is not that big because even on the palm of the hand he sits). The Nxumalo *izithakazelo* contained in Thamsanqa Sithole's *Izithakazelo Nezibongo zakwaZulu* (1982), which are very similar because of the Nxumalo clan's origins in the Ndwandwe clan,⁷ go beyond Zwide to mention Soshangane, but do not mention any later figures either.

Ndwandwe history and the history of their close relatives, the Nxumalo people, are traced as far as Soshangane's generation in texts that are canonical insofar as they are in everyday use in 'Zulu' society, indicating that some splinters of the Ndwandwe clan are obscure to the descendants of those who remained in and those who returned to the Zulu kingdom after the Ndwandwe clan's defeat. The people I interviewed know vaguely that there are Ndwandwe people and people of Ndwandwe descent in Swaziland, Mozambique and in the Limpopo province of South Africa. Further research following the Ndwandwe lines of kinship in the geographic areas mentioned could provide more nuanced knowledge of the history of the eastern part of southern Africa. Information available today tells us that subsequent to Somaphunga's return to *khonza*, Sikhunyana went on to launch a revenge attack on the Zulu kingdom. Hence these lines in Shaka's *izibongo*:

*USikhunyana uyintombi ukuganile
Ekufunyani's uhlez' enkundlen' esibayen' eNkandla,*

Engaz' ukuth' amabuth' akho anomgombolozelo.

Sikhunyana is a girl and he has married you,
He found you sitting in council in the cattle-fold at Nkandla,
Not knowing that your soldiers had a cross-questioning. (202-4)

Sikhunyana's impi was defeated and he fled through present-day Swaziland to Soshangane's territory, according to Bryant (1929:593-4). Bryant also states that Shemane and another "half-brother" of Sikhunyana's, Madanga, fled with him and the latter two settled in Swaziland with the bulk of the survivors of the battle as Sikhunyana proceeded (594). Moreover, Bryant also continues to narrate how Sikhunyana was framed as a *mthakathi* (wizard) by a member of Somaphunga's community with whom he had had a disagreement during his reign after Zwide's death in Komati. As a result, claims Bryant, he was driven out of Soshangane's territory and was never heard of again (594). What is clear from the above is that the defeat of Sikhunyana's impi set in motion a further dispersal of Ndwandwe people.

Somaphunga's branch, based in Nongoma, was placed in permanent subjection to the Zulu clan's kingdom. Somaphunga was succeeded by his son, Mgojana, as the overseer of the Ndwandwe clan under the authority of the Zulu king, according to Philemon (Buthelezi, 2003b:interview).⁸ Mgojana married Cetshwayo's sister, Mbhixabhixa (Ndwandwe, 1994:6). Hence began the claiming of authority by Ndwandwe leaders through association with the Zulu ruling house. In Philemon's and Mzomusha's knowledge, Mgojana's sons were involved on different sides of the territorial dispute between Dinuzulu and Zibhebhu, which became increasingly bloody. As a result, after the defeat of Zibhebhu's faction of the Zulu clan, some of Somaphunga's progeny eventually escaped to various parts of the Zulu kingdom and others to Swaziland. Some of Mgojana's sons who had escaped to Swaziland, including Ntshingwayo and Mhlathuzana, returned to the Zulu kingdom during Dinuzulu's reign with Mbuswana as their leader. Mbuswana subsequently assumed the leadership of the Ndwandwe clan, but he was later embroiled in a succession dispute with Moya, Mgojana's heir apparent who had lost status after moving away from proximity with the Zulu seat of power during the conflict between Dinuzulu and Zibhebhu (Buthelezi, 2003c:interview). Mbuswana's contention, according to both Philemon and Nicholas, was that Moya was not Mbhixabhixa's direct son, but was the son of the latter's *impelesi* (bridesmaid) who, according to custom, bore Mgojana's heir because Mbhixabhixa was already aging by the

time she married the former. The dispute was eventually settled by Dinuzulu who reinstated Moya at the head of Ndwandwe society, and he proceeded to act as *ibamba bukhusi* (regent) when Dinuzulu had been imprisoned by the English (according to Philemon's narrative and in Nicholas' notes). Moya's son, Celijaji, was due to succeed the former but, instead, went to live in Durban and worked as a policeman, which marked the end of the last semblance of Ndwandwe power claimed through royal association.

In the present, there are attempts to revise Ndwandwe history and revive the Ndwandwe *ubukhusi* (kingship). Philemon says "*sesiqala manje ukuthi kufanele kugcotshwe indodana kaCelijaji ibe yinkosi*" (Buthelezi, 2003b:interview) (we are only starting now to say Celijaji's son must be ordained and become the *inkosi*). There is another project of revising Ndwandwe and Nxumalo history, of which I was informed by Mzomusha, and as part of which several public gatherings have been held in the Nongoma area. Nicholas blames the later suppression of the Ndwandwe people within the Zulu kingdom on Celijaji: "*Ukuba nalo uCelijaji waba umuntu owahlahlambayo kuningi okwakuyotholakala. Wasefaniswa noMntwana wakwaPhindangene [uMoya]... wakuzoba lula ngoba uCyprian wayezomnika indawo yakhe abe ichief, kwase uthiwa ngamachief. Kuthiwe Primary Chief. Nangu eyozihlalela ePhoyinti, yoziphoyisela khona...*" (Buthelezi, 2003c:interview) (If Celijaji was also smart a lot would have been gained. [Moya] was already being likened to *uMntwana wakwaPhindangene* [Mangosuthu Buthelezi]... It would have been easy because [the Zulu king] Cyprian would have given him his own territory and he would have become a chief, they were called chiefs then. He would have been called Primary Chief. Then he goes and lives on the Point and polices there...).

In conclusion, the relatively belated rise to prominence of the figures in Zwide's lineage who came to claim authority through association with the Zulu monarchy appears to have ensured that the process of the erosion of Ndwandwe history also occurred relatively belatedly. For a longer time than the histories of other defeated clans, Ndwandwe history, through Zwide, maintained its resistance to Zulu history, and to Shaka, from the margins of the Zulu kingdom. That resistance managed to remain undetected by Zulu authority as it was obscured by channelling it through the *izibongo* of Zwide. Because the Ndwandwe people resident in KwaZulu-Natal today generally trace history through Somaphunga, Ndwandwe history in the region is relatively uncontested in comparison with Buthelezi history as discussed in the previous chapter. However, the memory of the history prior to Somaphunga's return to the Zulu kingdom has been eroded significantly, with only sketchy and vague

knowledge being possessed by even a person like Philemon who is said to be one of the more knowledgeable people on Ndwandwe history in the Nengeni area of Nongoma. Nonetheless, the literary texts and historical knowledge I have discussed above provide us with an opportunity to understand the creation of the Zulu kingdom, and hence to be able to challenge the authority with which some versions of 'Zulu' history have been invested in support of political ideologies, as discussed in the Introduction. In the end, this chapter problematises post-apartheid redress in the KwaZulu-Natal region by showing that historical processes in the region prior to apartheid domination were propelled precisely by conflict and the ruthless domination of the weaker by the stronger powers: processes that were continued by the British and the Afrikaner nationalists under different guises. Zwide's *izibongo* and Ndwandwe history, therefore, challenge the authority of the Zulu kingdom, and are themselves, in turn, open to challenge by the clans which the Ndwandwe people defeated.

NOTES

¹ "Zwide did not go to the place of Soshangane". This is a quotation from Zwide's *izibongo* which I discuss in this chapter.

² I have maintained Stuart's arrangement of the text in translating his version. My organisation of the version performed by Mzomusha has been based on the Zulu text and the organisation of the English translation tracks this initial organisation. Also, I organised the text in the way it appears here based on two principles:

i) some line breaks are based on breath units, hence the indented lines that span more than one line on the page before Mzomusha paused for breath in his performance; others are based on logic where the *imbongi* stretched the same breath unit over indirectly connected ideas;

ii) the logic of the lines is signalled by capital letters and full stops: lines that are linked by logic to preceding ones begin with lower case letters; where they are not indented it marks the beginning of a new breath unit.

³ The representation of other clans' past *amakhosi* in Zwide's *izibongo* offers another opportunity of continuing the recovery of the histories of the KwaZulu-Natal region in a similar way that I have done using King Shaka as a starting point in this thesis.

⁴ For a discussion of the possible invention of the battle of kwaGqokli Hill in historical accounts, see Dan Wylie's criticism of E.A. Ritter's use of Bryant's history of eastern South Africa (2000:229-231).

⁵ See Bryant (1929:175) and the praises heaped on Shaka for "devouring" Zwide's sons in his *izibongo* as discussed in Chapter One. In his narrative, Mzomusha also suggested that Zwide's heir was Nozihlanjana, as he called him, and that he was killed by Shaka (Buthelezi, 2003d:interview).

⁶ Nengeni is an area with a strong Ndwandwe presence to this day. It is where I conducted interviews with Philemon, Anthony and Nicholas Ndwandwe. Also, it is just below the Mfakuceba residence that was built by Somaphunga and became the new Ndwandwe seat of power once the Ndwandwe people based there had become part of the Zulu state. In the mountains immediately above Mfakuceba stands King Zwelithini's Mahhashini residence, which is a bitter pill to swallow for many Ndwandwe people because their former territory came to be the headquarters of the Zulu royal family after Dingane's reign.

⁷ Bryant locates the split in Mavuso and Manukuza's time, which he very questionably identifies as the mid-eighteenth century (1929:161). However, the Nxumalo *izithakazelo*, which trace Nxumalo history through Zwide, challenge Bryant's claim. The question of when the Nxumalo clan split from the Ndwandwe remains unresolved and is part of the revision of Nxumalo and Ndwandwe histories that is currently under way.

⁸ Mzomusha refers to Mgojana as an *induna* of the Zulu clan, while Philemon and Anthony call him the Ndwandwe *inkosi*. This is because the word *inkosi* is sometimes loosely defined and used to refer to people in different ranks of authority in 'Zulu' leadership.

CONCLUSION

“Mtshali ‘changes’ name of province” screamed the headline on the front page of the *Sunday Tribune* on 18 January 2004. In the article, Fred Kockott reports that the office of the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Lionel Mtshali, is conducting government business under the name of the Kingdom of KwaZulu, which appears on the letterheads used by the office. According to Kockott, Mtshali, who is also the national chairperson of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), maintains that his use of the name serves to highlight “a historical reality that KwaZulu-Natal ha[s] been a Kingdom since the founding of the Zulu monarchy” (2004:1). Mtshali’s ‘renaming’ of the province is premised on the assumption that the creation of the Zulu kingdom and its subsequent history are a matter of pride for all people whose clans were incorporated into the kingdom. Moreover, this assumption invokes the first monarch of the centralised Zulu kingdom, Shaka, as a symbol of pride for all the people who are construed as ‘Zulu’.

Mtshali and the IFP’s invocation of Shaka, as well ironically as many counterarguments to the unitary ‘Zuluness’ over and through which the IFP claims authority, including those advanced at various stages in the last century from political positions such as that of the African National Congress,¹ all share a similar acceptance of the Zulu kingdom as a bounded and immutable ‘historical fact’. This, also, is generally the case with many people, ‘Zulu’ or not, whose knowledge of the history has been acquired through informal and formal education as well as through the media, where it is tempered with political ideologies. The constructions of history that have come down to us have rendered King Shaka an overwhelming symbol of ‘Zulu’ and African pride as a great military genius, nation-builder and statesman. This elevation of Shaka over time has reduced the options for African people to an inescapable choice: one either upholds Shaka or resists his upholding. Both positions have been tied to different persuasions within organised politics. On the one hand, African people who resist Shaka and ‘Zuluness’ are dismissed by the IFP as ANC sympathisers or as having been brainwashed by white people. On the other hand, people who claim ‘Zuluness’ with pride, particularly those who don traditional ‘Zulu’ garb on certain occasions, are readily identified as IFP supporters. This points to a damaged and skewed notion of ‘Zulu’ identity which has proceeded in part from the IFP’s redefinition of itself as a political party, which equates ‘Zulu’ cultural identity with its political interests.

In the end, my concern to open space for historical understandings of ‘Zuluness’ which run counter to IFP strictures poses some difficult questions in the post-apartheid remaking of the histories, ideologies and identities in the region and beyond: Why has the idealised and mythologised figure of King Shaka become an almost unassailable (and, for some, inescapable) source of ‘Zulu’ and African pride? Why has ‘Zuluness’ itself become inescapable for people whose clans were forcefully welded into the Zulu kingdom under Shaka? And what are the implications of calling into question the creation of the Zulu kingdom and its continued discursive remakings?

The defeat and incorporation of clans such as the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe in the race for dominance in the Phongolo-Thukela region yielded a state in which power was centralised in the Zulu ruling house under Shaka’s leadership. This centralisation elevated Shaka to the status of *Ingonyama* (‘lion’/King) of the ‘Zulu’ kingdom, as he is named in his *izibongo* and as all subsequent Zulu kings have been called. In the present, popular reconstructions of history among ‘Zulu’ people, which have been created out of and informed by the various writings and tellings of that history considered in the Introduction, have made Shaka a mythologised hero. One of the main reasons for this is that the kingdom he built is generally considered to have started unravelling after his assassination. His successor, Dingane, is reviled for having initiated the demise of the Zulu kingdom when he ordered the murder of the Afrikaner leader, Piet Rietief, and his party. Mpande is considered to have been a weak leader who was incapable of exercising authority, whereas his successor, Cetshwayo, is granted a measure of heroism because it was in his reign that the Zulu forces defeated the British army in the Anglo-Zulu War. However, after Cetshwayo, British colonialism is generally considered to have taken root, marking the frequently lamented end of the romanticised Zulu kingdom that Shaka had built.

Hence Shaka remains the hero king in most reconstructions of the ‘Zulu’ past. His position stems from violent conquests and the discursive erasure of the histories of the clans which were incorporated into his kingdom and their replacement with the Zulu clan’s history, as I have shown in the previous two chapters. The two traditions of representations and contestations of representations of Shaka, one spoken and the other written, have constructed a hero and a despotic monster out of him. Used variously over the last two centuries to legitimate and to discredit some of the ‘Zulu’ kings who came after him, and also to bolster some models of colonial rule as well as resistance to colonial and apartheid rule, Shaka has, in the end, become an ambivalent figure that continues to be utilised for different ends in the

present. Most significantly, however, it is the mobilisation of his image by the Negritude and the Black Consciousness movements, as well as by Zulu nationalist ideologies of the IFP and some strands of the ANC, in the last century which have made him an almost unassailable figure of 'Zulu' and African pride. All these mobilisations have been based on limited, politically-motivated assessments of Shaka designed to refute white versions of history that served the official colonial and apartheid agendas of eroding African people's self-worth.

However, if we consider that his kingdom was built through conquest, the effect of which was to fracture societies and displace many people, in the process altering the course of histories like those of the Buthelezi and the Ndwandwe clans, ought the ambiguous figure of Shaka to continue to be glorified as a hero in the region's history? What options are available for people who want to escape the tyranny of the continued hostage of their histories which have been authorised through Shaka throughout almost the past two centuries? And how can cultural identities be separated from political identities so that, in the end, both types of identities are individually available to be chosen without one automatically implying the other or being construed as the other?

To this day, the images of Shaka and the 'Zulu' past continue to be manipulated by the IFP for political gain, and figures like Mangosuthu Buthelezi continue to claim authority through their ancestors' historical association with the Zulu clan dating back to Shaka. Shaka has been fixed in memory through constructions and reconstructions of his image which, in the present, are dependent on limited knowledge of the past among the recipients of those reconstructions of the past resulting from the erasure that history undergoes in its being told and retold. Shaka and the Zulu clan's histories have become fixed in popular memory as a result of their written and oral representation over almost the last two centuries. Hence Mtshali can claim that his actions are based on a "historical fact", but that 'fact' is laid open to challenge when histories like those of the Buthelezi clan and the Ndwandwe kingdom, which I have put in dialogue with Shaka and the Zulu clan's history in this dissertation, are allowed to articulate their subversion of claims for Shaka's continued centrality in discourse.

As suggested at the close of Chapter Three, in the KwaZulu-Natal region, arguments for redressing injustices committed under previous systems of domination are more complicated than they have thus far been considered to be. In writing back into history people and events that have been written and spoken out, or that have been reduced to marginality, as I have done in this dissertation, we also need to call into question the making of the Zulu kingdom. Given that the Zulu kingdom was built through conquest, i.e. through military

might and a 'winner takes all' policy, subjecting defeated peoples to considerable suffering, and that colonial and apartheid domination can be seen as the furtherance and intensification of the cycle of dominance based on might, Shaka can then be seen as one of several nodal points in the cycles of domination that have swept through the region. The advent of colonialism marked another nodal point, as did the ascendance to power of the National Party, which inculcated apartheid. Therefore, the insistence that African, or, more specifically, 'Zulu' people, since this region is too easily assumed to be the land of the Zulu, should receive justice for the atrocities visited on them under colonialism and apartheid is problematised by Shaka's reign having also been one of ruthless domination.

Too easily the inhabitants of the region are assumed to be unproblematically 'Zulu'. Yet, this 'Zuluness' is a creation that occurred under Shaka and was later entrenched through the construction of all the inhabitants of the region as Zulu under colonial and apartheid administration, when even areas which were never colonised by Shaka were assumed to be part of the Zulu kingdom. As a result, 'Zuluness', which is open to challenge, has eventually become an inescapable 'label' for even those who are engaged in attempts to challenge the making of the Zulu kingdom.

Consequently, if it is legitimate to claim that justice should be dispensed to those, or their families, who were displaced and violated under colonial and apartheid rule, then perhaps the same argument holds for the Zulu kingdom, under which individuals, families and clans were subjected to violence and dispossession. This means that the centripetal narratives of 'Zuluness', which are propagated by the IFP to buttress their political support among (mostly rural) 'Zulu' people who identify with and maintain continuity with the manipulated 'Zulu' past, lose their authority. If some inhabitants of the KwaZulu-Natal region can make claims for justice as Zulu people, it follows that fragments of those Zulu people can extend the same argument for justice to claim their sovereignty from the Zulu kingdom and their determination to repossess the ancestral land of which they were dispossessed by the rulers of the Zulu kingdom almost two centuries ago.² The Buthelezi clan, or those sections of the clan that do not claim authority through historical royal association, and the Ndwandwe clan can legitimately challenge the Zulu kingdom and lay claim to their former positions before Mtshali's "historical fact" was achieved under Shaka, as can other clans whose ancestors suffered similar violence. Furthermore, even the Ndwandwe clan itself can be challenged for the violence it visited on the clans which were subdued in the process of the building of its kingdom during Zwide's reign and before.

If such a discussion is to be conducted, it is not to begin a series of recriminations for events which took place in the past, but to expose the fallacies on which some of the self-assured versions of the history of the KwaZulu region are built. Therefore, it needs to be remembered that there are histories beyond Shaka, in fact prior to Shaka, and histories that run concurrent with those that are authorised through Shaka which paint a different picture of the region and which are, in part, recoverable through engagement with literary texts. Such histories and their limited textual manifestations deserve to be remembered, not in order to fracture the 'Zulu' society that has achieved stability, but instead, to animate our present concerns of transcending narrow ethnic-separatist definitions of our identities. In transcending these definitions lies the hope of beginning to escape the tyranny of an over-determined, totalising 'Zuluness'; of being able to enter into dialogue with one another as South Africans trying to establish new post-apartheid modes of relating and interacting with one another without continuing to be held hostage to 'historical facts' of dubious provenance.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, Liz Gunner and Mafika Gwala's discussion of Chief Albert Luthuli's *izibongo* and their borrowing from Shaka's (1994:15-6), as well as Shula Marks' discussion of ethnicity in the KwaZulu-Natal region (1989:215-240).

² This is a similar argument to that on the trans-Atlantic slave trade: whether reparations for this slave trade can be sought from former European colonial powers that conducted trade in slaves without making the same argument about the Islamic slave trade that predated the trans-Atlantic. See, for example, Soyinka (1999).

POSTSCRIPT

Since the completion of this thesis, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) has lost political control of the KwaZulu-Natal province to the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa's third national and provincial democratic elections that were held on 14 April 2004. This has rendered some of the assumptions underlying this thesis outdated. However, at this stage it remains to be seen what the effect of the transfer of political power to the ANC will entail for the mobilisation of the figure of King Shaka and of 'Zulu' history for political and economic gain. It is still unclear whether Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the IFP will continue to claim legitimacy through the 'Zulu' ethnic identity that is tied with a manipulated image of Shaka, and also to what extent the marketing of the province as "The Zulu Kingdom" will persist. Furthermore, the implications of the ANC's election victory for the position of the Zulu monarchy and the institution of traditional leadership in the region are yet to emerge.

02 May 2004

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