

✓

ORAL STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT EXPRESSION AND ARTICULATION OF CRITICISM IN ZULU SOCIAL DISCOURSE

By

Noleen Sheila Turner

**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of D.Phil in the Faculty of Humanities: School of Languages
and Literature, University of Durban-Westville.**

Promoters:

**Prof P.J. Zungu
Dr J. Conolly**

Co-Promoter:

Prof J. Coullie

Durban

October 2003

✓

DECLARATION

I, Noleen Sheila Turner

Reg No. 8523331

Hereby declare that the thesis entitled **ORAL STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT EXPRESSION AND ARTICULATION OF CRITICISM IN ZULU SOCIAL DISCOURSE** is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other Degree or to any other University.


.....
Signature

04 - 04 - 04
.....
Date

ABSTRACT

This study examines the oral strategies employed by Zulu speaking people in the expression of conflict and criticism in their social discourse. These oral discourses, viz. *izibongo* and naming practices, are analysed to ascertain the socially acceptable ways in which Zulus articulate their frustrations and discontent in various social settings. These are commonly used in rural communities, but they also echo in urban social settings. Hostility and ill-feelings are thus channelled through the sanctioned form of these various oral expressions either as a means of merely airing one's dissatisfaction or as a means of seeking personal redress.

The study also reveals that these particular forms of oral expression with critical content, do not exist for their own intrinsic value simply to artfully describe a particular individual. They are composed primarily to serve a particular social function of conflict articulation and expression in non-conflictual ways.

The function of these oral forms is that of a "socio-cultural archive" (Conolly 2001), which is vested in the memory of those who can express in performance, their renditions of personal and group identity. The aesthetic beauty of these forms must be regarded as a secondary function and a direct by-product of the primary function, which is personal identity expressed in a way which ensures that issues which could cause conflict are highlighted so as to diminish their conflictual potential. The reason for this is that in order to fulfill the first function, which is conflict reduction, Jousse (1990) states there has to be a form (rhythm, balance and formula) which makes the expressions memorisable - which literate people equate to 'poetry'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to register my indebtedness and sincere appreciation to the following:

1. My promoters, Professor Phyllis Zungu for her invaluable insights and suggestions, Dr Joan Conolly for her meticulous attention to detail, extensive knowledge in the field of oral studies, and her tireless patience and co-supervisor Prof Judith Coullie, for her expertise, advice, support and encouragement in completing this research project. Their professional competence and committed supervision was of great assistance to me in completing this thesis.
2. My colleague Malini Ramsay Brijbal for carrying an extra share of the teaching load in the final phase of completion.
3. All the wonderful informants and colleagues who so patiently answered my endless questions and endured the many interviews which provided the information that made this study possible....Ningadinwa nangomuso!
4. The National Research Foundation (NRF) for the financial assistance in the form of a bursary that contributed in making the research possible. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrive at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be contributed to the NRF.
5. The University of Durban Westville for their financial assistance in the form of a staff grant.
6. To my supportive and loving husband Sidney, our children, Shannon, Janna and Patrick and my dear friends for their cajoling interest in keeping my oft flagging spirits going, so that this project would see completion.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of 2 sets of the most wonderful parents any person could be lucky enough to have been blessed with, my father and mother Harold and Sheila Robertson, and my parents-in-law, Lawrence and Joan Turner. You were all such an inspiration to me. Your selfless generosity of spirit lives on beyond you. Rest in peace.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Dedication	v
Table of Contents	vi
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 General Introduction	1
1.2 Description and Context of the Research	3
1.3 Aim and Focus of the Study	7
1.4 Motivation for the Study	8
1.4.1 Personal and Social Motivation	8
1.4.2 Academic Motivation	10
1.5 The Scope of the Study	12
1.6 Limitations of the Study	14
1.7 Terminological Logjams in Oral Studies	17
1.7.1 Terminology in Zulu Oral Texts: <i>Izibongo/Izihasho</i>	22
1.8 The Text in Context: The Fluidity of the Performed Text	30
1.9 The Structure of the Study	33
1.10 Synopsis and Concluding Remarks	35

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	38
2.2	Conflict Reduction in Oral Communities	38
2.2.1	Scholarship on the Oral Style	39
2.3	Published Research on Oral Strategies for Recording Conflict	48
2.3.1	Literature Review on Oral Communication & Conflict in African countries	49
2.3.2	Research in Oral Communication and Conflict in southern Africa	53
2.3.2.1	Songs	53
2.3.2.2	Oral Compositions: <i>Izibongo</i> / <i>Izihasho</i>	60
2.3.2.3	Published Research in the Field of Conflict and Onomastics	64
2.4	Recapitulation	71

Chapter 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF ORALITY AND CONFLICT

3.1	Introduction	73
3.2	The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm	74
3.3	The Theoretical Framework of Oral Studies	77
3.3.1	The Orality-Literacy Debate	77
3.3.2	The Oral Mode and Performance	79
3.3.2.1	Memory and Mnemonics	82
3.4	Theoretical Framework of Conflict in Oral Societies	86

3.4.1	Conflict in Africa	86
3.4.2	The Process of Socialization and Control	89
3.4.3	The Nature and Form of Dispute	90
3.5	The Forms and Functions of Humour in Oral Composition	98
3.6	Recapitulation	100

**Chapter 4 : CONFLICT EXPRESSION IN NAMING: THE
SCIENCE OF ONOMASTICS AS AGENT OF
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ZULU SOCIETY**

4.1	Introduction	101
4.2	Methodology	103
4.2.1	Identity of Respondents	106
4.2.2	Collecting data	108
4.3	Conflict and Community Values in the Social Arena	110
4.4	The Function of Zulu Personal and Animal Names	113
4.4.1	Zulu Naming Practices	113
4.5	The Use of Allusive Language in Onomastics	118
4.6	Naming Reflecting Inter-Personal Conflict	120
4.6.1	Conflict Between Spouses/Lovers	120
4.6.1.1	Personal Names	120
4.6.1.2	Animal Names	123
4.6.1.3	Homestead Names	127
4.6.2	Conflict Between In-Laws	128
4.6.2.1	Personal Names	129
4.6.2.2	Animal Names	132
4.6.2.3	Homestead Names	135

4.6.3	Conflict Within the Family at Large	136
4.6.3.1	Personal Names	137
4.6.3.2	Animal Names	140
4.6.3.3	Homestead Names	145
4.6.4	Conflict with Neighbours and Members of the Local Community	147
4.6.4.1	Personal Names	148
4.6.4.2	Animal Names	150
4.6.4.3	Homestead Names	154
4.7	Recapitulation on Personal, Animal and Homestead Names	156
4.8	Nicknames	157
4.8.1	The Function of Nicknames	159
4.8.1.1	Allusion in Nicknaming	162
4.8.1.2	Nicknames Relating to Physical Appearance	163
4.8.1.3	Nicknames Relating to Behaviour Traits	165
4.8.1.4	Nicknames Depicting Character Traits	168
4.8.1.5	Nicknames Depicting Features of Dress	171
4.8.1.6	Nicknames Reflecting Idiosyncratic Speech Patterns	171
4.8.1.7	Nicknames Given to Females	172
4.9	Conclusion	173

Chapter 5: EVIDENCE OF CONFLICT AND CRITICISM IN ZULU ORAL CLAN HISTORY

5.1	Introduction	176
5.2	Performance of Clan <i>Izibongo</i>	178
5.3	Criticism in Clan <i>Izibongo</i>	179
5.3.1	<i>Izibongo zikaQwabe/Gumede/Khuzwayo/</i>	180
5.3.2	<i>Izibongo zikaKhusi</i>	182
5.3.3	<i>Izibongo zikaLuthuli</i>	184
5.3.4	<i>Izibongo zikaNdabandaba</i>	186
5.3.5	<i>Izibongo zikaNdimande</i>	186
5.3.6	<i>Izibongo zikaMkhize</i>	187
5.3.7	<i>Izibongo zikaMyeza</i>	188
5.3.8	<i>Izibongo zikaNgcobo</i>	188
5.3.9	<i>Izibongo zikaShelembe</i>	188
5.4	Recapitulation on Clan <i>Izibongo</i>	192

Chapter 6: THE *IZIBONGO/IZIHASHO* OF ZULU WOMEN

6.1	Introduction	194
6.2	<i>Izibongo/izihasho</i> Methodology	196
6.2.1	Identification of Respondents	198
6.2.2	Collecting Data	199
6.2.3	Ethics	200
6.3	Women and <i>Izihasho</i>	202
6.4	<i>Izibongo</i> texts Recorded in Print	208
6.4.1	The <i>Izibongo</i> of Royal Zulu Women	208
6.4.1.1	Brief Historical Background of Mkabayi	210
6.4.1.2	Brief Historical Background	216

	of Nandi	
6.4.1.3	Brief Historical Background of Monase	225
6.4.1.4	Brief Historical Background of Nqumbazi	227
6.5	Recapitulation of Royal Women's <i>Izibongo</i>	229
6.6	The Oral Composition of Ordinary Women	230
6.6.1	Contemporary Oral Compositions in Urban Settings	232
6.6.2	Prominent Themes in Women's <i>Izihasho</i>	234
6.6.2.1	The Theme of Promiscuity	235
6.6.2.2	The Theme of Gossiping	250
6.6.2.3	The Theme of Excessive Drinking	257
6.6.2.4	The Theme of Overstaying One's Welcome	258
6.7	Recapitulation of Women's <i>Izihasho</i>	259

Chapter 7: THE IZIBONGO/IZIHASHO OF ZULU MEN

7.1	Introduction	261
7.2	The Role of Language	262
7.2.1	Oral Formulas	262
7.2.2	Humour and Satire	265
7.2.3	Bawdy Language and Sexual Innuendo	267
7.3	<i>Izibongo zamakhosi</i>	268
7.3.1	Criticism in Men's <i>Izibongo</i> Recorded in Print: Extracts from the <i>Izibongo Zamakhosi</i>	270
7.3.1.1	Criticism in the <i>Izibongo</i> of Senzangakhona	271

7.3.1.2	Criticism in the <i>Izibongo</i> of Shaka	273
7.3.1.3	Criticism in the <i>Izibongo</i> of Dingane	275
7.3.1.4	Criticism in the <i>Izibongo</i> of Mpande	279
7.3.1.5	Criticism in the <i>Izibongo</i> of Cetshwayo	280
7.4	<i>Izihasho Zabantu</i>	283
7.4.1	Criticism in the <i>Izihasho</i> of Ordinary People	285
7.5	Various Complaint Motifs and Critical Themes	286
7.5.1	The Theme of Sexual Misconduct	286
7.5.2	The Theme of Drunkenness	290
7.5.3	The Theme of Theft and Dishonesty	297
7.5.4	The Theme of Domestic Matters	310
7.6	Recapitulation of Men's <i>Izihasho</i>	317
Chapter 8	: GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	320
REFERENCES		333

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

Conflict can arise in virtually any social setting, whether it is between individuals, groups, organisations or nations, and it is unavoidable in human society. It is the management of these issues of conflict through specific forms of articulation amongst Zulu people, and how this reflects the value systems of the group, that is of interest in this study.

In researching oral strategies such as naming practices and *izibongo/izihasho* as a means of conflict articulation, one must view these social conflicts as contextualised events in their specific social setting. This entails taking into account not only the cultural setting, but also the social discourse, the context and a review of events leading up to and surrounding the conflict situation. In some instances this involves more than just the disputing party, it involves the entire social network in which the conflict is situated. This way of viewing conflict and its articulation as events in the comprehensive continuum of social life, is common in Africa. This is because of the community-based style of living prevalent amongst Africans. Social life in communal societies is the area in which values and norms function, and is the environment in which cultural traditions are formed and handed down in a predominantly oral fashion, from one generation to another. In societies such as this, where the oral mode of transmission is favoured, inter-personal communication on a daily basis characterises social discourse and interaction. Jousse

(2000) terms this the "geste and rhythm" of human expression and communication. It is in this environment of constant human communication and interaction that the energy comes which may fuel conflict. This is in stark contrast to many contemporary literate urban societies in which values, norms and cultural traditions may be communicated rather through the media or through books, in memos, letters, notices and emails. This mode of communication tends to alleviate and even prevent conversation and extended oral communication. Literate societies tend to focus on individualism and an individualistic style of life, whereas in societies which are "orally-based" and communal in lifestyle, the important element functioning throughout all social life is the network of extended human relations. Family ties and community networking are constantly respected, maintained and strengthened. Whenever kinship or social relationships are disturbed by a dispute, priority is given to restoring the balance. Jannie Malan (1997:24) makes the point about African communities that

The social context can make an important difference if the purpose of the conflict resolution process is formulated in social, relational language. Relationships that have been broken or damaged should be repaired. Wrongs should be rectified and justice restored. The whole procedure of resolving the conflict will also be regarded to be what it actually is: an event in the continuum of social life.

1.2 Description and Context of the Study

In this study, an analysis is made of the strategies used by Zulu people in particular oral discourses, viz. *izibongo* and naming practices, in which they articulate their frustrations and discontent in various social settings. Discourse analysis treats the social environment as a 'text' or rather a system of 'texts' which can be analysed by the researcher to examine the psychological processes that underpin them. Discourse refers to language usage in real contexts, analysis of which Burr (1995:48) defines as "a kind of frame of reference, a conceptual backcloth against which our utterances can be interpreted".

In my first years of teaching a course somewhat paradoxically and misleadingly referred to as oral "literature"¹ at the University of Durban-Westville, it became apparent to me that the understanding of the students was that the only written source of information for this course was contained in a handful of books which had recorded the *Izibongo Zamakhosi* (Praises of Zulu Kings) which was touched on in certain schools at high school level. At the time, in the latter 1980's and early 1990's, prior to the release of Nelson Mandela and the first democratic elections in 1994 there was some obvious political tension between the ANC and the IFP on campus. I used to hear students referring to certain political leaders and to other groups of students with specific obviously derogatory names, so I introduced a new section of the course I was teaching to deal with current political jargon and naming practices. This became popular with

students who derived much amusement from revealing the popular mud-slinging names of opposition leaders and party members. It eventually became a topic that was too politically contentious for the time, but from it I encouraged students to explore the wealth of information that is recorded within their own memory and those of others in their society. Popular folksongs, oral compositions such as *izihasho* and folktales render the memory of those in society as a form of "human books" rather than those relied upon in bound versions in the local library. This led to the recording and analysis of contemporary popular Maskandi songs which dealt with current controversial topics. From this developed my interest and enthusiasm for contemporary and modern *izibongo/izihasho*. This was something that students were familiar with, but had never regarded as a subject worthy of study. The enthusiasm with which this branch of oral studies was met has gone from strength to strength and has given students a sense of the value, vibrancy and dynamism of their own culture and traditions. This area of study has become well accepted as worthy of research in tertiary institutions not only in southern Africa, but around the globe.

My particular field of research has involved issues such as the contextual variations that affect the language used in communication, involving specific concerns such as the physical circumstances of the speech event, i.e. the setting, as well as the participants and their relationship roles, the particular aims and purposes of the speech event and the coherence of the discourse. The oral expressions that provide the vehicle for venting dissatisfaction in a

way that is socially acceptable were of particular interest to me as they are an intricate part of the oral tradition of the Zulu. These are commonly used in rural communities, but they also echo in urban social settings. Hostility and ill-feelings are thus channelled through the sanctioned form of these various oral expressions either as a means of merely airing one's dissatisfaction or as a means of seeking personal redress. The ultimate function of making public one's displeasure and discontent is conflict reduction. Vansina (1985:100) makes the point that:

Every traditional message has a particular purpose and fulfills a particular function, otherwise it would not survive. The significance of its content in relation to community or society at large is what I call a function.

He goes on to explain that functions cannot be observed, as they are elements of social analysis and interpretations of social situations produced by the mind of the analyst. The functions can only be deduced by examining how the messages are used in society and this forms the focus of the data in the following chapters dealing with the oral forms used to express conflict and social disputes.

The articulation of disputes or conflicts in social environments occurs in the context of condensed or extended family settings, in the context of the neighbourhood or in a combination of family and neighbourhood. As important as the *function* of conflict articulation is the *form* that these oral expressions take amongst the Zulu, in the words of the famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright "form follows function". This involves an examination of the

various oral modes of expressing conflict that occur in social behaviour as well as the mnemonic forms in which it is done, as mnemonic form is the way in which information that is recalled from memory is specifically structured. The articulation of *izihasho* by Zulu speakers is the stored knowledge of individual identity.

The data captured in this study was originally orally composed and the majority recorded here, appear for the first time produced as written text. The only forms of Zulu discourse previously recorded in writing within the ambit of this research, are the *izibongo* of the four royal Zulu women and the excerpts quoted from the *izibongo* of the Zulu kings, *izibongo zamakhosi*, discussed in greater detail in chapters six and seven. In the Zulu oral texts which I have collected, the subjects are all taken to task for social conflict that has arisen because of, amongst other things, dishonesty, gossip mongering, excessive drinking, irresponsible squandering of income, laziness, and sexual promiscuity.

The forms of these oral expressions under investigation in this study include *izihasho/izibongo* (oral compositions defined in detail in 1.7.1), about both important and ordinary people) and the art of personal naming. In each case, the person is criticised within the context and framework of the oral tradition which has always been the recognised public forum of censure amongst the Zulu.

1.3 The Aim and Focus of the Study

The history of South Africa over the past three decades and the prevalence of conflict and violence in the political arena as well as the social sphere during this time, makes this study on the features and functions of various speech forms and expressions particularly pertinent as it serves to throw an important light on how African communities articulate conflict.

Roberts (1979:40) quotes research which shows that people in communal African societies are extremely sensitive not only to ridicule but even to the mildest criticism. This influences them strongly to adhere to approved patterns of behaviour. Shame and rejection represent an extremely powerful means through which deviant behaviour can be controlled, and this is particularly prevalent in close-knit rural Zulu communities. Roberts (1979:42) maintains that:

In any small closely knit community where people find themselves in continuing face-to-face relations, the threat of exposure to ridicule and disgust, provoking feelings of shame and remorse, must represent an important mechanism of control Almost all these means of maintaining order, particularly those which derive their force from the actor's perception of how other people may react, operate through human communication in the course of everyday life. Through talk, values and norms may be expressly stated, and consequences of departure from them spelled out.

These oral expressions of conflict still occur (not as commonly however) in urban township situations as well,

where community living has not yet been superseded by the more literate individualistic nuclear style of life. Community orientated societies are normally closely knit, and one's actions and one's reputation in that community are, most often, common knowledge. In such situations, a member in that community knows that the attitude of others depends on his/her reputation, and, more often than not, the threat of gossip and a disreputable standing in society serves to encourage the individual to adjust his/her behaviour accordingly.

In this way, conflict can be constructive. But it can also be destructive. It is this potential for destructive conflict that Zulus seek to minimize in their oral practices. The articulation of the source of conflict may or may not result in actual solutions being arrived at. In some instances the expression in itself may be sufficient to release frustration and pent up emotion.

1.4 Motivation for the Study

1.4.1 Personal and Social Motivation

I undertook to investigate oral strategies for conflict expression as a result of my interest in the area of onomastics (the science of naming) and *izibongo/izihasho*, (commonly mistranslated in English as 'praise poetry'). These interesting forms of oral composition contain naming techniques whereby a verb is nominalized or substantivized and its root is repeated several times to emphasize the fact that a person's identity is manifested by what he does. Their core is the expression of the person's

identity. The more I learned about these unique forms of oral biography/autobiography, the more I realised that within these modes of expression which record mainly positive features of the subject, there exists an oft-recurring thread of criticism and allusion to conflictual situations. The criticism is often brief, but the more I investigated this phenomenon, the more I realised that these particular forms of oral expression with critical content, did not exist for their own intrinsic value simply to artfully describe a particular individual. They are composed primarily to serve a particular social function of conflict articulation and expression in non-conflictual ways.

This study therefore aims to study key discursive practices, thereby enabling the researcher to make broader assessments of the Zulu people with regards to their attitudes and traditions regarding social conflict. These particular genres of oral studies, that of *izibongo* and onomastics, are but two facets of a much wider field of discursive practices common amongst the Zulu. Story telling in the form of *izinganekwane*, proverbs, idioms, various categories of song, riddles and other oral games, also serve as oral media through which conflict may be aired. Oral traditions are still very much alive and thriving amongst the majority of Zulu people, particularly those in rural areas, and, inextricably linked with these traditions, is the culture from which they emerge. Oral practices are part of the heritage of the Zulus' cultural wealth in its various forms and expressions and they live on, irrespective of whether they are recorded in writing or not. They continue in a

parallel fashion to written records, often intermingling with them.

1.4.2 Academic Motivation

To date, although much has been written around the topic of onomastics and *izibongo* as is evidenced in chapter two, there has been no comprehensive study done that traces and documents the form and function of oral discourse amongst the Zulu, which articulates the various areas and reasons for social conflict and in so doing, seeks to air the tension, reduce the point of conflict or correct the focus of aberrant behaviour.

Apart from the dearth of information on this specific topic, an additional issue that interested me while undertaking this research was a linguistic one: in this particular field of oral studies there is a perennial problem with traditional terminology. The difficulty with terminology here (and hence the need for clarification) is tied in directly with the mode of expression that is not only English, but a written form that deals with academic language and involves the oral-literate interface. This difficulty has provoked a sense of frustration in me that arises out of experience in the field where scholars use a background of literary experience to describe something that is essentially oral in origin, form and function. This has motivated me to reconsider the whole issue of terminology when trying to isolate the form and function of the oral expressions under investigation.

The particular function of the specific type of *izihasho* and *amagama*, both forms of oral ID's (oral expressions describing various aspects of a person) being examined here, is conflict reduction. The function of these oral forms is that of a "socio-cultural archive"² (Conolly (3) 2001), which is vested in the memory of those who can express in performance - by chanting, singing or reciting - their renditions of personal and group identity. The aesthetic beauty of these forms must be regarded as a secondary function and a direct by-product of the primary function, which is personal identity expressed in a way which ensures that issues which could cause conflict are highlighted so as to diminish their conflictual potential. The reason for this is that in order to fulfil the first function, which is in this instance conflict reduction, there has to be a form (rhythm, balance and formula) (Jousse 1990), which makes the expressions memorisable - which literate people equate to 'poetry'³. These oral expressions are composed to record in human memory for posterity the 'id-entity'⁴ of particular individuals, and what constitutes them in terms of their history, genealogy, legal systems, trade agreements, ownership, kinship, knowledge systems, belief systems, as well as their religious and cultural practices.

This brings to mind the experience of Milman Parry when he asked the *guslars* of Yugoslavia if their epic recitations were poetry. They asked what 'poetry' was, and on being told of its aesthetic beauty and transporting effects, were incensed and vehemently denied that their intention was to create something so light-weight. They maintained that rather their intention was to record **the identity** of the

group which was of far more weight and significance. Without identity, a person would have no substance and would essentially be a 'non-entity'. In the words of Jousse,

Such ethnic observations make it perfectly clear why such rhythmic oral recitations and their constituent elements may be in no way be called poetry stanzas or verses particularly because of the meaning that the latter words have acquired in our current usage, whether for better or worse. ... To label the traditional reciting of Achanti mores, poetry, would be an enormous psychological mistranslation and one with considerable consequences, tantamount to calling the sculptures in catholic churches, idols. (Jousse 2000:40)

This study sets out to give additional insight into and an understanding of the Zulu people and their forms of oral discourse. In addition to collecting and analysing oral data yet unexplored, it also attempts to show that oral traditions amongst the Zulu are vibrant and contemporary, not static or 'written text' bound.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The oral genres being investigated in this study make use of an eclectic mix of contemporary materials to speak of current conflicts, articulating the concerns and problems of everyday social existence, things that matter to all people. It is extremely difficult to isolate the examples quoted here into distinct categories of 'rural' or 'urban'. There are blurred distinctions between the two as the one feeds off the other. It is the 'style' in which the composition is delivered which gives us the vital clue as

to what kind of society the text emanates from, i.e. one that favours the oral mode over the written. In such societies the memory is of paramount importance and must be 'practised', hence the reliance on the mnemonic Oral Style (Jousse 1990,2000,2001). This does not mean to say that all expression in a milieu which favours the use of oral expression is necessarily in the mnemonic Oral Style. These specific forms are the focus on which this study is based.

I refer to these oral compositions as oral texts, most of which have been captured in writing for the first time for the purpose of this research. Finnegan (1990:132) refers to particular forms of 'text' as both product and process, i.e. these recorded forms should not be regarded as finalised or frozen products. Each time the text is recited, it occurs with variations, not only oral but also gestual in terms of hand and body movements, expressions and actions. These variations also occur in the way the message is received and responded to by those listening in each particular context that the text is expressed.

One must regard these particular recorded oral texts as shifting and elusive, continuous in form with both the 'oral' and 'literate', the 'traditional' and the 'modern'. Malinowski's claim that there is "no text without context", is undeniable. The oral texts require a responsive audience, with the performer acting as the leader. This audience is attuned to the performer because they share the same collective memories and culture, and they are therefore able to decode the messages contained in the texts because of this common history. Performers and composers of these recorded forms are ordinary people. In

some instances, certain lines or phrases are composed by peers, sometimes they are self-composed. Some of the language contained in many of the texts is regarded as coarse and unsavoury by people from both within and outside the tradition. Such language, however, is acceptable within the specific constraints and context of the actual performance.

Public censure, even during the reign of the well-known powerful Zulu kings throughout the 1800s, was an important form of critical voice. Its expression was through the medium of the *imbongi* who acted as mediator between the voice of popular opinion and the king. This relationship was not uni-directional, but also served to inform the people about the king, his actions and behaviour, the 'conscience of the king', not unlike the role of the Fool in Shakespeare's plays. The use of this critical voice for social commentary is one that literate urbanised Zulu societies no longer commonly exercise. Nowadays, the critical public voice is heard but the medium has changed. Due to the influence of literacy, societies tend to rely more on official channels, various forms of the electronic and written media, and investigative journalism to articulate criticism and express areas of conflict.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The material on which this research has been based was collected in an 'Ethnic Laboratory' (Conolly 2001) type of situation, as it has been community based research, conducted during the period 1986 - 2001. I have deliberately omitted the performed text within the ambit of this thesis,

as it would have made it too long and cumbersome. I have focused instead on the verbal texts, and the role of the verbal elements as conflict reducing mechanisms.

I have found through experience that, as a white female academic, it is extremely unlikely that I would ever have been able to gain access to such sensitive material (namely, that relevant to contentious topics such as private social conflict), were I simply to try and research such examples in the field. This would also apply to any person doing research in this field who is not part and parcel of a particular community. The primary problem is that a given community is most unlikely to open up to a complete stranger and reveal matters which are of relevance to a clearly defined and exclusive community, and which are often controversial and highly personal. Added to this is the nature of the material being documented. It is essentially an orally articulated form and is recited only at appropriate gatherings of community 'insiders', and hence, would only be known by those who have been present and who have at some stage witnessed its expression and are familiar with the context of its content.

In academic circles, for some time, studies of oral traditions have occupied an inferior position to studies of the written text. Scholars such as Ong (1982), Lord (1986), Havelock (1988) and Foley (1988) have concentrated their theories on the great divide between literate and oral cultures. Scriptocentrism (the writing-dominated tradition of industrial culture) has led to one thinking of the 'oral text' as a written representation of the oral form, as Frielick puts it, "Winged words ... caged in texts"

(1988:203). Kaschula (1991:140) makes an important point on the relationship between oral and written forms and the perceived Western idea of the superiority of scriptocentric forms in his research on the Xhosa *imbongi*. He says:

A Western ethnocentric view places oral literature in a bad light - something which one associates with an illiterate, uncivilised society. One must remember that oral literature preceded writing, lives alongside writing, influences writing, and yet also manages to stand alone. Oral and written literature are literature in their own right; interacting at some point, remaining autonomous in many ways, backed by the same culture and society, and performing the same function of commenting on that society.

Scripted versions of texts, without the enactment of the actual performance, assume a literate type of audience, who in all likelihood would most probably not respond to the scripted version of the oral expression in the same way that the intended audience familiar with the oral tradition would have. However, it seems that (in academic circles) printed texts continue to be one of the main forms for the compilation and dissemination of oral forms in academic circles, despite the limitations involved in rendering oral performance in print. Audio and video recordings are not nearly as common for recording data as the written record is. Research of oral texts not previously recorded in writing now encompasses additional aspects such as the process involved in formulation, i.e. the interplay between individual creativity and the traditional convention, context of the actual performance, role of the audience etc.

The fluidity and multiple authorship of oral texts also provide a distinction between oral and written forms. Each written text has only the author or authors engaged in the actual writing, and the product remains relatively fixed, but oral performance is fluid and exists in the memory of the audience and the performers. The versions that have been captured in writing here, as has been discussed earlier (see Context of the Study), provide one possible transcription of the varied versions that may occur of each oral text depending on the circumstances of each rendition. The collection of oral texts recorded here do not pretend to reflect the behaviour of Zulu people in any one particular area. Rather, this record reflects an eclectic collection of texts which demonstrate a behaviour common to Zulu people, regardless of their geographic location. Although mindful of the necessity to raise such issues surrounding the oral form of expression, this research, focuses primarily on the **function** of these oral forms in Zulu discourse. In this I follow Isabel Hofmeyr (1979:44-45) who states that we need to concentrate more on "the text as embodying social relationships", part of what Conolly terms the "socio-cultural archive", rather than just on the text in itself.

1.7 Terminological Logjams in Oral Studies

The terms 'oral literature', 'orality'; 'orality-literacy', and 'orature' are but some of the terms that have been used by folklorists, linguistic and literary scholars, historians, anthropologists and inter-disciplinary scholars to discuss this specific sort of human expression which occurs in particular culturally defined contexts. I prefer

to use the term 'Oral Texts' as it is all-encompassing and does not limit the field of discussion to just verbal expression. In using the term Oral Texts in this study, I not only embrace orally transmitted folklore, but also include gestual-oral expression, the role of movement, mimicry and dance forms; sound, speech as well as song which are fundamental to the performance and delivery of the oral forms. In terms of this study, however, I have limited my research into the verbal texts only.

In many academic circles for some time, the concept of the oral text and its analysis has occupied an inferior position to the written text. The bias can be seen even in purportedly neutral reference works such as dictionaries. For instance, the *Oxford Dictionary* explanation of the word 'text' is:

Main body of a book or printed page; original works of an author, apart from anything else in a book; a short passage, sentence as the subject of a sermon or discussion.

The *Collins Essential English Dictionary* focuses more attention on the 'written' explanation of the term 'text':

The main written part of a book; any written material; the written version of a speech or interview; a book or other piece of writing connected with an academic subject or used for a school or college examination.

These quotes highlight the inherent prejudice of literate 'authorities' in the English language. The reference to books, authors, writing etc. shows just how far removed

those in literate circles are from acknowledging the existence of oral forms and the relevance thereof. As Jousse (2000:24) says:

The original and capital sin of our written-style civilization is that it considers itself singularly superior and unique, and believes, moreover, that everything not recorded in writing, does not exist.

The term text derives from *textus* (tissue) and *texere* (weave). The term text,

reflects a reality informing metaphor, which implies tissues of meaning woven into cohesive structures developed over time and with use, therefore Oral-style texts qualify fully in the 'etymological sense of the word'. (Conolly(3) 2001:384)

Here we need to distinguish between the recorded text which is normally written and associated with main stream literature, and the oral text as it is recorded in this thesis. Ong (1982) argued vociferously, (I believe mistakenly), that text could only be written.

Barber (1993:91) makes the important point that the central characteristic of modern critical orthodoxy is the connection, made at a basic level, between the idea of a 'literary' use of language and the notion of a fictitious, imaginative or imitative domain created by written texts. Literature is defined primarily by its special use of language, with the addition of supra-segmental rules (metre, rhyme, or more diffuse stylistic qualities). Secondly, the texts which have these stylistic features are

felt to belong together in a domain which is segregated from 'real life'. This would seem to imply that some aspects of 'poetic' language focus attention on the words themselves, rather than on the performer, audience, and contextual circumstances. This is not the case with oral texts in the Zulu domain as will be evidenced in the following chapters which cite numerous and varied data that show that the oral texts are indeed linked directly to 'real life', even though they may evidence aspects of 'poetic' language. Discussion of the form of 'poetic' aspects of language will be covered under the section 'Memory and Mnemonics'.

In essence the term 'Oral Literature' is a contradiction in terms, as the Oral-style texts under examination in this thesis cannot be described as literature in the commonly accepted sense of the word, not even when they are recorded in writing. At that point, they are merely Oral-style texts which have been recorded in writing. Literature by its very nature is 'composed in writing' while Oral-style texts are clearly orally composed.

Finnegan (1990:132) draws attention to the idea that text as product has to be considered together with the process underlying its composition. The idea of the text in the sense of the African oral tradition, and the idea of how the text exists in society, is very much at odds with the commonly held current orthodox European view of literature. This is where the domain of 'ordinary language' governed only by grammatical rules can be defined against the separate domain of 'poetic language'. Barber (1993:91) cites the Yoruba oral tradition as bearing a resemblance in

certain aspects to medieval European views of the text, reminding us that the definition and evaluation of literature that we accept as normal today is specifically a post-Renaissance phenomenon. Barber quotes Burrow (1993:92), who shows that in the Middle Ages, the concept of verbal art or eloquence was not necessarily tied to a notion of fictionality. Language use in texts was determined not by the fact/fiction distinction, but rather by the status of the person at whom the text was aimed. More generally, and for centuries, the rhetorical tradition exposed a view of the text as a form of utterance, that is a form of social action, which by definition has real consequences in the world. This is evidence that every society goes through various stages of evolution and these kinds of development are anthropological. Terry Eagleton (1983) advocates a review of this tradition which reflects on precisely how texts act in the world, and by what linguistic means. The tendency for academics to rely on literate terms such as 'poetry', 'oral literature' etc., is because these are terms literate academics are comfortable and familiar with. The field of Oral Studies has been and still is being dealt with in many disciplines in terms of literary terminology. There is a need for researchers in this field to reassess the use of terminology that is inappropriate in describing the material being dealt with, and hence my preference for terms such as 'oral composition/expression' instead of poetry, which unavoidably tends to come with all the preconceived literary notions.

Reference to the written form of text as I have used it in the ambit of this thesis means a stream of thought

initially orally conceived and expressed which is then recorded in writing. As Finnegan so aptly describes the process of recording the oral text, it should not be regarded as a final fixed form once recorded. Rather, the text constitutes an active dynamic process, not frozen in time and form as it is when recorded on paper and would include Zulu oral expressions such as proverbs, idioms, riddles, *izibongo/izihasho*, songs and names.

1.7.1 Terminology in Zulu Oral Texts: *Izibongo/izihasho*

The most problematic of these definitions is that of the English translation used by various academics, for the Zulu word '*izibongo*'. Barber (1991:13) in her investigation of *oriki* encountered similar problems and makes the point that:

Though *oriki* are often called 'praise poetry', they are not wholly flattering to their subjects. Their point is rather to go to the heart of a subject's identity by evoking whatever is distinctive in it. If what makes a big man formidable is his violence, greed, or intemperance, these qualities will figure prominently in his personal *oriki*.

She gives the Yoruba interpretation of the word *oriki* as 'definition' in English, but she adds that the term encapsulates more than just definition as it is a highly charged form of utterance that is composed to single out in concentrated language whatever is remarkable in current experience, commemorating a range of events or phenomena, from small private incidents to momentous public issues. This is exemplified by Groenewald (1994:Pilanesberg) in his research on Ndebele chiefs, where he discusses the use of

current Ndebele *izibongo* as a powerful contemporary political tool which is used to "sensitise" the listeners as to the "legitimacy" of the subject. He cites the case of Prince James Senzangakhona Mahlangu, who was a politician in the late 1980's, aspiring to a position in the now defunct KwaNdebele cabinet, whose *izibongo* were used as a political weapon in the crucial year of 1988. Between July and December of 1988, in view of the proposed independence of KwaNdebele, at the seven meetings at which Groenewald recorded the material for his research, no fewer than 88 *izibongo* were performed. He concludes that the *izibongo* of the modern political leaders such as that of James Mahlangu have evolved from the traditional and ethnic form of oral composition, and are now considered an important political tool which can be used alongside political speeches not only to reinforce but also to influence the views of the people.

The term *izibongo* has many varied aspects to its nature, but the meaning that is most widely accepted in relation to the form of *izibongo zamakhosi* (*izibongo* of kings and chiefs), is that they are compositions which present both positive and negative feats, character, physical and personality features of the person or thing about which they are composed. This genre of oral composition is regarded as the highest form of traditional expression in Zulu.

Dhlomo explains this concept of eulogistic *izibongo*:

They were used to excite and delight, to appeal to and to appease, to honour and humour a person. They were a fairly faithful and inspired record of your career and character. In youth they told your measure of promise, your inclinations and your dormant but dominant qualities; in advanced age, the story of your achievements and

adventures. The King's praises were the longest and the most laudatory. The heroes were allowed a certain liberal measure. (Dhlomo 1947:5)

Koopman in a more general definition of *izibongo* describes them as:

Any form of address or reference (whether of one word, or extended at length), which seeks to go beyond the basic identity of the individual, and which seeks to further the status of the individual, whether in relationship to society, or to the speaker in a positive way.

(Koopman 1986:147)

Finnegan describes the *izibongo* as 'poems' which are:

Intermediary between epic and ode, a combination of exclamatory narrative and laudatory apostrophizing.

(1970:121)

Cope (in Koopman 1986:148) echoes this fact when he states that "praises may be critical (overtly or covertly - by omission)", and both relate this to the function of this form of oral composition as a form of social control. Wainwright notes that although *izibongo* have always been recognized as "praise poems" *per se*, some of the *izibongo* which have been recorded can be poems which contain "criticism, oaths and outright insults" (1979:4). In her PhD thesis on '*Ukubonga Nezibongo*' Elizabeth Gunner (1984:33) defines *izibongo* as:

a generic term for praise poetry which can refer to a) praise poems collectively, b) to the praise poem of an individual, or c) to the various

units of praise or praise names, that
make up an individual's praise poem.

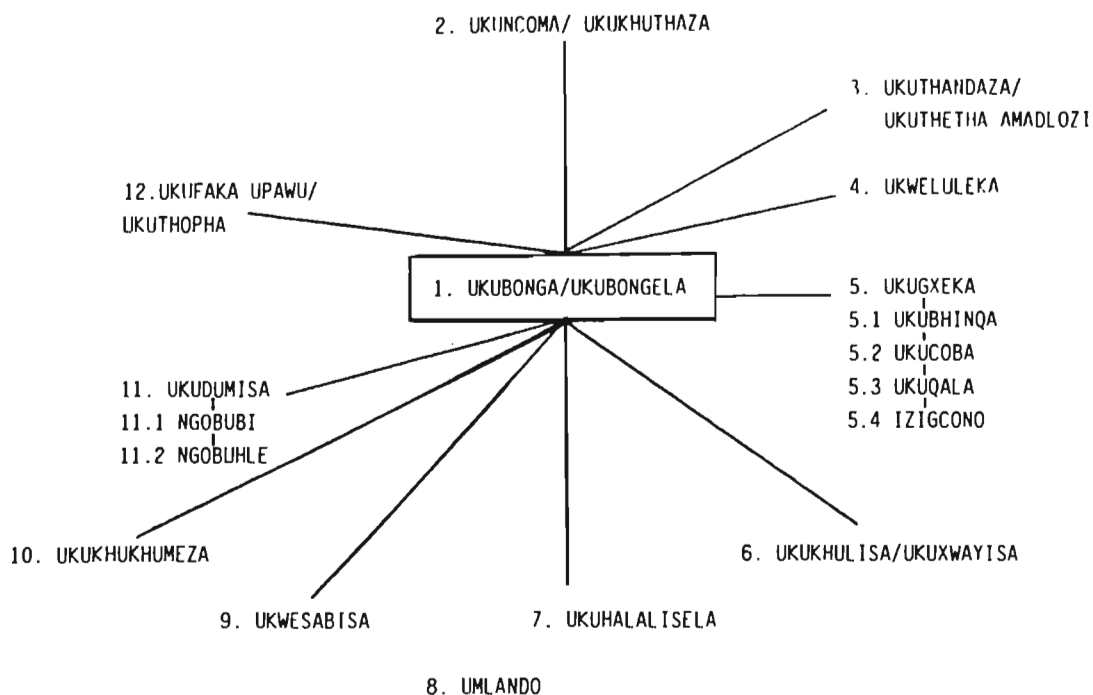
In her later publication, Gunner (1994:2) modifies her definition:

In a way the term praise poetry or praise names is misleading because what *izibongo* are primarily concerned with is naming, identifying and therefore giving significance and substance to the named person or object.

Opland, in preference to the translation of praising to describe the Xhosa verb *ukubonga*, originally defined it rather as meaning "to **write** a poem (about)" (1973:33), as he regards the description of 'praising' as too limiting when one also has to deal with elements of censure and criticism. Opland indicates the difficulty with this term when he states, "Recite smacks of memorization, utter is too general, declaim too formal, chant too musical" (1983:33).

Zondi's approach in teaching aspects of *ukubonga* and *izibongo* in Zulu to his students at the University of Natal, is perhaps the most fitting in so far as he takes a holistic approach to this term *izibongo*. Zondi does not limit himself in terms of emphasis on any one aspect. This approach is best illustrated in the diagram below which demonstrates clearly the various aspects and functions of *ukubonga\ukubongela*, often incorrectly defined as the process of 'praising'. It is so much more than that, and a single recitation may incorporate several aspects outlined in this diagram. The deciding factors are, of course, the performance, the performer and the context of the performance. In other words, the content of the oral

expression is determined by who is performing, where they are performing (on what occasion) and the audience in front of whom the performance is being delivered. All the elements identified by Zondi in the following diagram amount to the concept that *ukubonga/ukubongela* is the summarised description of a person. Each distinctive aspect which makes up the sum total of what the process of *ukubonga* entails, reinforces its gestual-oral nature.



Footnotes:

1. To praise.
2. To admire, praise, speak well of.
3. To pray, communicate with the ancestral spirits.
4. To advise, guide, put right.
5. To slander critics.
- 5.1 To speak sarcastically.
- 5.2 To label.
- 5.3 To provoke.
- 5.4 Satirical nicknames.
6. To give warning/ advice (in a constructive way)
7. To congratulate.
8. Historical record.
9. To instil fear.
10. To praise in an exaggerated way.
11. To laud, make famous.
- 11.1 To laud, make famous in a negative way.
- 11.2 To laud, make famous in a positive vein.
12. To put a clan mark/ to recite clan praises.

consist largely of praises, but which may contain aspects of criticism or censure. Among one's peers, the recitation of a person's "oral ID" elevates him/her and is not necessarily taken as an admonishment or insult, despite the seemingly censorious or insulting overtones that may be articulated in the performance. Being known by one's *izibongo* provides the person with a distinct identity, a sort of recognition and support which is important to his/her ego and psyche and for this very reason *izibongo* remain a popular and often necessary form of public expression. Barber offers great insight into the essence of this parallel form of oral expression with the Yoruba *oriki*. She states:

Oriki encapsulate, in a name, your essential being, your most cherished identity: but they also describe the parameters of the space into which you must expand - 'living up to' or reaching out into the horizons the name assigns. (1999:39)

Here I would like to add that in addition to 'living up to', one can also witness in the *izihasho* researched in this thesis, that one may be exhorted to be wary of 'living up to' the more negative aspects expressed in censorious tones.

The most basic type of *izibongo* is simply a collection of extended names. This type of oral expression is the one accorded to the common man who, although his *izibongo* may contain references to events and efforts of endeavour, has not yet been elevated to a position of political importance. This type I prefer to refer to as *izihasho*. On the other hand, the *izibongo* of chiefs, kings or politically prominent and famous people, known as *izibongo zamakhosi*, are more akin to the epic. These oral expressions are composed by an

imbongi, a man who not only plays a major role as exalter of the reigning monarch but who is also the official channel through whom the opinions and general feelings of the *populus* are reflected back to the king. He may be likened in some aspects to what Shakespeare referred to as the 'fool'. This term is not meant in its contemporary sense, as the Shakespearean fool was considered the intermediary between the king and his people, and vice versa. He was the leveler, responsible for lifting the king's spirits when he was down by praising him, and bringing him down a peg or two when he flew too high, endeavouring to keep a healthy balance in the society between the king and his people. In literate culture the '*imbongi*-fool' translates into the political analyst or the political activist, in mass media institutions such as labour/union movements or even democratic forms of government.

In view of the difficulty encountered when using these terms in the English translation, I have chosen rather to use them in their Zulu forms and trust the explanations given to describe these terms give a better sense of what they represent in their totality. My intention in giving such a lengthy *explice* of the various terms is that those who participate in the debate and discussion around this topic will choose in future to refer to them in the original Zulu form, avoiding the trap of falling in to the use of familiar but limiting English terminology.

1.8 The Text in Context: The Fluidity of the Performed Text

I have chosen in this study to focus on the socio-linguistic functions, form and meanings of the actual collected texts as conflict reducing mechanisms. In recording the texts I have recorded one rendition. However, this should not disguise the fluidity inherent in the composition performed orally. Different performers will recite different versions of the same composition in different contexts. Sometimes the same performer will give an alternate rendition of a particular oral text in varying circumstances. This was made clear to me by a colleague of mine at the University of Durban-Westville, Mr L.E.S. Mfeka, who illustrated, with the various renditions of his own *izihasho*, that a person can be 'recognised' by his parents in oral poetry in a vastly different way to which he is 'exposed' by his age-set peers or even people with whom he works in close contact. He recited a version often delivered by one of his parents when he is at home, and then compared this to lines which would be recited by his peers on the football field. Common linking factors of lineage, place of origin etc are present in both. But the actual 'meat' of the *izihasho* varies according to the experience that various people have of him, as well as the purpose which the act of the performance is to serve, e.g. greeting, recognition, teasing, encouraging etc. A person reciting his or her own *izihasho*, or even the those of a third person, will always assess the context in which the performance is being delivered. The words recited will also not only vary according to the people by whom he is being 'recognised', but the setting will also determine

how the oral composition will be 'edited' to make it suitable for the occasion. If Mfeka's friends recite lines at a drinking party, this may lead to a different performance to one which occurs in a more sombre setting. The former is far more likely to include elements of spice, than one which is recited in a family setting where perhaps a family member's *izihasho* is recited in front of the parents and more senior members of the family. In this case the spice may or may not be left out, according to the performer's sensitivity to his surroundings. In the lines recorded below, one is able to see the difference between the 3 different versions, the first (a) is always rendered by his mother, compared to the following lines (b) which he renders himself, and those by which he is referred to by his friends (c):

(a)

Ipholonjwane eligcwala embizeni kaMaBhengu lilinye.
Ubhokoda vuka ukudla amasi.
Uji yafa imbuzi kwaNobamba
Imikhuba yamaphoyisa phela

(b)

Ingama kaBhahuza
Usehlasenyuka isibhamu somlabalaba

(c)

Usehlasenyuka ipenti elingenalastiki
Unqasha ozifaka zonke

(a)

Ipholonjwane that fills the pot of MaBhengu is only one
Stout, fit one who wakes and immediately eats *amasi*
(Exclamation) the goat from Weenen died
Undesirable action of the police surely!

Biographical Background:

The reference to *Ipholonjwane* is unknown by the recipient but the rest of the line refers to the fact that he is the only boy of MaBhengu. Line 2 refers to the fact that since a small child, Mfeka has loved *amasi*. The reference to the goat is a result of an incident when Mfeka went to visit his father at Weenen. The goat that was chosen to be slaughtered to celebrate his visit died mysteriously the next day. The family believed it was a result of the jealousy of the police at the Weenen Police Station, where his father (an outsider from the area) had just been promoted to the position of Station Commander.

(b)

Ram (Aries sign) of Bhahuza

Restless mover, gun of umlabalaba (board game)

The first line is a reference to his birth sign, Aries, and mentions his lineage connection with his father. The second line is full of nuance. A popular Zulu board game is known as *umlabalaba* and is similar to Chinese checkers. When one has all three balls aligned in a straight line, one calls out in an onomatopoeic way representing the sound of a gun, signifying victory. The reference to restless moving up and down is a figurative image of the board game but also refers to Mfeka's career as a school teacher. He was regularly promoted to more and more senior positions at various schools, not staying for any great length of time at any one particular institution.

(c)

Mover up and down, the panties have no elastic
Accurate One who put them all in

Friends of Mfeka, enjoying the image of one constantly on the move, adopt this popular formula for a ladies' man and apply it to Mfeka, describing him as irresistible to women. The last line refers to an incident when he was a member of a voluntary team which was building a staff room at one of the schools he worked at. He was the only one who managed to hammer the nails home into the wood without any difficulty.

The variance in the *izihasho* of the same person in the vein outlined above, would merit a complete study of its own. This is echoed by Barber (1993:101) when she examines Yoruba *oriki*, a form synonymous with Zulu *izibongo*:

Oriki chants are both disjunctive and incorporative. By an additive process, epithets of different provenance and with different fields of reference are brought into juxtaposition ... Their primary links within the chant are not to each other but to the subject to whom they are attributed. They co-exist in a relation of equivalence, in the same way that a plurality of names belonging to the same person are equivalent to one another.

1.9 Structure of the Study

I have begun this study (in this Chapter) with a general introduction to the concepts of particular oral forms used by Zulu speaking people to articulate and express situations and feelings which generate conflict in their social environments. This section describes what the study is about

but records the motivation behind the research as well as the context in which these situations occur. It also defines the limitations that prevail in carrying out the research.

In the next section, Chapter Two, I review the literature on previously conducted research on conflict; I look at studies which examine how it is dealt with in societies outside of Africa, but focus mainly on studies pertinent to this continent and more specifically, to areas in southern Africa. In addition, I examine the literature on oral studies and onomastics.

Chapter Three deals with theoretical orientation, and identifies and clarifies in greater depth the theories dealing with orality and conflict.

Chapter Four introduces the recorded data in the field of onomastics. Here the actual information researched is analysed to give evidence of the widespread use of naming techniques in conveying subtle yet pertinent social messages.

Chapter Five deals with the oral records of conflict and criticism ossified in clan oral history and attempts to account for the origins of these references.

Chapter Six deals with the recorded *izibongo* of historical royal Zulu women as well as examples of contemporary compositions. In this chapter the examples of famous royal women are examined for the censorious content of their *izibongo*, despite their important standing in society. This is contrasted with the collection of contemporary

compositions which seem to play a specific function amongst women in more urban-based communities in terms of conflict expression.

Chapter Seven examines examples of the many and varied *izibongo* of contemporary Zulu men, and investigates the role that these censorious compositions play in society.

Chapter Eight concludes the findings of this thesis and makes certain observations about this field of research as well as recommending possible related fields of research to other scholars in the field.

1.10 Synopsis and Concluding Remarks

In this introductory chapter, a broad overview has been made of the strategies used by Zulu people in particular oral discourses in which they articulate their frustrations and discontent in various social settings. Discourse refers to language usage in real contexts. The contextual variables that affect the language used in communication involve specific issues such as the physical circumstances of the performed event, i.e. the setting, the participants and their relationship roles, the particular purpose of the speech event and the coherence of the discourse. The oral expressions that provide the vehicle for venting dissatisfaction in a way that is socially acceptable are an intricate part of the oral tradition of the Zulu and are commonly used in rural communities, but also echo in urban social settings. Hostility and ill-feelings are thus channelled through the sanctioned form of these various oral expressions either as a means of merely airing one's

dissatisfaction or as a means of seeking personal redress. One of the main functions of ultimately making public one's displeasure and discontent is conflict reduction. This, however, does not mean that once articulated, "critical" epithets will necessarily quietly be forgotten. This may imply that there is a risk of perpetuating rather than defusing grievances. However, one must bear in mind in examining the function of these "critical" texts, that they also play an important role in establishing reputation, and enduring reputation in African traditions is, and has always been, of paramount importance. Many of these oral texts function not only to deflect and perhaps dissolve conflict, but also manage to preserve the memory of old conflicts. These become available for resurrection at appropriate moments when recalling the identity of one who may have passed on. As with Zulu *izibongo*, in Yoruba traditions the past is reactivated in the present through *oriki* like a thread that leads back into past social history. In this way, *izibongo* can still revive scandals of years ago with the same immediacy of reference as if they were occurring in the present time. Barber makes the point that,

The past is encapsulated and brought into the present, where it exercises a continual pull. (1991:4)

In *oriki* as with Zulu *izibongo* of individuals and of social groups, Barber (1991:14) notes that there is a transcendence of time where the past is reactivated in the present, where prominent men and their actions of the past, who are predecessors of the living, are evoked in the midst of the activity of the present generation. She explains that in

performance these oral compositions (*oriki*) are recycled and recomposed, but they nevertheless retain an essential core which is preserved even when its meaning has been forgotten. *Oriki* and *izibongo/izihasho* can thus be a link back into an otherwise irrecoverable social history.

The following chapter investigates evidence of published research in the field of oral studies and conflict articulation both inside and outside the African continent, but concentrates on the oral forms of this chosen mode of expression.

Notes

1

Essentially what is studied in this particular course are purely oral constructs such as *izibongo/izihasho*, proverbs, idioms, riddles, which are used in oral social interaction.

2 Conolly J.L. (3) 2001:

Vol 1: pp 36,71,81,85,102,141

Vol 3: pp 53, 164, 176, 219, 229, 279, 281, 331, 345, 366, 379, 380, 382

3 Where Lord and Parry identified the 'formula' as a mnemonic construct, Jousse identifies the role of 'balance and rhythm' informing 'formula'

4 id-entity = a whole/entire description of the person's id or ego

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As this research is inter-disciplinary, involving aspects of orality, sociology, anthropology and socio-linguistics, it is easier to examine the reviews of material published in each discipline separately, and this will be done in four distinct categories: oral studies; conflict in (oral) societies; onomastics; and Zulu *izibongo*.

2.2 Conflict Reduction in Oral Communities

Orality encapsulates not only words which describe ideas or propositions, but gestures, facial expression and other corporeal-manual features. It is in the various forms of the Zulu Oral Style (such as *izibongo/izihasho*, names, songs etc,.) that messages may be passed, censure articulated, warnings issued and potentially disruptive conduct reproached. The criticism or warnings may be direct, aimed at a particular person as with *izibongo/izihasho* and names, or they may be indirect, couched in metaphor in a variety of Oral-style texts such as when people discuss a certain targeted mode of behaviour in the form of a song. Such a song is often not explicitly directed at a particular person, but is performed within earshot of the person at whom the censure is aimed. Examples of both the direct and indirect methods of criticism occur widely, not only amongst the Zulu. One interesting aspect of Zulu oral traditions is the function that its various forms of expression have: its control

system works either by means of positive encouragement of socially acceptable forms of behaviour, or by negative censure where the devious or unacceptable attitudes and actions of law breakers and social deviants are verbally aired. It is the latter aspect, the expression of satirical comment and social dissatisfaction in Zulu oral traditions, which forms the basis for investigation and discussion here. This form of social control as part of communal entertainment was practised in days gone by and continues to be important and prevalent in present times in the current forms of *izibongo/izihasho*, proverbs, idioms, names and various song forms.

Bascom (in Dundes 1965:294) reflects the view that:

Folklore fulfils the important but often overlooked function of maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behaviour. Some forms of folklore are important as a means of applying social pressure and exercising social control.

Research done in oral studies, as well as that published by other authors on the topic of conflict, are discussed in detail in this chapter.

2.2.1 Scholarship on the Oral Style

The focus in the debate amongst scholars previously has been on issues about whether particular people were literate or oral and the implications of these categories¹. The focus now extends to additional aspects where the term 'oral' as representing old or 'traditional' or rural is questioned². Contemporary scholars in oral studies tend to

view the oral and written modes as interacting in various situations, not only in the distant past, but in contemporary times and in contemporary urban and rural settings³.

Finnegan advocates the use of the adjective 'oral' in her article entitled "What is orality - if Anything?" (1990:145), and questions the validity of the term "orality" insofar as it is understood to constitute a single monolithic and established whole. She points out that to regard the term as such,

is to deny the many differences in how oral processes take place in practice, in the different respects in which an activity or product can be oral, and to deny, it could almost be said, the real diversity and richness of human creativity.

The term 'oral studies' is an all-encompassing one advocated by Conolly (2001:85), who states that oral studies focus on the "intersecting levels of individual, group and species-specific identity". The research in this all-encompassing field investigates, records and explains the oral traditional 'memories' performed as rituals and dance in movement and gesture; protest, slogans and praises, narratives, epics and fables, negotiations, genealogies and histories in sound, speech and song; beadwork, masks and sculpting, rock and house painting as forms of writing. These various forms record and teach beliefs and belief systems, and legal and fiscal systems. They record histories and genealogies, provide social commentary, impose social norms, mores and taboos, and teach occupational and social skills. These uses differ

from ethnic milieu to ethnic milieu in a variety of ways but the most important connecting thread is that all of these forms hold human memory as the preferred mode of archive or record, even in milieux which are literate. I choose to use the terms 'oral composition', 'oral expression' and 'oral ID' in the specific oral genres which I am investigating in this study.

The role of 'memory' as the archive of the oral tradition is identified by Marcel Jousse (1990,2000,2001) who also identifies the ways in which such an archive of memory is expressed in the 'corporeal-manual mode' of movement, dance and mime; in the 'laryngo-buccal mode' of sound, speech and song; and the 'mimographic mode' of many forms of writing, including scribal writing, but also including other forms of fixed text. Jousse identifies the principles underpinning the expression of human understanding as the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm, which accounts for the ways in which humans have, since the dawn of time, made sense of the world in which they live by a process of imitation energized by rhythm and formulated in a balanced mode which intersects with the rhythms and balance of their psycho-physiological make up.

Milman Parry, the first of the modern investigators into the oral traditions in the English speaking world and a teacher and then colleague of the renowned scholar Albert Lord, attended Jousse's lectures in Paris between 1924 and 1928. Parry was well-versed in scholarly French, and Jousse had already established the theory of the role of the mnemonic formula by 1924/5 when he published *Le Style Oral* (The Oral Style). Parry accompanied Murko to Yugoslavia

where he observed the guslars (oral composers and performers) who were reciting 40 - 100 thousand line stories and epics which resembled very closely the Homeric epics in length, composition and performance. By 1928, when he defended his second doctorate at the Sorbonne, Parry was convinced that the Homeric epic was the composition of centuries of oral reciters who had traditioned their recitatives over a long period of time. This might indicate Jousse's influence on the thinking of Parry and illustrates that his work on the construction and composition of mnemonic texts actually preceded that of Parry and Lord, but until very recently, was little known or went unappreciated in the English speaking world⁴. Research of orally composed texts now encompasses aspects such as the process involved in formulation, i.e. the interplay between individual creativity and the traditional convention, realisation of the actual performance, role of the audience, etc. Jousse's whole understanding of human expression⁵ is based on the Anthropology of Geste and Rythm which includes the 'corporeal-manual' (body and hands) and 'laryngo-buccal' (larynx-lips), in the transmission and interpretation of meaning.

The realisation amongst scholars in the field that there is more to the oral text than just the verbal elements is widely documented of late in the works of people such as Barber (1991), Foley (1988), Finnegan (1992), Okpewho (1983 and 1992), Lord (1960), and Adam Parry (*Opera Omnia* was produced by Milman Parry's son in 1971). This has resulted in a number of historical texts such as the Bible, Homer's works, Indian epics, Scottish and Hispanic ballads being re-analysed as products of oral composition. A

question such as, "What constitutes the authentic version of a text?" has been dealt with in chapter one and is evidence that 'authenticity' in the oral tradition is very different from the literate perspective. From the literate perspective, it is commonly accepted that there is only one single authentic version of a text in the oral tradition. This begs the question: in whose terms and from whose perspective is authenticity judged? The issue of individuality of the oral text in the oral milieu is undeniable and is illustrated in the oral text of Mfeka cited in the previous chapter. The literate perspective does not account for the oral multiforms which have been identified by numerous scholars working in the field of orally composed texts.

In his exposition of *The Oral Style* (recently translated from French into English in 1990), Jousse (1925) provides the researcher in oral studies with what John Miles Foley (a highly regarded contemporary scholar of the oral tradition) describes in the foreword of the English translation of Jousse's *Le Style Oral*, as a cornerstone of modern studies of oral tradition.

Jousse's formulaic theory identifies the role of balance and formula (in)forming the mnemonic formulas in the oral transmission of tradition. He makes a detailed analyses of the data collected, demonstrating the juxtapositioning processes of what he termed the 'rhythmic schemas' that constitute the mnemonic structure of the formulas. Jousse conducted similar research with different Latin, Greek, French and Aramaic texts in his laboratory attached to the Sorbonne, and then recorded them in *Le Style Oral* and *The*

Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm (2000). He also supervised research in many other languages among the students who gathered there from all over the world: Africa, China, India, Madagascar, and studied the gestual expression of the Plains Indians of North America. Jousse presents a wider basis than the research done by Parry and Lord because he explains the roots of the Oral-Formulaic Theory. He puts forward the principles of Bilateralism and Rhythmism which together generate Formulism. As the 'balance' (bilateralism) and 'rhythm' (rhythmism) interact, 'formulas' of expression are apparent and become ever more refined through eons of dynamic human corporeal-manual and laryngo-buccal repetition in performance. To Jousse, "real human language" was not limited to writing only, but included what he termed the "corporeal-manual mode", that is, the use of the body and hands in movement, dance and gesture. In addition to this he takes into account the "laryngo-buccal mode" which involves the use of larynx and lips in sound, speech and song. He regarded the words, melodies and rhythms as integrated into an indivisible whole performed unit of meaning which he termed "the propositional geste", a spontaneous and smallest unit of meaning in the oral-aural mode of expression.

He explains that as he recited Homer's compositions in the course of his classical studies, after learning them by heart, he would find that he constantly came across the same formulas or formulations in the recitations which he sensed in his mouth. Proposition equates balancing to Jousse, and he makes the point that all the propositional verbalisation of balanced rhythmic expression is formulaic and traditional. Jousse explains that it is not the word

but the "propositional Geste" that is the unit of meaning, so once the beginning is given, one can go on automatically in a recitation to the end (2000:19). He says words are grouped in propositions not cut up as they are in dictionaries - but used as whole units of meaning.

Walter Ong (1977:230), another renowned scholar on the subject of human expression and its forms and functions, including the oral tradition and oral-literate interface, differs essentially in his approach to oral studies from Jousse, in his perspective of the oral tradition which is taken from that of the 'word'. Ong's point of departure for oral studies, is the 'word', which precludes the role of the body and vocal nuance in the expression of meaning. If one follows Jousse's reasoning, it becomes clear that the notion of a 'word' is ultimately a literate perspective and that one cannot perceive the parameters of a word which only become apparent in written form when one has mastered reading. To an oral reciter, words as independent entities do not exist, rather, meaning is expressed in 'streams of sound and movement'. Jousse regarded the 'word' as essentially a visual concept of the scribal-literate kind, which cannot be used without contradiction in Oral-style contexts.

Ong (1982) makes the point that people from oral cultures have definitive cognitive capacities (and are essentially 'different') from those who are literate, in that they express themselves in formulas and also think in formulas. Jousse, however, sees all human beings as having different capacities of memory in relation to the amount that the memory is used. The inferences that can be drawn from

Jousse is that people who use the Oral Style have more practiced memories. People who become literate tend not to use their memory faculty sufficiently, and eventually lose this skill, whereas people who tend to express themselves using the Oral Style, keep their Oral-style memories going and have far better recall faculties. The reason that people in this mode of expression recite formulas which are rhythmic and balanced, is because this form of expression supports human memory. Jousse perceives the human being as made in a balanced way and energised by rhythm. He sees that balanced conformation of the human being combines with the energising rhythm of the human and together they form formulas which support and aid memory. This capability is locked in the DNA structure of the human being. Jousse identifies expression of all people through time as operating in the three ways already mentioned (corporeal-manual, laryngo-buccal and mimographic) which are inclusive of **all** human expression, both oral and literate. The mode of expression that people use does not in any way distinguish them biologically. All human beings have the same range of capacities which they use differently depending on their customs and beliefs. People move in and out of patterns of behaviour depending on a number of factors. As circumstances change, people adapt their behaviour accordingly, seldom consciously. Human beings are so designed that they automatically behave in ways that are appropriate to the occasion.

Ong (1982) argues that communication is about verbalisation that moves from "oral-aural" to the written word, thereby excluding the gestual-visual mode from the understanding of human expression. This would indicate that Ong's approach

is more exclusive and ethnic compared to that of Jousse which appears more inclusive and anthropological. Ong refers to the division of cultures into three successive phases: firstly, the oral or oral-aural: secondly, the written or scripted phase with the invention of the alphabet: and thirdly, the electronic phase. He adopts the culture of literacy as the point of focus in his worldview, whereas Jousse's taxonomy includes the human expression of all cultures and languages. He includes all fixed modes of expression as belonging to the same category of capacity, which is borne out by the recent study of Chamberlin (2002) who reports that research in cognitive psychology now shows that the same cognitive activity in the brain is used for tracking animal prints **and** for reading scribal writing. Ong read Jousse in the original French and it is obvious that his thinking was influenced to some degree by Jousse, but he chose to reinterpret it in his own way or to follow a different approach.

Jousse provides one, I believe, with a sounder approach as his theory flowed from his experience in his own native *paysan* milieu. From his perspective and observations which resulted from his own independent seminal research, Jousse drew conclusions which he generalised into a theory which he tested against empirical evidence from all over the world. This theory is still being successfully used at rhythmo-stylistic workshops currently being conducted on Oral Traditions in South Africa and in Paris. Ong theorised from a literate perspective but tested little empirically, resulting in the fact that his assumptions are based on limited concrete evidence.

2.3 Published Research on Oral Strategies for Recording Conflict

Conflict within oral communities - or as Ong terms them, 'orally-residual' communities - particularly in Africa, has been touched on by various scholars in the different fields of oral studies.

Labov (1972) has researched the rules of ritual insults amongst Black American youths while Leach and Ozkok (1987) recorded Turkish boys' verbal duelling rhymes on the other side of the globe. In southern Africa, similar research is currently being conducted by Bailey amongst the Tonga and Swahili communities in Mocambique. This type of research constitutes what Dundes (1964) calls "the ethnography of speaking folklore" in which not only the general function of the insults are analysed, but also the rationale underlying the use of the particular insults. The oral techniques which exist in contemporary societies are not exotic bits of esoterica. They are dynamic functioning elements of oral traditions globally, where a semi-public arena is used for the playing out of common private problems, affording the youth opportunities to give appropriate vent to the emotional process of growing into adulthood.

Finnegan (1992:223) also records this pattern of communication amongst the Eskimos where song duels (which are long and derisive texts) are composed, not only as a means of expressing hostility, but also as a form of entertainment. In America, in Texas, prison songs have been deemed a longstanding convention for Afro-Americans to

express hostility and insults. These songs are directed at the prison officials, and are regarded as a safer form of expression than direct speech.

Forms of oral communication other than conversational speech are also commonly used in voicing complaints in the marital arena. Finnegan (1992:225) cites the examples of Maori and Chilean women in subordinate positions, who express their pent up emotions about marital problems in the form of songs. This is also common among the Yoruba and Chopi women who vent frustration about one another and problem situations in public, in the acceptable medium of oral compositions. She also gives examples of work songs where onerous tasks, whether in the fields, on roads or even on water, are performed within the rhythmic framework of a song, thereby inducing all to perform equally. Aside from lightening the labour at hand, these songs, which at times contain comments on unsatisfactory social or family issues, give opportunities for personal expression.

2.3.1 Literature Review on Oral Communication and Conflict in African Countries

Finnegan (1992:222) mentions the use of oral 'poetry' and song in Africa for the expression and resolution of hostilities between individuals or groups in social settings as well as in the political arena. The west Nigerians composed satirical political songs to express their frustrations in the 1959 federal elections, and Bashi singers in the Congo composed songs which were sung in the workplace to express their dissatisfaction and grievances. Finnegan states:

...expression in poetry takes the sting out of the communication and removes it from the 'real' social arena. And yet, of course, it does not - for the communication still takes place. It is a curious example of the conventions that surround various forms of communication in society, where, even if the covert 'content' remains the same, the form radically affects the way it is received - whether or not it is regarded as a confrontation, for example.

Work songs are common in Africa and are sung by both women and men. Kraemmer (1975:112), in his work amongst rural folk in northern Zimbabwe, makes the point that work songs ...

also provide an occasion when persons would not be called to task for voicing criticism, which frequently took the form of obscene reference in song.

Okpewho (1992:147) (in his research on African Oral Literature) similarly refers to the 'critical spirit' in oral forms. He discusses the role of 'praise singers' who have license to criticise their rulers with impunity. The role of the *imbongi* in southern Africa, as not only the social conscience of the people, but also the voice of the ancestors and the unconscious, has been extensively documented by writers such as Cope (1968), Gunner (1984), Kaschula (1991) and Turner (1990). Okpewho (1992:148) comments that this oral form of personal redress throughout Africa is also common outside of ruling circles. He calls these songs of personal abuse 'lampoons'. In Nigeria, the tradition was used by individuals to wage personal vendettas against various members of the community. However, the

usefulness of these songs in the oral tradition was to encourage those in society to observe good conduct, while developing a sense of responsibility, and at the same time these 'lampoons' were intended to act as a warning against those in the group who might be indulging in behaviour that is regarded as detrimental to the well-being and general survival of the society. Okpewho (1992:154) also discusses songs and oral compositions as a preferred form of expression in the political arena in Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Mapanje and White (1983) document various forms of conflict and protest in the oral expressions of Africa from Mozambique, Sudan, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, Somalia and Nigeria. In their anthology, there is a specific chapter on 'poems' which reflect aspects of protest and satire. Mapanje and White argue that African oral composers are allowed an unusual freedom of speech:

Sons may criticise their fathers, wives
their husbands, workers their employers,
and everybody the chiefs or officials who
rule them, so long as it is done through
poetry or song. (1983:129)

Vail and White (1991) also offer numerous examples of the expression of complaint in song and in oral composition in Africa. They cite examples of the work of Evans-Pritchard (1948) and his collection of work songs amongst the Dinka; Hugh Tracey's (1948) recordings of songs amongst the Chopi; Gluckman (1963) and subsequently Kuper's work (1964) on the Swazi *Ncwala* (first fruits) songs in the context of political struggle, as well as Mafeje's work, among others,

on the role of the Xhosa *imbongi* in the 1960s. Lullabies are also documented by Finnegan (1992) as providing an indirect means of critical expression amongst the Nyoro of Uganda, the Dogon, the Rundi and the Kamba.

In Tanzania, Mutembei and Lugalla (2002) argue that oral expression has been used by the Haya community from time immemorial as a pedagogical tool to shape social norms and behaviour. It was used not only to preserve the wisdom of the nation, but in more recent times, to document the dilemma in modern societies facing the scourge of AIDS and AIDS-related problems. These researchers have concentrated on the genre of oral 'poetry' from the Kagera region of Tanzania as they state that unless those engaged in the fight against the pandemic, whether they be governmental or non-governmental bodies, use the language of the communities, their intervention measures against the spread of HIV will be of limited success. They cite a study carried out in Uganda where the emphasis is put on the use of language that is understood and accepted by the local communities:

Promotion of preventive measures will be most effective if carried out by peer educators who "notice" and communicate social messages in appropriate language situations. This may be important in campaigns aiming at changing attitudes, behaviours and practices.

(Obbo
1991:84)

Mutembei and Lugalla go on to say that the most important aspect as to why oral compositions have to be given prominence in education campaigns related to HIV/AIDS, is

that it gives women a chance to be heard and to air their complaints and anxieties, a channel not normally open to them in other modes of discourse. In addition, the study of these specialised oral compositions creates a unique understanding of the way people themselves construct reality in relation to the epidemic.

2.3.2 Research in Oral Communication and Conflict in southern Africa

2.3.2.1 Songs

The role of songs amongst Xhosa women in South Africa has been well documented by Thabisile Ntshinga (1993). She deals with how these songs have been adapted to environments affected by modernisation, and analyses the nature of the traditional song as it was before contact with western civilisation. She investigates change as a stimulus for folkloristic creativity in a mutating society. Within the scope of her analysis of these songs, Ntshinga (1993:47) documents examples of songs serving as vehicles for criticising social transgressors e.g. the following song which she cites is used to mock women who get married but come back home because they cannot cope with the demands of marriage:

Chorus:	<i>Wen' ubuy' ekwendeni</i>
Leader:	<i>Uhlebekile ntombi</i>
Chorus:	<i>Wen' ubuy' ekwendeni</i>
Leader:	<i>Wen' ubuye ngoko</i>
Chorus:	<i>Wen' ubuy' ekwendeni</i>
Leader:	<i>Wen' ubuye ngoko</i>
Chorus:	<i>Wen' ubuy' ekwendeni</i>

Leader:	You are disgraced girl
Chorus:	You who has come back from marriage X 2
Leader:	You who came back then X 2
Chorus:	You who has come back from marriage

Another example (1993:116) cited traces the frustration a woman has in her marriage because of her philandering husband:

<i>Andiyaz' oyifunayo</i>	I do not know what you want
<i>Ndikunikil' isandla</i>	I have given you my hand
<i>Ndikunikil' ingalo</i>	I have given you my arm
<i>Ndikunikil' amabele</i>	I have given you my breasts
<i>Yhe! Wena andiyaz'</i>	I do not know what you want!
<i>Oyifunayo</i>	

The interesting point that Ntshinga makes in outlining some of these songs which contain criticism and express discontent is that the text of the song alone is not relied on as the sole medium for expressing lament and regret. In recording the song, Ntshinga notes that the performer does not display facial expression of unhappiness. She remarks that in performance, the attitude towards her husband's transgression is portrayed as one of contempt. The effect of the performance of the song and the verbalisation of her frustration is sufficient to provide her with a measure of emotional relief and elicits support for her from those in the audience.

Jafta, in her survey of Xhosa drama (1978), also makes passing mention of songs serving as records of the transgression of social norms. She explains that Xhosa women use the medium of song and performance to alleviate feelings of tension in the marriage and extended family situations. Due to the traditional restrictions on methods of articulating dissatisfaction about a marriage, a woman finds the performance of song the ideal vehicle for bringing her pains and problems into the open. In this way the sufferer shares her burden with her fellow sufferers. Amongst the Northern Sotho, Kgobe (1985:48) documents examples of folksongs which serve as expressions of social conflict and moral reprimand:

Every society has a system of laws, social ethic and precepts. Every member of the society is bound to conform to certain obligations and codes of conduct within the society.

Stewart's (1994:74) research on songs amongst the rural women of KwaZulu Natal also touches on the roles these lullabies and work songs have to play in terms of admonishing and commenting indirectly on the behaviour of those within the community. She deals with themes which cause strained interpersonal relations in polygamous homesteads

where the relationship with rivals is aired, because a song sung to a child invariably has a wider audience and it is hoped that the resolution of conflict might be initiated by people who might have heard the song.

The lullabies and corn threshing songs she documents show that these rural women, profoundly aware of their subordinate position in a patriarchal society, have found a creative and acceptable way of resisting their situation by verbalising it in song. These songs were recorded by Stewart in the early 1990s, indicating that this form of song is still a vibrant and vocal oral form of conflict articulation amongst Zulu women, particularly in the more rural parts of KwaZulu Natal. Certain songs recorded may be regarded as lament songs which, although composed at the time of an event that may have been linked to mourning or death, are then orally handed down from generation to generation. These become reshaped into channels of protest and social commentary which serve to voice the concerns of the living. Some songs deal with issues surrounding the women's work conditions, while others deal specifically with frustrations in their domestic and social environments.

In terms of research done amongst the Zulu, Krige (1968:179), in an article entitled "'Girls' puberty songs and their relation to fertility, health, morality and religion among the Zulu'", refers to songs concerned with premarital morality where certain songs are chanted which advocate the opposite of what is considered correct. She makes the point that "This is in keeping with a technique of sarcasm and ridicule commonly used by the Zulu".

Krige (1968:186) quotes, amongst others, the following two sarcastic and ridiculing songs in which outrageous situations are recorded in connection with a girl's morality, thereby emphasising the type of behaviour that is

desirable and acceptable by juxtaposing it with undesirable and unacceptable forms, e.g.

a)

Esihlanjeni ayebuya lubolo

Uz' umsunu ushay' ikhwelo

Sebethi ngqopho

Uz' umsunu ushay' ikhwele

Sebethi ngqopho

Woz' uwubone

Sebethi ngqopho

At the streamlet, hey penis

Until the vagina whistles (a sound said to be made during sexual intercourse)

They are now prodding

Come and see it (the vagina being prodded, attacked)

They are now prodding.

b)

Woza lubolo We!

Woz'ungibhebhe We!

Esihlanjeni We!

Uyaluzwa We!

Lushay' ikhwele We!

Come, penis

Come and mount me

Down at the riverside

Do you hear it (the penis)

Whistling?

Krige (1968:179) explains that the Zulus place high value on virginity, and this is borne out by the current revival of the custom of vaginal inspections being done in several parts of rural KwaZulu Natal to ascertain the state of virginity amongst the young unmarried girls. The seduction of a girl brings defilement upon her whole group of age-mates, thus the emphasis on virginity, especially in the rural areas. Coarse and taboo language is acceptable in this form of oral composition. As evidenced in the examples above, a popular song depicts a ridiculous situation for a Zulu girl, where she is ironically enjoined to do something sexual that is normally frowned upon.

Kunene (1962:23), in his dissertation, makes brief mention of satirical songs and a specific form of lullaby as being a type of melic poetry whose "significant function is that of maintaining the values of society". He describes satirical poetry as being "composed of songs expressing disapproval of the actions of some of the members of society"(1962:23). Kunene gives three brief examples of satirical songs in which a person is mocked for doing something socially unacceptable as in the following derisive chant:

*Ziyogana zonke, ziyogana zonke,
We! sifebe samakula we! sifebe samakula!*

(1962:25)

They will marry all of them, they will marry all
of them,

Hey, you prostitute of the Indians, hey you
prostitute of the Indians!

Although Kunene does not provide an explanation, it is obviously an example of a jibe at a person (and her family) which is in response to an affair she has had with an Indian man. Kunene remarks that the people satirised in this type of satirical song cannot do anything about it, but can just hope that the songs will fade from memory in time. He observes, however, that actually the songs do not disappear in a short while, but are chanted at the person and his or her family for quite some time after the event on which they comment; even the children and grand-children of those teased may suffer the ridicule which was originally directed at their parents or grand-parents.

The other type of melic poetry which Kunene deals with is the lullaby. Some of these soothing songs intended to pacify children are spiced with satirical content, where there is an exchange of words between a 'voice' and a 'chorus'. He regards these lullabies as being of a complex type, since they are not only composed for the enjoyment of children but may also be enjoyed by adults. They have the form of a chanted type of nursery rhyme in which meaning, although indirect, is of primary importance. They may also be used as a means of making a verbal attack on someone. As children are enthusiastic about these rhymes they normally learn them by rote and then recite them everywhere, which serves to heighten the torment directed at a certain person. Kunene concludes the section on satiric songs by saying:

Melic poetry in this way reinforces the social ethic and checks the behaviour of the individual. Whilst eulogistic poetry states what is socially desirable, satiric songs see to it that what is desirable is maintained. (1962:26)

2.3.2.2 Oral Compositions: *Izibongo/Izihasho*

Scholars such as Bryant (1929), Samuelson (1929) and Grant (1929) were early recorders of Zulu *izibongo*. Their information was gleaned from individual *izimbongi* (bards) as well as commoners who had extensive knowledge of the *izibongo* of certain clans and kings. It is from the collection of James Stuart, however, and later the editing of his work by Trevor Cope (1968), that discussion on the examples of the *izibongo zamakhosi* is based. Cope's selection of *izibongo* includes a selection of oral compositions of the Zulu royal line, of chiefs, of outstanding warriors, royal women and two white men. Cope was meticulous about placing these oral compositions, collated and edited from Stuart's work, in a social and political context.

Opland's well known work, *Xhosa Oral Poetry* (1983) is as valuable in the Xhosa domain as this work of Cope's on *Zulu Izibongo*, and shows the resilience as well as the awareness of change in social and political conditions amongst the Xhosa. He highlights the role of criticism in these oral compositions by *iimbongi*, of the current ruling chiefs, and their subsequent incarceration and harassment during the Apartheid era because of their views on matters such as the so-called independence of the Transkei. These findings are echoed in Kaschula's subsequent research on the

Transitional Role of the Xhosa Oral Poet in Contemporary South African Society (1991). He records the role of the Xhosa *imbongi* as former unfettered social critic and political commentator and comments on the changes that occurred from the late 1960s to the end of the 1980s. He quotes the example of Chief Ndamase who regards the *imbongi* today simply as an entertainer. As the *imbongi* was, and still is, at risk for what he says, we find a total change in the role of the traditional *imbongi*. He no longer acts as mediator between the chief and his people, someone who may at will extol or criticise with impunity. Urbanisation, economic pressures on the individual, the influence of Westernisation, the highly charged political atmosphere of the apartheid state, the role of the media, formal education and the changing political situation are all documented by Kaschula in the changing conditions facing the contemporary *imbongi*.

Gunner (1984) has also conducted extensive research in the field of Zulu contemporary oral compositions. She assesses the key role of *izibongo* in presenting and expressing identity. She traces how the public role of the royal *izibongo* in current times shows the ways in which this form of oral composition may be adapted to become part of a new political tradition, still able to create a unifying consciousness for contemporary speakers. In addition, she looks at the form and content of individuals' *izibongo*, as well as describing the performed aspects thereof. In her discussion on allusion as a form of criticism she deals in passing with certain aspects that revolve around criticism and conflict. The point that Gunner makes, albeit briefly, is that conflict, when it occurs in men's *izibongo* is

usually only one of a number of briefly explored topics. In women's *izibongo*, however, Gunner states that criticism and complaint tend to be the dominant themes. She points out that this allusory criticism is also prevalent in the *izangelo* (*izibongo* of infancy) which are normally recited in front of audiences comprising women only. In an earlier study Gunner (1984:330) also mentions briefly the theme of conflict in the *izibongo* of ordinary people where the content of the *izibongo* is extremely negative and critical, in this way exerting social pressure and "pulling behaviour back into line".

This topic of social pressure and 'pulling-back-into-line behaviour' has also been the focus of previous research by myself (1990, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2001) in documenting the oral compositions of Zulu men and women, where the emphasis in the examples cited is largely on highlighting behaviour that needs correction.

In their publication *Musho* (1994), Gunner and Gwala present a collection of oral compositions of national figures, chiefs, as well as ordinary men, women and children. In their introduction, the authors describe *izibongo* as a "key art form in the political discourse of the day" where the *izibongo* of the kings and national figures was used increasingly in the 1960s and 1970s as part of political gatherings. Conflict expression is touched upon briefly in isolated examples. Groenewald's research focussed on the use of *izibongo* for political effect in the *izibongo* of Prince James Senzangakhona Mahlangu amongst the Ndebele (1994). These analysts, namely, Gunner and Gwala, and Groenewald reveal how the form of Nguni *izibongo* has been

manipulated by performers and politicians to criticize political ideologies of the day. The *izibongo* of national figures contain within them criticism of unpopular actions that they may have taken as well as the opinions of the people about unpopular situations. In his capacity as representative of not only the community but also of the ancestors, the *imbongi* (the bard) presents these opinions to figures of authority. Gunner (1991:31) argues that:

The extent to which South African traditional art forms have been stereotyped and under-estimated in their capacity as agents both mirroring and engaging with social and political life, is only now beginning to be explored.

Kromberg (1994) who documents examples of worker *izibongo*, continues the work done by Gunner and Groenewald and others and describes the transformation of *izibongo* from a medium for praising chiefs to a medium for worker mobilisation. In trade union/worker *izibongo*, criticism and conflict expression appear to be suppressed in the interests of the larger aim of solidarity and unity. Shabane (1999) traces conflict briefly in the lyrics of *maskandi* musicians.

All the above authors touch on conflict in the political sphere concerning figures of importance, or the work arena, or they concentrate on other forms of oral expression i.e. songs, lullabies etc. My research aims to fill the gap where little is as yet documented about the expression of conflict in the specific form of names and *izibongo/izihasho*.

2.3.2.3 Published Research in the Field of Conflict and Onomastics

Koopman in his extensive study on "The Social and Literary Aspects of Zulu Personal Names" (1986), classifies into 24 different categories the reasons for giving these personal names. He lists 'Friction' as one of them, giving 14 cited examples. He goes on to explain that this category has names which refer "to friction at the time of birth, either between the parents, or between parents and in-laws, or between parents and neighbours" (1986:87).

He quotes from other studies done in Africa by Beattie on Nyoro personal names and Middleton on Lugbara personal names, where names commonly reflect disputes with neighbours or express tension within the domestic environment. However, with reference to Zulu personal names, he argues that:

Such causes of friction are seldom expressed in Zulu personal names, probably because the two vehicles of women's praises, and the names of dogs exist to serve this purpose. (1986:106)

Koopman (1994:24) makes the additional point that animal and personal names have a dual purpose: to act on the level of *denotatum*, i.e. to label, identify or call a person, dog or beast, while simultaneously acting on the level of *designatum*, to make social comment, whether these constitute disciplinary messages or social telegraphic texts. My research reveals, however, that there is significant evidence to show that contrary to Koopman's statement above regarding friction seldom being expressed

in Zulu personal names, these names do in fact play an important role of *designatum* and social comment.

The practice of derisive naming can provide an allusive way of astutely airing a conflict or source of dissatisfaction or discontent in such a way that it is repeatedly exposed to the community at large, and furthermore serves as a constant reminder to all of the underlying message contained therein. This may be done repeatedly in certain situations where one wishes to make one's neighbours/spouse/in-laws aware of a situation which is causing a problem. The encoded message is passed in an acceptable, non-confrontational manner, by calling a child or animal's name out loud, and if the occasion merits it, repeatedly!

Molefe (1992), in his research amongst the Zulu on the praises of domestic animals, cites examples of animal names woven into extended oral compositions, usually by the owner of the animal, or someone connected with them on a daily basis. These names make passing mention of disciplinary messages which are contained in the names of certain animals. Molefe gives the example of a man who, while cultivating his fields, would call out to his team of two oxen:

*Iyaphi ngale Thakathani,
Iyaphi uNquluzomjendevu?*

Where are you going Thakathani (Bewitcher),
Where are you going, Nquluzomjendevu!
(Bony buttocks of a spinster!)

He explains that two messages are conveyed in these two names given to the oxen which are directed towards certain people in his local community. Generally these types of names are directed at unnamed persons, but particular persons in the community will accordingly identify the message encoded in them. Firstly, in the name '*Thakathani*' meaning, loosely, 'Carry on bewitching', the owner of the ox aims his message at those who are suspected of bewitching him, informing them that he is aware of it, but it will make no difference to him. By calling out the name of this beast loudly in passing ('*Nquluzomjendevu*' which means 'bony buttocks of a spinster'), the namer is telling the neighbours that their daughter should have got married a long time ago, as she is getting past the acceptable marriageable age. To the Zulu people, thin, shapeless buttocks are scorned, as is the woman who remains unmarried. By naming the ox in such a way, the neighbour avoids causing embarrassment and pain that would be inevitable if the girl was addressed directly on the issue. Furthermore, the pressure from the community is clearly made known with regards to women remaining spinsters. Often the dislike of spinsters is derived from other women in the community fearing that spinsters engage in infidelity amongst other married men, as the expression in Zulu records, '*imijendevu idla emhlambini*' (spinsters eat from the herd, lit: they dabble where they please). Although satirical naming is done mostly by women, it is not exclusively their domain as shown in the above example where the names were composed by the owner of the oxen, a man.

The mention of conflict in the research of Molefe is restricted to a few examples. This theme of conflict and naming practices was expanded on by myself in a series of published articles on the composition and performance of cryptic social messages in personal names as well as animal names, as well as in work and social situations. In these articles I deal with various reasons for cryptic names being given to Zulu children and to livestock to express situations of conflict and feelings of frustration (Turner 1992, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001).

Names reflecting conflict are not restricted to categories of animals and people. They are also commonly given to inanimate objects such as homesteads. In his research on Zulu homestead names, Ntuli (1992) mentions the fact that although a homestead may be named by its occupants, an alternate name popularised by the community may also be given. This name may reflect criticism of the behaviour of some of the occupants. Ntuli (1992:18) notes that, "This implies that when the community gets involved, name giving may serve as a form of social control".

Shabalala (1999), in her research on homestead names as a reflection of social dynamics amongst the Zulu, states that although the primary function of Zulu homestead names is to identify distinctly each homestead from another, since people of the same clan with the same surnames usually settle close to one another in rural areas, "these names are also used as a way of communicating the inner feelings, thoughts and attitudes of the name-giver".

She categorises the names she collected into seven categories. The largest of those categories comprises names reflecting friction (32%). She records that,

. . . in Mabengela naming still reflects family tension or unpleasant occurrences such as conflict within the family or witchcraft within the family or among the community. (1999)

Oblique allusion is typical in the speech of most Zulu people. Allusive language is characteristic of various forms of Zulu oral traditions such as riddles, *izibongo*, lullabies, *amahubo* (poetry accompanied by song), and lends itself to the concept of naming, where often a succinct word can conjure up a multitude of thoughts and expressions. The skilled use of allusion is a powerful weapon in the hands of the sharp and observant name-giver.

In terms of the types of names considered here, reference is made in particular to the Zulu personal name (*igama lasekhaya*) and the 'nickname' (*isifekethiso*) which forms part of the common man's *izihasho*, an extended form of naming. Often one of the lines of a person's *izihasho* will become a 'nickname' by which that person becomes known among his peers. This practice is particularly popular in work environments where nicknames are used to label 'out group' members. Interestingly, in her research in the Scottish Highlands Dorian encountered a similar practice. She states that,

the actual use of such names, however, demands social competence in order to evaluate the offensiveness of such names -

a knowledge of social structure which is available only to 'insiders'. (1990:258)

Out group members may be ignorant of the very existence of these names in most cases; moreover, even when the 'out group' members do know of their alternate names, they are most often totally unaware of any emotive or figurative underpinning that may be connected with these names.

In the context of the work environment, those in power constitute the 'out group'. These nicknames are often used to label an individual or express dislike toward another person's attitude or behaviour, or they may simply be used to express a form of ridicule and repressed antagonism. This view is supported by scholars such as Holland (1990:258) who states that,

the use of nicknames, especially offensive ones, takes on social significance in that their covert usage can occur only in the company of like-minded people.

Dorian (1990:258) reinforces this viewpoint and adds the point that the one way in which a circle of friends can express social solidarity is by using certain offensive nicknames among themselves pertaining to others.

One way in which a group of friends express social solidarity is in freely using certain offensive by-names among themselves.

The concept of allusion is central to the metonymical practice of this form of personal alias. Leslie and Skipper make the valid point that,

meanings of nicknames are not to be found in dictionary definitions or even necessarily in their origins, but in their uses in everyday life. (1990:276).

This is in line with research conducted by Skipper (1986:137) which reveals that nicknames are used by specific groups as a symbol of solidarity as well as for venting frustration which may be caused by the person in question to whom the nickname is given. Similarly Cohen (1990:260), in his study of nicknames of inhabitants of an Italian village, observes that nicknames operate as boundary-defining and boundary-maintaining mechanisms for groups to whom separateness, difference, and distinctiveness are of particular value and importance. Suzman (1994:270) reinforces this point in her research into Zulu personal naming practices. She states:

Name-giving provides an outlet for the regulation of social relations in the intense social interaction of small communities. It allows people to communicate their feelings indirectly, without overt confrontation and possible conflict.

Just as personal names (in which a cryptic social message is embedded) may be given to children in Zulu society, the practice of naming domestic animals functions in the same way. These names act as a type of pressure-valve in airing tension, demonstrating the anthropology of this practice of naming as a conflict-reducing strategy in a given community where direct confrontation is deemed socially undesirable or unacceptable.

2.4 Recapitulation

To date there has been no comprehensive study done in the field of *izibongo/izihasho* or onomastics that traces and documents the form and function of oral discourses amongst the Zulu, which focuses particularly on their role in addressing conflict in society. In researching the function of these oral genres, a common purpose of their articulation becomes apparent: they seek to air the tension, reduce the point of conflict or correct the aberrant behaviour. This point will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter on theories of orality and conflict.

Notes

1.

See: Alant J. 1994. Towards a Linguistic Definition of Orality. In *Alternation* Vol 1 No.1; Canonici N.N. 1999. 'Interplay between Orality and Literacy in Zulu Literature'. In Smit J. 'The Dancing Dwarf from the Land of Spirits'. (1-14); Finnegan R. 1976. What is Oral Literature Anyway?; Lord A. 1978. *The Singer of Tales*; Ong W. 1982. *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*. London, New York: Methuen

2.

See: Barber K.1989. Interpreting Oriki as History and as Literature; Barber K. 1991. I Could Speak until Tomorrow; Canonici N. 1999. Interplay Between Orality and Literacy in Zulu Literature; Finnegan R. 1988 Literacy and Orality Studies; Kaschula R. 1993 Foundations in South African Oral Literature; Cohen D.W. 1989. The Undefined of Oral Tradition.

3

See:

Furniss G & Gunner E. (eds). 1995. Power, Marginality and Oral Literature in Africa. Witwatersrand University Press. Johannesburg; Frielick S. 1988. Winged Words/Caged Texts: Oral Tradition and Teaching African Literature. In *Catching*

Winged Words: Oral Tradition and Education. Selected Conference papers edited by E.R. Sienaert and A.N. Bell for the University of Natal Oral Documentation and Research Centre, Durban; Govindsamy D. 1995. *The Praise Poetry of Contemporary Trade Union Poets in Natal*. Unpublished M A Dissertation. University of Natal Durban; Gunner E. 1994. *Musho: Zulu Popular Praises*. Witwatersrand University Press. Johannesburg; Groenewald H C & Makopo S. 1991. *The Political Song: Tradition and innovation for liberation*. In *Oral tradition & Innovation*. Sienaert E, Bell N & Lewis M Eds. University of Natal Oral Documentation and Research Centre. Durban; Hofmeyr I. 1993. *We Spend Our Lives as a Tale that is Told. Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chiefdom*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press; Horn Peter. 1994. *Orature, Literature and the Media*. In *Journal of Literary Studies*. Vol 10 No.1. UNISA: Pretoria; Kaschula R.H. 1991. *The Transitional Role of the Xhosa Oral Poet in Contemporary South African Society*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Rhodes University: Grahamstown; Kromberg S. 1994. *Worker izibongo and Ethnic Identities in Durban*. In *Journal of Literary Studies* Vol.10, No.1, 57-74; Ntshinga T.N. 1993. *Xhosa Women's Songs*. Unpublished M.A. Dissertation: UNISA.

4

The Oral Style was translated into English in 1990, the *Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm* in 1997; *Memory, Memorisation and Memorisers in Ancient Galilee* and *The Parallel Rhythmic Recitatives of the Rabbis of Israel* in 2001.

5 In *The Oral Style* (1990).

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF ORALITY AND CONFLICT

3.1 Introduction

As the data contained in this thesis emanates from Oral-style communities, this chapter will expand on the concepts and relevant terminology pertaining to the field of Oral Studies as well as that of conflict introduced in Chapter one, and examines the theoretical underpinnings surrounding these terms.

The identification of features of oral studies and especially the issue of conflict and their terms of reference, have become of late a topic of increasing interest amongst researchers in southern Africa. The National Research Foundation is now encouraging academics to focus on the area of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and included in that focus area is the recommendation that research be done on the impact of Indigenous Knowledge on lifestyles and the ways in which societies are run. The study of ways in which specific societies articulate issues of conflict has a direct bearing on the understanding of the broader field of conflict. This study deals specifically with Oral-style communities (in this case Zulu speaking) and how they use particular oral strategies to cope with issues of conflict. This requires an in-depth examination of the theories underpinning the concepts of orality and the oral strategies employed in expressing conflict. As a group typical of many Oral-style communities, the Zulu people have not only found an acceptable way to manage and ameliorate conflict in social

situations, they have based it very significantly on an age-old mnemonic oral tradition which is socialised and accepted as a norm of group behaviour.

3.2 The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm

I have chosen to base my research largely on the theories expounded by Marcel Jousse (1886-1961), a man born into an oral milieu, who observed his own French *paysan* (peasant) oral background and roots, and compared them to other oral milieus the world over. Jousse's Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm provides an holistic understanding and expression of his relationships with himself, his fellows, and the universe at large. Jousse's perceptions are all encompassing and far more extensive than this study permits. For the purposes of this study I focus on those aspects of Jousse's understanding that support the phenomena that I have detected in the data I have collected.

Jousse identifies that human beings are in constant interaction with each other and the world in which they live. He identifies this interaction as an ongoing series of

'The Acting one - Acting on - the Acted upon'

In this series of interactions, Jousse perceives that 'the universe plays man, and man plays the universe' and that in so doing man 'reflects', 'mirrors' or 'imitates' what happens to him and around him. He terms this 'mimism' as he sees that this is psychophysiologicaly intussuscepted into the viscera, the psycho-biological memory of our beings. Jousse perceives that this interaction and the process of memory or learning are dynamic, and register idiosyncratically, thus accounting for identity and

individuality and allowing creativity as a response to idiosyncratic situations. It is this creativity born of reflection that accounts for the idiosyncratic nature of the compositions which are recorded in this thesis. Jousse was of the opinion that each person in society makes value judgements differently depending on what he or she has experienced before. The embedding of new knowledge in the context of previous knowledge can be understood in terms of Jousse's example of a baby who, from the moment it is born, receives all the movement of things around it like an insatiable leech. This is then faithfully reproduced within it (that what is played out external to itself). It then replays all that has been received in it. Jousse's process of An Acting one - acting on - an acted upon, can thus be seen in the light of "receive, register and replay" (2000:311). Higgs (2000) explains that Jousse's conception can be understood to refer to imitating, echoing and matching oneself with what already exists. Humans receive stimuli from the life force of the universe which becomes 'in-pressed' into their beings. These become 'registered' and then are 'ex-pressed' in human expression. Jousse terms this form of playing and replaying 'mimism'. Mimism is identified by Jousse as one of the four Mnemonic Laws of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm (the others being Bilateralism, Rhythmism and Formulism). As mimism interacts with these other mnemonic principles, it is the process whereby the anthropos "mirrors, voluntarily and involuntarily, the balanced rhythmic formulas of the universe in synchronous balanced rhythmic formulaic expression" (Conolly 2001). Mimism is the essence of the oral forms which are examined in the following three chapters - the fact that people 'express' by means of

naming practices and *izibongo* what is 'in-pressed' in them - the things that happen around them in their communities.

Jousse then, also identifies that the geste and rhythm which are anthropological, account for the structure of human expression. The oral-gestual medium, which comprises audible and visible movement, is the way in which oral societies record their socio-cultural affairs. Jousse identifies the Anthropological Global Oral Style, which he referred to as the Oral style, to describe the use of the gestual-oral medium as a mnemonic (memory enhancing) form of record keeping. In his exposition of the Oral Style, Jousse (1990) distinguishes between the Oral Tradition and the Oral-style tradition in that the Oral Tradition is the socio-cultural archive that has been passed down from generation to generation **not** in scribal writing. The Oral-style Tradition is the mnemonic mode of "gestual-visual/oral-aural expression" which is used in oral milieux for the recording and transmitting of the socio-cultural archive (Conolly 2001(1):25). This is the means by which the oral tradition/oral socio-cultural archive, is recorded and transmitted. Both the Oral Tradition and the Oral-style tradition are responsible for the passing down of the socio-cultural archive, the difference is that the Oral Tradition constitutes knowledge recorded and transmitted (as in the data quoting various forms of *izibongo/izihasho* contained in chapters three, four and five), while the Oral-style tradition is the tradition, way or manner of mnemonic recitation.

Vansina (1985:100) states that:

Every traditional message has a particular purpose and fulfills a particular function, otherwise it would not survive. The significance of its content in relation to community or society at large is what I call a function.

He goes on to explain that functions cannot be observed as they are elements of social analysis and interpretations of social situations produced by the mind of the analyst. The functions can only be deduced by examining how the messages are used in society and this forms the focus of the data in the following chapters dealing with the oral forms used to express conflict and social disputes.

3.3 The Theoretical Framework of Oral Studies

3.3.1 The Orality-Literacy Debate

The term 'oral residue' coined by Ong (1982:13) refers to the characteristics of orality that remain in the world of literacy even after the introduction of writing. Ong defines this term as encompassing the psychology of the 'oral mind' which is determined by both environmental and hereditary factors. He thus distinguishes clearly between 'oral' man and 'literate' man. To all effects and purposes, however, we are all orally residual insofar as we are all oral-literate to varying degrees. The main distinction is that some people have better powers of memory recall than others because they still use mnemonic texts in communicating. The difference lies in the degree of oral residuality in our behaviour.

In this research, the 'oral mind' is reflected in those people with living oral traditions, living in communities where the oral text is still favoured, thus displaying a higher degree of 'residual orality'. Their contemporary forms of oral composition which are still prevalent have their roots in the older forms with strong mnemonic patterning and allusive images enveloping the message. Ong states that,

Oral cultures indeed produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth, which are no longer even possible once writing has taken possession of the psyche. (Ong 1982:14)

The last part of this statement was effectively challenged at a conference held at the University of Natal in 1986 (with Professor Albert Lord as the guest speaker present at the time), after a performance by the highly esteemed Xhosa *imbongi*, David Yali-Manisi. Professor Sienaert, a scholar in the field of Oral Studies, questioned the spontaneity of composition and asked what evidence there was that Manisi did not compose *izibongo* in advance in writing. The *imbongi's* response, which is recorded on video tape, was to leap to his feet immediately and produce a lengthy performance of completely new material pertaining to the point in question and the academics involved in the debate. His spontaneous lengthy response is proof that oral reciters are still capable of producing "powerful and beautiful performances" even after writing has entered the psyche. However, as Horn (1994:77) rightfully points out, no human culture has ever lacked "writing", unless one defines "writing" in the narrow sense of a specific type of syllabic or alphabetic "writing". Cognitive psychology has

now identified that the activities of the brain which enable the reading of scribal texts are identical to those activities which account for tracking animal spoor in the wild. Essentially, we are all oral-literate in varying degrees and have been since time immemorial.

3.3.2 The Oral Mode and Performance

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages in order to share meaning in a conceptual field created by active participation of both sender and receiver. The conceptual field in which meaning is created and shared is the performance.

The oral mode is a performed mode which has aural reception as well as visual reception with includes gestual transmission, hence reference to gestual-visual/aural-oral. Barber (1991) explains that the oral form provides a continuity between the object of discussion and the discussion itself. The oral texts are obscure because the meaning hidden in them goes beyond the opacity of particular verbal formulations or references: in performance the verbal aspects are the least important aspect of the message. The underpinning mode of human expression is gesture/movement of the body and the hands. It is these movements which provide the subtle nuances of meaning that defy verbal translation. Jousse explains that for texts to be memorable, they must be brief. Over a period of time with brevity comes density, and with density, obscurity. This obscurity is due to the use of metaphor and language which are by their nature, time and context bound. Jousse (2000:333) states:

Brevity is the ideal of rhythm-catechism - especially of popular rhythm-catechism (...) Such brevity accounts for the brilliant charms of proverbs, for to claim 'brevity' implies 'density' and, incidentally, 'obscurity'. The supreme rhythm-catechist would be the one who succeeded in combining simplicity and brevity.

Barber's article on "Obscurity and Exegesis in African Oral Praise Poetry" raises important points on this subject with reference to *oriki*. She claims that,

Obscurity and its exegesis (or lack of exegesis) are central to what these texts mean (1999:33) ... Their lack of transparency, their detachment from the normal plain of referentiality, the often tortuous tracks required to expound their meaning, heighten the sense of their value. (1999:38)

She goes on to explain that their lack of transparency and their obscurity in one sense, constitute objects by which one can exercise interpretative skills, and are essential, as when the occasion arises they need to be dense and weighty enough

to hurl in all their unexplained impenetrability onto the 'head' of the addressee, unleashing his, her or its encapsulated powers. (1999:39)

Jousse makes it clear by multiple examples that it is in the nature of 'memory' and 'performance' that the 'density' and then the 'obscurity' occurs. The mnemonic Oral Style is not necessarily about being difficult but about being accurate in transmission of the message over time. However

it is also the measure of wisdom and intellectual capacity. In the Oral-style society, the one who knew the most was highly revered.

When the 'recorded text' is detached from the performance, it becomes more obscure because its contextual function no longer animates it and gives it form and significance. By virtue of its mode of expression, the 'gestual-oral' mode is three dimensional, immediate and spontaneous with interaction between performer and audience, and needs to be considered as action/interaction, rather than as a two-dimensional fixed inert text. In his comprehensive book on African Oral Literature, Okpewho (1992:31) observes that in oral societies:

texts were handed down from person to person and from one generation to the next, the question of individual authorship was considered superfluous. ... Certain texts are deliberately made to abdicate the identity of their composers.

The interaction between performer and audience often influences the style and outcome of the performance, which ultimately implies that:

Group interactive authorship during performance over an indeterminate period of time - performs social and moral norm-referencing and cohesive functions within the relevant group. (Conolly 2001(1):95)

This 'social and moral norm-referencing' is the basic function of the various Zulu oral texts which I present in this thesis. While the scribal form used as the basis of this research records aspects of the linguistic elements of

the performance, it lacks the dynamic vitality of the non-verbal aural features such as pitch, emphasis, non-verbal sounds, as well as features such as movement and gesture, pause and pace and particularly the response of the audience. Also, it lacks the flexibility of context-responsive variations. Nevertheless, the scribal recording of these oral traditions, which is the essential thrust of this research, documents a vibrant form of social tradition that is mutating and in some situations, particularly urban ones, disappearing altogether.

3.3.2.1 Memory and Mnemonics

Jousse makes the point that while Oral-style ethnic milieux do not function without scribal writing and the ability to read, they prefer the non-scribal mnemonic mode of the Oral Style as the mode of recording the socio-cultural archive (Conolly (3)2001:248). Jousse specifically calls this form of oral expression the Oral Style and not poetry. The Oral-style ethnic milieu, as interpreted by Conolly, is that of the living human memory as socio-cultural archive (2001(3):248).

The theories that work for literate texts simply do not work for oral texts. Conolly (2001(1):94), whose research has focused on the study and explication of the theories, methodologies and terminologies of Marcel Jousse, gives further consideration to this point and concludes that the conceptual logjam of apparently mutually exclusive foci is relieved if one considers the field of oral composition and articulation more in terms of Jousse's approach as the study of 'human memory and expression'. He explains that

once words are recorded on a page, one loses the dynamic vitality of the performance and 90% of the meaning. The page as used in a literary and linguistic analysis and historical recording simply cannot accommodate the gestual-visual/oral-aural interface, but often it is the medium for research which one has to resort to.

In the Oral-style milieu, memory records, whereas in the literate milieu, writing records. The Oral-style delivery is both recorded and remembered whereas the literate account is recorded but not necessarily remembered. The essence of memory is the human being who is dynamic and vital. The repetitive combination of rhythm and balance encourages the formulation of expression which occurs with a rhythmic beat that is not necessarily metrical (Jousse 2000:179), and this expression is, in essence, the formula. Jousse observes that any formulaically composed text which is learned rhythmically then becomes incarnated in the being of the reciter, which means that it is fixed in memory (Jousse 2000:576). Jousse's interpretation of rhythm includes duration, intensity, pitch and timbre (Jousse 2000:33). When he talks about the rhythms in the mouth, he refers to the repetitions of the articulations of sounds such as avocalisation (assonance) and aconsonantisation (alliteration). In ethnic milieux each individual from childhood applied himself to the memorisation and then to the passing on of traditional formulas. This has been dealt with in the sphere of Zulu Oral-style traditions by scholars such as Gunner (1990:201), who states that formulaic lines serve both as recognition cues for an audience and as mnemonic cues for the reciter. She cites the less formalised delivery of *izibongo* by ordinary people

where, in performance, innovations in the way of formulas and metaphors occur commonly. Depending on the skill of these individuals, the formulas are improved and expanded upon to create one's own personal combinations. Jousse (1990:371) explains that the formulas which are characteristic of the formulaic Oral Style are the result of thousands of generations' inspiration and linguistic accomplishment. Successive generations add to and create their own 'verbal tools' for the combined purpose of the social expression of their own personal knowledge, and the traditional continuance of all their Indigenous Knowledge. Jousse explains that people imitate the behaviour that they observe around them in their gestually and/or orally expressive behaviours. He calls this imitating behaviour, 'mimismic' (Jousse 2000:67ff), and dates the identification of this kind of behaviour back to Aristotle whose vision of art was 'imitation of life'. Jousse's insights imply that the mimismic behaviour of the human being is anthropological, that it is part and parcel of being human, that it is biological and that culture is born of biology. He explains that man, in imitating, does so 'informed' and 'formed' by his own 'formation' - his bilateralised, rhythmised being, so that his expression is 'formulaic' in the expression of his reality, which is memory. The greater the refinement of the formulas, the stronger the mnemonic element embedded in the expressor, which then results in what we like to identify as 'art' and 'artistry'.

Jousse laments that in modern times it is rare to find people who are able to improvise 'immortal masterpieces' in public. Many learned people are now only able to express their knowledge on paper with pen at hand. He accounts for

this by saying that these people no longer deem it necessary to practice daily the practical science he calls the Rhythmical and Mnemotechnical Oral Style. This science can only be achieved if one maintains disciplined memorisation and practice.

In the ethnic milieux where daily memorisation and practice are the norm, these utterances have achieved such perfection that our literary critics of Written Style have, right up to the present time, confused and equated them with our poetry. Our poetry is a horse of a very different colour from the utterances of the Oral style, in that our poetry is merely an artificial, graphic residue bearing no evidence of the spontaneous, immediate and concrete expertise which is characteristic of the Oral Style. (Jousse 1990:249)

In Nguni oral traditions, Gunner (1984:273) posits that formulas can be seen as flexible yet stable units which allow memory and creativity to inter-relate, and which heighten performer-audience communication. She refers to their ability to provide a ready reference to a range of situations and attributes, which makes them useful aids in composition. Kaschula (1991:66), in his research on the Xhosa *imbongi*, states that in Xhosa society, one comes across literate *imbongi* who at times produce compositions orally and spontaneously, but at other times, first write and then memorise the composition, but still produce expressions that are formulaic in style. This is due to the fact that oral formulaic thought permeates writing and is embedded in the conscious and unconscious, finding its way in expression within specific cultural contexts.

3.4 Theoretical Framework of Conflict in Oral Societies

3.4.1 Conflict in Africa

When researching the topic of conflict in society, what becomes glaringly apparent is the dearth of information based on African history and tradition. There is a large amount of information that is rooted in Occidental experience, however African modes of perception, imagination and thought are a relatively new field of research. Bozeman (1976:65) writes that Africa's cultural consciousness is an undisputed fact today, but the difficulty of comprehending it compared to other civilisations arises for several reasons. The first is that African society is traditionally a non scribally-literate world in which the unity of African culture projects the sum total of values, beliefs and institutions that have been shared by countless generations. This represents a 'socially complex mosaic' of heterogeneous elements in a huge continent, where present lines of political organisation are fluid, and where neither anthropologists nor political scientists have as yet been able to agree upon generally applicable categories of classificatory schemes. Bozeman suggests that any inquiry into the role of conflict in African politics or society requires a shift of focus to the small folk community, the form of group life that Africans themselves have regarded as enduringly meaningful throughout the centuries. It is in these small communities in which neighbours and kinsmen are in close contact that interpersonal conflicts are likely to be cast in terms of witchcraft and sorcery to account for inexplicable events such as death, illness and misfortunes.

It is here, in the context of relations between people who know one another well, that frictions, jealousies and hatreds are most pronounced.

In societies that favour the oral mode of expression over writing, an individual is perceived primarily as an extension or representation of the group to which he belongs, either as a member of a family, clan, lineage, village or other grouping. The Occidental idea of the autonomous person, endowed with individual rights and responsibilities is a very different conception from that of the 'communal' African person. This then explains the affirmative African approach to conflict as a socially and psychically vital function. There is a shared perception of conflict as a structuring or constitutive force in communal affairs, where well-regulated adversary confrontations provide fitting circumstances for the blunting of socially threatening tensions. In view of the fragility of social ties between members of an African community, actual or potential conflict situations have consistently challenged the traditional genius for maintaining the closely-knit community life. Each African speech community has its own code of customs for abating antagonisms, conciliating disputants and ultimately re-establishing communal accord. There is quite obviously not one single homogeneous African approach to conflict. Nevertheless, when these are surveyed in the perspective of shared cultural patterns, certain common features readily emerge and these are as different from Western (literate) approaches as the situations that provoked them. This is because African systems of conflict control emanate from established social practice and are therefore virtually synonymous with the entirety of social

life. Furthermore they depend primarily upon the medium of the spoken word. Bozeman (1976:222) notes:

Unlike the West - where peace and harmony are posited as primary value, thus dictating, as it were, the definitions of their opposite, and where "order" is viewed as a function of peace - Africa reverses the argument. There, order is understood, symbolised, and institutionalized unequivocally in terms of controlled conflict. Personal and social "peace", as this concept is understood in the different value languages of the Occident, has no counterpart there.

Oral forms of combative speech in the form of insult, ridicule and witty and derisive commentary are recognised in African societies and many other parts of the world, and here particularly amongst the Zulu, as effective forms of social sanction. In a non-literate culture in which the word is the equivalent of the act, talking invites artistry and verbal virtuosity in the form of repetition, and circumlocution is meant to extend rather than to contract the discourse and therewith also, the pleasure of actual and vicarious participation amongst those present. Lambert (2000:44) compares classical and African cultures in the light of 'shame' cultures in contrast to the 'guilt' cultures of the modern West. The essential difference between the two different types of cultures is that shame cultures rely on external sanctions for good behaviour, whereas guilt cultures rely on an internalised conviction of sin. He goes on to say that shame is a reaction to other people's criticism, and a man/woman is shamed either by being openly ridiculed and rejected or by fantasizing to himself that he has been made ridiculous. Thus shame

cultures are highly receptive to the disapproval of others. As Taylor points out, "the distinguishing mark of a shame culture, and that which makes it different from a so-called guilt-culture, is that here public esteem is the greatest good, and to be ill spoken of the greatest evil" (1985:54).

3.4.2 The Process of Socialisation and Control

Social conformity and order in any society obviously depends upon some understanding existing between the individuals that make up that society or community. This understanding pertains to how the activities of everyday life should be arranged and also as to what the acceptable and unacceptable forms of conduct are in a given context. How much of this behaviour is predictable and expected, and how much falls out of the understood norms, depends largely on the size and the closeness of the community or society concerned. Whatever the values and norms of a society are, they are passed on to its members from generation to generation as they mature. This maturation process, which takes place in all societal groups, is a matter of learning how to adjust one's behaviour and expectations in relation to other members of one's group. To a certain degree, this involves observing the patterns of behaviour of those around you, what is done and not done, what evokes pleasure or displeasure. In part, it involves expressly being taught what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' in terms of values for that particular community.

This process of socialisation does not cease at maturation but continues through every stage of life. In identifying various ways in which this continual process is sustained,

anthropologists have repeatedly emphasised the importance of ritual and ceremonial procedures, the rites of passage such as initiation, birth, marriage and death rituals, as reinforcing and reaffirming established values. The elaborate and ceremonial feasting which attends and identifies such events may be seen to be smoothing the path through these difficult transitions as well as cementing together the unity of the group, thereby perpetuating a necessary sense of continuity. By and large, compliance with the accepted values of a society or community are unconscious and without question. However, sometimes immediate personal advantages conflict with socially approved rules, or maybe even with the perceived interests of some other person. The immediate advantage sometimes outweighs what other people think, or their disapproval, particularly those whom the person is in close contact with and may have to rely on in the future. The disapproval may vary from mere ridicule, loss of prestige, or mockery, to physical retaliation, appeal to third parties for intervention, resort to sorcery, the withdrawal of valued co-operation, or even total ostracism. In the realm of this particular study, the oral record of such disapproved actions focuses on its various forms of specific social discourse in Zulu speaking communities.

3.4.3 The Nature and Form of Dispute

In terms of the nature of dispute, dissatisfaction and criticism depend largely upon the beliefs that are held and the values subscribed to in a particular social setting. Conflict, however, remains an endemic feature of social life. We define ourselves in relation to the 'other',

therefore we must constantly affirm what those differences are in an ongoing series of conflictual interactions, which amongst the Zulu take the form of proverbs, riddles, *izibongo*, *izihasho*, songs, oral witticisms and games etc. This is reflected in many other societies all over the world as evidenced in information documented by Jousse on the *hain teny merinas* in Madagascar (1990:79), as well as in numerous articles on verbal duelling such as that amongst the Swahili and Tsongas.

The sociological meaning of such conflict, therefore, is exposed in an approach that analyses it in the context of extended social processes. The dispute or source of conflict needs thorough examination in terms of its social context in totality, its origin, and efforts to resolve it and the history of the involved parties and their particular relationships, all held in memory. Essentially, conflict or dispute in society occurs when norms of behaviour are transgressed or interpreted in a manner which renders the behaviour unacceptable to a person or persons in a particular community. The meaning attached to the term 'norms' is that they are an accepted rule or form of behaviour, which is regarded as widely practised and relevant to the regulation of social conduct. Norms of conduct are criteria that serve as acceptable standards of behaviour and may be seen as self-evident correlates of the social order implicit in this study to the fabric of the Zulu society itself. Enthusiastic descriptions of physical violence often marks oral narrative, as evidenced in the heroic oral records of the Zulu kings with the emphasis on description of conquests made and adversaries vanquished. The term 'heroic' used extensively by Daniel Kunene (1971)

in his research amongst the Basotho, refers particularly to deeds of heroism in the history of man's struggle for survival, and in the pursuit of honour. The common and persistent physical hardships of life in many early societies, of course explain in part the high evidence of violence in early verbal forms. Ignorance of physical causes of disease and disaster can also foster personal tensions. Since the disease or disaster is believed to be caused by something other than physical causes, the personal malevolence of another human being, e.g. a sorcerer/*umthakathi* can be suspected and personal hostilities are thereby increased. But violence in oral expressions is also connected with the process itself, as all verbal communication must be by direct word of mouth, involved in the give and take dynamics of sound. Interpersonal relations therefore are kept high - both attractions and, even more, antagonisms. The other side of agonistic name-calling in oral cultures is the exaggerated expression of praise which is found everywhere in connection with orality. This is evident in many Zulu oral forms e.g. *izibongo*, *izihasho*, *izigiyo* which are discussed in detail in chapters six and seven.

The origins of norms of social behaviour are extremely diverse, some evolving from long established observed patterns of behaviour, some from decisions of prominent members of the society in handling disputes. What is clear is the fact that changes and additions to the normative repertoire may take place simply due to transformations in social patterns, as these become expressed in the context of a dispute. Roberts (1981:4) in his study on the Tswana

people makes a point about the dispute process that is also applicable to the Zulu social setting. He says that:

The dispute process, then, represents the main forum in which Tswana converse daily among themselves about the organization of their society, the nature and content of their normative repertoire, and the attributes of their culture.

Roberts uses the term 'Processual paradigm' to explain a theory that is traceable to Malinowski's work in 1926, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, which sought to explain how order was maintained in a society which lacked courts and the executive members of courts like policemen. The term 'processual paradigm' explains the parallel shift of emphasis in political anthropology from structure and institutions to processes and interaction. Perhaps the most significant of the insights gained from Malinowski's work, according to Roberts, is

that behaviour is constrained primarily by the intrinsic properties of social relations - obligations, expectations, and reciprocities - and by the exigencies of interaction. It is therefore in social processes, not institutions, that the analysis of order is ultimately to be grounded. (1981:12)

Roberts (1981:14) goes on to say:

If the form and content of dispute-settlement processes are to be explained, attention must be given to the disputants' ostensible motives in pursuing a quarrel, how they recruit support, their strategic efforts to influence the procedural course of events, and so on.

In the light of the processual paradigm then, the dispute-settlement process must be situated within the logic of a socio-cultural order where value and meaning are negotiated and this negotiation depends on a shared ideology. Conflict is treated as an essential part of social life and this conflict can only be understood within a context of extended social processes dependent largely upon the beliefs that are held and the values subscribed to within a given community.

Coser (1956) supports this view in his analysis of the functions of social conflict. He quotes the central thesis of the work of Simmel revolving around conflict being a form of socialisation. He maintains that conflict is an essential element in group formation and the persistence of group life. Conflict is thus seen as performing group-maintaining functions insofar as it regulates systems of relationships, i.e. it 'clears the air' and helps to create a situation where hostile feelings are allowed free behavioural expression. Simmel's view constitutes what Coser terms a 'safety-valve theory', where the conflict serves as an outlet for the release of hostilities which, if no other outlet were provided, would adversely affect the relationship between the antagonists. Coser notes that conflict is not, therefore, always dysfunctional. Without channels for venting hostility and expressing dissent, members of a social group might feel completely crushed and may react by withdrawal.

The practice of conflict expression in the forms of derisive names and expressed in the extended form of naming (*izibongo*, *izihasho*, *izigiyo*) that occurs in oral

compositions as well as in the oral song texts, is not unique amongst the Zulu, but is common in much of Africa and elsewhere as has been extensively documented by Okpewho and Finnegan among others.

Finnegan (1970:470) summarises the concept of 'naming' in Africa when she states that:

Names often play an indispensable part in oral literature in Africa ... they have ... many different interpretations ... from the psychological functions of names in providing assurance or 'working out' tension, to their connection with the structure of society, their social function in minimizing friction, or their usefulness either in expressing the self-image of their owner or in providing a means of indirect comment when a direct one is not feasible.

In the following chapters I will expand on three of these points raised by Finnegan viz.:

- a) the aspect of "working out" tension,
- b) "their social function in minimizing friction"
- and c) "their usefulness in providing a means of indirect comment when a direct one is not feasible".

By allowing the expression of pent-up feelings of hostility, frustration and dissatisfaction, conflict serves to maintain inter-individual and group relationships.

In the realm of collective existence, minor divergences serve to confirm and consolidate the underlying cohesion of the group, as a society obviously relies on a certain common consent. According to Coser (1956:75), communal conflict that is based on a common acceptance of basic

ends, is a positive force. People in the community settle their differences on the basis of unity. Durkheim's prior research, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1934:129), echoes this sentiment when he makes the point that just as the individual depends upon society because he depends upon the parts of which it is composed, so groups, due to their interdependence, help to maintain the social system in which they function. Thus social conflict may have a positive and integrative function to play in maintaining the balance in society. In the words of Coser (1956:80):

Conflict may serve to remove dissociating elements in a relationship and to re-establish unity. Insofar as conflict is the resolution of tension between antagonists it has stabilizing functions and becomes an integrating component of the relationship. However, not all conflicts are positively functional, only those which concern goals, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumptions upon which the social relations are founded.

Coser maintains that the absence of conflict cannot be taken necessarily as an index of stability and strength in close social relationships. These may more likely be characterised by frequent conflicts where the members feel that provided the conflicts do not threaten basic community consensus, they are free to express hostile and ambivalent feelings in specific social ways.

There exist three possible kinds of relevant expressions of feelings of hostility in behaviour. The first is direct expression of hostility against the person or group which

is the actual source of frustration. The second is displacement of such hostile behaviour onto substitute objects, and the third is tension-release activity which provides satisfaction in itself without need for object or object substitution. Hostility and feelings of dissatisfaction about an individual or even a group's behaviour, is not only expressed directly, but is often expressed indirectly.

Witchcraft is a practice where hostile feelings are allowed socially sanctioned expression against the adversary. In accusing particular members of the community of practising witchcraft, the accuser often singles out the perpetrator as a means for the release of hostility which could not be expressed safely against that person in any other sanctioned way. Reference to witchcraft in various forms of Zulu oral expression is common. Clyde Kluckhohn, who has made a study of witchcraft amongst the Navajo Indians, (in Coser 1956:43) makes the point that:

Witchcraft beliefs and practices allow the expression of direct and displaced antagonism ... and channels the displacement of aggression, facilitating emotional adjustment with a minimum of disturbance of social relationships.

Wit is another vehicle of indirect expression commonly used. Freud comments that wit permits one to make one's adversary ridiculous in a way which direct speech could not because of social hindrances. Wit may not necessarily bring about a change in the relations between one person and another, particularly if the intended target of the witticism is unaware of the source and intention of the

witticism. It may, however, afford an outlet of expression to the person voicing the source of the conflict, without necessarily changing the terms of the relationship. The expression in these terms, then, merely functions as a form of tension release. This practice, which is not unique to the Zulu people, is commonly employed in *izihasho* and particularly in nicknaming practices.

3.5 The Forms and Functions of Humour in Oral Compositions

Humour has social significance and is primarily an interactive process among people who share some commonality of situation and experience.

In her discussion of forms of humour amongst the Xhosa people, Dowling (1996:138) outlines several key functions, viz:

- ❖ to act as a defence against risk and danger
- ❖ to communicate on taboo topics
- ❖ to increase the morale of the in-group and to introduce or foster a hostile disposition towards the out-group
- ❖ to control behaviour
- ❖ to cope with despair, defeat and failure
- ❖ to make social interaction easier and more enjoyable

With reference to these functions, the humour embedded in many of the oral compositions recorded is essentially the key to making the barb of the conveyed message more acceptable. Naming is particularly effective as a channel for expressing discontent as the technique of humour is

reliant on compression and brevity. Nash (1985:13) states that,

Metaphors that link laughter and explosiveness ("erupt", "burst out") touch on an interesting paradox: that the energies of humour, like those of a detonation, are both contractive and expansive ... they compress so powerfully, imply so much in a little compass - a phrase, or even a single word.

Levine (1977) uses the term 'tendentious' to explain this form of humour where criticism and aggressiveness are acceptable against those in exalted positions who claim to exercise authority. The humour then represents a kind of rebellion which permits the liberation of inhibited and suppressed feelings, bringing with it immense feelings of relief and pleasure. Powell and Paton (1988:229-230) observe that

humour is equally to be seen sociologically as constituting a form of tension management, social resistance and social control in human relationships.

The laughter and humour evoked in oral expressions most often

spring from ... the desire to place the situation into perspective; to exert some degree of control over the environment ... and often exists the most urgently in those who exert the least.

This is particularly the case with rural Zulu women in rural extended family situations and with workers in urban environments. The humour provides the composer/reciter with a platform to pass messages which would in normal

discourse be regarded as unacceptable. Mulkay (in Dowling 1996:136) refers to this function of humour as one which operates as a defense against risk and danger, claiming that,

the humorous mode can provide a protective shield against some of the dangers lurking in the realm of serious discourse.

3.6 Recapitulation

The central core of my research in the area of Indigenous Knowledge Systems is the function of Zulu oral texts which articulate conflict in social discourse amongst the Zulu people. As 'Form Follows Function', it is necessary in this theoretical chapter to examine not only why these issues of conflict and criticism arise, but what forms of social discourse are used to articulate censure and dissatisfaction. In so doing, I have attempted in this chapter to reveal how those who compose and articulate the oral texts, do so by employing recognised and familiar techniques which are common to the oral genre. The following chapters contain the data which exemplify the theories discussed here.

T050260



CHAPTER 4: CONFLICT EXPRESSION IN NAMING: THE SCIENCE OF ONOMASTICS AS AGENT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ZULU SOCIETY

4.1 Introduction

Onomastics is the term given to the science of naming and is an important feature of all cultures for one reason or another. This chapter focuses on the way in which Zulu society uses onomastics, especially, anthroponyms (personal names) to play a significant role, not only serving as useful labels in distinguishing one person from another in the community or society at large, but also in reflecting and expressing the occurrence of conflict within specific social communities. References to social conflict are also reflected in the names given to animals and homesteads in Nguni society.

Adrian Koopman (2002:34) has conducted extensive study on various aspects of Zulu naming practices over the past twenty five years and has contributed enormously to the growth of interest in the field. This research culminated in his recent publication *Zulu Names* (2002) which covers a wide variety of topics including anthroponyms, toponyms, animal and bird names, historical names as well as the names of schools, homesteads and shops. He makes the point that to Euro-Western thought generally speaking, a name is given as a label or tag, something that can be used when referring to a person. Sometimes people may be aware of the origin of their names and its underlying meaning, but most often they are not. The name in Africa, however, has a different function altogether, as in the majority of cases, personal names are not used either for reference or direct

address. Evidence from African societies suggests a far closer link between name and person, almost as if the name were a part of the body, which could lead to a situation where the name is misused in potential cases of witchcraft.

In Zulu speaking communities, the giving of a particular name to a child reflects the occurrence of certain natural or historic events which coincide with the birth of the child. Naming may also be done with the express purpose of inculcating in the child certain desirable attitudes or behaviour traits by virtue of the semantics attached to the name, e.g. Nomusa (kindness), Mondli (the provider), Nonhlanhla (the lucky one) etc. Thus, a name, particularly with regard to African society, is not simply a reference to a person, or a label. As Parrinder (1951:24) puts it:

a name expresses the individual character of a man. It is not a mere handle, but shares in the spiritual reality of man's being.

Thipa (1994:2) who has studied onomastics amongst the Xhosa people, states that this type of naming "impacts on society and what is going on in society". Finnegan comments in her research on naming trends in Africa (1970:470) that "Names can be used as a succinct and oblique way of commenting on their owners or on others".

Lieberson (1984:77) in his article 'What's in a name', discusses general points about naming processes. He makes the point that "the naming process is not independent of the society in which (certain) events occur." These events largely affect or are determined by the society in which they take place, and it is these events that play a large

part in the rendering of names not only to people, but to domestic animals as well.

Bozeman (1976:166) states that in African society, a man becomes a "prisoner of his name" and he is only presumed to be truly alive, as long as he preserves his good name. This position is clearly articulated in the Psalms in the Old Testament, and is also current in the thinking of Native populations globally. This sentiment becomes especially relevant when one studies the attitudes of African people, in this case the Zulu, with regard to witchcraft: their fear of being bewitched is so pervasive that it is believed that the very articulation of a man's name could result in him falling prey to a sorcerer's evil actions. This belief can be traced anthropologically to times in Medieval Europe, where name-calling was taken as the equivalent of placing a curse or a blessing on a person. This belief is still current globally in those societies that favour the oral mode expressed out of memory.

4.2 Methodology

The functionalist approach adopted here was popular amongst scholars inspired by the anthropologist, Malinowski (1926). Such scholars were little interested in the history of the cultures they studied - they concentrated on the things each community did here and now. For them, the usefulness of these practices helped to preserve the community as a social unit. Of the various differences of approach between these groups of scholars, one is particularly worth noting: whereas evolutionists saw the indigenous knowledge systems of their research as a survival from the past and

tried to speculate on what the original form might have been, Malinowski's generation saw them in terms of their usefulness for the society - their functions.

The research which investigates and analyses the aspects of animal and personal names which reflect conflict, focuses mainly on the affective meaning in dealing with the etymology of these names, where they occur as an "index of psychological and sociological climates" in the domestic and work environments (Raper 1987:87).

Nicolaisen (1974:104) makes the point that names reflect three levels of meaning, viz. "the lexical level" which involves the semantics of the word, e.g. *uSipho* (gift); "the associative/pragmatic level" which deals with the reasons why the particular lexical items were used in the naming process, e.g. the child is treasured as a "gift"; and "the onomastic level" which deals with the meaning of a denotative name as a name which is given to an entity but in the course of time, the lexical meaning may become irrelevant or disappear altogether. An example of this last category is *eThekwini* (the Zulu name for the city of Durban) which is the onomastic representation of a place but which was originally derived from *itheku* (a bay).

In line with the nature of this research, these various categories of names have been dealt with on the associative or pragmatic level. According to Raper (1987:82) the pragmatic level deals with extra-linguistic entities to which the name refers and he cites four different types of pragmatic meaning. First, the connotative meaning which signifies things known about the entity, e.g. *iPhoyinti*

(the Point - a part of Durban), and which could also be connoted by the name Durban or eThekweni. Secondly the affective, expressive or emotive meanings, which are the feelings which are evoked about a particular entity, e.g. *uMantshontsha* (a Zulu name often given to someone who is a thief). Third, the stylistic meaning which is related to temporal attitudes i.e. attitudes to certain names at a given point in time e.g. *Inyathi* (buffalo), the name of a beast called out specifically in the presence of a certain man who held a high position in a particular community at a particular time in the 1980s. The beast's name would be called out as a warning to other members of the community about this man's unpredictability and unreliability in community affairs at the time.

The phonic-associative meaning is the last of the four different types of pragmatic meaning and refers to English surnames such as Marshall and Koopman which are phonically associated with the substituted surnames Mashu and Khumalo which are the Zulu sounding equivalents of the English names. The pragmatic approach may be viewed in the light of Jousse's term 'mimism' which is clearly reflected in the function of the naming process, where Man the Anthropos, is played or 'in-pressed' (im-pressed) by the world around him, which he registers in the context of previous experience and then replays or 'ex-presses' what has been played into him. Naming is a continuous process which all people 'play' and 'replay'. With names that reflect conflict a person may gain relief or satisfaction when the action that has caused dissatisfaction (which is played/in-pressed) is 'replayed/ex-pressed' harmlessly, functioning as a conflict-reducing agent. The cause of conflict that is

expressed in names which encapsulate cryptic social messages, is not necessarily resolved or corrected by the giving of the name. However, it may well be, which would then vindicate the name giver. In many situations, however, the potential for conflict does not continue to fester as name givers have been able to indicate to those around him/her, their feelings, suspicions, frustrations, tensions or plain unhappiness. Similar findings have been made in other African societies by authors such as Beattie (1957), Middleton (1961) in Uganda, Finnegan (1970), Tembo (1989) in Zambia and Abrahams (2002) in Mozambique.

The primary reasons for naming in this cryptic and often satirical way evident in the following examples of names and nicknames cited are:

- a) To express dissatisfaction or vent frustration
- b) To cast suspicion or level accusation at a certain individual in the family environs of the local community
- c) To ridicule, mock or warn against an unacceptable mode of behaviour
- d) To challenge a person/s whose superior position, precludes normal channels of criticism and censure
- e) To dispute allegations or rumours by informing the person or group responsible for the allegations that the namer is well aware of the situation.

4.2.1 Identity of Respondents

The data for this research on naming practices in Zulu-speaking communities has been collected over a period of

fourteen years as a result of oral interviews I have conducted in four broad settings:

- a) Initially, amongst colleagues and students at the University of Durban-Westville;
- b) later in the wider community in commercial and industrial settings;
- c) amongst over 450 participants in my own Zulu Communication course which I started teaching in 1990;
- d) interviews with Zulu speaking learners from three different schools in KwaZulu Natal.

When I began teaching Zulu at the University of Durban-Westville to mother-tongue Zulu speakers in 1984, I became fascinated by the semantic density of their Zulu names. I would often question students about the origin of their names and found on a number of occasions a rich social tapestry behind them, which I would record. This interest then expanded into the field of animal names as well. A linked interest developed in the field of nicknames amongst course participants in a Basic Zulu Communication Course for Business which I have run both for various companies over the past thirteen years, as well as for a number of people working in the public and private sectors.

At the beginning of the course, I always encouraged participants to establish not only what their Zulu nicknames were that they were commonly referred to by their Zulu speaking colleagues, but to investigate the Zulu nicknames of others in their companies. Sometimes, once the Zulu speakers became aware that their colleagues were committed to learning to communicate in Zulu, they would

render the relevant detail behind the assigning of a nickname. Sometimes, the nickname was given but not the background to it, for fear of retribution.

Although my research has been largely conducted in the greater Durban area, the informants themselves have not come from exclusively urban or only rural areas. Some are from rural backgrounds, temporarily based in urban environs due to their studies, others have grown up in urban township environments. All the informants have come, however, from various parts of KwaZulu Natal.

4.2.2 Collecting Data

Information has been gleaned about the names of Zulu speakers from a wide variety of respondents by means of oral interviews. This has necessitated further in-depth questioning to ascertain the history of the names or nicknames, as often the semantic equivalent of the name is inadequate to explain the link between the name giver's reasoning and the apparent meaning of the expression. I then recorded this information in writing in a number of notebooks which were reserved for this purpose.

For instance, the *izifekethiso* (nicknames) collected in the workplace were gleaned in two different ways. In the first instance, *izifekethiso* were rendered and explained by the recipients of the nicknames (normally English speakers) who were participants on my Zulu Communication Courses. Each recipient was asked a number of questions pertaining to his/her nickname. If the necessary information was lacking, information would then have to be solicited from fellow

workers in the workplace. In the majority of cases, the people who had nicknames were not aware of the meaning of the name or any figurative connotation attached to it. Many of the participants on these courses would respond by saying that they had found out that they had these nicknames, but employees were not willing to divulge the meaning, presumably for fear of retribution. Other *izifekethiso* (nicknames) were recorded as a result of oral interviews I have had over the years with a variety of Zulu speaking people I have known and had contact with, who have worked in various companies throughout the greater Durban area. In the vast majority of cases, when I have explained my area of research, workers would take great delight in explaining the names given to various employers past and present, once they had been assured that the information was to be used in an academic field and would not jeopardise their positions in any way.

Of the over 250 examples of nicknames collected, only 12% of the name recipients interviewed were aware of not only their nickname, but also the meaning and hidden implications. Of the remainder, 32% knew they had nicknames and that they were known by their nickname, but did not know its meaning. Of the remaining 56%, 22% said they did not know their nicknames, could not get them or did not have one, whilst the remaining 34% either found out their names, or said they had been given one by people they worked with. In the South African context at the time that most of this study was undertaken between 1988 - 2001, the vast majority of name bearers in the work environment did not speak or understand Zulu, as non-Zulus were most often in positions of seniority in commerce and industry.

4.3 Conflict and Community Values in the Social Arena

In researching the function that these names have in society, it is necessary to examine the society in which they thrive. The Zulu people live an essentially community-orientated existence as compared to South Africans of settler descent who live an 'individualistic' nuclear style of life. The reasons for this are numerous but include factors such as economic status, perceptions of status, value systems that are reflections of education and social mores in a particular milieu, and work demands. In societies which tend to exhibit the nuclear style of life, if there is friction with one's neighbours, it is dealt with in a completely different, mostly impersonal manner. Should the friction reach significant proportions, the legal system will be resorted to. Run of the mill snide remarks or unpleasantries would, in some cases, be ignored, and a frostiness/lack of communication would exist subsequent to any unpleasantness between neighbours, or in more extreme cases, the remarks may result in people being sued for defamation.

One must bear in mind that amongst the Zulu people, whether in rural areas (where community-orientated living is even more marked) or in urban areas, contact with one's neighbours is an essential part of life. No formal invitations are issued to see one another. People are mostly at liberty to call in on one another whenever they so desire, and when an occasion arises such as a wedding, funeral or even a party to celebrate an event, it goes

without saying that the neighbours are naturally invited to take part in the goings on.

This is vastly different from life in a nuclear family environment, where often even friends will not visit one another uninvited. Within a community-based society such as that of the Zulu people with its inherent extended-family and close communal relationships, this 'lack of communication' is tantamount to being cut off from the people around you, the thought of which is regarded as being totally abhorrent, hence, the necessity for one to air one's grievances and to 'work through' anxiety or tension. In fact, it is this very issue that many Blacks now living in predominantly White areas in South Africa comment on shortly after moving into such a neighbourhood. They often feel completely 'cut off' from others living around them and complain about the formal and stiff atmosphere that exists, compared to the life within a community where they have grown up. Some academics/scholars have attributed this independence and distance to literacy and scribal writing.

Zulu life is centred on the principle of *ukuhlonipha* (respect) which is central to the philosophy of *ubuntu* (human dignity/caring). In rural areas, where polygamy has always been prevalent, the concept of *ukuhlonipha* is extremely important in certain situations as it involves the relationship between a woman and her husband and his family, as a young bride moves into her husband's homestead to live amongst her in-laws. In her new home, the young bride has a subordinate status and is under the supervision of her mother-in-law who subjects her to a number of rigid

social and work conditions. Conflict in these situations is common between the bride and her in-laws, between the new bride and other co-wives in polygamous situations. Conflict may also arise in close-knit communities between neighbours as well. In modern times, the importance of the position of the mother-in-law is underlined by the fact that the husband is often absent for lengthy periods of time at the place of his employment. She is thus the voice of authority in his absence. Among the main causes of conflict in the traditional extended family are: laziness (or perceived laziness) of the daughter-in-law in performing duties expected of her, jealousy between co-wives, infidelity (or even suspicion of infidelity), gossiping, witchcraft and non-conformity to traditional expectations.

If a person is guilty of wrongdoing in his/her community, not only is dishonour brought upon the individual's name, but also upon the name of the family and, in certain circumstances, even upon the immediate community at large. This is because, amongst the Zulu, people are not only identified by their names, but always, simultaneously, by where they come from. Thus, through naming practices pressure is exerted in a subtle form by the members of the community to conform to modes of acceptable behaviour. This assertion is borne out by research carried out by Gumede (2000) in his home area of Emaqwabeni, where names are used to deflect tension and act as 'conflict-reducing agents'. He draws the conclusion that names function as:

accurate barometers of the equilibrium within a social group, and provide sensitive access to understanding relationships and status hierarchies operating within the group. (Gumede 2000:51)

4.4 The Function of Zulu Personal and Animal Names

Koopman (1986:104) identifies a number of distinct reasons for giving these personal names, listing 'Friction' as one of them. He explains that this category has names which refer:

to friction at the time of birth, either between the parents, or between parents and in-laws, or between parents and neighbours. (1986:87)

He goes on to say that causes of friction are, however, seldom expressed in Zulu personal names, as the more common channels that exist for this type of expression are women's *izihasho* and the names of dogs. I have managed to research (Turner 1992; 1997; 1998; 2000) a large number of examples of personal names and animal names proving to be popular forms of conflict expression, together with the masters dissertations of Molefe (1992) on animal names and Shabalala (1999) on homestead names; this research has resulted in Koopman revising this statement in his latest publication, *Zulu Names*, in 2002.

4.4.1 Zulu Naming practices

Traditionally amongst the Zulus, particularly in rural-based communities, names are given seven days after the birth of a child (Ngubane:2002). There are no specific naming ceremonies conducted. However, when a child is born, a mother is not permitted to be seen by the public for

seven days, during which time she is kept under supervision by traditional mid-wives. Sometimes the father consults with other members of the homestead before he decides the name of a child. Often one of the grandparents, if still alive, is given the opportunity to name the child, particularly in the absence of the father. It is not unusual nowadays, however, for the mother or other members of the family to fulfill this function of name giving in the absence of the father.

The current practice of name giving followed in urban areas has not been extensively documented, but passing mention has been made in some articles about current trends. These findings (such as those of Suzman) are borne out by oral interviews I have had with Zulu urban dwellers, who concur with the information I have recorded. Suzman (1994:269) states that names givers in rural areas are normally males while in urban areas the predominant name givers are females. This may be due to factors such as the breakdown of the extended family support structures, as well as illegitimacy and even the emancipation of women in urban areas. This trend is not rigid, however, as in urban areas today it seems that either the mother or the father may give the name.

In the use of animal names to express issues of conflict, it appears that these names are given more to cattle and dogs as compared to any other domestic animals. Possible reasons for this would be the fact that one would have more reason to articulate these names openly - a dog would be called to accompany its owner, or to perform a task such as hunting. Cattle names would be articulated during milking

or ploughing to encourage improved performance or even just as a means of praising a valued animal who is an abundant milker or prolific breeder, or who just has exceptional markings. Hence, the vast majority of examples cite these particular animals.

There seem to be no rigid restrictions as to whom may ascribe a name to an animal in order to pass the implied social message underpinning the name given. Any person living within the community may give a name to an animal, but it is most often the owner of the animal. The name may be given at the time of birth of the animal, or it may be given at a particular time when an event has occurred which stimulated the animal's owner to ascribe a particular name to one of his/her animals. The real meaning of the name will be clear only to those people familiar with the event, and living in the immediate environment of the name giver. The messages insinuated in these examples, as with all orally inclined communities, thrive only in their "native" climates embedded in their own specific social logic. If one is unfamiliar with the background which motivated the name being given, then the implication recorded in the name is also lost.

It is interesting to note that in the names which I have recorded from Zulu speakers in the past fifteen years, where the circumstances surrounding the origin of the names reflecting conflict were questioned, over half the recipients of these names were extremely vague about the reasons for their names being given. On further enquiry, they have returned to me with an 'official' explanation of the details surrounding their name's 'history'. When I have

asked whether or not they feel affected by the meaning of their names, only five of the over two hundred names I collected had changed their names because they were bothered by them. The rest of the name recipients felt that the name encapsulated 'social history' that was not aimed at them but at others at the time of their birth. More than one informant remonstrated with me, asking me if I was not aware that this was one of the functions of African names, to reflect the circumstances of one's birth.

The trend in the use of names amongst African people in South Africa seems to be changing currently, with many choosing to use their African names over their Western names particularly in school and work environments. Recent changes of names of people prominent in the public eye, from previously used Western names to their original African names are: the Minister of Labour, Shepherd Mdladlana, who now uses his African name Membathisi; the late Patrick Terror Lekota became known as Mosia; and Arnold Stofile, Eastern Cape Premier, now chooses to be known as Makhenkesi Stofile.

It is important to note that despite the fact that I have, in most cases, recorded a particular explanation of the particular name I have cited, many of these names have a general meaning attached to them that is commonly understood by most Zulu speakers. The specific circumstance leading to the name being given will obviously vary from situation to situation, but the general underpinning remains the same e.g. any person with the name of *Muziwenduku* will be clearly understood to have come from a home where punishment was commonplace. The same applies to

Makhalanjanlo, where it is generally known that this kind of person complains a lot for all sorts of reasons. In addition to the fact that there is a general understanding behind certain names, the same name may be given to different children in a variety of different circumstances to indicate a similar incident, e.g. *S'thembiso* (promise) which reveals that a promise relating to that household, has either been made or broken.

Just as personal names may be given to children in Zulu society in which a cryptic social message is embedded, the practice of naming domestic animals functions in the same way e.g. *Uvila* ('Lazy One' - a dog so named because of the daughter-in-law's laziness in performing household chores). The skilled use of allusion is a powerful weapon in the hands of the sharp and observant name-giver, and affords one the opportunity of voicing an opinion in a socially acceptable way, given the impropriety of direct confrontation: for example, *Umpdikwa* - the denied one, is a name given to the second born child of a migrant labourer. This name was given by the child's grandmother to indicate her suspicion of an illicit affair the mother had had in the father's absence, culminating in the birth of this boy who did not have any features resembling the family. Variants of this situation of births outside of marriage are found in the names: *Thangithini* (what do you expect me to say?); *Bonakele* (suddenly appeared/It was obvious); *Mfaniseni* (show me the resemblance); *Phumaphi* (where do you come from?); *Mtholephi* (where did you get him from?); *Mthathephi* (where did you take him from?). The same name e.g. *Maliyami* (my money), may be given by different owners to their animals to reflect totally different situations of

conflict. The name giver's intended message is accurately conveyed to the target in the community as those who live in close proximity are all aware of the context in which the name is given. These names act as a type of pressure valve in airing tension, deflecting criticism or levelling accusation in a given community where direct confrontation is deemed socially undesirable or unacceptable.

4.5 The Use of Allusive Language in Onomastics

Oblique allusion is typical in the speech of most Zulu people. Allusive language is characteristic of various forms of Zulu oral traditions such as riddles, *izibongo*, *izihasho*, lullabies, *amahubo* (traditional song forms), and lends itself to the practice of naming, where often a succinct word can conjure up a multitude of thoughts and expressions.

In terms of the types of names considered here, particular reference is made to the Zulu personal name (*igama lasekhaya*) and nicknames (*izifekethiso*) (which sometimes form part of the common man's *izihasho*). Often one of the exclamations from a person's *izihasho* will become a nickname by which that person becomes known by his peers, e.g. *UMalalephenduka* (Mr Unpredictable), *UMankenteza* (Ms Chatterbox), *UQimbile* (Mr Naked one - caught in *flagrante delicto*).

The practice of derisive naming can provide an allusive way of astutely airing a conflict or source of discontent in such a way that it is repeatedly exposed to the community at large, and furthermore serves as a constant

reminder to all of the underlying message contained therein. When one looks at the situation in which one wishes to draw one's neighbours'/spouse's/in-laws' attention to an issue which is causing a problem, what better way of letting them know in an acceptable, non confrontational manner, than by calling a child or dog's/ox's name out loud, and if the occasion merits it, repeatedly! Although satirical naming is done mostly by women, it is not exclusively their domain, as was evidenced in the example of Molefe cited in Chapter Two, where a male named his oxen to pass criticism at his neighbour's daughter.

Names reflecting conflict are not only given to animals and people. They are also commonly given to inanimate objects such as homesteads. Ntuli's research on Zulu homestead names makes brief mention of the fact that although a homestead may be named by its occupants, an alternate name popularised by the community may also be given. This name may reflect criticism of the behaviour of some of the occupants. Ntuli (1992a:18) notes that, "This implies that when the community gets involved, name giving may serve as a form of social control".

Shabalala (1999), in her research on homestead names as a reflection of social dynamics amongst the Zulu, argues that the primary function of homestead names is to identify distinctly each homestead (as many people from the same clan with the same surnames usually settle close to one another in rural areas - the homestead names distinguish one family from another). These names are also used as a way of communicating the feelings, thoughts and attitudes of the

name-giver. She classifies the names she collected into seven categories. The largest of these categories is the one containing names reflecting friction (32%). She records that in Mabengela, a region in the Nkandla district in Zululand, naming still reflects family tension or unpleasant occurrences such as conflict within the family or witchcraft within the family or among the community (1999).

4.6 Names Reflecting Inter-personal Conflict

The examples cited in the following pages focus on names given to humans, dogs and cattle/oxen, and homesteads, which articulate conflict in the domestic environment:

I have classified the types of conflict which are expressed in these names into the following categories:

1. Conflict between spouses or lovers
2. Conflict between in-laws
3. Conflict within the family at large
4. Conflict with neighbours/local community

4.6.1 Conflict between spouses/lovers

4.6.1.1 Personal Names

Women in Zulu society, traditionally speaking, are not free to confront their husbands directly - or indeed any of their in-laws - about issues, neither may they argue with them. The assigning of a name to a child or animal serves, therefore, as an ideal way of expressing any pent up frustration a spouse may feel about something the husband has done which is disapproved of. These names which I have recorded from Zulu speakers in the past twelve years,

articulate areas of conflict that occur between spouses and lovers:

Muziwenduku/M'ziwempi (Home of the stick)

The boy of this family was given this name by his mother who was satirising the father as a man who was accustomed to using the stick excessively in resolving any familial problems.

S'thembiso (The promise)

The mother gave this name to her son to reflect a broken promise made to her by the father of the child with whom she had had a long relationship. When she had fallen pregnant, the father had promised marriage, a house and stability, but had subsequently absconded to Johannesburg, abandoning her and the child.

UzibizeTheku (the dirt of Durban)

This name refers to a child born outside of marriage who was brought home from Durban by a young unmarried father to his mother's homestead. The child was the result of a brief love affair the young man had had, while working in Durban. This name would be given by the father of the child who removes the baby to his own mother immediately after its birth indicating that he got the baby by mistake from a girl (a prostitute, drunkard, thief, jailbird etc) whom he believes does not deserve (or is incapable) of adequately nurturing the child.

Mphikeni (Deny him/her)

This boy's mother gave him this name to reflect the father 's refusal to accept that the child was his.

Funelinjani (Which one do you want)

This rather crude name was given by a disgruntled father to a child born to him and his promiscuous wife. The reference to -li- refers to *isende* (testicle).

This name was also given to a child by a mother who was dissatisfied with her husband's promiscuity. And this name was also given by a taxi driver to his child as a comment on his wife's jealousy about his relationships with other women. The intention in the message is to pose the question to his wife as to what type of penis she requires to satiate her, so she would not quarrel with him about his other relationships.

Hluphuyise (Worry your father)

Hormone imbalance probably resulted in the name of this child given by the father, who went through 9 months of torment with his wife during her pregnancy. Apparently this normally quiet and affable woman became extremely irritable with her husband during her pregnancy much to the husband's annoyance, who then named his son to record the unacceptable treatment he had had to deal with during this period. The name is also given to children whose mothers get ill during pregnancy and are taken by their husbands to *izinyanga* (herbalists), *izangoma* (diviner) and allopathic doctors. The child may, in the end, be born normal,

but will still bear this name to indicate the worry he/she has caused his father.

Qondeni (What is your intention?)

This name in the form of a question was posed to the husband by the wife to ascertain what his intentions were in the future, as prior to the birth of their child, the husband sided constantly with his parents in the on-going friction between them and his wife.

Qhamukephi/Velephi/Muntukabani (Where do you come from/Child of whom?)

These names were given by different fathers to their sons to express their own suspicions as to the part they had played in the conception of their children. In one case the father was accused of being sterile. The question being leveled in the latter case, is "Where/how were you conceived as I am accused of being sterile"? The same woman's next child was named Fuzuyise (Takes after/looks like his father) by the mother (in an attempt to verify the legitimacy of the child).

4.6.1.2 Animal Names

The following names of animals which I have collected, are also used as a means of passing messages between spouses and may be given by ever-observant in-laws, or by the mother or father of the child. Even where the name carries an unwelcome message, it is not likely that the animal's name will ever be changed. This situation is echoed in people's *izihasho* which, once given, remain not only during

the person's lifetime but are remembered and recited on occasions after the person's demise. The name need not be given on direct acquisition, or on the birth of the animal, but may be given at any time when the occasion merits it.

Cattle Names:

UZinkamba (Clay Pots)

This name was given to a beast by a wife to express her dissatisfaction with her husband's excessive drinking habits. Clay pots are the vessels from which Zulus usually drink their traditional beer.

Maliyavuza (Spendthrift: literally; 'The money is leaking')

This cow was named by a woman whose husband had won a jackpot of R30 000 at the races. Instead of investing the money wisely, the man had spent it on feasting, buying five horses and four cattle. Three of the cattle died, and she named the fourth one in this way to warn her husband against wasting all the money irresponsibly.

Maliyami (My money)

On purchasing another cow, the man then replied to his wife's accusation by naming the new cow in this way, indicating to her that he would dispose of the money as he wished. This name also has a general complaint indication understood by the Zulu speech community, that one of the partners is the provider, and the other exploits the situation by spending and not contributing.

Bozebabuye (They will come back)

A husband who was an excessive drinker who was known to beat up his wife and children when intoxicated, bought an ox and called it in this manner after his wife left home with all the children and returned to her parents' homestead.

Ngizazisa (I wonder/woe is me)

A man had bought a calf he could ill afford. Shortly after purchasing the calf, it nearly died. The man who was worried sick about his bad investment would sit and mutter "Ngizazisa" to himself. His wife then named the calf in this way, once it had recovered, to remind her husband of his folly.

Dog Names

Thandendlini (He likes it in the house)

A wife named her dog in this way in order to get the message across to her husband that she thought he was lazy as he did not have a job and would just laze about at home all day in order to be near the food.

Zond'umkakhe (He hates his wife)

This name was given to a puppy that was born in a homestead where the husband and wife were constantly at loggerheads. At the time the puppy was born, the husband refused even to speak to his wife, thus, her accusation levelled through the puppy's name.

Zond'umkakho (Hate your wife)

This is a variation of the name above and was given by a father-in-law to a puppy born at the time when his son and daughter-in-law were constantly fighting. The parents-in-law were partial to the daughter-in-law and sided with her in the dispute.

Shiy'umuzi (Leave the homestead)

A woman named her dog in this way after her husband had deserted her in favour of another woman.

Bayakhuluma (They are talking)

A man named his dog in such a way to warn his wife about her unacceptable behaviour which had everyone in the district talking about her. She would openly berate and criticise her husband in front of the family and the neighbours. The implication is that neighbours were gossiping about her. This name is also generally understood as an indication of neighbours gossiping for any number of reasons, but particularly about extra marital affairs.

Cat Name

In all the names of animals I have managed to collect over the years, this is the only cat's name I have recorded. The importance of cattle to the Zulu, socially, culturally and economically is paramount, hence the prolific number of names given to these animals. Dogs are normally kept for purposes of guarding and hunting and are also commonly named.

Keeping cats as pets is not common amongst the Zulu, as animals that are kept normally serve a purpose. This is borne out by the research of Koopman (2002:217) who states, "Cats are very seldom given names in Zulu society. When I was researching Zulu personal names ... I found 72 names for dogs, but only three for cats". He goes on to point out that another reason for cats not being commonly kept in Zulu households, is the fact that they like to move about at night, the time when witches are at work. If the cat had a name, this would enable a witch to capture the cat and put it to work as a familiar as they are known to do with other animals such as hyenas. The link of the cat's name to the homestead, makes it easier for the witches to establish a basis on which to work their evil intention.

Doli (Doll)

A woman gave her cat this amusing name in order to make her husband aware of the fact that she knew he was having an affair with a woman named Dolly.

4.6.1.3 Homestead Names

KwaSalabenabe (remain and stretch your feet)

The informant said that she, the owner of this homestead, had some misunderstanding with her husband who had another wife staying with him. When she went to fetch wood on one occasion, her husband burnt her hut. He did not realise that his brother had witnessed this. The wife was told by her brother-in-law who had seen his brother burning the house. The wife then said to her husband *Sala-ke nomuzi wakho wenabe* (remain with your homestead and stretch your feet) and left

the homestead and her husband to build her own. She then named her new home in the contracted form of kwaSalabenabe. The name also refers to any situation in which people express their happiness when a person who is disliked, or poses a threat, leaves.

4.6.2 Conflict between in-laws

This category contains examples of conflict between the daughter-in-law and her in-laws. Conflict is far more common between a wife and her in-laws than between a husband and his in-laws. The reason for this lies in the Zulu custom of the young bride moving in with her husband's family. In Zulu society, the young bride is the focus of intense scrutiny by the in-laws, particularly the mother-in-law, and the names given to a child reflect this often conflictual relationship.

Ramphele (1989:11) makes the point that the power of older women is derived through their co-optation by patriarchal family structures - and this co-optation plays a key role in the perpetuation of patriarchy. The most powerful woman in the Nguni family is the older mother (40 onwards). Younger women tend to play a less significant role in family leadership although they play a major behind-the-scenes role in family maintenance in labour, child care etc. Ramphele refers to a divide-and-rule policy whereby older women are given power in families, with younger women falling strictly under their authority (ibid 1989:12).

The expectations of mothers-in-law are seldom fulfilled by daughters-in-law who are often accused of being lazy and

indolent. Makhwaza (1997:26) in her research on satirical wedding songs, (following that of Turner (1990) on aspects of satirical commentary in Zulu oral traditions) discusses the fact that the relationships between the husband's sisters and the new bride are usually conflicted. The reason for this lack of amity is that the sisters-in-law usually serve as the "watch-dogs" of the family, ensuring that the new bride performs her duties satisfactorily. Many songs sung at wedding ceremonies reflect this disgruntled relationship between in-laws.

Mangele (2000:19) adds that *umakoti*, the new bride, is expected by her in-laws to work hard in her new homestead. She is given various tasks such as cooking, washing, working in the garden/fields, fetching water and looking after children. She is expected to follow traditional culture and values and maintain a respectful demeanour. The following names reflect the friction in these relationships:

4.6.2.1 Personal Names

Mcanukelwa (Be annoyed with her)

The equivalent of this name for girls is Mcanukeliwe. A boy was given this name by his mother to reflect her awareness of the fact that her in-laws disliked her.

Hlalezwini (Stick to the word)

This name was given by a father to his first born as a way of vindicating his wife against his own parents who had criticised her for a number of years for being

childless. She constantly maintained during this time that she would eventually have a child.

Bajabhisile (They are disappointed)

This name is on the similar theme of barrenness and was given to a daughter by her mother to reflect the years of suffering and indignity she had experienced at the hands of her in-laws who constantly criticised her barrenness. On producing a child, she named it thus to express the feeling that now that she had produced a child, they would be disappointed as they would no longer be able to criticise her.

Fikanaye/Zanazo/Zanaye (Arrive with her/him)

This name was given by the mother -in-law to the child born to her daughter-in-law seven months after marrying her son, giving air to her suspicion that the child was not his. It is a name given to a child that also generally refers to a woman who goes into marriage already having an illegitimate child.

Babhekile (They are looking for it)

The grandmother gave this name to a girl born to a woman who did not bring with her into the marriage the customary dowry, 'umabo', i.e. sleeping mats, blankets, calabashes, brooms etc. The name is directed at the mother, indicating that the in-laws are still awaiting the customary items.

Bhekisisa (Look carefully)

The mother-in-law, by giving this name to her grandson, was attempting to draw her son's attention

to the fact that his wife was having extra-marital affairs, thus casting doubt on the lineage of the child. The name calls upon the son to look carefully at the features of the child, as his did not resemble those of the family in any way.

Nomthetho (Make the law)

A baby girl was the recipient of this unusual name from her grandmother because of the mother's uncharacteristic behaviour of introducing and implementing her own laws into her mother-in-law's homestead. She refused to serve certain visitors food, she would not allow her brother-in-law to wear her husband's clothes, and was evasive when asked to help with certain of the household chores requested of her. It is customary for the new bride to keep as low a profile as possible and to be helpful and obedient. The name given by the mother-in-law was intended to draw the daughter-in-law's attention to the fact that this behaviour was unacceptable as well as to inform other members of the community of the situation.

Zithulele (Keep oneself quiet)

A mother gave this name to her son after a dispute with her in-laws. She had been sent home. However, on her return to the in-laws' homestead, she failed to bring a beast in compensation for insulting her in-laws, as her family could not afford to send one. On her return she was shunned. She maintained her silence thus giving rise to the newborn's name.

Nkomokazikho (There are no cattle)/Malidwe (only money)

The child was called this by the mothers' parents as a reminder to the father that he had not yet paid the lobolo for his bride.

Thulebona (Quiet but aware)

The grandmother of this child named it thus to reflect her son's reticence in not chastising his wife for her extra-marital affair. Although aware of the fact, he did not do anything about it.

Mhletshwa (The one who is whispered about)

The mother of this boy gave him this name as a result of an incident which took place shortly before the birth of her child, when she, unbeknown to her in-laws, overheard them whispering unpleasant comments about her. This name was intended to act as a clear message to them that she had heard what they had said about her.

4.6.2.2 Animal Names

Cattle Names

Velemzini (Came from the in-laws)

This name refers to the lobolo cows that came from the bride's in-laws. A mother-in-law named her cow in this way as a reaction to the fact that her son married a woman who had already had a child from another man. The complaint refers to the waste of cows from the homestead to pay for a bride that already has a child.

Nkomozelanga (Cow of the sun/day)

The father of a particular girl gave this name to a cow to illustrate his dissatisfaction over a *lobolo* dispute. The cattle he had received for his daughter's *lobolo* were very skinny as if they had been through a severe drought, and the name is aimed at the daughter's husband and his family.

The name can also be given to reflect outstanding *lobolo* that is paid in full in one day.

Zigizendoda (Footsteps of a man)

A bullock was given this name by a mother-in-law to air her opinion of her daughter-in-law's masculine behaviour. This girl had taken to running, and on certain occasions during her husband's absence, she would wear jeans on visits to town.

The name was also given by the in-laws on the birth of a child as a result of them hearing the footsteps of a man, presumed to be a lover, visiting the daughter-in-law in the absence of the husband.

Zihambangemizi (Visitor of one place after another)

A mother-in-law gave this name to a beast to criticise the behaviour of her daughter-in-law who wandered around from home to home gathering gossip. The in-laws would call out the beast's name as soon as this woman would embark on one of her gossip rounds, to indicate their dissatisfaction with her behaviour.

This name was also given to a dog in a certain family by a man's mother who was accusing him of having

dubious sexual relationships with other men's wives in their absence.

Dog Names

Dogs, as well as cattle, are used in this subtle message passing:

Phekenebe (Cook with legs outstretched)

A woman named her puppy in this way to level criticism at her sister-in-law's indolent behaviour. She was apparently so lazy she would remain seated to do whatever chores there were, either stirring the pot or cooking.

Mafikizolo (She arrived only yesterday)

A mother-in-law named a puppy in this way to warn and ridicule her daughter-in-law who displayed no respect towards her. Having just moved into her new household after her marriage, she refused to abide by her mother-in-law's requests. She would do things according to her own rules, and resented the relationship between the mother-in-law and her husband.

The name indicates that a new-comer has no right to take over, and is subject to the rules and regulations of the in-laws' household.

Zakhele (Build for yourself)

Again, dissatisfaction between in-laws and the new daughter-in-law is revealed in this name which resulted from the selfish and unco-operative behaviour of the new bride. The name contains a warning that if

she did not comply with what was required of her, she would have to move out to her own place.

Bangigondile (They are after me)

This name was given to a puppy by a new bride to indicate to her in-laws that she was aware of the fact that they were not in favour of their son marrying her. The name also alludes to her perception that the in-laws were ill-treating her.

Bayotshwaleni (They are at the shebeen)

A mother-in-law named her dog in this way to criticize her son and his wife who spent too much time drinking at the local shebeen.

Hlalekhweni (One who stays at the in-laws)

This name was given to a dog by a father who did not approve of the unusual practice of his daughter's fiancé moving into the girl's homestead. The girl's brothers would frequently call the dog's name out in the presence of the groom to indicate that they, too, were not happy about the situation.

4.6.2.3 Homestead Names

ENdinabafazi (place of the wives' anger)

Wives are supposed to respect their in-laws, especially the father in-law. They do not normally address him directly even in normal discourse. In times of conflict they may only do so if they have been given permission to do so by the in-laws, and this involves the ritual of slaughtering a cow for them. Nevertheless it is not

all wives who are respectful to their in-laws and follow traditional expectations in this way. The head of this homestead (whose wife was dead) had experienced conflict with his son's wives and they used to make him angry in his old homestead. When he could not stand living with them he built himself another homestead and named it eNdinabafazi (place of the wives' anger).

KwaPhumuzumlomo (Give the mouth a rest)

The owner of this homestead named her homestead KwaPhumuzumlomo because of endless gossip amongst the in-laws and family members where she was staying. Because of this she then moved out of her husband's homestead and built her own. She gave it this name because she was tired of complaining.

4.6.3 Conflict within the family at large

Tension within different families exists in different situations and when a member of a family may feel that he or she is unfairly treated or criticised, he or she may have occasion to move from the original homestead and build their own. The homestead's name is then used as an indirect comment on and expression of their feelings. Ntuli (1992b:31) gives an example of a woman who did not understand why she was hated by the other co-wives and ignored by her husband. She would continually ask, "What wrong have I done?" (*Ngoneni*). She named her hut *eNgoneni*.

4.6.3.1 Personal Names

In these examples, one witnesses the designation of names again to new-born children to reflect problems within the extended family, often between siblings or between parents and children.

Mtholephi (Where did you get him from)

This unflattering name was given by the unhappy parents of a young woman who had left home to seek employment in town.

She returned home within a year heavily pregnant, unable to name with certainty the father of the child or his whereabouts.

Hlamukiwe (They all left me)

This name was given to a baby girl by her father in response to a situation in which 5 families lived within one big kraal. Over a period of 3 years, four of these families gradually left, leaving this man and his wife and 2 week old baby all alone. The name was an accusation directed at the rest of the family for deserting the kraal for no apparent reason.

Chith'umuzi (Destroy the household)

As a certain father did not wish to share his inheritance, his brothers all left the homestead resulting in the breakdown of family unity and harmony. His son was thus named by his mother to record her dissatisfaction with the father, who was suspected of practicing witchcraft on his brothers.

The name was also given to a child whose father was neglecting the family, thereby destroying it.

Mphikeleli (The stubborn one)

The father of this mother gave this name to her second child born out of wedlock to register his annoyance at the fact that she had not heeded his warning after the birth of her first child.

Msayinelwa (A restricted/no-go area)

A family dispute during the pregnancy of one of the sisters of this clan led to her eldest brother forbidding his other brothers from entering the sister's homestead again. The name of this child who was born shortly thereafter was given by the eldest brother in reference to this incident, to act as a constant reminder of the situation (*ukusayina* may be taken to indicate a no-go area).

Kakiwe (Surrounded)

This name was given to the second child born to the same woman involved in the previous example as a reflection of the fact that the dispute was still not resolved, the family being immersed in and surrounded by dispute.

Funokukhulu (He wanted a big share)

An inheritance dispute between two brothers prompted the name of this child given by the father who was the eldest of two brothers. Prior to the birth of this child, the younger brother had contested the fact that

his elder brother should receive the bigger portion of their inheritance. The younger brother's refusal to accept this important Zulu custom, in terms of which the eldest son normally receives the largest share, was thus unacceptable. The name is a form of chastisement to the younger brother for his greed.

Zwelikabani (Whose land is this)

This name again reflects an inheritance dispute between a chief's four sons. The lawful heir, i.e. the eldest, was threatened with death by the others if he did not share the inheritance with them. In the midst of the dispute, the eldest brother's wife gave birth to a son which afforded him the opportunity to pose the question to his brothers, underlining the legitimacy of his claim to the land as the eldest brother.

Mkhetheni (Single him out)

The third son in a family of four boys directed this accusation at his parents, who had paid *lobolo* for the other three sons, but did not pay for his *lobolo*. He had worked on his own and saved enough money to pay the necessary bride price and by naming his son thus, he was able to voice his anger and bitterness at his parents for singling him out in this manner.

Funokwakhe (Wants his own possessions)

The first born son to the youngest of three brothers was named in this manner by the father to inform his older brothers that he is aware of the fact that they

usurped part of his inheritance from his father while he was too young to do anything about it.

Bonokwakhe (The one who is introspective)

The eldest son's first child in this homestead was given this name by his mother to reflect his pig-headedness in not taking the advice of other members of the family with regard to family matters. The name serves as a warning to take into consideration the viewpoint and requirements of others in the family.

A variant form of this name is Bhekokwakhe.

Hlebani (Why do you gossip?)

This name was given to a nephew by one of the sisters-in-law of a certain family who were unhappy with the mother's habit of being the local gossipmonger. Her gossiping had caused the family trouble on numerous occasions, and the name was given to the child as a warning to the mother that others were not happy about her behaviour.

4.6.3.2 Animal Names

In these examples, one witnesses the designation of names carrying succinct messages, again, most commonly to cattle and dogs, reflecting problems within the extended family often between siblings, between parents and children, between co-wives, sisters-in-law etc. The target of the name is normally well aware when the name is given, that he or she is the intended recipient of the message contained therein. This is due to the closeness of the people who live in the various communities.

Khuz'umkakho (Reprimand your wife)

This message was directed by the eldest brother in a family at his youngest brother's wife. The name he gave the beast was intended to alert his brother to warn his wife about her gossip-mongering ways.

This name was also given to an ox by a man whose older brother's wife constantly teased him for not being married. She would complain about having to cook and wash for him when he should have his own wife to do it.

Khuz'umhlola (Address/reprimand this unusual matter)

This name is similar to the one above and was given by a man's father to his ox in order to warn his son, whose two co-wives were always at one another's throats, to deal with the situation.

Mabuya (The one who comes back from marriage)

This ox's full name was 'Mabuy'emendweni', and was given by a divorcee's sister-in-law. This woman having divorced her husband had come back to her own original home where she tried to lay down her own laws to her sisters-in-law. This led to much resentment and the sarcastic reference in the name given.

Mhlab'ungehlule (The world has overcome me)

This name was often shortened to Mhlaba and is a name which was given by a co-wife of a certain man who preferred her to his older wife. It led to much conflict between the two women. The older woman

eventually committed suicide and the name was given by the younger wife to a calf born after her rival's death.

Sakhenaye (We are living with him i.e. a sorcerer)

This name was given by a section of a certain family who were relatively well off, to reveal their suspicions about their poorer neighbouring relations. The wealthy section of the family fell prey to many forms of bad luck, and on consulting the local *isangoma* (diviner), they were told that their problems stemmed from their own relatives who were practising witchcraft on them.

Ziyalobolana (They pay *lobolo* for one another)

In Zulu society, *ilobolo* is the term used to refer to a payment made by a prospective groom (either in cattle or money or both) to a woman's parents as a form of bride-price. The name given to a calf owned by a certain family was intended to ridicule a daughter who was engaged to a man the family did not accept. She refused to give him up and the calf born at the time of the conflict was named in this way to accuse her and her betrothed of being totally unacceptable. The reason behind this is that according to Zulu customs, it is only the man who pays *lobolo* for the woman. A woman cannot pay *lobolo* to her groom, neither can he pay *lobolo* to his prospective bride, it has to be paid to the bride's parents. As he could not afford the *lobolo*, she assisted in the payment of the amount owed to her family from her own earnings.

Nkomozombango (Cow of dispute)

This name has various connotations as is the case with many of the names cited, but in this case it was given to the only remaining cow left to a woman whose husband had died. After his death the eldest son took all the cattle for his own - leaving only one for his mother which she named in this fashion as evidence of her discontent.

Phumuphele (Get out/go away)

A beast was named this by a father. It pertained to his renegade son whose behaviour had become unacceptable to his family as he was suspected of stealing and other illegal practices. On arriving at the homestead, the father would call out the beast's name in order to let him know he was not welcome.

Salabembuza (Left in question/doubt)

A dissatisfied mother named her calf in this manner because of a family member who was suspected of stealing. Every time this person visited the homestead, several things would be noted as missing from the household. The name was also called out as a warning to others in the community when this particular person appeared.

Television and Nkomozikhalendlini (Television and the cow is crying in the house)

A father named his two beasts with these two different names, to accuse his children who were wage earners of buying worthless luxuries such as a TV set with their

savings, instead of buying cattle, which, to a Zulu person are the traditional signs of wealth.

Zithuthe (Tell tales)

One of the members of a certain family would never keep family matters private. A family dog was named in this way to inform that person to cease this unacceptable practice.

The name derives from the proverb *ukuthutha izindaba* - to spread tales.

Zanazo (Come with them)

The second dog bought by this same man carried a similar message directed at the same person who always came home with gossip and stories about other people.

Thubhobho (2 shillings)

This scathing name was given by an aunt to her dog to reflect the scornful attitude she had towards her niece who was known to be practising prostitution in the area. In times gone by, women were paid 2 shillings (then 2 and 6 - two shillings sixpence) for prostitution. The name reflects the cheapness of the woman who was prepared to sleep with a man for such a paltry amount of money.

The name is also given as a nickname to people who drink illegal beer (*isigatha*) and beg for two bob (now the equivalent of R2), in order to buy a nip of *isigatha*.

Zendazamshiya (All married they left her)

The mother of a particular family gave this name to the family dog in order to show her dissatisfaction with her daughter who was getting past the customary marriageable age for a girl. The name would be called out by other members of the family not only to tease and irritate the unfortunate woman, but also as a form of encouragement for her to go out and actively seek a husband.

Uvila (The lazy one)

A mother used this dog's name to level accusation at her lazy daughter who would not assist her in the household chores.

Salakutshelwa (The one who refuses to be warned)

A father gave this name to his dog in order to admonish his son. He had refused to listen to his father's advice and had suffered accordingly. The name derives from the proverb *Isalakutshelwa sibona ngomopho* - the foolhardy one learns the hard way.

Madakwazinyele (Drink & defecate)

This rather crude name was given to the family goat by a father to show his disgust with the behaviour of his son. He would drink to such excess that he would lose control of his bodily functions and disgrace himself.

4.6.3.3 Homestead Names

Shabalala's research on homestead names (1999:54) reveals that the predominant reason behind the assigning of names

to homesteads is to record friction within extended families (32,1%). Other reasons she gives are: family unity; improvement and prosperity; description of location and incidents pertaining to the homestead itself; wishes and aspirations; religious affiliations and other. The following examples come from research carried out in the Mabengela community in Zululand by Shabalala:

KwaMuntungifunani (What does a person want from me?)

The head of this homestead, a peace loving man, named his home in this way to inform someone in his extended family that he was aware that a problem existed in their relationship. The name is taken from the phrases he used to say: *umuntu ungibulalelani ngoba angisho lutho kumuntu, futhi angifuni lutho lomuntu* (why is the person killing me because I do not say anything to anyone and I do not want anything from anyone).

KwaBhekomzondayo (Look at the one you hate)

The head of this homestead gave this name to his homestead because he wanted people in the community who he suspected hated him and might plot against him, to know that he was aware of their feelings towards him.

EMpithini (Chaos)

This name was derived from the noun *isiphithiphithi* (chaos/ up and down). The namer said that her husband and his brothers were constantly quarrelling in their father's homestead. Their father then said they should separate, each person building himself his own homestead so that they could minimise conflict among themselves. The namer's husband then built a

homestead and named it eMpithini because there were ups and downs and chaos, with people moving around to build their own homesteads.

KwaLandokwakhe (Fetch her own)

The head of this homestead said that, poor as she was, she managed to build her own homestead. When she was building her homestead, she remembered that the man whom she was married to took the cows she had received as compensation for children born to her daughters out of wedlock. She then went to fetch what rightfully belonged to her. In Zulu a proverb sums up this conflict: *'ifa lakwenye indlu alidliwa kwenye indlu'* (The inheritance of another hut is not eaten in another hut).

KwaPhumangezwi (Leave because of talks)

When people live in extended families, there is often inter-family jealousy. This name was a result of a man who left his parent's homestead because of the endless discussions to resolve the jealousy between him and his brother, and between their wives and the mother-in-law. The name reflects the fact that he was forced to leave because of the continuous war of words.

4.6.4 Conflict with Neighbours and Members of the Local Community

As mentioned in the section above on community-orientated societies, peaceful relations with your neighbours and other members of the local community is regarded as vital for the smooth co-existence of people living not only in

rural areas, but also in urban areas. Conflict and antagonism are stumbling blocks to successful co-habitation in these communities. Therefore, where a problem exists, it must be resolved, or if not resolved, it must at worst be aired to those around, so that suppressed tensions can be 'worked through' without direct confrontation. Many of the problems that exist between neighbours, especially in the rural areas, arise as a result of accusations or suspicion of witchcraft. Personal and animal names play a significant role in encoding messages regarding witchcraft. The main causes of conflict within communities seem to be:

- a) Accusations regarding witchcraft
- b) Jealousy between neighbours
- c) Accusations with regard to dishonesty
- d) The spread of rumours/gossiping

4.6.4.1 Personal Names Regarding Accusations of Witchcraft

Mnukwa (The suspect)

This child was named by the father who was suspected by neighbours of practising witchcraft. By naming his son thus, he was venting his frustration and anger at the suspicions cast on him, as well as attempting to deny them at the same time, by making the allegations public.

Bhekumuzi/Bhekuzalo (Look within the homestead/ within the clan)

This child was named by a certain family as a way of accusing their neighbour of practising witchcraft.

Bhekamuphi (Which one is to be watched)

In giving his son this name, the accusation was levelled by the father at the community at large, as a result of a number of misfortunes that had befallen the family, implying that someone was responsible for witchcraft. The name indicates that the father was aware that one of his neighbours was responsible.

Zinukile (Suspected himself of witchcraft)

This name was given by an in-law to her son's child after a quarrel between her neighbour and her son, in which he demanded to know why they had not invited him to a gathering they had had. He asked them if they suspected him of witchcraft. Thereafter, the entire family regarded him with close suspicion, which gave rise to his child's name.

Thakathangani (With what do I bewitch)

This name is normally given to girls and in this instance was given to a girl to deny the accusation leveled at one of the parents that they were practising witchcraft. The name has to do with jealousy of a person who seems to be prosperous where others around him/her are not. The implication is that witchcraft is used to ensure prosperity.

Muth'ungimele (The *muthi* is ceaselessly worked on me)

This name was given by a father to his son soon after he had moved into the iNkandla area where witchcraft is known to occur. Most newcomers to the area do not stay there long for fear of '*ukuthakatha*' (being bewitched). This man complains by means of the choice

of this name for his child, that he is constantly the target of sorcerers.

4.6.4.2 Animal Names

Suspensions of witchcraft, jealousy, theft, gossiping, unpredictability and dishonesty are but some of the behaviour aberrations which cause discord in extended communities. One way in which a member of the community vents frustration or levels accusation in public, is by naming domestic animals. The animals' names may be called out loudly across fences, fields etc, in order to put one's 'message' across.

Thakathabehleka (Smile while bewitching)

This name, given to a beast, was intended to reveal that someone in the family who feigned innocence, was actually believed to be a sorcerer.

Maliyami (My money)

In this instance, this name was given to an Afrikander bull by its owner due to the rumours that spread as soon as he had acquired it by his neighbours who suspected he had stolen it from a local White farmer. Here, he openly protests his innocence.

Thengezakho (Buy your own cattle)

A man who lived in a community where others did not possess cattle, was subjected to constant complaints about his cattle which would walk across cultivated fields and eat the neighbours' mealies. He then named one of his animals in this way as an statement aimed

at the neighbours suggesting that they should stop persecuting him for his good fortune, and buy their own cattle.

Qedumona (Stop the jealousy)

This cow was named on the same theme as the one above - and is a direct message to the neighbours by a certain man to stop harbouring the futile feelings of jealousy towards him.

Bayanyenyeza (They are whispering)

The owner named his cow in this fashion in order to air his anger towards his neighbour who would not face him with a particular complaint, and instead complained to everyone else in the district. The name reflects the fact that the owner had heard about the complaint from everyone except his neighbour.

Mfazomubi (Bad woman)

A cow was given this name by a man who was aiming the title at his neighbour's wife who was constantly interfering in his own home affairs and causing dispute amongst his wives.

Inyathi (Buffalo)

This beast's name used to be called out in a certain community as a warning to all concerned whenever a particular man, who held a high position of authority in the community, was present. His behaviour was regarded as unreliable and unpredictable. Buffalo are regarded amongst the Zulu as not only extremely

powerful beasts, but also as unpredictable and potentially very dangerous animals.

Bakhomb'eduze (They point at him nearby)

This dog was given this name by its owner to cast suspicion on one of the people living close by who was suspected of dabbling in witchcraft.

Bhekabathakathi (Watch out for sorcerers)

This dog's name was given as a warning to the people in the community that a certain person amongst them was suspected of being involved in witchcraft.

Bashobonke (They all say so)

An old grandmother in a particular community named her dog in this way to inform her community that she was aware of the allegations being made about her being responsible for causing the death of one of her grandchildren, and is an attempt to refute the rumours.

Gedleyihlekisa (Relaxed and laughing/ Two-faced person)

A certain man visited his local *isangoma* (diviner) to ascertain the reason for the consistent problems in his life. As a result of the information he had gleaned from his diviner, this man named his dog in this way to bring to the attention of his best friend that he suspected him of being the source of all his problems.

Thathakonke/Thathangozwane/Umunwe Okhombayo

(Take everything)/(Take with the toe)/(Pointing Finger)

All these names are variations of the same theme of dishonesty. Dogs are named in this manner to bring to everyone's attention that someone is suspected of being a thief and to warn them to be on the lookout for the culprit.

Philangokweba (Live by stealing)

This dog was called by its shortened version "*Phila*", but whenever the occasion deemed it, it was used in full to alert everyone to the fact that the owner's neighbour was a known thief in the area. At a drinking session at this man's house, when other neighbours were assembled together, this man would call the dog by its name and ask it "*Uphila ngani?*" to which another would answer using the dog's full name. The calling of the dog would precipitate a lot of mirth amongst the men and cause intended embarrassment to the man being accused.

Nggekethu (The talkative one)

The neighbour's wife was targeted in this example as a result of her endless gossip-mongering.

Qamunda (The gossip)

This is an alternative to the above name given to the dog for exactly the same reason.

Bacelanjalo (They ask incessantly)

This dog's owner named his animal in this way to vent his anger and frustration at constantly being asked by his neighbour to help him in one form or another.

Hlalakum'suka (It always starts him)

A dog was given this name as a way of venting a certain man's dissatisfaction with his neighbour's inconsistent and moody behaviour.

Silwayiphi (Which fight are we fighting?)

A man gave a puppy this name during an ongoing dispute with his neighbour about their boundary fence which had holes in it. There were endless fights about his chickens who would pass through a hole in the fence to eat on the other side, leading to the neighbours being on bad terms with one another.

Bhusumane (Boesman/Coloured)

This derogatory racial slur was given by an old retired man to the ugliest and cheekiest of a litter of pups born after he had ceased working for a Coloured man where he had been employed for nearly 20 years. As an employer, the man was well known in the district for being aggressive and rude and the satirical name served as a humorous reminder to the old man of his former employer.

4.6.4.3 Homestead Names

Koopman (2002:190) quotes ten examples from the research of Ntuli and Shabalala, as well as older historical names of homesteads from the James Stuart Archives, which illustrate

social tension in the wider community. He cites the source of this social tension as jealousy between co-wives, infighting amongst heirs with regards inheritance issues, suspected witchcraft of neighbours and general inter-homestead anxieties.

Shabalala's research is based on the origin and function of Zulu homestead names. Several examples of these homestead names are given, including those which reflect suspicion of witchcraft in the community. The following examples are taken from Shabalala (1999:51):

KwaBhadazi (Place of moving clumsily)

This homestead was given this name because when the father of the head of homestead came to visit his son's homestead he found at the entrance to one of the huts, an unknown big foot print. The floor had just been done and the intruder obviously did not know this, and the footprint was discovered in the morning. It seemed that the person who had stepped in realised, after stepping in with one foot, that the floor was still wet. The person then stopped and thus only one footprint was left. The family members suspected that it was a witch who had left the foot print. When the father of the head of the homestead came to visit the next morning, on finding the foot print, he asked: "*Ubani lendoda ebibhadazela la?*" He then named the homestead *kwaBhadazi*.

eNgedla (place of backbiting)

The head of this homestead said that his father named the homestead *eNgedla* taken from the saying *Ugedla*

ekuhlekisa umthakathi (the witch kills with witchcraft while laughing with you) because he suspected that neighbours were killing the members of his family by bewitchment. The head of *eNgedla* said he is now the only member of his family who is living and he gave the homestead this name to express his accusation to certain members of his neighbouring community.

eMlonyeni (in the mouth)

When the head of this homestead was young and still staying at his father's homestead, he was constantly involved in fights with other young boys. He moved to his mother's homestead where he was involved in a fight with his uncle. He was constantly in trouble and being called to *imbizos* (meetings) to discuss his behaviour. When he moved out on his own, to reflect his dissatisfaction with the way people spoke about him, he named his homestead *eMlonyeni*, indicating he was tired of the constant talk he seemed to generate.

4.7 Recapitulation on Personal, Animal and Homestead Names

Names reflecting censure, disapproval and discontent serve an important social function in that they tend to minimise possible conflict and even violence in the communal environment by enabling a person about whom defamatory allegations have been made to refute these accusations, and attempt to clear his/her name in a subtle yet effective manner. They may also function by either exposing, accusing, mocking, warning or challenging the underlying reason or cause of the friction, as a means of working out

tension and frustration by affording the namer the possibility of passing an indirect yet effective comment in an environment where direct confrontation and conflict is inadmissible and socially unacceptable. Such naming practices thus continue to play an important role in community-based societies, which today live predominantly in rural areas.

In the same way that personal, animal names and homestead names are given in domestic (normally more rural-type) environments, a modern equivalent can be found in urban/industrial settings where nicknames are given to employers or co-workers by Black employees, as well as within Zulu speaking peer groups.

4.8 Nicknames

Research on the topic of Zulu nicknames has tended to focus thus far on linguistic properties of nickname derivation (de Klerk:2002 and Neethling:1994), on source (Molefe:2000) and types of nicknames (Koopman:2002). I have chosen in my research to focus on the important function of conflict expression in assigning nicknames, not only amongst Zulu speakers themselves, but also to non-Zulu speakers in the general work environment where this form of expression is prolific.

The term 'nickname' is used to describe a name used in the place of a personal first name. The equivalent Zulu terms are cited by Koopman (1986:154) as *izidlaliso* (-*dlalisa* 'amuse, play with'), *izifekethiso* (-*fekethisa* 'play with, cause to sport, amuse, make a joke, say in fun), and

izifengqo (-*fengqa* 'give nicknames'). The term *izifekethiso* seems closest to the intended type of naming practice dealt with here and will be used interchangeably with the term 'nickname' or 'by-name'.

These are very often colourful metaphorical descriptions which are succinct critical allusions to the person's character, physical appearance, behaviour or idiosyncrasies. These names are most often referential insofar as they are not often used in the employers' presence in direct forms of address, but are used rather as a means of referring to the particular person in his/her absence. This is often due to the satirical nature of the caricature captured in the name by the nomenclator. These referential nicknames are forms or expressions of discontent or criticism aimed at those who work or mix in close proximity, and in many African societies, are a vital channel in which censure or tension is publicly aired in a non-confrontational manner.

Izifekethiso are often clear images of the name bearer in one way or another, either in terms of physical description which normally has to do with some unusual or odd feature e.g. *uMakhalembuzi* (Nostrils of the goat), or in terms of idiosyncratic behaviour traits e.g. *uMacoshamaphepha* (Picker up of paper) or character traits e.g. *uPelepele* (Hot Tempered). Amongst the Zulu, names given to children on birth are usually, as Neethling puts it, "semantically transparent" e.g. *uZandile* (the girls have increased) (1994:88). Nicknames given to adults, however, are normally metaphorically descriptive nicknames which require some

inside knowledge of the language in order to fully understand the intended metaphor.

An interesting aspect of my research into this topic was the seemingly collective nature of the origin of the nomenclator. In relatively few cases was the researcher able to trace the original 'inventor' of the name given. In the vast majority of cases, no one person claimed original 'authorship' of the name under investigation, although time-frames relating to when the name was given, as well as specific places, may give a clue as to the names' origins, e.g. *uMhlabunzima* (times are difficult; literally: the world is difficult), a name recorded twice prior to 1994, South Africa's first democratic elections, when friction between the ANC and IFP was particularly intense.

4.8.1 The Function of Nicknames

Koopman (1989:45) makes the point that Zulu personal names reflect the position of an individual not only within his immediate family, but also in the wider community. *Izifekethiso* given to employers and co-employees also reflect this position insofar as they give an indication of the feelings of the employees who work in close proximity with them. Such names may be used to challenge individuals who are, by virtue of their position of authority, not open to criticism via other channels of censure. Nicknames in African societies go beyond expressing the individual character of a person, they may also serve (Finnegan 1970:470) as a way of "working out tension", or for their social function in "minimizing friction" or even more

importantly in the context of this study, as a useful form "for providing a means of indirect comment when a direct one is not feasible". De Klerk (2002:149) in her article on nicknames given by Xhosa people to Whites, suggests that nicknames across social, cultural and linguistic groups are most likely given in order to serve a negative function, signalling, more often than not, unequal power relations.

Amongst the Zulu people, the motivation behind the creation of a name for an employer or person in a senior position in the work environment, can be seen in the light of the 'in group' and 'out group' scenario, where the workers who are party to the creation and existence of the name form the 'in group', and the named and other personnel, often in more senior positions, form the 'out group'. In most cases, the 'out group' are unaware of the existence of their aliases, but these are extensively used by the 'in group' when referring to that particular person. These names are composed by 'in group' members who are normally people who work with or are in close proximity to the person to whom the name is ascribed. A typical example of this amongst Zulu speakers where the 'out group' may well be Zulu speakers, is in the school environment where pupils commonly devise mischievous names for teachers. Both males and females create these imaginative nicknames. It is sometimes a particular event or situation that triggers the name creation, however once a person is referred to by this name, it tends to stick and will always be used when referring to that person. Schools and other closed institutions where name givers share common experiences, seem to provide the most popular arena amongst Zulu speakers for the concoction of negative nicknames, where

the 'outgroup' constitutes those in a position of authority or power. This situation is similar to that which exists in the work environment where, often, the bearer of the name is ignorant of his or her nickname. Where the bearer is aware of a nickname used in reference to him or her, he/she is often incapable of doing anything to stop it unless the culprit is caught using it and can be punished. This often strengthens the resolve of those party to the nickname to continue using it or to spread the use of it. However, in certain cases where a name is made up by one of the 'in group' which others think is inappropriate, that name will not 'catch on' and will not have popular appeal.

The situation in the South African work environment is one which is often marked by polarisation of the workforce. This, together with the collective consciousness of Black people, makes it easy to understand why this form of naming as an expression of social discontent is so popular. It serves not only to reinforce the social bonds between those who use these names, but also to set social parameters. In most cases, but not all, the 'out group' comprises a group of people who are male, Afrikaans or English speaking, with very little or no knowledge of Zulu. The people in senior positions appear not to bother to devise names for those subordinate to them; it seems always to be the reverse situation, where those in subordinate positions find power and freedom in this form of naming expression. McDowell (1990:15) refers to the use of nicknames given in this situation as a 'membership badge', a sign of belonging to a particular subculture, where the use of such nicknames allows one the freedom of linguistic 'muscle flexing' (de Klerk 2002:150).

4.8.1.1 Allusion in Nicknaming

In earlier research into this practice, I found that allusive language is characteristic of various forms of Zulu oral traditions such as riddles, *izibongo*, song etc. and lends itself easily to the concept of naming, where often a succinct expression conjures up a particularly accurate and incisive rendering of the person being referred to (Turner 1990:56). Workers accurately assess the behaviour and appearance of their co-workers and seniors, and this observation results in the imaginative and descriptive quality of the *izifekethiso* which they conceive. Imagery plays an important role in the conception of appropriate names for the target, and tied in with this imagery are aspects of symbolism and folklore as is evidenced in the nickname *uThekwane* (Hamerkop). This name was given to a certain engineer, thus named by his site staff because of his arrogant behaviour towards them. The link between the bird and the man derives from Zulu culture where the Hamerkop bird is described as an extremely vain and arrogant bird. This is due to the bird's habit of peering motionless into the water for long periods of time, waiting for the opportunity to avail itself of unsuspecting fish. Zulu folklore regards this behaviour as vanity, where the bird is not seen to be fishing, but rather to be admiring its reflection constantly in the water. Its arrogance is regarded as comical as the bird is not able to see its shortcoming in the form of the unsightly crest which protrudes from the back of its head.

I have recorded the following examples of nicknames over the past fourteen years either from people who actually have these nicknames, or who work in close contact or personally know those who have them. I have listed the name with the literal translations first and, where necessary, have supplied an explanation of the figurative meaning. Mr or Miss has been prefixed to the meaning of the nickname in order to distinguish between male and female namebearers.

4.8.1.2 Nicknames Relating to Physical Appearance

This category is a common one, and the quality or characteristic physical feature singled out is, more often than not, an oddity or unusual feature. Some are innocuous interpretations of this oddity where others have a more cutting edge. Some *izifekethiso* refer directly to actual body features or deformities as in the following examples of some of my past course participants:

uMadolo kaTsotsi - Mr Tsotsi knees- (the one with ugly knees)

uMadolomabi - Mr Bad Knees - (protruding knee caps)

uNgulubencane - Mr Small pig - (the one who is short and stout)

uNomvukuzane - Mr Mole - (the one with slit eyes)

uKhanda - Mr Big Head

uKhozi - Mr Eagle (tall with forward stooping shoulders)

uSinqamu - Mr Shorty - *isinqamu* - (a piece cut off)

uNqushumbana - Mr Shortman with big belly

uMantindane - Mr Witch's Familiar - (short man with hairy body)

uMakhalembuzi - Mr Big Nostrils - (nostrils of a goat)

uDlubu - Mr Glass Eye (*udlubu* - ground bean)
uMehlwembuzi - Mr Half-Closed eyes (eyes of a goat)
uMahlekehlathini - Mr Bushy Beard (the one who laughs from the forest)
uNdlebezikhany' ilanga - Mr Whiteman (ears that let the sun shine through)
uNtunsula - Mr Big Stomach (*thunsula* = pop out)
uMashibilika - Mr Bald Head (*shibilika* = smooth, slippery)
uKlolodo - Mr Grey Hair (*iklolodo* = white tailed mongoose)
uMadlodlombiya - Mr Untidy Hair (*amadlodlombiya* - long, untidy, dishevelled hair)
uMabele - Miss Breasts (*amabele* = breasts)
uNtsheshelezi - Miss Flat Buttocks (*shesheleza* - action of sliding down hills on the buttocks)
uSishwapa - Miss Flat Buttocks
uZingeziphezulu - Miss High Buttocks
uFriesland - Ms Big Breasts (Milk Cow)
uMathambo - Miss Skinny One (*amathambo* = bones. Thinness in a woman is a physical feature scorned by Zulu men who prefer well rounded female forms)
uMadwadwashi - Ms Huge Hips (a name given to an unpopular teacher who was extremely large - the term derives from the ideophone which describes uncontrollable wobbling)
uSitetelegu - Ms Fatty (another derogatory nickname given to a huge and cumbersome teacher)
uMavondwe - Ms Cane Rat (Name given to a teacher whose teeth were protruding like those of a cane rat)

4.8.1.3 Nicknames Relating to Behaviour Traits

Certain nicknames reflect the behaviour traits that a Zulu person would regard as odd, or characteristic patterns of behaviour which are generally considered to be unacceptable, e.g.:

uKhombinathing - the one who points at nothing. This nickname was given to a supervisor at a factory who insisted on pointing out every little detail to his workforce when giving them an instruction, even on certain tasks which the workers regarded as self-evident. The condescending approach adopted by the supervisor was construed as insulting by his team, who felt they were being treated as children, hence the appropriateness of the name given.

uPelepele - Chilli pepper

This name is a common nickname which I recorded in 8 different environments over a space of twelve years, to describe a hot tempered person.

uBhejane - Mr Black Rhino

This name was accorded to a large man who is a director of a company and whose mannerism of always leaning forward on his fists when addressing someone, often in an aggressive manner, gave his workers the impression of a person always on the attack like the Black Rhino, known to be dangerous and unpredictable.

uMahlafuna - Mr Constant Chewer (*hlafuna* - to chew)

uDinwayini - Mr Why are you annoyed? (this manager at a clothing firm seemed to have a constant scowl on his face)

uMacimeza - Mr Blinky (a person with the habit of blinking; from *cimeza* - close one's eyes)

uPhayiphayi - Mr Nervous Glancer (of anxiously looking here

and there)

uMawiliza - Mr Incoherent Talker (said of a man who spoke impatiently to his workers)

uMhlwathiza - Mr Big Strider (hlwathiza - a certain style of walking through long grass where there is no path)

uBhodloza - Mr Strident Walker (bhodloza - smash through - a name given to a game ranger who walked boldly through rough territory)

uNkalankala - Mr Crab (his habit of not walking in a straight line)

uMadubula - Mr Shooter (a farmer who was known in his district to shoot at any trespassers on his farm)

uMashayimpukane - Mr Hit a fly (a farmer from the Underberg area who was well known as an expert marksman)

uMadonela - Mr 'Donner' (a name given to a foreman with the surname of McDonald who was known to physically assault his labour - taken from the Afrikaans word 'donner')

uBhutimadlisa - Mr Show Off/Big Spender/Womaniser (ubhuti - brother/dlisa - feed)

uSibotho - Mr Legless/Paralytic drunk (isibotho -old dilapidated thing/weak-footed person)

uMXhosa - Mr Xhosa (an employer who came from the Transkei and spoke Xhosa to his staff)

uMehlemamba - Mr Mamba Eyes (name given to a supervisor who never missed a trick and was always checking on his labour force)

uMcathama - Mr Stealthy Walker (an employer who was constantly turning up unexpectedly to check on his staff)

uMalandela - Mr Follower (from his habit of following around after his labour)

uMpisi - Mr Hyena (Name of a manager who was a constant and unexpected checker of tasks he had set his workforce to do - hyenas tend to turn up when they are least expected or welcome)

uMahlomeka - Mr Constant Checker (*hlomeka* - be thrust in/go this way and that)

uMsheshelengwane - Mr Informer (*umsheshelengwane* - one who curries favour with superiors)

uMdumakhanda - Mr Thundering Head (Name given to a manager who used to get frantically busy and often not cope well with the pressure)

uGedleyihlekisa - Mr Unpredictable (One who pretends to laugh when he is actually gnashing his teeth)

uNgwecezekabishi - Mr Cabbage Peeler (One who favours certain workers over others)

uSikhova - Mr Owl (The owl in Zulu culture is a bird of bad omen and hunts at night - this manager was an unpopular night shift boss)

uGogo - Mr Granny (a pernickety manager)

uMhlupheni - Mr Irritation

uNdlebekazizwa - Mr Refuse-to-Listen (name given to an arrogant young manager)

uMashiyesipoki - Mr Eyebrows of a Ghost (derived from the Afrikaans word "spook" - name of a manager who had very blond and thick eyebrows who always kept his eyes downcast at the floor - avoiding greeting people, which is a sign of poor manners amongst the Zulu)

uNthatheli - Mr Journalist (name of a person who seemed to know all the current news and events in a certain area)

uGundane - Mr Rat (a name given to a supervisor at a

factory who moved around everywhere at speed - like the movements of a rat - checking on people. Also a name given to a worker who worked when others were on strike - equivalent to the term "scab")

uShosholoza - Miss Rapid Walker (*shosholoza* - move fast)

uPheshe - Miss Fast Mover (name given to a manageress in a clothing store)

uMashayinsimbi - Mrs Iron Ringer (a name given to a farmer's wife who was stringent with time with the farm labour - the name is derived from her habit of ringing the bell to call the labour in the morning and after lunch breaks)

uMazenze - Miss Flea (a name given to a lady supervisor at a clothing factory who gave her machinists work and would move around from one person to the other at high speed - expecting work to be done at a fast pace)

uLamthuthu - Ms Battery chicken (This humorous nickname was given to a secretary at a company, referring to her lack of intelligence. Amongst the Zulu, battery chickens which are kept and force-fed in cages, are slow and easy to catch, as compared to the type of yard chicken regarded as wily as it is free to roam around the homestead and is difficult to catch)

Unongozololo - Ms Lazy One (Nickname for a lazy secretary)

Ugqu - Ms Thud (Nickname for a lady clerk at a firm in Prospecton who had a prosthetic foot)

4.8.1.4 Nicknames Depicting Character Traits

Some names relate directly to the character traits of certain individuals and like the *izifekethiso* cited above, also are commonly derived from animals or birds.

uNogwaja - Rabbit

This name is also derived from Zulu folklore where the rabbit or hare is one of the traditional trickster characters. This man is regarded in the same light, as a tricky, cunning character. The name may also refer to a person who has big ears.

A similar nickname to this is *uHlakanyana*, also a popular trickster figure in Zulu folklore.

uSeleseele - Mr Stubborn One

(*iseleseele* - frog)

uNtabakayikhonjwa - One who cannot be pointed at (i.e. not easily confronted) (*intaba* - mountain/*khomba* - point)

uMuntukaziwa - Mr Unpredictable

(*umuntu* - person/*akaziwa* - is not known)

uMalalephenduka - Mr Unpredictable

(*lala* - sleep/*phenduka* - change)

uMabulalehleka - Mr Untrustworthy

(*bulala* - kill/*hleka* - laugh)

uMjikaJo - Mr Unpredictable Jo

(*jika* - turn around)

uDlayedwa - Mr Unpopular

(*dla* -eat/*yedwa* - alone : Eating alone in Zulu custom is a practice frowned upon as being selfish)

uMangqafane - Mr Cheeky One

(*ingqafane* - burr that gets into sheep's wool and pricks the skin)

uMpisekhaya - Mr Argumentative One

(*impi*- the dispute/*ekhaya* - at home)

uNkomiyahlaba - Mr Argumentative One

(*inkomo* - cow/*hlaba* - stab)

uMagangane - Mr Naughty One

(ganga - to be naughty)

uPhondo wendlovu - Mr Forceful One
(uphondo - horn/indlovu - elephant)

uKhabalidaka - Mr Fearless One
(khaba - kick/udaka - mud)

uChakide - Mr Wily One
(uchakide - weasel: A trickster character from Zulu folklore)

uHlakanyane - Mr Trickster
(ihlakani -a cunning person: A trickster character from Zulu folklore)

uNogwaja - Mr Trickster/Clever One
(unogwaja - hare: A trickster character from Zulu folklore)

uNkunikayihlehli - Mr Fighter (Bull who won't withdraw)
(inkunzi-bull/hlehla - withdraw)

uMavelempini - Mr Bad Tempered
(vela - appear/empini - from fighting)

uHlomendlini - Mr Cowardly One
(hloma - arm oneself/endlini - in the house)

uMjendevu - Ms Spinster (a nickname given to an unmarried teacher in her early forties)

uNwabu - Ms Chameleon (The chameleon is an extremely slow mover, and this name is meant to reflect the laziness of this teacher who is renowned for arriving late in class, badly prepared lessons and laziness when it comes to timeously marking student's work)

uSijaka - Ms Slow-witted

uMdamfu - Ms Lazy

uNdaba - Ms Gossiper

uMakhalanjalo - Ms Constant Complainer (nickname given to a woman who was a credit controller in a Durban firm and moaned about everything)

uVovo - Ms Strainer (this name was given to a woman who works in a company in Durban. Her peers gave her the full name *uVovoliyakhapha* which means the strainer is leaking, referring to her penchant for gossiping and inability to keep any information to herself. She was usually referred to by her colleagues behind her back as *uVovo* - the term for a grass strainer traditionally used to strain Zulu beer.

4.8.1.5 Nicknames Reflecting Features of Dress

USikhindi - Mr Shorts

(*isikhindi* - shorts)

uMakapisi - Mr Cap

(*ikapisi* - cap)

uMbadada - Mr Zulu Sandals

(*imbadada* - thick rubber sandals commonly worn by Zulu men)

uSigqokosemfene - Mr Golf Peak (*isigqoko* - hat/*imfene* - baboon: that shows the hair through the top of the peak)

4.8.1.6 Nicknames Reflecting Idiosyncratic Speech Patterns

u-Ameni - Mrs Amen (Nickname given to a lady manager who used to say "Amen to that" whenever she agreed with someone)

uMangingiza - Ms Stutterer

(*ngingiza* - stutter)

uMaphinda - Miss Stutterer

(*phinda*-repeat)

4.8.1.7 Nicknames Given to Females

A point worth noting in the realm of this research on derisive nicknames, is the dearth of names given to females compared to males, particularly in the employer/employee environment. This obviously has something to do with the fact that most employers are male. Koopman endorses this point in his book *Zulu Names* (2002:70):

In all the years I have been researching Zulu names I have searched for and asked for examples on women's nicknames. I have never been given any, and finding examples has been almost impossible.

He goes on to say, however, that, "I remain convinced that somewhere out there is a wealth of data on women's nicknames waiting for discovery".

The majority of female nicknames I have managed to record of non-Zulu speakers in the workplace are usually of a benign nature as witnessed in the many renditions of names such as:

uNomusa - (kindness),
uGugu - (treasure),
uNobuhle - (beauty)
uNtombenhle - (nice lady)

The predominance of nicknames for male employers or superiors is also possibly because of the Zulu custom of preferring to assign nicknames and *izihasho* (whether complimentary or derogatory) particularly to males. Although one does encounter examples of nicknames for females (as well as *izihasho*) amongst Zulu speakers, the derisive ones are not nearly as prolific as those which occur amongst men. Schools seem to provide the richest

source of evidence for derisive female nicknames as they are assigned to unpopular teachers and are used with great satisfaction and often amusement by pupils.

De Klerk and Bosch (1996:4) in their survey in the Eastern Cape on nicknames as sex role stereotypes amongst Xhosa-speaking people, have made similar findings. They found that males are more likely not only to have nicknames, but also to coin them and to use them. These nicknames, they conclude, are most likely to be descriptive of physical or personal characteristics. De Klerk (2002) in a later article on Xhosa nicknames given to Whites, cites only one female nickname in 52 examples quoted. Phillips, (1990:286) who conducted research on nicknaming practices in America, also concludes that nicknames are assigned predominantly to males. The names attributed to females she notes as being mostly indicative of physical qualities or connotations of kindness, goodness, pleasantness and beauty, which was similar to the findings I have made in my investigation.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter which deals with Zulu personal names as well as names given to animals and inanimate objects such as homesteads, provides clear examples of how voicing one's opinion or frustration within Zulu society is done in the socially acceptable form of onomastics.

In addition, the nicknames recorded in work and social environments, demonstrate membership and solidarity as part of group structures. In this case the 'in-group' constitutes the Zulu-speaking workforce in the workplace or Zulu

speakers of 'in-groups' in 'closed' situation such as schools or higher education institutions. The higher up the work/power scale an individual is placed, the less likely s/he is to be party to the invention or even use of such nicknames. Morgan et al (1979:63) reinforce this point:

there is a close relation of the social structure of the class to its nicknaming system ...; nicknames can actively mark out groups or individuals and indeed are often consciously used for this purpose.

Unlike the conclusions reached by most researchers (Bosch & de Klerk:1996, 1997; Cohen 1977; Dorian:1970; Holland:1990; Leslie & Skipper:1990 and Prabhakaran:1999), namely that nicknames are generally known by the bearer, in this particular instance the *izifekethiso* are most often not known by the name bearer. Many of these referential *izifekethiso* are forms or expressions of discontent or criticism aimed at those who work or move in close proximity to the name givers, and are a vital channel in many African societies in which censure or tension is publicly aired. In most cases the tension is relieved by the humour embedded within the name given, the humour obviously being appreciated by the mother-tongue speakers of Zulu. The embedded humour in many of the critical nicknames given by Zulu speakers reflects the outlook of the Zulu people who acknowledge the fact that people are often completely unaware of their own shortcomings.

Nyembezi (1954:33) gives the example of the Zulu proverb: "*Usifumb' ubon' uqhaqhazela*" (the hunchback laughs at the one who tremors). He explains that the appeal of this proverb is the ability of the Zulu people to perceive

humour in unlikely and varied situations. The ignorance of the hunchback (himself imperfect) who laughs at another person with imperfections, provides the perfect foil for the perceptive nomenclator, whose prudent observation of certain circumstances and events, as well as physical, behavioural and characteristic oddities or shortcomings, forms the basis of many of the colourful and candidly descriptive names which he/she so aptly bestows upon the recipient.

NOTES

1. See songs recorded in Makhwaza (1997:26-28)

CHAPTER 5 : EVIDENCE OF CONFLICT AND CRITICISM IN ZULU ORAL CLAN HISTORY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, certain examples of clan *izibongo* are examined as ossified oral historical records of inter-group or inter-clan conflict amongst the Zulu. In Nguni society, the basic unit of the family bears its identity by means of the clan name or *isibongo*, which is the equivalent of the English surname and is the name of the original kraal head, founding father, or some particularly famous member of the clan e.g. Zulu, Qwabe, Buthelezi etc.

The wife/mother in the family maintains her own identity, as she comes from another clan group, so a woman from the Khumalo clan who marries a man from the Zulu clan, will be known as MaKhumalo Zulu. The Zulu family is patrilineal, so all children take the clan name of the father.

In addition to the clan name, *isibongo*, there is also the *isithakazelo*, an address name or praise name. A.T. Bryant (1963:15) described the term as:

Common to every member of the clan, which was usually the personal name of some ancient celebrity thereof and is now applied properly, only in polite conversation, to any clansman who, by being called after him, felt participator in his glory.

Some clans have several *izithakazelo*, which are normally the names of revered and admired ancestors of the clan. These

address names have great significance for the Zulu people, so much so that if one wishes to address a man respectfully, one does so by using his *isithakazelo* and not his *isibongo*. Some clans which have split apart for one reason or another (such as inter-familial dispute) in times gone by, use one of the *izithakazelo* of that clan as a new *isibongo* or surname to distinguish this clan off-shoot from the parent clan. An example of this is the clan name (*isibongo*) Ndimande. Some members now use the *isithakazelo* Gcwensa as their actual surname. In some cases, the use of certain *isithakazelo* in the same clan may vary from one area to another, e.g. the Mkhize people from the north of KwaZulu Natal in the Msinga/Eshowe area commonly use the following *izithakazelo*: *Mkhize! Khabazela! Ngunesi! Gcwabe!* whereas the Mkhize clan from the uMkhomazi region of the south say: *Mkhize! Mumbo! Khabazela! Gcwabe!*

The use of the *isithakazelo* is widespread and indeed, it is the norm. When one person meets another with whom he is familiar, it is common for them to employ the *izithakazelo* of each other when greeting formally. The *izithakazelo* of people from the Qwabe, Gumede, Khuzwayo, Makhanya clans are *Mnguni! Qwabe! Phakathwayo! Mpangazitha!* The remainder of the clan praises (cited on page 186) together with these clan appellations make up the oral clan history also known as *izibongo*. The reciting of clan *izibongo* has always been and still is an important cultural practice amongst the Zulu people.

Clan *izibongo* are the property of a group of people, the members of the clan, and they are shared by every member. All the clan members know their clan *izibongo* or are

expected to know them as part of their culture and heritage. This is different from individual *izibongo* which are known by the person concerned and others close to him/her. As a rule, clan *izibongo* are relatively stable but may have some minor variants. Clan *izibongo* are generally known as *izithakazelo*, but this may lead to some confusion as some regard this term as referring only to the praise-names of the clan. Mzolo (1977:5), in his MA thesis on Nguni clan *izibongo*, suggests that when referring to the entire clan praise the term *izithakazelo nezibongo* be used (in order to avoid ambiguity). I prefer using the term in the same way as it clarifies exactly what is being referred to, either just clan appellations (*izithakazelo*), or the entire oral clan history (*izithakazelo nezibongo*).

The investigation of critical elements within certain oral clan histories constitutes an attempt to investigate the existence of historical conflict captured in the form of oral composition, which is shared by a particular group of people, viz. those from the same clan, and directed not at specific individuals.

5.2 PERFORMANCE OF CLAN IZIBONGO

Clan *izibongo* are performed in a wide range of situations. On less important occasions, e.g. a mother playing with her children, it is not necessary to render the full version of the *izibongo*. However, on important or serious occasions such as private family rituals and ceremonies, the oral clan history is respectfully recited in its entirety. The clan *izibongo* are normally recited before an audience, be it just immediate members of a family or numerous clan members on an

occasion such as a wedding. These clan *izibongo* then act as a cohesive force binding the members of the clan together into a close social unit.

Clan *izibongo* are recited for a number of various reasons, such as: a form of respectful greeting; as the main means of identifying a member of a particular clan; in circumstances of consolation or comforting; as an expression of appreciation and congratulation; in marriage negotiations and formal betrothal; at marriage ceremonies; at sacrificial ceremonies; and the *ukubuyisa* ritual, which is the bringing back of the deceased member of the family as an ancestral spirit.

5.3 CRITICISM IN CLAN IZIBONGO

The content of clan *izibongo* consists of references to past events, and this constitutes a brief summarised record of the history and behavioural traits of each clan. Variation in the content of clan oral history does occur in some areas, but it is minor and reflects elements such as grammatical tense inconsistencies and the odd metaphor change. It normally does not affect the actual historical events captured in the clan history. In some instances, due to the influence of Christianity, certain words deemed to be vulgar have been substituted with terms deemed more 'palatable' for public consumption. Evidence of this may be seen in Hadebe's account of the Amahlubi Tribe's *izibongo* (1992:47).

The clan *izibongo* cited here come mainly from 2 different sources who have done extensive research in collating

material on the subject, Mzolo in 1977, and Makhambeni in 1986. Like individual *izibongo*, the content is highly metaphorical and allusive. The thrust of my investigation is to highlight the fact that despite the elevated nature of these *izibongo*, they can be seen to contain criticism and some clearly satirical references to certain events or deeds from the clan's past history. These references, albeit in some cases rather unflattering, live on in posterity in the *izibongo* of the clan.

5.3.1 ***IZIBONGO zikaQWABE/GUMEDE/KHUZWAYO/MAKHANYA***

- 1 *Mnguni!*
 - 2 *Qwabe!*
 - 3 *Mnguni kaYeyeye.*
 - 4 *Osidlabehlezi!*
 - 5 *BakaKhondlo kaPhakathwayo.*
 - 6 *Abathi bedla babeyenga umuntu ngendaba.*
 - 7 *Abathi Dluya kubeyethwe.*
 - 8 *Kanti bahlinza imbuzi.*
 - 9 *Bathi umlobokazi ubeyethe kayikhuni,*
 - 10 *Sidikida lolodaba!*
 - 11 *Phakathwayo!*
 - 12 *Wena kaMalandela*
 - 13 *Ngokulandel' izinkomo zamadoda,*
 - 14 *Amazala-nkosi lana!*
 - 15 *Mpangazitha!*
-
- 1 *Mnguni!*
 - 2 *Qwabe!*
 - 3 *Mnguni son of Yeyeye.*
 - 4 *The one who eats whilst others are seated!*

5 You of Khondlo of Phakathwayo,
6 Whilst they ate, they misled a person with a
 story
7 Saying pass by, someone has given birth
8 Whilst they were slaughtering a goat.
9 They say the bride was giving birth with
 difficulty
10 We are talking about that story!
11 Phakathwayo!
12 You of Malandela
13 For following other men's cattle,
14 These are the king makers!
15 Mpangazitha!

(Makhambeni 1986:78)

In the clan *izibongo* of the Gumedede/Khuzwayo or Makhanya people, as with the *izibongo* of the parent clan, the Qwabe, the behaviour trait of meanness, or stinginess, is exposed. It is a custom of the Zulu people that food should be shared with a stranger, no matter how little there is. This gave rise to the proverb:

*Isisu somhambi asingakanani, singangenso
yenyoni*

The stomach of the traveller is not so big, it is
like the kidney of a bird.

These *izibongo* of the Qwabe people, however, (in lines 6-9) reveal that when they ate meat, they were not generous with their food to strangers as custom demanded. These lines allude to the fact that if an animal was slaughtered and strangers appeared, the Qwabe would say that a difficult

birth was taking place, and in such circumstances, a stranger was expected to pass on and not enter the homestead. The Qwabe kinsmen were then able to continue with their feast!

In modern times, with increasing crime and violence in both urban and rural environments, this attitude of opening one's home to strangers is inevitably changing. Suspicion and fear of intruders has gradually altered the way Zulu people generally react to the appearance of strangers in their homes/homesteads. The change in social attitudes is, however, not reflected in the content of the clan *izibongo* which still cite such critical references, which are retained in the clan's history. The following *izibongo* of the Khusi clan also contain mention of aspects of behavioural reproach which occurred in time gone by, but the criticism nevertheless remains as part of the clan's history.

5.3.2 *IZIBONGO zikaKHUSI*

- 1 *Khusi noSinyala,*
- 2 *KaNcama,*
- 3 *KaBhusula,*
- 4 *KaMjadu*
- 5 *Kwanonkonyana eyathi ihamba,*
- 6 *Yabona abafazi bakoninalume*
- 7 *Yakholwa ukuhamba ematsheni.*
- 8 *Kwasidwabela,*
- 9 *Owadwabela inkwali njengenyamakazi.*
- 10 *Kwamfo owathi eqonywe intombi,*
- 11 *Kwathi kusakughamuka unina*

12 *Wase uyayilahla intombi,*
13 *Wabambelela kunina.*
14 *Kwasitha esabhulwa ngenduku.*

1 Khusi and Sinyala,
2 Of Ncama,
3 Of Bhusula,
4 Of Mjadu,
5 Of a calf which as it was walking,
6 It saw the women of its uncles,
7 And it was perplexed to walk on the rocks.
8 The one who dons a laurel,

9 Who donned a laurel for killing a partridge as
 if it was for a buck.

10 A person who when he fell in love with a girl,
11 As soon as her mother appeared,
12 He then abandoned the girl
13 And clung to her mother.

14 Of the clan where the heap of corn was threshed
 by an ordinary stick. (Mzolo 1977:17)

The biting satirical criticism which occurs in this clan's *izibongo*, reflects their devious skill in performing cunning deeds and alludes to their reproachable moral fibre. This is found in lines 8 and 9 which refer to the common practice of the hunter donning a laurel after killing a buck in a hunting expedition. The Khusi, however, were said to do so after killing even a bird - which is an extremely deceitful action. Furthermore, the last line says that they thresh a heap of sorghum with an ordinary stick instead of using the proper instrument *isibhulo*, a flail, which is a further

reference to their failure to follow correct procedures or customs. Lines 10-13 make reference to the clan's lack of moral character, where Nguni custom demands that a man, once he has chosen a woman, cannot become intimately involved with that woman's relatives or friends, let alone the mother!

5.3.3. IZIBONGO zikaLUTHULI

Encapsulated in the next praises of the Luthuli clan is a satirical jibe at their fanatical cleanliness, to the extent that they were even afraid to eat maas, for fear of it dripping down their arms. Although this clan was well-to-do with large herds of cattle (line 13) resulting in huge clouds of dust appearing (line 15), they are accused of theft in lines 4 and 9, where their cunning and sharpness is highlighted. Line 10 might also be taken as a reference to stealing, in the light of their approach to a house from the rear, which is not normal in Zulu custom where one always approaches the homestead from the front entrance after announcing your arrival out aloud.

1. *Mshibe!*
- 2 *Mandlanduna!*
- 3 *Bangadl' insikazi balambile.*
- 4 *Ngoze ngikwenz' owangenza khona.*
- 5 *Nina eningawadl' amasi ningawanikiwe.*
- 6 *Nesab' amas' ehla ngendololwana.*
- 7 *Nina bakwaMashiza!*
- 8 *Ndlwan' enhle,*
- 9 *Sigencagenca mbaz' ebukhali.*
- 10 *Malala aqhamuk' ezansi*

11 *Zingwazi*
12 *Ezidla inyama abanye bedl' inyamazane.*
13 *Mavel' enkomeni,*
14 *Abanye bevela ebantwini.*
15 *Luthuli lwezinkomo!*
16 *Mshibe kaMakhiph' inj' efukwini,*
17 *Kuzalelele yena.*
18 *Donda!*
19 *Mvumbi, qhawe elikhulu!*
20 *Mholi wezizwe zonke!*

1 Mshibe!
2 Foreman's power!
3 They can eat a female beast, are they hungry?
4 I will do to you what you did to me one day.
5 You who don't eat maas when it is offered to
 you
6 You are afraid of the maas running down your
 elbows.
7 You of Mashiya!
8 Beautiful small hut,
9 Chop, chop sharp axe.
10 You who sleep and appear from the bottom,
11 Heroes
12 Who eat meat while others are eating buck
13 You who emanate from the cow
14 Whilst others emanate from people,
15 Dust of cows!
16 Mshibe of Makhipha, the capturer of a dog in
 the lair
17 Born for him.
18 Donda!

19 Digger, great hero!
20 Leader of all nations!

(Makhambeni 1986:79)

5.3.4. Izibongo zikaNdabandaba

In the *izibongo* of the Ndabandaba people, there are two cutting satirical lines that are clearly stated amongst the *izibongo*:

Wena owadla umtakadadewenu

Vila lindima-nde

You who cheated your own nephew

The lazy one, who is like a cultivated plot of
land that is long.

(Mzolo 1977:195)

These lines find their echo in the clan name of Ndimande, who share common *izibongo* with the Phungula people. The reference cited above refers to the reason behind the split in the clan which stems from inter-family sexual relations, something that is taboo amongst the Zulu. The *izibongo* of the Ndimande people also bears reference to criticism and vulgar language.

5.3.5 Izibongo zikaNDIMANDE

Ndimande!

Gcwensa!

Nodlomo!

Bhebhula!
Msunu mude!
Uma umfushane ufuze ekhabonyoko
Mashanela izibi
Zibheke emsamo.

Ndimande
Gcwensa
Nodlomo
Bhebhula
Lengthened vagina
If it is short, you take after your mother's family
Sweepers of dirt towards the back part of the hut.

The criticism levelled in these clan *izibongo* refers back to the fact that this clan was formed because of inter-familial sexual relations which are alluded to in the *izibongo zikaNdabandaba*. The reference to body parts is obscure and unknown (or maybe avoided?) to several people of the Ndimande clan whom I questioned. The last line suggests that these events are not the norm, hence the reference to sweeping backwards into the hut.

5.3.6 *Izibongo zikaMKHIZE*

In the following lines quoted from the *izibongo* of the related Ngcobo, Mkhize, Shelembe and Myeza clans, it can be seen that similar scatological references are made to the sleeping habits of all these clans. These descriptions carry overtones which, in the light of the history which follows, may be regarded as intentionally insulting:

*LiLala, elalala lawufaka nomunwe engquza,
Lavuka ekuseni lawufaka emlonyeni
Lakhomba ilanga.*

The Lala, who slept with a finger stuck in the anus,
He got up in the morning and put it in the mouth
And pointed at the sun.

(Mzolo 1977:186)

5.3.7 *Izibongo zikaMYEZA*

*AmaLala!
Alala nomunwe endunu
Savuka lapho sawusuzela
Wase woma umunga*

The Lala people!
Who sleep with the finger stuck in the anus
We woke up and broke wind at the Acacia tree
It then dried up.

5.3.8 *Izibongo zikaNGCOBO*

*AmaLala, alala nomunwe egolo
Avuke achinse ilanga.*

The Lalas who sleep with the finger stuck in the
anus.

They get up in the morning and sprinkle at the sun.

(Mzolo 1977:196)

5.3.9 *Izibongo zikaSHELEMBE*

*AmaLala alala nomunwe engquza,
Bavuke bakhwife ilanga.*

The Lalas who sleep with the finger stuck in the
anus,
And get up and spit at the sun.

(Mzolo 1977:202)

Mzolo (1977:202) explains these common lines of oral history as a reference to their habit of being extremely early risers, who - on getting up, as proof of having arisen before sunrise - were supposed to spit or point at the sun. These clans all belong to the parent AmaLala group, and the explanation for these lines may be as a result of their origin. The incorporation of these clans into the Zulu kingdom of the coastlands south of the Thukela took place on lines which were very different from those along which the chiefdoms of the kingdom's heartland were incorporated. From the start, a clear social and political distinction was made between this latter category of chiefdoms and those of the kingdom's south-eastern marches. The peoples of the heartland of the Zulu kingdom north of the Thukela came to be designated as *Amantungwa* or 'upcountry' people, those of the peripheral chiefdoms to the south-east came to be categorized both by their Zulu overlords and by their own rulers, as *Amalala*.

In his pioneering study conducted on the history and customs of the Zulu people in the early decades of the last century, Bryant (1929:55) records that the term *Lala* had appeared in the literature as a generic name for a group of lineages of common language, culture and origin whose ancestors were said to have migrated from the Swaziland-Thongoland region along the east coast into the region south of the Thukela.

However, more recent evidence (Hamilton and Wright 1990) shows the term to have been an invention of the Shakan period. It seems to have existed as a term of contempt for individuals of lowly status. With the emergence of the Zulu kingdom, the word seems to have been taken up by the newly formed Zulu aristocracy and applied as a term of abuse to a particular category of the people partially incorporated in the Zulu kingdom's south-eastern periphery. The category seems to have been defined primarily on linguistic terms and applied to people of the *tekela* or *tekeza* dialect, which appears to have been common south of the Thukela and which differed from the Zunda dialect used at the Zulu court. This is evidenced in the recordings of Madikane, in the James Stuart Archives (Webb C. de B & Wright J.B. 1979 vol 2:55), where he, as a member of the Lala people, makes the point that:

Tshaka called those in Zululand *tekeza'd amaLala*, whilst those in the area of Natal he spoke of as *iNyakeni*, i.e. those who also *tekeza'd*. He used to insult us and frighten us by saying that we did not have the cunning to invent things out of nothing like lawyers.... He said that we were Lala because our tongues lay flat (*lala*) in our mouths, and we could not speak in the Ntungwa fashion. He spoke of them as *iNyakeni* because they had dirty habits and did not distinguish between what was good and what was bad. A person of the *iNyakeni* did not pay respect to chiefs, nor did he wash or keep himself neat.

The evidence of Madikane lends a clue to the scatologocial references of anal behaviour common in all these clan histories. Bryant also comments that the Lala people:

Were what one might call a de-based type of Nguni, evidencing in their language, their habits and their physique, a considerable alloy of Tonga and Swazi or semi-Sutoid blood.

(1929:55)

He goes on to explain the term *inyaka* as "a thoroughly indolent person". The effect of the insulting lines in the AmaLala clan *izibongo* may well have been to induce attitudes among these people of timidity and servility. Hamilton and Wright (1990:20) explain that:

These expressions were the product of a process in which ethnic slurs as symbols of stereotyping and prejudice were used ideologically to justify discrimination and exploitation.

The crude coercion and subordination of the AmaLala people was effected by the Celes, apart from the Zulus, as the Celes were pre-eminent in the coastal regions.

The lines of clan *izibongo* quoted above are typical examples of slurs and epithets that have been made in ages gone by, but are recorded for posterity. Allen in his work on *The Language of Ethnic Conflict* (1983:15), points out that words are weapons, and that:

Hurling epithets is a universal feature of hostile intergroup relations. Outgroup nicknames are pre-eminently a political vocabulary. Name calling is a technique by which outgroups are defined as legitimate targets of aggression and is an effort to control out-groups by neutralizing their efforts to gain resources and influence values.

However Allen goes on to explain that today:

The variety of names tells us more about the sociology and history of intergroup relations than about prejudice against these particular groups.

(Allen 1983:24)

Abner Nyamende (1988:219) describes clan *izibongo* as "the compound storage of the facts of life". He reinforces the view that although originally certain lines in these clan *izibongo* may well have been used in a jibing or insulting fashion, today they are simply a crystallized form of historical, socio-economic and religious information which is learned and committed to memory earlier on in life. Nyamende also notes that:

What is more fascinating is that it does not embarrass the parents to hear their child using an inappropriate clan name to thank someone. Instead one can sense their pride at seeing their child passing yet another test ... The key factor is to make the child aware of the importance of the clan name and its accompanying praise poetry as a means of showing respect and appreciation.

5.4 Recapitulation on Clan *Izibongo*

Clan *izibongo* are the echoes and re-echoes of historical situations. They contain issues and incidents of contention which are reflected in the particular examples of satirical clan *izibongo* discussed above.

The content and the literal meaning of the lines is today not taken to be anything other than a record of the clan's past which is recited with a sense of self-pride and of

self-identity, although in the days when these lines were first incorporated into the clan *izibongo*, they may well have served to record situations of inter-clan censure and conflict. It is naïve to assume that the background narratives that introduce these clan *izibongo* as well as the *izibongo* of the historical Zulu kings and queens that follow, are water-tight. The fact that dominant social values then were very different from today must also be taken into consideration. It is not possible to read and interpret the older *izibongo* from the same standpoint as contemporary examples, and I have relied mainly on evidence from sources recorded by Bryant, Stuart, Mzolo and Cope in assisting me with deciphering the older material.

The following chapters deal with personal oral compositions that serve directly to air tension, conflict and complaints from historical and contemporary times.

CHAPTER 6: THE IZIBONGO/IZIHASHO OF WOMEN

6.1 Introduction

In chapter four, I discussed onomastic expressions of situations of tension and conflict in the form of the cryptic naming of children, animals and homesteads, as well as in nicknaming practices. It has been shown how names reflecting censure, disapproval and discontent serve an important social function in that they tend to minimise friction. Names containing cryptic social messages perform several functions: they enable a person about whom defamatory allegations have been made to refute these accusations and attempt to clear his/her name; they may simply serve to expose, accuse, mock, warn or challenge the underlying reason or cause of the friction; they serve as a means of working out tension and frustration by affording the namer the possibility of passing an indirect yet effective comment in an environment where direct confrontation and conflict are not only inadmissible, but also socially unacceptable.

Songs operate in a similar manner and Ntshinga (1993), Stewart (1997) and Mangele (2000) quote examples of women's songs which are sung in specific settings, e.g. while working in the fields, at certain ceremonies (especially wedding ceremonies), or at social gatherings. In these songs, those who deviate from cultural norms are chided for their transgressions. In the following three examples of songs which I have recorded, a certain woman is targeted by the group with whom she is working. In the first two examples a particular woman was the target. She was being indirectly accused by one of the women of having an affair with her

husband. It is expected generally and in this instance specifically, that the guilty party will hear the song being sung and recognise it as a warning, even if she does not openly acknowledge her guilt. In the third song, one woman was expressing her fear about a neighbour who was suspected of witchcraft:

Song 1

*Eyami, eyami le ndoda!
Oyicela kimi mawuyifuna
Eyami le ndoda, eyami!
Oyicela kimi ngiyayiphekela
Eyami le ndoda, eyami!*

He is mine, he is mine this man!
Ask me first if you want him.
He is mine, this man, he is mine!
Ask me first, I am the one who cooks for him.
He is mine this man, mine!

Song 2

*Makugula mina kuthi kutu!
Uma kugul' umnakwethu
Kuphuma amasheke!*

If I am sick, well just too bad!
If the co-lover is sick
Out come the cheques!

Song 3

*Ungibheka kanjani?
Iso gunqu iso lomthakathi!
Wangibheka wangeba
Iso gunqu iso lomthakathi!*

How are you looking at me?
You look at me with an evil eye, the
eye of a sorcerer!
You look at me with a shifty eye
An evil eye, the eye of a sorcerer!

These songs operate in a similar way to women's *izihasho* in that they can be used to expose social ills, but the songs have a broader frame of reference. They are essentially a communal experience with one person singing the opening line and the others around her replying with the chorus lines. Songs are less personal than *izihasho* in that they are not necessarily directed at any one specific person, although they may be. When they are sung, the message embedded within the lyrics of these songs may be aimed at a more general audience.

Enoch Mvula has studied the pounding songs of women in Ngoni society; he states that these songs which are performed by women when pounding or grinding maize,

become a licensed means of communication employed strategically to play out social conflict and to define, maintain, or alter the position of women in the Ngoni community... The pounding forum provides the means to do this by creating a safe and licensed context and the pounding song acts as a poetic genre for expressing and defusing social tension. (1991:4)

6.2 *Izibongo/izihasho*: Methodology

The *izihasho* recorded as data in this research have not previously been recorded in writing. I have chosen to incorporate the data and their explanatory biographical notes within the main body of the discussion, instead of listing them separately as annotations or notes. I have

done this because the evidence which the data supplies gives relevance to the theory. In doing so, I strongly support Barber's recommendation for future work on African oral genres. She suggests that in interpreting oral texts, understanding what the text is constituted for, and how the people among whom it operates understand it, one should incorporate the expositions into the main discussion of the texts and take such analyses out of the footnotes. Her reasoning for this is not,

to instate them as the sole authoritative interpreters, relied on to disclose the 'real' meaning of esoteric texts, but rather to gain access to the available modes and manners in which interpretation is conventionally carried out in that circuit of cultural production. Such investigations ... should help to shed light on how meaning is held to be related to text in specific genres and scenes of cultural production. (1999:45)

All the data captured in the form of oral texts was written down either as it was dictated by the source informant, or - because of the intimate nature of the relationship of the oral composer/target of the texts to the informant, and their familiarity with the material - it was written from the student researcher's memory.

In sourcing and recording material in the field of *izibongo/izihasho* and song forms, I would explain my area of interest to students. Those who were interested in this field of oral composition were free to choose from a number of different topics presented to them for submission of research assignments. Once I had isolated those with

material of interest to me, I interviewed each individual about their submissions. I would then raise all my queries in terms of the obscure and allusive references and other questions relating to the explanation of the data. In this way, I was able to access information not locked into only one community, but a number of urban, peri-urban and rural communities in all different parts of KwaZulu Natal. Sometimes the students were able to answer my questions immediately. Often, they would have to refer the questions to the informants about whom the oral texts were composed.

6.2.1 Identification of Respondents

Social scientists deal with human beings who give purpose and meaning to their actions; they therefore aim to understand human behaviour from the subject's frame of reference, rather than in terms of the external causes of phenomena, as natural scientists do. In order to truly understand human behaviour from the subject's frame of reference, it is necessary to have an 'insider' perspective as advocated by Jousse. This requires more than just language proficiency and an intellectual understanding of the text in the particular language being studied. In addition, it requires the ability to identify affectively with the milieu from which the text emanates.

I brought to this research a background of over 20 years' reading, teaching, researching and publishing on various aspects of the Zulu language and the Zulu people. Although I am not able to claim an 'insider' perspective on the topic, not being an actual part of the communities from which this information was drawn, I do nevertheless feel

entitled to stake my claim as an 'implicated' researcher because of my relationship with my Zulu students who supplied much of the information.

The information that makes up a large proportion of my recorded data on *izihasho* was gleaned from informants (who were under-graduate and post-graduate students at the University of Durban-Westville). This ongoing research was the basis which informed all my social interactions over a period of seventeen years.

6.2.2 Collecting Data

The methodology that emanates from research that deals with specifically Oral-style texts demands a different approach from that of a literate based study. In the former realm, written questionnaires are unsuitable in recording material that is essentially stored in memory only. However, I have had to often resort to relying on written forms to record the information obtained in these interview situations, as well as written submissions from informants which form the basis of lengthy discussions in individual interviews.

The pool of different informants from whom the material on *izihasho* was recorded, were tasked over a period of twelve years with writing on a variety of topics pertaining to *izibongo*, names and songs. These topics had a wide range of titles which allowed students to render their own opinions on a number of issues pertaining to the oral genres. The reason for assigning these topics to classes in the written form, was due to the large numbers in the various undergraduate classes (varying between upwards of 500 at

first level to 120 at third level). It would not have been feasible time-wise with these numbers to interview each student individually. Some topics dealt specifically with identifying conflict which is aired orally in their close-knit communities, and the various forms that the conflict expression takes, i.e. *izihasho*, naming practices, or song form. Others dealt with gender issues reflected in oral compositions. It was only when I had isolated material which was most relevant that I invited students for individual interviews, to identify the origin of the conflict as well as the history around it. In one-on-one interviews with me, over 250 informants over a period of 10 years were asked to expand on the information recorded and to elucidate certain details. The only way in which one may record texts which have never previously been captured in writing (if one is not a member of the specific community), and that deal with very sensitive and private matters, is to get them from those who are very intimate with the people involved in the conflict situation, either because they are members of that person's family or of their communities. In other words, the informants are 'insiders' in their respective communities which validates the authenticity of the material as it comes in the majority of cases from the performers themselves, i.e. those who have recited or have been intimately connected with the performance of these *izihasho*.

6.2.3 Ethics

Most of the material contained in this study is of a highly sensitive nature as it pertains to conflict articulated in specific oral forms within close communities of Zulu speaking people. Due to the risky nature of the content,

the subject of the oral texts is only named when permission has been given, while the name of the informant who rendered the texts often is not. This is necessitated by the very nature of inter-personal communication amongst the Zulu (and indeed many societies who prefer the Oral-style mode of communication), where inter-personal direct confrontation or even criticism is not considered to be desirable or acceptable. Gaining access to such a sanctioned form of oral conflict expression through the mediated form of writing, presents its own problems in terms of inter-social relations. These informants were simply not prepared to assign their own names or in some cases even the names of the recipients of the *izihasho* once they were recorded in writing. However, the fact that the actual names of informers or subjects of the *izihasho* were in many cases not specified, does not in any way suggest that these oral forms are fictional. Therein lies the very discrepancy in the orality-literacy debate - where the written form is required as the only proof of validation. This is simply not the case.

To these informants, I am extremely grateful for opening the door to an otherwise closed topic of research: without their intervention I would not have had the opportunity to conduct research into these practices. I appreciate also, their generosity in offering up their time to answer endless probing and often embarrassing questions as I tried to decipher the latent meanings hidden within the 'oral texts'. Even if a researcher as a social scientist (particularly a white woman, as in my case), were personally to conduct field research within the community for long periods of time, it would not necessarily enable

her or him to gain access to or understanding of this highly personal and often obscure mode of expression.

In no cases were tape recorders used due to the sensitive nature of the information being captured. It was explained up-front to the informants that I was interested in developing my own research in this way and I requested permission from them to use the information gleaned in the interviews for my own research purposes. The questions posed to each informant differed according to the information recorded in each unique setting. The students have submitted this material in response to various assignments which offered a choice of titles on various aspects of oral compositions, and required them to analyse the function of these compositions in contemporary social settings.

6.3 Women and *Izihasho*

Okpewho (1992) in his research on African Oral Literature explains that speaking about one's problems, whether in the form of song, 'poetry' or story, provides the performer with an avenue for emotional and psychological release in day to day relations between members of society, helping to promote the bases for social harmony. He notes that this form of oral lampooning is widespread across Africa. The type of content encountered in the *izihasho* of women from both rural and urban environments, functions as an acceptable means of social commentary and deflection of ill-feeling,

discouraging social evils such as theft,
adultery, truancy and general
irresponsibility among young and old

alike ... they encourage the citizens of a society to observe proper conduct, cultivate a sense of purpose and responsibility, and issue a warning whenever anyone or any group indulges in habits that are detrimental to the moral health and general survival of the society. (1992:149)

Gunner (1995:186) maintains that the *izibongo* of men in Zulu society are linked to both power and patriarchy, although the 'battlefield' she notes, is sometimes one of small interpersonal conflicts and often even conflict between the sexes. The *izibongo* of men are indeed far more commonplace than those of women. If anything, women's oral compositions are the exception rather than the rule. This appears to be the case throughout Africa. Mack who writes on Hausa Women's oral 'poetry', states that although Hausa women of northern Nigeria do create oral and written literature that reflects their situations, attitudes, aspirations and perspectives on their community, they "are indeed exceptions in Hausa society" (1986:181). Kolawole (1997:74) draws attention to the "immeasurable creative force of women" throughout Africa, citing satirical songs among the Yoruba, maiden songs in Ghana, Galla lampoons, Kamba grinding songs, Igbo birthsongs and folktales in all parts of Africa, but she makes the point that "their roles in cultural creativity have been undermined in the usual male/positive, female/negative attitude". She goes on to say that there are countless examples in Africa where women excel in creativity, adaptation and manipulation of existing or new texts into contemporary situations. This is evident in the onomastic practices and *izihasho* of contemporary urban and rural Zulu women. However, in the many areas she points out in which women excel in their

"immeasurable creativity" there are no clear parallels to *izihasho*, which, amongst the Nguni, still tend to be a predominantly male domain.

Women's *izihasho* are not performed at large and important public gatherings, but rather at more intimate settings, sometimes with men present from their community, but more often amongst other women in more informal settings such as in the fields, while working or while resting, or in certain homesteads when a celebration is taking place. When men are absent from such performances, women are at liberty to challenge and expose emotions and sentiments and to use vulgar language that is normally inexpressible in more formal, public domains. Gunner (1979:241) has documented some oral compositions of rural women in this genre, covering topics such as jealousy, love, sexual power relations, gossip and desertion. She concludes that although women's *izibongo* are by and large marginalised compared to those of men, they nevertheless "stand as a celebration of their personality and achievement".

In times gone by, Vilakazi regarded the *izibongo* of women as "compositions dealing with something beautiful and praiseworthy." (1945:46). Gunner criticizes Vilakazi's claim that the "praise poems" of women deal with "something beautiful and praiseworthy". She maintains that Vilakazi's claim seems almost to ignore the contents and statements of these very oral records, which for the most part:

reflect the facets of life important to women, while displaying at the same time the sharp eyed concern with individual identity

that characterizes all Zulu praise poetry.
(Gunner 1979:239)

A woman's acquaintances will acknowledge her indirectly or greet her directly by referring to one or more lines of her praise names. She goes on to say that,

the women who possess and compose praise poems are usually traditionalists who do not belong to any of the mission churches, and many are married in polygynous households. (1979:239)

Apart from the function of 'poetic identity' which Gunner cites, she also lists complaints and accusations as important functions of these *izihasho*. Tension and rivalries that exist in the close-knit structure of the Zulu polygamous unit find their legitimate outlet in *izihasho* through allusive diction. Gunner argues that:

The statement of complaint or accusation in a praise poem is an effective and socially acceptable way of publicly announcing one's anger or grief. (1979:239)

De Vos (1966:68) makes the point that in polygamous societies in which the social status of women is low, where men are dominant over women, the need is greater to maintain barriers securing the social status of men. Generally speaking, the greater the exploitation of subordinate groups, the greater the social need to maintain external symbols of status differentiation. One of the forms or external symbols is the predominant verbal expression of men's *izibongo*.

In most polygamous societies, particularly in Zulu traditional rural societies where women live together in

close proximity in the homestead situation, tensions tend to arise. Magwaza (2001:25) makes the point that in addition to this, women in such a patriarchal setting are given "minimal or marginal opportunity to air their views". In line with this, Jafta (1978) and Ntshinga (1993) state that the very nature of Nguni tradition forbids a woman from talking openly about her marriage situation and its inherent problems. Magwaza (2001:27) supports this view:

Zulu women are viewed as custodians of culture who have a duty to transmit ethnic identity to the young. 'Guarding the culture' is held as an important responsibility. In instances where the very culture that is guarded is to the detriment of women's dignity, respect and rights, she is not allowed by tradition 'to answer a man back'.

Generally, the lines of a woman's *izihasho* are known by people close to the recipient in her community setting. In analysing the content of these oral texts, one must take context into consideration. In these examples, the oral texts seem to be used as a form of reprimand but the severity of the chastisement depends largely on the context, and may vary from mild and playful teasing, to deprecation or derogation. The performance is not complete in itself - it exists within a recognised tradition. The impact that the recitation of these *izihasho* has, not only on the person at whom they are directed, but also on the people present, is totally reliant on the environment in which they are recited and also on who is responsible for reciting them. This will often also determine the purpose which the articulation of a person's *izihasho* is intended to serve. In some cases, the *izihasho* may be recited by a woman in the community who

wishes to admonish the mother of the target, in an attempt to comment on the lax control the mother has exercised over her child, as well as the moral looseness of the daughter. In the vast majority of examples cited here, where specific women who transgress socially acceptable norms in urban settings are exposed, one must once again bear in mind that they are atypical examples of *izihasho*; it is more usual to find the good and the bad balanced and blended together to give an overall picture of the person. As this research focuses on aspects of conflict and criticism in the oral genre, it has resulted in the presentation of these specific examples of *izihasho*.

The mercurial nature of these oral *izihasho* also renders them extremely difficult to capture in writing. If the person to whom they refer should be asked to recite her own *izihasho*, often a form of editing occurs which robs them of any risque spice. This underlines the importance of being an 'insider' in the community, where the *izihasho* of one's family and close friends and neighbours become part and parcel of one's memory bank.

Most often, despite the content of these compositions, they do not evoke hostility or animosity because of the humour which is embedded in the images, and also because of the context in which they are recited. Where the humour may be lacking in the actual words, it may be very much part of the actual performance, where the reciter softens the message by absurd facial expressions and comical bodily gestures in order to provoke laughter. The humour in performance and reception will ultimately reveal whether the person is being chastised or not, or whether the articulation of her

izihasho, often in a shebeen setting as with many of these examples, is meant to 'delight and excite' the recipient. The latter response would result from the fact that the group is acknowledging her character and attention is being focused on her. Among her drinking peers, the recitation of a woman's *izihasho* elevates her and is not necessarily taken as an admonishment or insult, despite the seemingly censorious content and insulting undertones. Being known by her *izihasho* provides a woman with a distinct identity, a sort of recognition and support which is important to her ego and psyche (Turner 1995:58).

6.4 *Izibongo* Texts Recorded in Print

6.4.1 *The Izibongo of Royal Zulu Women*

The *izibongo* which contain satirical and critical references are not the exclusive property of ordinary women, but are also prevalent in the oral compositions relating to women of Royal blood. Written records exist from the nineteenth century in James Stuart's Archives of the *izibongo* of important women in history such as Mkabayi, Nandi, Monase, Nomvimbi and Ngqumbazi and are traceable in the works of oral scholars such as Vilakazi (1945), Cope (1968) and Gunner (1979). These women were all directly related to the Zulu kings from Shaka's time to that of Cetshwayo. In these *izibongo* one finds abundant scatological and agonistic references on the same lines as those contained in the modern contemporary *izihasho* (in 6.4.1) of the promiscuous nurse, the local gossipmonger or the lazy daughter-in-law. The content of the *izibongo* of these royal women, despite their rank in society, is often hardly complimentary. Some of the disparaging references that are encountered include:

Physical oddities such as ungainly height, wide spaced thighs, big chin, heftiness as well as extreme ambition, meanness, unpleasantness, sexual forwardness and ruthlessness. (Turner 1986:61)

If one thinks in terms of the *izibongo* of men of royal lineage as being generally laudatory and eulogistic, one might expect the compositions of the royal women to be the same, in keeping with their elevated social position. However, in the light of the observations on the definitions and functions of *izibongo* in general in chapter three, certain of the *izibongo* of the royal Zulu women presented here, particularly those of Nandi, Monase and Ngqumbazi, provide an interesting contrast with regard to what is normally contained in the majority of the traditional *izibongo* of royalty i.e. extensive praising. These oral compositions recorded in writing reveal the existence of a type of critical element that is commonly reflected amongst women's compositions in extended-community lifestyles. These *izibongo* exemplify statements of individual identity, with detail favourable and unfavourable being bluntly recorded in harsh reality, irrespective of the women's royal status. Apart from the more extended versions of Mnkabayi and Nandi's *izibongo*, they are typical examples of those of the ordinary person, remaining on the more domestic level of criticism and complaint.

Before attempting to analyse these selected oral compositions of individual royal Zulu women, an historical resume of each of the characters is essential for the basic understanding of the references and events alluded to,

thereby enhancing the comprehension of the composition, with its allusive and metaphorical style.

Msimang (1981:52) states that *izibongo* are not strictly a biographical account of an individual, and cannot be wholly relied upon to furnish accurate historical records, as many allusions are made in the historical references without any explanatory details, and events are often chronologically mixed. The language of oral composition recorded in these texts is highly figurative with extensive use made of metaphors. In certain instances, the metaphors used would be obscure without research into the history and customs of the time. This allusive character, which may be meaningless to the uninformed reader or listener, is, of course, not a mark of inferior composition. When looking at compositions such as these of royal women, one has also to realise that they were likely to have been understood by the audience in front of which they were performed, but with the passing of time, they have, as Gunner observes, 'gathered' obscurity like a film of dust. Furthermore, as *izibongo* are "statements of individual identity" (Gunner 1979:240), one accepts that private inexplicable allusions are bound to occur therein.

6.4.1.1 Brief Historical Background of Mkabayi

Mkabayi was the daughter of the Zulu king Jama, and was therefore an aunt of Shaka, Dingane and Mpande. Mkabayi was one of twin girls born at the homestead of Nobamba. In line with the beliefs that Zulus had about twins, the arrival of these twin girls, shortly after the death of Jama's first son, Palo, led to rumours circulating that Jama had been

bewitched. Jama's counsellors advised him to follow the strongly adhered to custom of the Zulus, that the first born twin should be killed. This would have meant the death of Mkabayi, but Jama refused. This refusal met with great opposition among the people of his clan, and Mkabayi's mother's eventual death was blamed as a direct result of the refusal to adhere to custom. As Mkabayi grew into childhood, she was resented by all who were aware of the fact that she was a twin. As people tended to avoid her, she grew up aloof, sullen, cantankerous and moody. Her father, however, was particularly fond of his strong-willed and aloof daughter and spent much time with her. As a result, Mkabayi was drawn into the affairs of the people and was devoted to the cause of her father's people. Women in Zulu society at the time of Mkabayi normally played no role in the running of the clan. The exception would have been a small group of royal dignitaries, among whom, Mkabayi's prominence and power as she matured, was unrivalled.

When her father Jama died, in about 1781, his heir Senzangakhona was a mere child, and so control of the clan fell to Mkabayi (who remained unmarried), with Mudli, a cousin of hers, as head of the army. Mkabayi was reportedly a cold and committed ruler, whose primary concern was the continuance and expansion of the Zulu clan and its traditions. At the time Senzangakhona ascended the throne, Mkabayi resided over the ebaQulusini military kraal from which she continued to be his advisor on matters concerning the nation as a whole. After Senzangakhona's death, and before Mkabayi proclaimed Shaka as the rightful heir to the throne, she again took over the leadership of the clan.

Shaka, on his ascendancy, appears to have ruled his people without much recourse to anyone for advice. This seems to be one of the major reasons why Mkabayi plotted against him and was instrumental in bringing about his death in 1828 at the hands of his brother, Dingane, whom she favoured. Again after the death of Shaka, and before Dingane was officially installed as king, Mkabayi stepped into the breach as regent. With Dingane on the throne, Mkabayi again came to the fore as a royal advisor, and she was put in charge of the Ihlababa of Nobamba regiment. When disagreement and conflict arose between Dingane and Mhlangana, again it was Mkabayi who plotted Mhlangana's death. The power that Mkabayi wielded must not be underestimated. As Stuart (1924:165) recalls, when the Zulu army went out to fight, it first called at EbuQuluseni, Mkabayi's kraal, to receive her blessing. When it arrived there, Mkabayi would dress in male regimental fashion, and taking spear and shield, she would walk between the rows of warriors just as any military commander would do. The history of Mkabayi's later years is very scanty but it appears that, after the death of Dingane in 1840, her power waned and she died a lonely old woman during the reign of Mpande.

This sketch of Mkabayi's life story indicates why she was referred to as the 'kingmaker', as her power and influence was ever-present during the time of great historical importance to the Zulu kingdom. When Zulu kings are praised, even in modern times, she is included, but her place is noticeably at the end, because of her station as a woman.

The *izibongo* of Mkabayi are modelled in form, content and style, on those of the great Zulu kings and chiefs. Several points of criticism are directed at her in these *izibongo*, but the manner in which it is done (e.g. lines 3-6), is more in the mould of the 'heroic poetry' of the kings.

Izibongo ZikaMkabayi

- 1 *USoqili!*
- 2 *Iqili lakwaHoshoza,*
- 3 *Elidl' umuntu limyenga ngendaba;*
- 4 *Lidl' uBhedu ngasezinyangeni,*
- 5 *Ladl' uMkhongoyiyana ngasemaNgadini,*
- 6 *Ladl' uBheje ngasezanuseni.*
- 7 *UBhuku lukaMenzi,*
- 8 *Olubamb' abantu lwabanela;*
- 9 *Ngibone ngoNohela kaMlilo, umlil' ovuth' intaba*
zonke,
- 10 *Ngoba lumbambe wanyamalala.*
- 11 *Inkom' ekhal' eSangoyana,*
- 12 *Yakhal' umlomo wayo wabhobhoz' izulu,*
- 13 *Iye yezwiwa nguGwabalanda,*
- 14 *Ezalwa nguMndaba kwaKhumalo.*
- 15 *Intomb' ethombe yom' umlomo,*
- 16 *Zase ziyihlab' imithanti ezawonina.*
- 17 *UMthobela-bantu izinyoni,*
- 18 *Bayazibamba usezibuka ngamehlo.*
- 19 *UVula-bangene-ngawo-onk'-amasango,*
- 20 *Abanikazimuza bangene ngezintuba.*
- 21 *Umncindela kaNobiya,*
- 22 *Umhlathuz' uzawugcwal' emini.*
- 23 *Imbibakazan' eyaqamb' imingqa kwaMalandela,*

24 *Yathi ngabakwaMalandela*

25 *Ithi yikhona bezoqananaza ngazo zonk'izindlela.*

(Cope 1968:173)

The Praises of Mkabayi

- 1 Father of guile!
- 2 Cunning one of the Hoshoba people,
- 3 Who devours a person tempting him with a story
- 4 She killed Bhedu amongst the medicine men,
- 5 And destroyed Mkhongoyiyana amongst the
Mngadis,
- 6 And killed Bheje amongst the diviners.
- 7 Morass of Menzi,
- 8 That sucked the people in and killed them off;
- 9 I saw by Nohela son of Mlilo, the fire-that-
burns-on-every-hill,
- 10 For it caught him and he disappeared.
- 11 Beast that lows on Sangoyana,
- 12 It lowed and its voice pierced the sky,
- 13 Until it was heard by Gwabalanda
- 14 Son of Mndaba of the Khumalo clan.
- 15 Maid that matured but went without a lover,
- 16 Until they criticised her those of her mothers,
- 17 One who tames birds for the people,
- 18 Then they are just in front of her.
- 19 One who opens that people may enter through all
the gates,
- 20 And the owners of the kraal enter by the narrow
side gates,
- 21 Sipper for others of the venom of the cobra,
- 22 The Mhlathuzi river will flood at midday.

- 23 Little mouse that opened new paths in the land
of Malandela
24 And called them the people of Malandela
25 So that they would thereby command all the
routes.

The opening address in Mkabayi's *izibongo* is *USoqili*, 'father of guile'. This has significance in so far as not only is she addressed as a male, but as a trickster figure which relies on its cunning, popular in Zulu *izinganekwane* (folktales). Being of royal blood and unmarried, she was given the elevated status of a prince and, later, of a fatherly figure, hence the use of the typically male formative -so- in the name *USoqili*.

The first half of Mkabayi's *izibongo* contain references to several events alluding to the occurrences of deaths which were carried out on her command. Her *izibongo* are rich in imagery and full of latent references to her treachery and cunning. She is addressed as "Father of Guile", "Cunning one", "Morass". Lines 2 and 3 make reference to Mkabayi's cunning in being able to manipulate and talk people into situations, often with fatal consequences, as with the situation with Mbopha who assisted her in the assassination of Shaka. Mkabayi promised him the benefits of becoming an important chief and the gift of large tracts of land for his part in the plot. His murder was also engineered by Mkabayi. Mkabayi also succeeded in including Mhlangana in plotting Shaka's demise. She then, in turn, plotted his death to make the path clear for Dingane to take over as king. The *imbongi* alludes to this in the lines:

Iqili lakwaHoshoza

Elidl' umuntu limyenga ngendaba

The cunning one of Hoshoza

Who devours a person tempting him with a story

The formula used in line 9 is an echo of the description of Dingane's kraal which Stuart cites as "*KwaNohela kaMlilo! Umlil' ovuth' izintaba zonke*" (1924:166). Msimang (1981:66) explains the idea of Mkabayi being likened to a 'morass' as significant in that she was a dangerous and powerful woman who was responsible for the deaths of royalty and commoners alike, but her appearance was deceiving. As an introvert, who kept in the background, like a marsh, her presence was inviting, but her victims soon got themselves bogged down and died.

Her unmarried status also contains censure in that she is referred to as a woman who matures without a lover, unusual for Zulu women then and now. Despite Mkabayi's incredible influence and power, she does not escape the criticism of the *imbongi* in her oral autobiographical record.

6.4.1.2 Historical Background of Nandi

Nandi, Shaka's mother, was the daughter of an important Langeni chief, Makhedama kaMgabi (alias Mbengi), of Nguga. The meeting between herself and Senzangakhona occurred after Nandi had heard glowing reports about the young Zulu chieftain, and purposefully arranged a casual meeting with him and his group on the road while they were herding nearby her homestead. The initial meeting of these lovers continued on the following day, and the result was to make

its presence felt three months later, when Nandi learned that she was pregnant.

A messenger was subsequently dispatched bearing a formal indictment against the youthful Zulu chief, which was subsequently denied by Mudli, acting co-regent, with the reply that the girl was harbouring an intestinal beetle (known in Zulu as *ishaka*), regarded then as a common cause for the suppression of the menses. However, in due course she gave birth to a son, and word was sent to Senzangakhona that the 'beetle' had arrived and was awaiting him.

Nandi was reluctantly fetched and installed as Senzangakhona's third wife, without any of the customary feasting and wedding celebrations that normally befit a chief. Nandi found herself in a position of being unwelcome, scorned by the other wives, and generally neglected as she was regarded as ill-tempered and argumentative.

Nathaniel Isaacs, a contemporary trader who had met her, wrote of her at the time:

She was said to have been a masculine and savage woman, ever quarrelling with, and so enraging her husband, that he was compelled to exercise some salutary authority and reprimand her for the impropriety of her conduct.
(Fynn 1950:12)

Senzangakhona finally expelled Nandi from his kraal after an incident involving the death of his pet fat-tailed sheep, killed by Shaka's dog. She returned to her father, Mbengi,

among the Langeni, and proved to be highly unpopular even among her own people.

Shaka's childhood days among the Langeni were extremely unhappy, and both he and his mother were constantly teased and rejected. In the face of famine, around the year 1802, Nandi made for Mpaphala, where there lived a man named Gendeyana, whom she married and to whom she bore a son, Ngwadi. There, for a while, she and her family were accepted, but even there she was to have no lasting peace. Nandi and her son held no rightful place there, and eventually she sought refuge again, this time with her father's sister among the Mthethwas.

The *induna* in charge of the district in which they settled was Ngomane. There, Nandi and her son were treated well, and they were to remain there until Shaka was taken under Dingiswayo's wing. With the support of Dingiswayo, Shaka eventually succeeded to the chieftainship of the Zulu clan on Senzangakhona's death.

On the assumption of this position, Shaka set up his headquarters at KwaBulawayo, where his mother (to whom he was, by all accounts, very attached) governed the royal *isigodlo* (royal harem) whose inmates Shaka called his sisters, *odadewethu*. Here Nandi resided with her son, and she, like Mkabayi, was held in great awe by the people at large, as mere displeasure or whim on her part could result in the death of a subject without question.

The details of Nandi's death are varied. Rumour has it that Shaka committed matricide out of anger at her attempt

to hide a child born to him. Shaka's fear of succession led to his suspicion that his position would one day be usurped by offspring of his. For this reason he refused to take a wife and beget children as was the custom amongst the Zulu. This version of Shaka's anger toward his mother for hiding one of his offspring, is supported by Magera Fuze (Cope, 1979:63), but Henry Francis Fynn (Fynn, 1950:132) is adamant in his diary that Nandi died naturally as a result of dysentery. This opinion is reinforced by evidence recorded in the James Stuart Archives (Vol 2) of Madhlebe kaNjinjane (Webb & Wright 1979:45), who also emphasises that Nandi died a natural death.

Izibongo ZikaNandi kaMbengi WaseLangeni, Unina kaShaka

- 1 *USomqeni!*
- 2 *UMathanga kawahlangani,*
- 3 *Ahlangana ngokubon' umyeni.*
- 4 *UGedegede lwasenhla nenkundla.*
- 5 *UPhokophalala kuMaqhwakazi,*
- 6 *Angibonang' uphok' ukuphalala.*
- 7 *Umboni wamabhuzenge uSontanti,*
- 8 *USontanti onjengowakoGwazana*
- 9 *USontanti kayidl' inkom' ensiwazana,*
- 10 *Udl' ubisi lwenkom' enezimpondo,*
- 11 *Ukwesaba' abayisengayo.*
- 12 *Intombi kaMbengi weNguga kaSoyengwase*
 kaMaqamade
- 13 *Uxebe woMhlathuze.*
- 14 *Mfazi ontongande zingazandoda,*
- 15 *Oyishaye yanyus' iSabiza.*
- 16 *UMathanga kawahlangani,*
- 17 *Ahlangana ngokubon' indod.*

18 *Obengabafana baseNgugeni,*

19 *Abeza beluhayizana.*

(Cope 1968:175)

The Praises of Nandi, Daughter of Mbengi, Mother of Shaka

1 Father of laziness!

2 She whose thighs do not meet,

3 They only meet on seeing the husband.

4 Loud-voiced one from the upper part of the
 court.

5 She who rushed out to Maqhwakazi,

6 I did not see the millet rush out.

7 She who sees confusion, Sontanti,

8 Sontanti who is like the daughter of Gwazana;

9 Sontanti does not partake of a little hornless
 cow,

10 She drinks the milk of the cow with horns,

11 For fear of those who milk it.

12 The daughter of Mbengi of the Nguga kraal, son
 of Soyengwase, son of Maqamade,

13 Flirt of the Mhlathuze valley.

14 Woman whose long staves are like those of a
 man,

15 Who struck it and it went up the Sabiza river.

16 She whose thighs do not meet,

17 They only meet on seeing the husband.

18 She who was like the boys of Nguga,

19 Who came in a small group.

With regard to the physical qualities expected of and admired in women in Zulu society at this period, Cope (1968:21) cites broad face, broad hips, firm flesh, especially large firm breasts and buttocks. In terms of behaviour, diligence, modesty, obedience and respectfulness were expected of Zulu women, as well as fertility. The 'izibongo' of Nandi, not being in the panegyric mode of those of Mkabayi, do not reflect any of these flattering feminine features. They are a good example of individual satire in traditional oral composition. These *izibongo* are composed (albeit in the traditional eulogistic form) in an exclusively personal and physical vein containing much criticism and disapproval. Nandi was a woman of great importance, being Shaka's mother, and it was therefore the acceptable way for reflecting an individual's unsatisfactory behaviour and personality traits in society through the words of the *imbongi* who claims immunity in his criticism as they are taken as a reflection of popular sentiments. Gunner states:

Allusion in *izibongo*, as in Somali poetry, can be a useful way of making a point that it would be dangerous or indelicate to state directly ... In women's *izibongo*, criticism and complaint tend to be dominant themes. (1984:256,260)

Nandi's *izibongo* are rich in imagery which at times is bawdy and risqué. The contrast in content between the *izibongo* of Mkabayi and Nandi is apparent from the outset in the vastly different initial forms of address. Although morphologically similar, both being addressed in a form normally used for men, (indicated by the formative -so-), while Mkabayi is referred to in terms of her cunning and

shrewdness as *USoqili* (father of guile), Nandi is addressed as *USomqeni*, (father of laziness). This sets the tone for the rest of the oral composition.

Ambiguous language together with clever mnemotechnical technique (the clamp rhymes of the vowel sound -a- and cross clamping with the verb -hlangana) is encountered early on in Nandi's *izibongo* involving the word *hlangana*, which may signify respect for men but can also mean 'to have sexual connexion'.

UMathanga kawahlangani

Ahlangana ngokubon' umyeni.

She whose thighs do not meet

They meet only on seeing the husband.

Ugedegede lwasenhla nenkundla

Loud mouthed one from the upper part of the
court

The above references seem hardly complimentary, and allude to Nandi's ability to make herself heard on various matters to Senzangakhona and his councillors. It reveals the low esteem in which she was held at her husband's court.

Clever allusion is couched in the use made of a nomino-verbal compound - *Uphokophalala*. This metaphor is 'pregnant' with meaning, *uphoko* being a "small species of millet which is used for improving beer and is roasted by soldiers when preparing for a journey" (Doke & Vilakazi 1972:688). *Phalala* can mean "to rush out in haste" (op cit:644). The combination of the two conjures up a vivid

image of Nandi being constantly on the move. Her initial sojourn onto the hill of Maghwakazi (her reported first meeting place with Senzangakhona), eventually resulted in her rejection by various Zulu clans due to her position of unmarried mother and in her subsequently moving about from place to place in the years that followed.

In lines 5 and 6 the *imbongi* levels subtle criticism again by conjuring up the image of the impulsive Nandi rushing out - but not being met by an accompanying 'army' to bring her, for proper installation as was customary, into the court of Senzangakhona. The unflattering reference to Nandi as *uSontanti*, "drifter", again refers to her behaviour (regarded by Zulus as unfeminine), of wandering about without no fixed roots. In *izibongo*, the use of the word *ukudla* may mean sexual intercourse, as well as eat or drink, or conquer, capture, annihilate, achieve, stab etc. Thus the inferred meaning here may be that Nandi had sexual intercourse with a chief of importance. At the same time it carries the meaning that she does not dally with anyone that is not of importance, a shrewd reference to her burning ambition.

The *imbongi* openly criticises Nandi when he refers to her as *Uxebe* (flirt), which derives from the noun *isixebe*, (a concubine). This may well be a reference to her alleged affair with Phakathwayo, one of Shaka's arch-rivals, and the paramount chief of the area in which she resided with her husband, Gendeyana. This affair was said to have greatly incensed Shaka (Bryant 1929:196). Nandi's unusual height earns her another slating comment:

Mfazi ontongande zingazandoda

Woman whose long staves are like those of a
man

The words *Oyishaye yanyus' iSabiza* (who struck him and went up the Sabiza River), contains criticism of Nandi's fierce temper, and the source of this line has reference to an incident when Nandi, in a fit of rage, was reported to have struck one of Senzangakhona's senior councillors in the face, (Fynn 1950:13); this was one of the reasons for her eventually being banned from the royal court, for "the impropriety of her conduct" as Nathaniel Isaacs put it.

The repetition of the *Umathanga* image reinforces the sexual allusions made earlier in the composition and is typical of oral compositions, where much use is made of clamp words for ease of recall in performance. Cope (1968:175) explains the last two lines as reference to the day when Nandi was unceremoniously introduced to Senzangakhona's kraal, accompanied by a small group of men from the Nguga kraal, after Shaka's birth. This again is a subtle, mocking criticism as Zulu custom dictates that a bride-to-be be introduced into her husband-to-be's kraal accompanied by a large group of men amidst much celebration and festivity.

Nandi's *izibongo* reflect the attitudes of the Zulus, the Langenis and the Mthethwas towards her. Her greatest disgrace was to have fallen pregnant by Senzangakhona. He never accepted her as a real queen, with full rights. The fact that her *izibongo* have survived is attributable only to her later political importance as Shaka's mother.

The great majority of traditional *izibongo* that have survived the passage of time from oral form to recorded written texts are those of people who had status in society, either as great chiefs, war heroes or members of the royal family. Many of these may have become reduced in length over the years as certain lines are gradually forgotten in their reproduction.

Two other *izibongo* of important historical royal Zulu women are those of Monase and Ngqumbazi. These examples are not as lengthy and historically detailed as those of Mnkabayi and Nandi, and they echo more typically critical sentiments on domestic issues.

6.4.1.3 Historical Background of Monase

In their accounts of the brief history of Monase, Vilakazi (1945) and Fuze (Cope:1979) agree that she was one of the 'harem' girls of Shaka, who was suspected of being pregnant by him. She was given to Mpande by Shaka in marriage before the child was born. As Mpande's chief wife, she bore him four children: Mbuyazi, Mantatashiya, Mkhungo and Bathonyile.

Thus it was widely believed that Mbuyazi (Cetshwayo's half-brother) was indeed Shaka's progeny, and this belief is strongly supported by Vilakazi (1945:50), who reveals that Mbuyazi and Shaka share similar references in their *izibongo*, e.g. the opening line of Mbuyazi's *izibongo* runs:

Indlov' enesihlonti

An elephant with a tufted neck

This, Vilakazi explains, refers to Shaka who had a tuft of hair growing at the nape of his neck. The last two lines of Shaka's *izibongo* also echo in the *izibongo* of Mbuyazi:

Umbeduka njengesona,

UNotakasa onjengoboyi.

(Grass) growing like a thicket

He struts like a bush warbler.

The residence of Monase was established at the Mfaba hills on the south bank of the Black Umfolozi River, while the section of Mpande's family presided over by Ngqumbazi (Cetshwayo's mother) resided on the south side of the Mhlathuze river. The two sections were thus about eighty miles apart, the chief residence of the king being between them, at the White Umfolozi. Parties began gradually to associate themselves with either of these two centres, and gave themselves the names respectively of *Izigqoza* and *Usuthu*, the latter being the party of Cetshwayo and the former that of Mbuyazi.

The conflict between the two pretenders finally came to a head at the famous battle of Ndondakusuka (1858), from which Cetshwayo emerged the victor. After this battle Monase left for Natal where she lived in obscurity until she died.

Izibongo zikaMonase, Inkosikazi kaMpande, Unina kaMbuyazi

1 *Usidididi!*

2 *Umbilini wezinkabi,*

3 *Udladla likha ngomkhonto,*

4 *Amakhosikazi edla ngezinqindi,*
5 *Umfazi onesilevu njengendoda.*

1 The hefty one/creator of confusion!
2 Like the entrails of oxen,
3 Thy kraal dips with a stabbing spear
4 While other women's kraals eat with shorthanded
 spears.
5 The woman with a beard like a man!

(Vilakazi 1945:50)

Biographical Detail

The *izibongo* of Monase begin with the rather unflattering reference to her size, a metaphor which is extended for emphasis into the second line, with the entrails of an oxen being used as an image to describe her endless proportions!

The use of the metaphor in line 3 *Udladla* means a powerful or masculine person, which, taken with the last line, is further evidence of the *imbongi's* wish to bring home the point of her masculine appearance.

6.4.1.4 Historical Background of Ngqumbazi

Fuze (Cope 1979) claims that because Shaka paid the *lobolo* cattle on Mpande's behalf for Ngqumbazi, she was to be regarded as the chief wife. In his later life, Mpande showed preference for the wife whom he had married after he had gained the kingship, and this wife was Nomantshali. She was

said to have bewitched Ngqumbazi, causing a tuft of hair to grow over her right eye. Nomantshali was killed by Cetshwayo along with her son Simpoyiyana as he feared that the succession might be allowed to pass to her son Mtonga.

Izibongo zikaNGuqmbazi, Inkosikazi kaMpande, Unina kaCetshwayo.

- 1 *USogqayi!*
- 2 *UNgubo zenkonjane*
- 3 *UMsweyazi wakomgengeni*
- 4 *Uzincisha yena,*
- 5 *Waze wancisha ngisho inkosi yohlanga,*
- 6 *UMsizi wabakude, abaseduze bekhala naye.*

- 1 Close peerer!
- 2 Swallow's clothes
- 3 The needy one at the grain basket
- 4 She stints herself,
- 5 She went even further and stinted the Royal One himself.
- 6 Helper of those far away, the close at hand cry with her.

(Gunner 1979:254)

Ngqumbazi, mother of Cetshwayo, is not portrayed in the kindest light in her *izibongo*. The opening line again contains the masculine marker -so- which is not unusual for royal women. Line 2 makes reference to the fact that the queen used to feel the cold and was wont to wrap herself up at all times in a black shawl, two of the corners hanging down her back like the tail of a swallow.

Lines 3, 4 and 5 focus upon the single quality of stinginess with food for which Ngqumbazi was apparently notorious. Line 6 sums up, in a humorous vein, the fact that she was not the easiest person to live with, implying that her behaviour to strangers was far better than that to which she subjected her immediate neighbours.

6.5 Recapitulation of Royal Women's *Izibongo*

These *izibongo* of historical royal Zulu women are evidence of being realistic statements of individual identity, with both favourable and unfavourable details being recorded without euphemism. In fact, these particular examples (i.e. those of Nandi, Ngqumbazi and Monase) indicate clearly that there is no difference in the level of content in their particular *izibongo* and those of ordinary women with no royal connections, where criticism is common. This is unlike their royal male counterparts, whose *izibongo* are vastly different in content and style, where status is patently obvious to the listener or reader. When a king is eulogised, the *izibongo*, although they might contain lines of subtle criticism, present the subject with a predominantly favourable identity as this is an obvious function they perform in presenting the leader of the nation in a positive manner. The examples of the *izibongo* of the royal women examined above may be regarded in their time to have functioned as statements of identity. Today they serve as intimate oral archives recording historical events which provide people in contemporary times with an interesting insight into their characters, current opinions about them

and historical events surrounding their lives and times. The fact that in some of these we encounter extended compositions rich in content is because these oral accounts have developed aesthetic characteristics directly because of their mnemonic form. In this form of oral expression we are confused into thinking that the *izibongo* are primarily artistic expressions when in fact their primary function is individual identification and recognition.

The complaints or criticisms of physical oddities and discreditable personality characteristics and behaviour recorded in these royal *izibongo* of more than a hundred years ago, are not atypical of the compositions which I have recorded in recent times; one finds some echoes in the *izihasho* of ordinary urban Zulu women.

6.6 The Oral Compositions of Ordinary Women

In researching the oral compositions of ordinary Zulu women, one of the most striking features I have found is the absence of complimentary and positive *izibongo* generally accorded to women in modern urban environments. Why this should be may result from a shift from their more rigid rural/communal roots to a less structured and looser social hierarchy/combination with other women in the urban community. This is a result of increasing urbanisation due to the steady movement of women from rural areas into the industrial and domestic labour market. In these situations, they are normally not living in traditional extended family situations, so are removed from the very composition of the patrilineal and patriarchal Zulu social structure. In addition, there is often a tenuous mix of Christian and non-

Christian followers living in close proximity in urban areas, and this often results in strong social commentary which finds its expression in women's *izihasho*. Magwaza (2001:26) observes that:

Traditional practices are a socially legitimated form of expression. Women's subordination to men tends to be re-inforced through cultural practices, and individual attempts to differ are regarded with suspicion.

In line with the critical nature of the examples cited here, it would seem that women have appropriated the form of expression common to men and inverted the positive content to negative ones in order to highlight their negative feelings and criticism of the intended target of the composition in urban and peri-urban areas.

The same principle as found in the naming of both people and animals applies to women's *izihasho*. These serve as extended "names", by means of which social comment, however critical or accusatory, may be made. Such comment is made couched in the allusive but acceptable form of *izihasho*. Apart from the function of personal identity and recognition, Turner (1995:72) also lists complaint and accusation as important functions of these *izihasho*. Tension and rivalries that exist in the close-knit communities find their legitimate outlet in *izihasho* through allusive diction. Gunner observes that:

The statement of complaint or accusation in a praise poem is an effective and socially acceptable way of publicly announcing one's anger or grief. (1979:239)

By reciting or having one's *izihasho* recited, one's sense of belonging within a particular community or cultural group is reinforced. As these oral compositions are normally performed in the presence of other women e.g. within the homestead, in the fields while working or at any social occasion, "the feeling of group solidarity and a shared identity is often very strong" (Gunner 1979:243).

Izihasho can be self composed or given by one's peers and their performance is of necessity a communal experience. As communal living and shared experiences are more marked amongst rural women, there tends to be more balance in their *izihasho* between positive and negative references. Although there may well be uncomplimentary references and accusations against certain women, these are often balanced with those that serve to compliment and flatter the subject.

6.6.1 Contemporary Oral Compositions in Urban Settings

The *izihasho* encountered in contemporary urban settings differ markedly from their rural counterparts which, judging by those that I have recorded, seem to have more balance between the positive and negative content.

Another difference between women's *izihasho* in rural and urban areas concerns rarity: very few women in urban areas seem to have *izihasho* of their own. The personal oral compositions of women in urban areas that I have managed to collect, are those which seem to be of a disparaging and deprecatory nature. The acceptability of this form of criticism lies in the community structure within which these

women live. Although not as close-knit as women in rural environments, most women in urban areas still hold a basic shared value-system and therefore feel at liberty to comment - through the time-honoured tradition of *izibongo* - on any form of behaviour that affects the stability and smooth running of their community. A similar observation is echoed in the research of Mack amongst Hausa women. She states:

Oral performance by Hausa women ... represents the irreverent, the revolutionary in Hausa society. It is performed by women whose own lifestyles deviate from traditional and conservative women's roles. (1986:185)

The prevailing attitude among various urban educated women whom I interviewed was that "decent women do not have *izihasho*". The practice of *izibongo* is still largely perceived to be a male prerogative, and if a woman does acquire *izihasho*, they seem quite often to be of a non-complimentary nature. This would seem to indicate that an important function of *izihasho* for women is a castigatory, monitoring and regulating one. This is not the norm in the *izihasho* of men, which portray a more balanced picture of the subject. One can conclude that there is a very marked gender imbalance in the formulation and expression of these oral compositions. C.D. Ntuli has a strong opinion on this point of gender bias in Nguni society. He states:

Kuhlonishwa kabili, 'respect is mutual', so goes the Zulu idiom. In reality, this idiom rings hollow in the ears of many Nguni women as they lament a culture's blind, biased, and selfish consideration of the interests - mainly - of men above theirs. (Ntuli 2000:32)

He goes on to say that although respect, whether it be verbal or behavioural is expected of all members of society, women's sins are magnified and labels are given to women who seem to have failed in adhering to the expected codes of conduct. He points out that society tends to treat women with less respect and dignity than their male counterparts. He adds that society is more than ready to sling mud and condemn a woman who has faltered, whereas,

in Zulu there are very few words to describe a man who has misbehaved or who has shown some kind of disrespect or of not (sic) conforming to the expected norm. (Ntuli 2000:36)

Another interesting fact is that compositions of this nature are not the sole domain of women. Obviously, where castigatory and caustic references are predominant, it stands to reason that the lines are not self composed, although this may happen. In certain of the oral compositions recorded in urban settings, however, lines have been added by men as well as by other women, serving as an oblique type of conflict reducing behaviour in monitoring the norms of acceptable social conduct.

6.6.2 Prominent Themes in Women's *Izihasho*

The language encountered in this type of remonstratory oral delivery is of a highly allusive and formulaic nature. At the same time, however, it contains a very clear message which is intended to act as a warning and admonishment against pursuing unacceptable forms of behaviour. It is also common to encounter scatological references as well as crude and vulgar terms. These words are acceptable within the

framework of *izihasho* but would be frowned upon as *inhlamba* or filth if used loosely in everyday speech. This is an a tendency in most societies where people are free to express themselves in normally unacceptable ways within the framework of specific settings (such as certain games enjoyed by women at kitchen teas and stork parties).

The types of irregular behaviour targeted in these oral compositions focus primarily on misdemeanors such as promiscuity, laziness, gossiping, excessive drinking and failure to perform marital and maternal duties.

The most prevalent theme by far contained in the *izihasho* researched in urban areas is promiscuity. Due to the allusive nature of these oral compositions, it is necessary with some examples to fill in biographical detail as well as to examine the texts themselves.

6.6.2.1 The Theme of Promiscuity

Often more than one theme can occur at a time within a composition, so a woman can be reprimanded not only for promiscuity but also for drunkenness and laziness as well. Certain formulas recur in the examples given, and it is clear that there is often an urban counterpart for a well established formula prevalent in rural areas e.g.

akadlulwa bhulukwe vs akadlulwa bheshu/akashiywa
'sidwaba

she is not passed by any (man wearing) trousers vs
she is not passed by any man wearing traditional dress
(she is a prostitute)

The following *izihasho* are those that have promiscuity as the dominant topic.

Izibongo zikaKHI NGCOBO

UmaCosha

Siyacosha, siyaqathaza lapha.

Sithi Woza, gibela, oya phambili

Social Worker, moto yomphakathi!

The One who picks up,

She picks up here and discards there.

She beckons, Come, ride, going forward

Social Worker, vehicle of the public!

(Turner 1995:65)

Biographical Detail

The deverbilised image in the first line of "picking up" is carried through to the next line by initial clamping and contrasted with the verb *qathaza* which means to drop, in order to highlight this woman's behaviour in "picking up" and "dropping men" in that she is known for having affairs with many men.

The formula in the last two lines of being a vehicle (taxi), is a common one when alluding to promiscuous behaviour, the woman being likened to a mode of transport which is easily accessible, provided one has the money to pay, plus carrying the sexual undertone of being something that someone is able to ride on.

The sardonic metaphor expressed in English of the "Social Worker" alludes to someone who serves the community in a positive way - in this instance the male community, who make frequent use of her services.

Izihasho zikaS'BONGILE

Yeka mangqengqewu!
Yeka khamba oludala
Oselukhathele!
Kade kwasa ludlela.

Enough you talkative one!
Enough you old beer pot
Which is tired and worn out
For it has been in use a very long time.

Biographical Detail

The reference in the first line to Mangqengqewu is a derivation from the verb *ngqengqeza*, a verb which denotes noise or the constant sound of a ringing bell.

The allusion to S'bongile, a woman in her mid forties, as an old worn out beer pot, is a double edged sword. Not only does it carry the reference to drinking, but at the same time her promiscuity which is well known and shows no sign of abating, has rendered her a worn out utensil which is no longer desirable or useable.

Izihasho zikaMASITHOLE

UMahamb' ehlala
Ngenxa yobusoka

USifebe siyangicasula,
Wangalali ekhaya ngenxa yamadoda.
Untandokazi yamadoda
Mshintshanisi wamadoda,
Oshintshe amadoda ayishumi,
Ushintshe uSipho,
Wamshintsha ngoS'fiso
US'fiso wamshintsha ngoJohn
UJohn wamshintsha ngoSabelo.
USabelo wakhala wemuka
Walandelwa uVezi.
Mshintshi wamadoda ahlukene
Oshintshe uMdu
UMshintsha ngoZakhele.
Madod' onke ngawami.
Mthandi wamadoda
Othande eThekwini
Wathanda eMgungundlovu
Wathanda oLundi
Wathanda ePort Shepstone
Othande nkalozoneke.

You who have no fixed place to live
Because of your promiscuity.
Prostitute you upset me,
You do not sleep at home because of men
The lover of men,
One who changes men,
Who rejected Sipho
By accepting S'fiso
When she had already admitted John.
Who rejected John

By replacing him with Sabelo.
Sabelo ran away
And was followed by Vezi.
The changer of different men
Who rejected Mdu
And changed him for Zakhele.
All men belong to me!
The lover of men,
You have men in Durban
You have men in Johannesburg
You have men in Olundi,
You have men in Port Shepstone,
You have men in all spheres of the world.

Biographical Detail

Although these lines may not have much metaphorical imagery, the appeal lies in the structure of the composition which is based very closely on the lines of traditional *izibongo zamakhosi*. Instead of conquests in battle, we are presented here with a number of 'love conquests' who are discarded and done away with in much the same fashion as the heroes of old dealt with adversaries in battle. The mnemotechnical devices typical of oral compositions are very much in evidence in this particular example with much use being made of clamp words such as the noun *amadoda*, the repetition of Proper nouns and the repeated use of the verbs *shintsha* and *thanda*.

Izihasho zikaDELIWE

Mqedi wezwe!
Wena ongakhethi

*Ukuthi umuntu mdala noma mncane.
Wena futhi ongakhethi
Ukuthi umuntu mnyama noma mhlophe,
Ngoba uthi awubandlululi muntu.
Wena futhi ufuna ukuzidelisa
Ngoba ukholelwa ekutheni lento kayipheli,
Mtshali wamalumbo
Kwabancane nabadala.*

You who goes everywhere!
You who does not choose
Whether a person is old or young.

You also don't choose
Whether a person is black or white
Because you say you do not discriminate by race.

You want to satisfy yourself
Because you believe that what you have is inexhaustible.
You spreader of venereal diseases
To young and old alike.

(Turner 1995:66)

Biographical Detail

This woman lives at Ngonyameni near Umlazi. She is illiterate and comes from a poor family. She turned to prostitution as a source of income. The lines would be recited when with her peer group and were rendered more as spicy teasing than malicious accusation.

The first five lines refer to this woman's indiscriminate sexual behaviour, even across racial lines. The last two

lines refer to her ongoing treatment at the local clinic for venereal diseases.

Here we see evidence of cross clamping with the lines:

Ukuthi umuntu mdala noma mncane.

Ukuthi umuntu mnyama noma mhlophe,

Whether a person is old or young.

Whether a person is black or white

Izihasho zikaNOBUHLE BUTHELEZI

Maphek' ethulule njengebhodwe lasehlobo!

Uyathutha uyaphelekezela webhasi!

Izolo ubusefemini,

Namuhla usemgaqweni

Emalolini nasematekisini.

Abamnyama nabamhlophe baziwa nguwe

Kazi ingakanani lento yakho?

Bayadela abayaziyo.

The cooker of different foods like the summer pot!

You are transporting and accompanying people, you bus!

Yesterday you were at the firm,

Today you are in the street in lorries and taxis.

Both Blacks and Whites are known by you.

I wonder what the capacity of your thing is?

Happy are those who know it.

Biographical Detail

The first two lines of this composition are the only ones which have metaphors that require elucidation. The first line refers to her as the summer pot referring to the wide variety of lovers she has in the same way that the summer pot has such a wide variety of different vegetables which are cooked because of the favourable growing season. The second line refers to her in the commonly used formula of a bus, a vehicle which transports many people provided they have the fare - a reference to her many customers. The composition is concluded with crude references to her sexual capacity.

Izihasho zikaBUSISIWE

Hamba, hamba ngane!
Nomgodlagodla wezinsuku.
Mibhal' engabhalwanga!
Sehla senyuk' emabhasini.

Sakhathala ngezincane izifebe
Kuyez' ukuhlwa, sekusemnyango
Zonke zozwakala!

Go, go away child!
Weighed down by parcels every day.
Books that have not been written in.
She goes up and down with the buses.
We are tired of young prostitutes
Darkness is coming, it is now at the door
All will be revealed!

Biographical Detail

These *izihasho* belong to a girl who was, at the time that her *izihasho* were recorded, at school in Umlazi. She was given these *izihasho* by different people who live in her community, and they are normally recited by various members of her peer group. On being questioned about the content of the composition, she showed indifference to any negative view that they expressed about her. She said that her parents were not aware of her *izihasho*.

The first verse refers to the fact that although this girl left home every day laden with books for school, her books were not used, as she would not attend school but would go into town with potential suitors.

The second verse acts as a warning to the girl, that people in the community are aware of the situation, and that if she is caught out, the evidence will be made known for all to hear.

Izihasho zikaLUNGILE

ULungile, umama's baby!
Hhayi Mama, ungakhathazeki,
Udl' Induna, esuthis' isikhathi eside!
Ingane inengane!

Lungile, mother's baby!
No mother, don't worry,
She eats Induna (maize meal) and fills herself up for some time!

A child who has a child.

(Turner 1995:68)

Biographical Detail

These *izihasho* which were recited at occasions by this young girl's peers and even sometimes by their mothers, were given to her in an attempt to censure her own mother. The accusation levelled at her in these lines was to expose the fact that she indulged her daughter and spoiled her rotten. She would also not heed the warnings of others with regards her daughter's bad behaviour and is thus chided with the results of her lack of discipline, i.e. her daughter's pregnancy.

The first two lines gently tease the girl and her mother, but in the third line, the mother is addressed in a sarcastic manner. The fourth line alludes to the fact that the girl is pregnant (i.e. her stomach is full having satisfied herself with Induna maize meal). The last line is a reference to the undesirable situation of a young girl falling pregnant.

Izihasho zikaZOKUPHIWA MAKHATHINI

Udilozi liyaxega uma libona indoda!

Ibhasi engashiyi muntu.

Egibelisana nangesikweletu.

Uyigagu lamadoda!

Isiqeda koma soqobo.

Panties that loosen on seeing a man!

Bus which leaves no-one behind.

It is ridden on with credit.

Lovable one to men!
The real thirst quencher.

Biographical Detail

The first line here is a more modern urban formula equivalent to the original lines which appear in Nandi's *izibongo*

..... *Umathanga awahlangani*
 Ahlangana ngokubona umyeni/indoda

Again the common oral formula of a woman as a form of public transport is used here - where Zokuphiwa is likened to someone who accepts anyone's advances. However, unlike a professional prostitute, she does not expect payment hence the reference to *isikweletu*, but rather expects her lovers to court her and buy her things. Her appeal to men is quite obvious and the way in which she is referred to in the last line refers to her ability to gratify the sexual needs of her suitors.

Izihasho zikaMAMKHIZE

Umgqomo ungenankintsho!
Untamb' ende kalayini.
Umlomo uconsa amathe
Mawubona into efake ibhulukwe.
Umaqoma aze aquleke,
Awusibheki isikhali esinengwebu
Okwehla ngomphimbo kuyelilela.
Sala Sarafina!

Container without handles!

Long rope of string.
Mouth that waters
When it sees one who wears trousers.
One who loves till losing consciousness,
You don't care that the weapon has froth
That goes down the throat
Stay Sarafina!

Biographical Detail

The metaphor used in the first line of a container or bin is commonly used to describe a person who is indiscriminate either in drink or love matters. The second line is a common metaphor that is associated with height and is wide-spread formulaic phrase¹. The last three lines criticise her for excessive drinking, and end with a jibe at her for being condemned to the status of an old maid, the name Sarafina being in popular use before the film of that name to indicate an old, outdated person.

Izihasho zikaNESI waseKING EDWARD

*Umagwaz' ePhoyinti osinqasibomvu,
Umubi wengulube!
Ngokuthath' ukiss uwufak' odakeni.
Ungan' ayinacala indab' isocansini.*

*Umelaph' wengculazi kanti uyayifafaza!
Udilozi liyaxega malibon' indoda.
Into kaThixo ayipheli!*

The one who stabs at Point Road with red buttocks,

You are as ugly as a pig!
For taking a kiss and dipping it into the mud.
The child is innocent, the problem lies with the mat.
The healer of Aids while she spreads it!
The panties are loosened when seeing a man.
This thing of God does not spoil!

(Turner 1990:117)

Biographical Detail

These lines would be recited by the peers of this nurse when chiding or teasing her. They would normally be treated with hoots of laughter by those listening, and at worst would cause mild embarrassment to the recipient on some occasions, depending on who was in the company.

The first line alludes to her abode in Point Road in Durban, notorious as a place of prostitution. The second line refers to her facial appearance, as she is not an attractive woman and the fact that she is not choosy about the appearance or status of her lovers either. The third line seems to reflect the sentiment of debasing sexuality and sexual relations with its metaphor of mud. The fourth line is a jibe at her habit of never sleeping alone. The next line is true irony, although she is a nurse whose profession it is to render help in curing people, because of her loose morals, she is actually responsible for spreading disease. The penultimate line speaks for itself, but came into her *izihasho* for her reported affair with a patient at the hospital. The last line is a line that the woman herself was fond of saying when questioned about her insatiable sexual appetite, implying that no matter how much she engages in intercourse, her sexual organs were indefatigable!

Izihasho zikaMAMSOMI

*Umathanga ayazivulekela,
Umazalela ezeleni njengenkukhu.
Akadlulwa bheshe, akadlulwa bhulukwe,
Umubi, umuhle, ingobo uma uyindoda.
Uyindaba izekwayo emadodeni!*

Thighs that open easily,
Never bearing children like a chicken does an egg.
No male passes her by (whether clad traditionally or in
Western clothing),
Whether you are ugly or handsome, as long as you are a male.
All men know about her!

(Turner 1990:119)

Biographical Detail

The bearer of these *izihasho*, MaMsomi, is not averse to these lines which criticise her promiscuous behaviour. They are normally recited by her peers seemingly not in a malicious way, but more in a type of 'barbed' teasing manner.

Izihasho zikaMAGUMEDE

*MaGumede, mfaz' oshay' indoda!
Ngqongqoza bhasi yabelungu
Ngqoshishilizi emzini.*

MaGumede, woman that hits men!
Railway bus of the Whites
Dominant in the household.

(Turner 1995:64)

Biographical Detail

These lines serve to hold this iron-willed lady up for ridicule. In a patriarchal society such as is found amongst the Zulu, it is extremely rare to encounter a woman who dominates the household or her husband. For this reason she is criticised, but to her, these *izihasho* are a delight and she has no problem with calling her own *izihasho* out gleefully. The *izihasho* would operate on a second level when recited by her peers, in so far as they would also be recited in order to rebuke the husband, who has allowed such a thing to happen in his household, and would be an invocation to him to address the situation.

Izihasho zikaBELLA MSHIBE

Bafazana baka-D, benzani?

Babhinc' izidwedwe

Wake wambonaphi uMlung' ephihl' ungiyane?

Hololo! Hololo! Hhayi ngiyeke wena!

You low-classed women of D-Section, what are they doing?

They wear rags

When did you last see a Whiteman wearing a headring?

Hololo! Hololo! No leave me alone!

(Turner 1995:62)

Biographical Detail

The lines in this woman's *izihasho* were self-composed and are used as a comment directed at a section of women who lived in D section in the township of Umlazi. She came from a rural

environment to town to join her husband who had secured accommodation there. She encountered this group of women in the community who looked down on her and mocked her for her traditional form of dress.

The use of the now offensive term *umfazi* in its diminutive form which reflects derogation, makes Bella's feeling about her critics quite clear. The reference to *izidwedwe* which are equated to discarded clothing or rags is an effective slight about these women's clothing which, although Western, are described as being rags. The term *izidwedwe* carries a double entendre, as it may also refer to a morally bad person.

The third line carries the main implication of the intended message, in that White men are never seen wearing the traditional Zulu headring, *ungiyane*, therefore those who shun traditional ways and traditional dress and adopt other people's customs and culture cannot be respected.

6.6.2.2 THE THEME OF GOSSIPING

The behaviour of these women vis-a-vis the expected norm of a woman in Zulu society is being censured and the exposure of these undesirable traits were aired in the hope that they would shame them into reverting to a more acceptable behavioural pattern.

Izihasho zikaNOMSA

*Uvovo liyavuza,
Kadlulwa zindaba,
Kadlulwa bhulukwe.*

*Umathanga awahlangani
Ayazivulekela uma ebona ibhulukwe!*

The strainer which is leaking!
No news passes her by,
No man passes her by.
She whose thighs do not meet,
They open voluntarily when seeing trousers!

(Turner 1995:60)

Biographical Detail

This talkative woman who is also exposed for her immoral behaviour is well known amongst her associates in KwaMashu by these formulaic lines. The first line contains a reference to the image of *uvovo*, a particularly striking metaphor, in which her gossipmongering habits are likened to that of a strainer which is used to strain traditional beer. The formula which is used in the fourth line is taken from Nandi's *izibongo*.

IZIHASHO zikaTHEMBANI

*Isigubhu samanzi siyavuza
Kadlulwa zindaba,
Kadlulwa bhulukwe.
Umaphenti uyaxega uma ebona indoda.
Umabheja abebomvu uma ebona indoda.
Ubuso bugcwala injabulo uma ebona amabhulukwe.*

The gourd of water is leaking.
No news passes her,
No trousers pass her.

She is the one who sees a man and the panties are loosened.
Her complexion changes on seeing a man.
She is the one whose face breaks into a smile on seeing
trousers (a man).

(Turner 1995:58)

Biographical Detail

The oral record of Thembani's behaviour is very similar to those recorded in the previous example with similar images. These izihasho were those of a youngish woman who lives in KwaMashu.

Izihasho zikaMAKHUZWAYO

- 1 UPhoshozwayo,
- 2 Uyazithanda izindaba zabantu.
- 3 Akadlulwa ndaba,
- 4 Umadlebe afinyelela kuzo zonke izinkalo.
- 5 Inja yomoya,
- 6 Izizwa ngekhala izindaba,
- 7 Kuthi lapho ingezwa,
- 8 Itshikizise umsidlana wayo, ikhonkothe.
- 9 Umapheka ibhodwe lize lishe,
- 10 Ngoba elibele ukulevuza izindaba.
- 11 Useze wamlomo ubhek' ecaleni.
- 12 Ukudla akasakwazi emlonyeni.
- 13 Udlana nezindaba.
- 14 Umaxosha umyeni kusale yena.
- 15 Impela, ukhanda limtshel' okwakhe.

(private informant)

- 1 The Talkative One!
- 2 She likes other peoples' stories,

3 She does not miss a single yarn,
4 Ears that reach out to every plateau,
5 Spying dog,
6 It smells out stories with its nose,
7 But when it does not hear,
8 It wags its small tail and barks.
9 One who keeps the pot on the fire until it
 burns
10 Because she is busy talking incessantly,
11 Her mouth now faces sideways.
12 She who eats no food,
13 She devours only stories.
14 One who drives away her husband and remains
 behind,
15 Indeed, she is pig-headed!

(Turner 1990:112)

Biographical Detail

These lines were recited by this woman's neighbour, whose feelings about MaKhuzwayo are quite evident here. She is a woman who is not originally from this particular area, but within a short space of time after moving in, she knew everything about everybody. When ostracised by certain people who tried to keep information out of her hearing, she would go up and down the streets, asking endless questions, in order that she did not miss out on anything. She was married with no children, but her husband eventually left her because of his unhappiness with her behaviour.

The composer has used some humorous images in this oral record, comparing MaKhuzwayo to a dog, emphasising her ability to sniff out spicy information. Due to the fact

that she is constantly gossiping, her mouth is described as being constantly sideways, typical of a person who is always whispering secrets.

Izibasho zikaMaZONDI WASEMBALI

- 1 *Gagashe, MaMgobhozi*
- 2 *Zaziwa uwena kuqala abanye bengakazazi*
- 3 *Uma yaziwa nguwe*
- 4 *Isuke isizokwaziwa iMbali yonke*
- 5 *Uhleli nje awusebenzi uhlalele zona*
- 6 *Uzazi ukusuka nokuhlala*
- 7 *Bathi bebuya abasebenzayo*
- 8 *Usubatshela zonke gobhozile*
- 9 *Wena owagobhoza abanye bengakagobhozi*
- 10 *Uthi ulele ebusuku ube ucabanga*
- 11 *Ukuthi ingabe kosa nini uyosakaza*
- 12 *Msakazi wezindaba izingapheli*
- 13 *Ezakho azinaso isikhathi kuhle*
- 14 *KweRadio Zulu*
- 15 *Kuthi kuyolalwa ube uzizwe kahle*
- 16 *Ngoba ungena umuzi nomuzi*
- 17 *Ufuna izindaba*
- 18 *Ugobhoza iMbali yonke*
- 19 *Ongazazi uzizwa ngawe*
- 20 *Ayikho ekudlulayo*

- 1 *Gagashe, Mgobhozi!*
- 2 *It's known that your rumours start from you when
others do not know*
- 3 *If it is known by you then it will be known
through the whole of iMbali*
- 4 *You just sit around waiting for gossip*

- 5 They say when those who work return
- 6 You tell them everything
- 7 You who gossips when others do not
- 8 At night you lie and wait for the dawn so that
you can spread more news
- 9 Broadcaster of news that does not end
- 10 You do not keep the same time as Radio Zulu
- 11 It is said that sleep only comes when you have
gathered sufficient information
- 12 Because you go from homestead to homestead
- 13 Looking for gossip
- 14 To spread around the whole of iMbali
- 15 Some not knowing it was heard by you
- 16 Nothing escapes you

Biographical Detail

Mrs Zondi is a lady who lived in this informant's township of Imbali in Pietermaritzburg. She doesn't work, but spends her time sniffing out gossip from one house to the next. Her surname is appropriate in view of the fact that the *isithakazelo* (clan greeting name) attached to the Zondi clan is 'Nondaba' - the one who has news. The names used to greet her in the first line signify rushing and flowing movement, much like the news that pours out of her constantly. She is well known in her area as a renowned gossipmonger. She tells everyone on their return from work what has happened in their absence. Her news is not restricted to certain times like on Radio Zulu. Sleep only comes to her when she is dead tired after information-gathering from all those around her.

Izihasho zikaNOKUZOLA

- 1 *Ugedegede wentokazi zonke zibuzwa kuye*
- 2 *EzakwaShenge, ezakwaShozi, ezakaShabalala*
- 3 *Zaziwa nguye*
- 4 *Impophoma yabakhiphibezisu yezifebe*
- 5 *Ibhasi elibhabhaza ngetiye*
- 6 *Isiphefu siphefuzelela izigodi zonke*

- 1 Non-stop talking woman, all stories are
asked for by her
- 2 The stories of the Shange, Shozi and
Shabalala families are known by her
- 3 She is a fountain (of knowledge) about
those who have aborted the babies of
prostitutes
- 4 She is the bus that goes with tea
- 5 She is the light of the stories that come
from many areas around her

Biographical Detail

This oral composition was recorded by a student who lives in the same area as this woman in Eshowe. Nokuzola is known as one who always knows about stories before anyone else, sometimes they are true, but she is suspected of scandal mongering. The metaphor of waterfall (*imphophoma*) and the noun symbolising a noisy incessant chatterer are rich in imagery. The sound of the bus's noise in *elibhabhaza* also signifies the noise she creates with her gossiping. The reference to tea means that a cup of tea is sufficient payment to get her to pour forth her information. Others in

the area would recite these lines as a form of censure, but Nokuzola is a headstrong woman who does not bow to pressure and these lines seem not to have curtailed her gossiping tendencies, but what they have done is that people, on hearing these lines, become more circumspect in giving any information in front of her. The critical content here serves more as a warning to the community in which this woman lives than as a deterrent for her abject tendencies. This woman was, however, not keen on these *izihasho* being recited in front of men, especially her husband, as she had been severely chastised by him when he had heard it on a previous occasion.

6.6.2.3 The Theme of Excessive Drinking

Izihasho zikaBongi

1 *Ziyalamba izingane noma azilambi,*
 2 *Inqobo umangithole izinyembezi zikaQueen Victoria.*
 3 *Angiphuzi ngiyawolela.*
 4 *Ngiphuza izithukuthuku zami zomfazi womlungu.*
 5 *Umadakwa adunuse edunisiswa izithukuthuku zakhe*
 6 *Tshwala bami ungumduduzi wezithandani!*

1 The children may or may not have food,
 2 The important thing is that I get the tears of
 Queen Victoria.
 3 I do not drink, I pour it in.
 4 I drink my sweat caused by the white woman.
 5 The drunk one seen by all because of her heavy work
 6 Oh alcohol of mine you are the comforter of the
 orphans!

Biographical Detail

These *izibongo* are those of a young woman who lives in Umlazi. Her parents died in a car accident while she was very young. She has two children born extra-maritally and works for a White woman who exploits her with long hours and low pay. She acknowledges in these lines a self-criticism, but apportions the blame and her situation to her employer's harshness. Liquor is regarded by her as her escape and saviour from the harsh realities of life.

6.6.2.4 The Theme of Overstaying One's Welcome

Another satirical oral record on a domestic theme is that which condemns the insensitivity of a visiting relative from a rural area who came to stay with a family in a Durban township and then prolonged her stay indefinitely.

Izihasho zikaJABULILE

- 1 *Kanti uyohamba nini?*
- 2 *Mavakasha angabe esahamba.*
- 3 *Mahlala izinyanga ngezinyanga,*
- 4 *Umafika ezohamba kusasa,*
- 5 *Ikusasa lizobe ikusasa.*
- 6 *Sidlakudla, isinkwa asisalali,*
- 7 *Bhejane, phuma esiqiwini!*
- 8 *Umahlale ecinene,*
- 9 *Umzimba ongasawazi amanzi,*
- 10 *Unukisa indlu yonke,*
- 11 *Mdondoshiya wentokazi,*

12 *Phuma esiqiwini!*

- 1 When will you go back?
- 2 The one who visits and never departs.
- 3 The one who stays for months and months,
- 4 The one who arrives with the intention of going
back tomorrow,
- 5 Then tomorrow becomes tomorrow.
- 6 The one who eats a lot and leaves no bread
untouched,
- 7 Rhinoceros, get out of the game reserve!
- 8 The one whose nose is always blocked,
- 9 The body that does not know water,
- 10 The one who makes the whole house smell,
- 11 The giant of a woman,
- 12 Get out of the game reserve!

(private informant: Turner 1990:116)

6.7 Recapitulation

In the oral texts of women under consideration in this chapter, the aspect of *ukugxeka* (criticism) heavily outweighs the more positive aspects of the subjects. They are exposed to the critical analysis of vice and folly by the use of invective, sarcasm, irony, mockery and raillery, exaggeration and understatement, ambiguity and wit.

Generally in *izihasho*, bringing about conformity to approved modes of behaviour is achieved not through overt criticism as is the case with these examples, but more through extensive positive reinforcement of what are deemed to be approved actions and praiseworthy qualities. In the examples

cited in this chapter, where specific women who transgress socially acceptable norms in urban settings are exposed in these scribally recorded IDs, one must bear in mind that they are atypical examples of *izihasho*, where the good and the bad are normally balanced and blended together to give an overall picture of the person. Kolawole states that, "Women use oral literature and exclusive female genres to condemn social problems, immorality, unfaithfulness, and idleness - and to make demands" (1997:77).

The oral compositions of royal women, on scrutiny, serve as important historical records as well as functioning primarily in their own lifetimes as compositions reflecting their owners' personal identities. These *izibongo* offer insights into the lives of these women which would otherwise have been lost in the mists of time. The *izihasho* of modern times (reproduced above), tend to remain on a personal and domestic level. The content bears evidence, in both historical and current *izibongo*, of coarse descriptions and satirical references, despite the fact that the bearers of some of these *izibongo* held prominent positions in terms of their relationship to kings.

The following chapter examines the more prevalent form of *izibongo/izihasho* of Zulu men and the function that these play in rendering criticism of behaviour and actions that differ in some respects from those outlined for women above.

Notes

¹ See Koopman 2001 for discussion on formulas and catch phrases generally and a discussion on this particular formulaic phrase.

CHAPTER 7: THE IZIBONGO OF ZULU MEN

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the features of conflict expression contained in the most prevalent form of *izibongo* in Zulu society, that is, in the male domain. It traces the fluidity of this form of oral tradition which is able to transform its focus in order to accommodate the changing needs of the people who are so inextricably linked to it. This critique is done not only by looking at previously written extracts from the well researched field of the *izibongo* of the main Zulu kings (*izibongo zamakhosi*), but also looking at the current previously unrecorded versions of the *izihasho* of the ordinary man.

The most basic type of *izibongo* is simply a collection of names and extended name phrases which serve as a condensed "oral ID". This type of composition is the one accorded to the common man who, although his *izibongo* may contain references to events and efforts of endeavour, has not yet been elevated to a position of political importance. Evans-Pritchard (1948:166) makes the point that:

The study of names and titles of address has importance because ... they symbolise a man's social position in relation to the people around him.

The *izibongo* of chiefs, kings or politically prominent and famous people (*izibongo zamakhosi*), display the evidence of extensive formulaic use and mnemotechnical devices in

extended oral compositions, compared to the more basic simple *izihasho* of the common man.

7.2 The Role of Language

7.2.1 Oral Formulas

In the *izibongo* performed by specialists for important people, one finds that certain *izimbongi* or professional bards tend to re-use a limited number of formulas which are suited to their own performing and composing styles. These formulas have a stabilising function in the text, although memory and creative variation are clearly important factors in the individual's choice and use of them. Apart from these formulas assisting in the speed and fluency of recitation, and their obvious mnemonic function, they are also important compositional devices which act as a handy basis from which an accompanying image may more easily be developed.

Certain formulas act like 'codes' and convey a certain message to the listener about a certain characteristic trait, peculiar to the person about whom the line is composed, and these are normally easy for the audience or listener to identify with. These formulas have been described by Gunner (1984:272) as:

- a) Fixed formulas;
- b) Flexible formulas: i) using figurative language
ii) with a marked pattern
- c) Shorter formulas: i) used only by bards
ii) in general use

With composers of *izibongo* and *izihasho* in the light of this

research, the focus is on c ii), where we find a number of shorter formulas in common usage cropping up quite regularly.

Lord (1986:8) comments on the presence of a substantial number of true formulas in a text as being a reliable criterion for oral composition. Several of these formulas occur in the examples of recorded oral compositions, which are cited below.

Gunner (1984:273) gives the example of the following formula taken from three sources:

1. *Umthente uhlab' usamila*

The Silverspike Grass stabs whilst still young
(Extract from the *Izibongo* of Chief Qokinsimbi
Ntuli, Eshowe)

2. *Umthente kaJama uhlab' usamila*

The Silverspike Grass of Jama which stabs while
still young
(Extract from the *Izibongo* of Dinizulu)

3. *Umthente kaJama uhlab' usamila*

(Extract from the *Izibongo* of Zwelithini
kaBhekuzulu, the current Zulu Monarch)

Gunner does not record, however, that this formula can be traced back to Shaka's *izibongo*:

Umthent' ohlab' usamila kaMjokwane

Silverspike grass that pricks while still
growing, son of Mjokwane

This formula associates the bearer with one who takes high office and great responsibility at an early age or who shows obvious talent while still young.

This notion of formulas was explained by Milman Parry (cited by Gunner 1984:282) to be a popular and pleasing phrase, which is recalled by other oral composers to express a certain idea when the need arises. Formulas also vary greatly from area to area (those used in urban areas may vary from those used in the rural areas) and they appear and disappear over the passage of time. What is of the utmost importance in the use of formulas is that they provide an element of familiarity to which the audience subscribes. This accounts for the reason why one might find a variance in the popularity of certain formulas which tend to be used more often in particular areas.

The following is an example of a formula commonly used in urban areas of a man who is a womaniser:

Akadlulwa siketi!

He is not passed by any skirt (woman)!

A similar formula given in the previous chapter to describe a woman that is very "keen" on men:

Akadlulwa bhesu/Akadlulwa bhulukwe!

She is not passed by a *bheshu* (man's traditional loin covering)/trousers!

Another commonly used formula which may occur in slightly varying forms describes a person who has narrowly escaped death, or one who is extremely hard to get rid of, and in this way carries a tone of approval inherent in it. However, it is often used subtly in *izihasho* to level criticism at others who have been implicated in a plot to 'get rid' of someone for whatever reason:

UMafavuke njengedangabane

The one who dies and rises again like the Dangabane weed.

These lines are taken from the *izibongo* of the famous Mthethwa chief, Dingiswayo, who was attacked and regarded as defeated. He was able to resurrect himself and became an important and powerful chief, who was to become the mentor and inspiration for the young Shaka. This formula has survived the passage of time of two centuries and is used in various contemporary contexts, but in a critical vein it refers to someone who is impossible to get rid of. The audience, because of their familiarity with the subject of the *izibongo* would be able to discern whether the formula was being used in a disapproving tone or not.

7.2.2 Humour and Satire

In contemporary oral expressions it becomes apparent that satire and panegyric forms of these biographical and autobiographical compositions, invert each other as the

composers cleverly manipulate the recognised structure of the traditional form i.e. *izihasho* to record their protests or complaints about a person. In *izibongo/izihasho*, the expectation of the audience listening to the recitation of the oral composition, is that most often the content reflects positive aspects of a person's identity and actions. The inversion occurs when the opposite (i.e. criticism) is rendered by using *izibongo/izihasho*, a form of oral composition more widely associated with non-negative sentiments. The manifest satirical elements belong to the category of personal satire, and the focus of conscience, exposure or correction is on the person who is being satirised. In personal satire, the 'victim' or 'target' is named or referred to in allusive imagery which makes him or her recognisable. The problem facing the satirist in this type of satire is how to expose the person being satirised in such a way that all reasonable people will be convinced that aspects of his or her behaviour invite censure, and also how to shame the victim so that the result is some sort of possible reformation, or, at least, recognition of his or her weaknesses and failings.

But contempt or disapproval in *izihasho* is lightened - in many instances - by humour. The mark of the oral satirist is that he does not accept these failures, or he refuses to tolerate them discreetly. To this end he exposes these shortcomings to all and sundry and holds them up for derision and ridicule. This is particularly true of *izihasho* - the oral art form which may contain abuse, insults or ridicule - for, in these, a person's shortcomings, whether they be physical or behavioral, are revealed to all, and furthermore these faults may be

immortalised in the oral expression, for sometimes these oral records outlive the person at whom they are aimed. The degree of severity of the derision, mockery or ridicule also varies from the one extreme of mild teasing, to severe censure, libel or blasphemy. In all the instances dealt with in these examples of Zulu oral traditions, however, the element of humour or wit is either clearly evident, or less obviously present in the incongruous metaphorical description used.

Again, whether or not the person at whom the articulated expression is aimed takes exception depends largely on the motivation and the manner of the performer, as well as the context in which the criticism is articulated.

7.2.3 BAWDY LANGUAGE AND SEXUAL INNUENDO

The most important thing about the criticism which is found in these oral forms is that it is very closely related to reality and real life. On a higher plane involving such things as political lampooning, the satire may be subversive, but in the light of this investigation, it is a form concerned with social issues and more often than not deals with the more humorous side of satire. As it tries to strip off masks, and expose things as they are, satire reduces matters to basics. Abusive and crude language is an important aspect of this type of individual satire, where frequent reference is made to bodily parts and bodily functions. This feature links people to their own basic humanity and is known as scatology.

The use of explicit language is prominent in the type of satirical expressions under examination here, sexual references being accepted in a way that they are not in everyday speech. Problems that relate to sexual matters, promiscuity, marriage and status are aired with acceptable license, either in the tone of raillery, mockery, sarcasm or invective. As Gunner states: "To ignore the bawdy element in *izibongo* is to fail to see the extent of their biographic nature" (1984:332). The following compositions of the *izibongo* of prominent Zulu Kings, although containing elements of censure and dissatisfaction, do not reflect the element of bawdiness in the same way that the oral compositions of commoners do.

7.3 *Izibongo Zamakhosi*

The *izibongo zamakhosi* under discussion in this study were composed by an *imbongi* or professional bard who not only played a major role as exalter of the reigning monarch but he was also the official channel through whom the opinions and general feelings of the ancestors were reflected back to the king.

When one compares the situation in which the modern *imbongi* operates to that of his traditional counterpart from days gone by, the picture is markedly different. If one examines the *izibongo* of the current Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini, as recorded by his previous *imbongi*, Dlamini, one becomes aware of the fact that unlike the balanced compositions of previous powerful Zulu kings from Shaka to Cetshwayo, where license to criticise the monarch was not uncommon, these modern *izibongo* no longer contain material which could be considered damaging or critical of the king's actions, indicating a shift in the function of the *imbongi*. With the

current political situation, and the tension between Inkatha and the ANC, there is little wonder that,

Usage ... of key symbolic forms (such as the royal *izibongo*) convey a kind of ownership, a right to dictate and define what a culture is, to whom it belongs and how it operates in relation to contending political ideologies of the time. (Gunner & Gwala 1991:12)

In the run up to the 1996 KwaZulu-Natal local elections, performances of the *imbongi* took place on numerous occasions in rural areas where the Inkatha Freedom Party candidates were addressing their rural constituencies. This would indicate that even the usage of praises of senior political leaders, aside from those of the royal house, have a role to play in the contemporary political scene in uniting people in support of a particular political party or ideology. Kromberg (1994:57-74) in his research clearly shows that this trend is not unique to the Inkatha Freedom Party, but was also harnessed by the ANC-aligned trade unions in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Kaschula (1991) cites the cases of several Xhosa *iimbongi* who have been either harrassed or arrested in recent years because of criticism which has been passed about certain political leaders and contentious political issues while reciting oral praises. This would seem to indicate that power is of concern in all societies and how that power is brokered is important to the ongoing health of a community. In situations where the oral mode still dominates in the hearts and minds of the people, the *imbongi* still continues to voice criticism.

However, there exist many examples of criticism in the historical praises of the various Zulu Kings regardless of

how powerful they were, particularly from the era of Senzangakhona (1760-1816) to that of Cetshwayo (1862-1884). These were incorporated into the King's *izibongo* by the *imbongi* as admonishments for what he, as mouthpiece of the people, believed to be actions or events worthy of censure.

**7.3.1 Criticism in Men's *Izibongo* Recorded in Print:
Extracts from the *Izibongo Zamakhosi***

The *izibongo zamakhosi* are a clear example of what Conolly terms the socio-cultural archive, for they orally record the kings' histories, their nature, characteristics, peculiarities and the events of their lives. The tendency in this type of composition is to maximise the praise element. Bryant, an early chronicler of Zulu history and customs, describes the *imbongi* as one who made it his business to know everything that the king and all his ancestors ever did or ever had done, making,

reference to every creditable and even discreditable, incident in the king's and his ancestors' lives. ... And like the jesters of old, they were permitted such extravagant freedom of speech that they put on record much that it might otherwise have been dangerous to state. (1949:485)

The versions of the *izibongo* of the earlier kings from the father of Shaka, Senzangakhona, right to the present king Zwelithini Goodwill, although passed on from generation to generation orally, have fortunately also been recorded in writing by various scholars of Zulu history and oral traditions. Among the most well known collaters and

recorders of various versions of the oral records of the previous kings were A.T Bryant, R.C. Samuelson and James Stuart from the first three decades of the 1900s, C.L.S. Nyembezi (whose book *Izibongo Zamakhosi* was published in 1958) and A.T. Cope (whose *Izibongo* was published in 1968). Stuart's research was made accessible in the 1960s and 1970s in the form of the James Stuart Archives, edited by Webb and Wright. A version of Dingane's *izibongo* was later published by Rycroft and Ngcobo in 1988. It is from these sources that researchers have been able to make in-depth studies of these lengthy oral compositions and study the historical, sociological and anthropological significance embedded in their allusive language.

The critical extracts examined make up a very small proportion of the total *izibongo* which consist mainly of eulogies of the Zulu kings. On average, the *izibongo* comprise approximately four hundred lines, lengthy oral records by any standards. The critical elements are interspersed in the *izibongo* and are a fraction of the total content, but the critical message they carry is nevertheless noteworthy.

7.3.1.1 Criticism in the *Izibongo* of Senzangakhona

In tracing aspects of criticism present in *izibongo zamakhosi*, we find the barbed references from the *imbongi* going back as far as the time of Senzangakhona (1760-1816), the father of Shaka, who was extensively criticised overtly and covertly, for certain aspects of his character and habitual behaviour. The main theme running through these

izibongo is critical reference to Senzangakhona's womanizing tendency (Cope 1968:76/79 lines 8-9/63-66), his unpredictability (Cope 1968:77 lines 45-50, page 79 lines 52/76, page 81 lines 83-85), and the unusual emphasis on his perfect physique (Cope 1968:77 lines 16-29, page 79 lines 67-70). This is unlike the *izibongo* of the Shakan and post Shakan era where qualities such as bravery, hunting and fighting skills, leadership qualities and conquests are the main focus of the praises. Apart from these references to his female conquests, he is criticized also for his treatment of the family of his conquests:

Odl' umfazi umkaSukuzwayo

Wamudl' uSukuzwayo kanye nendodana

He captured a woman, the wife of Sukuzwayo,

And destroyed Sukuzwayo and his son.

He is also described as a soft target, repeatedly captured by other tribal chiefs:

Uthi lwempundu lakwaNomgabhi,

Obehluhlal' izikhova,

Obeluhlal' uPhungashe wakwaButhelezi,

Luhlal' uMacingwane waseNgonyameni,

Luhlal' uDlidlama wakwaMajola.

Stake forming the gate post of Nomgabhi,

On which owls perched,

On which Phungashe of the Buthelezi's sat,

On which Macingwane of Ngonyameni sat,

On which Dladlama of the Majolas sat.

(Cope 1968:79)

In the following extracts, Senzangakhona is criticised for spending too much time with women and not enough with his council:

Obengayi bandla, obengayi maduneni

One who does not attend the Assembly, nor to his council

(1968:81)

An example of how the imbongi reveals Senzangakhona as being unpredictable in nature:

*Amanz' aseMphembeni inguqunguqu,
Angiwaqedi nalaph' eyayo.*

(1968:82)

Constant changing water of the Mpembeni stream,
I do not even know where it is going to.

These *izibongo* contain criticism comprising virtually 50% of the content either by omission (what the *imbongi* does not say) or overtly by commission.

7.3.1.2 Criticism in the Izibongo of Shaka

Even a king as powerful as Shaka (1787-1828) did not escape the critical tongue of the *imbongi* who warns him not to continue pushing his men on endless campaigns, especially during the summer season which was the time when they traditionally rested:

*Mgengi phez' izitha kusehlobo,
Utshani bude buzokugibanisa.*

Trickster, abstain from enemies, it is summer,
The grass is long, it will get the better of
you (Cope 1968:95)

The following lines refer to Shaka's obsession with succession and the ruthless manner in which he dealt with those whom he perceived as a threat. The *imbongi* here warns Shaka that if he continues on his killing spree there would be no nation to lead or to rule over. He also expresses his concern about Shaka's relentless raids for food and cattle from his neighbouring clans.

*Nkosi umubi ngoba awukhethi,
Ngoba nobakonyokolume uyababulala*

Chief you are bad because you are not selective
Because you even kill family members

*UShaka ngiyesab'ukuthi nguShaka
Ngibon' isizwe senkosi siphela,
Iyobus' obani?*

Shaka I am afraid to say it is Shaka
I see the dissipation of the king's nation
Who will then reign?

Ivila elidla amabele ezikhuthali

The lazy one who devours the corn of the diligent
ones

*Umasongo mahle inkonyane yenkomo
Kwangixaka ukukhaba kwalenkomo*

Yakhab' osengayo yadel' umbambi

Powerful limbs, calf of the beast
The kicking of this beast puzzled me
It kicked the milker and left the one holding it

The following example illustrates the *imbongi's* criticism referring to Shaka's attack of a neighbouring clan, which appeared to be an error of judgement.

*Umvumelani uGodolozì
Ethi ngowanganeno kwaNandi
Kanti ukude kwaNtombazana*

Why has he accepted Godolozì (Phakathwayo's brother
– a supporter of Zwide¹)
Thinking that he was on his side
Whereas he was on Ntombazi's side (Zwide's mother)

7.3.1.3 Criticism in the Izibongo of Dingane

Dingane (1788-1840), son of Senzangakhona and half brother of Shaka and Mpande, usurped the leadership of the Zulu nation after the murder of Shaka, the result of a plot between Dingane and his aunt, the powerful Mkabayi. The criticism levelled at Dingane by the *imbongi* pertains extensively to Dingane's part in Shaka's death and the unpredictability of his character. Shades of cowardice are hinted at in the following extract from Dingane's *izibongo*:

*UNomashikizela
Owashiy' impi yakhe*

Restless One who left his regiment
(Rycroft 1988:71)

Here the bard exposes Dingane in a cowardly light by making use of the feminine marker -No-. This is a metaphoric reference to Dingane's action when he deserted the regiment he was with on a specific campaign, to return in order to assassinate Shaka who was at his kraal, unprotected and unsuspecting. The clever use of the metaphor *UNomashikizela* also contains the image of 'wobbling buttocks', again an image associated more with women than with men. Dingane is also criticised by the *imbongi* for his treacherous behaviour towards his own brother Shaka:

Owagabadel' inkundla yakwaBulawayo
He who usurped the court of Bulawayo

This is reinforced in the metaphor of unpredictability:

UVemvane olumabalabala
Ngisabathe ngiyalubamba, luyahwaqabala

Colourful butterfly
He who shrinks when he is touched

Dingane's relentless attacks are also openly criticised by the *imbongi*:

UMvus' omnyama wawoShaka
Ovusel' abantu ukuhlatshwa

The Black created one of Shaka
He who created people to be killed

Dingane is described several times in terms of water metaphors which portray him as unpredictable:

Inzonzo linzonzobele

Deep pool

Injonjolol' eziziba olwandle

Deep one, like pools of the sea

Izibuko likaNdaba,

Elimadwal' abushelelezi;

Lashelel' uPiti nendodana

The ford of Ndaba,

That has slippery rocks;

Which proved too slippery for Piet (Retief)
and his son (Rycroft & Ngcobo 1988:74)

Isiziba esisiMavivane Dingana

Isiziba sinzonzo sinzonzobele

Siminzis' umuntu eth' uyageza.

Deep river pool at Mavivane Dingana

The pool is silent and overpowering

It drowned someone intending to wash.

(1988: 70)

Ibhaka lamanzi lasoNdikidi

Rain water pool of the House of Ndikidi

(1988:80)

Kunjengamanzi' aseKhumbane

Won' angafakwa lunyawo

Like the waters of the Mkhumbane

Where no foot is ever dipped

(1988:84)

The Ford of Ndaba image above refers to the incident in which Dingane lured the Voortrekker leader, Piet Retief, and some of his followers to a meeting at which they were unexpectedly attacked and killed. The Mavivane reference alludes to the drowning incident described by Nyembezi in which Dingane and Mhlangana (his half brother) went to the river to bathe after Shaka was murdered, before one of them was appointed by lot to be Shaka's successor. As pre-arranged with Mkabayi, Dingane's aunt, four of Dingane's supporters attacked Mhlangana and drowned him, leaving succession open to Dingane alone.

The last two images of water refer to the site of the Mkhumbane stream, near Dingane's capital, Mgungungdlovu, where Rycroft explains that many of Dingane's enemies were murdered. The portrayal of Dingane through water underlines his personality as unpredictable and someone not to be trifled with.

Singqungu khuluma
Bakuzwe umoya
Abaseyitheni nabasekhaya

One who has no mouth/cannot speak
His subjects merely hear things on the wind

(1988:96)

In the above extract from Dingane's *izibongo*, he is admonished by the *imbongi* for his silence and failure to communicate with his people about his actions.

Uvezi ngimfumene bemzila
Ngafika ngamudla
Kanti ngizifak' iloyi sesiswini

Vezi - I came upon him being shunned by them
I came and partook of him
But I was stuffing my stomach with poisonous
herbs. (1988:77)

In this last extract, Rycroft and Ngcobo explain that the reference here remains largely obscure but seems to reflect unexpectedly bad treatment of someone (either the *imbongi* or others known to him) at the hands of Dingane, who is reported to have dealt severely and unpredictably with people on various occasions. Fynn (1950:174) refers to Dingane as more treacherous and crafty than Shaka in local killings.

7.3.1.4 Criticism in the *Izibongo* of Mpande

Mpande (1810-1872), the brother and successor of Dingane, was the king whose reign of thirty-two years was relatively peaceful and stable and one that was characterised by dealings with English and Boer settlers, the colonial powers. In his reign, however, the Colony of Natal had become a reality and its leaders were no longer prepared to wait upon the dictates of the Zulu king as their predecessors had done. The following lines from Mpande's *izibongo* (he is referred to by the name 'praise name' Mdayi) reflect the *imbongi's* concern about conflict amongst the Zulu people regarding the land and settlement issue:

*Ubangwe ngamaNgisi namaQadasi.
Olokothe izwe, lalokotheke.
Wathi liyohanjwa ngabamhlophe namaQadasi.
Mdayi, sabela kweliphesheya,
Ubani ongabiz' uMdayi kwelakithi kwaZulu?*

He who was fought over by the English and
the Boers.
He who dared the country, he dared for it.
He said it would be traversed (overrun?)
by the Whitemen and by the Boers,
Mdayi, answer the land over yonder,
Who can summon Mdayi here, amongst our
people in Zululand?
(Stuart 1924:109)

In her article on the Zulu *izibongi* Gunner (1976:80) observes that Mpande was a mild man compared to his two brothers, Shaka and Dingane. His bard, Magolwana, seemed to have had the license to say to the King what other men would not dare to say to the king, and yet go unpunished.

7.3.1.5 Criticism in the *izibongo* of Cetshwayo

Cetshwayo (1862-1884), Mpande's son, faced numerous problems on his accession to the Zulu throne. He continued to face succession threats from various latent power blocks within the Zulu kingdom even after he defeated the pretender to his throne, his half brother, Mbuyazi. This was despite the fact that he eventually was named by his father Mpande as his successor. In addition, the Zulu empire no longer existed in its former state and he had to deal with the force of British imperialism and the quest for confederation in southern Africa. His *izibongo* mainly reflect two main themes of criticism by the *imbongi*. The first relates to his policy in dealing with the colonial powers prior to the Anglo-Zulu war (1879). The second relates to accusations of Cetshwayo being power hungry because of his initial attempts to usurp power from his father, Mpande, prior to him being formally named as his successor:

*Ithole lakokaMpande elihlaba
kungakaphumi zimpondo*

The calf of Mpande which tries to
gore without having horns (Cope
1968:222)

*Zingel' ugcine nganeno koThukela,
Ngaphesheya kukhon' abamhlophe, abelungu,*

Hunt only on this side of the Thukela,
On the other side are the White people
(Cope 1968:223)

Ndondelakuyalwa

He who is reluctant to take advice
(Cope 1968:227)

uSigwembe esal' ukulanyulwa ngabamhlophe.

Bandy-legged one that refuses the mediation of
the whites.

(Cope 1968:223)

This last quotation refers to the fact that Cetshwayo
refused the advice of Shepstone and Colenso in dealing with
settler and land problems. This is reflected again when the
imbongi refers to the king as:

Usalakutshelwa, usalakunyenyezelwa.

He who refuses to be told, he who refuses to be
warned.

(Cope 1968:227)

The reference to Cetshwayo as *Usalakutshelwa* has its roots
in the Zulu proverb, '*Isalakutshelwa sibona ngomopho*', which

means that 'he who refuses to be told learns the hard way', indicative of a further warning to Cetshwayo about his dealings with the colonial governing power.

The *imbongi* in the next example takes Cetshwayo to task for his violent obstinacy and warns him not to kill certain members of the royal family and this is juxtaposed with the last two lines in which he is revealed as using brute force to dispose of those of his brothers who were a threat to him:

*Washikizel' uMashikizel' omnyama
Edondolozela ngenhlendla yakh' ebimathatha
Impi yakh' eyakuyibuthis' eNdlwayini
Wafik' izinkomo zaseNdlwayini,
Wazihlaba kanye namathol' azo;
Kwathiwa ziyeke lezo MntakaNdaba
NgezikaNyokomkhulu ngezikaLangazana*

The Restless black one moved on,
Leaning on his barbed spear,
His army he was going to mobilize at Ndlwayini,
When he arrived there he killed the Ndlwayini cattle,
He killed them together with their calves;
It was said "Leave those ones alone, son of Ndaba,
They belong to your grandmother, they are Langazana's".
(Cope 1968:215)

The importance of the criticism in these *izibongo* is that the *imbongi* was able in a sanctioned and channelled fashion to report the dissatisfaction of the people back to the King. The exact nature of the criticism is not known, but it appears that Cetshwayo slaughtered cattle he ought not to have, probably in order to feed his army.

These royal *izibongo* are clearly distinct from the *izibongo* of normal people not only in that they were recited by a

professional *imbongi*, but also in that the inspiration in composition was guided largely by conventions and usage that were known to his fellow *imbongis* and approved by his audience. However, the *imbongi*'s delivery of a king's praises and the delivery of his "apprentices" were relatively stable. This is a distinguishing feature between this elevated form of socio-cultural archive and that of the *izibongo/izihasho* of the ordinary man where fluidity and invention are more characteristic. In order to distinguish between these two types of *izibongo*, I again refer to the latter, which are used in more private circumstances, as *izihasho*.

7.4 *Izihasho Zabantu: The Izihasho of Ordinary Men*

These are autobiographical or biographical expressions composed either by the person himself or by family and peers/contemporaries. They are accumulated over a passage of time, as the person grows and develops from childhood. Besides the name given to a boy by someone in his family at birth, he is later given a name which is coined when he begins to *giya* (improvised dance, usually mimicking war movements). Thereafter, a new name is taken on reaching adulthood and this is added to by other names which bear comment on certain deeds, characteristics and achievements. In some cases these names are expanded on and become incorporated into the person's *izihasho*. Coarse language, images and expressions are at home here. A person may even laugh at the uncomplimentary nature of his *izihasho*, as it offers him a measure of recognition (albeit notoriety) in his immediate social circle. Amongst the Zulus it is

regarded as desirable to be recognised in society rather than to exist without recognition.

The link of a man's personality and identity is so tied in with his *izihasho* that they are not only confined to the performing situations of dance, song and *izihasho*, i.e. *ukugiya*, but are also composed and performed by non-professional composers (peers, friends and family members). *Izihasho* are commonly recited at non-formal occasions such as on the playing fields - before, during or after a soccer match - by a player's supporters; or when men come together to talk and drink, a newcomer perhaps being introduced by the recitation of his *izithakazelo* or *izihasho*; or they may be recited as a form of encouragement in whatever field of endeavour an individual may be engaged in, be it sport or some other type of activity. These compositions, whether they be of a complementary or critical nature, are merely an extension of the category of *ukubonga*, *ukubongela* and *izibongo* as exemplified below.

Gunner notes that in the popular *izihasho* of men :

The multi-vocalic character of the art form is asserting itself against the monologic, rigid, heroic mould of the big *izihasho*. (Furniss & Gunner 1995: 190)

In these *izihasho*, one's modern hero (e.g. either in the form of a singer or sportsman) is given *izihasho* in the same way that the traditional hero in battle or the hunt would attract *izibongo*. Gunner goes on to comment that although men's *izihasho* are far from the centre of power compared to the loftier *izibongo* of important people, they remain part

of the public domain in a way in which women's *izihasho* do not. Men's *izihasho* are central performance pieces that go hand in hand with large celebrations and large audiences of women and men. Here the military ethic and the heroic metaphor juxtapose with the metaphors describing the basic humdrum of events in everyday life.

7.4.1 Criticism in the *Izihasho* of Ordinary People

Izihasho are an ongoing contemporary oral tradition, and it is in this particular form that we encounter panegyric and satire being complimentary forms of amplification. The ordinary person's *izihasho* are but an extension of his/her being. These record his/her 'warts and all', and do not aspire to the level of the elevated eulogies such as the *izibongo zamakhosi* that befit the person of rank, importance or royalty. This does not, however, rob them of their 'spice' - on the contrary - it enhances them, as in this type of oral composition there is less at stake.

Cope (1968:21) suggests that *ukubonga* is so general a term in content that even

where achievements like gluttony or murder are not necessarily praiseworthy, ... they are nevertheless the subject of *ukubonga*.

Izibongo which contain critical/comic lines may even originate from a person's childhood days, when he may have been known by such nicknames as "the one with bandy legs" or "the one with flapping ears".

Despite the fact that the assumed underlying intention of this type of oral composition composed in contemporary times about ordinary people is usually a balanced type of oral ID, there exists a sub-genre which balances far more on the critical side than is typical of 'normal' *izihasho*. The style of composition of *izibongo* and *izihasho* is the same as far as form and mnemonic techniques used are concerned, but differs in function and content. These critical *izihasho* are aimed at particular individuals and perform a social function as the people who transgress these values are seen, perhaps, as threatening the stability which is regarded as desirable in their own particular social environment and are, as a result, socially censured by means of their oral records.

7.5 VARIOUS COMPLAINT MOTIFS AND CRITICAL THEMES

The following examples have been grouped together wherever possible, in terms of subject matter or content. The most prevalent of the complaint motifs/criticisms registered in these compositions are drunkenness, dishonesty, failure to provide adequately for the family, gossiping and sexual promiscuity. However, there are a number that transcend any rigid classification, and which may contain censure of a variety of different behaviours. Where permission has been given, I have given the names of the people at whom the censure is aimed.

7.5.1 THE THEME OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The following oral compositions are examples of the use of sexually explicit and crude language in rendering criticism of certain characters. When discussing the type of language

used in these compositions, (bearing in mind that they are indeed, oral compositions), what certain people outside the tradition may deem as crude or unacceptable language, may well be perfectly acceptable to the people within the contextual setting in which this oral composition occurs. The 'crudeness' depends very much upon the listener's own personal social traditions as well as social context.

The first composition is an excellent example of scatology in which a certain man is ridiculed and teased for the way in which he relentlessly chases widows and older women. In this instance, as with many of the other examples which follow, the *izihasho* were recorded from the mouth of the man to whom they belong. To him, they contained nothing which he deemed unrepeatable or secret: they were recited as a matter of fact, and the veiled censure and criticism were accepted with a measure of pride!

IZIBONGO zikaDIMBA DI

- 1 *Dimba Di!*
- 2 *Bafelokazi bayamsondeza,*
- 3 *Madoda ayamsunduza*
- 4 *UBafana gezani ngob' inyama isizolunga.*
- 5 *Usihlama esahlula amahleza*
- 6 *Kwaze kwasiza uMahazula.*
- 7 *Isalukazi senkomo siqedelwa emlonyeni,*
- 8 *Esomuntu ngaphambili!*

(private informant)

- 1 *Dimba Di!*
- 2 *The widows bring him closer,*
- 3 *The men shove him away,*
- 4 *Boys prepare because the meat is nearly ready.*

- 5 Ordure that could not be removed by maize cobs
- 6 Until Mahazula helped.
- 7 The old cow ends up in the mouth,
- 8 The human one on the lover's mat!

Biographical Background

This man's real name is Mthethwa, and he is infamous in the area surrounding Dambuza for his attraction to widows and old women. His persistence in persevering with these women is explicitly expressed in the reference in line 2. He was famous for his philosophy that no woman is an old woman while she is alive, hence the humorous sexual reference in the last line!

The next composition concerns a man's unacceptable aberrant sexual behaviour and the tone is bitingly sarcastic.

IZIBONGO zikaJEROME 'VUNDLASE' DLAMINI

- 1 *Ngimfushane, ngiyidampi yini?*
- 2 *Ngimhlophe, ngiwumlungu yini?*
- 3 *Vundl' etshitshini,*
- 4 *Uyathund' uthundel' eceleni!*
- 5 *Vundl' etshitshini elingaziwa!*
- 6 *Wavundla kuMaKhumalo ezethwele,*
- 7 *UZondi wakuhlobis' ikhanda ngocelembu;*
- 8 *Wavundla kuMaShezi enguMdlezane,*
- 9 *UMthethwa wakukhingxa ngelumba,*
- 10 *Vundl' etshitshini!*
- 11 *Ngikuthanda ngob' awunamdlezane;*
- 12 *Ngikuthanda ngob' awumxoleli umfazi ngish'*
 ekhulelwe,
- 13 *Zonk' uziphakel' ukudla kwezifebe.*

(private informant)

- 1 I am short, am I just a (beer) dumpie?
- 2 I am light complexioned, am I just a
White?
- 3 Sleep with a virgin,
- 4 You are ejaculating, ejaculating off target!
- 5 Sleep with a strange virgin,
- 6 You slept with the pregnant woman from the
Khumalo clan,
- 7 And Zondi decorated your head with a bush
knife!
- 8 You slept with a woman from the Shezi clan who
had recently given birth,
- 9 And Mthethwa trapped you with a sexually
transmitted disease.
- 10 Sleep with a virgin!
- 11 I admire you because you don't mind even if it
is a woman who has just given birth;
- 12 I admire you because you don't have sympathy
even for pregnant women,
- 13 You just feed all with prostitutes' food!

Biographical Background

This man, Vundlase, is from the Greytown district, and is short and light in complexion. As can be witnessed from the scathing attack in these lines, Vundlase is exposed and derided as a man whose sexual behaviour is abnormal. He is notorious for refusing to make advances to unmarried girls (virgins) or girls of his own age group. He was often caught making love to other peoples' wives or girlfriends,

and was even accused of abusing an insane woman, as well as having intercourse with pregnant women and women who had very recently given birth. Irony is used in this oral composition to reinforce the contemptibility of this man's transgression of acceptable sexual customs among the Zulus. This refers particularly to the customary sanction on intercourse with women who are in advanced pregnancy, and also to those who have recently given birth. As the composition makes quite clear, the cuckolded husbands dealt severely with this rogue for his violation of respected traditions.

The language used in this composition is extremely coarse and carnal in nature. As mentioned before, the utterance of indelicate words such as *thunda*, and *ukudla kwezifebe* (semen), are not easily accepted, but in the sarcastic and ironic nature of this oral expression, which would normally never be uttered in front of females, it is tolerated, as the words serve to highlight the non-conformity and baseness of this man's behaviour.

7.5.2 THE THEME OF DRUNKENNESS

IZIBONGO zikaHUNDU MSHEFANA

- 1 *Hundu Mshefana*
- 2 *Ayigundi, yesab' iqwele*
- 3 *Vula Dladla!*
- 4 *Nang' uMahlalela esefikile!*

- 1 Hundu, the one who shaves a little

- 2 He doesn't cut his hair as he fears rough
 skin/acne
- 3 Open Mr Dladla
- 4 Here comes the one who does not seek work, he
 has arrived!

These lines criticise the neighbour of this informant who dropped out of primary school to seek employment but was unsuccessful for a lengthy period. During this time of unemployment he used to spend most of his time at the local shopkeeper's, the store of a Mr Dladla, who also used to sell beer. The interesting point about these lines is that some time after they were composed, the target then found a job and was gainfully employed. His composition, however, did not change, and he would still be 'bonga'd' by his contemporaries in the same way.

IZIBONGO zika"WOLA WOLA" BERNARD VILAKAZI

- 1 *Wola Wola mgqomo kadoti,*
- 2 *Lukhamb' olukhulu oluchichima ingwebu,*
- 3 *Mqukululi webhodwe lisashisa,*
- 4 *Bathi kuyadla kuyabibela*
- 5 *Akuyaz' imali yesaka.*
- 6 *Umunt' omdala uyesaba ukwelusa*
- 7 *Kant' emasini uvuka ubhememe.*
- 8 *Sgolozi' esimehl' abomvu*
- 9 *Mhlinzi wenkom' isaqhashaza.*
- 10 *Mavathavatha, mabuya ngezandla kwaNokhesheni.*
- 11 *Ugadla ngemigoqo nje,*
- 12 *Ziph' induku?*

(private informant)

- 1 Picker up of anything and everything
indiscriminately, oh rubbish bin!
- 2 You big open-mouthed pot which overflows with
froth.
- 3 He who lifts the pot when it is still hot,
- 4 They say it eats gluttonously,
- 5 It does not know the price of a bag of meal.
- 6 The old man who fears to herd cattle
- 7 But who becomes extremely active in the eating of
amasi!
- 8 Starer, who is red-eyed,
- 9 The skinner of the beast still wriggling about,
- 10 Mavathavatha, who returns empty handed from
Nokhesheni.
- 11 You strike with logs,
- 12 Where are the sticks?

Biographical Background

The subject of this oral record is a renowned drunkard from the area near Nongoma, and like much of the material cited, is recorded in writing for the first time. It has some highly amusing but cutting imagery in it. Vilakazi is obviously not choosy about what he drinks, treating traditional beer, *utshwala*, with the same relish as he drinks an assortment of spirits, hence the uncomplimentary term 'rubbish bin'. Not only does he drink excessively, but he is also a renowned glutton (line 4). This character does not work and has been unemployed for many years, and

he fails to contribute or buy any provisions for the homestead (line 5). He is exceptionally lazy and does not support his family (line 6), but still claims his share of things from others (line 7) - this line referring to the fact that, when his eldest daughter got married, he laid claim to the *lobolo*, and also that he constantly demanded money from his sons from their earnings.

The name given him in line 8 - *S'golodlo* (sic) - refers to someone who has a fierce and awesome stare, and red eyes. Line 9 refers to his penchant for doing unusual and unacceptable things (just as skinning a beast that is still alive) and the following line refers to an attempt by the subject to find work at Nokhesheni. After a brief spell he returned without a cent, having spent it all. The last two lines of the composition refer to the fact that even after having worked briefly, he returned home empty-handed without anything useful to contribute.

These lines are called out by this man's contemporaries at drinking sessions or any other gatherings in his area - not necessarily in the order recorded here. The subject has no qualms about these grievances being aired, and in fact is rather proud of his drinking ability and the fact that he is renowned in the area for his remarkable consumption feats! Although this may seem to undermine the theory of social control, this particular composition is a marvelous example of double irony. Although the content is intended to expose the failings of Vilakazi and hold his behaviour up for reproof and censure in the framework of the traditional *izibongo*, he himself does not perceive them as such, and in fact, accepts them for praise as opposed to

dispraise. Even a man's failings in certain contexts can be regarded as a source of pride! This example underpins the importance of understanding that this form of oral composition operates within specific social contexts, and when examined with no background knowledge of the contextual setting, the intended function of censure may misfire. Apparently "critical" texts need to be examined as Barber² suggests "in the light of a more nuanced and culturally contextualised understanding of how unusual behaviour is locally evaluated". Thus, references to excess or deviance cannot be assumed to be unequivocally negative, and in fact in certain circumstances, such forms of outrageous behaviour may even be taken as a sign of greatness.

The pride that certain characters have in behaving in anti-social, non-conforming ways can be traced back to Zulu folklore where the trickster figure is seen as the epitome of anti-social behaviour. Unlike many Western fairy tales where the trickster is punished, in Zulu folklore the trickster plays a central role and is often the triumphant one who stands at the outside limits of human society and boundaries of social practice and accepted ethical norms. The successful trickster is regarded with a guarded kind of admiration and Canonici notes that the "Trickster is associated with childhood, a period of capricious behaviour and social irresponsibility" (1995:98).

Raphael Ngcobo's *izihasho* is another oral composition which censures drinking habits and the abandonment of Zulu customs and it also includes a rather critical appraisal of his physical appearance. This composition, although critical,

does not contain as tough and serious an approach to the censured behaviour as the previous composition. The criticism in this particular izihasho exemplifies a kind of urbane mockery and ridicule.

IZIBONGO zikaRAPHAEL NGCOBO

- 1 *Fuze kaNdlulamithi!*
- 2 *Qhude elakhala emgqonyeni ligqitshiwe.*
- 3 *Wena ogayelwa utshwala ubuqede.*
- 4 *Odla indoda ngamazinyo azingovolo,*
- 5 *Usigubudu seziphongo,*
- 6 *Ujojo lwaseNgedle,*
- 7 *Olwawela imifula,*
- 8 *Luqonde phesheya kweNciba,*
- 9 *KwelikaSebe izwe,*
- 10 *Lwabuya selukhuluma isiXhosa,*
- 11 *Lugcina amasiko esiXhosa,*
- 12 *OlukaMalandela lungasaziwa.*
- 13 *Yima njalo Bafayeli!*

- 1 Fuze, son of Ndlulamithi! (Giraffe)
- 2 Cock that crowed while it was buried in the
 dustbin.
- 3 He who finishes the home-made beer.
- 4 He who eats men with his protruding front
 teeth,
- 5 The one with a huge forehead,
- 6 Tall one of Ngedle,
- 7 Who crossed rivers,
- 8 Heading across the Kei River
- 9 To Sebe's country,
- 10 And who came back speaking Xhosa,

- 11 And observing Xhosa customs,
12 That of Malandela's (i.e. the Zulu language),
no longer known.
13 Long live Bafayeli!

(private informant)

Biographical Background

Ngcobo lived at Ngedle and these lines are light-heartedly mocking different aspects of his life. The second line refers to an incident when he was attacked by a gang of thugs and robbed. He was then hidden in the bush and left for dead. He was subsequently found by some people who heard him groan from the bushes. Line 3 remarks on the fact that he was an incessant drinker, and lines 4 and 5 are uncomplimentary references to his physical appearance.

The remainder of the composition is a mocking reference to the fact that Ngcobo once visited some relatives of his near Alice in the Ciskei. He stayed there for 2 months, and, on his return, he persisted in speaking Xhosa and adopting certain Xhosa customs, while ignoring his own (Zulu) customs. The last line is a mocking salute to Raphael, echoing his own inability as a child to pronounce the 'r' sound (which is a 'borrowed' consonant in Zulu), and substituting it with the 'b' sound. In this composition, one gets the feeling that the subject of these lines is being criticised in a way that he is being exposed to his own frailties and inconsistencies, rather than being the subject of rigorous and intolerant disparagement, as in the tone of the examples which follow.

The following example targets the drunkenness and dishonesty of a certain Ntabazosizi Nxumalo, the neighbour of a past student who lived in KwaMashu:

Izibongo zikaNtabazosizi Nxumalo

- 1 *Wiliwili belungu!*
 - 2 *Niyayithokh' Ingilishi.*
 - 3 *Yadl'amahewu, yahewuleka!*
 - 4 *Ushaya ngaphansi*
 - 5 *Ushaya ngaphezulu.*
 - 6 *Mfana unjengengane!*
 - 7 *Uyababa, bhiya!*
 - 8 *Uyababa, sitawoti!*
-
- 1 *Wiliwili, you white people!*
 - 2 *You talk English.*
 - 3 *You drank amahewu*
 - 4 *And became drunk. .*
 - 5 *You are vomiting severely.*
 - 6 *Boy you are like a baby!*
 - 7 *You are bitter, beer!*
 - 8 *You are bitter, stout!*

Biographical Background

This composition refers mainly to an incident involving Ntaba Nxumalo, an employee of the old South African Railways. He had a habit of talking English, which is why he is mocked in the first two lines, the word '*wiliwili*' deriving from the verb '*wiliza*' - to speak incoherently.

Lines 3 - 8 refer to an occasion when Nxumalo was suspected of stealing *amahewu* (a drink made from maize) from his fellow workers. One of his colleagues 'doctored' his '*amahewu*' by dosing it severely with a laxative used for horses. The result after drinking the stolen *amahewu* was that Nxumalo was rushed to hospital after excessive vomiting. The last two lines are a satirical reference to the fact that the *amahewu* was reputedly bitter with the laxative added to it. The interesting point about these lines is that very few people who knew Nxumalo understood the significance of these lines: only those who had worked with him were aware of the incident being referred to. This oral composition was recorded by a student who had heard Nxumalo himself reciting his own *izihasho* on a number of occasions. Only when he pressed Nxumalo some time later for an explanation, would he reveal the meaning behind the lines. The reason for his circumspection was embarrassment at the outcome of his indiscretion.

In the next oral composition which has many scatological references and deals mainly with the complaint motif of theft, there are numerous amusing metaphors, with particular reference being made to the title given to this thief, *UMathathangozwani*, the one who takes with his big toe!

IZIBONGO zikaMATHATHANGOZWANI

- 1 *Yahamba into yokwabo madoda,*
- 2 *Isho ngemicondo sengathi izophuka,*
- 3 *Engabe uvelaphi namuhla*
- 4 *Ho! Kuyakhalwa lapho, isuka khona.*
- 5 *UMathathangozwani kusale kukhalwa,*
- 6 *Akasweli ukuthi intoni azoyithatha.*

7 *Ungamfica eqalazisa okwamehlonwabu,*
 8 *Kanti ucinga azokuntshontsha.*
 9 *Usaziwa yonk' indawo,*
 10 *Nezingane nazo, seziyamazi,*
 11 *Nezingane ezikhalayo zithuliswa ngaye...*
 12 *"Thula, nangumathathangozwani uzohamba nawe!"*
 13 *Imbi lento injalo nje,*
 14 *Isho ngesikhulu isihluthu lesi,*
 15 *Amehlo abomvu ingathi ilahle,*
 16 *Uvela bahleke woqobo.*
 17 *Lento isho ngamazinyo sengathi ngamahalavu,*
 18 *Izihlathi ungathi amawolintshi.*
 19 *Baze babuze bathi umumetheni ndoda?*
 20 *Aphendule athi "ngimumeth' unyoko".*
 21 *Phela unkabi ngisho okudliwayo akakushiyi,*
 22 *Emakhishini ufika qathatha.*
 23 *Sewakhuluphala ungathi ingulube izohlatshwa,*
 24 *Kodwa isishwapha, mayebabo!*
 25 *Usebaqedile abafazi babantu,*
 26 *Wonke umuntu usehlale eqaphile,*
 27 *Lapho edlule khona kusale kukhalwa,*
 28 *Basho bathi nangophela uMathathangozwani.*
 29 *Pho, mntanomuntu akashiyi lutho,*
 30 *Ngisho ezincane izingane imbala.*
 31 *Okuyizalukazi kuyalenga nje,*
 32 *Zilandela lesi sibhulo asiqhuba ngaphambili!*

(private informant)

1 There goes the wonderful fellow,
 2 He has got thin legs as though they might
 break.
 3 We wonder where he is from today,

4 Hey, where he comes from people are
 crying!

5 The one who takes with his toe and leaves
 people crying,

6 He never lacks anything to steal.

7 You find him rolling his eyes this way and that
 like a chameleon,

8 Whereas he is on the lookout for anything to
 steal

9 He is known all over the place,

10 Even the children now know him,

11 Even crying children are silenced with him....

12 "Stop crying or Mr Take-with-his-toes will
 steal you".

13 He is very ugly,

14 He has a shaggy growth of hair,

15 The eyes are as red as embers,

16 The one who causes laughter by his appearance,

17 He has teeth like spades,

18 His cheeks are like oranges.

19 They even ask him what is in his mouth?

20 In reply he says, "your mother is inside!"

21 He does not leave any edible things,

22 In the kitchens, he is there,

23 He has grown fat, like a pig for slaughter,

24 Flat buttocks, oh!

25 He has seduced all the other men's wives

26 All the people are now on the lookout

27 Wherever he has been, he leaves people in
 distress,

28 They say there is Mr Take-with-the-big-toe
 indeed!

29 Well, he does not leave anything,
30 Young girls even,
31 And as for old women, they hang around him,
32 They are interested in the motto below his
belly!

Biographical Background

This composition is a very good model of satire by means of humorous exaggeration. The *imbongi* has created a marvellous example of hilarious caricature. This fellow is the master of kleptomaniacs! Nothing is safe from his grasp... things edible and inedible, even young girls and other men's wives fall prey to him.

Mathathangozwani is described physically in the way in which one would draw a cartoon lampooning a person, with exaggerated features, as in line 2 which makes mocking reference to his thin legs; line 7 with his ever-rolling eyes like those of a chameleon; lines 13-17 describe him in the mould of the *izimu* (cannibal) from Zulu *izinganekwane* (folktales). His huge mass of unruly hair is described as well as his flaming red eyes, his overly prominent huge teeth and puffed out cheeks; line 23 bitingly comments on his excessive weight and lack of buttocks! The descriptions used here clearly reflect characters commonly known in *izinganekwane*. Lines 13-17 reflect the physical description of the cannibal in Zulu folklore and lines 25, 29 and 30 make reference to the *izimu's* insatiable lust for young women. The mention of *unwabu*, the chameleon, conjures up imagery commonly used in folktales of magic, in which the chameleon is the bearer of death, laziness and gluttony.

This exaggeration is not reserved just for his physical appearance: the composer humorously magnifies his malevolent behaviour traits by means of amusing metaphorical images. To begin with, the name given to this character sets the tone of the whole composition: Mr Taker-with-the-big-toe! His notoriety is so widespread, that people in the area use his name in the same way as the "bogey-man" is used, in order to induce good behaviour amongst the children (stanza 3). This has a parallel in folktales to the character of Big-Toe as described by Callaway (1868:158). Big-Toe is a cannibal: all the imagery used in this *izihasho* revolves around the subject's cannibalistic qualities. Cannibals normally evoke the image of beings that are "directly contrasted to human beings", are "very large and very hairy... and often have one huge leg or toe" (Kuper 1987:171): the image parallel to this is evoked in line 14.

In stanza four, the last line is evidence of the use of vulgar language, the reference to *unyoko* (your mother), being one of the worst ways to *thuka* i.e. swear at or insult a Zulu person, but use of the word is acceptable within the framework of the *izihasho*.

The use of bawdy language is continued in line 29 and again it is used in a form of exaggeration in the last 4 lines of the composition, when the subject is described as such a thief or cannibal that he does not even discriminate between old ladies and young ones, he simply takes them all. His attraction to the older women is described in singularly lewd sexual terms in the last line.

Another fairly lengthy oral composition in even more scathing vein, which denigrates and vilifies the dishonesty of a neighbour's son, is shown in the following example:

IZIBONGO zikaMATIYELA

- 1 *Matiyela!*
- 2 *Nyon' ebukwa iziyosithela,*
- 3 *Ngoba ihamba namagugu.*
- 4 *Manyobozele omadolonzima.*
- 5 *UMcothozi lo ongqengq' ezintini.*
- 6 *Ngingabonanga kanti*
- 7 *Umqwalane kagundi kaciji,*
- 8 *Ushaywe yilanga wanyazima.*
- 9 *Ubeyagunda ubeyakuphucuka.*
- 10 *Inkom' ebhong' ebusuku,*
- 11 *Yabhong' emini isimanga.*
- 12 *Thubeleza mshini wezintaba,*
- 13 *Wen' okhala liyathungatha,*
- 14 *Lifana nalenj' ilandela umkhondo.*
- 15 *Mshushumbisi wamakhulukhulu*
- 16 *Abanye bakubuka balil' izililo.*
- 17 *Mebi wabalindele ubakhalise*
- 18 *Ujijan' umagqolozelw' eqhamuka.*
- 19 *Umlaleli wezindaba zabantu,*
- 20 *Azifukamel' usaba sisu sikhulu,*
- 21 *Sisuth' izinyembezi zabakhalayo,*
- 22 *Sisuth' izinhleko zabathokozile.*
- 23 *USomahlon' umangen' ecathula.*
- 24 *Nunu, xamu kavinjwa mthetho,*
- 25 *Ugena ngaphandle kokuzithoba*
- 26 *Ungesabi, mshushumbisi, mathwala*
- 27 *Akazweli, ukuba uyazwela*

28 *Nga sewadangala.*

(private informant)

1 Matiyela

2 The bird they watch till it is out of sight

3 Because it goes with treasures.

4 The Shameful one who walks away reluctantly,

5 Light treader, who walks on slender wooden
sticks,

6 And yet I did not see.

7 Hairless one who neither shaves nor grooms
himself,

8 Who is beaten by the sun and glistens,

9 If he shaved he would look like a gentleman.

10 Cow that roars in the night,

11 If it roared during the day it would be
unusual.

12 Dodge about, machine of mountains,

13 You whose nose is searching for a trail,

14 Like that of a dog following a scent

15 Stealthy thief of hundreds and hundreds,

16 Others look at you and lament.

17 Thief of those waiting for you to make them
weep

18 Tall person who is stared at on appearing.

19 One who listens to the stories of people,

20 Brood over them that's why his stomach has
become big,

21 Full of the tears of the weeping,

22 Full of the laughter of the satisfied,

23 Shameful one who enters walking slowly,

24 Monster, monitor lizard not controlled by the
law

- 25 Who enters without humility
26 Fearless, stealthy carrier of baggage,
27 Who is unsympathetic, for if he were such,
28 He would have been depressed long ago.

Biographical Background

The subject of the censure and remonstrance here was the eldest son of a family of five who lived in the Hammarsdale area. At the age of 15 he fell into bad company, and dropped out of school in standard six. He became a notorious burglar in the area, contrary to his kin who were a well-liked family with no record of criminal activities.

This oral composition was composed by the neighbour of Matiyela's family in order to expose this boy in a derisive way. Like all oral compositions, it is rich in metaphors and ambiguous images.

Lines 1-3 expose him immediately as a thief whom people do not trust. His stealthy shifty manner is revealed in several lines: *Umcothozi lo ongqengq' ezintini* (Light treader who walks on slender wooden sticks); *Mshushumbisi wamakhulukhulu* (Stealthy thief of hundreds and hundreds); *Ungesabi, mshushumbisi, mathwala* (Fearless stealthy carrier of baggage). Lines 10 and 11 refer to his habit of stealing at night, not during the day when people are around.

Lines 19 and 20 reveal how he glibly lies about the way in which he acquires things. Line 24 is a cutting comparison made between Matiyela and the monitor lizard, *imbulu*, a despised and unsavoury trickster from Zulu folktales, which always pretends to be something which it is not. It has a

prominent tail which represents a phallic symbol, and is capable of transforming itself into a human being. Its weakness which always betrays it as an animal is its greed for milk and its ugliness. These images of ugliness, betrayal and inhumanity are evident in the image the *imbongi* creates of this man, Matiyela. The last 3 lines are an outright denigration which accuses the subject of being a cold and ruthless character.

The following two oral compositions on the theme of improbity (dishonesty) are, like the previous composition, also in a less light-hearted vein, although they are still enriched with witty satirical images.

IZIBONGO zikaMATHUNGA JOSEPH ZULU

- 1 *Mathunga ezinayithi,*
- 2 *Ugqok'ingub' ebomvu nje, wayinikwa wubani?*
- 3 *Libomv' uBhunu, libomv' iKhalathi.*
- 4 *Ushay' inkondlo nje, kanti ngeyakho yini?*
- 5 *Ngoba akuganwa wena.*
- 6 *Mavaka, niyiminweba nizikhohlisa nje,*
- 7 *Nithi nishay' insizwa*
- 8 *Kanti nishay' onyoko.*
- 9 *Mbadlambadla abil' amanz' ophondweni,*
- 10 *Qhud' elikhulu uManqofoza,*
- 11 *Nduku yeXhosa,*
- 12 *UMantshabule.*
- 13 *Uyisigebengu, uyisigelekeqe,*
- 14 *Uyabahlupha abantu behlezi ekhaya.*

(private informant)

- 1 Mathungu, sharp like needles!

2 You wear a red dress, who gave it to you?
3 The Boer is red (light-skinned), the Coloured
 is red.
4 You're singing a wedding song, but is it
 yours?
5 Because it is not your marriage.
6 Cowards, you just waste time, you deceive
 yourselves,
7 You think that you are hitting a young man
8 Whereas you are hitting your mothers.
9 You huge big fat one, the water is boiling in
 the horn,
10 Big cock, the pecker,
11 Stick of a Xhosa.
12 Umantshabuke.
12 UMantshabule.
13 You are a gangster, you are a crook!
14 You even trouble people in their own homes.

Biographical Background

These rather slating lines refer to a light-complexioned man who hails from the township of KwaMashu. The opening lines contain an interesting metaphor, addressing him by his *isithakazelo*, or praise name of *mathunga*, which means "one who sews". He was called this because of his ceaseless movement from one place to the next, like the zig-zag movement of a sewing machine. The second line contains an allusive image pertaining to the fact that he had actually been jailed on a charge of murder (hence the metaphor of the red dress), and the question as to its origin is actually a rhetorical question by the composer, questioning where this

fellow came from, as none of his family had any criminal record.

Line 3 is ambiguous as it can be taken as a mention of his light complexion or it could be a reference to the two men who were involved in his murder charge.

Lines 4 and 5 are clever allusions to his dishonesty implying that his actions are totally inappropriate. The following three lines are direct criticism levelled at the subject and his band of cronies who brag about their physical prowess and manlihood when in fact they are cowards. There is a clever play on words in these lines: *nithi nishaya insizwa kanti nishay' onyoko* which could have the idiomatic meaning in addition to the literal interpretation, which would indicate that "you think you behave like men but you really behave like women". Line 9 takes a hard swipe at this man's physical appearance and the rest of the line is a figurative reference to the fact that he smokes dagga. The metaphor *Qhude*, in the next line, refers to the fact that this man was the eldest in his family, and ruled his younger brothers and sisters with an iron rod. The mention of 'the stick of the Xhosa' connotes a symbol of cowardice. In fighting, this man was known to use a long and flexible whip of the type commonly used by the Xhosas. The last two lines of the composition are direct denigration, accusing Joseph Zulu of being a thief and a bandit who is a constant scourge on people, even in their homes.

The following oral composition is much shorter than the above and not as rich in imagery, but its validity can be

judged by the fact that, despite its contents, the subject of the reproof was very proud of his *izibongo* and would chant these lines especially when he was intoxicated, much to the diversion of the audience.

IZIBONGO zikaS'GOLOZA

- 1 *UMahlek'ehlathini onjengohlanya,*
- 2 *Akabhekeki.*
- 3 *USigoloza esimehl' abomvu.*
- 4 *Ilang' alishon' engashayiwe,*
- 5 *Ingani uphuma engena.*
- 6 *Akanamsebenz' awenzayo.*
- 7 *Uphila ngokuthatha ngozwani.*

(private informant)

- 1 The unkempt one, like a madman,
- 2 You cannot even look at him.
- 3 The starrer with red eyes.
- 4 Each and every day he is beaten,
- 5 Because he goes in and out,
- 6 He has absolutely nothing to do,
- 7 He lives merely by taking with the toe
 (stealing).

Biographical Background

S'Goloza was a man who passed away in 1990, but lives on today through his *izihasho* which are still a source of amusement to those who knew him.

The first line is a comical reference to a man who never shaved his unkempt and extensive beard. Lines 4 and 5 refer to the fact that he was of no fixed abode, and constantly used to 'visit' different houses and then stay there until

he was chased away for stealing. Line 7 is again a metaphorical reference to the subject's habit of kleptomania, an image already encountered in the composition of *Mathathangozwani*.

7.5.4 THE THEME OF DOMESTIC MATTERS

The following compositions were recited by an old lady from the Vryheid area: they relate to a young man from one of the neighbouring homesteads who refused to leave home to go out and earn a living, as was expected of all young men. The old woman recited his *izihasho* to her grandchildren as an example of what she considered to be a failure in life and to act as a warning to them. This echoes the type of satire which occurs in folktales where the undesirable and unsuccessful exploits of characters are told to children by the granny, to act as a warning against undesirable behaviour and misconduct. The *izihasho* of successful people were also regularly recited to her grandchildren as an indication of what were regarded as desirable attributes in a person.

IZIBONGO zikaNTABENKULU waseMAVELA

- 1 *Mgqashiyi ezibayeni zamadoda,*
- 2 *Madakeni ozishay' inkinsela,*
- 3 *Nkabenkulu yokoMavela,*
- 4 *Esuth' esibayeni ezinye zisuth' edlelweni.*
- 5 *Njomane!*
- 6 *Makhal'esondela njengempisi,*
- 7 *Sinqindi esibuthunthu,*
- 8 *Sinqindi esisikela umniniso.*
- 9 *Siqabetho sakoMavela,*

10 Ovele ngesisu abanye bevela ngezinkomo.
 11 Vathe vathe emaxhibeni aph' amantshontsho?
 12 Ukhuthele mfana, umandl' okhambeni,
 13 Ayidl' izinjinga ayidl' abakhulu.
 14 Nkalankal' evimbel' amanzi,
 15 Kazi abanye bophuzani.
 16 Ziziba zaseHlonyane ziludidi zinodaka,
 17 Kosizakala abangani na?
 18 Njomane kaMgabhi!
 19 Bafazi baseMavel' abanonya,
 20 Nimzondani UThandabantu,
 21 Lokhu naye uyohlabana ngomuso,
 22 Ayidl' amadoda ayidl' izinjinga.

(private informant)

1 The dancer in the kraals of men,
 2 Dirty, poor man who pretends to be rich,
 3 Big ox of Mavela,
 4 Which feeds in the kraal while others feed in
 the pastures,
 5 You of the Mhlongo clan!
 6 "One who cries as he approaches", like a hyena,
 7 The blunt knife,
 8 The blunt knife which cuts for its owner.
 9 Basket of Mavela,
 10 The one who came with a stomach while others
 came with cattle.
 11 Empty handed in the kitchen huts, where are the
 titbits?
 12 You are diligent, boy, you like the beer pots,
 13 You just don't beat the rich men, you just
 don't beat the important ones!

14 The crab which stopped the water flow,
15 I wonder what others will drink.
16 The pools of the Hlonyane river which are dirty
and muddy,
17 Will the friends get help?
18 Njomane of Mgabhi,
19 You women of Mavela who are cruel,
20 Why do you hate the lover of the people?
21 Since he will succeed in the future,
22 It just does not beat the rich, it just does
not beat the important ones.

Biographical Background

Nkabenkulu, as lines 1-5 mention, unlike the other young men in his area, refused to leave home to go and work for wages, preferring to stay at home where he was assured of a steady supply of meat and traditional beer. Being a lazy and unambitious person, Nkabenkulu was content to trade his labour (i.e. skinning slaughtered beasts, repairing kraal fences, etc) in exchange for food and drink, hence the references in lines 6-12. Line 13 which is repeated again at the very end of the composition, refers to this fellow's inherent dislike for anyone who was rich or successful for he felt that their success was the cause of his failure. Lines 19-21 subtly ridicule Nkabenkulu, although he was reported never to have understood the innuendo intended. He had made numerous attempts to marry certain women in his area, but each time he was turned down, as parents were aware of the unlikelihood of receiving any *lobolo* in the form of the necessary cattle for the hand of their daughters

in marriage. These he would always promise would be given 'some time in the future'.

The metaphors used in this oral composition also enhance the attitude of mockery and ridicule of the subject of the composition. He is described in the second line as:

Madakeni ozishay' inkinsela

Dirty poor man who pretends to be rich

In this line the composer does not pull any punches. Then in line 6 he is likened to *impisi*, the hyena, which does not do its own killing, but waits to prey on the remains of left over carcasses, implying his inability to provide for himself and work like other men. Line 7 again is an interesting metaphor in which he is described as a blunt knife, which is not a particularly useful implement, but this image is expanded on to highlight this man's selfish behaviour. Line 12 is a sharp line of sarcasm focusing on his misplaced energy. Line 14 depicts him as a crab: the significance of this reference lies in the comparison of movement, as his behaviour was not straightforward and conventional.

This character was nevertheless reported to be extremely proud of these *izihasho* which he would shout out himself at beer drinking sessions. He was apparently unaware of the intended criticism that so many of these lines contained, and this would add an additional source of amusement to those who knew him well, on hearing him recite with pride these satirical lines. Nkabenkulu died suddenly, and rumour in the area had it that he had actually been poisoned, as he

was believed to have been making passes at numerous women when sufficient beer loosened his tongue.

The sometimes uncomplimentary, even stinging, satirical nature of certain *izihasho* often does not upset or disturb the bearer of the *izihasho* at all - on the contrary, in certain cases as have been quoted here, the person may even be pleased at the effect they have of marking him out, providing him with recognition, notwithstanding it being unfavourable, in his immediate community.

Sometimes the bearer of lines intended as criticism and which are meant to act as a form of social control, ignores the advice and defies the criticism, as in the case of the *izibongo* below which belong to a man who was having an affair with the wife of a blind man. He was severely censured for this, but he chose to ignore the warning and advice tendered in the lines bestowed on him:

UNkalankala 'dung' amanzi.

Bakhuza, bathi, "Nkalankala mus' ukuwadung' amanzi kuzonakala.

Inkalankala yadung' amanzi yawelela ngaphesheya.

The crab disturbed the water.

They admonished him, saying, "Crab, don't cross the water the thing will go wrong."

The crab disturbed the water and crossed over to the other side.

(Gunner 1984:336)

Another shorter oral composition that highlights the problem of *lobolo* payment is that of a man named Cija who although renowned for his technique in stick fighting, could not afford to pay the bride price for his girlfriend, and this fact is aired in a rather brusque way:

IZIBONGO zikaCIJA

- 1 *Uthemba lempukane*
- 2 *Ongen' ebhusha engenamali.*
- 3 *Amajuba amabili akhale phezu kweDlebe,*
- 4 *Eliny' lathi "kwangiqonda?"*
- 5 *Eliny' lathi, "usho khona, ukuhlupheka?"*

- 1 The hope of a fly
- 2 Who entered a butchery without money,
- 3 The two doves that cooed on top of the Dlebe
 mountain,
- 4 The one said, "It is after me?"
- 5 The other one said, "Indeed, you mean to endure
 hardship?"

Biographical Background

Here the unfortunate situation is revealed to all in these lines. The aspirant lover is referred to as someone who embarks on something which is hopeless, i.e. marriage without the required *lobolo*, and this sentiment is echoed in the last line. The criticism in these lines adds an interesting satirical element to the composition in that they contain a balanced mixture between torment and disenchantment. The imagery of the fly entering a butchery and not paying is reminiscent of the Zulu riddle:-

Q. *Ngikuphica ngomuntu wami ongena esilaheni,
adle, adle asuthe, aphume engakhokhanga?*

A. *Impukane.*

Q. I quiz you about my person who goes into the
butchery, he eats and eats until he is
satisfied then he goes out without paying?

A. A fly.

The next example is used to tease a young boy who shows no
interest in girls. These lines are said by this boy's
brothers and cousins when mocking him.

IZIBONGO zikaS'KHUNI

- 1 *US'khuni*
- 2 *US'khun' ojoj' ilanga,*
- 3 *Khwezela mama,*
- 4 *Safa intuthu.*
- 5 *Uvava lwenkunzi yakwaQwabe,*
- 6 *Ukhilimu wezintombi,*
- 7 *Ezimbuke zamamatheka,*
- 8 *Magede wafulathela.*

(private informant)

- 1 The black one!
- 2 The black one that observes the sun,
- 3 Revive the fire, mother
- 4 We are dying from the smoke.
- 5 The sharp-horned bull of Qwabe,
- 6 The face cream of the girls
- 7 Having looked at him they smiled,

Biographical Background

This boy, S'khuni, was tall and dark in complexion, and unlike his peers, who enjoyed their social life, he preferred to stay at home with his mother. Normally he could be found in the kitchen, or behind the house sunning himself (line 2 - the ambiguous meaning here refers to his unusual height). Lines 3 and 4 are a subtle mockery of the boy, for although the lines were addressed to his mother, they were actually aimed at him, for S'khuni was constantly asking his mother to revive the fire, as he detested the smoke of the dying embers. These lines also highlight the fact that he, unlike other boys of his age, was used to life around the kitchen. The last three lines of the composition reveal that despite attempts by young girls to interest him, he remained uninterested.

7.6 Recapitulation

The forms under scrutiny here may be considered in the light of the juxtapositioning of personal *izihasho* and historical *izibongo*. The modern forms of men's *izihasho* are seen as an ongoing contemporary counterpart of traditional oral history, reflecting not only a change in their actual content, but also in the function and context in which this genre is performed. In this form of oral expression we find that:

Name-giving provides an outlet for the regulation of social relations in the intense social interaction of small communities. It allows people to communicate their feelings indirectly,

without overt confrontation and possible conflict.
(Suzman 1994:270)

The constitution of a sociocultural system like that of the Zulu shapes an order of manifest linkages and values. These in turn configure the relations and interests that are negotiated in the context of dispute and conflict and therefore, the form and content of processes of confrontation. It is in the context of confrontation - when people negotiate their social universe and enter into discourse about it - that the forms that have been discussed here take on relevance in terms of conflict management. Context in this form of oral composition and expression is all important and as Goody (1977:79) states:

The appreciation of oral poetry derives partly from widely-shared human experiences and partly from the specific personal and cultural situations surrounding the act of communication; while the outsider can recognize the general, he is at a loss when it comes to the particular.

Far from being a dying art form in contemporary Zulu society, *izibongo/izihasho* continues to flourish, to adapt and to gain momentum in its modern and dynamic setting. Where transformation in content and even presentation may occur, *izibongo* continue to reflect the origins of this traditional oral form which has flourished amongst the Zulu people since time immemorial.

Notes:

¹ Phakathwayo was a powerful rival chief during Shaka's time, as was Zwide, chief of the Ndwandwe tribe. Zwide's mother, Ntombazi was reputed to be a 'witch' and was always a thorn in Shaka's side.

² A point made by Karin Barber in communication on an earlier version of this thesis

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

One of the primary aims in conducting this research was to document the many previously unrecorded forms of naming strategies and *izibongo/izihasho*, which are sanctioned channels through which Zulu people manage issues of conflict and articulate criticism. At the same time I have shown how these oral forms reflect the value systems of the group. One must, however, bear in mind that value systems for the group are determined by dominant social values of the time.

Humans define their relationships by communication and conflict represents a form of human relationship. Social conflict is a term we assign to particular human communicative behaviours; it exists when the parties involved agree in some way that the behaviours associated with their relationship are labeled as conflict behaviours. The forms through which this conflict is expressed vary from culture to culture; in Zulu culture, since these forms are orally expressed, this type of communicative evidence or oral articulation of criticism and conflict has not been formally captured before in any depth, possibly due to the sensitive nature of the content. Through this research, material that would not normally be available to other researchers has been saved for posterity. Jandt (1973:4) makes the point that one desirable attribute of conflict is that through conflict man is creative, and it is this creativity in conflict communication captured in this

study in the form of ingenious names and *izihasho* amongst the Zulu that is the focus of this thesis.

The first chapter discusses the cultural setting and the social context in which conflict occurs and describes the various oral strategies of naming and *izibongo/izihasho* that are used as a socially acceptable means of conflict expression and criticism amongst the Zulus. Cultures which place emphasis on the individual are often those where direct confrontation is not unusual. In many African societies communal living is the norm, and with particular reference to Zulu society, there are considerable restrictions regarding direct expression of feelings and emotions. Impey and Nussbaum (1996:233) state that in African societies:

There are many prohibitions regarding direct confrontation with another person. The arts provide a socially sanctioned vehicle for expressing complaints or criticism of others.

This chapter initially turns its attention to what Impey and Nussbaum refer to as the 'arts'. In addition, this section deals with the reasons why this study was undertaken as well as discussing the scope and limitations of this research. Terminological issues such as the use of the terms 'text', 'literature', 'poetry', 'praise poetry' are investigated in order to debate the view that the data which forms the basis of this thesis, cannot be described in the light of these terms which are synonymous with preconceived literary ideas of 'art' and 'artistry'. The theories that work for literate texts are juxtaposed to those which are suitable for

discussion of oral texts. In a non-literate culture in which the word is the equivalent of the act, talking invites artistry and verbal virtuosity in the form of repetition, and circumlocution is meant to extend rather than to contract the discourse and therewith also, the pleasure of actual and vicarious participation amongst those present. The 'artistic' forms of oral composition under investigation in this thesis are regarded as being composed for their various **social functions**, that of conflict articulation and amelioration; in certain instances the installation of a memorable persona in the public eye; and the function of public naming as an on-going process of contestation and not merely labeling, where various people in the communities may evaluate names and oral compositions differently, some seeing them in certain situations as coded condemnation whereas others perceive them as proud or defiant boasts. The **form** which many of these oral compositions take popularly referred to in the literature as 'praise poetry', is recognised rather as a by-product of these social functions.

The second chapter focuses primarily on the field of oral studies and the interaction of the oral and written modes, as well as documenting the research done in the field of oral studies in relation to the topic of conflict. The theory of Jousse underpins the discussion on the construction and composition of the specific oral forms used by Zulu people to express conflict and articulate criticism. These are shown to be mnemonic oral texts which are formulaic, balanced, rhythmic expressions. The material of published authors in the field of

conflict touches on recorded expressions in political, work and social arenas globally, but concentrates particularly on Africa. The references discussed, although extensive, reveal that there is a gap in the knowledge not only regarding expressions of conflict in African societies when compared to the amount of recorded material relating to the Occidental experience, but also specifically in the Zulu social arena, and one of the aims of this thesis is to investigate and fill that gap.

The third chapter which deals specifically with the theoretical framework of orality and conflict, outlines the four mnemonic laws as explained in Jousse's *Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm*. This is discussed in relation to the data which consists predominantly of previously unrecorded oral material which is recounted in the remaining four chapters.

The theoretical framework of conflict in African societies is approached in the light of group life, and small folk communities which are by-and-large typical of Zulu societies in which the individual is perceived primarily as an extension of the group to which he belongs. In this type of social setting one encounters those who favour the oral mode of expression over writing which tends to have a more 'distancing' effect on people. The African world view is examined in terms of its deeply rooted philosophy of "holistic harmony and communalism rather than in the individualistic isolationism characteristic of European thought" (Sofola 1998:54). Relatedness is the essence of

African social reality and characterises the experience of the living person. "If one is cut off from his community, one is considered dead" (Sofola 1998:54). It is in the light of this philosophy that the desire to communicate problems and express conflicts is examined amongst the Zulu in their social discourse.

The fourth chapter is the first of the data chapters and deals specifically with the aspect of onomastics and the way in which names and nicknames are given to people, animals and homesteads to pass cryptic social messages. In Zulu society, a person's 'physical integrity' is presumed to be imbedded in the name that he has (and therefore to the extension of names which occurs in the composition of *izihasho*). Hence the supreme importance commonly attached to the naming system in many African societies.

Rattray (1929:372) in his study on Ashanti society acknowledges this point when he says:

If I were asked to name the strongest of the sanctions operating in Ashanti to enforce the traditional rule of the community, I think I would place the power of ridicule at the head of the forces of law and order.

In addition to an extended analysis of personal, animal and homestead names and the circumstances surrounding the composition of each name, the category of nicknames is also investigated to reveal how Zulu people who constitute the 'in-group' (in whatever environment), use nicknames as a

means of demonstrating membership and solidarity of group structures. At the same time, these nicknames play an important function of leveling criticism and voicing conflict at those targeted who work or mix in close proximity. These nicknames are often colourful and amusing caricatures of a person's behavioural, physical or idiosyncratic character traits.

Chapter five introduces the first of three chapters which deal with the aspect of censure in the Zulu oral compositions known as *izibongo/izihasho*. This form of expression is based on an age-old mnemonic oral tradition which is socialised and accepted as a norm of group behaviour. This 'social and moral norm-referencing' is the basic function of the various Zulu oral texts which I present in this thesis where people imitate the behaviour that they observe around them in their gestually and/or orally expressive behaviours. The expression is 'formulaic' and the greater the refinement of the formulas, the stronger the mnemonic element embedded in the expressor, which then results in what certain cultures like to identify as 'literature' and 'poetry'.

Chapter five deals with aspects of criticism that are apparent in clan *izibongo*. These critical references have survived the passage of time and still are recited currently in the oral history of the clan, despite the obscure and seemingly tactless origin of some of these references.

The final two chapters deal with the way in which the *izibongo/izihasho* of men and women are used as common vehicles for conflict articulation, not only amongst commoners, but also amongst those of royal station. Although the composition and expression of *izihasho* is more common amongst men generally, the evidence recorded in this thesis shows that it is not that rare amongst women. What is worthy of note, however, is the fact that many of the examples of *izihasho* recorded amongst urban women seem to play a role of exposing and satirising women who transgress socially accepted norms. These examples are not the norm in *izibongo*, where negative and positive elements are normally balanced in composition. Rather these examples exemplify a specific type of *izihasho* which play a particular function in which the severity of the chastisement depends largely on the context in which the oral compositions are recited, varying from mild and playful teasing to outright deprecation and derogation.

The final data chapter deals with criticism captured in the written recordings of the *izibongo zamakhosi* as well as in previously unrecorded oral renditions of the *izihasho* of commoners. Even in the eulogies aimed at powerful warrior Zulu kings such as Shaka, Dingane and Cetshwayo, criticism is freely leveled in the sanctioned form of *izibongo* by the *imbongis*. It is in the *izihasho* of male commoners, however, that censure is most prolific, attacking vices such as sexual misconduct, drunkenness, dishonesty and cowardice amongst others. The documenting of these oral compositions underlines the limitation of assigning this genre to the category of

"praise poetry". It embraces so much more than what the English term suggests, that it would seem wiser for those interested in studying this oral genre to refer to it in terms of the Zulu terminology *izibongo/izihasho*, which this chapter shows to comprise so much more in not only form, but function as well.

What requires further research in the light of this study, is whether the censorious content of this type of oral ID has a modifying effect on the behaviour of the person to whom it is directed, and if so, to what extent. An additional field of investigation related to this, is to record in which specific environments these oral renditions are more likely to be 'edited' or changed, and for what specific reasons. This has been touched upon in some of the examples cited, but this could only be meaningfully researched in one particular area where the researcher actually resides and knows the community intimately. This familiarity with the various community members as well as the presence of the researcher at various community gatherings when oral performances spontaneously take place, would help in drawing conclusive findings.

A further point for consideration that this study has highlighted, is the dearth of material available relating to gender issues in Zulu speaking communities. Topics relating to the imbalance between the *izibongo* of males and females in Zulu society deserve attention. This would address issues such as why women do not encourage the proliferation of *izibongo/izihasho* amongst themselves, as well as an

investigation of the difference in the qualities regarded as positive and negative within the framework of male and female *izibongo/izihasho*.

The most significant issue, however, which I feel needs attention as a result of this research, is the impact of urbanisation and industrialisation on the channels of normal articulation of censure and criticism amongst Zulu speaking people. The increasing shift of people from rural areas into urban areas affects the way people express themselves and deal with conflict, particularly amongst those no longer living in the situation of the extended family. Channels of communication previously open and available to those in extended family situations and communal societies are diminishing greatly or no longer exist in certain urban settings. The environment in which one may pass on a veiled message through naming, songs or *izihasho* and where one is familiar with the social background to such messages is not the norm in urban areas where one increasingly encounters the nuclear family living in isolation from the traditional extended family group.

This point was brought home to me recently after I had given a Cross-Cultural Presentation to the Durban group of Life Line counsellors, a voluntary association of people who give advice and solace to people who phone in with personal problems. One of the issues which was raised by their head counsellor after I had given my presentation to their trainee counsellors in October 2003, was the marked increase in the number of Zulu

women who were phoning in to discuss their problems and asking for advice. One of the matters often discussed by these women was that they had nowhere and no-one to turn to with their marital and family problems in urban areas. The situation seems to have been easier to deal with when these difficulties could be shared with members of the extended family and others from the immediate community. One of the requests often made over the telephone is that these women seek personal one-on-one counseling, as opposed to telephonic counselling. This is typical of oral-style societies where physical presence is essential in the articulation of the message. To accommodate this increased request for help, Life Line in Durban started a drop-in, face-to-face service on 11th March 2002, called the *Ukuba Nesibindi* VCT Site (Be Strong Voluntary Counselling and Testing Site). Initially, all the interviews dealt with the issue of AIDS, but Sister Dudu, in charge of the Site, informed me that it had increasingly become a centre not only for issues directly to do with AIDS, but also for dealing with domestic problems, rape and family violence.

Between 1991 and 1996, the general Life Line counsellors in KwaZulu Natal felt that they could cope with the number of crisis line calls made by mainly White and Indian callers. However, from 1996 to 1997, there were not sufficient trained Zulu speaking counselors to field the dramatic increase in the number of calls made daily to the telephonic toll-free help line which was used almost exclusively by Blacks, so a central call centre was set up in Johannesburg. In accounting for why there was a marked increase in the calls made by Zulu

speakers, Sister Dudu made the point that it was only really in the early 1990s that the disease known as AIDS was given wide-spread exposure in KwaZulu Natal. The first training that Life Line was commissioned to do by the State hospitals and Health Departments was undertaken in 1988. Counsellors were trained to deal not only with AIDS counselling, but all the issues that underpinned and resulted from AIDS. Sister Dudu, in an interview in October 2003, made the point that since that initial training that was done, health care workers were reporting that there had been little change as regards cultural attitudes. These issues relate directly to family problems dealing with sex, the use of condoms, multiple sexual relationships, and sexual myths about intercourse with under age children. More disturbing is the imbalance in the requests for help between Zulu males and females. Telephone calls from Zulu males are markedly fewer than those from women and in the drop-in site, the request from females for counselling was more than double that of males. Without the acceptable channels of communication of discontent available to modern urban Zulu people, the question remains, how are these people now expressing their pent up frustrations and social conflict, and is this responsible for the increase in family violence in urban areas?

Mutating forms of communication amongst younger people is evident today in the form of American rap, particularly popular amongst young Black people in South African society. The roots of this song form, often full of social comment and reflective of the Black American gangster culture, reveal a

society of transactional sex, violence, rebellion and discontent. This seems to be a channel for the articulation of dissatisfaction that is becoming increasingly popular. Another conduit for the expression of various social complaints that has regained popularity mostly in Zulu speaking communities, is Maskandi¹ and Kwaito music². However the problems that are voiced in these musical forms provide an outlet to the artists who sing and/or compose the lyrics and not to the general public who may, however, receive the messages contained therein.

Although it is undeniable that conflict may be dysfunctional, the functional aspects of it are opposites sides of the same coin. Roberts's research reports that:

By virtue of its enormous range and flexibility, the control implications of speech forms, must everywhere be significant, and some scholars are now urging that studies of order in any society should begin with detailed examination of speech forms, both within and outside the context of dispute. (1979:44)

Oral expressions of social conflict in Zulu discourse, therefore, may be seen as positive social functions for the following reasons: they set group boundaries by strengthening group cohesiveness and separateness and they clarify objectives which results in the establishment of group norms. In addition, they serve to reduce tension and permit maintenance of social interaction under stress, but ultimately, their major function is in the restoration of balance and harmony in society.

Notes

- 1 See Shabane. A.B. 1999 in bibliography.
- 2 See Impey A. 2001. in bibliography.

References

- Abrahamo L. 2002. Naming in the South of the Save River. In *A World of Names, Nomina Africana* 16(2):91-99.
- Alant J. 1994. Towards a Linguistic Definition of Orality. In *Alternation* 1(1).
- Allen I.L. 1983. *The Language of Ethnic Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ayer A.J. 1963. *The Concept of a Person*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Barber K. 1977. *Readings in African Culture*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- , 1989. Interpreting Oriki as History and as Literature. In *Discourse & Disguises: The Interpretation of African oral Texts*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham.
- , 1991. *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- , 1993. Inhabitable Words: Text, Metatext & Criticism in Yoruba Oral Praise Poetry. In Gugler J. & Leusebrink H.J. & Martini J.(eds). *Literary Theory & African Literature*. Meunster: University of Bayreuth.
- , 1999. Obscurity and Exegesis in African Oral Praise Poetry. In Brown Duncan (ed): *Oral Literature and Performance in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Bascom W. 1993. *Sixteen Cowries: Yoruba Divination from Africa to*

- the New World*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Beattie J.H.M. 1957. Nyoro Personal Names. In *Uganda Journal* 21.
- Bozeman A.B. 1976. *Conflict in Africa: Concepts and Realities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Brockmeier J, Wang M. & Olson D. 2002. *Literacy, Narrative and Culture*. London: Curzon.
- Bryant A.T. 1929. *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*. London: Longmans, Green & Co.
- . 1949. *The Zulu People*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter.
- . 1963. *Bantu Origins - The People and their Language*. Cape Town: C.Struik.
- Burr V. 1995. *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Burrow J.A. 1993. *Langland's Fictions*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Callaway H. 1868. *Nursery Tales, Traditions and Histories of the Zulus*. London: Trubner.
- Canonici N.N. 1991. Traditional Cannibal Motifs in Modern Zulu Literature. In Sienaert E., Bell N. & Lewis M. (eds). *Oral Tradition and Innovation*. Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre.
- . 1995. *Tricksters and Trickery in Zulu Folktales*.

- Unpublished PhD Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- . 1999. Interplay between Orality and Literacy in Zulu Literature. In Smit J. A. (ed). *Alternation: The Dancing Dwarf from the Land of Spirits*: 1-14.
- Chamberlin T.E. 2002. Hunting, Tracking and Reading. In Brockmeier J., Wang M. & Olson D. (eds). *Literacy, Narrative and Culture*. London: Curzon.
- Cohen E.N. 1977. Nicknames, Social Boundaries and Community in an Italian Village. In Holland T.J. *The Many Faces of Nicknames. Names*, 1990, 38(4):255-272.
- Cohen. D.W. 1989. The Undefined of Oral Tradition. In *Ethnohistory* 36(1).
- Conolly J. 2001. *An Annotated and Glossed English Translation of Memory, Memorisation and Memorisers in Ancient Galilee by Marcel Jousse: A Study of the Origin, Nature, Analysis and Recording of Mnemonic Rhythmo-stylistic Texts. Volume One: Translations on and at the Oral-Literate Interface; Volume Two: Memory, Memorisation and Memorisers in Ancient Galilee; Volume Three: A Glossary of Joussean Concepts, Terms and Usage*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Cope A.T. 1968. *Izibongo - Zulu Praise Poems*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Coser L.A. 1956. *The Functions of Social Conflict*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- de Klerk V. & Bosch B. 1996. Nicknames as sex-role stereotypes.

- Sex Roles*. 35(9/10): 525-541.
- . 1997. Nicknaming among Xhosa speaking children and adolescents. *S A Journal of African Languages*: 17(3):100-105.
- de Klerk V. 2002. Xhosa Nicknames for Whites. In Moller L. A. & Jacobs J.U. (eds). *A World of Names: Nomina Africana* 16(2):146-163.
- de Vos G. 1966. Conflict, Dominance and Exploitation in Human Systems of Social Segregation. In *Conflict in Society*. London: De Reuck A. J. & Churchill A.
- Dhlomo H.I.E. 1947. Zulu Folk Poetry. In *Native Teacher's Journal*:6.
- Doke C.M. & Vilakazi B.W. 1972. *Zulu-English Dictionary*. Witwatersrand University Press, 2nd ed. Johannesburg.
- Dorian N.C. 1990. A Substitute Name System in the Scottish Highlands. In Holland T.J. *The Many Faces of Nicknames*. *Names*. 38(4):255-272.
- Dowling T. 1996. *The Forms, Functions & Techniques of Xhosa Humour*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Dundes A. 1965. *The Study of Folklore*. New Jersey: Englewood and Cliff N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Dundes A. and Arewa E. O. 1964. Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folkore. *American Anthropologist* 66(6): 70-85.

- Durkheim E. 1947. *The Division of Labour in Society*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Eagleton T. 1983. *Literary Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Evans-Pritchard E.E 1948. Nuer Modes of Address. In *Uganda Journal*. Vol 12
- Finnegan R. 1970. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- , 1990. What is Orality - if Anything? In *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 14:130-149.
- , 1992. *Oral Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foley J.M. 1988. *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Frielick S. 1988. Winged Words/Caged Texts: Oral Tradition and Teaching African Literature. In Sienaert E.R. and Bell A.N.(eds). *Catching Winged Words: Oral Tradition and Education*: 203-212. Durban: University of Natal Oral Documentation and Research Centre.
- Furniss G. & Gunner E. (eds). 1995. *Power, Marginality and Oral Literature in Africa*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Fuze M.M. 1979. *The Black People and Whence They Came*. Cope A.T. (ed). Translation by Lugg H. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

- Fynn H.F. 1950. *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn*. Stuart J & Malcolm D. (eds). Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter.
- Gluckman M. 1963. *Custom and Conflict in Africa*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers.
- Goody J. 1977. *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Govindsamy D. 1995. *The Praise Poetry of Contemporary Trade Union Poets in Natal*. Unpublished M A Dissertation. Durban: University of Natal.
- Grant Rev E.W. 1929. Izibongo of the Zulu Chiefs. *Bantu Studies* 3.
- Groenewald H. 1994. In Praise of Resistance. Unpublished paper presented at SAFOS Conference Pilansberg.
- Groenewald H.C. & Makopo S. 1991. The Political Song: Tradition and Innovation for Liberation. In Durban: University of Natal Oral Documentation and Research Centre.
- Gumede M.A. 2000. *Compliments and Caveats: An Implicated View of Zulu Personal Naming as a Retaliatory Function in the Emaqwabeni and KwaLuthuli Areas of KZN*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Gunner E. 1976. Forgotten Men: Zulu Bards and Praising at the Time of the Zulu Kings. In *African Languages* 2.
- , 1979. Songs of Innocence and Experience: Zulu Women as

- Composers & Performers of *Izibongo*, Zulu Praise Poems. In *Research in African Literatures* 10(2): 228-256.
- . 1984. *Ukubonga Nezibongo: Zulu Praising and Praises*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. SOAS: University of London.
- Gunner E. & Gwala M. 1991 & 1994. *Musho: Zulu Popular Praises*. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan University Press & Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Gunner E. 1995. Clashes of Interest: Gender, Status and Power in Zulu Praise Poetry. In *Power Marginality and African Oral Literature*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Hadebe S.B. 1992. *The History of the Amahlubi Tribe in the Izibongo of its Kings*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Hamilton C. & Wright J. 1990. Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Precolonial Context. In *S.A. Historical Journal* 2:3-23.
- Havelock E. A. 1988. *Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*. New York: Yale University Press.
- Higgs C.M. 2000. *Metaphor, Mimodrama, Mimism and Mind: The Perceptions of Meaning and 'Meaning-Making' of Marcel Jousse*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Hofmeyr I. 1979. The State of South African Literary Criticism. *English in Africa* 6 (2):39-50.

-----, 1993. *We Spend Our Lives as a Tale that is Told: Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chiefdom*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Holland T.J. 1990. The Many Faces of Nicknames. *Names* 38(4): 255-272

Horn Peter. 1994. Orature, Literature and the Media. In *Journal of Literary Studies* 10(1). Pretoria: UNISA.

Hornby A.S. (ed) 1974. *Oxford Advanced Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Impey A. & Nussbaum B. 1996. Music & Dance in southern Africa: Positive Forces in the Workplace. In *Sawubona Africa: Embracing Four Worlds in South African Management*. Sandton: Zebra Press.

Jafta D.N. 1978. *A Survey of Xhosa Drama*. Unpublished M.A. Dissertation. Kwadlangezwa: University of Zululand.

Jandt F. E. 1973. *Conflict Resolution Through Communication*. London & New York: Harper & Row.

Jousse M. 1990 (1925). (Translated by Sienaert E. and Whitaker R.) *The Oral Style*. USA: Garland.

-----, 2000 (Edited by E. Sienaert and translated in collaboration with J. Conolly) *The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm*. Cape Town and Durban: Mantis Publishing. 2nd Ed.

-----, 2001 (1930). *The Parallel Rhythmic Recitatives of the Rabbis of Israel*. Cape Town and Durban: Mantis Publishing.

----- (1997 (Anthropology) 340
Durban (Edited by) Centre for Oral Studies, University of Natal

Kraemmer J.E. 1975. *The Dynamics of a Changing Music System in Rural Rhodesia*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. East Lansing, Michigan: University of Michigan.

Kaschula R.H. 1991 a. *The Transitional Role of the Xhosa Oral Poet in Contemporary South African Society*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

----- . 1991 b. Some Thoughts on the Orality-Literacy Debate, With Specific Reference to the Xhosa *Imbongi*. In *Oral Tradition & Innovation*. Sienaert E., Bell N. & Lewis M. (eds). Durban: University of Natal Oral Documentation and Research Centre.

Kgobe D.M. 1985. *The Classification and Significance of Folksongs in Northern Sotho*. Unpublished B A Hons. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Kluckhohn C. 1944 *Navaho Witchcraft*: Papers of the Peabody Museum. Vol XX11 No.2. In Coser L.A. 1956. *The Functions of Social Conflict*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Kolawole M.E.M. 1997. *Womanism and African Consciousness*. Trenton, New York: Africa World Publishers.

Koopman A. 1979. The Linguistic Difference Between Nouns and Names in Zulu. *African Studies* 38(1): 67-82.

----- . 1986. *The Social & Literary Aspects of Zulu Personal Names*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.

----- . 1989. The Aetiology of Zulu Personal names. In *Nomina*

- , 1994. The Socio-Cultural Aspects of Zulu Ox and Dog Names. In *Nomina Africana* 8(1).
- , 2002. *Zulu Names*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- Koopman Albert. 1991. *Transcultural Management*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Inc.
- Krige E.J. 1950. *The Social System of the Zulus*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter.
- , 1968. Girls Puberty Songs & their Relation to Fertility, Health, Morality & Religion among the Zulu. In *Africa* 38(2) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kromberg S. 1994. Worker *izibongo* and Ethnic Identities in Durban. In *Journal of Literary Studies* 10(1): 57-74.
- Kunene D.P. 1971. *Heroic Poetry of the Basotho*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kunene R.M. 1962. *An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry, both Traditional and Modern*. Unpublished MA Dissertation. University of Natal. Durban.
- Kuper H. 1964. *The Swazi: a South African Kingdom*. New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston.
- Kuper A. 1987. Cannibals, Beasts and Twins in Southern Bantu Folklore. In *South Africa and the Anthropologist*. London:

Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Labov W. 1972. *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lambert M. 2000. Classical Athenian and Traditional African Ethics: The Hermeneutics of Shame and Guilt. In *SA Journal of Folklore Studies* 11(1).

Leach J.W. & Ozkok B. 1987. The Strategy of Turkish Boys' Verbal Dueling Rhymes. In Dundes A. *Parsing Through Customs: Essays by a Freudian Folklorist*. Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Leslie P.L. & Skipper J.K. 1990. Towards a Theory of Nicknames: A Case for Socio-Onomastics. *Names* 38(4): 273-282.

Levine L. W. 1977. Black Laughter. In *Black Culture & Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*. Levine L.W. (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Lieberson S. 1984. What's in a Name? In *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 45:77-87.

Lord A. B. 1986. Words Heard and Words Seen. In *Oral Tradition and Literacy*, Whitaker R. & Sienaert E. (eds). Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre.

Mack B.B. 1986. Songs from Silence : Hausa Women's Poetry. In Davies C.B. and Graves A.A. (eds). *Ngambika (Studies of Women in African Literature)*. Trenton New Jersey: Africa World Press.

- Mafeje A. 1967. The Role of the Bard in a Contemporary African Community. In *Journal of African Languages* (6).
- Magwaza T. 2001. Private Transgressions: The Visual Voice of Zulu Women. In: *Agenda* 49: 25-32.
- Makhambeni N. 1986. *Izaqheqhe*. Haum de Jager. Pretoria.
- Makhwaza I. N. 1997. *Elements of Satire in Zulu Folksongs*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Malan J. 1997. *Conflict Resolution: Wisdom From Africa*. Durban: Accord.
- Malinowski B. 1926. *Myth in the Primitive Psychology*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Mangele Z.H. 2000. *Zulu Marriage Values and Attitudes Revealed in Song*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Mapanje J. & White L. (eds). 1983. *Oral Poetry from Africa*. London: Longman.
- McDowell J.H. 1990. Towards a Semiotics of Nicknaming: The Kamsa Example. In Holland T.J. *The Many Faces of Nicknames*. 1990. *Names* 38(4):255-271.
- Middleton J. 1961. The Social Significance of Lugbara Personal Names. In *Uganda Journal*:25.
- Miruka O. 1994. *Encounter with Oral Literature*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

- Mkhonto B.B. 2000. The Symbolic Dynamics of some Written *Izibongo* and Melic Poetry of Children. In *SA Journal for Folklore Studies* 11(1):21-31.
- Molefe L. 1992. *The Praises of Domestic Animals*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.
- Molefe L. 2000. *Onomastic Aspects of Zulu Nicknames with Special Reference to Source and Functionality*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Morgan J., O'Neill C. & Harre R. 1979. *Nicknames: Their Origins and Social Consequences*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Msimang. C.T. 1981. Imagery in Zulu Praise Poetry. In *Limi* 9:51-76.
- Mulkay M. 1988. *On Humour -its Nature and Place in Modern Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mutembei A.K. & Lugalla J.L.P. 2002. Using Narratives to Understand People's Experience on AIDS: Examples from Oral Poetry of the Bahaya of Bukoba, Tanzania. Unpublished Paper delivered at the Conference on Language, Literature and the Discourse of HIV/AIDS in Africa, hosted at the University of Botswana, Gabarone, June 2002.
- Mvula E.T. 1991. Strategy in Ngoni Women's Oral Poetry. In *Critical Arts - The Journal for Cultural Studies* 5(3). Durban: University of Natal.
- Mzolo D.M. 1977. *A Study of Nguni Clan Praises in Natal & Zululand*. Unpublished MA Dissertation. Durban: University of Natal.

- Nash W. 1985. *The Language of Humour*. New York: Longman.
- Neethling S.J. 1994. Xhosa Nicknames. *S A Journal of African Languages* 14(2): 88-92.
- Ngubane S. 2002. *Reclaiming our Names: Shifts Post 1994 in Zulu Personal Naming Practices*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Nicolaisen W.F. 1974. Names as Verbal Icons. *Names* 22:104-116.
- Ntshinga T.N. 1993. *Xhosa Women's Songs*. Unpublished M.A. Dissertation. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Ntuli C.D. 2000. Respect and *Hlonipha* among the Nguni and Some Observations on Derogatory Tags that Tarnish Women's Image. In *S. A. Journal of Folklore Studies* 11(1).
- Ntuli D.B.Z. 1992. The Significance of Zulu Homestead Names. In *Nomina Africana*, 6 (1).
- Nyamende A. 1988. Oral Praise Poetry of the Clans. In Sienaert E. & Bell N. (eds). *Oral Tradition and Education*. Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation Centre.
- Nyembezi C.L.S. 1948. The Historical Background to the *Izibongo* of the Zulu Military Age. *African Studies* 8:110-125.
- 1954. *Zulu Proverbs*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter.
- 1958. *Izibongo Zamakhosi*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter.

- Obbo C. 1991. *African Women: Their Struggles for Economic Independence*. London: Zed Press.
- Okpewho I. 1983. *Myth in Africa: A Study of its Aesthetic & Cultural Relevance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1992. *African Oral Literature*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Ong W. 1977. *Interfaces of the Word*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 1982. *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*. London & New York: Methuen.
- . 1988. *Orality-Literacy Studies and the Unity of the Human Race*. Durban: Natal University Oral Documentation & Research Centre.
- Opland J. 1973. African Phenomena Relevant to a Study of the European Middle Ages: Oral Tradition. In *English Studies in Africa* 16(2)
- . 1983. *Xhosa Oral Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1993. Scop and Imbongi. In *Comparative Literature* 45(2): 97-119
- Parrinder G. 1951. *West African Psychology*. London: Lutterworth Press.

- Parry A. 1971. *The Making of Homeric Verse. The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Phillips B.S. 1990. Nicknames and Sex Role Stereotypes. *Sex Roles* 23(5/6): 281-289.
- Powell C. & Paton G E. 1988. *Humour in Society - Resistance and Control*. London: Macmillan.
- Prabhakaran V. 1999. The Hardest Stone the Devil can Throw: Indian Caricature in South Africa. In *Nomina Africana* 13(1 & 2): 87-100.
- Preminger A. 1974. *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics*. London: MacMillan.
- Ramphela M. & Wilson F. 1989. *Uprooting Poverty - the South African Challenge*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Raper P.E. 1987. Aspects of Onomastic Theory. *Nomina Africana* 1 (2): 78-91.
- Rattray R.S. 1929. *Ashanti Law & Constitution*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Roberts S. 1979. *Order and Dispute*. New York: Penguin Books.
- . 1981. *Rules & Processes: The Cultural Logic of Dispute in an African Context*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rycroft D.K. & Ngcobo A. B. 1988. *The Praises of Dingane*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

Samuelson R.C.A. 1929. *Long, Long Ago*. Durban. Knox Printing and Publishing Company.

Shabalala M.A. 1999. *Homestead Names as a Reflection of Social Dynamics in Mabengela, Nkandla*. Unpublished Masters Dissertation. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.

Shabane A. 1999. *Ukulondolozeka Kwamasiko Nenkolo Lomdabu YamaZulu Emculweni WoMaskandi*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Durban: University of Durban Westville.

Skipper J.K. 1986. Nicknames, Coal Miners and Group Solidarity. *Names* 34(2):134-145.

Sofola Z. 1998. Feminism and African Womanhood. In Obioma Nnaemeka (ed). *Sisterhood:Feminism and Power*. Eritrea: Africa World Press.

Stewart D.L. 1994. *Songs of Rural Zulu Women*. Unpublished MA Dissertation. Durban: University of Natal.

Stoller P. 1996. *Sensuous Scholarship*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press.

Stuart J. 1924. *Ukulumethule*. London.

Suzman S. 1994. Names as Pointers: Zulu Personal Naming Practices. In *Language in Society* 23(2):253-272.

Taylor G. 1985. *Pride, Shame and Guilt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tembo M.S. 1989. *What does Your Name Mean? The Meanings of*

- Indigenous Names Among the Tonga of Southern Zambia*. Interim Report 1. Lusaka: Institute for African Studies.
- Thipa H. 1994. *Sociolinguistics and Xhosa Names*. (Unpublished paper delivered at the 1st World Congress of African Linguistics, University of Swaziland.
- Tracey H.T. 1948. *Chopi Musicians: Their music, poetry, and instruments*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Turner N.S. 1988. A Comparison of the Royal Women Mkabayi and Nandi. *SA Journal of African Languages* 8(1):28-33.
- . 1990. *Elements of Satire in Zulu Oral Traditions*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- . 1992. Zulu Names as Echoes of Censure, Discontent and Disapproval within the Domestic Environment. In *Nomina Africana* 6(2): 42-56.
- . 1995. Censure and Social Comment in the Izihasho of Urban Zulu Women. *Alternations* 2(2): 55-73.
- . 1996. A Perspective on Static Satirical References in Zulu Clan Praises. *South African Journal for Folklore Studies*, 6(1):74-85.
- . 1997. Onomastic Caricatures: Names given to Employers and Co-workers by Black Employees. In *Nomina Africana* 11(1):50-66.
- . 1998. The Composition and Performance of Cryptic Social

- Messages in Zulu Onomastics. In *Voices, Journal for Oral Studies*, Sienaert E (ed). University of Natal. Durban.
- . 2000. Zulu Names and Indirect Expression. In *Names* 48(2):127-137.
- . 2001. Humorous Names: Verbal Weapons. *SA Journal of African Languages* 21(4).
- Vail L. & White L. 1991. *Power and the Praise Poem*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Vansina J. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. London: James Currie.
- Vilakazi B.W. 1945. *The Oral & Written Literature in Nguni*. D. Litt. Thesis. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.
- Wainwright A. T. 1979. *The Praises of Xhosa Mineworkers*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Webb C. de B & Wright J.B. eds. 1979. *The James Stuart Archives*. Vol 2. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.