



**THE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS BASED ON RELIGION  
AND HEALING AS ENCAPSULATED IN O.E.H.M. NXUMALO AND  
L.B.Z. BUTHELEZI'S POETRY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Signature

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Student's name

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Date

As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this thesis for submission.

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Signature

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Supervisor's name

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late brother Velenkosini Mdanda who passed away in 1976. Though he is not here, his spirit sees and touches it. It is also dedicated to traditional indigenous religious priests and also to traditional healers. They are urged to keep up the good work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study concerns itself with indigenous knowledge systems related to religion and healing as encapsulated in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. Most of the poems referenced in this study are laced with religion and healing, with the aspects of healing being related to religion and success? In short, the healer has to be upright as far as religion is concerned. Any deviation from religious norms and values tarnishes and nullifies the healer's expertise and their ability to heal. In short the ancestral spirits dislikes deviant behaviours such as witchcraft, when the healer lives in two worlds, that of healing and that of bewitching others. The ancestors strip the healer of the healing powers, as a punishment.

To gain their expertise, the practitioners of religion and healing undergo training in the art of detecting illness and witchcraft using bones and other devices, and this training, to a greater extent, must come with the approval of ancestors. It is also upon the diviners and traditional healers to perform rituals when death has struck, by preparing rituals that should enable the living dead to meet their ancestors spotless. Since, the indigenous people believes in the life-hereafter, it is believed that a person pursues with living, similarly to an earthly one even in death. It is believed that failing to perform these rituals, invites death to encroach and repeatedly strike the community or family.

Witchcraft is deplored in indigenous religions and communities often gather together with healers to fight against witches. In indigenous religions untimely death is believed to be the work of the witch. All in all indigenous religion and healing complement each other in the worship of the Supreme-Being through deities. In short, Chapter One concerns itself with a general introduction for the entire study. Some key concepts such as: indigenous knowledge systems; deconstruction; inter-textuality; new-historicism; influence and so on, will be discussed in this said chapter.

Whereas Chapter Two discusses how theories like deconstruction, inter-textuality and new-historicism will be utilised in the study. Take for instance deconstruction is to be utilised since it deals with multiplicity of meaning in interpretation of poetry.

Chapter Three deals with the link between Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry as they relate to indigenous religion and healing and the relevance of these two concepts. Chosen poems by Nxumalo and Buthelezi will be analysed in this regard.

Chapter Four touches on instances of the indigenous knowledge system and how it is constructed within the poetry of Nxumalo and Buthelezi. Specifically, the position of the Supreme-Being and that of the deities will receive attention here.

In Chapters Five, discussions of the instances of indigenous rituals within the selected poetry and the training of prospective traditional healers will be analysed.

Finally, Chapter Six presents the conclusion, findings, recommendations and possible future directions for research in this field.

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# CHAPTER 1

## General Introduction

### 1. Introduction

The study examines the indigenous beliefs and practices of the Zulus, and how they feature in the poetry of both O.E.H.M. Nxumalo and L.B.Z Buthelezi. In this regard, this study critically analyses Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. The study also intends to examine the themes of religion and healing as revealed in the works of the foregoing poets. In this way, this study intends to account for the relevance of indigenous religion and healing in Zulu culture. It reveals how indigenous religion moulds the indigenous people, and how indigenous healing contributes towards contemporary primary health systems.

In addition, the study evaluates the traces of indigenous knowledge systems that are imbedded in the foregoing poets' poetry. Furthermore, it analyses what role these knowledge systems play in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry and how these poets comment on reality. Since the world, of late is in dire need for us to consider how indigenous knowledge systems of religion and healing are relevant to indigenous people activate and would be of assistance to activate morality and to alleviate decadence that culminates in incurables. This chapter is a holistic introduction of the study to be undertaken and explores the reasons for the study and research methodology.

In addition, an illustration of approaches to literary discourse is undertaken. This chapter also covers definitions of terms that are relevant to this study. The technical terms, religion and healing in poetry of Nxumalo and Buthelezi are analysed by utilising deconstruction, new historicism and inter-textuality approaches. The method of data in the form of literature also receives attention in this chapter. Furthermore, biographies of the poets, Nxumalo and Buthelezi will also be provided. Ultimately, this chapter will outline the following chapters in the study.

## **1.1 Research outline and introduction to study**

This study seeks to uncover the indigenous religion and healing systems of the Zulus as it is handed down by their forefathers. As Uka (1996:21) explains:

When we speak of African Traditional Healing we mean the indigenous religion of the Africans. It is the religion that has been handed down from generation to generation; it is not fossil religion (a thing of the past) but religion that Africans today have made theirs by living it.

The researcher concurs with the foregoing quotation in the sense that African Traditional Religion is a revealed religion, but it has no historical founder like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Confucianism. The religion is revealed in the sense that it came into existence, like any other religion, as a result of human experience of the mystery of the universe. In an attempt to solve the riddle of the mystery of the universe, man everywhere has asked questions, searched for answers to these questions and come to the conclusion that this mystery must be attributed to a supernatural power that belong to both visible aspects of our world. This type of experience and discovery of a Supreme Being is equally true of the forbearers of the Zulu culture.

The religion and healing systems of the Zulus can be studied under the following aspects: dreams; omens; witchcraft and ancestral spirits. In practise, repeated customs and number of accepted taboos help the Zulus to keep to their beliefs. These repeated behaviours help protect the believer against the wrath of the spirits and often customs are performed with respect. Customs are symbols that help people to understand and appropriate what is involved in the act. In this respect, customs are a behavioural guideline that enables believers to follow the standards and needs of their ancestors or deities. To be meaningful, all Zulu rites have symbols designed to help people understand and appreciate what is involved in the act and thereby correctly address their ancestors. The Zulus believe that this earth is a land of happiness, sorrow and death upon which people inhabiting it experience the said aspects.

If they are to survive, the inhabitants have to look to someone more powerful than themselves for protection and guidance. Evil spirits bring hardship, sorrow and death upon the people inhabiting this earth. Ancestral spirits who act like guardians protect the people against all sorts of evil. They fight the enemy, sustain life and provide riches for the believer. The obvious danger is the witch. The ancestors on reading the intentions of the witch, comes to a man or a woman in a dream to warn him or her of the action contemplated by the enemy. Alternatively, the ancestors may send an omen instead of a vision. Berglund (1976:266) concurs with the foregoing paragraph:

The Zulu's idiom *ubuthakathi* (witchcraft) implies two fields of evil. Firstly it refers to an incarnate power geared towards harm and destruction, which manifests itself either directly or through manipulators of *ubuthakathi* (to bewitch) are termed *abathakathi* (wizards).

In this regard it is obvious in the foregoing extract that the Zulus hate evil spirits, which in the main are brought about by wizards. The uses of power towards the evil ends in witchcraft and sorcery are quite distinct. Firstly witchcraft assumes a supernatural and mystical character of the power and the witch often undergoes specialised training to attain these abilities. There is no end to the amazing and incredible things witches can accomplish. Sorcery is different as it can be performed by anyone. Medicine can be obtained by anyone from any herbalist, who knows how to manipulate medicinal powers, and the outcome of sorcery depends not on the sorcerer or the herbalist but the intention of the ancestors. Through sorcery anyone is able to use a herbalists' medicines (*imithi*) to cure previous harm.

On the other hand, a healer's chief work is to: heal the sick, bring good luck, protect and drive away the evil spirits that cause suffering and death. This kind of healing spirit is often hereditary, although at times one acquires it through invocation. Invocation describes the practice of a healer summoning friendly spirits to make use of the applicant as a host. Ordinarily, the ancestors as healing spirits will visit one of their descendants in their sleep and show them the roots and herbs needed for healing different kinds of diseases.



The recipient may even be told where they can find these plants. These dreams and apparitions will become more and more frequent if the recipient is unwilling to take up the job. As Campbell (1998:14) puts it:

To herald this healing spirits, the benevolent spirits will make the host dislikes certain foods and introduces an ailment, at times, which can never be treated by a physician.

The foregoing extract indicates that the ancestral spirits are selective in their behaviour towards their descendents. In addition, they may enter a descendent they feel will be most able to carry out the healing obligations. It is true that if the proclamation of the approach by the spirits is not heeded, the intended recipient will continue to be tormented as long as s/he lives. It is for this reason that when healers die, they are buried with their medical kits (*isikhwama*) so that it cannot be used by any of their children without instruction.

Healers do not have equal powers and those who have less deal mostly with minor ailments such as headaches, diarrhoeas, and so on while powerful ones are able to cure consumption-tuberculosis, paralysis, cancer and mental illnesses. These healers may cope with pestilence, stop swarms of locusts from destroying crops and deal effectively with animal diseases and epidemics. Most importantly, powerful healers are also responsible for bringing rain in times of drought. Wedel (2004:67) maintains:

What is the most interesting with these healers is that however powerful he may be, he cannot be a jack-of all trades.

The foregoing excerpt indicates that it is not possible for healers to have the knowledge needed to cure all diseases. Some are experts in one disease while others are able to cure more than one. Different powers to heal particular diseases and this kind of specialisation enhance credibility to indigenous, cultural and scientific advancement of the Zulus. Under good spirits also comes the violent one, the divine healers' spirit. This is witch-hunting spirits, detecting wizards and witches. Sick people will consult this spirit to see who is harming them.

This kind of spirit usually reveals its presence before or shortly after puberty. In addition, if the spirit is a female, the host -whether male or female- will marry, but if the spirit is male, a female host will not be able to marry or bear children, as the spirit will hinder sufficient development of the reproductive organs. The divine healer's spirit is both a doctor and a fortune teller. Prayers, sacrifices and offerings are elements considered central to a daily life of the healer and feature prominently in the practice of indigenous religion and healing systems. Adeyemo (1987:35) describes this as:

The commonest act of worship in Africa.

He is quite correct. Rarely does any important moment pass during each day of a Zulu adult's life without a verbal or mental recollection of the power of God and the ancestors. An accidental bruise or gift received good or bad news, sickness or good health in the morning, a feast or a funeral; all are recognised by appropriate prayers. Mbiti (1996:2) characterises the practice of prayers as:

One of the most ancient items of African  
spiritual riches.

In this way too, sacrifices and offerings become sacred offerings to the ancestors and Supreme Being as the occasion for prayer may indicate the needs for the sacrifices or offering. When life is threatened or weakened, prayer is a means of restoring wholeness and balance in life. In indigenous religion and healing, prayer is comprehensive, requesting the removal of all that is a bad and anti-life in society, and demanding restoration of all that is good. Nothing less satisfies the Zulu religious mind. It is significant to note, though, that the very act of prayer sheds light on the centrality of relationships in the Zulu moral vision.

A Zulu prayer acknowledges the mutual interdependence of the invisible worlds. Prayer, however, emphasises more the dependences of the living on the ancestors and God. A prayer says that there comes a time when order and harmony in human life and in the world depends on powers greater than human power. This is especially so when humanity has done wrong or harbours anti-life elements.

A prayer places the individual or community in the hands of a greater mystical power and intends to overcome or to assuage their spirits displeasure. That is why the individual or the community, at prayer, is often humble before God and the ancestors who have obligations towards their children, the living. In addition, it is perfectly legitimate for the living to express their deepest emotions of frustration, confusion and anger in prayer to these mystical powers when things are not going well in the community.

## **1.2 Reasons for the study**

As far as this research could establish there are no researchers who have researched indigenous knowledge systems as enshrined in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. During the preceding one hundred years, writers have covered indigenous modes of worship and it cannot be ignored that the information was distorted to a great extent. It was distorted by non-Africans who appear not to understand the essence of traditional religion and healing. The prospective study aims to investigate how indigenous knowledge systems feature in some of the poetry produced by Nxumalo and Buthelezi. The study will investigate indigenous knowledge systems, encompassing religious practice and healing systems as directives from deities. That is to detect the moral and spiritual foundation on which the lives of both the individual and the culture depend to bring home to the average man that religion and healing are not just a fiction, which have nothing to do with the fact of life. The view that morality and religion in an indigenous society cannot be separated. This is strongly affirmed by Daniel (2001:36) when he asserts that:

Generally morality originates from religious considerations and is so pervasive in indigenous people's culture that two cannot be separate from each other. Thus we find that what constitutes the moral code of any particular indigenous society the law, taboos customs set forms of behaviour- all derive their compelling power from religion. This morality to flow out of religion and through this conduct break of the moral code is regarded as evil and punishable.

The implication of the above assertion is that morality in indigenous society was not introduced by Christianity, nor was it invented for society to preserve itself. Morality comes from religious practices and principles and since religion is a code of practice, society did create it to preserve itself. The researcher shall therefore detect how morality was given to the Zulus by God. The ancestors and the spirits keep watch over the indigenous people, acting as agents between God and the living, to make sure that people observe the moral laws and are punished when they break them. According to Mbiti (1996:8):

Most African people acknowledge God as the final guardian of law and order of moral and ethical codes.

As Mbiti explains then, the breaking of the moral and ethical order either by an individual or group is ultimately an offence against God as the moral values are derived from God whom the indigenous people consider to be pure. In this way, God has provided the moral and ethical structures for behaviours and these are meant to guide man. This study investigates the possibility of utilising both herbs and Western medicines to cure disease. As being realised more than ever before, a substantial number of ill indigenous people in contemporary society still seek their primary health-care from assorted indigenous healers instead of doctors of orthodox-medicine. Campbell (1998:80) has been consistent in his call for inclusion of African cultural values and therapeutic techniques into Western medical practices in order to provide efficient health services to indigenous people. He has strongly suggested that:

Western psychiatry must learn to make more creative of the indigenous culture, if it is to increase its effectiveness, in dealing with mental illness and hasten the acceptance of modern medicine among indigenous people.

The above citation indicates that as long as there are indigenous peoples so too will the vital elements of their religion remain. In other words, the future of the indigenous religion and healing is very much tied to the future of the indigenous people as distinct group of people.

The inclusion of indigenous religion and healing as a subject in the school curriculum may help to immortalise the religion and healing systems and better incorporate indigenous knowledge systems in westernised education systems.

Armes (1997:1) concurs with Mbiti (1996:6) when he asserts that:

A people's history must rediscover the past in order to make it used again. Such a history must deal with the past with a view to explaining the present. It must deal not only with objective developments but also bring the discussion to the realm of value judgment, the past should not be the object of mere complication if the present is to be meaningful. For if the past was viewed as a frozen reality, it would either dominate and immobilize the present or to be discarded as irrelevant to today's concerns.

The foregoing citation simply shows that what was once practiced in the past is not irrelevant, since the indigenous knowledge systems run like a golden thread from generation to generation. When misfortune strikes a household repeatedly, the elders turn to traditional ways of worship to prevent the continuation of bad luck. Folk medicine comprises medical beliefs and practices of a subpopulation and represents the uninstitutionalised aspects of medical pattern. Being more or less integrated with other cultural patterns like folk-beliefs and practices, the traditional practices tend to persist overtime, becoming part of an oral tradition that is passed on from parent to child and from an older to a younger generation.

The above mentioned citation therefore makes emphasis on the fact that the indigenous knowledge systems refer to that body of accumulated wisdom that has evolved from year of experience and trial and error problem solving by groups of people working to meet the challenges they face in their local environment drawing upon the resources they have at hand. The use of indigenous knowledge facilitates beneficiary participation and allows for integration of traditional knowledge with scientific knowledge to create appropriate technologies necessary for sustainable development and their problems.

To this end, it is instrumental that the search for new paradigms in provision of primary health system should recognise and utilise indigenous knowledge. This is justified on moral grounds by Batiste (2000:5) when he asserts that:

No sector of the population should be left outside the scope of change and development. The structural change that will enable all sectors of the population to participate in the development process must be activated. Social equality, including the achievement of a fair distribution of the income and wealth must be promoted. High priority must be given to the development of human potential in accordance with requirements of the environment, subjects to resources available.

The foregoing citation indicates that an indigenous knowledge system, religion and healing in particular, become an investment in total capital geared towards improving the overall conditions and quality of life. Specifically, this study delves into knowledge systems that have been developed by South Africa in particular. The foregoing aspects are examined in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. This study, in recording the findings from the poems, adds further moral value to the knowledge systems of present and forthcoming generations.

This conduct, which has to do specifically with the life of the individual, for instance, he would ask himself if it is right or wrong for him to eat, to work in his field, to visit the doctor or traditional healer when he is sick, and so on. Morals lay a great emphasis on social conduct, since the basic African view is that the individual exists only because others exist. It is morals which have produced the virtues that society appreciates and endeavours to preserve, such as self control, helpfulness, bravery, and so on. On the opposite side, moral sharpen people's dislike and avoidance of immorality like cheating, treachery, theft, selfishness, dishonesty, greed and so on. The ongoing and perceived conflicts between Christianity and African belief will also receive attention, since one has to take note that there is a conflict between Christian life and the life of those who follow only African religion. One possible reason for this conflict is the large number of moral requirements demanded and put upon African Christians by their missionary masters.

In addition, the conflict can be attributed to more of a clash between Western culture and African culture, than a specifically religious conflict. Some of the areas where conflicts arise, concern indigenous rituals, marriage customs, the place of sorcery, evil magic and witchcraft in indigenous life, and methods of dealing with healing, misfortune and suffering. As a result of some of these conflicts, some indigenous Christians have broken off from mission churches and formed their own churches. Where they are more able to freely incorporate traditional indigenous customs into their Christian life.

This has affected the form of prayers, music, hymns, songs, festivals and the appropriate attitude to dreams and visions. Essentially the organisation is modified in ways that seems to fit the followers best. At the same time they are trying to enable Christianity to reach the roots of indigenous people's lives and bring hope where there was none. Indigenous Christians take Christianity seriously, adding to the religious insight which they inherited from their forefathers, and applying it to the present day needs of society. It is Christianity which gave them the courage to fight oppression and domination by foreign rulers, for it endorsed their value of human dignity and emphasised the love which should exist among all men.

This study also teaches people to be humble because of their limitation. It tells men who were created that they have to celebrate this life to the fullest because it is temporary and runs very fast. This is what, in its own limited ways, indigenous religion has done for African people throughout their history. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will help to be an eye-opener to those who take the study of indigenous people's religion for granted. Specifically, those people who believe that indigenous people do not believe in a one God religious system. But have only adopted that system through the introduction of Christianity. Gumede (1990:5) agrees when he stated that:

Though God is indivisible, Western Religions progress has so diversified the approaches, into so many watertight compartments that even the enlightened seekers plod about as in a honeycomb with his feet sticky enmeshed, in the poisoned honey of rubric, dogma, hypocritical.

They represented what is called mainline churches preaching at most about Christian belief, vilifying indigenous religion. From the look of things, they themselves failed to practice what they preached. It is not possible to understand the traditional healer and indigenous healing practices without first looking into the concepts of indigenous religion. Medicine men and women will have to go on healing people, simply because there are a number of diseases that do not respond to Western medicine. In a nutshell, more research into the effectiveness of indigenous healing has to be carried out to combat the infirmities of indigenous origin. Trace has to be undertaken in the study to detect how influential indigenous religion is to indigenous healing. Indigenous healers are needed more especially during this current era of African Renaissance where the revival of both indigenous religion and healing has to be unearthed and pursued.

### **1.3 Research methodology**

In view of data collection and data analysis it is necessary to mention methods to be used in this study. Data is collected from available sources in the form of print material and in the form of published books. The information gleaned from the said sources are analysed with an eye to find the use of the indigenous knowledge systems in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry, particularly, as they refer to the themes of religion and healing. The secondary data collection has been through book reviews, journals and those of literary critiques. It is observed that a number of features in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's language, environment, beliefs (religious and cultural) are covered by a wide scope of their poetry. Therefore tracing these features can only be adequately done through deconstruction which informs us that there is and will always be a link between the texts and between writers (new and precursor writers). Leitch (1983:59) captures this point clearly by stating that:

The text is not an autonomous or unified object, but a set of relations with other texts. Its lexicon drags along numerous bits and pieces and traces of history so that text resembles a cultural salvation outlets with unaccountable collections of incompatible ideas, beliefs and conscious and unconscious tradition is a mess. Every text is intertext.



The foregoing citation indicates that no text is an island of itself. Each depends on the other text, and the spoken words without quotation marks. It is through the linking between a text with another text, with environment, history and others that the research clearly comes to indicate the extent Nxumalo and Buthelezi have been influenced by their external world and other writers. Their writings, through such influences, are an expression of sober-minded intelligent poets. For their poetry is an expression of societal, religious, cultural life and a rejection of unjust social values.

To borrow from Jefferson and Robey (1993:72), Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry:

...is not turning emotion but an escape from  
emotion it is not the expression person but an escape  
from personality.

The foregoing citation shows that Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry objectifies their feelings, respectively expressing them directly through "correlations". The uncompromising stances of the foregoing poets in their work are reflected in their anthologies which have been studied.

#### **1.4 Research approaches**

The investigation utilises both objective and subjective approaches in the study which has been undertaken. The objective approach is relevant to this study, since the researcher is not subjective. The subjective approach is relevant to this study, since the researcher elucidates the poets' method and meaning to poems in an objective way, in short, the researcher's personal interest in the poem. The researcher responds to that experience through a memory of her/his own experience Reaske (1996:40).

In other words, a subjective approach to a poem is moulded by individual experience which constructs their knowledge; the critique already has a particular subject and personal context. It would be unfair for a researcher to take an exclusively subjective approach in analysing a poem, since it is insufficient to base everything on one's own experience. One should say rather that this is what the poem means to me, but wonder how other researchers might interpret it.

In other words, it is imperative that the researcher utilises other approaches that extensively give a multiplicity of meanings to the literary work. The new historicism approach has also been used in the research which has been undertaken.

#### **1.4.1 Deconstruction approach**

Deconstruction is the term associated with the thinking and pronouncement of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. The theory itself is a reaction to some of the tenets of structuralism. We must bear in mind that deconstruction is not a replacement of structuralism, but a critique and refinement of it:

In the event we have the equally graphic “post-structuralism”, a term that seems not to have what we do in the present at all, but rather to re-name Structuralism itself as what we used to do in the past. It provides a post to confining it by means of the shortest discourse either the language has to offer. (Machin, 1988:2)

When the researcher deals with deconstruction, he is still operating within the realm of structuralism, since deconstruction constitutes an adventure or vision, a conversion in the way of putting questions to an object. Grabe (1991:123) believes that familiarity with is indispensable for an understanding of the deconstruction notion of the signs that create meaning in the reader. Jefferson and Robey (1993:112) take this point further when they say that it is necessary to make critique from inside the structuralist system.

Derrida’s problem with structuralism does not in any way take issue with the de Saussurean principle but only with the way in which structuralism has unwittingly betrayed the principles on which de Saussure’s “revolution” was founded. In structuralism, the elements which constitute language, structure and signs are significant. A sign in terms of structuralism consists of aspects which are equal. There are the signifiers and signified which are also in an arbitrary relationship. Within this arbitrariness, de Saussure knows that there is a difference between languages and signs themselves. The differences that exist between signifiers constitute the meaning of texts.

For instance, a speaker of English knows very well that the word ‘cat’ is not the same as “rat” as “c” and “r” do not sound the same. Where traditional theories of meaning like structuralism imply a vertical relationship between the signifier and signified in which the signifiers are seen to reflect or harness meaning other than itself, as Ryan and van Zyl (1982:92) indicated, Derrida wishes to replace this model of the vertical relationship, between the word and its meaning by reducing the generation of meaning to a process which occurs within a horizontal system of relationship.

Ryan and van Zyl (1982:93) state further that the signified no longer refer to entities, never free of meaning or separable from the signifier which “invokes” it. Derrida’s theory is influenced by the de Saussurean principle, “that language consists of a differential network of arbitrary sign signification”. Derrida nevertheless raised a number of points of criticism against de Saussure’s theory Grabe (1991:1240). In reality, de Saussure’s point of view emphasises the fact that writing is there just to convey speech. He further states that speech is represented by written symbols. In such a case, structuralism ranks speech over writing, a point which, while preserving de Saussure’s principle of rating speech, Derrida also promotes the idea of deconstructing written text.

At most speech and written text compliment each other in his theory of deconstruction. For example, ‘difference’ is a word derived from the French word ‘deferrer’ which has a number of meanings: to differ; postpone; delay and to differ; be different from. These numerous definitions of ‘difference’ highlight both the fact that any element of a language relates to other elements in a text, and may at the same time differ from them. For Derrida, the term difference is the opposite of and a guaranteed by presence and origin. Difference sees meaning as permanently differed by its difference from other meaning and thus volatile and unstable. In his words, Derrida (1981: 8-9) says:

You have noticed that this is a written or read, but cannot be heard. First difference refers to the (active and passive) moments that consist in differing by means of delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour... Second the moment of difference, as that this differentiates in the root of all oppositions

concepts that mark a few examples, sensible, intelligent, intuition, signification, nature, culture, etc...

It is quite obvious that the foregoing citation concerns itself with the multiplicity of meanings in text. In short, a deconstructionist may dissect a text and give a plethora of meanings to the said text. Derrida suggests that a concept logo centrism always assigns origin of truth, to the logo, to the spoken word, to the core of reason, the word of God. Therefore, in these circumstances; it is observed that full presence of the voice is valued over the mute sign of writing. Writing, as such, is considered to be secondary to speech; writing represents a fall from speech. This allows logo centrism to reduce writing into speech, into phonocentrism. As such, the dynamics of logo centrism generate historical and cultural matrices or hierarchies: voice/writing, sound/silence. These are de Saussure's logo centric dynamics as revealed by Leitch (1983:25):

It is this logo centrism which limits the internal system of language in general and by a bad abstraction presents de Saussure and the majority of his successors from determining fully and explicitly, that which is called the integral and concrete objects of the linguistic.

The above citation indicates that Derrida's deconstruction of the hierarchy of voice/writing by stating that even de Saussure's signifier check is initially imagined. Writing, according to Derrida, is the origin of language; the virgin is not the voice (phone) transporting the spoken word (logos). Derrida's, writing signifies any practice of differentiation, arbitration and spacing word. In building on structuralism, Derrida is not concerned with demonstrating how texts structures signify but the meaning that it gives revelation of the inadequacies of these structures. He is more concerned with gaps, indeterminacies and incoherencies and place within a text where it (text) violates its own conventions or its contract with the reader. As Waugh and Rice (1993:104) state, a text is to open it to release the possible position of its intelligibility, including those which reveal the partiality of the ideology inscribed in the text. To this Bressler (1994:104) adds the following:

The object of deconstructing the text is to examine the process of this material and their arrangements in the works the aim is to locate the point at which is transgressed the limits within which it is constructed, breaks free from the constraints imposed by its own realistic form. Composed of contradiction, the text is no longer restricted to a single, harmonious authoritative reading. Instead, it becomes a plural reading no longer an object for passive by the readers to produce meaning.

The foregoing citation alludes to the fact that any discourse has a multiplicity of meaning. More often than not, each meaning is dissected arbitrarily with each having incorporating positive and negativism natures.

#### **1.4.2 Intertextuality approach**

The study uses intertextuality as a literary approach. The intertextuality approach has been used to investigate the interrelationship between Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry and analyse the gist of indigenous knowledge system based on religion and healing and how these aspects interact in both poets work. Leitch (1983:123) asserts that:

When it finds its way into a current text, a chip or piece of an older monuments appears as a source, influence, allusion, imitation or parody sonnet, conventional thematic, and we recall perhaps Petrarch, Wyatt, Ronsard, Spencer or Milton.

The above mentioned citation explains that every text is not an original text. It is essentially a contextual quotation without the quotation marks. Intertextuality is a term coined by Kristeva (1980:39) and it alludes to every building in itself as a mosaic of quotations (without quotation marks) which is absorption of other texts. This term has become very influential as a way of thinking, of analysing texts or a way of seeing how literary texts come to acquire meaning. Intertextuality informs the reader that a text consists of a range of other texts or discourses and becomes a form and other texts are almost embedded in a current text.

The theory of intertextuality insists that a text cannot exist as self-sufficient whole and such does not function as a closed system. The presence of other texts in one's work or text in another person's work. There are traces of elements in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's work that relate to one another. Swanepoel (1990:23) says:

A text finds itself amongst a vast number of other texts from which it derives part of its meaning, in a way each text is influenced by previous text.

The foregoing citation indicates that intertextuality becomes less a name for a work relation to particular texts than a designation of its articulation in the discursive space of culture. The relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices of the culture and its culture is the possibilities of that culture. Culler (1998:103) says:

Intertextuality thus has done double focus. On the one hand, it calls our attention to the importance of prior texts, insisting that the antonymy of texts is a misleading notion and that a work has the meaning it does only because certain things have previously been written. Yet in so far as it insists on intelligibility on meaning, Intertext leads us to consider prior texts as contribution to a code which makes possible various effects on signification.

The above mentioned citation suggests that the content of the present text adds onto the existing contemporary ideas. Through its originality, which emanates from other text that have been written over time immemorial, intertextuality thus becomes a conglomeration of the cultural ideas of other texts. A work relation to particular texts that a designation of its articulation in the discursive spaces of culture. The relationship between a text and the various languages signifying practices of a culture and its relation to those texts which articulates to possibilities of that culture.

Barthes (1975:145) also sees it as an issue of past citations, where bits of coded formulae and others pass into a text are redistributed within it, for there is always language before and around the text. Therefore a text is, as far as intertextuality goes, a "deliberate" re-working re-cycling, rewriting and echoing narratives and discourse generally.

Swanepoel (1990:32) states that a text must constantly be read in its relationship with other texts of which it must be seen as an arrangement, adaptation or continuation. Intertextuality does not only investigate sources and influence, it also casts its net wide open to include anonymous discursive practice, codes of origins that are not easy to detect. That makes possible the signifying practices of texts. As absorption of one text by the other is a means of achieving or intertextuality as Plottel and Charney (1978: xvi) put it:

Every script (l'écriture) is a script (l'écriture's).  
Each utterance holds the trace of another utterance  
ever written carries the mark of the gas with  
something else that is, or was written even the  
ultimate signifier it is a text of another text.

The foregoing citation indicates that the writer of texts is a reader and lives within societal, political, cultural and religious background before he or she is a creator of texts. As such his work of art is inevitably shot through with quotations, references and influences of every kind. A text is also available through a process of reading and is produced at the moment of reading due to the cross-fertilisation of the packages of textual material. It is through this cross fertilisation that the researcher tends to believe that writers borrow their own ideas and other's writing when they write and in this process, what they borrow appears in their writing and shapes it.

In this sense Worton and Still (1991:7) say: "Minor poets borrow and major poets steal". These major writers often employ allusions that are highly specialised or else are drawn from the author's private reading and experience in the knowledge that few will recognise them without the help of scholar annotation. Therefore, whatever is borrowed or happens to be in one's work and belongs to someone else helps to supplement both texts (the precursor and current texts). To this Welser (1990:31) says:

Every literature imitation is a supplement which  
seeks to complete and supplement the original and  
which functions at times for later readers as a  
pretext of the original.

The above mentioned citation boils down to the fact that a text's context, emanates from previous texts. In treating intertextuality, scholars are confronted by a "major problem" found in the acceptable extent of which a text uses or alludes to a precursor text, to how repeated a new phrase word expression from a text must be in a new text. Culler (1998:104) talks about such an issue as a very delicate problem of identification and poses this question; at which point can one start to speak of this presence of one text in another as an instance of intertextuality?

This question leads us to two types of intertextuality, namely intertextuality proper and allusion or reminiscence. Intertextuality proper, as defined by Culler (1998:104), occurs when a text alludes to the redeploy of an entire structure, a pattern of form and meaning from a prior text, whereas allusion or reminiscence refers to a case where a text repeats itself from a prior text without using its meaning.

### **1.4.3 New historicism**

New historicism refers to a loose grouping of critics and theorists whose approach to the study of the past bases itself upon reading, both of non-literary texts. The new historicists have succeeded in defining new objects of historical study, with a particular emphasis upon the way in which casual influences are mediated through the discursive practices. A key figure in the rise of the new historicism is the Renaissance of history textuality. Critic Stephen Greenblatt in his recent collection of essays, *learning to curse* admits that for him the term describes not so much a set of beliefs as:

A trajectory that lead from America literacy formalism through the political and theoretical ferment of the 1970's to a fascination of what one of the best new historicity critics, Louis Morirose calls the historicity of the texts and the textuality of history. (Greenblatt, 1990:3)

To elucidate the foregoing citation Greenblatt (1990:146) describes the new historicism as a practice rather than a doctrine. He sees the new historicism as a creation of an intensified willingness to read all of the past with the texts to be central to the value.



Greenblatt notes that intention, genre and historical situation, all have to be taken into account, as all are social and ideological and must be involved in any reading of the design.

Greenblatt (1990: 122) asserts:

The production and consumption of such works are not unitary to being always involve a multiplicity of interests, however well organised for the crucial reason that art is social and hence presume more than one consciousness. And in response to the art of the past, inevitably register whether we wish to or not the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life.

In other words, the new historicist has as much to say about the reading of texts, as about their consumption. A number of historicists present their reading of texts written in the past as negotiations between past and present. In these way relationships, the features of a cultural product, which are identifiable only relatively to their difference from the historicist's own subject-position, in return make possible some degree of insight into the power configuration, especially in the aspect of class, gender, race and ethnicity. These prevail in the historicist's present culture.

There are three theories which have been used in this thesis, namely historicism, intertextuality and deconstruction. Since, deconstruction treats literature as an open letter to the world, it demonstrate an endless wandering of meaning as the very condition of interpretation. The history of interpretation alone points to the necessarily plural and disseminal character of signification.

#### **1.4.4 Parallel works on the chosen field**

As far as the researcher could establish, no research has been conducted into the study of indigenous knowledge systems as enshrined in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. There are, however, relevant materials that cover indigenous knowledge systems that are not similar to the prospective study. In her unpublished doctoral thesis, Biyela (2003) has conducted research on Selected Animal and Bird Proverbs as Reflectors of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Mores.

My proposed study will parallel Biyela's indigenous knowledge systems, but will not be a replica of her work, as the study in prospect will investigate indigenous knowledge systems as they feature their intensity in the nurturing of indigenous people. This study deals with the interpretation of songs, sung by the birds. It also gives meanings to certain names. There are legions of researchers who have studied Nxumalo's works, specifically, Mdanda (1998). Her unpublished M.A dissertation is entitled, *a Protest language in Otty Nxumalo's poetry*. She picked up and analysed the poems as they related to protest language. On the other hand, Mdanda (2002) in his unpublished Master's degree dissertation has conducted research into the construction of a National consciousness in Buthelezi's poetry. He discovered that much of Buthelezi's poetry put emphasis on racial togetherness and reconciliation.

This research dissertation differs from the foregoing researchers in the analysis and interpretation of Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry in that it finds parallels in analysis and interpretation of imagery and symbolism. As they relate to traditional religion and healing. Sukumane (1982) in her unpublished B.A (Hons) research article, reflects on the use of imagery and symbolism in the Nxumalo's poetry and seeks to find out how effectively Nxumalo uses imagery and symbolism in his poetry. Furthermore, she examined the ways in which universal and cultural influences have affected the poet in his choices of images and symbols. On the contrary, this study will delve into the ways in which indigenous knowledge systems are based on religion and healing.

#### **1.4.5 Review in journals**

Indigenous religion is traditional. The word "traditional" may connote something that came into being long ago and may belong to the era of primitivity. Indigenous religion is traditional, not because it is static and incapable of adaption to new situations and changes, but because it is a religion that emanates from people's environment and was created on their soil. The foregoing paragraph is in line with an article in the *Black Leader*, entitled *Beliefs and Practices*, (Vol 2, 1999:40) wherein Setiloane reiterates the point that South Africans do not talk freely, even with missionaries, about *Modimo* (God).

“*What do you know about this thing called Modimo?*”, they would ask. The reply would come back: “*Modimo, nobody knows about Modimo*”. The conclusion would be that ignorant Africans never knew anything about God before the arrival of missionaries. African people knew God before the white men came. Setiloane (1999:30-40) goes further in saying that a literary of religious scholars feels it would have been much better if Jesus Himself had come to Africa before the missionaries, because the missionaries failed to understand and penetrate the African mind.

Setiloane uses this statement to demonstrate how far the missionaries failed to understand what the people meant when they referred to their God as *Selo*, meaning “monster”. Zulus have more profound word, *Nkulunkulu*, which means “something that is big beyond description”. This “Thing”, *Modimo, Qamata, Umvelinqangi, Isilo, Selo se se Oitshegang*, is neither woman nor man. It is an indescribable, unexplained being. On the contrary, Setiloane (1999:40) explains that missionaries thought *Selo* meant a “*Malevolent and malicious thing*” that existed in a hole and which, like the fairies of Scotland, sometimes came out and inflicted disease on cattle and even caused death. An article written by Bafana Nxumalo, entitled *Fighting for recognition*, in *Salute Journal*, parallels this study because it also deals with indigenous religion. Nxumalo (1998) asserts that, wherever the African is, is sowing or harvesting a new crop.

He takes with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony. If he is educated he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or at university. If he is a politician he takes it with him to parliament. The foregoing citation puts emphasis on the fact that religion is the strongest element in traditional background and probably exerts the greatest influences upon the thinking and living of the people concerned. Though African religion has been condemned as superstition, satanic, devilish and hellish, it has survived and dominates the lives of African people today. Healing is part of the whole complex religion attempts by man to bring the physical and spiritual aspects of the universe as well as men who lives in it, into that desired harmony. Healing thus becomes a cardinal religious practice because indigenous cosmology demands that life in the world must be kept free from problems, ill health and obstacles which may hinder the fulfillment of desired goals.

Life here on earth is believed to be desirable essential. Illness is amongst the unfriendly agents that threaten life here on earth. It is an enemy which the indigenous person hates as much as death itself. Sindinga (1993:283) asserts:

... Sickness for the African is a diminution of life, a threat posed to life, and healing is an activity second only to that of giving.

This foregoing observation is true when one places it within the context of the indigenous people in worship, or other ritual performance. Health and healing are connected, just as they involve both rational and mystical procedures. In addition, a substantial aspect of health and healing is kept out of view of ordinary human activity and remains shrouded in the mystical. The indigenous systems of healing have been traditionally associated with a thorough knowledge of herbs, roots and so on through revelation and inspiration by the power of the ancestral spirit. As healing is a part of religious practice, it compliments with religion and empowers a healer to heal. Nonige (1997:36) asserts:

The missionaries had a problem. They found a strong virile culture old. There were strong socio-magico religious beliefs which were as much a part of the Zulu as his black colour which could not be rubbed off his skin.

The abovementioned citation indicates that Zulu medicine, like Zulu religion, would not be wiped off by an imposition of white man's religion. No transformation was possible within the Zulu cultural ethos. It was therefore necessary for missionaries to impose a stronger taboo in the hope that Zulu culture would be swamped and submerged. Zulu traditional healing was declared unchristian, unclean and an anathema for all practicing Christians. On the contrary, the Zulu could not abandon his philosophy of life but had to live in two worlds, that of African way of life and that of the Western way of life. Independent African churches cropped up and were ultimately made up of Africanised Christian beliefs. It is true that the missionaries built hospitals and clinics and it must be pointed out that the network of hospitals and clinics in KwaZulu-Natal are as a result of the zeal of the early missionaries.

It is most unfortunate, however, that the path chosen by the missionaries has always run parallel to that chosen by their patients, the converted. Traditional healing and traditional healers have always been in the middle of the great divide between traditional religion and Christianity. Since the missionaries set out to evangelise indigenous peoples by eradicating the entire indigenous knowledge system without understanding the shared commonalities first.

### **1.5 Biography of O.E.H.M Nxumalo**

Otty Ezrom Howard Mandlakayise Nxumalo originates from Ngoje, in the Louwsburg district in KwaZulu-Natal Province. He was born to Christian parents, Qedusizi and Getty Nxumalo on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1938. Nxumalo enrolled with Louwsburg Combined School and later moved to the Inkamana Missionary Institution, where he obtained a teacher's Certificate.

Thereafter he furthered his education and obtained the following degrees B.A (1970); B.A (Hons) (1972), B.Ed (1976); M.A (1980). From 1980 to 1989, he attended Harvard University where he obtained the following degrees, EDM, PA and EdD. Nxumalo was once an Administration Clerk for the Bantu Education Department in Pietermaritzburg in 1966. Between 1967 and 1972 he was a Secretary for the Zulu Language Board and a Secretary for Zulu heritage at Ulundi.

In 1977 he was employed as a lecturer at the University of Zululand and became attached to faculty of education as a vice dean. He has also lectured in the Sociology of Education. Nxumalo married in 1966. His first marriage failed due to unforeseen circumstances. His poem entitled *Ugane kahle* (I wish you a happy marriage) was a precursor and a prediction of what was going to occur to his first marriage. He married his second wife in 1995. In 1994 he was employed as the first Director-General of KwaZulu-Natal, after the first democratic elections. He was employed under the banner of the Inkatha Freedom Party which had won the elections in KwaZulu-Natal. After ten solid years as the Director-General, he relinquished that position and is presently a successful businessman in commercial farming sector. Nxumalo is a staunch Catholic.

He epitomises Catholicism but lives in two worlds, since he also practices traditional customs. Catholicism does not water down African Religion, but is instead supportive and does not encourage its members to do away with the traditional beliefs. Thus, Nxumalo is punctiliously obedient to both Western and African religion and his poetry is a testimony to this. Nxumalo started producing publications in the 1960's. He has compiled novels, short-stories and poems. In 1961, he published a novel titled *Ikusasa Alaziwa* (The future is unpredictable).

A novel entitled *Ngisinga EMPumalanga* (I look eastwards) was published in 1973 and a novel *Izinsizwa Ngamakhosi* (Gentlemen are Kings) was produced. The short-stories entitled *Emhlabeni* (On Earth) were published in 1963; *Amagwababa Echobana* (when ravens crush lice) in 1985 *Umlabalaba* (A draft) in 1989; *Benzangani?* (How are they successful?) In 1990 and *Induku* (A mace) in 1992. He is one of the renowned contemporary Zulu poets. An anthology entitled *Ikhwezi* (A morning star) was published in 1965; followed by *Umzwangedwa* (A stressful moment) in 1968 and ultimately, *Lo mlilo olokozayo* (A fading flame) in 1989. One can safely say that there is a plethora of influences that motivated Nxumalo to write down poems. To be specific, one of his primary influences is Zulu nationalism. In *Induku kaShaka* (Shaka's Mace); the literal subject says:

*Mhlawumbe kuyaye kuthi  
Lapho sesilele sikhonqa  
Unyonyob'uyekwelamathongo  
Uzikhnik'izehlakalo,  
Ozibona Zenzeka kuleli  
Okulo Ubuk' uZulu  
Bemphuz' inyongo.*

(Perhaps at night  
When we are fast asleep  
Snoring you tip-toe  
Silently to the ancestral  
Land telling them about  
Unpalatable incidents,  
Seeing the Zulu people  
Being looked down upon).

(Nxumalo: 1965:24)

The literal subject, being spirited by indigenous religion and healing, uses personification to value the importance of King Shaka's mace. This mace takes a position of a dissatisfied Zulu person as the literal-subject perceives, about the atrocities inflicted upon King Shaka's nation. The Zulus are marked by violence, and perceived as disrespectful, castaways who are oppressed and looked down upon. As a result the literal subject conveys his discontent through the mace to a particular ancestor, Shaka. This mace acts as both an agent and a mediator between the living and the ancestor, King Shaka. It has to tell Shaka about the mess the Zulus are in and how they are badly treated. Telling Shaka about this would heal the inner being of the literal subject. Presumably, King Shaka might come up with a plan to heal and revive the once mighty Zulu nation, even healing the wounds of those suffering from atrocities and from the wrath of the ancestors.

### **1.6 Biography of L.B.Z Buthelezi**

Lizwi Bonginkosi Zacharia Buthelezi was born on 19 December 1950, at Sifuleni Village, Msinga, in KwaZulu-Natal Province. He received his primary education at Qinelani School, and then moved to Sekano Ntoane High School in Soweto, where he matriculated. Buthelezi enrolled with the University of Natal and was awarded a Bachelor of Theology in 1998. He was once a clerk of the Ministry of Agriculture in both Dundee and Vryheid. Being a staunch supporter of Inkatha Cultural Organisation and a member, he was appointed as a secretary in 1980 in Ulundi. Buthelezi was a Bishop of the Holy Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion.

He was the founder member of the National Zionist movement of South Africa. Being influenced by indigenous religion, as well as healing, Buthelezi has changed his political affiliation and is now a member of the African Christian Democratic Party. His faith, a Zionist-faith per se, is embedded in indigenous religion and healing principles. He was residing at Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal, where he was also involved in the department of Travel and Tourism activities. Buthelezi also served as a municipal councillor in one of the wards at Dundee under the ACDP banner.

In 2008, he died of sugar diabetes complications. Buthelezi's poetry, without any shadow of doubt, was influenced by a combination of deep-rooted indigenous beliefs and healing systems.

Buthelezi compiled the following anthologies:

In 1980 Buthelezi published, *Izagila zephisi* (The Hunters' knobkerries). In this anthology he has covered a litany of themes such as religion, healing, love and nationalism. In *Amaqabunga eNtombe* (Leaves of an Intombe Twig), which was also published in 1980, he expressed love for his grandmother and the rural life of eMsinga. In 1985's *Ithunga likaNondlini* (a milking vessel for a good milking cow), *Unondlini* becomes a nickname for his only daughter. Although Buthelezi often referred to family in his work, he mostly dwelt on themes of Christianity and rain-making. A prolific writer Buthelezi published *Khala Nkomo KaZulu* (Roar you Zulu beast) in 1986. In this anthology he laments to the highest heavens about the then Zulu kingdom. In 1994, *Isandlwana* (like a little hut) came to the fore which was followed in 1995 by *Amathambo Ekhandanda* (Deep Thinking).

Then followed by *Umagwaz'eguqile njengethole* (who he stabs squatting like a calf) in 1998 and finally *Amabongendlini* (a herd of cattle) in 2000. At most the themes of indigenous religion and healing are covered in the foregoing pieces of work. Buthelezi's other works are found in the anthology arranged by C.T. Msimang, entitled *Amagagasi* (1981) and *Izinsungulo* (1984). There are several researchers who have studied Buthelezi's poetic-work, specifically, J.M. Ngwenya (1990:41). It is evident in the poem, *Iminqwamba yamathwasa* (The hoods of trainee diviners) the poem goes like this:

*Ngibona ukwenza kwemijikijelo yakho.  
Kumisa isangoma sisanganele emathanjeni aso.  
Siwajolozele ukuzele ukuze azithamunde.*

(I see the strikes of your deeds,  
It confuses the diviner and becomes vexed.  
And resort to throwing the divine-bones.  
He goes on the bones to give answers).

(Buthelezi, 1987:18)



When Ngwenya tried to analyse the poem of his precursor, he became confused. He identifies himself with a divine healer who consults with his powerful divining bones to detect something. An indigenous divine healer is always consulted to detect witches and to find out a remedy to cure illness. *Azithamunde* (They tell truthful stories). The literal subject is now capable of writing his own poems due to indigenous influences perpetrated by his precursor Doctor B.W.Vilakazi. The literal subject appears as if he is talking to the grave of the precursor.

He is using apostrophe telling the dead how difficult his *Imijikijelo* (poetry) for him to analyse. More often than not, Zulus make use of the practice of talking to a grave to ask the ancestral spirit of the dead to be of help to him. Grave visiting is done in the morning or at sunset as it is the indigenous people's belief that prayers are well received by ancestors either in the morning or in the afternoon. Buthelezi, a prolific poet, passed away on 16 January 2008, after a long illness.

## **1.7 Chapter outline**

This study comprises six chapters. Each chapter commences with an introductory paragraph that concisely explains the gist of that chapter. The last chapter concludes the study and highlights the areas that have been touched on.

### **Chapter 1**

This chapter consists of a general introduction for the whole study, aims of the study, researcher's methodology and the theoretical framework that has been used when conducting the study. Some key concepts, such as indigenous knowledge systems, deconstruction, intertextuality, new historicism, and so on are highlighted in this chapter. The approaches that are used in length, namely deconstruction, intertextuality and new historicism are the framework of this study. It also throws more light on the concept of indigenous knowledge system, interrelationships, religion, healing and influences. The theory of deconstruction is relevant to this study, since it deals with the multiplicity of meaning of the subject-matter.

On the other hand, intertextuality is utilised to effect on link between Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry on religion and healing. The new-historicism is applied in this study, because its emphasis is upon the way which casual influences are mediated through discursive practices.

## **Chapter 2**

Chapter two looks at the indigenous knowledge system and the links between Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry by using the aspects of religion and healing. Aspects which influenced the poetry of Nxumalo and Buthelezi are touched on.

## **Chapter 3**

This chapter concerns itself with the advantage of indigenous knowledge systems. The link between Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry and its relevance to the present life will be studied. Ultimately, analysis of chosen poems has been done.

## **Chapter 4**

This chapter concerns itself with instances of indigenous knowledge systems with regards to traditional religion and traditional healing as reflected in the two poets work. The work of deities and that of Supreme-Being has been analysed. Focus is also been based on the effectiveness of traditional healing to indigenous people.

## **Chapter 5**

Chapter five discusses other instances like indigenous rituals and their impact on the present day life. The rituals like the *Nomkhubulwane* ceremony and neophyte training received attention.

## **Chapter 6**

Chapter six presents the conclusion, recommendations and possible future directions in this field.

It deduces the relevance of traditional religion and healing to indigenous people, as inherited in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. This study also reveals the relevance of indigenous religion and healing in the everyday life of today's current indigenous people.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has briefly introduced the issue that is discussed throughout the study. In the true sense of the word this chapter is the general introduction for the whole study. The chapter outline, which illustrates the content of all the chapters of this study, is provided. It comprises the definition of the terms that are relevant to this study, aims of the study, reason for the study as well as the glimpse on why some of Nxumalo's and Buthelezi's poems are ingested with indigenous knowledge systems on religion and healing. The approaches namely deconstruction, intertextuality and new historicism are discussed at length in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### Theoretical framework

#### 2. Introduction

This chapter's task is to give a broad definition of concepts, namely: indigenous knowledge; indigenous religion; healing and the phenomenological approach. The elucidation of terms throws some light on technical terms emanating from the study. Indigenous knowledge is seen as how it is analysed utilising approaches, like phenomenological and others. The approaches are seen as instruments that dissect the text and consequently give a magnitude of meaning to the said text. The approaches in this study assist in detecting how concepts of religion and healing feature in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry.

#### 2.1 Phenomenological Approach

The study sees the phenomenological approach as one of the best ways of looking at and understanding indigenous experience. It is, however, important to note that practitioners of indigenous religions and indigenous healers do not see themselves as phenomenologist, nor do they define themselves in that framework. However, in the whole area of transcultural psychology it is only those researchers who have adopted the phenomenological attitude that have succeeded to group and grasp the essence of indigenous experience.

To mention a few of these researchers, Kruger (1974:61), in operating within the same framework, refers to '*ukuthwasa*' as a crisis of living. Even though he is fully aware of the fact that some of the presenting symptoms of '*thwasa*' might be categorised as an anxiety state in psychological and psychiatric terms, he continues to try to describe that indigenous experience within the whole cultural word view of '*thwasa*'. In addition, Schweitzer (1977:60) also, in adopting the same methodological approach, refers to '*ukuthwasa*' as a category of experience. These researchers do not distort the reality of a '*thwasa*' experience, mainly because they operate from an appropriate methodological stance, which does not attempt to weigh people's experiences against any well developed theory.

In relation to this, it is interesting to consider a phenomenological psychologist's Giorgi (1971): Recommended, that in any study of human behaviour, all the elements of the person's world, from where pattern of coherence, within which events are intelligible to that particular person. In this respect then, indigenous experience must be understood and interpreted within Zulu cosmology.

The most critical and important issue of the phenomenological approach is its conception of human individual based on the total indissoluble unity of the individual and his/her world, within this framework the person is viewed as having no existence apart from other persons. In this respect each individual and his/her world is said to constitute one another. Since man's existence is necessarily embedded in and inseparable from a unique world. A distinctive characteristic of existential analysis is that phenomenological psychology is based on an ontological framework. This combines with ontology, the science of being and of the world (*dasein*). The existence of this particular being sitting opposite the healer Kruger (1974:62) in May (1972:38) who says:

...a knowledge of the drives and mechanism which are in operation in a person's behaviour is useful; a familiarity with his patterns of interpersonal relationships is highly relevant, information about his social condition, the meaning of particular gestures and symbolic actions is of course to the point.

It is therefore important to note that in concepts of healing, all the voluminous knowledge falls onto a quite different level when the overarching, most real fact of all namely the immediate living person himself, is comforted. The world (*dasein*), as used by existential healers, indicate that man is the being who is there. It also implies that he has, in the sense that he can know that he is there and can take a stand with reference to the fact. May (1972:41) explain:

There is moreover not just any place but particular one. The particular point in time, as well as space of existence, at the given moment.

In this respect, man is the being who can be conscious of and therefore responsible for, her/his own existence. Thus, being human also involves the process of moving towards something, or of what s/he is becoming. Therefore, within the phenomenological framework, man is the particular being who has to be aware of himself, if he is to become himself. Also of importance in the analysis of being is the understanding of the person-in-law world. Existentialists suggest that the world of this particular patient must be grasped from the inside, be known and seen, as far as possible, from the angle of the one for whom it exists. May (1972:56) maintains that to rediscover man as a being within the world it is important that it strikes directly at one of the most acute problems of modern human beings namely, that they have lost their experience of community.

As a result, an existential analyst distinguished three modes of the world that is three simultaneous aspects of the world which characterize the existence of each of one person as being in the world. In addition, May (1972:57) also stipulates that there exists a biological world, the environment, known as the *mitivelt* or 'world around'. Similarly, there is also *mitiveld* or 'with the world' which is the world of joining with one's kind, the world of one's fellow men, and the *eigewelt*, the 'own world', the mode of relationship to oneself. It is, however, important to note that these three modes of world are always interrelated and always condition and influence each other.

Rather than being seen in three different worlds, they must be seen as three simultaneously modes of existing in the world. Psychotherapists who work within this framework focus their attention not on the world as interpreted and thus created by scientific fact and theory but rather concern themselves with the interrupted world of everyday experience or with the world as given in direct and immediate experience. This life-world foundation of the existential-phenomenologist is not at all like the real world of the natural scientist and traditional psychologist, which is created for explanatory purpose through the direct employment of cause-effect thinking. Instead, Giorgi (1971:83) refers to phenomenology as a new method understanding with different assumptions from general psychology.

He sees one of the central differences between ‘phenomenological psychologists’ and ‘traditional psychologist’ to be the way that phenomenologist’s see man as intentional. In other words, man always perceives himself in relation to a specific context and not in a vacuum or in isolation. He sees this in contrast with deterministic and passive view of man as active and responsible agent whose behaviour is always meaningful and significant. It has to be noted with interest that a person’s behaviour might appear normal to the observer who may apprehend the meaning of that person’s behaviour. Kruger (1974:39) maintains that:

To understand man we must be in the structure of this world that understands him within human cosmology.

To summarise the above exposition and also emphasise on indigenous understanding within the human cosmology experience, it has to be noted that a phenomenological psychotherapist starts off by trying to come to a consistent idea of what it means to be a human being. For him, being human means being conscious of something except if one is asleep and when one is in his latter state, if his consciousness comes in the form of dreams. Whether a person’s consciousness is in a form of a dream, being human means being alive and having a relationship with the world. Obviously phenomenologist believes that a man without the world is unthinkable and it is impossible to think of the world without man. Man constantly illuminates the world throughout his existence.

On the basis of the above, one can deduce that a phenomenologist always assumes that man is a life history. All s/he had in the past can be made real at any other time of her/his existence in the world. Reader response criticism owes an important debt of phenomenology and the Geneva School, particularly in the person of the German critic Wolfgang Iser. (Iser’s, 1974) essay “*The Reader Process: a Phenomenological Approach*” is a good example of the creative development of a number of aspects of phenomenology. It espouses the way in which phenomenology leads naturally to some of the pre-occupations of reader-response critics. Iser (1974:274) maintains:

The phenomenological theory of art lays full stress on the idea that considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the text but also equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text.

He concludes that the literary work has two poles; the artistic pole, that is text which is created by the author; and the aesthetic pole, which is realisation accomplished by the reader. Iser calls the foregoing theories artistic concretisation and stresses in particular the work's virtuality, like the text of the play, which can be produced in innumerable ways literary work can lead to countless reading experiences. He also makes use of Husserl's argument that consciousness is intentional, it is directed and goal seeking rather than random and all-absorbing, so far as the literary work gaps. According to Iser (1974:280):

No literary work is complete. All have gaps which have to be filled in by the reader, and all readings will fill these in differently.

Central to this argument is that because literary works typically contain gaps, the reader usually goes beyond what is simply presented by the text. Reading is a creative process in this view thing which the reader not only concretises that which is some sense there in the text. But also adds to and goes beyond what the author has provided or even intended. While the structuralists see society as a source of knowledge, the phenomenologist claims that it has its origins in the way in which individuals interpret the world.

They start from an examination of social interaction and the meaning which individuals attach to their exchanges with others in everyday life. By sharing common experiences people see the world in a particular way and once accepted, this reality gets transmitted to a new generation and assumes that status of objectivity accepted as the truth. According to Stewart (1998:63) societies differ in terms of their definition of reality. He makes an example of the misfortune by stating that:

In Western society accidents such as car crashes or injuries at work are put down to carelessness, lack of concentration or chance. In other society's



explanation may be different. For example among the Zulu witchcraft will be held responsible.

Indigenous Zulus clearly observe and generalise about the empirical how of misfortune crushes a man. But they also try to explain what has been called that particularly misfortunes. Similarly, beliefs in witchcraft explain why one crops fails and not another's, why a man falls ill when he has previously been well and his fellows are still well, why a small wound festers instead of healing, why a poisonous snake bites a man so that he dies. Among the indigenous people, the belief is also used to explain why particular enemies in battle are strong or work. Clearly those slain were killed by an enemy's spears: but an internal enemy, the witch, has caused this particular death and this witch is held responsible in internal tribal relations. Berger and Luckmann (1976:96) call such a system of beliefs and explanation of reality, "a universe of meaning". This provides a way for members of society to place mysterious events within the realm of human understanding and helps to give comfort and relieve anxiety in times of crisis.

A universe of meaning needs constant support and justification. This is because the ideas which a society holds true may come under threat from a variety of internal and external sources. According to Mtimkulu (1962:40) religion is one of the most important and widespread sources of legitimation that has ever existed. For it is through religion that most societies in the past have been able to place their way of life within the realm of supernatural forces. Their universe of meaning is thus provided with internal strength and cohesion. One of the issues raised by a phenomenology theory of knowledge is that of relatives (Boronski, 1987:6). A relativistic theory is one which does not provide criteria from which to judge the truth of the beliefs and ideas of others.

Relativists argue that because all knowledge is socially produced, that is, it is the product of its context, ideas about truth and reality will vary depending upon the type of society in which they are located. One well known proponent of this is Winch (1964:141) who argues that because each cultural society has its own criteria of reality by the indigenous people for it cannot be proved that it exists. Winch (1996:4), on the other hand, objects to the view that indigenous witchcraft does not accord with objective reality on the grounds.

That there is no intelligent concept of reality that can be used to evaluate the truth as falsify what the belief system involved in a very form of life or social practice. A major criticism of relativistic theories, however, is that relatives argue that there are no universal standard truths; it is inconsistent for them to argue that theories based on relativism are true.

## **2.2 Religion as a belief system**

It is perhaps not a coincidence that sociologists and philosophers have made a comparison between science and religion as belief system. Berger and Luckmann (1976:41) assert that:

A belief system is a set of beliefs and ideas which help people to make sense or interpret the world. It also tends to be supported and promoted by a community of experts who claim to have a special insight into the truth.

It is through religion that human beings first attempted to interpret the world and it is from religion that more advanced ways of thinking, such as science, evolved. Sociology of knowledge without sociology of religion is impossible and vice versa. In all societies there exists a universe of meaning which becomes institutionalised and is seen as the truth and the objective way of seeing the world. In the past, religion has probably been the most important source of legitimation for any universe of meaning, providing important ways of justifying a particular view of the world. Indigenous knowledge of religion, for example, was initially seen in the days gone by as the dominant belief system which provided the official version of how the world and the universe should be seen.

The order imposed upon the world by individuals in society; however, is constantly under threat according to Berger and Luckmann (1976:15) which takes the form of unexplained phenomenon such as natural disaster and death. This is because they threaten the smooth and ordered functioning of society. In an effort to explain such things and give them meaning, human place within the realm of awesome and mysterious powers and develop a bank of knowledge which Berger and Luckmann (1976:51) call cosmology. According to Hamilton (1984:63) it is the social organisation and practice of beliefs in a cosmology which constitutes a religion and involves the division of the world into the sacred and

profane. Something sacred stands out in society as having strange and potential dangerous powers which, through special ceremonies, can be harnessed for the good of the community. The sacred, includes phenomena which have significance outside everyday experience and inspire acts of devotion and worship. For example, the indigenous ladies in Zululand made regular pilgrimage to the hills to plea for rain during drought and dedicated a mealie field to '*Nomkhubulwana*' (rain princess) as a shrine. Anything can be made sacred by a society, from a grave or cattle-kraal to a person, such as a chief. Anything that can be made sacred is set apart from the rest of the society by ritual; the profane world refers to the similar side involving the everyday realities such as work and the satisfaction of the basic needs. Within a sacred cosmology unexplained phenomena find an explanation and an individual receives answers to questions of ultimate meaning.

It provides a comprehensive fragment which is able to provide definitive answers to all spheres of life from the mundane to the mysterious. The threat to social order is thus reduced. Boronski (1987:41) is of the opinion that Durkheim was one of the first thinkers to examine the role of religion in the production of human knowledge. This tradition has been continued by Berger and Luckmann (1976) who claim that knowledge and religion are extricably linked. The importance of religion is that it provides a way to give meaning to the world and provides answers to ultimate questions. For instance, that religion:

[is the] establishment of sacred cosmos and sacred canopy. (Berger and Luckmann, 1976:355)

This means the co-extensive with the meaningful order and core values of society is indigenous, in this regard. Thus religion provides a man with ultimate atrocities. In short indigenous religion plays an important part in the world building that character, shaping is the audacious attempt to conceive of the universe as being humanity significant. Sociologists have differed as the manner in which religion is closer to common usage and refers only to those ultimate interpretations of life that contains a belief in God, or gods or other supernatural entities. Thus, under a Durkheim (1912) definition of religion, such as overarching framework for human life as Marxism, Nationalism or the ethics of sexual liberation would be called religion, just as (Christianity or Judaism) would be.

Because all of these fulfil essentially similar social functions under a more conventional definition of religion, the former groups of beliefs system would be called with other terms to distinguish them from such religions in the narrow sense as the Christian or Jewish ones (Berger and Berger, 1976:380). Although (Berger and Luckmann, 1976:380) adhere to a definition of religion they do differ in terms of how far they would go in defining a system of beliefs as religions. Durkheimian (1967:14), for example, believes that religion is any system of beliefs which tries to explain our place in the cosmos. This would include such belief systems as science and Marxism.

On the other hand, Berger (1969:180) does not go as far as this simply because he questions the utility of a definition that equates religion with human foolish behaviour. Since there are modes of self-transcendence and concomitant symbolic universes that are vastly different from each other, whatever the identity of their anthropological origins, little is gained by calling modern science a form of religion. Berger (1969:395) gives an explanation of theodicy as follows:

The need to endow suffering an evil with moral meaning and purpose addressed in various ways by religion. Christianity offers various resolutions to the problem of theodicy. Misfortune maybe thought of [as] testing faith or of returning the thoughts of a backslider, the visiting on iniquity to the seven generation on the other hand, Indigenous religions resolution to the problem of theodicy may cite witchcraft or the act of evil spirits as the cause.

The plausibility nature of classical indigenous religion has been eroded by the process of acculturation. This is partly a result of the disenchantment of the indigenous people and increasingly relation of outlook it promotes. Nevertheless, this does not mean that indigenous relation is any less important today, but that now there is religious pluralism in which various religious groups compete with one another in the market for ideas about ultimate meaning. Although indigenous religion has lost much of its institutional importance through the process of secularisation, it still plays an important part in people's lives in its privatised form.

Thus indigenous religion has undergone a process of transformation which involves the individual finding his or her own salvation with the help of new personalised religions. Indigenous religions encapsulate a wide range of practices that are designed to enable an individual to achieve his full potential as a human being. Wallis (1984:396) calls this range of practices *suentology*. This *suentology* is claimed to be able to eliminate psychosomatic and psychology illness and their effects and to greatly improve the individual's functioning in interpersonal relations and in his/her creator.

In addition, indigenous religion provides the committed followers the means to recover extraordinary spiritual powers. The ability to see and hear things at a great distance, to be able to manipulate objects by purely mental means, to gain technique of counseling and mental and spiritual exercises. Training and auditing are provided at varying fees but advancement in *suentology* will normally add several herds of cattle. Frazer (1984:15) does not interpret the process of solemnisation in the same way as Berger and Luckmann (1976). Frazer (1984:15) asserts that:

In the past we lived in communities in which religion was a source of knowledge and provided common values by which to live our lives and contribute to the stability of the community.

The foregoing quotation may indicate that people in stone age were highly religious. On the contrary, people now live in a rational society which provides them with no moral standards. This can have harmful effects on society in which moral judgment are the basis of decisions. It is not to say that these judgments were right but only to indicate that this was the style of decision making. The world was suffused with values, and values often having the facts. In social systems, such judgment cause to have relevant custom, which was the code in which many such values were enshrined and given partial expression, falls into decay. It no longer serves as a buffer zone that protects men from the abrasiveness of the operation of the law and no longer operates to communicate a sense of rectitude and to state the terms in which men may enjoy the goodwill of their fellows. At present, the indigenous society is underwritten by no such values but by empirical facts and their rational coordination.

Indigenous people are doubtful about the goodness of their own customs when they have been engulfed by a new religion and have discovered a faster, cheaper, way to go about things.

### **2.3 The indigenous healing**

Indigenous religion and healing complement each other. This religion and healing practice runs like a golden thread. It moves from generation to generation. Contemporary, traditional healing goes parallel with other healing processes particularly, the Western one. Hountondji (1997:13) asserts:

Instead of fitting into the dynamic of contemporary research through a real articulation with important knowledge, traditional knowledge is seen in the best cases, side with new one. In the worst cases, such knowledge is fizzling out of the collective memory.

The above citation means integration of indigenous healing system into the world processes of knowledge production. Among other palpable effects, a marginalisation of old elements of knowledge and know how, along with steady withering and impoverishment of traditional healing. In worst cases, this is sheer disappearing and vanishing out of people's conscious memory leaves much to be desired. The logic of extroversion which commands the so-called modern scientific activity of the indigenous people has a binding controlling, logic of marginalisation. Which should not be the case of course. Peripheral to science in the metropolis, institutionalised research in Africa entails, in its turn, a further push of indigenous elements of knowledge of the periphery, as mere survivals intellectual curiosities and lifeless. Inter objects, only fit exhibition in museums for titillation of antiquaries and other lovers of exorcism. Berger (1976:63) assumes that:

For the institution such as logic of marginalisation never reaches its aims fully.

The health culture of the indigenous people upholds three categories of ethno-medical therapy on indigenous health tradition and community beliefs system. These therapeutic producers are herbal, mechanical therapy and magical-religious therapy.

The foregoing practice is utilised to change a patient from an ailment state to that of fully-fledged healthy person. That is where the healing takes place. In short, healing occurs after treatment of an illness. There is an impressive record of the repeated failures of hospital medicine, a howling inadequacy of officially sanctioned knowledge. This has brought about a steadily strong turn towards those millennial stones of learning. Hastily dismissed out of mind in order to find therein effective solution to process of Westernisation which has this turning out to be self-limiting.

There is a plethora of questions to be asked to determine whether the indigenous healing system is relevant. The core question however is this: it is sensible to continue treating the counter-system, the indigenous knowledge and know-how as sporadic seasoning, used only occasionally to camouflage in the dominate system shall indigenous people keep passing now and then from within the dominate system, to counter system and then back again. When will Westernised doctors and nurses persuade their patient to go to the village to consult with indigenous healer for treatment? This work unpacks and gives answers to the foregoing question and unfolds the effectiveness of the indigenous healing system.

### **2.3.1 Indigenous knowledge**

Indigenous knowledge may be defined as knowledge that is unique to a given culture and society, which is based on their common stock of experience. By way of definition, Makhele-Mahlangu (1999:4) asserts this is the following:

...The word indigenous refers to roots, something natural or innate to. It is knowledge system that refers to the combination of knowledge systems technology, social economic and philosophy earning legal and governance system.

The idea of indigenous knowledge as explained in the above quotation is not just about trivialities. It is about excavating behind practice artifacts: religion and healing to mention but a few.

### **2.3.2 Encapsulate**

There is a plethora of ideologies and aspects in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. These aspects are ingested in poetry to convey certain messages. They go to the extent of giving the meaning of a particular poem. Within the Longman English Dictionary (2001:45) the term encapsulates, means to put the fact or idea of something in short form. In this study the theme of religion and healing feature as they are detected in the poetry of both Nxumalo and Buthelezi. Traces are done to give meaning and interpretation on how indigenous knowledge systems play a role in constructing meaning.

### **2.3.3 Indigenous religion**

Indigenous religion can be seen in five parts and no part by itself can constitute the entire meaning of religion. All these parts are seen as working together to give a complete picture. Twesigye (1987:84) asserts:

Beliefs, practice, ceremonies and festivals religious.  
Objects and places, values and morals, religious  
Officials or leader.

The foregoing aspects give meaning to indigenous religion. They form core values of religion. In short, indigenous religion shows the way that people think about the universe and their attitude towards life itself. Indigenous religion is concerned with topics such God, spirits, human life, magic, the life- hereafter and so on. Twesigy (1987: 84) maintains that:

The indigenous religion has no sacred books in the  
form of scriptures. Has no individual founder.

As a result from the above citation, there is a great flexibility and tolerance for pluralism beliefs, practices and ritual as there is no one dogma to follow. There is either orthodoxy or heresy. Indigenous people generally believe that being religious is co-existent with being human. They do not attempt to come into contact with God, since they believe that each human being has some kind of religion.



### **2.3.4 Indigenous healing and cultures**

To heal is to cure a person from illness. Stonier (1997:14) maintains that:

...When we talk of somebody being healed in an African context we mean that somebody is healed as whole, physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually. All these things can be achieved at the same time.

The foregoing citation simply means that healing is holistic, which is why a person whose behaviour is a problem will have rituals done that will heal him or her socially. At the same time, psychological healing takes place. There will also be spiritual healing in that, the ritual restores harmony with the ancestors and prayers are pronounced for the healing of the person. On the other hand, wherever and however there is diminishment of the force of life, something must be done to restore it so that it heals.

Whenever there is a breach of order in the universe as established by God through the ancestors, humanity must see to it that harmony is restored. Failing this, humanity will suffer. Thus, the causes of wrongdoing, illness and witchcraft, as elements that diminish life, need to be exposed and counteracted. For witchcraft is not only a symptom of the diminishment of the power of life, it is also seen to be the very embodiment of evil of the world. Then, it is essential that witches and witchcraft be detected and dealt with if life in the community is to continue. Gumede (1990:51) agrees that:

Our own concepts of disease have been seen as universal and permanent. The laws of cause and effect have for us an immutable quality which does not impress Zulus who are much more concerned with the who of causation than the why which occupies our minds.

The above citation means that it is common with indigenous people to point fingers at witches. Whenever death strikes, its causation is put squarely on the shoulders of a witch. There are many types of doctors in indigenous healing. As the term goes, indigenous healing is the practice of indigenous healers. Each group has its own function.

There are diagnosticians or therapeutics and specialists. The foregoing healers all work against the work of witches and wizards. Each group has its own function. In a nutshell, indigenous healers mentioned above utilise indigenous healing methods to heal the sick. More often, they make use of roots and herbs to cure illness. Of late a new category of healers has cropped up in the form of faith healers. These indigenous healers work as fortune-tellers, diagnosticians and prophets to heal the sick. Faith healers use water, roots, herbs and Christian-prayers to cast out evil spirits from the sick.

### **2.3.5 Poetry**

Different views on poetry have been expounded. It will be difficult then to align oneself with just one view. Reeves (1970:21) agrees with this by stating that:

Most experts would agree to call certain literary works poems, but when it comes to agreeing on a definition of poetry that would cover all such works, there, the trouble beings.

The foregoing citation means that scholars see it as entailing changing, rewriting and even forcing words, phrases and lines to give the poet what he wants to achieve in the production of poetry. In adopting this coined definition of poetry, this will fit exactly well with what Jakobson (1960) terms selection and combination when talking about the language of poetry. This also, in line with Spencer and Gregory, who assert that choosing best words and arranging them in best order in poetry.

It is our belief that such an act of selecting and putting together words and phrases into lines and stanzas of a poem, is not an easy task, but a heavy and hard one. Reeves (1970:22) see poetry as a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions. This definition fits well within the oral tradition of poetry. Where a bard, filled with internal suppressed emotions and excitement as the praised-one, the chief warrior approaches the gathering, will just stand up to externalise his powerful emotions. His emotions will pour out in words of praise, like an overflowing river in floods. Closer to Wordsworth's definition of poetry is that of Reeves (1970:4-5) when saying:

Poetry is an affair of the heart, no writer can make you fall in love, and poetry can never be fully explained. It can be talked with profit the above citation simply means that out of inspiration a poet expresses his sentiments in the form of poem. In this regard, the poet chooses words and form of expression to express his message.

The foregoing citation implies that poetry is thought expressed in rhythm. Poetry incorporates images and ideas than can be found in prose, but poetry begins with a vital rhythmic movement. It is without a doubt that poetry and its expression are something which comes from within an individual. This is especially true if one talks about oral traditional poetry, which is not coined and forced. This is the type of poetry which must accomplish by a certain sound and rhythm. The rhythm talked about here will always appeal to one's ears, hence Simpson (1967:3) says:

Poetry is not a "peculiar art". It is one of the most powerful of all art. Both the eye and the ear. All the other arts make their appeal through the eye or ear, not through both.

It must be noted that the abovementioned definition covers both modern and indigenous poetry and will always appeal to the ears because of its rhythm and to the eye because of its structures. Therefore, it is not for us to choose the best definition of poetry, as most definitions will suit the type and occasion of poetry.

### **2.3.6 Healing jargon**

There are different kinds of spirits that take possession of individuals. Bozongwana (1990:32) asserts:

Some of the spirits are good and others are bad. These vary in strength and influence upon the person as a host.

The foregoing citation asserts that once a person is selected as a desirable host or vehicle, s/he can never escape as the spirits move into her/his residence.

The victim may speak the language of the underselling spirit while s/he is in a trance and may have supernatural power and perform wonders. The chief work for good spirits is to heal the sick. This holds good to both *izinyanga* (traditional healers) and *izangoma* (diviners).

### **2.3.7 Indigenous healer**

#### **2.3.7.1 *Isangoma* (Diviner)**

To describe the condition of a man who is about to be an *isangoma*, Callaway (1970:259) asserts that s/he begins to be particular about food and abstains from some kinds and requests her/his friend not to give him/her that food, because it makes him/her ill. This means that s/he becomes possessed with witch-hunting spirits, which are dreaded by wizards and witches. The *isangoma* (diviner) spirits are both a doctor and fortune teller. The designation of the host is revealed in the acquisition of spirit attire vestment which s/he must obtain unaided. The word *isangoma* (diviner) refers to both male and female, while *isanuse* (diviner) refers to the male within the context of this study, the Zulu, *isangoma* is a person who has undertaken the process of *ukuthwasa*.

Doke and Vilakazi (1948: 812) explain the term '*ukuthwasa*' as:

...that which comes out revived after a certain period of disappearance.

These researchers see '*ithwasa*' to be a person who emerges like the season or new moon. Again, (Berglund, 1976:127) refers to the process of '*ukuthwasa*' as the breeding of the 'shades' over men. In relation to this view, '*ukuthwasa*' (breeding) involves:

...to breed out, to hatch out, and to generate to produce the young.

In short, the 'shades' often choose a person 'breed' over that person for a certain period and when s/he comes out s/he will be a new person with healing powers. This person will then undertake certain rituals and sacrifices and then be said that he is possessed by the spirits of

the 'shades' and will be endowed with the ability to divine and will then be referred to as '*isangoma*' (a divine-healer). Schweitzer (1977:17) states that:

The Xhosa divine (an equivalent to a Zulu *isangoma*) concerned with the sick or troubled person at home or family s/he is a ritual specialist whose function it is to restore the balance between good and evil that is to be manifested in the person, the society and the physical world.

From Schweitzer's definition it seems as if an *isangoma* always works with the person within their social environment, hence a marked characteristic of traditional healer must be attributed to their cultural insight. When working with the afflicted they give attention to the total person, manifested as a holistic unit with the extended family, with the community and the ancestral shadows taken into account. Again in clarifying the concept of an *isangoma*, it is important to look at '*isanuse*' which is the synonym of *isangoma*. Krige (1950:299) has pointed out that:

*Isanuse* denotes that such a man is able to smell out or unravel things, which of *isangoma* are derived from the fact that, when about to become doctors they wander about the mountains and live on roots.

An operational function of the *isangoma* can be seen in relation to the functioning of Western therapists. Unlike the highly private nature of the Western therapist, the *isangoma* always function in the full view of one's extended kin system. Rapport and Dent (1979:90) note that this strategy of the *isangoma* has a unique effect in the sense that once the treatment is concluded, the patient and witness share the belief that a cure has occurred. This shared faith in the patient undoubtedly plays a vital part in helping the patient to become re-integrated into his community and also reinforces the group beliefs in the practitioner's proves. This operational definition of the *isangoma* seems to put him in a unique position as compared to the Western therapist who can be seen as conservative and would rarely evoke dramatic proclamation.

## 2.4. The Zionist prophet

In this study the concept of indigenous healers comprises also the healer in African Independent Churches. This concerns the prophet, in the case of Zionist Independent Church. The prophet can be seen as a healer who is always concerned with the treatment of evil which is believed to be sinful. But the word sin must not be understood in terms of its orthodox, traditional interpretation of a breaking of God's commandment. To the indigenous Zulu person it means that which disturbs the equilibrium of society, that which causes unrest and disharmony and leads to harsh words and unbecoming acts of emotional disturbance.

Operational definitions of prophet show that Zionist prophets are the first to attempt a consummation between Christianity and indigenous people thought-pattern and symbolism. S/he would, for instance, always seal off her healing session by slaughtering a goat. In this sense they move away from mental colonisation to cultural cross-fertilisation. That is the blending of Christianity and indigenous religion. Like in the case of *isangoma* practices in Pentecostals and Zionist churches, there is special concern with spirit possession, since according to Hammond-Tooke (1977:432):

Possession of the spirits as a source of knowledge and power is eagerly sought and speaking in tongues and the use of violent gestures are interpreted as evidence of the working of the spirits from whom knowledge hidden to others is received through prophecy vision and dreams. The spirits is also the source by which Zionist overcomes the forces inimical to life, and by which vitality is enhanced.

The above mentioned citation explains that when a spiritual healer heals the spirit possessed, s/he becomes violent and researchers mention a state of ecstasy which culminates in a trance. Soon thereafter s/he reveals their vision calmly. In clarifying the meaning of the prophet, Hammond-Tooke (1977:433) maintains that a parallel can be drawn between the *isangoma* and the Zionist prophet. In looking at the operational definitions of both the prophet and the *isangoma*, the religious experience in the form of

emotionalism and the elaboration of rituals emerge as common factors. In these Hammond-Tooke (1977:433) states:

The lively rhythmic singing to the accompaniment of the clapping of hands, stamping of feet, shouting and much other ecstatic behaviour is common features.

The above citation indicates that the diviners are obliged to converge together for ancestral appeasement. They dance and stamp their feet to appease the spirits. They do this up to the extent of culminating to trance. Since the prophet is a person who is possessed by the holy spirits, so the ecstatic behaviour described always demonstrate the power of the spirits in the prophet's life. In a nutshell the meaning of the concept, indigenous healer, as it is used in this study one would say that the '*isangoma*' and the leaders of African Independent Churches can be said to be spiritualist. This would include any person who exhibits at least one of the following characteristics within his/her cosmological cultural setting. Gumede (1990:80) maintains that:

These healers are considered spiritists who communicate with supernatural beings, helping them to remove harmful influences. They intervene as mediums; performing certain rituals to cleans the premises of harmful spiritual influences.

From the foregoing citation one may deduce that the traditional healers act as mediators between ancestors and man. This group of healing doctors' practice, straight therapeutics or the art of healing. Gumede (1990:85) further maintains that the art of healing was brought down from Egypt, via the Sahara to Southern Africa. There are always people more gifted than others in all communities and in this respect the indigenous healers learned more about the uses of plants and herbs for healing purpose. They learned art and science from others by serving an apprenticeship as an '*uhlaka*' (apprentice) and moved through the rank to journeyman. Thereafter the young indigenous healer is confident enough to work alone as an '*inyanga*' (indigenous healer). He is then equivalent to a general practitioner and has learned enough to heal a nation. The act of healing tends to run in the families, but it is not necessarily hereditary.

It is the son who joins his father's practice; he is invited by the old man who was a successful and prosperous practicing indigenous healer. The art could not be claimed as for right. As the father often has many wives, he decides which son is a suitable candidate for him to train and would not necessarily be the heir. He has an enquiring mind, interested in nature, animals and people; he is intelligent and has a capacity to learn. An '*inyanga*' (indigenous medicine man) is a gentleman who is well respected by the community.

In older days the fee was well known to all and sundry. It was a beast, an ox or cow which indicates highly valued services of the traditional healer. Today's value of an ox ranges from R4000.00 upwards which indicates the price Africans attaches to health, protection and restoration. However there is a useful code of conduct: Only a small retaining fee is paid to begin with which is called the '*ugxa*' or '*inkanyiso*' (to link the patient with traditional healer's ancestral spirits). This is the doctor's fee for opening his indigenous doctor's bag. Therefore nothing is paid till the patient is cured which is a very interesting philosophy that has similarities to other cultures. Gumede (1990:31) says:

In China the doctor was paid only when no one was sick in the family. As soon as a member of the family fell sick no fee was due.

Amongst the Zulus, a fee is also due when the mission is accomplished. For example, if a patient comes to the doctor for gynaecological complaint, such as fertility, the indigenous doctor works hard to ensure the patient becomes pregnant and has a child. As soon as the baby is born, the fees are due. Gumede (1990:87) lists methods of administration of medicines:

Oral medicines taken by mouth were edible. They could be on herb or a mixture. *Isichonco* (an infusion): a fresh mixture of roots, barks or leaves were crushed and mixed with cold water. Medicine was strained. The mixture could be transferred through a grass strainer into another container, solid matter was sifted off. *Isikhetho* floated on the top. *Isichonco* was always a fresh infusion.



The concoction used above is consumed by the patient to boost fertility and to alleviate labour pains on the part of a pregnant woman. Soon after birth a baby also consumes the medicine in a liquid form. This medicine helps to give strength and boost the infant's immune system. *Impeko* (a decoction): Medicine is prepared as for an infusion but the mixture is boiled. *Ukugquma* (steamed) the patient: *isidina* (eruptions on the face like acne) is treated with this method. Suitable medicines are boiled. The patient is covered with a blanket and steamed up. S/he sweats out '*isidina*' as healing opens up the pores of the skin and let the dirt out. No other beauty ointments are used. *Ibomvu* (red clay) is used by woman at the time of confinement. White clay is used by *isangoma* (diviners). *Ukushunqisela* (smoke out): this treatment is given to the newly born babies.

The three legged pot is placed upside down on coal embers. Several dried medicines, barks, skins and fats, are placed on the hot lid. Smoke goes up and the new born baby is passed over the fumes a few times. This is done to prevent allergic reactions at a later stage and the child becomes used to all the dangerous elements of this world at birth. *Ukuzawula* (making small incision into the skin), then rubbing medicinal powders into the wound is one of the oldest means of administering medicine. The *muthi* goes directly into the blood stream at the site of pain. It is part of '*ukujova*' (injection hyotera) and is in demand amongst indigenous patients. The indigenous patient carry '*ingego*' also '*insingo*' (sharp cutting instrument) and use it for '*ukugcaba*' same as '*ukuzawula, ukuthoba* (fomentation) is usually applied on painful parts as in sprains, swollen joints and early boils, abscesses and carbuncles.

In other applications, medicine is brought to a boil and a little cooling is allowed to avoid scalding the patient. Branches of '*ijoye*' (*datura stramonium*) are used to apply to the hot medicine on the affected part, functions are to relieve pain and hasten pus formation to enable the abscess to burst open. *Ukulumeka* (cupping): A cupping horn is used to suck out a bit of the blood from the temple in cases of severe headache. The small incision is made longer and the longer end of a horn, which is open on both sides, was applied on the site to draw out blood. *Ukuhogela* (sniffing): for headache, *idlonzo* (*clematis brachiata*) leaves are crushed and rubbed in the two palms. A sharp pungent smell is emitted.

The patient sniffs this volatile smell to relieve headaches. *Ukuphalaza* (emesis): Medicine is taken orally and copious amounts of water are taken there with. Either there is spontaneous vomiting or the antiperistaltic action is started off by tickling the throat with a finger or a feather. Emesis is the treatment par excellence for ‘*idliso*’ (pulmonary tuberculosis). The rationale behind this is to reverse the process. ‘*Idliso*’ describes substances entering the mouth by the eating of poison. Emetic may be used simply for luck and to clean one or to remove ‘*isidina*’ (bad luck). Young men do this to have a nice complexion so that they look more attractive to women. He vomits because he wants to look more handsome afterwards and hopes that the girls will like him better and be full of sympathy, solutions and care for him.

*Ukuphalaza* is also used to administer white medicine at the time of purification during the rites of passage, for instance final cleansing rites after death. With ‘*isingunda*’ and ‘*umsenge*’ (*cussonia spicata*) the cabbage trees are commonly used and the ‘*amaphaza*’ (the fruit of the cabbage tree) are also used to start off vomiting to relieve biliousness, a common indigenous infection. Gumede (1990:89) further describes the administration of indigenous medicine: *ukuchatha* (enemata): A lot of children’s medicine is administered through enemas. Children under twelve to thirteen are not able to carry out the deliberate vomiting act. Their treatment comes orally or through an enema, ‘*umpeshwana*’ (*trichinris trichinria*) or threadworms are common parasitic infestations among Zulu children. A mother makes an infusion strain and places one mouthful into her mouth and squirts it through a suitable reed which is open on both sides.

This would clear out the colon and remove the offending threadworms. *Ukuncinda* (licking) hot medicine on a three legged pot lid heated on the fire and “licked up” with the fingers. With *Ukugqaba* (sympathetic magic) the indigenous healer prepares special medicine to enhance dignity and personality before a conflict. The medicine is rubbed over eyebrows on the day of the confrontation with the enemy. If the client is an accused, he rubs the medicine on his eyebrow just before the hearing. Ultimately the judgment comes to his/her favour. *Ukuchela* (sprinkling): these are protective medicines which are not edible but sprinkled on the yard to protect the ‘*ikhaya*’ (homestead) against witchcraft of the evil ones.

*Ukubethela* (stoppage): is also used in protecting the homestead against the evil and lightning in particular. This operation was, in olden days, performed by a specialist, a sky-herd. There are many other forms of administration of medicine, like ‘*ukukhunkula*’ (bewitch), ‘*ukukhafula*’ (to spit). These are, of course, functions of the evil ones and not the indigenous healer whose work is only to heal.

#### **2.4.1 *Abathakathi* (Witches)**

The clarifications of the role of *abathakathi*, amongst indigenous people, is very important since the Zulus, in particular, attribute the illness befalling them to either physical or natural causes; or the ‘*amadlozi*’ (shades) or the *abathakathi* (witches). (Sibisi, 1975:50) has pointed out that Zulu people often suspect the possible influence of the witches, particularly if the illness does not respond to the intervention of the indigenous healer. Among the Zulu people there are certain birds and animals that are definitely associated with witchcraft and are thought to be servants of human witches.

A hooting owl for instance, is believed to indicate misfortune at night. A fair knowledge of these animals is important because a person who, for example McFarlane (1970) pictures to be these animals might be struggling within himself about the possibility of being bewitched. Attitudes toward witchcraft seem to differ between the traditional Zulu person and the Westernised Zulu person. The indigenous Zulus believe in the existence of witches, and as a result live in fear of them. As a result, they often get help from the diviner if s/he suspects the influences. On the other hand the Westernised Zulu person often acknowledges the existence of the witch but has mixed feelings about ways of handling them in sense that they acknowledge their existences but deny their power with a belief that God is more powerful. The indigenous Zulu often involve the diviner when they feel they are bewitched. McFarlane (1970:136) has noted that although the members of the mission churches approach the prophet rather than a diviner, the two perform similar roles, including the removal of evil from a homestead. Mayer (1954:49) has pointed out that witchcraft is thought to occur in many races, cultures and environments. He gives his notation of witchcraft as follows:

The witchcraft must be related to something real in human experience occurring at as many different times and places and cultural leaves it and cannot be lightly dismissed as a frill on edge of human fantasy.

To elaborate on Mayer's view, witchcraft can be broadly conceptualised as the belief which is common amongst the indigenous people in particular, that the blame for some of the suffering rests upon a particular evil power, embodied in certain individuals in their midst. Consequently, a witch can be held to be a person who dwells in a distinctive evilness whereby s/he harms his/her fellows in mysteriously secret ways. However Mayer (1954:67) says witchcraft myths are found in societies and maintains that:

As a rule most people who are associated with witchcraft in all societies are adults, women and often from witch families. The sorts of misfortune that can be caused by witches are natural. Calamities such as death, sickness, drought, plague. They work from envy, malice or spite against individuals sometimes a practice can be due to greediness generally with no definite conscious motive at all. Witches turn against their neighbours and kinsmen. They do not harm strangers. Very often the ordinary individual is not qualified and is not able to read the message of the ancestors in his dreams. It is impressive to consult those who have a skill.

At most the skillful people are comprised of indigenous spiritual healers, coupled with the diviner, and they act as mediums and provide a communication bridge between the ancestral spirits and the populace at large. In this regard, '*abathandazi*' (indigenous spiritual healers) stand between their people and their ancestors as the mediums; *abathandazi* and *izangoma* form the link between the living and the dead. It is held by the Zulus that initially they had 'relation to *ababonayo*' (seers) or prophets who would foretell drought, diseases and other major events. Mbiti (1990:223) asserts that they received their revelations either from God or the spirits. *Umthandazi* interprets and carries over to the patient the communications from '*abaphansi*' (the ancestors).

*Umthandazi* (the indigenous healer) is like the prophet in biblical days. Some people are always given, by the Almighty, discerning eyes to look with and see into the future or the past as the case may be. They are always out there to guide societies in every sphere. An important distinction needs to be made between two streams. There are indigenous spiritual healers who are attached to main line churches and those who have deviated from the established Christian churches. These are separatist churches. WHO (1983:31) maintains:

These separatist churches are the new wine Christian teachings and religious organisations poured into the old wineskins of Zulu religious beliefs and behaviour.

WHO (1983) was investigating independent separatist churches in South Africa which had found no sanctuary within the '*mlungu*' (white man's) church. As such they had grown no roots and consequently broke away from missionary control to find their own churches. In a nutshell, African Independent Churches are an outcome of the political, social and denominational situation in South Africa. This very issue was raised by Dingane, King of the Zulus, in February (1835) when Gardiner introduced himself as neither a trader nor a hunter but a servant of God who had journeyed to Zululand to speak God's words among the Zulus. Chonco (1971:164) has this to say:

King Dingane was puzzled. He confessed he could not understand why the missionary should seek to instruct the Zulus in a new God when for countless generations they had been adequately protected by the spirits of illustrious ancestors. But it was Dambuza kaSobadli, Deputy Prime Minister, who settled the matter with an astute terse statement that the Zulus were averse to being taught religion by strangers. What confused the Zulus at most were complicated biblical words. The interpretation of certain chapters was very much vexing.

The foregoing quotations means foreigners misinterpreted indigenous religion ever since religion separatism has played South Africa for many years. Messianic prophets have been spouting up like mushroom. Religious sects, cults and church groups of all origins spring up annually.

This is probably an experience of a desire to get out of a religious ghetto (white man's religion) that is barren and does not meet the everyday needs of the indigenous people. *Abathandazi*, (faith-healers) in this regard, are called to face these people with the Gospel of Christ. People with empty stomachs, empty brains, empty everything, a workless, homeless, people who see no future apart from day to day living.

It is these critical politico-socio-economic changes that have produced the spiritual healers by the hundreds. The politico-socio-economic pressures on the indigenous people are immense, substance abuse, child abuse, hypertension, mental confusional states, schizophrenia and others are more common than typhoid fever. These are problems of adjustment into new social conditions. The indigenous people are very religious by nature whenever they walk into a blind alley they return to their ancestors and *Umvelinqangi* (God). *Umthandazi*, (faith-healers) at this point in time, is able to interpret the patient's dream and tell the patient what the dream portends. The indigenous spiritual healer adds the atmosphere of comfort in the prayer, the song and the words of the oracle from '*abaphansi*' (the ancestral spirit). Mutwa (1986: 26) states:

As the new Africa emerges and the urban complexes appear, one finds that a large number of persons unsettles by new expectation. These both rural and urban still tend to turn to indigenous healer to help with problems with which the person cannot cope.

The above citation means that at most, indigenous people live in two worlds. They pursue both the Western way of living and that of African culture. Although spiritual healing is preferred to a certain extent, an African more often than not returns to old and traditional practice of consulting with an indigenous healer. There are diseases which are incurable by spiritual healers and also Western medicine. In this regard a traditional healer gets an upper hand. This simply means the indigenous healer, the diviner, is still very much part of the community. He is there because he is answering pertinent questions for his patient within a frame of reference, the ancient spirits that they can understand. Mbiti (1990:106) sums up by saying:

They looked after us when they were here.  
They do so now. We firmly believe.

The foregoing citation means that a patient receives full-time and individual attention from the religious healer. In this scenario, the indigenous healer stays full-time at the home of the patient, and thereby the latter gets comfort from both the members of the family and the healer. Religious leaders and prophets have come up frequently in Africa and among the Zulu. Isaiah Shembe at *Ekuphakameni* is one of the best known and much loved for his humility and devotion of his services to his people. It is an interesting coincidence that three great men of God lived within a kilometre of each other's settlements, namely the name Mahatma Gandhi, the Rev. John Langalibalele Dube and the prophet Isaiah Shembe. Shembe was an outstanding indigenous spiritual healer. He produced numerous religious hymns for dancing, singing, ritual and healing of the sick. Sundkler (1961:195) explains:

The significance of 'AmaNazaretha' (Nazarites) sacred dance has been expressed by Shembe in various humans. The song is a Psalm of praise to the Almighty, Our maker whether he is called God, Tixo, Modimo, Allah or uMvelinqangi. Singing!  
What a lovely voice African has!

The prophet uses, singing, the outstanding gift of the African and they break into song to enrich the quality of the frames of reference. The testimony of Isaiah Shembe as a spiritual healer comes from people in all walks of life. Such testimonies are legion of course. Sundkler (1961:161) asserts:

Barren women, (izinyumba) with low fertility rates were helped to have babies on their own. Thousands were helped to lift up their spirit at Ekuphakameni by quiet, unassuming self-effacing Shembe the prophet.

Shembe proclaimed him a prophet. He understood himself to be prophet only and no more. His hymns give memorial to his theology. In short, Shembe did not proclaim himself to be a God. He acknowledges in his hymns that God is the greatest physician from whom he derives his power as a healer.

Shembe left Ekuphakameni, truly (a place of upliftment) where there was peace and tranquillity. When he closed his eyes for the perpetual sleep on May 2 1953 at Kwambonambi in Zululand, he was a great spiritual leader. Hackland (1987:375) says:

At his funeral at Ekuphakameni there was a steady  
beat of drums and some of the people cried out, 'he  
is a hero!' We are proud to be his people.

There is no reference to Shembe as God, but instead as a hero, a prophet who had successfully accomplished his healing mission. Apart from Isaiah Shembe, there was another spiritual leader named Mfene. Thusi lived at Malukazi. His background and his early childhood are not clear, but records reveal the story of a dream. Mfene Thusi's place, Emakhehleri (the place of a senior men literally, but spiritually, the place of the ancestors) was built at Malukazi near Isiphingo south of Durban. He formulated a simple code of living. He also adopted Shaka, Gandhi and Jesus to pray through. When the old ones (*amakhehla*) spirits spoke in several tongues it was a propitious occasion.

However, Brian du Toit who visited and studied Emakhehleri records, explains that in 1937 Thusi had a dream in which Shaka, Shembe and Mahatma Gandhi appeared and instructed him to give his time and efforts to helping his people. This could be done, he was told, if they listened to the old people (*amakhehla*) and those who had gone ahead while following indigenous Zulu ways, Du Toit (1971:18) says:

The ancestors had a great deal of knowledge and  
experience and could help the living if they would  
listen.

Thusi Mfene's code of living for his adherence consists of many indigenous practices such as to appease the ancestral spirits. There is the *isibaya* (cattle kraal enclosure) which is traditionally the area where the Zulus say all their most intimate prayers to the ancestors. The adherents carry a simple insignia, a small Zulu shield. This is a fitting emblem to the patron Saint, King Shaka, of whom they pray and address their troubles, small and large. All adherents to the spiritual healing church of Emakhehleri wear this small shield like a



badge. There is also an armlet (*isiphandla*) which is part of the skin of the sacrificial beast. Du Toit (1971:65) noticed:

...the skin had holes; the floor had been covered with skin of numerous beast and goats. Each goat skin had a round hole in the right shoulder. It is clear that this is where the fresh skin had been removed immediately following a sacrifice to prepare the armlet which all members wore on their wrists.

The armlet cited above is worn as a sign of gratification and is worn to let others know that the particular individual has appeased his or her ancestors. The usual indigenous theology is that the head of the family holds the goat facing the ancestors where they gather '*emsamo*' (top end of the hut) or at the top end of the cattle kraal (*isibaya*). The head of the family would talk to the living dead. They see its face, recognise it; *isiphandla* is cut from *ebunzini* (the forehead) of the animal while it is no more alive. Mfene emphasises traditional behaviour patterns, invoked during Zulu traditional ritual. Singing, the ancestral spirits, and all intercessions, *UMvelinqangi*, (God) through King Shaka the warrior king, founder of the Zulu nation. The Zulus believe that with their ancestors behind them nothing can go wrong.

Some spiritual healers incorporate elements of Zulu traditional living: cattle and goats are sacrifice in a bid to reproduce an old familiar frame of reference for the purpose of healing the multitude of physical and spiritual ills that afflict indigenous people. Apart from prophets like Isaiah Shembe, Mfene Thusi and others who founded church organisations, there are hundreds of men and women who work as healers among their own people on the basis of individual practices. They minister to the majority of the indigenous population, in the field of spiritual ills that afflict Africans.

Apart from socio-economic diseases, mental ill health today forms the biggest slice of all forms of diseases amongst the indigenous people, the people who are a community in transition. Urbanisation has brought about rapid changes, which brings about acculturation. The newcomers introduced new concepts, beliefs and practices. Social economics, political and religious adjustment become necessary in South Africa and has mostly Islamic and

Christian faiths. The Zulus has had to adjust from a circle to a square. Sweeping a hut involves the simple natural sweeping movement of the hand. The square is a four roomed township dwelling, present problems of removing dirt from the corners. There are sixteen steps to clean. The hut has a short door and no windows. Ventilation of a hut is through the thatch at the roof. The four roomed hut has a minimum of four windows and five doors. There are dozens of window panes to introduce light into the house, which make curtains mandatory for privacy in the night.

The Zulu hut has a firm smooth floor smeared with cow dung. There, the fire is lit to provide central heating in cold weather. The hut is cool in summer and warm in winter. In Western culture the floors are cemented. The walls are also plastered with cement. The floors must be covered with tiles if means allow it. The house must be furnished. There are services to pay for example water, light, fuel, and so on. There are school fees for indigenous child also school levels to build a school kitchen and extra classrooms which are never enough. There is no end to financial demands on the meagre earnings on the family which more often than not fall below the poverty line. Unemployment sets in and the entire indigenous community is thrown into socio-economic turmoil. The indigenous person is the least equipped with the necessary skills to survive harsh economic upheaval.

The indigenous person is the first to be fired and the last to be hired, when jobs become available, as a result, anxiety, depression, hypertension, substance dependence and disease become common place. In spiritual and moral support, Berglund (1976:160) maintains that consultation takes place not in the sterile meanings environment of the hospital, but at the patient's home where there is warmth. In the home environment, which is not only familiar but where the problem is, and where the living dead will hear the incantations to this person. They smell *impepho* and see the sacrificial beasts and roar approval as the goat bleats or the bull bellows when slaughtered. It is clear that, in the area of mental diseases, peaceful cures are possible.

#### **2.4.2 Indigenous versus Western patterns of healing**

As a controversy in this area, mention might be made of view that ‘witchdoctors’ and ‘psychiatrists’ serve basically the same functions. Witchdoctors (Berglund,1976:161) refers to all non Western therapists like, for instance the shamans and *isangoma*. With psychiatrists he referred to all Western therapists like the psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and counselors in general. Related to this view, is Hammond-Tooke’s (1976) who views that an *isangoma* is a psychiatrist’s ‘professional counterpart’. Broadly speaking they both help the malfunctioning individual to adapt positively in his society. However, it will be important to look at the following small but vital points which seem to mark off significant difference between these two healing systems.

As a rule, indigenous healers never attempt to treat a ‘patient’ as integral component of a family and a community at large. The main emphasis of the indigenous healer is on the palpable acknowledgement of mutual belonging. An indigenous healer, therefore, operates from a broader social perspective than the narrow and limiting individualistic framework commonly adopted by Western therapists. To understand the rationale behind the functioning of indigenous healers, it is useful to think of some of the ways in which people make sense of illness in cultural terms. Kleimann (1988:41) suggests that each member of the culture carries an explanatory model of illness which is typical for illness.

It is however, important to note that presently in Western psychotherapy too, there is a general awareness for the needs to broaden the conceptual treatment from individual to a more community-based model. This trend of thinking in the West is still in a much less development state. Lambo (1960), a Nigerian psychiatrist, for instance has patients in four villages surroundings the hospital. They seem to have moved much closer to the concept of a true ‘therapeutic community’ than anything yet developed in Western psychiatry. Related to this advancement in Western treatment is the collaboration between indigenous healers and Western personnel. In this regard, Lambo (1960) has pointed out that one of the unusual features of ‘our’ pattern of care for the mentally ill in Nigeria. It is ‘our’ unorthodox collaboration with the understanding of man and his social environment to

work in close collaboration with other disciplines. Even to establish some form of inert professional relationship on a fairly continuing basis with those who by Western standards, are not regarded as 'professional'. Some people think that societies of the third world are relatively simple. They are not. There have been many symposiums and conferences in primary healthcare in South Africa. There has been much talk about a multi-disciplinary approach and traditional healers have been invited to attend.

They have done so willingly but they have not been active participants in the communication exercise. After the meeting, the Western healers have disappeared behind their sterile curtain and the peddlers of barks and roots have retreated to their corner, behind the horns, gall bladder and oxtail curtain. When their mumbo-jumbo did not affect the white man there was nothing to worry about. Then people who have not improved at official health institutions resorted to traditional healers and found solutions. Chonco (1971:18) has this to say:

..In my practice (chemical) I had a co-operation with African traditional healers, inyanga, sangoma and religious priest healers who either referred patients to me as complete history of the illness and of the difficulties are encountering. I have treated student sangomas brought by the chief sangoma teacher and it is amazing to find that these traditional healers and diagnosticians have the most profound professional attachment to and concern for the welfare of their patients.

It is high time that indigenous healers have to work hand in glove with Western doctors. This would help to detect cures for incurable diseases. The foregoing citation highlights how feasible it is for the working together of the indigenous healers and Western doctors. According to ethical rulers, Chonco (1972) could not refer even to obvious hysterics and neurotics to traditional healers. This of course amazes the peddlers of root and barks why all the farce, because medicine originates from bark and roots. Without herbs there is no medicine. According to Gumede (1990:60), when the life president of the Natal Inyangas Association, Mr. Solomon Mazibuko died in 1986 his last wish was that he would like to see the indigenous healers working more closely with doctors and nurses.

There is much that the inyangas have had to offer sick people. Mazibuko would have liked to see the medicine men working in hospitals. There appears to offer unanimity in the traditional healer's camp. On the other hand, Julius Mpisane, Secretary of KwaZulu Natal Inyangas Association is on record as saying that:

Although a lot of discussion had taken place on the subject, it was unlikely inyanga as would ever become part of the organised health service in South Africa. They are an amorphous group. (Gumede, 1990:62)

In 1947 the Dingaka's Association made an application to the South African Medical and Dental Council for registration with the Medical Council. They wished to work alongside the star caring professionals giving healthcare coverage to the people of South Africa. A function they still perform to this day without registration with SA Medical Council. Dr Darye Hackland, Secretary for Health in KwaZulu, tells a similar story of working together with traditional healers. How do traditional healers examine patients and conduct diagnosis? Which drugs do they prescribe to their patients and how do they estimate of the dose? The inyangas promptly replied: We are not saying anything. (SA Family Practice, September 1987:373) they retreated behind the herbs and gall-bladder curtain. It was a statement! This is the picture on the one end of the continuum.

On the other side of the dark tunnel is much light many professionals in South Africa are of the opinion that the indigenous healer has a role to play in caring for the community's health. Hackland (1987:380) sums this up Western professionals recognise the importance of indigenous healers but they need to move closer in understanding. Medical practitioners who have spent time in the rural areas and have had the experience of primary healthcare at both poles are in no doubt that the traditional medical practitioner here is as old as Africa. Therefore traditional healing is here to stay. One of the Western doctors agrees, Anthony Baker in particular spent more than quarter of a century in the service of the me, the Africans in Africa at Nquthu hospitals KwaZulu-Natal.

He observed that:

For these men and women our medicine is too small. It is cold, too materialistic. We should cease from scorning those who pass our hospitals to care of the traditional medicine manor seeing this movement as necessary retrogressive. It is nothing of the kind, but rather a barometer of our failure to satisfy that part of sick man's consciousness which he reserves for himself. (Leech, 1974:44)

The foregoing citation describes the doubt retained by certain indigenous people concerning Western medicine. These individuals have qualms about the intensity and effectiveness of Western medicine. These are hard words but this highlights the distillation and crystallisation of an exposure to Zulu and culture for no less than 10 000 days. Barker found that he is able enough to cope with the mental depression of the people he served as Medical Superintendent of a large, prestigious mission hospital.

As these were outside his control, like removals, resettlements, deprivations from unemployment, he was aware that the main depressives, the schizophrenics and the toxic psychosis were all products of environment and that the traditional healers who deal with mental illness have gone through what s/he had not only learned the therapeutic properties of plants, but the very aspects nature which determine man's response to his disease. The rules of the game did not allow him to refer his patient to the indigenous healer. The strong fabric of his language is understandable. Dr Verah Burhman, a South African Jungian Psychotherapist, discusses the similarities between Jungian Psychotherapist and the traditional healer's approach:

Rituals and skill of indigenous healers are not the mumbo jumbo or witchcraft's magic, some whites think. But are based on the same sound principal that underlie much Western psychology contact between black and white healers' should be approached in a spirit of mutual respect. Blacks have more holistic view of health. Whites tend to divide illness into physical and mental. The principal among blacks was that, if part of me is

sick then whole of me is sick. There is the use of dreams by black traditional healer to get another dimension to healing the aid of the ancestor's spirits. Ritual dances create the mood and climate for actual contact with the departed members of the family. (Sunday Express, 13 January, 1985:15)

It goes without saying that some of mental illnesses are successfully healed by traditional healers. Therefore it is imperative to bring traditional healers into the fold. Since some of the mental sicknesses are resistant to Western medicines, the medical practitioners are not in the call to bring to the indigenous healer from the cold and give a helping hand. A Johannesburg Clinical Psychologist, Dr Robert Schweitzer, was studying alternatives to Western medicine in Africa and found striking transcultural similarities:

When Western man is not satisfied with conventional medicine treatment, particularly in the field of psychiatric illness, he returns to other models of healing. The depressed and neurotic often take up Yoga or Meditation and the bereaved sometimes turn to a medical healing. (Sunday Tribune 23 August, 1981:14)

The foregoing citation asserts that, western doctors employ various devices to heal a mental patient. When the sickness resists, the patient is usually referred to specialised institutions. In diseases that arise as a result of mind over matter, the traditional healer is an adopter. He knows his people, their culture, their religion, their joys and fears, their fiddles and foibles. Thus he virtually holds his patient by hand and leads him/her successfully on the road to health through the mist of the labyrinth in mental confusion state. Before the days of *mlungu's* (white man's) law, the indigenous healer had a choice according to his own and the patient's desires. The patient could be treated as in hospitals or live with the *inyanga* for treatment. With out-patient treatment, the healer visited the patient and sometimes spent days at the patient's home giving treatment. Protection, prevention and fortification formed major parts of the traditional healer's psycho-therapy at the sight of the cause of trouble. The helper who accompanies the patient at the instance of the indigenous healer removes the idea of the dumping syndrome as so often mental ill people feel they are dumped away

from home. When the traditional healer took his bag to live at the patient's camp. The patient was placed in a mood respective to treatment administered in a similar frame of reference. Either way the traditional healer applied a simple human approach to a complex human problem, but this seemingly naive approach paid large dividends in terms of speedy recovery. This was holistic medicine at best. Much research has been done. Many projects are under way in the area of the traditional system of medicine in the modern health care coverage. At the National Convention on holistic health and healing in 1985, in Durban, Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, a seasoned rural community health worker, was one of the eminent speakers. Dr Ramphele speaks:

Health is not only measured in terms of physical wellbeing, but a more profound way, which makes it possible for us to see health in a person who is disabled or terminally ill. The traditional Western medicine profession has great difficulty with the concept of health. Their difficulty is reflected in their frantic, same difficulty is also evident, in the inability of medical professions to relate meaningfully to someone who is terminally ill. They are ashamed of their failure to heal this person and there is rejection of the object that personifies this failure, the odyssey (Ramphele, 1987:10)

The above citation tells about ill practice in some hospitals in South Africa. If a patient suffers from a terminal-illness, the patient is turned back home before they even fully recovered. These hospitals often think of high expenditure in healing the patient, rather than the life of a patient. It is not a practice to an indigenous healer to treat a sick person away even if the doctor is able to help her/him. Good medical practice is that the patient must leave the healer's room full of hope for the future. This is what, more often than not, indigenous healers are doing compared to their counterpart, hospital where fully blown AIDS patients are referred back home.

#### **2.4.3 The similarities between a diviner and a Zionist prophet**

Sundkler (1964:63) has drawn a parallel between a diviner and the Zionist Prophet following the call to these two respective professions.



Resemblance has been noted between similarities in general appearance, behaviour and activities in their daily functioning, also in group pattern and in both seem to be possessed by the spirit of an *idlozi* (*ancestor*). While the prophet appears to combine both an ancestral spirit and the Christian Holy Spirit. This possessing spirit often gives the possessed an inspiration to sing in most of the time. It is, therefore interesting to note that a prophet understands Christianity in terms of his/her familiar indigenous belief, hence his/her call resembles that of a diviner. When a person becomes a diviner he/she gets thinner, emaciated, anxious and nervous because of his/her strange experience.

The anxiety, which is manifested by indigenous healers during their early stages of becoming healers is however different from that which is experienced by healers in Western world. The most important similarity noted in terms of their gift healing sessions. They both create highly charged emotion ceremonies. In which sufferers are encouraged to re-enact past experience and their excitement being intensified by rhythmic music, chanting and dancing. West (1975:81) has pointed out that:

Although, from the look of things the prophet draws  
her power to heal from God.

Through intensive analysis of the whole involvement, it appears as if his/her power comes from God through more direct agencies of certain guiding shades. Hence, Sundkler (1964:64) believes that s/he seems to operate from the same theoretical framework with the diviner. Ritual and sacrifices for instance, prescribe the treatment of certain illness similar to that of the diviner. The prophets often treat their patients by engaging them into highly mystical and emotion provoking ceremonies. During these ceremonies people are encouraged to dance out their emotional disturbance. All this involvement is taken as a removal of symptoms and the actual treatment is completed with the slaughtering of a goat. Another interesting point to note is the observation made by theologians who were involved in the study of the nature of African Independent Churches amongst the Zulus. Feddreke (1968:8) concluded:

The whole social system is transferred and  
modernized to fit into the world of today and its

structure. The basic pattern of Zionism is a true modern copy of a diviner and a compliment with finder's activities embedded into Zionist's prophets is absolutely in parallelism with the 'heathen' diviner.

It is evident in the foregoing citation, that a spiritual-healer and a divine-healer (*isangoma*) is almost similar. In short, the spiritual healer is borne from Africanised Christianity. In this regard both the prophet and the diviner handle the same types of problems, mainly those that can be dealt with on an emotional level and those that present themselves as if they are ailments. He felt that at the physical level an indigenous healer often operates from the believer's presence and that, by interviewing physical complaints, in actual practice indigenous healers always intervene. At an emotional level is his/her philosophical orientation rather than s/he handles minor ailments. Within the Zulus, the normal procedure is to administer '*Muti*' (Zulu medicine) so as to remove the symptoms for the treatment of the actual cause of the illness.

There is a belief that a person is ill because s/he has neglected the performance of the ritual and sacrifices. On the other hand, a person might suffer from a prolonged physical illness because s/he is possessed and in many cases both indigenous healers and prophets believe that through ceremonial rite and all cultural observances, a person will discover the correct diagnosis. What appears to be the main issue is not the level at which the disturbance is being expressed, but instead what a person has failed to do or what s/he has to become.

## **2.5 The concept of religion**

Statements about a peoples' religion are studied with greatest caution because they deal with what neither European nor native can directly observe, with conceptions, images, words, which require for understanding. A thorough knowledge of a people's languages and also an awareness of the entire system may be meaningless when divorced from the set of beliefs and practices to which it belongs. Bowie (2000:22) asserts:

The abovementioned citation means that religion is a system of ideas, attitudes, creeds and act of supernaturalism. A set of symbolic forms and acts

which relate to man to the ultimate consolation of his experience.

Bowie's definition of religion is simultaneously too broad and too narrow. It is too broad because it is possible to include political totems, which evoke adoration and fear and are separated from the mundane, phenomenal world of everyday experience. It is too narrow because his identification of the moral community or the foundation for the maintenance and application of the sacred leaves out beliefs and practice commonly referred to as 'magical'. Bowie considered magic to be antisocial and maintained that the unity of the moral community has priority over individuals activities that may be contrary to the collective will of the community.

Such a distinction between a religion and magic raises question about the foundation and the function of magic and creates an unnecessary disjunction between the individuals and society. Norbeck (1961:30) and Wallace (1966:12) identify beliefs and practices associated with supernaturalism in their definitions of religion, whereas (Norbeck, 1961) does not define what supernaturalism is, Wallace (1966) provides an explanation of supernaturalism in terms of how it is maintained and how it functions. To Wallace (1966), religion uses ritual, a mammalian characteristic that involves stereotypic repetitive acts of communication and is linked with myth explanations of ritual behaviour. In other words, religion uses ritual and myth to achieve or prevent certain goals.

Wallace further explains that the objective of religion is to transform and nurture humankind. This definition enabled the researcher to analyse religious phenomena with references to specific states of transformation. The definitions from Bellah (1964:4) and Feuchtwang (1984:21) refer to religion as concerned with questions about the ultimate needs and conditions of humankind. Bellah (1964) identifies the symbolic forms that relate humans to those questions and Feuchtwang identifies the ideological, symbolic and institutional factors that sustain or deal with those questions. Spiro (1966:15) makes it clear that religions refer to a type of interaction that culture creates and that this interaction relates human beings and superhuman beings within an institutional framework that we identify as religion.

Van Baal (1966:40) defines religion as an empirically unverifiable reality that is maintained by believers. Both Spiro and Van Baal (1966:40) suggest in their definitions that religion refers to a set of norms that govern the relationship between humankind and culturally created super ordinary reality. The function of religious symbols, according to Greeks, is to provide believers with a cognitive and emotional configuration that affects the existence of order. Because human experience often determines conceptions of order, human needs symbols which show that there is no basic contradiction between the experience of disorder and the existence of order.

Religion can evoke a sense of the sacred precisely because of believer's respect for tradition and continuity, religious symbols links the believer's present experience with meanings derived from the group's tradition, and religious beliefs that are taken for granted, truths build a strong force against new ways of thinking. Practice handed down through tradition as the God-approved ways are highly resistant to change. Although other aspects of religion promote social change, important elements in religion maintain the status quo. The connection between stratification and religious ideas has often been explained through theories such as Marx and Engel's explanation of religion as ideology. Marx (1963:122) asserts:

Ideology is a system of ideas that explain and legitimates the action and interests of a specific sector i.e. class of society.

The classical Marxian approach applies the concept of ideology only to ideas that embody the vested interest of the dominant classes, thus the term has come to have negative connotations even opposing definitional strategies to approach a phenomenon .Two major strategies used by thinkers are substantives and functional definitions.

### **2.5.1 Substantive definitions**

A substantive definition defines what religion is. It attempts to establish categories of religious content that qualify as religion and other categories specified as non-religious. Spiro (1966:96) asserts that religion is:

An institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings.

By institution this definition refers to socially shared patterns of behaviour and beliefs. All institutions include beliefs, patterns of action and value system. The critical feature of religion is that the beliefs, patterns of action and values refer to superhuman beings. Spiro's definition of religion is good example of definitional strategy because all of the categories in the definition, that is, institution, culturally postulated frameworks, are relevant concepts. His explanation of the concept of the superhuman beings is also significant because it emphasised the sense of power. Superhuman beings defined as those having greater powers than human beings, who can help or hurt human but can be influenced by human action. Power is one of the most important concepts in the sociology of religion using similar concepts, including no-human agencies, supernatural realm, super empirical reality and sacred cosmos.

The major advantage of substantive definitions is that they are more specific than functional ones. They are more explicit about the content of religion. Substantive definitions tend to be narrower and neater than functional definitions, using them; one can specify whether a phenomenon is or is not a religion. Substantive definitions also tend to correspond more closely than functional definitions to common sense notations, of religion because they are generally Western based especially Christian ideas about reality. For example, the distinction between natural and supernatural is a product of Western thinking. Substantive definitions are problematic precisely because they are historically bound, based on what is considered religion in one place and time. Because of their basis in Western historical experience, substantive definitions are deceptively neat.

Without specifying the functions of supernatural beings for example, it is impossible to distinguish the gods from ghost. Berger (1967:175) maintains that some thinkers identify religion with church-oriented religiosity. Relatively few non-western societies have formal organisations like churches. Confucianism is essentially a set of principal of order; especially regarding social relationships, that surround authority and kinship.

Confucianism, for example, does not include the worship of gods, although natural substantive definition, then Confucianism and some strains of Buddhism would not be considered as religious, nor would Christianity without supernaturalism cease to be a religion. Substantive definitions have difficulty in accounting for religious change.

If religion is identified only in terms of religious expressions it looks like non religion. Many theories of religious change, for example start from a notion of a time when people were really religious. In Christian history, the thirteenth century is usually powerful force in the entire society and thoroughly interwoven with other aspects of life, work, education, politics and family and so on. If one equates that image of religion, any change from that pattern is secularisation. A parallel problem occurs in studies of the family. If family is defined in terms of its historical marriage ties, many contemporary living arrangements do not qualify as family. Berger and Berger (1976:175) put the following questions:

Do two unmarried people and their offspring constitute a family? About six unmarried people sharing sexual partners and collectively caring for offspring.

The foregoing citation shows the paradigm shift. Nowadays a family establishment is multifaceted. There are so many elements that constitute a family. Because cultures constantly and sometimes rapidly change, it is difficult to document historical change in religion's place in society if we lack a sufficiently specific definition of religion. As a definition strategy, substantive definitions have advantages. They are more specific and amenable to empirical studies of religion. On the other hand, they tend to be more historical and culturally bound than functional definitions. Substantive definitions, in short, produce a very different interpretation of social changes than functional definitions.

### **2.5.2 Functional definitions**

A functional definition of religion emphasises what religion does for the individual and social groups. Accordingly, religion is defined by the social functions it fulfills. The content religious beliefs and practice is less important for definitional strategy than the consequences of religion. Geertz (1969:4) has a useful example of a functional definition:

A religion is a system of symbols which acts to establishment powerful pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conception of a general order of existence and clothing these conception with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seen uniquely realistic.

The definition emphasises several important concepts. The most important element is the provision of meaning because the establishment of sharing symbols is an essentially social event. The definition also accounts for social structure and social psychology functions through the concepts of moods motivations and factuality. The distinguishing features of these definitions are the conceptions of a general order of existence and their realism. According to Geertz (1969:12) people interpret event and experience as meaningful by linking them with a large sense of order. This sense of order is experience. Empirically this distinction means that the content of religious beliefs and practices does not matter so long as it serves to symbolise some transcending order to believers.

One distinction used in many functional definitions is the attribution of the sacred, whereas the natural supernatural distinction of some substantive definitions refers to the intrinsic quality of the object of worshippers. The realignment of the sacred refers to that group of believers sets apart as especially powerful and serious, for example communion bread may be regarded as nothing but a piece of bread by non-believers, but Christian worshippers regarded it as special and treat it differently from ordinary bread. Functional definition of religion includes all that substantive definitions identified as religion, but they are usually much broader.

Both substantive and functional approach would define the phenomena of Calvinism, Roman Catholicism, Methodism, Mormonism and Reform Judaism as religion. Geertz (1969:13) points out that his definition of religion would include:

...for example, golf-not merely if a person played it with a passion, but rather if golf were seen as symbolic of some transcendent order. Functional definitional often include religion phenomena such

as naturalism, Maoism, Marxism, spiritualism and even atheism. The religious qualities of less comprehensive human activities such as sport, art, music and sex are incorporated into some functionalist into some as well.

The foregoing citation emphasises the primary advantage of a functional definitional strategy, which is its breadth. Functional definitions tend to be better than substantive definitions for encompassing cross-cultural, trans-historical and changing aspects of religion. Functional definition encourages the observer to be sensitive to the religious quality of many social settings. A drawback of some of the functional approaches to religion, however, is their assumption that society has certain functional prerequisites. The assumptions imply that society requires certain social functions, some of which are uniquely fulfilled by religion. Parson (1944:88) asserts:

Some theories, for example, assume that society requires cultural integration. If religion is then defined as that which provides culture integration, the theory implies that religion is a requisite for society's existence.

Such an argument is circular, describing religion as that which provides and is defined as religion. The assumption that religion is necessary of unproven, some critics say that function strategies result in all-inclusive categories defining virtually everything human as religion . The choice between substantive and functional definitions is finally a matter of strategy. Each approach has advantages that man recommended it to certain tasks. Two strategies result in very difficult interpretations of various issues such as social change, secularisation, and the relationship between religion and other interpretations. An awareness of the limitations and scope of each definitional approach will enable the research to evaluate these other issues more critically.

### **2.5.3 Aspects of healing**

Religion and healing complement each other in indigenous knowledge systems. In short a healer is ought to obey all religious rituals in order to be empowered with healing powers. Healing therefore by large relies on how pious the individual is the patient also has to



observe religious rituals in order to be healed. In this regard, the patient has to follow religious patterns, and to heed to the healers prescriptions. If the patient is healed and ultimately fails to observe religious doctrine, there is a relapse of illness. This relapse is a punishment inflicted on him/her by ancestors, to a greater extent. Illness is believed in Zulu custom to be caused by deviant behaviour.

This deviant, from norms and values may be perpetrated by the witch or by a victim who deviates from norms. Deviners and faith – healers come to the fore, in such instances, to mediate and to heal the patient. There are those illnesses that are of Western origin. These ailments are only curable by Western medicine. They can never be healed by means of indigenous healing. On the contrary, some of the indigenous illnesses can never be healed by Western medicines. They can be cured by diviners and medicine-men.

#### **2.5.4 Religious beliefs**

Every religion has essential cognitive aspects. The religion shapes what adherents know about the world. The fundamental knowledge organises the individual's perception of the world as it serves as a basis for action. McGuire (1991:16) maintains that:

There is a tendency in modern Western societies to treat religious beliefs as mere opinion opposed to empirical beliefs, which are treated as knowledge.

This distinction hides the fact that both types of beliefs are knowledge to the individual who holds them. If a person considers evil spirits to be real, they are real with their consequences. They shape the person's experience and actions. The individuals who believe that spirits cause illnesses are acting according to their knowledge. The entire enterprise of theology, out of which formal beliefs are developed, represents a highly specialised and intellectualised approach to religion. On the other hand, religion also includes less formal kinds of beliefs such as myths, images norms and values, myths of creation and rebirth, for example, are told and enacted in dance and song. These other kinds of symbolisations are often more potent influences on behaviour than intellectual beliefs. Religious beliefs are not mere abstractions that are irrelevant to everyday life.

People use their beliefs to make choices, interpret events and plan actions. One form of religious beliefs are myths about all aspects of human's life: birth and rebirth, creation and transformation, one's people and death. McGuire (1991:16) says:

Myths are stories that provide a rationale for group actions. They can be metaphors for concrete social structures and for real human events.

Individuals draw on these interpretations to give meaning and direction for their actions. This distinction hides the fact that both types of beliefs are knowledge to the individuals who holds them. They shape the person's experience and actions. The individual, who believes that germs cause illness, represents a highly specialised and intellectualised approach to healing. If the individual believes in something, more often than that belief becomes a reality. If s/he believes that a certain concoction is good for healing, it will heal her/him. In short religion and healing go hand in hand.

This depends entirely on how an individual pins h/his hope. Religious beliefs inform the individuals what action is good and desirables or bad and should be avoided. They may tell the individuals that marriage is good and right because the holy marriage of the gods is to be wiped by humans. Religious beliefs may inform the individual that eating other people is wrong, human flesh is not an appropriate food. Thus, an entire range of values, norms and attitudes are derived from religious beliefs.

### **2.5.5 Religious Ritual**

Ritual consists of symbolic action that represents religious meanings. Durkheim (1965:420) maintains:

...Whereas beliefs represent the cognitive aspects of religion, ritual is the enactment of religious meaning.

The two are closely intertwined. Beliefs of the religious group give meaning and shape to ritual performance. Ritual enactments strengthen and reaffirm the group's beliefs. There are ways of symbolising unity of the group and, at the same time, of contributing to it.

Ritual helps generate religious conviction. By ritual action, the group collectively remembers its shared meanings and revitalises consciousness of itself. This has important consequences for the individual members come to identify with the group and its goals. Ritual is an effective way of transforming space and time.

Places where rituals occur, such as a mountain or a shrine can be changed, becoming a metaphor for sacred dynamic potential of religious ritual which suggests its link not only with religious belief but also with religious experience. Religious symbols, expressed in beliefs and rituals, have real power, which can be experienced personally by the individual. Ritual words and ceremonies can wake experience of awe, mystery, wonder and delight. Religious experiences often emphasises the power of ritual words, as exemplified by the seriousness surrounding the pronouncement of the words.

### **2.5.6 Religious experience**

Religious experience refers to the entire individual's subjective involvement with the sacred. Although such experience is essentially private, people try to communicate it through expression of beliefs and through rituals. Underhill (1961:125) asserts that, a person receiving communion in a Christian worship service may also experience an intensely subjective awareness of God. Prayer, meditation, dancing and singing are other common setting for personal religious experience. Similarly, even a private experience has a socially acquired belief structure shaped by the individual's interpretation of religious experience.

The symbolism of various religious traditions, for example indigenous religion, shapes, the interpretations of even highly mystical experience through such images as the pilgrimage, perfect love, marriage and rebirth. Individual religious experiences vary considerably in intensity. They range from momentary senses of peace and awe to extra-ordinary mystical experiences. Different religions place, different emphasis on religious experience. Most Christian denominations do not actively encourage highly emotive religious experience, whereas in some Pentecostal groups, these experiences are segregated and appropriate only for certain occasions.

Thus, among the Zulu people, extra-ordinary religious specialists who have undergone an intense encounter with sacred spirit emerged with special powers which can affect good or evil on behalf of the rest of the group. Another example is the segregation of occasions for special religious experiences, for example cultivations of *Nomkhubulwana's* field (rain princesses' field). The content of religious experience varies. It may check pleasurable aspects such as a sense of peace, joy, well-being and security. Religious experience may also produce terror, anxiety and fear. While the content of the experience depends on the group's beliefs about what is being encountered, both the pleasurable and frightening experiences are related to the sense of power. The notion of the sacred thus entails both harmful and helpful aspects. Personal experiences of this power can be overwhelming.

## **2.6 Religious community**

Religious experience may also include the awareness of belonging to a group of beliefs. Ritual often reminds the individual of this belonging by creating an intense sense of togetherness. Communal religious settings can produce a resonance of several individuals experience and thus even deeper sense of sharing inner time. Like making music together, such shared religious experience can create a sense of sharing vivid present time, an experiential communion. For example, participants in the several days and nights at “*Ukweshwama*” (new-harvest) ceremony, through rituals attune individuals towards the culturally valued sense of harmony. This occurs between the individual, social group and environment. McGuire (1991:20) asserts that:

...The community of believers may be formally organised. Formal specialization of a group into an organisation such as church is a relatively recent historical development.

The foregoing extract identifies ritual gathering of indigenous people, with that of the church goes. The religious group, whether formal and informal, is essential for supporting the individual's beliefs and norms. Coming together with the fellow believers reminds members of what they collectively value.

It can also impart a sense of empowerment to accomplish their religious and everyday goals. The nature of the religious community illustrated the social content of religious meaning and experience.

### **2.6.1 Religious and system of meaning**

The capacity of religion to provide meaning for human experience has one of the major themes of religion. Weber (1958:60) asserts:

...Meanings refer to the interpretation of situation and events in terms of some of broader frame of references.

For example, the experience of losing one's job is given meaning when it is interpreted as "bad luck", "market forces", "the boss is trying to get rid of pro-union workers", "ethnic discrimination", or "God's will". As this shows, meaning systems are a broad, interpretative framework. People may believe in the idea of germs and in the seemingly contradictory idea of evil spirits as explanations for illness and evil spirits explain others. Most historical religious meanings are comprehensive meaning. This provision of meaning is particularly important, for an understanding of religion because of the way in which meaning links the individual with the larger social group. Meaning is not inherent in a situation but is bestowed. It shows the wide variety of possible meanings that could be attached to the event itself for clues about which meaning fits best. The experience is given meaning by this choice of interpretations. Attaching meaning to events is a human process. Theory is a highly specialised form of legitimation. Non-intellectual forms are for more common legitimation, explains the way in which the social group should behave.

They also shape future action by justifying the norms of appropriate action. Religious legitimation makes strong claims for the bases of order and authority. Religious legitimation may be invoked to justify even revolutionary action. Thus, religious legitimations are not solely a tool of the dominant group, but may justify actions of subordinate and dissenting groups as well.

## **2.7 The individual's meanings system**

The individual does not construct a personal system from nothing. An individual's meaning system is learned, for the most part, during the process of socialisation. The interpretations that seem most plausible to a person are likely to be those that are familiar and held by others who are important to that individual. So although, each individual operates with a highly personal meaning system, that set of meaning is communicated by others. Yet all personal meaning systems gain effectiveness by their link with some community in which beliefs are shared. McGuire (1991:31) maintains that:

... Meaning and individual are intertwined people located themselves and their personal actions in a large social order by means of their meaning systems.

In short, the person is labelled by others by the way s/he behaves; his/her actions and all personality characteristics speak volumes.

## **2.8 Religious belonging**

A direct relationship exists between the community of believers and the meaning system. The unity of the relationship is expressed and enhanced by its shared meanings. With the group's meaning system, existence and importance are all conglomerated. The idea of the "church" that is community of believers is not merely an organised feature of religion but expressed a fundamental link between the meaning system and the community that hid it. Group's worldview is plausible, whereas outside the group that worldview is disconfirmed. Frequent interaction without the group, together with a distancing from nonbelievers views, helps support members worldwide in the face of real or perceived opposition from the world. Ammerman (1987:51) says:

... Even the most mundane actions are transformed to support the sectarian worldview. Christians immerse themselves in appropriate religious audio recording and reading matter.

The more dramatically the group's distinctive worldview differs from those prevalent in the society, the more important it becomes to huddle in the sectarian enclave. Sectarian strategies also include physical symbolic withdrawal from the world, limiting outside influences, and restricting member's social contacts. Especially important is the socialisation of children. The group protects its children from exposure to competing world-views. Also important is the selection of spouses. The plausibility of a person's meaning system is more likely to be undermined by interaction with co-worker. Thus, a group trying to defend its plausibility often prohibits members from marrying outside the group and arrange social events to encourage marriageable members to meet and marry each other.

## **2.9 Tribalism**

Another orientation that protects the group's distinctive worldview is tribalism. Which in ethnically, pluralistic societies refer to locating oneself within a specific ethnic community and its perspective. Greeky (1999:123) emphasises that Zulu ethnicity is not merely a vestige of old-country ways, but rather a dynamic, special way of negotiation to South African culture. Belonging to the indigenous community thus promotes a smoother transition to a new identity and sense of belonging. Ethnicity is also a useful variable in explaining diversity of beliefs within a religious group. The changes in pattern of both ethnic ties and religious involvement can be understood by clarifying that both are linked with the individual identity in two ways. As Hammond (1988:52) explains:

...Through a new emphasis on mystery and miracle, believers perceiving their world as full of the action of good and evil forces.

Believers experience the world as re-mysterical by the presence of God's spirit. It is also remystified by the presence of Satan in numerous forms, just as God is influential in their world so too is Satan immediate and active. The believers see the direct influence of God in the beneficial and pleasant events of their lives. At the same time they see the evil ones, as the source of doubts, temptations, dissension, sickness and other troubles.

The comic opposition implied in dualism provides a ready explanation for felt opposition to one's own beliefs and system. Numerous religious movements identify their own beliefs and practices as one of the side of God and decry compelling religious as one of the side of the evil. Often, however, evil is identified as a vague general force that seems to work against the commitments of the religious group that is working to oppose evil. Similarly, various fundamentalist Christian groups identify indigenous religion with the forces of evil.

### **2.9.1 Myth and totemism**

The word myth is derived from the Greek word, mythos. As defined by Pandian (1991:21), it is a pattern of beliefs that symbolically express the characteristics of a group. Kalweit (1988:43) defines myth as:

...Atraditional story of ostensible historical events that serves to unfold part of the whole worldwide of a people...an ill-founded belief held uncritically, especially by an interesting group.

From a religious point of view whether the belief, is ill founded or not, it has enough meaning for the believers to sustain or validate their cultural reality. Lessa and Vogt (1989:239) hold that:

...The term myth at best serves as a unifying concept which enables the communities to talk about etiology. Narrative and other forms which for society involved make up a body of assumed knowledge about the universe the natural and supernatural words man's place in the totality.

The foregoing citation means that myth is not a myth as such. Since, people are in dire need to know more about mysteries. Geertz (1969:36) asks himself some questions, about the relationship between myth and ritual. To throw some light on above questions, both structuralism and symbolic analysis have an answer. Structuralist analysis of myth, assumes myth as a language which communicates message. It aims to help receive the contradictions of cultural life. On the other hand symbolic approach interprets myths and rituals symbols of cultural archetypes of religiosity and particular religious traditions.



In a critique of the late-nineteenth-century study of totemism, people suggest that speculation on the nature of totemism began with Mc Lennan (1969:18) who asserts that:

A search for the origins of totemism and the belief that ancient nations came in prehistoric times through the totem age having animals for gods before the anthropomorphic gods appeared affected a generation of a scholar.

The problem with theories of totemism was that scholars held on to their preconceived notions about totemism, even when the data clearly suggested that different types of beliefs had been erroneously lumped together as totemism. For instance somatic religion produced data which indicated that the totemic animal affirmed symbolically represented a clan. That the ritual consumption of the anomaly affirmed and strengthened totems, representing “*amadlozi*” (ancestors). They are not killed, killing them is taboo. Fraser (1910:36) confirms:

Eating of the totemic animal was prohibited and that clan exogamy was a fundamental principle of totemism.

Fraser declared that totemism was both a religion and system of kinship classification, identifying individuals and groups of having descended from a lineal non-human ancestor. He indicated that the ban on eating totemic animal was limited to the clan that believed they had descended from the animal, not for the whole tribe.

For example, Dlamini clan is barred from eating a sheep. Both Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud looked upon totems as a central, crucial principal of culture. These great thinkers arrive at two different kinds of formulations concerning the importance and the meaning of totemism. Durkheim (1965:60) saw emphatically it is not an everyday emotion, but rather a feeling that separates the objects to which it is directed from the sphere of ordinary concerns. The sacred then can be best seen as that which is set apart from the utilitarian concerns of everyday living by the attitude of respects in which it is held. Secondly the fact that it cannot be understood by exercise of the empirical common sense sufficient for such ordinary concerns.

Smith (1965:31) maintains that sacred objects are not materially different from ordinary objects. The uninitiated sacred cow of the Hindus appears to be like any other two piece of transixed wood. Again, it is attitude of worshippers that makes the crucial differences. The sacred entities, which are intangible and indivisible and were existence thus cannot be demonstrated experimentally, many well, seem to the united to be nonexistent. Yet the awe in which they are held by their worshippers is real emotion.

Not only does this awe invest its objects with their sacred characters but it also makes it possible for these imaginary entities to exist in the mind of their worshippers. Such entities, however imaginary, have observable consequences closely allied to the sacred, is the unholy, which includes whatever under particular circumstances is thought to desecrate the sacred. It is precisely to avoid this possibility taboo. Sacred objects should not be touched, eaten or even closely approached except on special occasions and by specially authorised persons. The name of the sacred being should not be spoken and if it is, then in no ordinary voice or language.

### **2.9.2 Beliefs**

It is not enough; however, that sacred objects and entities merely exist. Their existence must be continually renewed and kept alive in the minds of the worshipping group through. Beliefs that are creeds and myths and practices that is ceremonies and ritual contributions to this end. Religious belief does not assume the existence of sacred objects and beings, but repetition of reverence. Because the referents of symbols include over precise intellectual definitions that their unifying force is the more potent for intellectual, definitions make for hair-splitting and divisiveness.

Symbols may be shared on the basis of not-too-closely defined meaning. For man alone amongst the animals is capable of symbolic language and abstract thought. Not only does man act and react under the spur of fear, excitement and anxiety, but he also invokes and anticipates action and uses his creative imagination to express his yearning and his hopes. Most importantly, man's existential plight is such that in no period of human history up to the present have men had the same empirical knowledge and powers of rational control

over their survival needs as they do now. From this standpoint, existence of this gap has helped to activate and maintain man's interest in a super empirical real. Religion may then be regarded as a cultural tool by means of which man has been able to accommodate himself to this experience in his total environment. That includes him, his fellow group members, and the world of nature and that which is felt by him to transcend them all.

### **2.9.3 Omens**

The recent living dead police the family. S/he patrols the home and its inhabitants and by using animal symbols reveals to the recipient his immediate misfortunes, perils and dangers, happiness and security as omens. Omens are so branded in society that they actively control the day-to-day activities of individuals and at times cause utter confusion and despondency. For instance, while walking to the field, one may see an earthworm (*inyoka yomhlaba*) crawling across the path.

As this announces the death of a close relative one has to alert others. So that plans for the day are alerted as the family prepares to mourn. Sometimes the death messages may delay for days and people will be wondering where it had occurred or whether or not it will still come. (Bozongwana, 1990:13) lists a number of bad omens that affect the individual mentally. He starts off with a chameleon; a common reptile seen throughout the year. Normally it lives in trees and is powerless to dig the ground for shelter. If, then it is seen burrowing in the earth, it becomes a very bad omen, signifying the death of a very close relative or one of the family.

All over KwaZulu-Natal, this omen is regarded as one of the most reliable ones. Then, cobras are usually either greyish or brown, depending on the kind of surroundings they are found in. When a cobra changes to conclude white patches it becomes an omen that signifies the death of a relative. The cobra symbolises bad luck when it loiters around or within home premises. One other thing a community has to watch for is the new moon, if the light faces to the right of the people as a whole. As this indicate that trouble and disease would never come to them that month or for sometime. The opposite indicates that there will be trouble and illness in the community.

On the other hand, if one sees a shooting star at night, it is good luck, although a tailed one means bad luck. To see an *umhlwazi* (sand snake) foretells good luck and a safe journey, more especially if the snake is seen lying still in the ground. The chirping and calling of the birds in the bush is goodluck also as it denotes that the traveller is safe from wild animals and other dangers.

#### **2.9.4 Dreams**

Another aspect that features in indigenous religion, and of course healing belief, are dreams. There are good and bad dreams. Many indigenous people dream in opposite, meaning what appears in a dream is opposite. For instance laughing in a dream foretells crying. Mfusi (1984:34) describes dreams and asserts that:

For a sick man to dream that he is well again denotes death from him. To dream yourself drinking milk means that you will fall sick. For anyone to dream that he sees stagnant water in a pool is like dreaming seeing yourself in the dirty water. To dream seeing a pit and yourself falling into it is not good. It means your own funeral or your relatives.

Dreams need careful study if they are to be used as directives. If one goes to bed with a heavy stomach one would have numerous dreams which would be meaningless. If one goes to bed thirsty, one is likely to dream of water and drinking it as the desire to drink continues while one is asleep.

If one has bad experience within the day this will come up in his/her sleep. This means that the subconscious mind is at work and nothing else. The indigenous Zulus call this “*ukuhhuma*” (sleep-talk) and it is not connected with the spirit. Some people say that true dreams come down and are marked with vividness that disrupts sleep. Even then it does not, in reality, follow that every dream comes true. As one, at times, never sees anything happen even after a most disturbing one. Dreams mainly indicate possible events likely to occur in one’s life time. Therefore, they cannot be said to be inevitable.

### 2.9.5 Zulu Cosmology

Hammond-Tooke (1974:318) points out that the elements of the cosmology of the people play a significant role in the information of their personality. He describes the belief system of the indigenous Zulu, *uMvelinqangi* (the Supreme Being) is the God-Almighty served by other deities. Explaining the Zulu cosmology is important, as it facilitates the understanding of indigenous experiences.

Hammond-Tooke (1975:318) says:

It provides emotional support in times of distress...  
and it provides an authoritative that man asks  
himself.

Any form of study that does not give an explanation for the role of the belief system, will be experienced as incomplete and alienating as the elements of cosmology of the people play a significant role in the formation on their personality. A cursory discussion will be based on “*uMvelinqangi*” (God) and “*Abantu basemlanjeni*” (River-people) to avoid tautology.

The citations of good dreams are as follow:

To dream that you see little fish swimming in clear shallow water is good. It means that you will succeed in all your undertaking. Rich green grass is always good. Those who dream seeing it is lucky. To dream yourself walking in light showers of rain is good. It denotes prosperity. For young people to dream of flying is good. It signifies a long and prosperous life. (Bozongwana, 1990:15)

Although many people’s dreams mean the opposite of what they think, there are other people who dream of exactly what will happen. Such people are said to be panic-mongers in the community. For instance, things like swarms of locusts, pestilence and death should not be known before hand. A herbalist is, therefore, called upon to apply medicine to the dreamer in order to defer such dreadful dreams.

He may wear the “*muthi*” (medicine) around his neck or place it under his pillow at night. Dreams signify that a very strong link exists between the dreamers and must be accomplished by a spell that will persuade the spirits to remove the wrong dreams from man, “*Amadlozi avakashela abantu ebuthongweni babo. Amadlozi ayakhuluma ebantwini* (Ancestral spirits visit people in their sleep and talk to them in dreams). If, for instance, a person is contemplating buying a car and then dream of seeing a pit with their money in, they would definitely change their mind and stop buying the car.

### **2.9.6 *Mvelinqangi* (God)**

Zulu traditional religion holds a belief in the existence of *uMvelinqangi*, who is equivalent to God, in other cultures. The Zulus always associate *uMvelinqangi* with creation. In their everyday interaction, they do not involve Him like is the case with the diviner. Hence, Hammond-Tooke (1975:319) sees this Supreme-Being as loosely integrated in the cosmology system. In the spiritual hierarchy, just below *uMvelinqangi*, the Zulus have *Amadlozi*.

### **2.9.7 *Abantu Basemlanjeni* (River People)**

Zulus believe that there are people who live in the deep pools of certain rivers. These people are often confused with “shades”. Hammond-Tooke (1975:319) maintains that the “River-people” are always associated with animals of the world, like crocodiles. They are also frequently associated with “*umamlambo*” (a river-snake). Hence, some people construct them as dangerous and others as benevolent. Most of the indigenous people identify the “River -people” with “shades”. Of the people who carry this belief, when they see a snake in a homestead and believe it to be a “River person” they do not kill it. But, a general belief is that they are visited by the “shades”. Of interest here is Hammond-Tooke’s (1975:319) view that the indigenous person and natural world are in a continual relationship, which is expressed symbolically. A similar view has been raised by Sibisi (1975:84) that Zulus believe that man has a close relationship with nature as well as with his culture. So if “*umamlambo*” (a river-snake) visits a homestead, the elderly in that homestead will observe its movements and interpret its people in movements within the

Zulu cosmology to be the message from the “shades”. In short, it can be postulated within the Zulu cosmology that the mediator between man and nature is the “River people” and between man and culture is the diviner.

### **2.9.8 Indigenous Knowledge**

This is mainly concerned with indigenous knowledge and how it really functions in public as an instrument of collective action. The significance of indigenous knowledge grows proportionately with the increasing necessity of regular intervention in the social process. Wherein, the main aim of indigenous knowledge is that there are modes of thought which cannot be adequately understood as long as their social origins are obscured. It is indeed true that only the individual is capable of thinking. There is no such sophisticated entity as a group mind, which thinks over and above the heads of individuals or whose ideas the individuals merely reproduce.

Nevertheless, it would be false to deduce from this that all the ideas and sentiments which motivate an individual have their origin in him alone. It and can be explained solely on the basis of his own life-experience. Just as it would be incorrect to attempt to derive a language merely from observing a single individual, who speaks not a language of his own. But rather that of his contemporaries and predecessors who have prepared path of him. So it is incorrect to explain the totality of an outlook only with reference to its genesis in the mind of the individual.

Only in quite a limited sense does the single individual create out of himself the mode of speech and of thought attributed to him for disposal only certain words and their meanings. These not only determine, to a large extent, the avenue of approach to the surrounding world, but they also show from which angle and in which context of activity, objects have been perceptible and accessible to the group or the individual. The first point which has to be put forward, is that the approach of the indigenous knowledge intentionally does not start with the single individual and his\her thinking in order then to proceed directly in the manner of the researcher of the indigenous knowledge who seeks to comprehend.

Thinks in the concrete setting of historical-social situation out of which individually differentiated only very gradually merges with others. Hountondji (1997:8) says:

It is not man in general who think or even isolated individuals who do the thinking. But men in certain groups who have developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of response of certain typical situations characterising their common position.

The foregoing citation means that strictly speaking it is incorrect to say that the single individual thinks but rather it is more correct to insist that s/he participates in thinking further what other people have thought is appropriate to this situation and attempts to elaborate further the inherited modes of response. S/he may also substitute others for them in order to deal more adequately with the new challenges which have arisen out of the shifts and changes in her/his situation.

Every individual is there in a two-fold sense predetermined by the fact of thought growing up in a society. On the other hand, s/he finds in that situation performed patterns of thought and conduct common in her/his vicinity. Another feature characterising the indigenous knowledge is that, it does not sever the concretely existing modes of thought from the context of collective action thought which the world discovers in an intelligent sense. Men living in group do not merely coexist physically as discrete individuals. They do not confront the objects of the world from the abstract levels of an unthinking mind nor do they do so exclusively as solitary beings. On the contrary they act with and against one another in a diversely organised group. It is the direction of this nature that will change the surrounding world or maintain it.

### **2.9.9 What is indigenous knowledge?**

The term, indigenous and thus the concept of indigenous knowledge, has often been associated with the context of the primitive, the wild, the natural. Such representation has evoked condescension from Western observers and elicited little appreciation for the insight and understanding indignity might provide.



But Semali and Kinchella (1999:4) say:

Is an everyday rationalised that rewards individuals who live in a given locality to these individual indigenous knowledge reflects the dynamic way in which the residents come to understand themselves in relationships to their natural environments. How they organised that folk knowledge of flora and history to embrace their lives.

Contrary to the above citation, Hountondji (1997:63) in her study in Australia refutes the utility of the term indigenous. She asserts it is derogatory, in the true sense of the word. Hountondji also dislikes the usage of the term traditional. She contends the term symbolises the backwardness of the aborigines and is also an insult to the aborigines. Hountondji prefers the aborigines to have their own original knowledge, which has been transmitted from generation to generation. In this regard, indigenous people make choices about the environments they live in; an environment which has for centuries been the source of foods, water, medicine and other natural resources and sustains them and their own life experience.

They have learned through trial and error, how to treat diseases, tend livestock, provide health and therapies, manage their religion and how to preserve and pass such local knowledge from one generation to the next. In this regard, literacy in the form of orality was the maintained vehicle for communication. Through oral means important information was passed on from one generation to the next. Knowledge system about the traditional institution of customary law, land tenure system, inheritance rights and rituals, were guarded and preserved not through Western writing system but instead transmitted through stories legends, folklore, fairy tales, trickster tales and in some occasion's petro-graphic art.

These were important devices which ensured the survival of the indigenous people for many years. In some indigenous communities these devices have withstood times and are still used along with dances, drumming, symbols, rituals and celebrations. These oral devices are however disappearing. The main cause is that indigenous languages, even though they are spoken by millions of people they do not enjoy preference.

Several scientists have tried to define indigenous knowledge. Most of these attempts take as their point of departure scientific knowledge and focus on the differences between scientific and indigenous knowledge. The schools of thought can be distinguished. Agrawal (1995:20) puts it:

The first one stresses differences in the subject matters for research. The second school of thought argues that the main differences are based on contextual grounds as indigenous knowledge is more deeply rooted in communities environments. The third school of thought focuses on the differences in methodologies used to conduct research.

In the same article, Agrawal argues that none of this distinction can be defended. There exists no substantial difference between indigenous and scientific knowledge. The point is, however, that one should not focus on bits of specific knowledge, but rather on the generation of knowledge. What matters in the longer-term is the continuation of a system that has shown to be able to generate knowledge that differs from the knowledge generated by the scientific knowledge system, a system that has developed alternative solutions for several local problems. These solution are not as sophisticated as the solution developed by the scientific system, but often they are equally effective and environmentally more sustainable. As the point of order, it can be safely assumed that indigenous knowledge interpreted here is the knowledge of indigenous people.

This is not as irrelevant as it may seem. In most articles and studies, *indigenous* simply means *traditional* or *local*. The difference between traditional and indigenous people's communities desires the pressure to integrate within the larger society of the national status of which they are part still have their own cultures. Local communities, on the other hand, usually do not have a cultural identity that sets them apart from the larger society. Indigenous people experience life experiences. Everything that is thought and done is done in relationship to the whole life experience. Everything that is known is known in the context of the entire life and for the purpose of furthering intellectual, moral and physical growth. Semali and Kinchella (1999:21) assert:

...Knowing, living and acting ethically are essentially elements of life.

Compelling observations such as those above, invite the researcher to show how African indigenous religion and spirituality are essentially linked with indigenous healing. The indigenous people believe and trust in the existence of an External Divine Mystery. These people, who have inhabited Africa for centuries, have always believed that there is an eternal, transcendent, Divine Mystery that brings everything into being and sustain all that which is not rich in meaning or cannot be fully understood.

This mystery, the ultimate Incomprehensible One is the Divine parent who gives birth to life and the world. It makes all beings grow and change, by continually providing elemental structure and direction. The indigenous people believe that the Divine Mystery directs each human life towards growth, goodness and meaningfulness to be, to do well, in short to think, talk and act morally and ethically. For the indigenous people, good must be done and moral life has to be lived not for the sake of a final reward in heaven, but first because, it is good and secondly, because goodness and morality enhances the internal goodness and intrinsic harmony already created by the Divine Mystery. Semali and Kinchella (1999:22) have a conviction that:

Human's ongoing formation, reformations are essential projects in life.

The indigenous people believe that human life must grow and flourish physically, intellectually and morally from birth to death. They see these aspects of human growth as one holistic becoming, not as three separate ways of growth. At the very centre of this ongoing becoming is a gradual formation of good human behaviour. The forming and reforming of a person's character is fundamental and essential for harmonious living with all that is good and impeccable in the world.

The well-being of the visible world and that of the transcosmic one, that is, spirit world are created through communal moral living. A sound human morality or spirituality gives birth to refined human, cosmic and transcosmic experience.

Thus, the number one priority of indigenous people is to hand down to the younger generations knowledge and wisdom that continually forms, reforms and transforms the individuals and the community. Through centuries of experience, the indigenous people realised that knowledge empowers them to cope with their spiritual backbone. They realised, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that their culture, society and ecology can only be sustained by a clearly defined sense and practice of morality and ethics. No wonder, therefore, that the entire formational system of the indigenous people is inspired by the single paradigm that is human and cosmic harmony hinges on human moral living. Cunningham (1991:43) states that a significant knowledge has the sole purpose of moulding the human heart towards the acquisition of cherished human values:

...Reverences, self control, thoughtfulness, hard work, community consciousness, courage and honesty.

A bulk of indigenous stories, sayings, rituals and proverbs for example, are used in various contexts to help the young to acquire the above values. The knowledge and use of proverbs is for the indigenous people as important as land, cattle and water. Thus, moral formation through proverbs, stories and rituals are as fundamental physical health-through nourishment by water. All indigenous people have a large collection of saying and proverbs that are passed on from one generation to the next, which mould good moral behaviour and character. They are constituent elements of indigenous knowledge and there is an intrinsic unity between the individual and the community. The indigenous people's view of a person strikes a balance between one's collective identity as a member of a society and one's personal identity as a unique individual. Cunningham (1991:8) says:

The self is definable in the context of society and society is definable through its unique members. "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am".

This way of understanding a person has significant impact on indigenous knowledge, on how it is defined and how it is passed on. Indigenous knowledge is essentially information and wisdom that enhances the well being of each person, of society, of those to come and of the agro-ecological environment.

When, for instance, indigenous parents teach their children how to get a good crop of banana, they would also, at this time, teach them that working hard is a blessing and fundamental human value and that a good crop will feed the family and others in need. Thus, what is known and passed on has personal, social, moral and ecological implications. Indigenous knowledge and education underscores the importance of boldness, co-operation, altruism, generosity and environmental protection.

A social-moral imperative is, therefore, at the core of indigenous knowledge. According to indigenous people's worldview, the universe is a web of one interconnected, inter-related and interdependent whole. Humanity and all other beings form one large family which must continually act and preserve the harmony already inherent in them. The entire universe is humanity's intimate partnership in life. The indigenous people interact with a universe that is dynamic, alive, calling and giving all sorts of messages. According to this understanding, everything is alive, stones, mountains, rivers, lakes, cloud and rain, are all alive in their intrinsic meaning and in their active partnership to people and everything else. Goonatilake (1984:33) notes that:

In the mind of indigenous Africans the cosmos is not fixed cold and mute: on the contrary and it's full of meaning laden with message and always speaking.

It is, therefore, humanity's responsibility to engage in an intimate and positive interaction with the universe, to read and decipher its meaning and message. In continually attempting to read, decipher and know each aspects of the universe, the indigenous people develop profound reverence and fascination with the universe. They realise out of time-tested experience, that human cannot live humanly and harmoniously in a sick universe. They know that they have the responsibility to develop, preserve and protect all resources, always trying to avoid a mere instillation and spiritual relationship with it. This trend of thought has several implications on indigenous knowledge. All aspects of the universe are interrelated. Analysis is done only to enhance wholeness and totality, whatever the context of its relationship and spiritual aspects. Knowledge of the universe and its constituent parts include reverence and awe for what is known.

For instance, a mother teaches her daughter that leaves of a certain plants are medicine for headaches and at the same time, teaches her to respect that plant as a partner of life. Early non-African authors tended to misunderstand this respect for natural phenomena and misnamed it animism. Indigenous Africans know that nature itself is a master recycler. Nature does not waste anything. It changes the forms of substances to new forms in order to enhance and renew the circle of life. For this reason, an indigenous African does not throw anything away. Recycling therefore is a respectful and economic way of preserving the circle of life.

## **2.10 Deconstructing the word indigenous**

From its origins, the word *indigenous* is loaded with ideological connotations. Its coinage is inextricability linked to colonialism. Atwater (1994:558) asserts that:

Colonial history has taught us all the non-conquering people, non-Europeans are indigenous. Included in this categorization are Navajos of North America, the Quechuas of South America, and the Zulu of South Africa.

The foregoing categories of people share common characteristics in the eyes of colonisers. They share the common destiny of forced subservience to Europeans. Viewed from eyes of the colonisers, indigenous people are the losers, those who lack power. Power defines knowledge. Therefore, the colonisers of indigenous people have defined the latter's beliefs in status of being called primitive knowledge. They were commonly called ignorant, primitive and inferior. A postcolonial point of view presents Euro-centrism. Atwater (1994:559) says:

This point of view assumes challenges to deconstruct and reconceptualise the word indigenous from its primo genius meaning into the contemporary one.

The former implies a definition that involves interaction. It means to define not only according to outsider but also insiders, from the contemporary relationship of the so-called indigenous with major society.

The series of ideas recognised that in the recent past, indigenous people have appropriated the word for themselves. In other words even if the term was coined from the colonisers (the outsiders), nowadays the term, as it is used by indigenous people connotes plurality, instead of otherness. Today, the word *indigenous* serves determination and political autonomy. It is important to mention that from outsiders there exists an important school of thought, which Baker and Taylor (1995:34). Call the critical *indigenismo*. It indicates indigenous self-sufficiency from many decades ago this is Latin-America school that criticised assimilatory and integrationist *indigenismo*. It assumes the indigenous people have the collective and individual right to remain and develop as indigenous and to be recognised as such Baker and Taylor (1995:44). On the other hand, in component acting in concert together.

### **2.10.1. The denigration of indigenous knowledge**

The denigration of indigenous knowledge cannot be separated from the oppression of indigenous people. Indeed, modernist science and anthropology in particular, have been deployed as a weapon against indigenous people. Levine (1996:30) clarifies that in this rationalistic womb, whiteness begins to establish itself as a norm that represents authoritative, delimited and hierarchical mode of thought. In the emerging colonial context in which whites would increasingly find themselves in the decades and centuries following the enlightenment of Western civilization. The encounter with non-whiteness would be framed in rationalistic terms. Giroux (1992:33) sums up:

Rationalistic emerged as the conceptual base around which civilization and savagery could be delineated ...whiteness representing orderliness, rationality and self-control and non-whiteness as chaos, irrationality, violence and the breakdown of self-regulation.

This rationalistic modernistic whiteness is shaped and confirmed by its close association with science. As a scientific construct, whiteness privileges mind over body; the intellectual over experiential ways of knowing; mental abstractions over passions, bodily sensations and tactile understanding.

In the study of indigenous knowledge, such as the epistemology tendencies of late, take on dramatic importance. The sight it provides into the social construction of intelligence of psychology opens a gateway into consciousness and its reaction to the world around it. These Western rationalistic dynamics of whiteness as a colonial impulse were well articulated by Baker (1996:36) in his ruminations on the scientific methods. Baker conceptualised science as an entity that would bind nature and reduce her to a slave. As a slave she could perform useful service for Europeans.

This dominant-submissive relationship between Europeans and indigenous in the power relations between universal and local knowledge need to be reconciled. The knowledge Western science produced became the benchmark by which the production or non-western civilisation was measured. In this context, European, by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, became increasingly condescending towards the primitive knowledge and culture. Such perceived primitivism is the concept Harding (1996:36) promotes for acculturation.

### **2.10.2 Local knowledge systems**

Until relatively recently, the concept knowledge had been influenced by the philosophy and methods of Western science. Today, policy decision makers, socio-economic planners, bureaucrats and educationists recognised the importance of various local knowledge systems in addressing the pressing problems of development and the environment in developing countries. United Nations (1993:29) defines local knowledge as:

The systematic information that remains in the informal sector, usually underwritten and preserved in oral tradition rather than texts in. In contracts formal knowledge is situated in written text legal codes and canonicals knowledge. Local indigenous knowledge is the actual knowledge of given population that reflects the experience based on traditions and includes more recent experience with modern technologies.

In contrast with the common connotation of traditional local indigenous, knowledge is dynamic, not static.



It constantly changes through experimentation and stimuli from the outside. Local people including farmers, landless labourers, women and rural artisans and cattle rearers are the major custodians of this kind of knowledge. These people generate knowledge everyday. They also integrate and adept new technologies into their knowledge system. The outcome of such hands-on activity is valuable in that it optimally utilises available resources, exploits the existing diversity, takes into account the instability of the environment and provides livelihoods, while appreciating the need to sustain the productive resources base.

Local indigenous knowledge must be understood within the framework of the local people. To separate it from its cultural context is to lose sight of the meaning that it has for the survival and integrity of the communities. These local indigenous knowledge systems cannot adequately be conserved by setting it aside in a museum or recording it on paper or electronically. Like biological diversity, local knowledge can only be conserved by keeping it alive and in use Agrawal (1995:43). The importance of local indigenous knowledge system cuts across all spheres of human endeavours, such as agriculture, medicine, religion, education, economics and politics. Developments in these sectors should be rooted in the soil foundation of local indigenous knowledge.

## **2.11 Conclusion**

The foregoing discussion reveals that indigenous religion and healing are embedded in the symbolic patterns of the indigenous people. God is the Supreme Being who is to be served by the people. When they are negligent and fail to serve Him properly, they suffer from consequences. A definition of concepts has been touched on in a bid to elucidate the essential religious and healing aspects. At most these terms are indigenous technical terms which might be strange to readers and as a result need elucidation. Therefore, theories like deconstruction, intertextuality and new historicism have been jointly utilised to interpret both Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry from the next chapter. In the following chapter, the advantages of indigenous knowledge will be discussed by analysing both Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. The links between the poems of the said poets will receive attention.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **The advantages of indigenous knowledge and the link between Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry.**

#### **3. Introduction**

In this chapter a profound investigation of aspects of religion and healing in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry has been done. The following aspects have received attention: aspects of religion and healing, which influenced the poetry of Nxumalo and Buthelezi; the advantages of the indigenous knowledge systems; the link between Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry and; its relevance to the present life and analysis of chosen poems.

#### **3.1 Aspects of Religion and Healing**

Religion is a difficult word to define, and it becomes even more difficult in the context of African traditional life. For Africans, it is an ontological phenomenon; it pertains to the question of existence or being. Within the traditional life, the individual is immersed in a religious participation that starts before birth and continues after his death. Therefore, for the individual, and for the larger community of which s/he is part, to live means to be caught up in a religious drama. This is fundamental concept, for it means that man lives within a particular religious understanding and meaning which influences how they live and create their relationship with others and the world.

Names of people have religious meanings in them; rocks and boulders are not just empty objects, but religious objects. The sound of the drum speaks a religious language, the eclipse of the sun or moon is not simply a silent phenomenon of nature, but one which speaks to the community that observe it, often warning of a catastrophe. Mbiti (1996:15) also asserts that:

For Africans, the whole of existence is a religious phenomenon. Man is a deeply religious being living in a religious universe.

In indigenous religion, wrong doing relates to the contravention of specific codes of community expectations. Individuals and the entire community have to observe these forms of behaviour to preserve order and assure the continuation of life. To contravene or threaten to contravene any of the community codes endangers life and it therefore considered bad. Although the conception of morality in indigenous religion demands that both individuals and communities refrain from wrongdoing, it demands much more than merely the avoidance of rules and taboo transgressions. It requires that people consciously pursue right or righteous behaviour.

In fact it is right behaviour, rather than the avoidance of wrong, that is distinguishing mark between an authentically good person and one who is not truly so. Mbiti (1996:16). In looking at the concept of righteous behaviour, a two opposing poems will receive attention. The one taken from *Umzwangedwa* by Nxumalo (1968) and the other cited from *Amaqabunga eNtombe* by Buthelezi (1987).

The character *Inkosi uMnikwa* (King Mnikwa) by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo displays great skill at handling a narrative. The story, based on the folktale, tells of the chief of the *Ntungwa* clan who had all a chief would ever wish for within his kingdom, a land bountiful with happy subjects and invincible warriors. He lacked only in one thing, an heir to his throne. He prayed and made rituals to appease God and the ancestral spirits and in his dreams made promises as to what he would do should he be given a son. God and the ancestors answered his pleas with the birth of a son, but, through misfortune the king was unable to honour his promises and as a result, the son died. Nxumalo dramatises the chief's berserk state of mind at the loss of the son with such vigour that one can actually visualises it:

*Waququd' imihlathi'  
enyuka, Ezungez' iliba  
egagasa Nokuphanda  
"Mhlawumb'  
Umntanami  
usephapheme  
Nje!*

(He gnawed the molars  
Pacing up and down,  
Moving around the tomb  
Hesitating to dig it up  
Perhaps my child has  
Awoken up!).

(Nxumalo, 1968:67)

In the above stanzas we are introduced to the background of the story. The hero is male known to us through his praises. His weakness lies in his failure to be mindful to rituals. He is described as a carefree and humorous character but his tendency to cause sensation and contravene taboos confuses the natural community law. This is aptly expressed in the metaphor of a calf, which in its gambol leaves confusion behind.

*Umgoqo kawuvimbanga  
kwasal'izinja  
Emasangweni,  
Ithol'elimanakanaka  
Izindlela zalo zidid'  
izimantshi Libandlule  
kwaGangile kwasuk'umusi.*

(The log never  
barricaded there  
remained dog at the  
gates; the spot calf  
whose ways  
confuse the  
magistrates each  
time it goes to  
Gangile there goes  
off a steam).

(Nxumalo, 1968:62).

The imagery in this poem is rich in culture traditional associations. The intensity of the poem chief's sonless predicament enunciated and expressed in imagery which forcefully evokes the typical image of elders trying to solve a difficult problem. It has to be elders, the grey-heads, who in the Zulu hierarchy, symbolise and personify wisdom.

*Zezwakala izimpunga,  
Zicwebezelis' ongiyane  
Zishiyelan' ugwayi zisindwa  
Ziphuku, zibikela gef' elimnyam'  
Elizosibekela,  
Inkosi yoselwa  
Eyayingenakushiya  
induku bandla.*

(They grey-headed men were heard with,  
shiny head rings,  
sharing snuff wearing skin blankets  
foreseeing the dark cloud to overshadow.  
The royal King was not to have  
A male heir to the throne).

(Nxumalo, 1968:62)

The foregoing extract depicts auditory and visual images effectively and is derived from the culture of the indigenous people. According to custom, it is a genuine cause for concern if the King has no male heir to succeed. Even in plain home, it is regarded as a serious matter if the head of the family (the man) does not have an heir to continue his name after death. It is quite imperative to indigenous people to appease God and ancestral spirits. Failing to do so will result in many kinds of afflictions and misfortunes occurring to the mischievous individual to a lesser extent and to the community at large to a greater extent. In short the lateral subject had to be vigilant and communicate regularly with God, through ancestral spirits, to avoid misfortune.

### **3.1.1 *Gabi-gabi* (Look I have a wonderful item) by L.B.Z. Buthelezi.**

There are great poetic nuances in the messages conveyed by the poems *Inkosi uMnikwa* and *Gabi-gabi*. The latter conveys the message of the bountiful rewards and successes and is conveyed on a lateral subject after appeasing God, through the ancestral spirits. The lateral subject is therefore boastful (*Gabi-gabi*) about his successes, but is also quick to praise God and thank his ancestors. His respectfulness, resilience and communications with his ancestors have paid dividends. A sense of touch in the very first stanza is utilised using euphemism.

The lateral subject believes that whenever he receives good things, they come from God. He uses the respectful word ‘*ukwamukela*’ (to receive) instead of ‘*thola*’ (something you pick up from ground). This is a sign of respect, so that more gifts are to be poured now and again into him.

*Ngiyathanda ukwamukela  
Asephenyile amathunzi.*

(I like to receive.  
The shadows have cleared away).

(Buthelezi, 1987:8)

The foregoing extract depicts what will happen should he fail or be reluctant to appease God, through ancestors; - he becomes ruthlessly engulfed by misfortune. On the other hand, when he carries rituals and prays to God, he receives an abundance of material things and fortunes. “*Asephenyile*” (Cleared) simply means when misfortunes have gone. Whereas “*amathunzi*” depicts misfortunes? These shadows are cleansed and cleared by means of appropriate rituals. A shadow is something impermanent, something that comes around when certain contraventions have been committed. This is evidenced in the third stanza, when the lateral subject makes mention of the things he has done to praise and appease God and the ancestral spirits. He is pragmatic and hands-on in this ritual:

*Ma ngishoshela emsamo  
Nalesicathulwana,  
Ngiyabazi ubunzulu benu.  
Ningangijuba-ke  
Ngokuthanda kwenu,  
Ukuba ngiyethe  
Nginiphuthume  
Ngokwangaphakathi.*

(When I move cringing to  
far flank of the hut,  
Carrying this small clay pot  
I know your deep-seated  
wisdom. You can give me  
any instruction to carry out

do skin it immediately and  
offer the insides).

(Buthelezi, 1987:9)

The above citation; explains how the indigenous person undertakes the ritual appeasement. “*Ma ngishoshela*” (when I move cringing) indicates, through movement, a sign of respect. It is believed in Zulu custom that the ancestral spirits do not dwell in the middle of the hut, but at the far-flank, the *emsamo*. In short the lateral subject is respectful. He also knows that his ancestors like home-brewed beer. This beer is brought to the spirits through a small clay pot that exclusively serves the owners of the household. Through this, a high level of homage is paid to the ancestors. The lateral subject is also ready to skin the beast, after talking to them. This beast belongs to the ancestors; that is the reason, which is why he says “*ningangijuba*” (you can instruct me).

The ancestors are fond of special internal organs, like the “*ingobo*” (stomach of a beast) and “*amathumbu*” (intestines). After skinning the beast, he grills and serves the spirits with the said meat. The steam and smell of the grill also serves to entice and invite all the ancestral spirits to help themselves to the feast. In the last stanza, the lateral subject tells us that this is his way of appeasing God:

*Ilolu nyawo engiluhambayo*  
*Ngelinye lamasu angihlaba*  
*umxhwele.*

(That is the way I am doing things  
It is one of my strategies that  
appease them).

(Buthelezi, 1987:11)

The above excerpt indicates that the indigenous person follows this pattern and symbol of praising God, through the ancestors. His practice does not end in vain; instead he receives handsome returns. Instead of deviating from the indigenous worship; it is one of these strategies of praying and doing rituals for the good of his family to a larger extent.

The lateral subject ends his conversation with the phrase, “*Wena Gabi-gabi*” (To you I say, look at what I have). These poems serve as a warning to indigenous people who appear to deviate from indigenous customs, and as a result –the poems suggest- nothing will go well with them. The poems then conscientise them to go back to their indigenous practices and appease the ancestral spirits. Since, in various ways, God provides for the things He has made, so that their existence can be maintained and continued. He provides life, fertility, rain, health and other necessities needed to sustaining creation. His providence functions entirely independently of man, though man may sometimes solicit God’s help. Magesa (1997:59) asserts that:

It is widely believed that God shows His providence through fertility and heal humans, cattle and fields, as well as through the plentifulness of children, cattle, food and other goods.

One may safely assume that the lateral subject in the above poem prayed for the foregoing items, mentioned in the excerpt. For instance, the Zulus teach their children that the source of being is God. It is God who gives men life and prosperity.

### **3.2 Mediation**

#### **3.2.1 *Leso Sihlahla* (That tree yonder there) by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo**

The lateral subject personifies the tree used as the central object in the poem. He describes the tree in terms of what it means to him. This tree is abstracted from the world of tangible reality. Although its being is strange and mysterious, the qualities of the tree from the poem are identified in personalities like priests, soldiers, watchmen, and angels.

In the poem, the tree has been at the cemetery for a long time ago. It shows its strength by defying the power of destruction. Its mysterious nature raises its image to that of a mediator, an angel. It communicates between God and men, as far as Christian belief is concerned:



*Nele ngelosi lisakuphela.  
Ungaval' amehlo  
nezindlebe, nxashana  
Abasemagcekeni akho,  
Benxusa ubusuku nemini,  
Izandla zakho ziphakeme.*

(Even angel's name suits you.  
Do not close your ears.  
When those on your yard  
Supplicate night and day).

(Nxumalo, 1965:2)

Apart from the angelic image, there are other qualities that the tree possesses that are supernatural in nature. For example, it is always green, despite its age:

*Kazi sihlahla wabekwa ntoni lapha?  
Kaz' ulapha kusukela nini?  
Kungan' khon amagatsha  
Akho eluhlaza' ebusika nehlobo?*

(I wonder you tree who puts you there?  
I wonder you have been here since when?  
How come your branches are green winter  
And summer)?

(Nxumalo, 1965:2)

The ideas behind the imagery in the above excerpt are core to the indigenous people's culture. Since, the indigenous people believe in life hereafter, they also epitomise the existence of *amathongo* (ancestors) in the world beyond. The indigenous people also believe in the communication that is maintained between the two worlds.

Consequently, this tree may be symbolic of mediation between the two worlds. The images of storm and lightening further illustrate the supernatural power of the tree:

*... Nguwe ophandle livunguza.  
Zisiphukha izhlahla!  
Wena qha!*

(It's you who is outside in stormy days.  
While other trees uprooted as a results!  
But not you)!

(Nxumalo, 1965:1)

As cited above, this tree withstands any type of weather and symbolises the idea that indigenous people's culture can withstand the influences of foreign beliefs, no matter how influential they may be. The lateral subject also acknowledges mortality, as a human being, but, illustrates the immortal nature of the tree by stating that:

*Ngivumele ngib' umngane ...  
Uz'ungikhumbule lapho  
Sesisobabili phakathi  
kwamabili  
Ngingesenakufinyelela la  
Ngikhona.*

(Allow me to be a friend...  
Do remember me when we  
are together at dead of  
night, when I will no  
Longer be able to come  
where I am).

(Nxumalo, 1965: 3)

In the above excerpt, the tree is associated with the supernatural, an old *ithongo* (ancestor). It is always green, which implies that it does not get exhausted in carrying out its duties. The duty of conveying message to and from God. This tree is living an eternal life. This eternal life that ultimately represents continuity after death. As a result there is no communication breakdown, between the dead and the living.

At most this tree accommodates every supplication from the living to God and vice versa. The extension of time *phakathi kwamabili* (in the midnight) symbolises the hour of need. When the voice in the poem is in a predicament. The moment when h/she needs to communicate with the dead, the living and God. Associative images have been utilised to evoke the sense of the poem.

For instance, the use of green and is significant as green is always associated with life and good health in plants. It is the perpetual colour of this tree, which symbolises that God never changes:

*...amagatsha akho aluhlaz' aluhlaza  
ubusika nehlobo!*

(Your branches are green winter  
and summer)!

(Buthelezi, 1987:9)

Whereas, reverence of this tree is depicted through the praise of the speaker:

*Unesithunz' esikhulu! Waz'  
okufihliwe kithi!*

(You are dignified  
You know what is hidden  
from us)!

(Nxumalo, 1965:2)

*Isithunzi* (the shadow), in indigenous culture, is associated with a man of dignity, and the moral weight and power to know that which is hidden from humans. This suggests that the tree has an interest in human affairs - yet it transcends human life, having a mysterious life of its own. It stands to reason that this tree can then be in the position to act as a mediator between God and human beings:

*Ungaval' amehlo nezindlebe  
Nxashan' benxusa '  
Ukub' ubacelele intethelelo.*

(Do not close your eyes and ears  
when they entreat you to beg, for  
their forgiveness).

(Nxumalo, 1965: 2)

This foregoing excerpt also shows the role played by this tree as a mediator between the living and the dead.

The dead are nearer to God and as a result they transmit all supplications made to them, to the Almighty. The sense of touch is also evoked by the images of fingers of the living, beckoning to the roots of the tree. There is a barrier of the earth between the fingers and the roots. The dead are under the ground. But, mysteriously, the tree reaches them through its roots:

*Ungenqabi mfowethu  
Nxashana iminwe  
yabeth' iqhweba  
izimpande zakh'ifuna  
ukalayeza kithi Noma  
ukuzwa ngeyeth'imiyalezo.*

(You must not refuse brother when fingers of our dead beckons to your roots willing to send messages to us or listen about our own messages).

(Nxumalo, 1965:3)

We also note in the above citation, that the tree in the graveyard comes to symbolise the mediator between the human world and the underworld of the ancestors. In this regard, this poem takes on an indigenous religious accent:

*Ungangihlamuki lapho  
Naluthi lokuloba  
Ngingasenalo  
Naphapha lingasekho,  
Uze nami:  
Ungithumel' izindlebe  
Zakho,  
Zemukel' engikushoyo,  
Zichazele abasele  
engifis' ukukusho,  
Ungibonele  
Kwabathandwayo kimi,  
Ungisize sibacelel' Inhlalenhle.*

(Do not turn your back on me when even a pen to write I no longer have, and a paper is no longer there, do also send me your ears to receive what I say to explain to the ones left behind what I wish to say, convey greetings to my loved ones. Help me to ask for well being on their behalf).

(Nxumalo, 1965:4)

The foregoing citation clarifies and puts emphasis on the fact that this tree is immortal while still on the other hand symbolising a mortal being. The poem's speaker uses personification and apostrophe by humbly asking the tree, while alive, to be his messenger in the life hereafter. In short, the tree becomes a private symbol developed by the lateral subject to suggest continuity of life and eternal life after death and hope. All in all, this tree is identified as a messenger who carries messages from man to the living dead and from there to God and vice versa.

From a Christian point of view, tree means a so called Christian who is unrepentant. Who is rigid and does not change from inequity, even though s/he listens to a plethora of sermons. There is a slight dichotomy between Nxumalo and Buthelezi's treatment of communication between God and Man. Nxumalo, as it is shown in the above poems, uses tangible objects as mediators between God and Man, whereas on the other hand, Buthelezi uses lateral-subject as communicators between man, the living dead and God.

### **3.2.2 *Nezinyandezulu* (And the old ancestral spirits) by L.B.Z Buthelezi**

The lateral-subject uses apostrophe believing that the ancestral spirits listen and heed to his pleas and supplications. Prayers and supplications are not often directed to the older ancestral spirits, but are conveyed to them through the spirits of recently deceased as they know better the plight suffered by the living. The *Nezinyandezulu* (old ancestral spirits) come to the fore occasionally when other spirits are unable to carry out their duties. These spirits bring along, more often than not, a plethora of fortunes:

*Nezinyandezulu ziyangizwa,  
nokungazi ziyangazi...*

(The old-ancestral spirits.  
Listen to me!  
They even know me well).

(Buthelezi, 1995:30)

When misfortune repeatedly strikes a homestead, the head of the family will consult with old ancestral spirits. The head of the family is the vehicle of communication with the spirits. As the lateral-subject maintains, in the foregoing citation, that the old ancestral spirits heed to his cries and even know him. They know him, simply because they once resided on this dusty earth. These spirits even know how to communicate with God, since they are nearer to Him. They have to plea for the living to God. Since this earth is full of atrocities and misfortunes:

*Namakhungela angihlaba  
Amabatha ngiwabangula  
ngizwe ukududuzeka.*

(The thorns that prick me.  
The inner side way of my feet  
Are pulled out  
Then feel comforted).

(Buthelezi, 1995:30)

The above citation implies that before he is able to talk to the old ancestral spirits, he has to go for cleansing first. The *Namakhungela* (thorns) are bad habits; he has to do away with, before communicating with the spirits, since, the spirits are in favour of a person with an impeccable behaviour. *Amabatha* (inner side ways of feet) in this context, means somebody with bad behaviour. The pulling of the thorn indicates that he mends his mischievous behaviour and feels comfortable thereafter (*ukududuzeka* – to feel comfortable). The lateral subject in this poem communicates on behalf of his family and the community at large. It is likely that the community suffers from a severe drought. A *Nomkhubulwana* (Princess of Rain) ritual is carried out to ask for God for rain:

*...uNomkhubulwana okhona  
ngenxa yokudliwa imvelo.*

(...Princess of Rain who is here  
because nature depends on her).

(Buthelezi, 1995:31)

One may safely assume that the above citation touches on the fact that the land was afflicted with drought. As a result, the lateral-subject reverts to *Nomkhubulwana* custom. Berglund (1976:65) asserts that:

Maidens go up the mountains to ask for rain.  
They put on the traditional outfit for male folk.

The foregoing citation emphasises the fact that the indigenous Zulu people depend on *Nomkhubulwana* during drought and famine. They believe that she is an *Inkosazana* (Queen) who comes down from heaven and lives in the sky with her father. She comes in the mists and is seen by children and maidens whilst a man must not see her. The indigenous Zulu people claim that the cause of the recent and frequent droughts is the fact that the indigenous Zulu people no longer honour *Nomkhubulwana* in the same way they had before. In *Nezinyandezulu* (And the old-ancestral-spirits), the lateral-subject goes on pleading to the old-ancestral-spirits, as the members not of his family only, but of the community at large, who dies and afflicted by diseases:

*Zihambile izinsizwa ezinkulu,  
zihambile izintombi ezinkulu, kanti  
unembeza usebenzani  
Kuwe kufa?*

(Great young men are gone,  
Great maidens have gone,  
What does conscience do to you  
death.

(Buthelezi, 1995:32)

The lateral-subject in the above citation reprimands both ancestors and death. This tirade aims to elucidate and boldly to tell them how ineffective they are in combating unnecessary

deaths. Young and valuable people have passed away; since the ancestors give death an upper hand. Despite his anger, the lateral subject is respectful and does not use razor-sharp words when communicating with ancestors. The verb *zihambile* (gone); rather than *zifile* (died) is a symbol of respect. On the other hand, when referring to death, a locative *kuwe* (to you) is a symbol of vilification. In short, he looks down upon death, since it is mauling the nation. It is evident in the eighth stanza that the lateral subject even went to the extent of consulting with traditional doctors since he was menaced by plight plagued members of his family and the community at large:

*Ngoba ngafuna ukwazi izimfihlo,  
Nezinkanga zaqaqwa...*

(Because I wish to know secrets,  
The problems were solved...).

(Buthelezi, 1995:32)

The above citation talks about the consultation of traditional doctors of the lateral subjects since these doctors have the ability to detect secrets unknown to the ordinary people. The use of *Nezinkinga zaqaqwa* (problems were solved), indicates that his family members or the members of the community contravened certain taboo and thereby created problems for themselves.

As a result of the wrath of the ancestors, they were both afflicted by various misfortunes and deadly diseases. It is typical of indigenous people to consult with diviners in a bid about the causes of afflictions. Krige (1965:299) asserts that:

The diviner is the man in greatest demand in Zulu society. When disease breaks out, when cattle are lost, when omens appear, or a wizard is suspected of having caused things to go wrong, the man who is consulted is a diviner.

It is obvious in the foregoing citation that the diviner will discover the cause of atrocities and then prescribes the steps that need to be taken to set things right again. But, it is always the head of the village who decides whether or not a diviner's assistance is necessary.



He will send messengers to the doctor that he wishes to employ and if the head of the village feels either the doctor or messenger are not an important man; he may even go in person.

His endeavours were successful. Since, the lateral-subject is boastful:

*Akukho silima sindlebende kwabo  
Ha! Nezinyandezulu ziyangizwa.*

(No one is discarded at his home  
Alas! Even old-ancestral spirits  
listen to me).

(Buthelezi, 1995: 32)

It goes without saying that the elders in the community have mandated him? To consult with diviners. Ultimately, though he considers himself to be insignificant *isilima sindlebende kwabo* (appears to be a fool, rather), the ancestors have positively answered his prayers. These above poems indicated that both Nxumalo and Buthelezi symbolise the relevance of indigenous customs, practiced by the indigenous people, in the large extent. The indigenous people were bestowed, through God's involvement in the affairs of mankind, with symbols and patterns to use and pursue their civilisation and culture. The people experience this involvement as his continuation to create, sustain, provide, pastor, nurse, heal and save. Most of these functions are on the physical and concrete level of being, and with the special reference to the life of man.

### **3.3 Healing aspects**

In English the word *medicine* indicates substances that are used to restore health. The Zulu term *umuthi* (medicine) is often used as a synonym for medicine but has wider connotation. *Umuthi*, (medicine) plural *imithi* (medicines) literally means tree or shrub. When used for medicine it applies to noxious as well as curative substances. There is *umuthi wokwelapha* (medicine for healing), and *umuthi wokubulala* (medicine for killing). While some *imithi* (medicines) are always used for healing and others for causing harm, still others can either heal or harm, depending on the motive for which they are used.

In regarding nature as a factor in the causation of illness, indigenous Zulus sees natural forces as operating at three levels. The first is concerned with the body itself as a natural biological entity that presents somatic symptoms to indicate illness. The second is much more concerned with the role of ecological factors on health. The last, but not the least, concerns sorcery. In addition to earlier descriptions of healing, in Zulu religions healing may also occur when the sick are comforted or whilst those who suffer from emotional disturbances receive therapy. In this way they become healing of the spirit. Some of the foregoing healing aspects are envisaged in the following poems.

### **3.3.1 *Lobu bungani ngiyabuthanda* (I like this friendship) by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo**

At most healing of the spirit is depicted in this poem. The lateral - subject likes this friendship, their friendship, simply because it keeps him going. It strengthens his mind and spirit. When confronted with various atrocities and predicaments, this friendship is there for therapy. Thus, he gains confidence, once again. Dominant features in this poem are the grass image, grass ropes, knots and coils. These tangible images are utilised to intensify the vigorousness and zeal of friendship. Even to show-off how they intact with their friendship is:

*Lesi sibopho sengcobosi esibophe,  
ubungani bethu ngiyasithanda,  
noma nina ningazi nankalo  
Lapho le ngcobosi eselukwe  
Ngayo yayimile khona...*

(This rope of rush has fastened,  
Our friendship I like it,  
Even though you do not know.  
The valley where the rush  
Out of which the rope  
Be plaited grew from...)

(Nxumalo, 1965:25)

The foregoing excerpt displays the images where the poet expresses the idea of steadfast friendship. The idea of plaiting the grass into ropes and tying them together is expressive of a desired tight emotional security in friendship.

On the contrary, developing from the grass metaphor is the imagery of rot and rust. The poet is over the moon with his present experience because the kind of grass out of which the rope that binds him together with his friend is made does not rust:

*Kasigqwali, kasiguquki, kasiguquki,  
kasigqashuki.*

(It does not rust, it does not tan, it  
does not snap).

(Nxumalo, 1965:26)

The evergreen colour of this grass, cited above, symbolises everlasting love not of mortal beings only but, love of God, which ultimately binds together mankind. This green colour also signifies the power of herbs in healing. At most, wounds are treated with green herbs to heal immediately. On the other hand, the falsity of friendship is an ugly thing. It is expressed by images of rot and putrefaction.

*Kunjalo bayaxabana nokuxabana  
Ngoba behlanganiswe okuthize okuphelayo,  
Okuvela qede kuvundis' isidleke somhawu  
Ezinhliziyweni...*

(Indeed they quarrel  
Because that which unifies them perishes,  
And nourishes the nest of jealousy  
In their hearts...).

(Nxumalo, 1965: 26)

The above excerpts touch on the heart of man. Wherein, there is a place for many emotions. One of these is compassion. In the heart, the place occupied by compassion is cited in the excerpt as *isidleke*, (a nest). The lateral-subject in this poem utilises an image with private significance. The birds nest reminds him of that compartment for compassion in the heart. The festered friendship is presented by the rotting of this nest. The metaphor, in its originality is forceful and vigorous.

On the contrary, a true friend is always there to heal a broken heart. Since, at most the heart lingers for unreachable expectations these dreams fail to materialise, the very same heart becomes broken, and to a greater extent compassion creeps in. The true friend then intervenes in this hour of need to heal that broken heart. That is how the indigenous people are well known for the practice of *ubuntu* (humanity). On the contrary however, a false friend finds joy and pleasure in the misery of his so-called friend. Festering friendships are presented in the metaphor of a dying grass, frost-bitten grass in winter and thorns. This appeal to the tactile senses is obvious:

*Ngithand'ingcobosi ngoba  
ngeyamaxhaphozi,  
Kungakho mhlawumbe nalesi  
sibopho singomi,  
Kungakho ubungani bethu  
bungashazwa busika  
Owam' umngani kabaleki nxa  
sengifulelwa Ngameva enqene  
ukuwubangula, esabe  
Ukuhlatsywa...*

(I like rush because it is of the marshes, It is why perhaps this bond never dries up it is why our friendship is never frost-bitten in winter. My friend does not flee when I am covered with thorns, to shun removing them, frightened of being pricked...).

(Nxumalo, 1965:61)

The foregoing extract depicts the *ingcobosi* (rush) as grass. It is always fresh and green, because it grows in the marches. The *muthi* substance of *ingcobosi* is highly recommended. That is one of the reasons why their friend is always healed and remains healthy, day in and day out. In short, the foregoing excerpt has dual insight when it states *Nxa ngifulelwa ngameva* (when I am covered with thorns). It touches on the healing of soul and that of flesh.

A true friend is a friend in need: if the lateral-subject is upset or under pressure, his friend will arrive to provide support and guidance. There is a multiplicity of meaning in the idiom *Nxa ngifulelwa ngameva* (when I am covered with thorns). It may mean a verbal attack or when the lateral-subject is being cursed for something he does not know or did not do. But, the blame is shifted to him from all sides and when he is done and down, his friend is there to lift up his spirits and counsel him. We know that when one is pricked by thorns; it is very painful. This may symbolise razor sharp words directed to the lateral-subject. These words are meant to hurt even though his friend remains by his side to help overcome all the predicaments.

Even if he is ailing his friend is always there for healing purposes. He offers him healing concoctions and soothing words, until he recovers. Indigenous herbs are strong enough to cure the lateral-subject, if offered by a true friend, as they heal both his spirit and flesh. For the presence of the friend gives hope. A hope that alleviates the pain of flesh and spirit. *Angihlenge* (nurses me) in the times of difficulties. If one is nursed, s/he becomes physically, mentally and spiritually strengthened. Colours are aptly clarified in Ngubane (1977: 188):

The ideophone *cwe* which describes green/blue (*luhlaza*) emphasises the clearness and purity of the colour and in this form green/blue (*luhlaza*) is identified with white in the symbolic language.

The above citation means, in symbolic language, water is green/blue (*amanzi aluhlaza*), and water is always used in the white contextual sense. Some medical treatments may not be performed if the sky is overcast, because of association with what the daylight reveals. Daylight reveals the natural surroundings, which are mainly green/blue.

### **3.4 Causation of ill-health by wizards**

It is well known that a doctor (in both indigenous cultures and Western medicine) cures sickness; he averts evil omens and “smells out” evil-doers. On the contrary the *umthakathi* (wizard) is the enemy of society.

He is the man or woman who uses powers for anti-social ends. The *umthakathi* (wizard) uses his power for evil and against the welfare of society. He injures people's health, destroys life, prevents rain, occasions lightening, prevents cows from producing milk, and is the cause of all manner of misfortune.

### 3.4.1 *Akamxolelanga* (He did not forgive him) by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo

In *Akamxolelanga* (He did not forgive him) a kinaesthetic imagery has been utilised. The story-teller gives an exposition of a wizard who bewitched people in the community. The bewitched people of the society, as in indigenous practice, consulted with diviners and doctors to smell-out the wizard but people kept dying. What is remarkable in this poem is that the evil doer is not mentioned by his surname, but only his evil deeds are envisaged. He is called *umthakathi* (wizard):

*Wabakhunkula ngapha nangapha  
kwakhal' ubumayemaye.  
Wasuluz' ezibongel' umthakathi  
Kwakhendlw'imithi yehluleka  
kwasala mama mbeleko kwasala  
khehla dengwane kwasala salukazi  
dengwane.*

(He bewitched them everywhere  
people cried to the highest heavens.  
Boastfully the wizard waddles  
praising himself. They tried to get  
medicine but did not work. Mothers  
were left behind with baby seaters,  
old men were left alone, and old  
women were left alone).

(Nxumalo, 1989:45)

The foregoing citation reveals the power of the medicine of the *umthakathi* (wizard). He is referred to as *wabakhunkula* (he bewitched them with first grade medicine). As a result his witch was incurable the *umkhunkuli* (great wizard) uses more powerful medicines than those used by ordinary wizards. People were anxious absurd and resorted to consult with diviner to cure illness, as an indigenous people's custom.

The diviners smelled the wizard out (*zamkhomba*). This shows us that the divine practices are not a fad or a nostrum as some people may think. The only setback with his evil deeds is that he inflicted incurable ailments on his victims. The foregoing excerpt concurs with Krige (1965:321).

The *umthakathi* works in secret and is able to carry out his evil practices. By virtue of the medicines he uses.

It is obvious in the above citation that the wizard used deadly medicines made up of parts of the victims, such as finger-nails, hair or excreta. For this reason, the indigenous people are very careful that no one is near when they go to relieve themselves. If an enemy is able to procure someone's excreta he is able to do this with certain medicines and deposits the mixture in a hole in the hearth, where fire is made. When a fire is made, the man whose excreta are so buried will feel a burning sensation and will cry out with pain. The victim will die soon if a doctor does not find out what the problem is and treat him against it. The same may be done with urine: the *abathakathi* (wizards) watch to see where their enemies urinate and then cut through the wet earth with a medicated knife. The person, whose urine has been treated in this way, will not be able to urinate again and finally the bladder will burst open and fill the stomach with urine until he dies.

The *umthakathi* (wizard) may also take a thread from the back of a mamba, its gall and its fat, and mix these with certain *amakhubalo* (medicine root). He lays this medicine across the path, with two sticks to hold the thread in place, and calls out the name of the person he wishes to bewitch. When this person comes along the road and touches the thread it will immediately turn into a real mamba and bite him, killing him immediately. In this case, unless the name is called, nothing happens. All the medicines that are used to injure people on pathways are known by the name *umbhulelo*. A very powerful *umbhulelo* consists of the placenta of a woman and a horse, mixed with human fats, *umdlebe* (a poisonous bush), *umopho* (a certain sea-animal), *ifelakhona* (a certain concoction), and other ingredients. In the foregoing stanza of the poem people are dying in large numbers and it may happen that the killings were caused by medicines that were sprinkled in their food.

Tigers' whiskers thrown into a person's food will, when swallowed, cause a gradual death. Another way of harming people is for the wizard to place the whiskers on his finger and then he would only need to point it at a person to cause them to die on the spot. It is possible to harm people by spurning medicine (*ncinda or khafula*) which is done by chewing the medicine before spurning it out and calling his enemy's name. The wizard would then give him imaginary stabs with an assegai smeared with the mixture. This would cause the death of the person whose name has been called. It is evident in the second stanza, that death does not discriminate. Death strikes at everybody and at any time:

*Yeka kufa nsongansonga  
Esongozel' umfundisi  
nomthakathi, umthakathi  
wansond'usezinhlungwini  
Isiphongo simfoma sibanda.*

(Oh death coming vigorously.  
That wraps up a pastor and a wizard.  
The nasty wizard is in pain his  
forehead is sweating while ice-cold).

(Nxumalo, 1989:45)

In the foregoing excerpt, death has attacked once again. *Umfundisi* (a pastor) who is believed to be impeccable in Christian doctrine also suffers from death. The wizard, who is so boastful, also lies in pains and is on his death bed. The poem uses an archaic violent term *nsongansonga* (to wrap up violently) to put emphasis on the vigorous and indiscriminate power of death. It is amazing that the wizard, the cause of the death is suffering from high fever. The poem has no empathy or sympathy with the wizard. Instead, it uses understatement *wansondo* (the damn bastard) to vilify the stature of the wizard. The third stanza utilises auditory sense when the wizard pleaded for assistance:

*...Ngisizeni nongibizel' uGxabashe...  
Msheshiseni ngafa zinhlungu  
Makangixolele uGxabashe weNkosi!*



(Help me by calling Gxabhashe,  
He has to come promptly,  
I'm suffering from pains Gxabhashe  
the man of God has to pardon me)!

(Nxumalo, 1989:45)

One may safely assume that the wizard was afraid of the pains and of death. This third stanza is suspenseful. One is willing to know why the wizard cries for *Gxabhashe*. *Makangixolele* (he has to pardon me), *Gxabhashe weNkosi* (*Gxabhashe* the man of God). When he calls *Gxabhashe*, the man of God, simply means *Gxabhashe* was faultless. He believes in indigenous doctrine called *ubuntu* (humaneness) will prevail and he is forgiven. *Gxabhashe* did not go about harming people. It is explained in the fourth stanza, that *Gxabhashe* was unaware that someone had wronged him:

*Nize nimtshel' ogulayo*  
*Makasho uxolisa wenzani...*  
*Indodana ngabe eyayelusile*  
*yagula usuku yashona.*

(Go and tell the patient  
He has to tell what wrong  
Has he done...  
My son was looking  
After my livestock.  
He became sick for a day  
And died instantly).

(Nxumalo, 1989:45)

The indigenous people used to convey messages by word of mouth and this method delayed the intensity of communication. In this regard *Gxabhashe's* response is sluggish due to the delay in communication. In this stanza *Gxabhashe* is nostalgic as he thinks about his son. He was thinking of his late son, who happened to be of help to him. In the fourth stanza the poem tells us that *Gxabhashe* was a good man.

*Amgobis' okwesikhathi*  
*uGxabhashe*  
*Wathath' induku*  
*wahamba*

*Wabon 'indlela*  
*Yomntanakhe.*  
*Ayeya ngayo esikoleni.*

Gxabhashe yielded to the plea  
After some time he took his stick  
And off he went.  
He saw a lane  
Where his son  
traversed to school).

(Nxumalo, 1989:45)

The foregoing citation tells that *Gxabhashe* yielded to the messenger's cries but on the way to visit the patient he saw the lane where his son had died whilst going to school. One may concur with Krige (1965:322) when he asserts that:

*An umthakathi* may kill you [by] using your footprint.

One may also agree with the abovementioned citation because the wizard, as in the case of *Gxabhashe*. May collect soil from your footprint in a snail shell and mix it with medicine. Then the foot will swell up and the swelling will extend to the rest of the body, causing severe pain. Another method is that the wizard creates an emetic which created from the infusion of leaves of a small bush mixed with little earth from the footprint of a person he wishes to kill. He vomits into a snake hole, calling at the name of the person the victim will very quickly feel the effects. The two last stanzas show us the hardened heart of the wizard. He fails to tell the truth that he bewitched *Gxabhashe's* son, but, what is remarkable is that *Gxabhashe* pardoned him.

*Ngiyaku... ngiyakuxo... usezwa?*

(I... pardon... do you hear)?

(Nxumalo, 1989:46)

It assumed that the wizard died before hearing the word, *ngiyakuxolela* (I pardon you). Maybe his spirit will hear the words. In the first stanza mention is made of the bereaved families who had consulted with the diviner healer.

Therefore it might happen that *Gxabhashe* was one of them. Since, the direct cause of an illness was very often the black arts and machinations of a wizard it was essential that the indigenous doctor be able to combat these through counter-magic. Therefore, that medicine and magic go hand-in-hand in the treatment of disease and is seen in almost every kind of medical treatment. Even when the ancestors are causing illness there are ways to bar such disease. The use of sympathetic magic in the curing of sickness is extensive. In the case of *Gxabhashe*, the misfortunes were the torments of the wizard, until the wizard met his death.

### **3.4.2 *Ngangena-ke eZulwini* (Then I entered into heaven) by L.B.Z. Buthelezi**

It is noticeable in the poem *Ngangena-ke eZulwini* (Then I entered into heaven) that the lateral subject was subjected to many atrocities that were particularly charged with sorcery. In this poem, the lateral-subject was not smelled out by the diviner as had happened in Nxumalo's poem, *Akamxolelanga* (He did not forgive him):

*Icala lelo engabe ngiwumsolwa  
Kulo ngisolwa ababenginuka.*

(The case which I was allegedly changed  
As being falsely accused  
By those who differ with me).

(Buthelezi, 2000:54)

In indigenous peoples belief, as cited above, it is obvious they do not commit a sin but a case. That is why the lateral-subject speaks of *icala* (a case) not *isono* (a sin). It is also typical of the indigenous people to suspect a person of practicing sorcery or witchcraft, without ever consulting a diviner. The person suspected is referred to as *unukiwe* (smell out). It might happen that the allegation is truthful or is just a rumour and speculation:

*Lahlehla lahlehla laze lahoxa  
Ngoba inkosi inhle inomusa.*

(It was remanded until withdrawn  
Because the king is merciful).

(Buthelezi, 2000:54)

The foregoing citation talks of the earthly king. That is why the initial consonant is in a small letter. The king was briefed that the lateral-subject was a witch. He was not convinced in the hearing of these allegations. As a result, the hearing was remanded (*lahlehla*) and eventually *lahoxa* (the case was withdrawn). In this move, one may say that the king did not call upon a diviner to verify whether the lateral-subject was indeed a wizard (*umthakathi*). The lateral subject speaks as if he is no more and reminds us that it is also one of the beliefs of the indigenous people, that there is life after death. What is remarkable in this stanza is that the accusers falsified his accusation:

*Abangibheca ngobubende inyama ngingayidlile.*

(Those who alleged I committed evil did, but did not).

(Buthelezi, 2000:54)

Even in the life hereafter, his ancestral spirits, accepted him with open arms because he had not bewitched anybody. The foregoing citation is of the opinion that the speaker did not bring along bad baggage to his ancestors. He was a pure man:

*Sengamxolela nalowo owayengufakazi  
Oqanda ikhanda owayefunga egomela ethi  
Wangelamela sukulumbe kwesikabhadakazi,  
ngigqoke isudi lesele.*

(I have forgiven even  
He has given false evidence  
Swearing he saw me.  
One day in the middle  
Of the night bewitching  
Being in the nude).

(Buthelezi, 2000:54)

The above-mentioned citation puts emphasis on forgiveness, *sengamxolela* (I forgave him). This forgiveness goes hand in glove with healing of the soul and spirit. Forgiveness heals the nation, and promotes harmony, though the lateral subject was accused of the serious allegation of practicing witchcraft, he does not bear grudges. If somebody is said to be *uyahambahamba* (it means he is bewitching other people).

The witch is presumed in Zulu, that he goes about at night naked *kwesikabhadakazi ngigqoke isudu lesele* (in the middle of the night) when practices witchcraft. The lateral-subject, while alive, healed the king whilst they were roasting stolen cobs, *ukuqwagela* (stealing of cobs). In this context, this type of stealing is not sinful in Zulu. But, one of the games practiced by boys, while looking after cattle. On the contrary, the lateral-subject considers it sinful to get cobs in this manner:

*Eyanginxusela intethelelo.*

(He asked forgiveness on my behalf).

(Buthelezi, 2000:54)

The above citation promotes one of the indigenous customs, named *ukushweleza* (pleading for forgiveness). Both the king and the lateral-subjects are now part of the living dead. As it is indigenous practice, the king is eligible and it is his prerogative to confess to ancestors on behalf of his subject in this context. The lateral-subject finds it embarrassing to talk directly to his ancestors, instead is asking the king to perform his duties.

### **3.4.3 Zophela ngaphakathi (A tacit cry) by L.B.Z. Buthelezi**

In *Zophela Ngaphakathi* (A tacit cry) the poet tells of an untimely death and the assassination of the Nigerian poet, Ken Saro Wiwa who was killed for his political convictions:

*Nimbophe amanxeba,  
Kakhulu leli elamjuqa  
Umphefumulo  
Nimshashazele  
Ngale nyongo,  
Nxese nawe Ken Saro Wiwa  
Inxeba le ndoda alihlekwa  
Kanti neliba le ndoda  
Lisendleleni.  
Nxa sizolahla isagila nje  
Isagila nje nize  
Nisivule amehlo.*

(Dress his wounds especially  
the one that caused death.  
Just plea for forgiveness,  
with this bile  
pardon to you Ken Saro Wiwa  
no one should laugh  
at you the man's grave lies  
along the lane  
When we pay condolences).

(Buthelezi, 2000:57)

The foregoing citation tells of a healing custom when somebody is stabbed or has died of a stab wound. When you *Nimbophe amanxeba* (dress up his wounds), certain herbs are utilised by indigenous healers to heal stab wounds. If wounds happen to be wide open, *umuzi* (a thread) is used to stitch them up. *Nimshashazele ngenyongo* (pardon, on his behalf by a bile of a scapegoat) to stop this not to happen once again amongst the members of the family. *Ukushashazela* (is to ask for forgiveness by slaughtering a goat by the members of the family). This custom is relevant and also practiced contemporary. *Inxeba lendoda alihlekwa* (no one should make such a victim a laughing stock).

It is taboo on the part of the indigenous people to laugh at a person afflicted by misfortune. The one who happens to laugh at him is labelled as a witch. It is also one of the indigenous customs to mourn together with a bereaved family (*sizolahla izagila*). This is one of the ways in which the community takes part in healing of broken hearts.

### **3.5 The contemporary relevance of indigenous religion and healing**

It is detected in the foregoing poems by both Nxumalo and Buthelezi that the indigenous symbols and patterns are still relevant to the indigenous people. The indigenous people believe in God, as a Supreme Being. He is closely associated with the sky and in lesser extent with deities of various kinds. Concerning, ancestor recognition; it is based upon the belief that man strives after death and that the ancestral spirits of man, survives after death. The ancestral spirits have the power to protect and help their descendants as well as to punish them.

It is believed, even today, that continued good fortune is attributed to their benevolence, while calamity may result from neglecting them. In a short time, religion gives impetus to traditional healing. To be healed, one has to disclose something previously kept to oneself. A declaration and an acknowledgement of an evil deed like; envy, suspension jealousy grudges and brooding anger are beyond doubt. That confession in indigenous people, as are reflected in the foregoing poems play a far greater role in the contemporary lifestyle of the indigenous people.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The belief in survival after death is common to all foregoing poems. It is not necessarily accompanied by ancestors worship or the worship of God. Support is also given to the fact that not all dead people become spirits of equal importance. Those who have been insignificant in this world are opting to also be insignificant in the next. The ancestors do not often reveal themselves to their descendants. They can on occasion appear to warn them of danger or to disclose new medicines to them. More usually their visits are to demand a sacrifice, or to reproach the living for some breach of custom. In this regard the diviners play a vital in the meditation and communication between the living and the spirits.

A person consults with a diviner since communicating with the spirits is not intelligible to the layman. In indigenous people's belief most evils that befall people are due either to witchcraft or sorcery practiced by the living or to the hostility of the ancestors. In the absence of sorcery, the misfortune is almost invariably attributed to the intervention of some offended or neglected ancestor whose spirit must be propitiated before relief can be expected. When studying the poetry of Nxumalo and Buthelezi, one can never be confined to the poems selected above. But, one is enticed to continue doing more research on traditional religion and healing. How the protocol is being observed by both indigenous healers and diviners in the line of communication. The living more often than not consult with diviners since s/he can never perform rituals all by himself/herself. As, the spirits do heed promptly when an ordained healer acts as a mediator between the living and the Supreme-Being.

The communication in the form of supplications, and thank-giving ceremonies have substance in the rituals when performed by the ordained healer. Consequently, the prayers are being answered promptly. Since this ritual has been performed, in accordance with the appropriate custom. In indigenous customs, the living therefore relies on spiritual healers to communicate with God. Since God is highly respected amongst the indigenous people. The work of the Supreme-Being will be tinged and receive attention in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 4

### The Supreme-Being and the deities

#### 4. Introduction

This chapter touches on the work of Supreme-Being and that of the deities. All references are based on the poetry of Nxumalo and Buthelezi and focus specifically on traditional religion and healing. The poems of Nxumalo, which has been discussed in this chapter, are *Lisholani*, *Kufa Ngikhongozela ngenkezo* and *Ningabe nisabuza*. The poems of Buthelezi under discussion are, *Ngibuvovile Buthungeni* and *Amade anginawo*.

#### 4.1 Explanation of the relationship of indigenous people, the Supreme-Being and Deities

The evidence has shown on the whole, the indigenous people believe in Supreme-being. The Supreme Being is generally associated with the sky, and showing Himself most impressively in the phenomena of the weather. At most, indigenous people look upon Him also as a creator of all things and the moulder of destiny. He remains entirely in the background of indigenous people's normal religious life, although he is to some extent sensitive about human conduct. Irregularities, in the world of man are bound to react immediately on the world of nature, and call forth such signs as drought, storm and pestilence. No shrines are erected for Him, and no sacrifices are made directly to Him.

The indigenous people believe that He exists, but they do not think that they can worship Him in any way, except through the ancestors. Therefore the ancestral spirits of the indigenous people are regarded not as independent deities, but as mediators of the court of the Supreme-Being, the unapproachable one. Schapera (1980:265) explains that the solidarity of family is not broken by death. An elder in the spirit world ought to receive the homage that was his due when he wore the garments flesh. The ancestral spirits are, therefore, entitled to be respected on their own account, yet they are thought of as independent deities and mediators whom one should never neglect or offend.

They are in fact the patron saints of the indigenous people. It is the belief of the indigenous people, especially the Zulus, that all things as well as the Supreme-Being sprang from a bed of reeds, everything, both animals and corn, everything coming into being with him. Krige (1965:281) says that as the word *uhlanga* (hollowed reed) maybe and is very often used metaphorically to mean a source of being. A father being called the *uhlanga* of his children, from which they broke off. The phrase that mankind broke off from a reed must not be understood in its literal sense. This term *uhlanga* is used in addition to the Supreme-being to imply the origin of mankind, another alternative form being *uMvelinqangi* (the first to come out). The Supreme-Being then, is the first cause and the creator of all things. He instituted the present order, gave men the *amathongo* (spirits of ancestors), doctors for treating disease and diviners. It is He who arranged that *amathongo* (spirits) should make known their wishes in dreams. Medicines are said to have been introduced in the world through ancestral spirits.

There are illnesses that are not understood by non-Africans. These illnesses are referred to as *ukufa kwabantu* (diseases of the indigenous people) Ngubane (1977:44), because the philosophy is based on indigenous people's culture. This does not mean that the diseases are seen as only being associated with indigenous people, but, instead that their interpretation is bound with African ways of viewing health and disease. The *ukufa kwabantu* (diseases of the indigenous people) categories of illnesses are either caused by witchcraft, sorcery and/or ancestral displeasure. These diseases do not respond to Western types of treatment.

The eating of poisons in food is called *ukudliswa* (eaten poisonous substance). Some of the substances which are put into a person's food could, on the other hand, also be capable of intensifying individual's love feeling towards the partner. This is also called *idliso* (eaten poisonous food) because it is thought to cause chest and stomach ailments after a period of time. The indigenous people therefore hold the belief that sickness, accidents and misfortunes are intentionally caused by persons or personified beings. They deny accepting the fact that an accident is the final explanation of misfortune. Sheldon (1982:300) asserts:

The traditional form addresses itself not only to the how, where and when of the disease causation, but to why as well.

It is obvious in the above citation, that there are central questions posed: Who caused the illness? Who caused the misfortune?; Who sent this misfortune?; Why did it happen to a certain individual not to his neighbour? In this regard, the how of the matter is not considered? The process of divination therefore determines the spiritual force being the strong. The intentional cause of the trouble must be demonstrated. Consultation with diviners is consequently essential. In short, the *izangoma* (diviners) are always involved when people feel they are being bewitched. They therefore adapt their work to this issue and their diagnoses are answers to this question.

#### **4.1.1 *Lisholani?* (Why does it say it?) O.E.H.M Nxumalo**

The voice in the poem, in the true sense, is overwhelmed by atrocious city life circumstance. As a result the poet suffers from nostalgia for the glorious indigenous lifestyle, where protocol is observed. The indigenous people pay homage to every activity that they do. They respect other people, young and old; they pay homage to living-dead and humble themselves to the Supreme Being. Every activity is directed and governed by the elders through ancestral spirits, the spirits who convey messages to and from God. On the contrary, everything has been distorted in the urban life. People appear to have dumped their civilisation. That is one of the reasons people suffer from a litany of misfortunes.

That the voice in the poem likes the traditional way of living is evident by the images in the poem which are culturally derived and evoke the indigenous glory. The dove heralds the coming of summer and the ripening of corn in the fields. This symbolises the bountiful and rich heritage of the indigenous culture since the summer seems to underlie and influence the life and attitude of the indigenous people, as far as time is concerned. The dove sings during the time of harvest. Thus, the economic life of the indigenous people is deeply bound to their concept of time.

This is what the poet has to say when he hears the bird:

*Lisholani lelojuba,  
Lisho lingabe lisanqamuka,  
Lithi: “Amdokwe, amdokwe!”  
Lisho sengathi liyangibona  
Ukuthi sengilizwile ngililalele,  
Lisho sengathi likhokha  
Isibhongo sokuthi kade  
Lalisho lingasangelameli.*

(Why does this dove say  
It sings incessantly  
It sings: “Amdokwe, amdokwe!”  
It sings as if it sees me  
That I have heard and listening,  
It sings as if it pays revenge  
That it took so long  
It sang even in my absence).

(Nxumalo in Ntuli, 1977:15)

The foregoing excerpt depicts the dove singing persistently. One may also consider the dove as a wise indigenous person who conscientises people who deviate from norms and values of the indigenous way of life. When people are happy and joyful, more often than not, they appear to forget that everything comes from God. Instead, they become reluctant to give thanks to Him, by appeasing the ancestral spirits. The dove’s persistent song comes with the pains of nostalgia:

*Lisholani kabuhlungu,  
Lingikhumbuza kude!*

(Why does it sing painfully  
Reminding me!  
Of a place far away).

(Nxumalo, in Ntuli, 1977:15)

The poet is touched by the singing of the dove for he believes things do not go well with the indigenous people, especially those who dwell in towns and cities.

They are afflicted by the plethora of misfortunes, because they have abandoned the indigenous way of life. These African people have changed with time: Mbiti (1990:21) says:

When Africans reckon time, it is for a concrete and specific purpose, in connection with events.

Since the foregoing excerpt considers time, as the composition of events, the indigenous people cannot and do not reckon it in vacuum. For them, time is simply a composition of events which have occurred, those which are taking place and those which are inevitably to occur:

*Lingikhumbuz' odadeweth' abalinde amabele  
KwelakwaMandlakaz' abafowethu abacuph'izife  
Emafusini. Lisholani lingikhumbuz' oNgcazane  
Izinganekwane zogogo asebazithulela.*

(It reminds me of our sisters guarding the kaffir corn in the land of Mandlakazi and our brothers Setting bird-traps in the fields.  
Why does it sing reminding me of Ngcazane – the folktales of Grandmothers long time dead).

(Nxumalo, in Ntuli,1977:15)

The voice in this poem is inspired by the cultural activities performed by indigenous people. The voice is of the opinion that these cultural values are far-fetched to that indigenous lifestyle. This inspiration is evoked in the images of the full life of the indigenous people. The life that is culturally rich in social life pursued by assiduous people. There are images like *ukulinda amabele* (guarding of kaffir-corn), the duty performed by young girls which lies parallel to the bird trapping performed by young men. These cultural activities are on par and parallel each other to symbolise their significance. The activities are harmonious which signifies the cohesion of indigenous culture. There is also a mention of folktales (*izinganekwane*). Morality was cascaded to the next generation by means of folktales. What is remarkable with folktales is that they are told by the word of mouth as oral histories and are not written down.

This also signifies that the indigenous people are the best storytellers. The voice in the poem uses satire to stress the difference between the indigenous people who stick to their culture and to those who deviated from norm. At most, those who have abandoned their culture live in towns and cities where life seems peculiar to them because they have forgotten their roots and been blindfolded by a strange civilisation:

*Lapha kulindw' amakhekhe abhakiwe, kuxoxwa  
Ngezithombe nebhola nomgqashi  
Abafana badlal'izimabuli namaphepha,  
Bagemana ngemimese, ngenqindi nangezicathulo,  
Lapha kudliwa amaswidi namabhloki eqhwa  
Lapha kudliwa ipapa nerayisi.  
Lapha akuklezwa kuthululwa ibhodlela,  
Kungcono lithule lelo juba,  
Ngoludala asisekuphinde sidle,  
Sakubona sakubeletha!*

(Here they wait for cakes that have been baked;  
They converse about cinema, football and dance.  
The boys play marbles and cards.  
They stab each other with knives, box and kick each other.  
Here they eat sweets and ice blocks.  
Here they eat porridge and rice.  
Here there is no mouth-milking  
They drink from bottles till empty.  
It would be better for that dove to be quiet,  
The old is past  
We suffer the consequences)!

(Nxumalo in Ntuli; 1977:15)

In the above citation the voice in the poem attaches more value to indigenous food than those found in urban areas. The natural ingredients of *amabele* (kaffir-corn) are healthier than cakes (*amakhekhe*) that are consumed, mostly by city dwellers. His preference to indigenous life style comes out when he presents contrasting images to depict the different lifestyles, norms and values. The image of city life is very disturbing to the poet. There is fighting over trivialities and the children ultimately kill each other by stabbing and through brutal force *bagemana ngemimese, ngenqindi nangezicathulo* (they stab each other with knives, box and kick each other to death).

People drink until they suffer from black-out, *lapha akuklezwa kuthululwa ibhodlela* (here there is no mouth-milking; they drink from bottles till empty) is the reason why the poet yearns and promotes the indigenous style of living, which does not have the wanton character of city life. Mbiti (1990:36) is of the opinion that:

God's anger is ventilated through when calamities,  
misfortunes and suffering come upon families and  
individuals.

The above citation indicates that misfortunes are brought about by God and generally these afflictions come through agent-like spirits. This holds true for city dwellers that happen to abandon the indigenous way of living. These manifestations of evil, such as sickness, barrenness and failure in undertakings are warning signals that the petulant people should go back to their indigenous customs. On the other hand, the manifestations of good, such as health, begetting many children, fertility, wealth, plenty and the like, are attributed to God. They are the tokens of his love to mankind.

## **4.2 The lesser deities**

### **4.2.1 *Kufa* (Death) by O.E.H.M Nxumalo:**

Death is one of the lesser deities but it is harmful because it kills everybody, even objects. In this poem, the voice uses apostrophe every talk is directed to death harshly:

*Izidladla zakh'onyathela ngaz' unyonyoba,  
Ungezwakali, zinamandla, zinobubi  
kuneze bhubesi;  
Mthakathi ndini unyonyobelana nesint'  
Ubusuku nemini!*

(Your claws you stamp with tip-toeing  
Secretly are more powerful poisonous  
Than those of a lion,  
You wizard you are stalking mankind  
Day and night)!

(Nxumalo, 1965:8)

The voice in the above citation does not know death, but the nasty work of death is depicted by harsh imagery *izidladla* (claws) which are powerful *kunezebhubesi* (than those of a lion). This simile signifies how agile and energetic death is. The voice also uses the understatement and derogatory *ndini* (you simpleton) showing how insignificant death is. Krige (1965:320) asserts that just as the doctor is the protector of society because he cures sicknesses, averts evil omens and smells out evil doers; the *umthakathi* (wizard) is the enemy of the society. The *umthakathi* (wizard) uses his power of evil against the welfare of society. He destroys life as it is stated in the above excerpt the *umthakathi* (wizard) just like *kufa* (death) works in secret:

*Ngob' uthatha kanye impela lab' abalangezelele  
 Ukufinyelele' emimangwen' ethile,  
 wawuzithath' izaqheqhe zelizwe  
 Ushiya imilaza.*

(Because you take those who are high  
 Expectations, you are prone to take valuable  
 People leaving behind none entities).

(Nxumalo, 1965:9)

Even in the foregoing citation, death is identified with the *umthakathi* (wizard). Since it is believed that the *umthakathi* (wizard) is inherently jealous of good things, he goes to the extent of using any lesser deities to destroy life, more especially progressive people. Those who are successful *izaqheqhe zelizwe* (thick curds of the nation) are a bitter enemy of death. (Berglund, 1976:79) concurs with the foregoing citation when he describes death. He asserts that there is death which is untimely and is regarded as a serious interference in a human's life.

The might of death would be destroyed in the judgment day. In short, death prior to maturity is taken very seriously and is automatically related to witchcraft and sorcery. In addition, death is fond of leaving behind the people who happen to be less important than productive ones. *Ushiy' imilaza* (leaves whey). This simile signifies trivialities with the unwanted watery substance which comes from curdled milk:



*Kaz' uyay' uthini, laph'  
uzwa amazwi  
amadodana  
namadodakaz'  
Empongoloza  
Ekhalel'oyise  
Usubathathile.  
Kaz' uyay' uthini  
Laph uzwa izililo  
Zikhihlwa  
Ngabafelokazi...  
Usubathathel'  
abayeni Babo!*

(One wonders what you  
Say when hearing  
Voices of sons and  
Daughters crying out.  
Crying for their fathers  
Whom you have taken!  
One wonders what do  
You say when hearing  
The weeping, weeping  
Incessantly by widows  
After taking away their  
Husbands).

(Nxumalo, 1965:10)

The above citation puts emphasis on the idea that in indigenous customs, death is the greatest enemy. Death has hardened its heart by not sympathising with orphans and those who are left behind. The poet's voice has amplified the intensity of the cry by using *empongoloza* (crying the heart out) and *zikhihla* (being weeped incessantly). When referring to widows, the voice in the poem is respectful. He calls the husbands (*abayeni*) not *amadoda* (men) since men do not carry a sign of respect, it refers to any other men. On the other hand, *abayeni* (husbands) has a sign of belonging. Berglund (1976:80) asserts that Zulu people are reluctant to speak about death as it is evil. This reluctance is related to the cause of death and its subsequent consequences rather than to anything else. Indigenous people always consider death to originate from witchcraft. It is viewed with extreme suspicion and anxiety. It is believed that when a man dies young, there is one who is the

cause of death. It is assumed that the aim of the killer is to kill utterly. The voice in the poem may also mean acculturation as in the following stanza:

*Uthini laph' isizwe sikhalel'  
Amagugu aso osuk' usuwathathile  
Wabaleka nawo sasala dengwane.*

(What do you say when the nation cries  
Aloud about their precious things  
Taken away from them and run away).

(Nxumalo, 1965:10)

The death of indigenous customs depicts misery brought about by foreign customs. A nation without its precious custom is a lost nation. Therefore, the voice in the poem identifies death as an enemy to the indigenous culture. Those indigenous people who altogether dump the indigenous culture are culturally poor, and liable to be afflicted by omens:

*Ngiyaye ngisondeze indlebe yami phansi  
Emhlabathini ngizizwe nezinsizwa zizibonge,  
Angizwe namazwi obabamkhulu engibezwa  
Ngendaba ngizwe behuba nezingom' uthuthumel'  
Umzimba wami, ngifikelwe ukulangaza.*

(When I put my ear down on the ground,  
I hear even young men sing praises.  
I hear voices of my forefather whom  
I know in storytelling,  
Hear them singing songs and my entire body  
Shivers and moved by singing).

(Nxumalo, 1965:12)

It is aptly evident in the excerpt that the voice in the poem firmly believes in the existence of forefathers and in the life hereafter. The voice believes that the departed one lives somewhere underground. *Ngiyaye ngisondeze indlebe yami, phansi emhlabathini* (I usually put my ear down on the ground). The voice concurs with Gumede (1990:81) when he asserts that:

These are ancestral spirits of the departed one.  
Sometimes they are known as *abaphansi* (those from  
down underground).

The foregoing citation agrees with the excerpt in the sense that *abaphansi* (those under the earth) indicates that when a man dies, he is buried under the earth. That is why the voice in the poem speaks of *obabamkhulu abaphansi* (my forefathers down underneath). The realm of the deceased is thought to be a shadowy area underneath the earth. The forefathers (*obabamkhulu*), according to the indigenous people, are men who had completed their work and died at a ripe old age. These oldest people are happy because things have gone well for them *behuba* (singing joyfully). The voice in the poem does not mourn the death of *obabamkhulu* (forefathers) because death of an aged person is not necessarily considered to be the work of witchcraft:

*Unqobeni-ke kufa ndini?*

(Where is victory you awful death)?

(Nxumalo, 1965:9)

In the above citation, there is a twist since this type of death of the aged people is considered to be a timely death. A timely death is, in indigenous languages, expressed by terms such as *ukugoduka*, *ukudlula*, *ukuhamba* and *ukuqhubeka*, which all give notions of passing on or a continuation. So where is your victory you awful death (*unqobeni-ke kufa ndini?*), because the deities down underneath are joyful and have plenty herds of cattle. The voice praises the forefathers who live underneath the earth. The derogatory *ndini* (useless thing) simplifies the how ineffective death is. From the look of things, these ancestral-spirits are the living dead conveying messages from him to God, whereas it is obvious that high profile spirits are seen to be dwelling peacefully in the sky. These spirits, by being right up in the sky, are of course nearer to the Supreme-Being:

*Kuyaye kuthi phakathi kwamabili  
Lapho kukhanya inyanga,  
Ngising'emkhathini womhlaba,  
Ngibon' amakhosi ezinhlanga zonke.*

(Usually in the middle of the night,  
When there is moonlight,  
I gaze on the sky of the earth,  
Then I see kings of different nations).

(Nxumalo, 1965:12)

The foregoing excerpt shows how deeply the voice in the poem is concerned with spiritual deities. He chooses the middle of the night to go and look at the open sky. In his mind, he feels right near God where there are no atrocities. Only Kings and those of the royal lineage have a place nearer to God. *Ngibon' amakhosi* (I see kings), he sees kings of different tribes or nations. These kings are now ancestors and take a close interest in their progenies. They guard them from danger and attend to their needs, but in return, they require sacrifices. Krige (1965:282) is vague when he talks about what he calls Heaven or the Sky. He asserts that the Lord of Heaven dwells since God is the creator of everything. The indigenous people's belief is based on this principle. In the above citation all the kings are faithful to God. *Lapho kukhanya inyanga* (in the moonlight), signifies harmony and gentleness and the use of the moon signifies peace. This implies that the kings live peacefully in the sky:

*Ngibon' izihlwele zisingethe  
UShaka ebusa ngokuthula  
Esesibumbe njengoba efisa  
Isizwe sika Zulu,  
Ngibone no Mhlangana no Dingane  
NoMkabayi bekhonze  
Ngokwe thembeka okukhulu.*

(I see crowds fairly  
Treating Shaka and  
Reigns peacefully uniting  
Zulu nation as he wished.  
I saw Mhlangana, Dingane and  
Mkabayi worshipping faithfully).

(Nxumalo, 1965:12)

In the life hereafter, as it is indicated above, the living dead dwell harmoniously. Even King Shaka, who used to rule with an iron fist, treats his subjects fairly. The voice in the poem also does have a vision of unity amongst the Zulu people even in the life hereafter the poem

foresees this vision in *zisingethe* (fairly treating) and *esesibumbe* (united), as a dream come true. This is confirmed by Krige (1950:284) when he says:

The *amathongo* or *amadlozi* live underground  
and occupy the same relative position there as they  
did while alive.

One may agree with the foregoing citation. It means that since an unimportant man has little or no power after death, he keeps on serving his king faithfully. The head of the family on the other hand, is the spirit that is invoked for help and that provides for his descendants. While the spirit of a king has the welfare of the whole tribe at heart and is of far greater importance than any other spirit. He has power even over other spirits in the same way, as in life, when he could command anyone in his tribe. In addition the king intervenes when a man's ancestors are not treating him fairly; the departed spirit of a king is invoked to compel those ancestors to bless him. The *amathongo* (spirits) of *Mhlangana*, *Dingane* and *Mkabayi* have been purified. The above three were Shaka's conspirators. They died with their hands dripping in blood but of late they are faithful to Shaka. It is said that a man's *ithongo* (spirit) resembles him in character. If he was good and brave when alive, he will be the same when dead.

*Imbongi yehla yenyuka*  
*Ikha uNodumehlezi kaMenzi*  
*ngibon'amas' eziphihli.*

(The praise-singer moves  
Up and down praising,  
Nodumehlezi of Menzi  
Seeing curdled milk in abundance).

(Nxumalo, 1965: 12)

A praise-singer is eloquent and dramatic when addressing the king. In this context Shaka is praised. He puts on (*isiphuku*) a cloak when singing praises *ikha uNodumehlezi kaMenzi* (praising Nodumehlezi of Menzi) means to awaken the love of Shaka to his subjects. The praise-singer touches on all the good things that Shaka has performed which include the unifying of the Zulu nation and as a result there is no talk of famine.

This is indicated when the poet says he sees everything in abundance (*Ngibon' amas' ezipihli* - seeing sour milk in abundance). This signifies the life hereafter; there is no talk of misery and shame. The indigenous people are living harmoniously, still pursuing their indigenous culture. Surely, death has no effect:

*Ngizibuze! Ukuphi kufa?*

(And ask myself! Where are you death?)

(Nxumalo, 1965:12)

In the life hereafter, nothing is tarnished by death. The living-dead enjoy their daily life as it was before. It is evident in the foregoing citation that spirits and other deities are conquerors and more powerful than death. The very last stanza shows how the poet is influenced by Western belief system, namely Christianity. In the Roman Catholic religion life after death exists beyond a river called Jordan:

*Ngiyaye ngiyibone leyondawo  
Imahlungu aphuphuzelay' aluhlaza.  
Ngibone ne Jordan linqamula.*

(I used to see that place,  
The valley rich in green  
see Jordan flowing across).

(Nxumalo, 1965:12)

In the foregoing citation the beauty of the life hereafter is symbolised by the colour green. It signifies that everything is pleasing and conducive to dwelling deserving of divine spirits. It is believed that some Christians consider the River Jordan as a fictitious boundary between earth and life after death:

*Phakathi kubhukud' izigidi ngezigidi zihlanzwa  
ngaphambi kokuwelela ngaphesheya lapho.  
Kuxolelana khon' izizwe izitha ziphume,  
Zixhawulana.*

(Inside swimming the multitudes and multitude  
cleansed before swimming ashore where nation  
smoke the same pipe. The enemies coming out  
shaking hands).

(Nxumalo; 1965:12)

The above citation emphasises the belief in limbo, a place where the sinful await cleansing through rituals that the forefathers will warmly accept. Cleansing the spirit using rituals to be warmly accepted by forefathers, instead it is believed that the spirits of the dead wait for some time in a certain place and being cleansed. This happens as they believe before enjoying the life hereafter. The reciprocal correspondence amongst Supreme-Being, deities and the living dead ensure functional arm and ensure the survival of the indigenous beliefs. While on the other hand the failure of the lesser deities, like wanton-spirits and death, promotes the fact that the Supreme-Being has an ultimate power on earth and the universe.

#### **4.3 Communication with shades as deities and God**

In Nxumalo's poem touched upon above, the sole communicator amongst men and the shade of the living dead is the voice. On the other hand, Buthelezi utilises a praise singer and the voice in the poem to form a link between the living-dead and men. The praise-singer is known for his eloquence and being adept in his choice of words. Prior to the commencement of any function or event the praise-singer comes to the fore, reciting praises for the clan. As a poet, Buthelezi also considers himself to be a praise-singer communicating with the shades on behalf of the Zulu nation.

##### **4.3.1 *Ngibuvovile Buthungeni* (I have sieved it, pour it into clay pots) L.B.Z. Buthelezi**

According to the Zulu religion, the king hosts a ceremony called *ukweshwama* (eating of the first harvest). If the king fails to perform this ritual the shades and God Himself punish him with death:

*Ibika lokudla kweNkosi  
Isibuya ukuyonyathela  
uselwa ukhamba aludle*

*ngokuheleza kazi bunjani?*  
“*Inggondovu lena!*”

(It’s an omen of King’s food  
coming back from the ceremony of fruits.  
The clay pots should pass on.  
One wonders how it tastes.  
“Strong beer has been brewed!”

(Buthelezi, 1993:20)

The above citation cites how the indigenous people enjoy themselves after the observance of the first fruit ceremony. What arouses happiness is the drinking from one clay pot. They sit in circles drinking from a clay pot which is round in shape and this signifies the togetherness of the indigenous people. It appears then that the said ceremony was successful, *isibuya ukuyonyathela usehwa* (coming from first fruit ceremony). It is then imperative for the king to make his subjects joyful in a unified manner. It is one of the indigenous customs that if somebody prepares beer to be drunk, s/he must taste it first “*kuphiswe ingqothovu!*” (Strong beer has to be brewed). The large quantity of foam from this beer signifies how joyful the shades are. In Zulu culture in particular, the beer in a clay pot should not be allowed to stagnate and must move from one person to another since in indigenous custom almost everything is shared equally (*Ukhamba - aludle ngokuheleza – the clay pot must move on*). A glutton is not recommended and being reprimanded.

*Lena imithombo yekhethelo,*  
*Amabele yilawo ake abongwa inyosi yakojuba.*  
*Inkenteza ezindlebeni zami.*  
“*Amdokwe!*”

(These are kaffir-corn of quality.  
These kaffir-corns are those one day  
Praised by dove singing incessantly in my ears,  
“They are ripe!”

(Buthelezi, 1993:20)



Kaffir corn is a staple food for indigenous people. Most often, if indigenous people talk of the best harvest, it is referred to as kaffir corn. The foregoing quotation simply means that the beer was brewed with quality kaffir-corn to ensure that everything goes well. In indigenous society, one of the ways to commune with the deities is through beer drinking. Beer is the food of men. It is not just food; it is like meat eaten by all men. This beer-drinking is not meant for only the living, but is also meant for the shades. It is also cited in the former paragraph that it is important that the person for whom the brewing has taken place, drinks first, even if it is a junior of the home.

In this poem, the voice of the poem has taken the initiative since this lateral-subject is the person that the shades must attend to. It is a sign of respect to the shades, pointing at that lateral subject and then the seniors drink. Those who drink first are the closest to the deities. The pigeon (*ijuba*) is again cited in this poem in ways similar to the dove enshrined in Nxumalo's poetry. The dove acts like a praise-singer, reminding indigenous people about time. It is now the time to thank God and deities about new breed of food and communicate with deities, thanking the Supreme-Being for food production. The beer, which is isolated and placed in an *umsamo* (far flank of hut), is meant for the shades. Berglund (1976:213) asserts:

No man drinks by himself. When we eat beer we eat  
it with them. There must be *umhlolo* (Beer set aside  
for the shades in *umsamo*).

The foregoing quotation indicates that deities are always present when people communicate with them. They love a din at a homestead when people shout and sing at the top of their voices:

*Uthini? "Buvuthiwe!"*  
*Nawe bakwenza*  
*uninge ngosikisiki*  
*lwenyosi kaZulu,*  
*Ebalisa ingaphezi*  
*engathi ifelwe izwe,*  
*Kanti imangazwe*  
*iziNyandezulu.*

(What does he say? “It’s ripe!”  
And they make you  
think with Zulu-bard’s  
inspiration complaining incessantly  
As if he is in misery,  
but amazed by old-ancestral spirits).

(Buthelezi, 1993:20)

The above mentioned quotation describes how the praise-singer sings the praises of the old ancestral spirits. This occurs in the first and in public communion. Fruit ceremony and communion with the shades after the first fruit ceremony has been completed. The invocation may take place in a byre or in the hut. Technically, the invocation referred is called the *ukubonga* (to give praise). In the foregoing citation, *inyosi kaZulu* (the Zulu bard) calls on the deities. If there is a ritual spear in the homestead, he the praise-singer carries it in his right hand, brandishing it as he calls on the shades, and performs his ritual dance (*ukugiya*). This arouses *usikisiki* (inspiration) amongst the congregants and the singing and dancing make them think deeply (*uninge*) about the profound knowledge of indigenous people and about thanking God, through deities.

A worthy invocation is marked by the utility of dignified language. Much care is given to the choice of words, expressions and gestures used in the invocations which are why the incessant praises (*ebalisa ingaphezi*) are very poetic and appealing to the living-dead. The extremely beautiful Zulu language, in particular, is often heard at the invocation of the shades. The officiate calls on the living-dead by using their personal names. He commences with the nearest direct descendant, then he proceeds with the names in the family tree he recalls by following the order of generations as closely as possible. The call on the shades may close with a collective address which includes all the shades not personally known to the officiate. Leech (1974:36) also asserts that women of standing in the lineage may also be mentioned, particularly if the responsible ancestral spirit is that of a woman. Children are not mentioned but in theory they are inclusive in the overall invocation:

*Ukugaqela ubhedu ulimi olwalugaywa  
IMbokodw'ebomvu iyokhonza kwaNobamba;  
Yayehlisa ngalesi cathulo izithele ungeklane  
Kucons' amathe, isona kany'esingiletha phambi  
kweSilo soMhlaba! Sithethe ngaso, iziBangamlotha.  
Ngithanda inkonyane lenduna  
Elisho ngamagabelo abubende.*

(To have an eye for usage of language skills,  
Grinded by *IMbokodw'ebomvu* Paying homage to  
*Nobamba* Used to drink from this small clay pot  
Getting neck meat with watering mouth,  
Definitely it is the very same that brought me here  
before the King talking to the ancestral spirits.  
I like that male heifer with dark red decorations).

(Buthelezi, 1993:20)

The voice in the foregoing citation indicates his like of indigenous customs, *ukugaqela ubhedu lolimi* (to aim at excellent usage of language skills). He likes his language which he believes links him with the deities. The voice is moved by old warriors (*imbokodw'ebomvu*), who are skilful in their language use. These warriors were respectful to the king. They were humble to anybody at the royal homestead entitled *Nobamba*, faithfully worshipping the king and everybody in the household. In the poem, this voice wishes to mimic what the warrior had done. Many rituals were performed by warriors at *KwaNobamba* (royal kraal) Bruhl (1995:61) asserts:

The Zulu army never went to war without being  
specially strengthened by the doctors of the king.  
A process which took a few days and was began  
as soon as all warriors have arrived at the royal kraal.

The foregoing citation indicates that the traditional doctors played a major role in the indigenous army. Every ceremony was marked by the presence of the doctors, and that of the army. The foregoing excerpt of the poem signifies that it is the ceremony of the first-fruit. The army is strengthened and given courage by eating the medicated flesh of a bull killed in a special way. *Izithele ungeklane kuconse amathe* (neck meat with watering mouth), the beast is then roasted and after being roasted, the *imbengo* (strips) are smeared

with black powders of pungent bitter drugs. In the aftermath, when all is ready, the regiments come up to eat the *imbengo* (strips) in this poem, *ungeklane* referred as *umbengo* (stripes). They form an *umkhumbi* (half moon) of regiments. The doctors and their assistants then begin to fling the strips of medicated half cooked flesh in the air, and then there is a scramble for meat:

*Yayehlisa ngalesi cathulo.*

(Take a sip out of this clay pot).

(Buthelezi, 1993:20)

It is an honour to drink beer out of the *izicathulo* (small clay pots), since it is designed for the king alone. This signifies the lateral-subject is a man of valour. The king, as a result, likes the lateral-subject since he drinks from the exclusive sacred utensil. The voice goes on to say that the beer drinking appeases the ancestral spirits. He uses the process of *ukuthetha* (speaking) to the ancestral spirits by presenting the small clay-pot. *Sithethe ngaso izibangamlotha* (talking over it about ancestors). This indicates that the living come into contact with the ancestral spirits in order to ask for favours and to thank them for their blessings. In this context, thanksgiving is taking place because something good has come about. That session is the first fruit ceremony. The voice in the poem likes the communion with the king's ancestral spirits. It gives him courage and the pride of being an indigenous royal warrior:

*Uthini? "Buvuthiwe!" nawe bukwenza uninge,*

*Ngosikisiki lwenyosi kaZulu.*

*Ebalisa ingaphezi*

*Engathi ifelwe izwe!*

*Kanti imangazwe iziNyandezulu.*

(What does he say? "It is ripe!")

And they make you think with Zulu-bard's inspiration,  
complaining incessantly,

As if he is destitute.

But amazed by old-ancestral spirits).

(Buthelezi, 1993:20)

The above citation puts emphasis on the type of indigenous weaponry warriors use. The young male calf enshrined in this poem, is nothing but an *ihawu* (a shield). When going to war, the regiments carry the shields for protection. These shields are richly decorated. In this poem the voice is taken by the dark red colour of the shield for *iduna* (young male calf). The dark red colour signifies the colour of the enemy, while the warriors themselves have been instilled with the necessary courage and ferocity to achieve victory. They are to keep away from the weakening influence of women and girls. In the fifth stanza, the poem uses contrast; the indigenous dress code is compared with the contemporary dress code. The voice in the poem laments over the good indigenous systems that have disappeared:

*Lapho lizokhipha ithala lemikhonto.  
 Ngithanda le nkonyane oyibhincile  
 Nsizwa ungathi uyahlola; singaseyubuye  
 Simbone uZulu enyathela uselwa.  
 Akasalazi iphunga lomusi wombengo!  
 Sizwa isandla sakho esivubela iganu!  
 Uyogiya uqephuze!*

(When the assegai bundle to be drawn out.  
 I like that calf you put on young man.  
 You look good, it appears.  
 As if Zulus will never celebrate first fruit again.  
 Do not experience appetising grilled meat,  
 We taste your brewed marula beer!  
 Then will dance joyfully)!

(Buthelezi, 1993:21)

The voice in the foregoing excerpt is nostalgic. When he looks at the buttock-covering skin worn by one of the warriors he is excited. *Ngithanda le nkonyane* (I like this calf which is *ibheshu* (a skin covering)). He likes this code of dress since it is the real dress code of men. The lateral subject in this extract laments over what is happening today. He cries foul, because the beauty of the first fruit ceremony is no longer overemphasised *singabuye simbone uZulu enyathel'uselwa* (we shall no longer see the Zulus performing first fruit ceremony).

It is so painful when indigenous people no longer communicate with deities and follow foreign culture.. There is a similar cry by both Nxumalo and Buthelezi when indigenous people dump their culture and follow something they do not grasp:

*Akasalazi iphunga lomusi wombengo.*

(He does not know any longer the smell of roasted meat).

(Buthelezi, 1993:21)

The foregoing citation means most of the indigenous people rely on other forms of grill. They do not know that deities like the smell of roasted meat, since roasted meat appeases the spirits. In return they pour a bounty of blessings to men. *Umusi* (steam) comes from roasting of fresh meat. In the true sense, this steam activates the king's subject to abide joyfully with indigenous customs. Soon, after the eating of *umbengo* (roasted meat), cattle were apportioned to the various regiments. These were killed and eaten in the evening which was spent in singing the great national chants. The first fruit ceremony is offered to the spirits of kings ancestors. These departed spirits are invoked by the officers' high rank, men with sufficient status to celebrate with the king on great occasions:

*Sizwa isandla sakho esivubela ganu!*

*Uyogiya uqephuze!*

(We taste your brewed marula beer!

You will dance joyfully)!

(Buthelezi, 1993:21)

In the foregoing citation, the voice is moved by beer. The beer which is made with the *iganu* (marula fruit) as one of the ingredients is highly ranked amongst the Zulu people. Sometimes, if you have taken a lot of beer, the Zulus will say *udakwe abamaganu* (you have drunk marula beer). This type of beer instils joy and happiness amongst the people. The people under the influence of this beer dance almost all night long. The indigenous people agree that evil, which is an enemy, is not involved in indigenous dance, *ukugiya*, because the *ukugiya* (dance) is to awaken the shades when there is something taking place.

In this regard, the shades are awakened to. The dance is waking the spirits and drawing them from where they are. That is the reason for the beating of the earth nullifies the strength of the evil. Therefore dancing is rousing them to do things they must do with vigour with the feet, the frequent dramatic stamping of the ground by the dancers. Before going to war, the regiments had to undergo certain rituals:

*Ngiyakwazi ubuthiwe Zulu,  
Uyakwazi ukubamba inkunzi  
Ngezimpondo!  
Uyephula izonga lentamo!*

(I know you Zulus have been recruited.  
You know how to hold the bull by its horns,  
Breaking its pivot joint)!

(Buthelezi, 1993:22)

Though some of the Zulu people have dumped their culture, the foregoing excerpt is coaxing them into believing in themselves again. They have the guts and strengths to revamp their way of living. When they go back to their culture, they have to arm themselves with education, the contemporary weaponry:

*Ngiyazi ubuthiwe Zulu.*

(I know you Zulus have been recruited)!

(Buthelezi, 1983:22)

The above mentioned citation indicates that the Zulu army used to fall under a different regiment. The first category was directed to gather the green branches of the *umthole* (mimosa tree). This branch was burnt as a charm with the roasting of the bull. This was done to strengthen the army. The following morning the regiments went to the spot appointed for the troops to *hlanza* (vomit). The first regiment to go through the vomiting process was the one chosen to deal with the bull selected by the king:

*Uyakwazi ukubamba inkunzi  
Ngezimpondo uyephule izonga lentamo!*

(You know how to hold the bull by its horns,  
Breaking its pivot joint)!

(Buthelezi, 1993:22)

It is evident in the above citation that the regiment drives the bull into the cattle enclosure where they tackle it. It was first kept running around to tire it. Then at about midday it was rushed and brought back to ground. The regiment then held onto it as best as they could while a number of them proceeded to twist its neck. As soon as it was dead the doctors came up to do their ritual. One bull was enough for the whole army and more were never killed. The above extract alludes to two powers; that of regiments and of education. If these aspects are mixed together, the indigenous people may once again become a mighty nation:

*Leli ibika inkosi isibuya,  
Ukuyonyathela uselwa  
Ithi kuzoba nenala.  
Ngibuvovile buthungeni Zulu!*

(This is a warning the king is  
coming back from performing first fruit Ceremony.  
He says food would be in abundance  
I have sieved it, serve it you Zulus)!

(Buthelezi, 1993:22)

After so many sufferings, the voice in the poem is asking indigenous people to go back to their customs. He is appealing to the indigenous people to appease the ancestral spirits by means of invocations and to thank the Supreme-Being for the abundance of food he provides. The only figure to perform *ukunyathela uselwa* (performance of the first fruit ceremony) is the king. He is the communicator between men and the living dead in as much as if the king is reluctant to perform his duties diligently. The whole nation is being afflicted by a litany of misfortunes. The lateral subject in the poem conscientises the Zulu people to help themselves by using indigenous customs. The ingredients in the beer will help to revive these customs. *Ngibuvovile* (I have sieved it), means the unwanted customs have been discarded; and the best and dynamic ones are ready to be practiced.



*Buthungeni* (serve it) signifies preaching and implementation of good customs. These indigenous customs, in this regard, go hand in hand with contemporary education. In this context, one may safely consider that the two poets (Nxumalo and Buthelezi) encourage the indigenous people to live in two worlds. But all in all, the indigenous religion must not be discarded since the wrath of ancestral spirits is left unabated if one dumps it in total. Sound indigenous religious practice strengthens quality indigenous healing.

#### **4.4 The art of the healing with deities' assistance**

The indigenous people belong to an old herder race. Sheep, goats and cattle are their most prized domesticated animals. There are always people more gifted than others in all communities. The medicine men and herbalists learned more about the uses of plants and herbs for healing purposes than others in the community. They master the use of roots, barks, leaves, fats and mineral matter, and so on for healing purposes. They learn the art and sciences from others through serving an apprenticeship as *uhlaka* (apprentice). Thereafter the young traditional healer is confident enough to work alone as an *inyanga* (medicine-man). He is then the equivalent of a general practitioner. The art of healing herbal healing tends to run in families, but it is not necessarily hereditary and as such the art cannot be claimed as a birth right. At most, the traditional healers are intelligent with enquiring mind and have an interest in nature, animals and people. Kaigh (1987:90) asserts:

Though God is indivisible, Western religious progress has so diversified the approaches into so many watertight compartments that even the enlightened seeker plods about as if in a honeycomb with feet stickily enmeshed in the poisoned of rubric, dogma, hypocritical schism, cant and sectarianism.

The foregoing citation means it is impossible to understand the traditional healer and traditional healing without first looking into concepts of indigenous religion. The indigenous people, for centuries upon centuries, have always been a highly religious people. Indigenous people left no shrines and no temples as monuments to their religious zeal.

This is because they never worshipped inanimate objects such as stones, trees forests and the sun as objects of their beliefs. Their religion is for everyday living. They believe in someone, a Supreme-Being, who they worship without seeing.

#### **4.4.1 *Ngikhongozele ngenkezo* (I am holding out receptacle called gourd) - O.E.H.M. Nxumalo**

The voice in this poem is willing to know everything that might bring along knowledge to him. He is holding the gourd in a bid to hold this diversity of knowledge. The lateral-subject wants to have some skills that might heal his fellow citizens from various types of ailments:

*Ngithole nempendulo  
Ukuthi ngizofunani lapha?  
Ngivulele amasango  
Kungene ukukhanya.  
Kukhanyise amasithe engqondweni,  
Yami ngmbulelwe iqiniso.*

(To get an answer  
Why am I here?  
Open the gates for me  
To let the light in.  
To enlighten my mind,  
To unfold truth).

(Nxumalo, 1965:55)

The *inkezo* (gourd) in the title of this poem signifies happiness. A gourd (*inkezo*) is a symbol of happiness in a sense that whoever has a gourd cannot die of thirst. It is connected with triumph if the same cup is used both for food as well as a water container. It goes without saying that the lateral-subject is holding this gourd to fill him with healing skills in this context. In the first stanza he uses apostrophe asking the spirit why he is living. He appears to be confused, *ngizofunani lapha* (why am I here). The lateral subject is confused because people come and go dying like flies He then appeals to the ancestral spirits to open his mind, to know the cause of this difficulty, *ngivulele amasango* (open the gates).

When the voice says, *Ngembulelwe iqiniso* (to expose the truth) he appeals for the knowledge of secrets to come to his rescue. Since only ancestral spirits can mandate and empower him with healing skills, the lateral-subject is willing to communicate with ancestral spirits to show him the healing medicine. If the ancestral spirits come to show him the medicine, they come in a dream. The lateral subject is not allowed to let the secret out of the bag and divulge it. The spirits may kill him. In the second stanza the lateral subject is willing to go anywhere the ancestral spirits may order him to seek for traditional medicine:

*Ngazi amagquma*  
*Anamakhambi empumelelo*  
*Ohambeni ngibone*  
*Izigodi ezisithele.*

(To know hills  
Having herbs for success  
On my journey to  
See obscural valleys)!

(Nxumalo, 1965:55)

The foregoing citation indicates that the lateral subject moves from pillar to post in search of healing herbs. The lateral-subject does not go on his own to the mountain and hills searching for herb, but gets directives from ancestral spirits through dreams. *Ngazi amagquma* (I know hills); these hills are far away from his destination. At most, the indigenous healer does believe that herbs obtained from far away valleys (*izigodi ezisithele*) have more vigour and are more powerful than the same herbs obtained locally. Therefore, the indigenous healer goes out his way to obtain medicines of therapeutic value.

There are drugs used to expel worms; for chest complaints, for disease of the gastrointestinal tract; for external application and medicines that are used to induce vomiting-emetics. Parasitic infestations have been with indigenous people for many centuries. The indigenous Zulu people have a name for all worms that worry the stomach. They also have *umuthi* (medicine) to de-worm themselves. Take for instance *uxhaphozi* (*ranunculus pinatua*), an infusion of leaves is made, strained and given to children in the form of an enema to expel thread worms.

There is also *iboza* (bush salvia), a strong solution made from an infusion which is boiled into a decoction. The mixture is a strong cough depressant. *Iboza* solution is also a strong disinfectant for use in tropical ulcers, but principally used as *isiphungo* (cough linctus). There is *ugodide* (hulme) which is pounded into an infusion, and is taken orally. *Ugodide* (hulme) has a cholagogue action that is used to draw out and drain bile. *Inyongo* (bile) is a common indigenous people's complaint. Applied externally, *ubohlololo* (*kalanchoe hirta*) is a hot decoction of leaves, applied to relieve joint pains from sprains and arthritis. Some of the uses of the plants and herbs show a very advanced indigenous knowledge. The injury of an eye in a fight is taken very seriously and for this, *amasimba enyanga* (antrarine) is used to keep the pupil dilated and thus avoid blindness. This medicine has a mydriatic effect. On the other hand, to induce vomiting *umathunga* (*cyrtanthus obliquus*) is used. In the third stanza, the lateral-subject begs the spirits to have good conscience:

...ngibe nonembeza, engimlalelayo,  
 Ongitshela ngizwe.  
 Imbuyiselo yobubi yoba ububi,  
 Isandla esishayayo  
 Soshaywa.

(...to have conscience that I would heed  
 to know crime does not pay.  
 The hand that strikes  
 will also be struck).

(Nxumalo, 1965:56)

The foregoing citation touches on the impeccable behaviour of the indigenous healer. He is not allowed to practice sorcery, witchcraft or mime people. Since, his work is to heal not to cause pain to the people, he is supposed to heal. *Ngibe nonembeza* (to have conscience) to be good, because sacred spirits pay him a visit. He also practices sacred medicines to heal not to harm the people. Contact (1980:14) asserts that:

The Bantu would in fact have no difficulty in accepting most of Biblical commandments, because among them the danger of taking the name of God in vain is generally acknowledged.

One may safely consider that the foregoing extract is in line with indigenous people's beliefs. Reverence for parents and those in authority is inculcated to indigenous healers in particular. Disobedience is punished, whereas self-control is cultivated and ancestral probity is respected. He is marked by a high respect for property, brotherliness, courtesy and hospitality. *Imbuyiselo yobubi ububi* (repayment of bad is bad), simply means that murder, witchcraft, stealing, adultery, bearing false witness against one's neighbour, hatred and arrogance are all condemned.

*Isandla esishayayo soshaywa* (the hand that strikes will be struck), this signifies that the ancestral spirits will be prevented from revealing things to the healer if he contravenes the established moral behaviour. All divine power will be taken away from him, since, the spirits demand moral behaviour within the family and nation in general. The lateral subjects plea to the ancestral spirit is to offer him skills in the performance of unending love of his divine duties. He asks them to give him expertise and unending love of his divine duties:

*...ngazi imbiza enothando oluyilo,  
Olungakhethi, olungaguquki,  
Olungathengi mpilo kabani,  
Oluthanda impilo nokuphilayo.*

(To know the gourd full of love,  
The perfect one that doesn't discriminate,  
Never changes  
That loves health and the living).

(Nxumalo, 1965:56)

The above citation is a prayer of the lateral subjects to the ancestral spirit. He uses *imbiza enothando* (a big gourd full of love). The big gourd signifies empathy and sympathy of the indigenous people to those who suffer from different ailments. The patients of the indigenous healing are not left in the cold as they are treated in the very same home of the indigenous healer. These patients still enjoys love and care as if they are in their respective homes. Since the diviner treats his patients with unconditional love *olungaguquki* and *olungakhethi* (that does not discriminate against), as a result, the patients are healed promptly due to homely love they receive, Ngubane (1977:101) aptly asserts:

A sick person is given attention day and night.  
It is the people of his immediate family who nurse  
him.

It is evident in the foregoing citation the importance of the indigenous healer in treating his patients. The traditional doctor may give orders that debar outsiders from coming anywhere near the patient. This is particularly the case if the latter is given treatment with black or red medicine. Outsiders who visit a patient, thus withdrawn to another house to speak with members of the family. If some family members are in a state of pollution (*umnyama*), such as may arise from contact with death, they may not come into the house where the ill person is lying.

This practice is consistent to every patient (*olungathengi mpilo kabani*), the healing that does not segregate patients according to social standing. (*oluthanda impilo nokuphilayo*) is the main priority of the traditional healer. Since, a sick person is encouraged to eat, as eating is believed to strengthen the body and promote speedy recovery, soft foods such as pumpkins and liquids such as fermented corn meal are preferred for a very ill person who has no appetite. If a sick infant refuses to eat, such liquid food is forced down its throat in a special manner known as *ukuxaka* (feed a sick person). These foregoing tasks are the mammoth tasks which need *uthando olungaguquki* (unchanging love) perseverance and regular contact with ancestral spirits. In the fifth stanza, the voice speaks of taking valuable verdicts. From the look of things, these verdicts should not come from him, but from the spirit. All the time he seeks to live a healthy life:

*...Ngibe nonembeza engimlalelayo,  
ongitshela ngizwe.  
Imbuyiselo yobubi yoba ububi  
Isandla esishayayo soshaywa.*

(...To have conscience to heed to the  
end result of a bad thing would be  
bad the hand that strikes will be  
struck).

(Nxumalo, 1965:56)

The foregoing extract, displays the plea of the lateral subject to the ancestral spirits to have the divination techniques of passing the verdict. In indigenous healing systems, diviners make use of different methods of detecting illness and causes of illness. There is the ecstatic diviner (*isangoma sekhandu*), because the diviner divines by listening to the ancestors and uses no material objects. That is why the lateral-subject asks the ancestral spirits to make him skilful in distinguishing between bad things and bad attitude. He asks them to give him reasons and sources of the bad (*ngazi ngezizathu zobubi*). In fact the lateral subject wants to know why people deviate from the norm and bewitch other people. As the indigenous people consider that—there is a sole cause of any happening, more especially after misfortune. Ngubane (1977:102) asserts that:

The clients of ecstatic diviner are expected to  
Co-operate with her by indicating agreement or  
disagreement.

As cited above, it is common with the clients to clap hands loudly when he says what they accept as the truth and softly if far from it. Some diviners prefer verbal agreement instead, such as “I agree, I agree, I agree” (*Ngiyavuma, ngiyavuma, ngiyavuma*). This is said enthusiastically when the diviner is driving towards the truth and less when it is not. A diviner may also throw bones. In this case, he is known as the bone thrower (*isangoma esichitha amathambo*). From the shape and position of such bones, he can tell the unknown.

The other divination procedure is that of the whistling great ancestors (*abalozu, amakhosi amakhulu*). The ancestral spirits in this case communicate directly with the clients by whistling out words which are meaningful to the listener. The voice in this poem, therefore asks the spirits to come forth and give him right answer and sound verdict for clients in front of him. *Ngingezwa ngendaba izinqumo* (not to take verdicts through hearsays) because some of the clients have prejudice. They simple smell out other people of sorcery before even consulting with the diviner. This is good practice that encourages fairness to promote good neighbourliness and health amongst the people. *Ngazi nomsuka wobuhle ohlumelelisa impilo* (I know about the root of beauty that reinstates life to be new again), in this regard the voice symbolises the best gift, God has given us, life.

It is therefore his prerogative to heal people in a bid to restore life. One finds it strange though, that an indigenous healer never treats themselves or any member of their family in case of serious illness. Instead they consult with someone else. A doctor never doctors himself. This rule also applies to the diviner. He never divines for her family or close relatives. It is imperative in the lifestyle of the indigenous people that frontiers of poverty are pushed away. In the sixth stanza means are made to improve abundance in food production and livestock. Poverty is never recommended in the philosophy of indigenous people:

*Ngazi umthombo okufanele  
Aphuze kuwona abazalelwe  
Eshweni lobu mpofu.  
Ngazi impilo yokukhuphuka  
Imimango ngimelwe ngenhla.*

(To know the fountain meant  
For drinking of the destitute.  
To know how to struggle  
Moving up the valley  
Being suppressed).

(Nxumalo, 1965:57)

The above citation explains how deeply the indigenous healer likes his job and how deeply he loves his clients without social standing. He is touched by those people who are living in poverty. How can he bail them out of famine and poverty? The lateral subject uses the image of *umthombo* (fountain) as an object to quench thirst. The fountain is known to never go dry. He is convinced that those who are destitute will soon get rich whenever they keep drinking from the fountain. The indigenous healer has the ability to heal land and livestock and to increase breeding, thereby alleviating poverty. *Ishwa* (misfortune) is never accommodated by the indigenous people. It lies squarely on the shoulders of the members of the community to appeal to ancestral spirits to stave off misfortune. This is done through the mediation of the indigenous healer. From the indigenous people's point of view, *ubumpofu* (poverty) means somebody who lives from hand to mouth. Who does not possess cattle and land, or rather when his cattle die and land produces no breed.



The indigenous healer is therefore called upon to heal the situation. Schapera (1980:223) says there are events which affect individuals differently. One man has a run of what they call bad luck, whilst his neighbour prospers. If one man's field is devastated by hail, another's escapes the scourge. That the diligent worker should reap and the slothful one misses his harvest is intelligible. But, when things work out quite otherwise, the indigenous people suspect that there is a power at work which is responsible for the difference. This is the important area that can be controlled by the indigenous healer.

He is willing to gain more knowledge in the healing processes. *Ngazi impilo yokukhuphuka* (to know the lifestyle of moving up) simply means, aiming to fulfill his healing task efficiently. The indigenous healer does not rely on local medicines and often goes far afield to get medicines from other experts, *ukukhendla* (get medicine from other traditional doctor). More often than not this happens if the indigenous healer is bewitched *ngimelwe ngenhla* (being suppressed) when his healing relies on other healers to remedy the situation. Brandwijk (1989:21) agrees:

If a man's whole being filled with a surge of joy, triumph, success as it was or if he feels utterly downcast, defeated, powerless to hopeless inertia and despair. Friendly and inimical must be operative.

The foregoing citation means the emotional effect is projected upon the objects and events in the outside world. Thereby, the things and events are thought to be amenable to the sort of influences and control to which men are known to be amenable. Here, too, comes in man's experience of the influences of mind on mind and body. The mere harbouring of an evil wish, of a grudge, of a spirit of hatred and revenge, can poison the mind of the person who has those feelings, even to the point of destroying, not merely mental balance, but also physical health. The victim of such feelings, if he knows himself to be the object of them; is worried and agitated in his turn, and responds, perhaps, with like feelings of his own, having like effects in himself. In the often fierce competition of indigenous healing in the same vicinity, there may be rival ambitions breeding bitter jealousies and hatreds, which may arise in an attempt to defeat the enemy through sorcery.

This may lead to accusations of sorcery. In the seventh stanza, the voice appeals to the ancestral-spirit to give him acute mind:

*Ngilalele, ngisole lakudingekile ngibuziwe,  
Ngilekelele ngingamemezi, ngithobe,  
Ngithande, nginikele.*

(To listen and complain when necessary being asked, Give help and not blowing trumpet, to be patient, to love and give free gift).

(Nxumalo, 1965:58)

The foregoing citation means the lateral subject is keen to heed to the ancestral-spirits instructions. Whatever he does, is mandated by the ancestral-spirits. They may send their patients to him, driven by spirits for healing. He has to listen and has to do what the spirits order him to do. *Ngilalele* (I am listening), is the very important quality features of the healer, since he has to go out of his way and listen to the plight of his patients. At times, it is imperative to heal the sick even if the latter has nothing to offer. *Ngisole lakudingekile* (complain when necessary), when ailment is caused by the patient he has to reprimand him and tell the patient about reprisals, and wraths of the ancestors. This may happen if the patient has deviated from norms and values prescribed by indigenous religion. *Ngibuziwe, ngilekelele ngingamemezi*, (to being asked, give help and not blowing trumpet), this takes place when people and patients come over to the diviner to smell-out and to detect the cause of misfortunes.

He rectifies what has gone wrong and does not brag about it. Since what he is doing is the directive of the ancestral spirits, the ancestral-spirits are not in favour of commotion and noise. *Ngithobe, ngithande, nginikele*, (to be patient, to love and give free gift), these are symbolic behavioural patterns of the indigenous healer. He is sacred in the eyes of the ancestral spirits and dedicate to their work wholeheartedly and to the Supreme-Being at the fullest. As the indigenous healers are great officials, dealing with the well-being of the nation, they are one of the main refuges of the suffering of their fellows.

Many are intelligent *ngilekelele* (to give help) and spare themselves no trouble to get remedies the people require. Even today the vast majority of indigenous people rely on their ministrations. The lateral-subject is thankful to God through the ancestral-spirits:

*Ngazi umthombo okufanele aphuze,  
Kuwona abazalelwa lobu mpofu.  
Ngazi impilo yokukhuphuka imimango  
Ngimelwe ngenhla.*

(To know the fountain which is meant  
for drinking who are born destitute.  
To know the up hill struggle of life.  
Moving up being suppressed).

(Nxumalo, 1965:57)

The foregoing extract shows that the voice in poem does not regret being a traditional healer and looks forward to becoming an expert in healing people, *Ngibheke phambili ngihlomile* (going forward armed). The healer is well prepared with a plethora of healing devices. From the look of things, this voice is not yet satiated with the knowledge he has. He wants more knowledge that comes from knowing God through nature, *ukukubona ebuhleni bemvelo* (to know you in the beauty of nature). In this regard, the beauty of nature signifies a deep knowledge in the healing of the sick. The lateral subject is not boastful, but all his successes depend on the reverence of God through ancestral spirits.

All good things come from the Supreme Being; as a result *ubukhulu* (the supremacy) of God is exalted through the healing of the sick. The healing *per se* pleases the voice in this poem, *izintokozo ongiphe zona* (the happiness that you gave me). The happiness implied in the poem refers to the people. (Ngubane, 1977:103) talks about the fees charged by diviners, which are graded in accordance with the technique used in divination. Times change and the fees charged have skyrocketed. The diviners who use the whistling spirits are the most expensive. The ventriloquist expects more payment because he is usually consulted about very controversial issues.

Although payment is directed to the indigenous healer, he refers payment to the ancestral spirits, as every remuneration belongs to *amakhosi* (ancestral spirits). In the last stanza, the lateral-subject is melding the indigenous beliefs with that of Western beliefs.

Even in this stanza, the voice appears to live in two worlds:

*Yegazi elaphuma enxebeni  
UJesu aligwazwa Isotsha...  
Ekugcineni ngibone iKhaya.*

(Of blood oozed out from the wound  
Of Jesus stabbed in by a soldier.  
Ultimately to see my Home).

(Nxumalo, 1965:59)

Of late, some of the indigenous healers get healing directives through Christian beliefs because some of the ancestral-spirits were early converts but did not discard their traditional-spirits way of life. Jesus, in this context *uJesu aligwazwa isotsha* (Of Jesus stabbed in by a soldier), is considered as one healer. His blood is believed to heal the spirits and down trodden people. He is considered to be one of the highest deities in communication with God and the living.

It has been hinted that the indigenous people believe there is life hereafter and that if a man dies he will meet with his relatives. It is therefore imperative to perform death rituals to enable him to be accepted by the living dead. In this regard then, *ekugcineni ngibona ikhaya* (at the end I see my home), the *khaya* (home) refers to the life of the living-dead, after doing the best in healing the sick. He feels his last reward is to be accommodated by the living-dead in the life here after, this assertion concurs with Cheetham (1975:16):

Ancestors worship is based upon the belief that man,  
or rather part of him, survives after death.

This above citation indicates that during his lifetime a person consists of two separable entities. That is his mortal body and his immortal soul. The latter is the one that enjoys the life hereafter.

One may safely say, though Nxumalo and Buthelezi are deeply and ardent believers of indigenous healing, they have a mix of Christian convictions that are meddling with indigenous knowledge system. This cultural meddling is caused by foreign beliefs, Christianity in particular. But, it is notable that Africanised Christianity exists in their works as well.

#### **4.4.2 *Ningabe nisabuza* (Do not ask any questions) by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo**

The poem entitled, *Ningabe Nisabuza* (Do not ask any questions), talks about death. But, it is laced with therapeutic healing in nature. In this poem, the lateral-subject is experiencing the death of the useful person. He dramatically portrays those events and procedures followed after the death of the loved one:

*Uselele engasanakujulukiswa,  
Langa nalusizi usethule  
Engasentakulila zinyembezi  
Abasele sebeyothi ba wakwaba?*

(He is asleep not to sweat  
Neither by sun or misery.  
He is quiet weeping no more  
Those who are left behind  
Where is the shoulder to cry on)?

(Nxumalo, 1989:24)

In the above excerpt, the lateral-subject in the form of a healer, tried to save the life of a person. But the attempt was in vain. He uses a euphemism, *uselele* (he is asleep) and *usethule* (he is quiet), to pay respects to this dead person because he appeared to be useful at his home and the community at large. In the life hereafter the living dead work no more, *engasanakujulukiswa ilanga* (no more being made sweat by the sun). Since the living-dead spend their time worshipping the Supreme-Being, they more often than not pay visit to the living through dreams and act as mediators between God and men. The sun (*ilanga*) in this context is the object that brings about shame to the indigenous people.

It is hot and unbearable, while the day enforces the people to work hard. The sun (*ilanga*) therefore brings about misery and shame to the people. *Usizi* (misery) is a dreadful factor which destroys life. Misery comprises of all bad elements, like drought, famine and death to name a few. It is an enemy to the people. The lateral-subject asks a rhetoric question to those who are left behind, about who they are going to turn to, to which shoulder they are going to cry on. This person left his mark on his household. Because the voice in the second stanza says:

*Bathi emsebenzini wadlondlobala waqonga,  
Bathi emphakathini wazilahla amathambo...*

(They say he excelled at work they say  
He was helpful to the society).

(Nxumalo, 1989:24)

The foregoing excerpt means the indigenous healer worked hand in glove with his ancestral spirits to heal the people. As a result he became an expert in healing, simple because he respects the calls of his ancestral-spirits and he is always humble. Ultimately his healing practice became outstanding, *wadlondlobala waqonga* (he excelled in his work superlatively). Be that as it may, he is the talk of the community because he works for it wholeheartedly, *wazilahla amathambo* (he was helpful to the community). At most, the valuable people do sacrifices in the community to safeguard its well being:

*Manje sebehlabela  
Okokugcina bemvalelisa,  
Sebeyombek' ezihlahleni,  
Ezikhosel' oyisemkhulu.*

(Now they sing for the last  
Time bidding him goodbye,  
They are to put him to rest  
Under the trees where  
His forefathers are buried.)

(Nxumalo, 1965:24)

It is typical of the indigenous people to sing and indigenous healers dance their dance during burial procession. Everything is carried out with dignity. *Sebehlebelela okokugcina* (singing the last hymn), happens when the corpse is carried out from the hut. Each household has a burial hymn, signifying a good send off to the spiritual world. *Sebemvalelisa* (bidding him goodbye), though it is painful to bury the dead, singing will ensure the dead a warm welcome by the ancestral-spirits. Instead of using the words bury, the lateral-subject opts for *sebeyombeka* (to place), this is a sign of respect. This also signifies that after putting him there under the trees, he will go to his forefathers. Only the forefathers take refuge under the trees since they are sent on errands to and from God. They are there under the trees to look after those who are still living. Buhrman (1977:17) concurs that:

Very early in the morning, there is a grave sitting  
The head of the family usually it is at the side of  
the cattle kraal, of the owner of the home.

The above quotation concurs with the context of the poem in the sense that while the digging of the grave goes on, a few men will be skinning the ox slaughtered to accompany the dead healer. This meat is called *ingovu*. There are two reasons for this custom. Firstly, the skin will provide a blanket covering for the corpse and secondly the meat is his *umphako* (provision). The belief is that he must have some food, preferably meat, to offer to the forefather, who will joyfully be giving him a majestic welcome as he enters their realm. This *ingovu* (meat for the dead), is never allowed into the kraal. It is, after the burial, roasted and eaten outside the home.

Whatever remains, is hung on tall trees and is eaten by late mourners as they arrive. Bones are burnt, mixed with herbs and thrown into the river water. This meat is eaten tasteless by all. Men collect *intaba* (gravestones) and place them in the grave yard well before the funeral starts. In areas where there are no stones, *umphafa* (branches) are placed on the entire grave and used as a death seal. A new entrance is made at the back of the death-hut and the corpse leaves through it to the grave. This is a sign that the departure is a temporary one. He has to come back later to take his place in the home.

The first wife's *isicholo* (the tuft of hair on the back of head which indicates her marital status) is removed and thrown into the husband's grave. It is believed that the immortality after death make the indigenous people feel they must take their wives with them and live a similar life. As the corpse is being placed into the grave in a sitting position and facing the kraal, the heir stands holding his spear at the side of the grave. This signifies that he takes over the headship, symbolised by the father's spear which he is now holding and ultimately possessing the power in the household. The wives sit close to the grave with faces covered while all this takes place. There is absolute silence, except for one who is doing the interment.

This is the most important part of the service as it is enshrined in this poem:

*Uselele engasanakujulukiswa,  
Langa nalusizi usethule.  
Engasenakulila zinyembezi.  
Abasele sebeyothi ba wakwaba?*

(He is dead  
Not to be tormented  
By scorching sun and sorrow  
He is stone dead.  
He will shed no more tears  
Those left behind  
Have no shoulder to cry on)?

(Nxumalo, 1989:25)

The above mentioned quotation puts emphasis on the life hereafter. This interment is the offering of the soul of the dead to the community of the dead. While in the interment service, names of all the dead fathers are mentioned and each is asked to receive and keep the dead man, an actual committal of the soul. As soon as the service is over, people are given *intelezi* (herb) to wash in the river. All this is connected with the ancestors who must now look after the family and ensure that death is not repeated. The death-hut is smeared with cow-dung mixed with *intelezi* (protective charm). The main reason for this is to remove any smell from the hut and drive away the infection that has caused death:



*Vulani iminyango ayinyukunya esaphila.*

(Open the doors he struggled to open when still alive).

(Nxumalo, 1989:24)

In the fifth stanza mentioned above, the descendants of the deceased indigenous healer are encouraged to carry on with good work. The deceased used to struggle hard to keep the home running and to give a helping hand to the sick. *Vulani iminyango* (open up the doors) means they must not sit back on their laurels and do nothing but instead strive to work hard. The voice in this poem gives therapy and encourages that instead of perpetual mourning, the mourners should continue to tackle the hardships of life. *Ayinyukunya* (struggling with) symbolises something difficult to overcome. This also signifies tactfully forcing circumstances to go one's way. When the burial is over the voice in the poem also encourages the people to go to workplaces.

*Kuqondwe ezinkundleni zemisebenzi kujulukwe.*

(To go to workplaces and sweat).

(Nxumalo, 1989:24)

They should not mourn forever, as the foregoing citation has indicated, since, it is typical of some indigenous people just to loiter and drink large quantities of beer all day long. The spirits dislike indolence; hence they are looking after the well-being of the people. It is envisaged in the last stanza that the deceased has to be emulated. His working skills have to be copied out in spirit by the offspring's. Relatives are soon cleansed after a day of burial, and are given strength. Here a goat is slaughtered. The meat is mixed with *amakhubalo* (herbs). Its meat is roasted and people bite it one by one, while the *inyanga* (the indigenous healer) knock their joints by a knobkerrie one at a time. This rite is more than the mere strengthening of the family by driving away the fear of death, and bad luck. The family is being immunised against possible future attacks. This rite, apart from being sorrowful, is mystical and highly religious. It expresses the fundamental reliance on the spiritual powers of the ancestors.

#### 4.4.3 *Amade Anginawo (I can't expatiate)* by L.B.Z. Buthelezi

This poem almost sends a similar message as that of Nxumalo's poem entitled *Akamxolelanga* (He did not forgive him). Intertextuality has taken place in these two poems in the sense that hardhearted people do not easily forget. This trend of hardened heart is not recommended in the healing- process and to the communal culture of the indigenous people. In the poem mentioned, the lateral subject is talking about the healing of the soul. He asks someone, who happened to differ with him, to set aside differences, and lead a normal life. But, his opponent is reluctant to heed the call.

*Uyongikhumbula sekusele  
Imizuzu emibili siqhume  
Isikhwehlela ngikuncenga  
Ukuba sisengelane ilala.*

(You will remember me  
When you are left with two minutes  
before you die  
Pleading you to forgive  
Each other).

(Buthelezi, 2000:21)

The foregoing excerpt tells of a petulant person in denial of forgiveness. It is noticeable, that the lateral subject tries to convince him to revive their mutual understanding but unluckily, that person does not agree. He is stubborn. At this moment the lateral-subject warns that *uyongikhumbula* (You will remember me) when that person is on a verge to die. The phrase, *siqhume isikhwehlela* (before you die) means when a person is convulsing and about to die, which is when the person can hardly express himself due to severe pains.

This person dies before the healing of his spirit. He is ferocious up to the end. A person to die in this situation is not accepted by the living-dead. He becomes a bad spirit and would be a living-dead that would bring about bad luck to his household, and the community at large. It is an indigenous custom to forgive and forget *sisengelane ilala* (to forgive each other).

If people of the same household bear grudges and engage in faction fighting the ancestral spirits become angry. Therefore *Ukukhumisana umzala* (to eat dry ashes) is the symbol of reconciliation highly recommended by the ancestral-spirits and it appeases them.

Gumede (1990:44) agrees that:

These are accepted as a call from the spirit world.  
It is said *abaphansi basifulathele* (our ancestors have turned their backs on us).

If a misunderstanding has angered the ancestral spirits, as quoted above, a goat is sacrificed as it is a beast par excellence and will placate the enraged ancestor. It goes without saying that spiritual purity is highly valued in indigenous healing:

*Sengathi ungeze waphazamiseka*  
*Ngenhliziyo angisabambile*  
*Ukuhlala epharadisi sisikisane*  
*Amavenge nawe ufukuthe*  
*Nabanye kanjalo!*

(I wish you are not disturbed  
I have forgiven you wholeheartedly  
To stay in paradise  
Cutting together strips of meat  
And you to eat up  
And others also)!

(Buthelezi, 2000:21)

The foregoing excerpt shows the kind heartedness of the lateral subject. On his way to his forefathers, he wishes him well, *ungaphazamiseki* (not to be disturbed), because he does bear any grudge. He tries his best to forgive him, *ngenhliziyi angisakubambile* (I have forgiven you wholeheartedly) so as to heal his spirit before he dies. The lateral-subject even wishes to stay with his rival in paradise. This paradise, according to Christian belief, is the place where saints stay peacefully. The place where there is neither sorrow or pain or famine. In *sisikisane amavenge* (cutting together long strips of meat) signifies staying together peacefully.

He even includes other people in paradise, wishing that they stay together with peace and tranquillity. *Nabanye kanjalo* (and others also), in paradise coincides with the indigenous belief of the life hereafter. In Christian doctrine, the saints are those who are healed by the blood of Jesus and are said to be the big congregation, whereas, in indigenous belief, the living-dead live together peacefully with their respective families underneath. In the same vein, (Beattie, 1969:45) says repentance and self-abasement that lead to change of heart and solemn pledges are altogether alien to indigenous religious life. Fervent appeals are unusual, because ancestor reverence is dominated by the idea of mutual obligations between the ancestors and their descendants:

*Ngivuke ekuseni ngathatha izinduku Makhosi!  
Zonke zishaya emhloeni  
Yebo ngawa ngamadolo kubafana bomoya  
Bazungeza maqede bathi ...  
Shodi wani mayi Lodi!*

(I woke up, in the morning and took sticks  
Ancestors! All of them detect the truth yes I knelt  
Down before the boys of the spirit they move  
Around in circles and said...  
There is something short my Lord!)

(Buthelezi, 2000:21)

If indigenous people are confused with a certain happening, the problem appears to go on and on. They consult with a diviner in a bid to detect the causal factor of that particular problem. The lateral subject in the above citation does the same. He looks up for sticks, as a tradition when one is to consult with a diviner, *ngathatha izinduku* (I took up sticks). In this excerpt, the lateral subject consulted with more than one diviner. The indigenous people do consult various diviners to ensure the truthfulness of smelling out. The lateral subject says all the diviners he consulted kept on hammering on one issue, *zishaya emhloeni* (they hammered on one truth). He swears by his ancestors *makhosi* (ancestors) because his ancestors were helpful with the fact that the person who is about to die, did something sinister to the lateral-subject. As a result the lateral subject wants to know the cause of ailment and misfortune, so that indigenous healers may rescue him.

Though the lateral subject has consulted with diviners, he is not satisfied. He now goes to faith healers. The lateral subject wants to be dead sure that diviners, coupled with faith healers, give the same answer. He bowed before the faith healers, *ngawa ngedolo kubafana bomoya* (I knelt down on my knee before the boys of the spirit); and prayed with them. Read (1966:94) concurs that there are as many methods of speaking to *abantu abadala* (forefathers) as there are *izangoma* (diviners). But, they all have common features. Some do indeed use *amathambo* (bones). Others have *abalози* (whistlers) who speak aloud. It is also noticeable that others have *isithunywa* (clairvoyance). Prophecies take their toll during church service or when the sick come in for healing. Someone with *isithunywa* (psychic intuition) will use prayer as a starting point, as it happens in the foregoing excerpt.

Then other members of the congregation allow the spirit to enter their bodies and to communicate with those who are around. As it occurs in the foregoing extract, *bazungeza maqede bathi* (they moved in circles and then they said); in tongues, *shodi wani mayi Lodi* (What is it that is insufficient my Lord), meaning there is something shortcoming. This might be due to the fact that the lateral-subject is not well. He needs healing, both physically and spiritually. One can safely assume that *abafana bomoya* (the Zionists) have Africanised, Christian beliefs. The *isithunywa* (psychic intuition) is more often than not identified with *idlozi* (ancestor) which does not feature only in Christian belief, but the holy-spirit from God. These Zionists move in circles when inviting the spirit. It is typical of the indigenous people to do things in circles, signifying indigenous unity. Gumede (1990:184) agrees to that:

*Abathandazi* (faith healers) stand in  
the same relation to people and their  
ancestors as mediums in Israel stood  
between the Israelis and Jahweh.

The foregoing extract, concurs with this poem in the sense that *abafana bomoya* (Zionists) interpret and carry over to the patient the communications from *abaphansi* (the ancestors):

*Bathi ake sithinte bathinta.*

(They said let us talk about it and they did).

(Buthelezi, 2000:21)

In the above citation, the *abafana bomoya* (the Zionists), communicated with the spirits and give the correct feedback. These Zionists are like the prophets. They are in a special relationship with the ancestral spirits and are able to interpret their will. They transmit the will to the patient and prescribe suitable sacrifices that must be made to make amends for errors of communication by the patient. As it was mentioned before these *abafana bomoya* (the Zionists) are spiritual healers who for one reason or another, deviated from the established Christian church. Teffo (1994:136) describes these separatist churches as the new wine of Christian teachings and religious organisations which is poured into old wineskins of indigenous religious belief and behaviour. The person in the poem is indeed a witch as the extract below spells out:

*Wangeqisela ngekhatazo  
Ngabathanda bekubiza ngegama  
Bengakwazi ungabazi ngingabazi  
Nguwena owamba ithuna  
Ngilahlekelwa ngamathuba ,  
Nginjenje kungenxa yakho.*

(You bewitched me secretly with medicine  
I liked them when they mentioned you by name  
They didn't know you I didn't know them  
It's you who dug up the grave  
I lost all opportunities as simple as that,  
Because of you).

(Buthelezi, 2000:21)

It is envisaged in the foregoing citation that something was wrong with the person who was about to die in the poem. In short, he bewitched the lateral-subject, but refuses to confess and to reconcile before dying. His evil deeds were executed secretly, *wangeqisela* (you did it tacitly). This boils down to the fact that the witch does his evil deeds alone at night and while no one sees him.

This purveyor of witchcraft gets the craft from the great. He causes ill-health and death. This evil doer peddles all sorts of social problems and is feared because he is known to kill without compunction. He occasions lightning at will and knows all dangerous poisonous plants, *ngekthazo* (poisonous herbs) as the lateral-subject is bewitched by *ikhathazo* (poisonous herbs) that projected all sorts of misfortunes. In *ngabathanda bekubiza ngegama* (I liked them when they mentioned you by name) the lateral-subject consulted with both indigenous diviner and spiritual healers. Squires (1991:131) concur:

Among the indigenous people, before an open accusation is made, the truth of which can only be decided by a legal divination (*umhlahlo*).

The foregoing excerpt concurs with the poem at stake, because the lateral-subject wanted to know the truth through *umhlahlo* (legal divination) and faith-healing. He has privately consulted also with several diviners to confirm his suspicions. The diviners and faith-healers all mentioned the name of the same witch in their verdict. The healers appear to be living far away from the lateral-subject, because he says the healers do not know this witch and vice versa. It goes without saying that the verdict is real. After the verdict has been pronounced, the diviner recommends the right healer whose service is appropriate to be called in by the victim.

The healer usually uses the leaves of *imunyane* (*leonotis leonurus*) which is a wild dagga and the bark of the weeping willow tree (*umnyezane*). He adds on *udakwa* (*rhus natalensis*) which is a very sound hypnotic and allows for good sleep. On the other hand, the indigenous healer strengthens his patient, through medicine, to ensure he is immuned to witchcraft. He uses medicine mixtures together with *mpindamshaye* (going back to purveyor of death). That is when the wizard tries to bewitch his victim; as it is in the case in this poem. The spell goes back to him, ferociously. The lateral-subject is lamenting over the deadly acts of the witch, *nguwena owamba ithuna* (it's you who dug up the grave). It means this witch used all possible means to destroy the lateral subject. At most, the witch of this nature uses killing medicines. He uses *ukukhafula* (to spray dangerous medicine) into the air.

The wizard chews the deadly poison into a pulp and sprays it in the direction of the victim. He calls the victim by name and uses the sharp horn to make stabbing acts toward the victim's hut. An antelope's horn is used as a dangerous weapon to cast a spell. This is done to ensure that the patient gets sicker every morning before he gets up and gets worse by the day. The witch dug up the grave for the lateral subject, but ultimately it is the witch who falls into it. *Ngilahlekelwe ngamathuba nginjenje* (I lost the opportunities as simple as that) signifies that the witch *phehla amanzi amnyama* (stirs up black water). As a result, the lateral-subject does not progress.

He is in stagnation and does not find a job because he suffers from *isidina* (unpopular). The ancestors appear to turn their backs on him. When this stirring of water occurs, it means that the witch is one of the members of the family. Everything slipped through his fingers and he is not sophisticated, *nginjenje* (I am as simple as that). To correct it a decoction of red *ubulawu* is prepared. After boiling, it is reddish in colour. The mixture is divided into two and is kept in two different clay pots. The cleansing medicine (*ubulawu*), as indicated, is used for steaming purposes and for emetics. For steaming, the mixture is brought to a boiling point and the patient kneels over the steam covered with a blanket (*isiphuku*) until he sweats profusely.

It is for this reason that the steaming medicine is kept separate as the sweat falls into the medicine and thus it cannot be for emetics. The emetic mixture is stirred with a short twig until it froths. The patient then takes a large amount of this, and vomiting is induced outside the homestead before dawn. After vomiting, the patient takes a mouthful of the mixture and squirts it out. He is then ordered to say; *hamba bubu* (go away evil) and *hamba sinyama* (go away bad luck). The lateral-subject complains that *kungenxa yakho* (it is because of you), the one who cast a spell on him. On the contrary, the witch does not utter even a single word of reconciliation. He has hardened his heart till the point of death. That is the reason the verdict of the society is to kill the witch, as he is evil. The evil spirit is inherently embedded in him. It goes without saying that one finds it difficult to heal the witch. His hands are dripping in the blood of innocent people. In the life hereafter he becomes an *indawe* (a vicious spirit).



On the other hand, the lateral-subject can change and live a normal life. After cleansing himself with red and white *ubulawu* (concoctions) all bad luck that was hovering above his head will soon disappear. What is remarkable with the two poems by Nxumalo, *Akamxolelanga* (He did not forgive him) and *Amade Anginawo* (I can't expatiate) by Buthelezi is that the voice in the poem did not confess his wrongdoings to *Ntombela*. In *Amade Anginawo* (I can't expatiate), the lateral-subject is asking his relative, who practices witchcraft, to reconcile with him. The opposite is envisaged. He does not utter even a single word. He prefers to die with witch baggage, rather than to ask for forgiveness from the lateral-subject. He does not want to humble himself, even *umhlahlo* (legal divination) stated categorically that he is a witch.

#### **4.5. The indigenous healer and his impeccable behaviour**

When the indigenous healer has qualified in his job, it is imperative for him to lead an impeccable life. He observes many taboos as a result to keep himself pure and does not provoke the anger of the ancestral spirits. Therefore, his actions are always directed by ancestral spirits. In the poem, *Uthembekile* (He is faithful) by Buthelezi, the lateral-subject outlines the faithfulness of the indigenous healer. He makes mention of all the things that the healer has performed to heal him, both physically and spiritually:

*Angikamtholi ofana naye ezakhe.  
Izethembiso akazihoxisi zingakafezeki.*

(I have not met yet who is like him.  
His promises are not withdrawn before  
They are accomplished).

(Buthelezi, 1994:57)

The lateral-subject, in the foregoing extract, praises the indigenous healer for his unfading love for his patients. No one is like him because he does not change his attitude towards his patient *angikamtholi ofana naye*, (I haven't met the one who is like him). He performs his healing duty outstandingly well. His *izethembiso* (promises) are not withdrawn before fulfillment (*zingakafezeki*).

In this regard, the indigenous healer does not tarnish himself when fighting against ailment. He is not a defeatist. When an ailment appears to be incurable, he goes to the extent of consulting with other indigenous healers to fight against the sickness. He is faithful to his calling:

*Wethembeka kimi  
Engifika senginuka phu!  
Akazange angivalele amakhala.*

(He was faithful to me  
When he found me stinking!  
He did not shut his nostrils).

(Buthelezi; 1994:57)

In the foregoing citation, the lateral-subject emphasises the faithfulness of the healer, *wethembeka kimi engifika senginuka phu* (he was faithful to me when he found me stinking). There are many ailments that make the person stink. It usually happens when the sick is powerless and when there is no one looking after him. Schapera (1980: 227) agrees that many diseases are called simply by name of the organ which is the seat of the pain for example, “I have a foot, I have a neck,” meaning one has a pain in these parts. The indigenous people do not recognise the disease as natural and some diseases come from defilement.

Others are sent by the spirits for neglect of custom, especially of ritual healing and killing at transition ceremonies. But most diseases, especially if the onset is sudden or if they are long continued, are believed to be caused by the sorcerers and witches as it is the case in the abovementioned excerpt. The lateral-subject was stinking with illness. As a result, the process of the disease and the method of treatment differ in each case. It is therefore essential that the ultimate cause of the disease should first be discovered. The most important thing is that the *inyanga* (indigenous healer) has the power to tell the sick everything about his illness and especially that he tells him about the beginning of the illness.

Diagnosis of these outside causes is therefore an essential issue in the indigenous people's treatment of disease. If a witch or sorcerer is responsible, it is further necessary to smell out the particular individual in order to make him lift his heavy hand from the patient or to destroy him so that his influence may cease. In the least, healers attempt to discover the material used so that medicine can be applied with success to the suffering body, *wethembeka kimi engifika senginuka phu* (he was faithful to me when he found me stinking). It coincides with what the faithful indigenous healer does in the execution of his duties.

Among the specialists dealing with disease, one has to distinguish between the pure herbalist and the diviners who specialise in diagnosis. The herbalists claim to have a wide knowledge of the properties of plants and to be able to compound ingredients from these sources for the cure of disease and the protection of man, beast and home. They also secure success in manifold activities and undertakings. There is also *inyanga yezilonda* (the healer who doctors sores). The traditional doctor applies *isidikili esimhlophe* (arthrosolen calocephalus-hulme) to cure open wounds. Roots are crushed into a paste which is strained and used to dress the open wounds. On the other hand, *umadolwana* (*pelargonium speciosum*) is utilised to cure septic rashes and wounds. Leaves and stalks are pounded into an infusion which is applied on septic wounds and septic rashes such as weeping eczema.

The indigenous people use its paste to wash their teeth, stopping the mouth to stink. Often times, the remedy is revealed to the *inyanga* (traditional doctor) by his ancestors. The indigenous people distinguish between *imithi emnyama* (black medicines) which are very powerful and work mostly as purgatives and emetics. They have strong astringent properties which take away the blackness, the evil. On the other hand, there are *imithi emhlophe* (white medicine) which are soothing and purifying in their effects and are always used to settle the body after the use of the black medicines. In the excerpt, the healer did not *vala amakhala* (show dislike), look down and dislike the bad state of affairs of the lateral subject. In the indigenous symbols and patterns, swearing at others is tantamount to practical witchcraft. It is believed that a person may bewitch by the word of mouth, *ukuloyisa* (swearing ferociously).

In the following stanza the voice says:

*Esengisongele ethi uzongigqema  
Inkamba beyibuza yengozi!  
Efunga egomela ethi  
Uzongicoshisa amaphepha...*

(When swearing and said he will make a gash  
On my head swearing ferociously  
Saying he will make me  
mentally deranged...)

(Buthelezi, 1994:58)

The lateral subject admires the healer when the latter offers him a psycho-therapy when the aggressor attacks the lateral-subject, baying for his blood. The healer is always there to comfort. It goes without saying that the healer has strengthened the lateral-subject since the witch has tried in vain to cast the spell on him. That is why he resorts to physical contact, *uzongigqema inkamba beyibuza yengozi* (he will make a gash on my head). The witch wants the lateral-subject to die.

He now swears to make him mad. In indigenous belief, making a person mentally-deranged is the cruelest witchcraft amongst them all. It is pathetic to see a person pick up papers being mad (*uzongicoshisa amaphepha*), but the witch then finds pleasure in seeing that. All in all, the lateral subject stands by the healer, saying he is faithful to him *uthembekile*. In the last stanza there is a repetition of *uthembekile* (he is faithful). The lateral-subject, repeatedly thanks the healer, when one day, he found him very ill. This repetition also coincides with stanza five, six and seven. This stanza describes the hardship experienced by Jesus on the cross:

*Wakholeka kakhulu ejuluka,  
Esemanzi te... eshikashikeka emthini.*

(He was very faithful when he sweats so drenched...  
feeling pains on the tree.)

(Buthelezi, 1994:58)

The foregoing excerpt talks about Jesus. He was so faithful to God and man when he sacrificed his own life (according to Christian doctrine). It was so difficult for him, when *ejuluka* (sweating) on the cross. The Christians believe he died for the atonement of sin. He was sorrowful and suffered excruciating pains, *eshikashika* (feeling pains) before he died. The voice in this poem uses the symbol *umuthi* (tree) instead of the cross. This signifies respect, since the cross symbolises capital punishment which is meant for criminals. Oosthuizen (1992:63) asserts that:

Healing and vital forces come from God and are  
transported to the world through Jesus Christ and  
those who have faith in Christ shall be treated.

The foregoing citation, as far as indigenous healing is concerned, compares Jesus Christ with the great ancestor. The great ancestor, in indigenous terms, is the one who is higher than other ancestors and is close to the Supreme-Being. The title given to Jesus, as Messiah, the Christ, the son of David, and the son of man, has no relevance to indigenous healing concepts. On the other hand, Christ may fit well as the great ancestor who comes to rescue people from evil who ask forgiveness on behalf of people from the Supreme-Being. Christianity and traditional healing get their healing powers from a similar source. In the poem the voice says:

*Ngiyalangazelela ukumbona mhlazana  
Kugoqwa imihla yami ngimkhinikele  
Ngezomhlaba ngimdumise ngimbonge.  
Angibonge ngokwethembeka kwakhe.  
Angeke ngimkhohlwe.*

(I am willing to see him when my days are  
Numbered, Telling Him about profane affairs  
For His faithfulness, I will never forget Him).

(Buthelezi, 1994:58)

In the above citation, the lateral-subject is willing to see both the traditional healer and possibly Jesus Christ. These two figures were helpful to him when in a predicament. He is willing to see Him when he dies, *mhlazane kugoqwa imihla yami* (when my days are

folded). The lateral subject talks of the life hereafter *ngimkhinikele ngezomhlaba* (telling Him about profane affairs) and will tell home more specifically about atrocities since he suffered from many afflictions on earth, perpetrated by his fellow human beings. The lateral-subject says that he is willing to exalt and praise Him; *Ngimdumise* (exalt) and *ngimbonge* (praise Him). He will do these gestures simply because the indigenous healer and possibly Jesus were his shoulders to cry on while on earth. They were of help to the extent that he will never forget them even in the life hereafter. *Angeke ngimkhohlwe* (I will never forget Him) means even the thanksgiving ceremony will be performed in the life hereafter since he did not get time to do this ritual in life. Kabasela (1977: 80) asserts that:

The sources of healing powers are from God and the Supreme-Being. People call upon the name Jesus Christ to heal them while others call upon their great ancestors to heal them.

The foregoing quotation means that there is a clear exchange between the approaches of healing. In indigenous belief it is based on ancestral spirit and is known to be powerful and that he can serve people. If the ancestors are failing to take control of the situation, the great ancestor is called to rescue. This title is suitable for Jesus in indigenous people's terms especially on healing. The Great Ancestor is at all times at the right hand of the Supreme-Being. It is so difficult for traditional healers to differentiate between them. The same thing applies to the Christian doctrine of Trinity.

It goes without saying that the voice in the poem has undergone acculturation since the context of the poem, *Uthembekile* (He is faithful) signifies the indigenous people. They find themselves living under two distinctively different influential concepts of healing, namely indigenous healing and Christian healing. Their identity as being indigenous people is very important for them and traditional healers are consulted whenever problems arise. At the same time they do not want to leave Christianity behind because they have seen that there is something good coming from it which may improve their way of living. They continue to have strong faith in traditional healing, despite of proliferation of Western medicine.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

It is interesting to know that there is a line-function in indigenous religion. The Supreme-Being is the overseer of the land and the living dead, the universe and the earth. There are deities in the form of great ancestors and ancestral spirits who act as God's agents. It lies squarely on the shoulders of the ancestors to send messages from the living to the Supreme-Being and vice-versa. On the other hand, the livings have to obey the laws of God and heed to the indigenous culture of the ancestors. They have to obey rituals and be respectful all the time. Failing to do so, they face the wrath of the ancestors.

A plethora of hardships come to the fore in the form of deaths and drought. Indigenous healers are also mandated by ancestors to pursue their work. The ancestors communicate with the living through dreams. They show them the medicines to use for healing and also give them skills to heal and smell out wizards and sorcerers. The doctor's *izinyanga* and *izangoma* (diviners) are given powers by ancestors to heal. The indigenous medicine may be described as the total body of knowledge or techniques for the preparation and use of substances, measures and practices in use, explicable or not, that they are based on the socio-cultural and religious bed rock of the indigenous communities.

They are founded on personal experience and observations handed down from generation to generation. They are used for the diagnosis, prevention or elimination of imbalances in the physical, mental and social being. One may safely say that indigenous medicine is thus a distillation of indigenous culture. The spirit that moves it is shared by all forms of medicines, since the fear of disease and death and the need for food and health have led men in every age and clime to seek assistance from all that nature can offer them. All the aspects of the link between ancestral spirits and healing are enshrined in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry as indicated above. In the subsequent chapter, research into rituals and training of healers will receive attention as also embedded in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry.

## Chapter 5

### Rituals and training of neophytes

#### 5. Introduction

In this chapter, rituals and training of neophytes, both diviners and Zionists will receive attention. Since both diviners and Zionists are required to obey and observe certain rituals to ensure their perfection in their work. When beliefs such as creeds and myths are combined with rituals and ceremonies they contribute to the overall indigenous religious patterns. A religious belief not only assumes the existence of sacred God and other beings, but by repetition of rituals, strengthens and re-affirms the faith of indigenous people. Ritual practices guide the indigenous people to the unseen world. In this regard beliefs not only describe and explain sacred beings and the unseen world, but most importantly of all they explain the ways in which the unseen is meaningfully related to the actual human world. For an indigenous people's understanding of religion in general, ritual is more important. Christiana (1964:6) asserts:

Ritual is the active, observable side of religious behaviour. It can indeed include any kind of behaviour sacrificing life, reciting formulas, etc.

The foregoing citation indicates that the ritual's sacred nature depends not on its intrinsic character but on the mental and emotional attitudes held by the group towards it and the social and cultural context within which it is performed. The same behaviour, eating, for example may be ordinary in one context, but sacred in another, such as when one partakes of it during the first fruit rituals. Ritual, in other words, defines the context within which sacred behaviour takes place. Ritual also assigns roles to the participants. Through regular recurrence and meticulous repetition it channels emotion and thus enhances the emotion evoking power of the symbols used. An important function of ritual is to fortify faith in the unseen world and to afford a symbolic means of expression for religious emotion. Since the religious emotion is viewed as expressible, all attempts to express it are approximations and therefore symbolic.



Yet as a means of making the unseen world of sacred objects and beings live in the minds and hearts of the indigenous people, symbolism though less exact than more intellectualised modes of expression, has a peculiar potency of its own. This is because symbols have a power to evoke feelings and associations over and above mere verbal formulation of the things they are believed to symbolise. Hence, it is not hard to understand that sharing common symbols is a particularly effective way of cementing the unity of a group of worshippers. The sharing of belief and ritual implies that the group members' relationship to the sacred is in some way intimately connected with the tribe's moral values.

This implicit connection is made apparent in the preservation of some particular animal. Krige (1965:303) concurs that a diviner becomes particular about his food and abstains from certain foods, especially *amasi* (curdled milk), confining his diet to meat, dregs of beer with boiled maize and wild herbs. Before becoming a fully fledged diviner, the diviner becomes a neophyte, undergoing initiation and training under an experienced and qualified diviner. One of the most salient features of the indigenous societies is the role of the ancestral spirits. Zionists acknowledge that the ancestral spirits are responsible for various illnesses that are believed to be products of social tensions and conflicts. In recognising the ancestral spirits, Zionists reveal their belief in kinship and family ties as the basis for ordering and maintaining social relationship.

### **5.1 Background of Zionism**

The context within which Zionism first took shape is visualised by its founders as analogous to the wilderness in which the Israelites wandered as they struggled in their search for water, and a God who would meet their needs. Giving the background of the initial formation of Zionism, (Sheldon, 1982:63) asserts that it began as a religious movement instigated by Whites, who had been influenced by the philosophy and writings of John Dowie. Dowie founded the first Zionist church in Zion City, Illinois, in 1896 and there claimed the title of First Apostle of Jesus Christ. The central belief in Dowie's messianic message was that of divine healing, a phenomenon which Dowie believed could be consummated without the use of medication or doctors.

Dowie's teachings also involved taboos on eating pork and the use of alcohol and tobacco. Dowie set forth his message of healing based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and the Coming King. Dowie was also the moving force behind Daniel Bryant who pursued healing activities, first among the Whites, and later among the Zulus. Bryant inaugurated an intensive campaign of baptising and healing which drew hundreds of Whites and indigenous people into Zionism.

In the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War and Bambatha rebellion, mistrust cropped up among indigenous people that led to the withdrawal of Whites from Zionism. Throughout its development, Zionism has splintered into many churches and smaller groups which have been individually inspired and led. This makes the task of constructing a complete history of Zionism very cumbersome. However, the emphasis which Zionists have placed on baptism observance of the communion use of the Bible and faith healing have linked them with Christianity to a greater extent. These practices and rituals are individually selected by Zionist healers from a large corpus of Christian teachings and beliefs.

The undeniably eclectic approach in balancing Christianity with indigenous traditions makes Zionism distinct from many other religions found in the indigenous societies today. The roots of this eclecticism are traceable to specific prophecies and visions which are believed to have carried the interest of the Holy Spirit, but which also derive from the whims and eccentricities of Zionist prophets themselves. Sundkler (1961:55) says Zionism could be appropriately defined as a syncretistic indigenous movement with healing, speaking in tongues, purification rites and taboos as the main expressions of its faith.

He stresses the influence of the Holy Spirit and of divine healing, as well as the combination of both indigenous and European cultural elements. Sundkler (1961:66) also observes that any church which exhibits the six features of healing, prophets, drums, dancing, night communion and river baptism, may be classified as Zionist. The Zionists consider Christ as always having been present everywhere. Christ has been present in Africa, but possibly meeting Him through the Cross is a new way of understanding the measure of His commitment to creation.

His life on earth shows that at the heart of totality stands the Cross, not only as a shadow and an unbearable burden, but equally as a light in the midst of the everyday world. Zionists also hold the indigenous belief that *Mvelinqangi* (the Supreme Being) is far away in his place of abode, the exact location of which is not known. As a result, offerings are made to the ancestors who are known to the people, since they are the ones who are still personally remembered by someone in their family who receive offerings of sacrifices. Mbiti (1990:167) asserts that:

Those go back four or five generations and we call them the living dead.

These living dead pass requests, prayers and wishes of the people to *Mvelinqangi* who, under normal circumstances, is not involved in the day-to-day matters of the people on a personal level. The offspring communicate with ancestors in dreams. Many dreams are simple for indigenous people to remember the next day and interpret correctly with well recognised systems of symbols. Very often the average individual is not qualified or able to read the ancestors' message in his dream. It is, therefore, necessary to consult those who have skills. The spiritual healer and the diviner are two people who act as mediums and provide a 'telephonic' bridge between the ancestral spirits and the populace at large. *Abathandazi* (spiritual healers) stand in the same relation to people and their ancestors as the mediums of communication. It goes without saying that *abathandazi* and *izangoma* (diviners) form the link between the living and the dead. It is held by the indigenous people that *ababonayo* (prophets) foretell droughts and other major events.

## **5.2 The missionaries' teachings and the Zulu beliefs**

The missionaries had a problem. They found a strong virile culture based on a religion centuries old. Chonco (1971:164) says:

There were strong socio-magico religious beliefs which were as much part of the Zulu as his black colour and could not be rubbed off his skin.

One can thus deduce that indigenous medicine, like indigenous religion, cannot be wiped off by an imposition of a White man's religion. No transformation was possible within the indigenous cultural ethos. It was, therefore, necessary to impose a stronger taboo in the hope that the indigenous culture would be swamped and submerged. Indigenous music was taboo; indigenous marriage customs were condemned, the marriage was declared unlawful and sinful and the indigenous traditional communities were thoroughly uprooted. The indigenous traditional healing was declared un-Christian, unclean and an anathema for all practicing Christians.

Even little children could not go to school with their skin fasts as this was considered obscene. Little girls could not be admitted to school without dresses. The indigenous children went to school every morning from Monday to Friday dressed in European attire, but went back to dressing in their skins in the evenings. The non-Europeanised children remained very comfortable in their traditional dress. This simply means the indigenous person is steeply immersed in his own culture and religion but out of convenience he must live in the White man's environment. He needs the Christian minister to baptise his child, confirm the child, get his son married, and bury his mother.

However, in the night or when sickness strikes, the indigenous person visits the diviner and the traditional healer to find out who caused the misfortune of illness in his family. Some indigenous people live in two worlds, i.e. the European way of life and the indigenous philosophy of life. Laced with rituals, training of diviners and spiritual healing, both Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poems have received attention.

### **5.3 The birth, marriage and rituals**

The indigenous people engage in *ukumisela* (make certain) ritual when a wife does not give birth to a baby boy. A traditional-healer is called upon to communicate with ancestral spirits. He also gives the pregnant woman herbs to ensure her child is a boy. The pregnant woman then fastens her waist with a string to prevent miscarriage until she gives birth to the child. In contrast though in the poem entitled *Yasho Ingelosi* (so said the angel) by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo, the angel deity takes an initiative wishing Sibusiso all the best.

In this poem, Nxumalo uses an apostrophe in the form of prayer, where earthly preparation and rituals for the prospective new born child have to be done. The line function is between the Supreme Being, the angel and the parents. The angel is a deity used by the poem in the place of the ancestors. This angel is *isithunywa* (a messenger). In this regard, the poem Africanised the Christian beliefs since according to Christian doctrine there is no direct communication between angels and the living. It only occurs in the indigenous religion where deities communicate with the living through dreams, rituals and prayers.

This is *amadlozi aphile* (ancestor given). (Jeff, 2001:35) asserts:

Some families announce the pregnancy to the  
ancestors so that they protect the unborn child.

The foregoing citation espouses how indigenous people value the pregnancy of women and that everything depends on the mercy of the ancestral spirits. It is imperative that expecting mothers drink certain medicines that will open the passage for the baby and increase the lubrication. For instance, the donkey's placenta and the skin of the python are believed to be very good for parturition, when the woman is about to deliver and a midwife is called in. After delivery, the placenta and the umbilical cord are separated with a sharp instrument. Indigenous people bury the placenta in the labour hut, contrary to how it is done when the child is born in clinics and hospitals.

*Phana lo mfana abazali abayibo,  
Abayoba nothando lwempela  
Abayoba nekhono lokumkhulisa  
Lokumbamba lokumlola,  
Lokumlolonga abhekane  
Nomhlaba awehlule.*

(Give this boy proper parents,  
Who will love,  
Who will be skilful to nurture him,  
To prepare him up so as to face this world  
And concur it).

(Nxumalo, 1965:51)

It is noticeable in the foregoing citation that the angel wished the boy Sibusiso (Blessing) all the best. This concurs with the rituals performed by the indigenous people, in the sense that the parents take care of the newborn child. He asks God to give *lo mfana* (this boy) good parents filled with *uthando* (love). This unconditional love is shown in the first initiation of the child, which takes place during the disposal of the placenta and the umbilical cord. The child is received into the community in which it is to live and as a new member, it must be given a name for identification. In this poem, the deity has already named the boy *Sibusiso* (Blessing).

The poem does not give the reason though why this name is given to the boy, but more often than not the name of the one of his ancestors is given to him as a memorial. In some cases, this is to invoke the spirit of the ancestor so that it blesses the household. Some names may mark occasions, while others describe the life in the home. Nearly all indigenous names mean something or interpret an event that took place in the neighbourhood at the time of birth. It does not follow, however, that if the child is given a religious name, he will later on become for example, a medium or *inyanga* (a doctor) like his ancestor for whom he is called. Love for the living dead and the belief that they care for the living make the indigenous people think of them and long to see them.

Thus by naming their children after the ancestors, the better their comfort and hope. Belonging to a family means living in close communication with the dead and the living. In the quoted poem, the deity wishes *Sibusiso* (Blessing) to have parents who will *lomlola* (sharpen) and *lokumlolonga* (mould) him. Belonging to the family means indigenous teachings and moulding will take place. It will also ensure the belief in the living and dead as an entity will be inculcated in the offspring. Knowledge about bringing up a child is considered the most important aspect of indigenous peoples' education. According to custom, the indigenous men may not touch their children until they are ten years of age. It is, therefore, the duty of women to bring up a child in every respect, as is evident in the following stanza when the voice says:

*Afunde ukuthemba abanye abathethelele  
abangamethembi yena afunde ukubekezela  
Nesineke, noma yena angabekezelelwa.*

(He has to learn to pin his hopes in others,  
forgive those who do not trust him.  
He has to learn to be tolerant and be patient,  
even though they do not tolerate him).

(Nxumalo, 1965:52)

The foregoing excerpt places emphasis on initiation rites of the lateral-subject. Growing up is a big task. It needs the whole village to raise this boy; parents alone cannot do it. Sibusiso (Blessing) is going to live with amongst other people. As an indigenous person, he is to pursue the concept *ubuntu* (humane-ness), and has to *themba* (pin his hopes) in other people. Some will love him and others will treat him with suspicion, but he has to forgive his adversaries, *abathethelele* (forgive those) *abangamethembi yena* (who do not trust him). These are the golden rules that parents teach their offspring *ukufunda ukubekezela nesineke* (to learn to be tolerant and have patience). This ensures good communal life and good citizenship to a greater extent. Mbiti (1990:120) is of the opinion with initiation of a child.

He says after initiation the child is born in another state, which is the stage of knowledge. The physical pain which the child is encouraged to endure is the beginning of his training for difficulties and sufferings of later life. Outside the community environ, life is robust and he is taught to be patient, *noma yena angabekezelelwa* (even if they are intolerant to him) as endurance of physical and emotional pain is a great virtue among indigenous people, since in indigenous societies life is surrounded by much pain from various sources. In the stanza there are similarities of ideas. There is no development of ideas. In stanza three, we read:

*...ikulindele ukuzondwa.*

(...he has to be aware of being hated).

(Nxumalo, 1965:51)

In the same vein, in stanza five, the voice says:

*Eyozondwa yona ingazondi.*

(They will hate him but not to hate in return).

(Nxumalo, 1965:52)

It is noticed in the above citation that there is nothing but tautology. The poem has just deviated from stages of development of the boy child, since the next stage after first initiation is ear cutting. Nowadays most of the indigenous people have discarded these rituals, except for *ukudebeza* (incising the face) which is still in vogue in Southern KwaZulu-Natal. The sole purpose of *ukudebeza* is to curb eye disease, as when this ritual is not done the person suffers from watery eyes and short-sightedness. Ear cutting is done to prevent petulance, which is apparent during the adolescent stage.

This remarkable sentence is very striking:

*Benze uSibusiso indoda.*

(Mould Sibusiso to manhood).

(Nxumalo, 1965:52)

The foregoing excerpt shows how patriarchal the indigenous people are. A man is more highly rated rather than his female counterpart. It is, therefore, imperative to mould a boy to become an honourable man. The decisive stage of training the boy is when he reaches the adolescence stage. This is a crucial stage as *Sibusiso* (Blessing) undergoes manhood training. It is the time when he shows arrogance and rudeness, in the formation of character. His parents have the feeling his complacency is so strong that the new teaching makes little progress. That is the reason this deity, the *ingelosi* (angel) pleads to the Supreme Being in the opening of each stanza:

*Phana, baphe, benze, bamakhe, muphe.*

(Give, please offer, make them, mould him, please do give).

(Nxumalo, 1965:51-53)



These fluttery utterances signify that raising a child is not an easy task. The spirits and the Supreme-Being per se are to be asked to give a helping hand, as this boy child is a gift, coming from the Supreme-Being. The boy is obliged to obey the indigenous laws and live in accordance with the propriety prescribed by the community, deities and the Supreme-Being at large:

*Ebala izinhlanhla esezayehlela...*

(Counting the blessings that showered on him...).

(Nxumalo, 1965:51)

These blessings may not fall upon *Sibusiso* (Blessing) when he happens to deviate from norms and values. To count on the blessings as cited above do happen when practicing a thanksgiving ritual. The ritual is conducted to appease ancestral spirits and, of course, God Himself. Failing to do that, *Sibusiso* (Blessing) may face the wrath of the ancestral spirits. Bozongwana (1990:22) agrees that:

Instead of a formal initiation rite, the indigenous people and ancestor have a short, and yet as effective ceremony to mark the puberty changes.

The foregoing citation means that when a boy has his night emission of sperm, he gets up early the next morning before others and goes to the river to wash himself. When he comes back he is not allowed to eat food in the day time, but only at night. When the period is over, he is given medicated food by the traditional doctor. The break with childhood is dramatised by the act of washing. This ritual of washing may also carry with it the deeper religious idea of purification from the state of unproductive life. To be considered tough is an approval and qualification that the boy may now be fully incorporated into the wider society. As this following excerpt says:

*...indoda engenakubalisa ngezindumalo ezedlule...*

(...the man who will never complain with disappointments that faded away...).

(Nxumalo, 1965:52)

In this above citation, the poet has overlooked the stern advice that Sibusiso's parents and the traditional doctor give him medicine, to harden the boy to face the world. Instead the poet has conveyed the message as a kind of supplication. During puberty the parents are very vigilant. The boy is taught how to conduct himself well and not to misbehave with girls. On the other hand, the traditional doctor performs a ritual where he puts maize meal at the end of the stick which he thrusts at the boy. The boy must hold it with his mouth. This ritual makes the boy strong. A typical indigenous man does not cry or complain about trivialities (*indoda engenakubalisa*). He is not disappointed if things do not go his way, and he lets bygones be bygones (*ngezindumalo ezedlule*).

They do not bear grudges or gossip and are not captious. In the last stanza the voice speaks about natural love. It is habitual that when a boy reaches puberty he develops strong love feelings. He seeks out pretty girls for courting. Apart from good looks, if he is eloquent, the boy wins many girls. To an indigenous boy, having many girlfriends is pride and honour. At times the boy may become promiscuous which is unacceptable of course. That is the reason the poet says:

*Muphe uthando lwendalo.*

(Give him natural love).

(Nxumalo, 1965:53)

The foregoing citation means that the boy should have pure love, not full of greed and lust, since greed brings about jealousy and animosity, as boys fight and kill over girls. In the same vein, love full of sentiments is often laced with lust. Lust is taboo in indigenous people for intent having sex with a girl before marriage is not permissible as this may result in unwanted pregnancy. That is why in certain indigenous societies, marriage negotiations are arranged by parents to ensure purity amongst the boys and the girls. Mbiti (1990:135) agrees that as a rule parents come to a compromise. Then the two sides fix the amount of presents to be exchanged. Traditional beer is drunk as a ritual. This is a symbol of friendly attitude and the willingness to establish fellowship and readiness to form a marriage covenant.

In the last stanza, the poem fails to mention some of the symbols and patterns of indigenous men. This includes polygamy in the traditional sense. Maybe the reason is that the poem juxtaposes both indigenous and Christian mindsets, wherein Christianity does not promote polygamy. On the contrary, the poem encourages Sibusiso to appreciate the beauty of women when it says:

*Abone izimbali akwazise.*

(When glaring at flowers he has to honour you).

(Nxumalo, 1965:53)

The abovementioned quotation cites the beauty of flowers. These flowers symbolise the beauty of girls. They are the flowers of the nation. The poem uses the sense of sight in glorifying the beauty and, of course, God who is the provider of fertility. Goody (1962:85) says:

He who has many descendants has the strongest  
possible manifestation of immortality.

It is evident in the foregoing citation that polygamy raises the social status of the family. It is instilled in the minds of the indigenous people that a big family earns its head great respect in the eyes of the community. Often it is the rich families that are made up of polygamous marriages. If the first wife has no children, or bears only daughters, it follows almost without exception that her husband will add another wife, partly to remedy the immediate concern of childlessness and partly to remove the shame and anxiety of apparent unproductivity.

It might happen in the case of Sibusiso in this poem that many prayers and supplications were pronounced to God, through ancestral spirits and Jesus. To be productive in terms of having children is one of the essential attributes of being a mature human being. The more productive a person is, the more he contributes to society at large. When an indigenous family is made up of several wives with their households, it means that in times of need there will always be someone around to help.

This is corporate existence. In the true sense of the word, polygamy helps to prevent and reduce unfaithfulness, especially on the part of the husband. It is inculcated into the minds of the indigenous children from childhood to adulthood to love and honour fellow human beings. In this poem, the voice wishes Sibusiso:

*Athande umfowabo.*

(To love his brother).

(Nxumalo, 1965:53)

The foregoing citation touches on the concept of *ubuntu* (humanness). The word *athande* (to love) and *umfowabo* (his brother) are all relatively inclusive. This love is not literally directed to his biological brother. Rather, it is directed to all people irrespective of colour or race. This is what Mbiti (1990:14) calls:

I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.

One may deduce from the foregoing citation that the existence of the individual is the existence of the corporate, where the individual may physically die. This does not relinquish his social-legal existence of the corporate, where the individual may physically die. Since the 'we' continues to exist for the 'I', this continuity is of great psychological value. It gives a deep sense of security in an otherwise insecure world in which indigenous people live. This poem has a happy ending. The boy is told to listen to music. The indigenous people are known for their love of music, and sing beautifully when they are working, performing rituals or even in sorrow.

*Ezwe umculo akubonge. "Amen!"*

(And listen to music and thank you. "Amen")!

(Nxumalo, 1965:53)

The foregoing citation depicts one of the outstanding symbols of unity and communion with the shade is the music. While *ingoma* (hymn) is associated with national events, particularly the festival of first fruits, *ihubo* (song) is sung only on occasions related to happenings within lineage. It binds people together and has a sacred character.

When it is sung, the shades are present in a very real and intimate manner. Even God loves music. He enjoys music for both indigenous and Christian groupings when they (*bonga*) thank Him for the great things He has done. In this regard, Sibusiso is inspired to (*ezwe*) interpret the music and participate in the ritual for thanksgiving.

#### **5.4 The exclusive Nomkhubulwana Ritual**

*Nomkhubulwana*, known as *Inkosazana yeZulu*, is the heavenly princess. The princess is looked upon as being a virgin and as such, she is closely related to the young marriageable girls as well as to fertility in humans and animals. She is also associated with the sky. She is regarded as being everlasting in that she neither becomes older nor changes. From time to time she gives advice and rules which have neither been sanctioned by society nor derived from the shades. The indigenous Zulu people believe *Nomkhubulwana* derived from a reed soon after *uMvelinqangi* (the Supreme Being).

They believe that *Nomkhubulwana* gives showers of rain as well as good harvest. During drought, therefore, the Zulus used to ask for rain from *Nomkhubulwana*. Even if crops wilt and die in the fields, the indigenous Zulus used to feel it was time to cultivate *Nomkhubulwana*'s field as an act of appeasement. They used to say that they are out to declare war against *Nomkhubulwana*, since she needs her field. Msimang (1975:351) says the field was cultivated but never weeded. (My own translation). The Zulu people had a belief that *Nomkhubulwana* resides on top of the mountains, where there are deep blue lakes.

##### **5.4.1. *Inkondlo ngoNomkhubulwana* (A poem on Nomkhubulwana) by L.B.Z. Buthelezi**

In the following excerpt, the poem espouses the inspiration brought about by *Nomkhubulwana* (the Queen of Rain) to the poet, inspiring him to write poems:

*Wena oyinhliziyi enkulu yogqozi.  
Wena ongumthombo omkhulu wenkondlo.  
Wena oyisizalo sembongi yendabuko.*

(You the big heart for inspiration.  
You the big fountain for poetry.  
You the source of traditional praise-bard).

(Buthelezi, 1995:33)

The above quotation tells how inspirational *Nomkhubulwana* is to the life of the poet. He calls her *inhliziyo* (heart) *enkulu yogqozi* (big for inspiration). The voice is very nostalgic about the rituals performed for *Nomkhubulwana*. As the maidens used to pray and recite a poem for the princess, the voice in the poem considers *Nomkhubulwana* as *umthombo* (fountain) for the poetry (*inkondlo*). *Inkondlo* (poem) in this regard refers to the abandoned customs which used to be performed by indigenous people. These customs which were fruitful and real were carried out as it was indicated in the foregoing paragraphs. *Mvelinqangi* came first, then followed by *Nomkhubulwana* from the reed.

Eventually the rest of the indigenous people followed suit. That is the reason the voice in the poem *Nomkhubulwana* is *isizalo* (progeny) of *imbongi* (praise-bard) of *indabuko* (the indigenous), since the indigenous Zulu people humble themselves to *Nomkhubulwana* when asking for assistance. For instance when the indigenous people plea for a plenty of harvest and for rain. In the following quotation the voice highlights the rituals performed for *Nomkhubulwana*. As the voice does not indicate all the details on how rituals are conducted, the ideas are not logically enunciated:

*Ngihanjelwe nguNomkhubulwana*  
*Ungibizela enkundleni ngiyavuma*  
*Uthi mangithule amagalelo ami.*  
*Ngingelokothe ngiwaqhathanise nawakho*  
*Wena uzalwa nguMvelinqangi kangilutho.*

(I am being visited by *Nomkhubulwana*.  
She calls upon me to the scene I agree  
She says I have to deliver my heavy blows.  
I can never compare mine with yours.  
You are the *Mvelinqangi*'s progeny I am  
nothing).

(Buthelezi, 1995:33)

The foregoing excerpt needs to be unpacked while at the same time, explaining the ritual for *Nomkhubulwana's* field. In the excerpt, the voice talks about visitation. The voice knows that this visitation compels him to perform a certain cultural duty. As he is a male, he has to give his sister his traditional attire to wear, and then the sister has to perform his chores such as looking after cattle. This was a symbol of complaint about the atrocities of famine and drought. (Berglund, 1976:65) describes *Nomkhubulwana* as being a very beautiful girl of 20 years with shiny skin and white attractive teeth.

She is always smiling, except when something bad has happened. Then she brings news about drought and famine. She is looked upon as shy and bashful in a becoming manner, neither talkative nor inquisitive, but merely interested whenever people wish her to see things. Hence the voice says *Ngihanjelwe nguNomkhubulwana* (I am being visited by *Nomkhubulwana*). The princess *Nomkhubulwana* appears in the morning mists. She is closely associated with the rainbow. The voice in the poem says *uthi mangethule amagalelo ami* (she says I have to deliver my blows), symbolising what the lateral subject has to do during drought and famine. The voice goes on to explain, *wena uzalwa uMvelinqangi* (you are the progeny of the Supreme Being) meaning the voice has no power at all to bring about rain and abundance of breed.

Since the princess has the ability to bring steady and frequent rains, these are brought about by pleading with her father, the Supreme Being. One may safely assume then that the cause of frequent droughts recently is the fact that the indigenous people no longer honour *Nomkhubulwana* as they did during the former times. When performing the ritual asking for plenty and for a good harvest, the girls secretly brew beer known as *uNomdede*. Msimang (1975:351) maintains that it is brewed on the occasion when the first mist in spring is noticed on the mountain, indicating that *inkosazana* (princess) has come down from the sky onto the mountain. Out of respect to the princess, men avoid the mountain, especially in the early spring. Men do not fear her but merely respect her by not going to places where she is known to appear.

That is why the voice in the poem says *ngingelokothe ngiwaqhathanise nawakho* (I can never compare mine and yours). The voice respects *Nomkhubulwana* since she is the one who brings about plenty and good fortune. As she has supernatural powers, she needs to be worshipped. The beer is brewed from millet brought from their respective homes, with each girl contributing a quantity which is given to the girl appointed for the purpose of brewing the beer. While the beer is fermenting, the girls borrow their brother's everyday wear, dancing shields (*amagqoka*) and sticks. This ritual was celebrated in December. It is unfortunate that this development is missing in the foregoing poem. Dressed in their brothers' attire, the girls would enter their fathers' cattle enclosure and drive out cows to be herded on the slopes of the hill. One of the beasts ought to be a heifer while another ought to be a milk-producing cow. At the grazing ground, they would leave the cattle under the care of a few girls.

The rest would climb further up the mountain to a known place, each carrying a calabash containing the beer they brewed, some maize, millet, pumpkin seeds and beans. Berglund (1976:66) asserts that some of the calabashes containing beer would be placed on a large overhanging stone for *iNkosazana* to come and see them clearly. The packets containing the seeds would be placed next to the beer containers. Then the girls would sing a song inviting *Nomkhubulwana* to come and partake of her food. The rest of the beer would be drunk by the girls during the course of the day. The seeds would be removed in the afternoon when they returned home, and used in the field tilled in honour of the princess elsewhere at a later stage. That field would never be weeded after cultivation.

There is no fixed quantity of seeds that had to be taken to the celebration on the mountain. They took those seeds so that *Nomkhubulwana* could see them and give them good crops, because she knew that they were for her own garden. Then she drove away *isangcokolo* (common maize grub) so that they might reap good crops. Beier (1966:87) says that the presence of cattle in close vicinity of the girls' celebration of *Nomdede* is interpreted as a fertility symbol. They take a heifer so *Nomkhubulwana* would see that they were nurturing the animal so that there might be milk in the calabashes. Again the heifer was like them in that it had not given birth.



He further describes that a ceremony was performed in the fields when the plants were high enough. This ritual is associated with *Nomkhubulwana* through *Nomdede* beer. He further asserts that each girl carried some red powdered clay and a twig of *ulethi* bush. They pass through the fields and sprinkle the plants with the powdered clay, touching the plants with the twigs. On a later occasion, they will pass through the fields again uprooting plants which have been attacked by maize grub, in the company of elder women on this occasion. They will go to a remote place and bury the ears of millet in the earth while the grub-eaten stalks will be thrown into a river.

The lateral subject appears to be confused in this poem, when he says:

*Ngindinda ezintabeni ngiqwabinga.*

(I am loitering on the mountain tops  
Looking anxiously).

(Buthelezi, 1995:35)

In the foregoing citation, the lateral subject seems to be perplexed in the execution of the *ukucela inala* (asking for abundance ritual) since this ritual has changed through the course of the years. He says *ngindinda* (I am roaming about), meaning he is in search of the *Nomdede* ritual as many an indigenous person has abandoned this ritual. More often than not, the indigenous people do not even know what it is all about, with *Nomkhubulwana*. He, therefore, goes to *ezintabeni* (mountain top) to gain knowledge from the wise people in this context.

The voice uses the archaic word (*ngiqwabinga*) signifying research into this fading ritual. He really is confused because his stanzas do not logically follow the content of the *Nomkhubulwana* ritual. Instead, he touches on the literary works he has compiled. He does not put his finger on the kernel of *Nomkhubulwana's* ritual, in the true sense of the word. The poem also missed the point in failing to mention the rain ritual. Instead, the voice talks about *Nomkhubulwana's* poem, and not even her song:

*Inkondlo ngeyakho Nomkhubulwana...  
wayihaya inkondlo.*

(This poem belongs to you *Nomkhubulwana*,  
You have recited this poem).

(Buthelezi, 1995:34)

Even though the deeds of *Nomkhubulwana* in the foregoing excerpt are not tabled, the voice in the poem simply praises *Nomkhubulwana* for the sake of her being the princess. The voice says *inkondlo ngeyakho* (this poem belongs to you) meaning *Nomkhubulwana* must rejoice since the voice's inspiration to write poems comes from *Nomkhubulwana*. One may safely say that this voice identifies the inspiration for writing poems with the abundant and soothing rainfall brought about by *Nomkhubulwana*. The asking for rain ritual is part of the *Nomdede* ceremony. Carried out during severe drought, the girls would come out in numbers to honour *Nomkhubulwana*.

Only girls are to honour and worship the princess. They would wake at dawn, smear their faces with red clay, and drive the herd of cattle up the mountain while singing for *Nomkhubulwana*. On the mountain top they would cover their naked bodies with leaves. They would then turn the parts of stones that were basking in the sun to face downwards. This was meant to change the climate. While doing so, they kept on singing till midday. Soon thereafter the girls would tumble down the mountain wielding leaves. They would go to the river where their mothers were waiting for them with gourds of beer. The girls would swim in the river, crying for *Nomdede* to bring about rain and would then come out of the water and take a sip of beer.

The rest of the beer would be poured out like a stream for *Nomdede* to drink. When they got back home, torrential rain would fall, known as the rain for girls. Early the following morning, the girls would wake up and ask for seeds from each homestead. They would then till *Nomkhubulwana*'s field and plant the seeds. Berglund (1976:72) maintains that *Nomdede* is celebrated at a time of the year when supplies are running very low and people are expecting the rains with growing excitement. Against this background, the fertility ritual of *Nomdede* certainly feels like a living function.

This *Nomkhubulwana* ritual is of late confused by the practice of independent churches, the Zionists in particular. The congregants go up to the mountain to request rain from God, but nothing happens. One wonders how they communicate with deities and God in particular.

#### **5.4.2 The training of neophytes and rituals**

There are different kinds of spirits that take possession of individuals – some good and others bad. These vary in strength and influence upon the person acting as a host and vehicle. Once a person is selected as a desirable host, s/he can never escape as the spirits quickly move into him/her to take residence. This dwelling spirit overpowers the host and then dictates terms suitable to it. The victim becomes its vehicle for attacking its enemies. The activities of the spirit may cause the person to be hated by his neighbours if it is a witch spirit. On the other hand, the host is loved by all the community and revered when it cures illness in the home of the neighbourhood. The spirit is dubbed the doctor's spirit. Griffiths (1982: 957) asserts that:

The good and the bad spirits are continually at war  
with each other and there can be reconciliation.

The abovementioned citation means there are two opposing spirits. One is called *idlozi elibi* (bad spirit) and the other *idlozi elihle* (good spirit). The main difference between these two is that *umthakathi* (witch) is bent on harming and killing other people, while the other fights against that. Their activity in the possessed person is marked by disturbances so that the host becomes aware of the spirit's intention. The host normally acts under instruction the spirit's instruction which is backed by force. Sometimes the disturbance occurs in the mind while at other times it takes place in the body causing it to quiver violently. The victim may speak in a language of the indwelling spirit while in a trance. S/he may have supernatural powers and perform wonders.

#### **5.4.3 The good spirits**

One of the good spirits is an *inyanga* spirit (doctor's spirit). Its chief work is to heal the sick, bring good luck, protect and drive away the spirits which cause suffering and death.

This kind of spirit is hereditary although at times the host acquires it through invocation, i.e. by using charms an experienced doctor will summon a friendly spirit to make use of the applicant as a host. Ordinarily, the ancestor who had *inyanga* spirit visits one of his descendants and he shows him roots and herbs for healing all kinds of diseases while the recipient is in his sleep. He may even be told where he can find these plants. Dreams and apparitions become frequent, particularly if the recipient is unwilling to take up the job. To herald this *inyanga* spirit the benevolent spirit will make the host dislike certain foods and introduce an ailment which cannot be treated by a physician. If this proclamation of the approach of the spirit is not heeded, the victim will continue to be tormented as long as s/he lives. Bashier (1967:85) says that it is for this reason that when the traditional doctor dies, s/he is buried with his medical kit, as it cannot be used by any of his/her children except by instruction.

These traditional doctors do not have equal powers. Those who have lesser powers will deal with minor ailments such as headache and diarrhoea, while powerful ones are able to cure consumption (tuberculosis), mental disease and so on. A traditional doctor may be able to deal with pestilence, stop the swarm of locusts from destroying crops and deal effectively with animal diseases and above all, seed and rain in times of drought. What is remarkable about these doctors is that however powerful they may be, they cannot be a 'jack of all trades'. One particular doctor will not have the knowledge to cure all diseases by himself. Some are experts in one disease, while others are able to cure more than one. Different spirits bestow different powers to heal particular diseases and this kind of specialisation has enhanced credibility to traditional, cultural and scientific advancement of the indigenous people. As most healing in this world is psychological, the indigenous doctor will be seen with various kinds of apparatus.

He carries his horn, calabashes, snail shells and so on to impress upon the patient that the process of healing has begun. Because they are able to call upon the spirits to assist in the fight against pestilence, cattle epidemics and to drive away crop insects and locusts, the indigenous doctors are the spiritual backbone of the indigenous people. They help to strengthen the morale of the community.

The indigenous people are united morally and spiritually by cherishing these beliefs. Under the category of good spirits there are also the violent ones, the *isangoma* and *isanuse* (diviner's spirit.) The *isangoma* refers to a female diviner, whereas *isanuse* is a male diviner. This is a witch-hunting spirit dreaded by wizards and witches. Sick people consult these diviners to detect those that are harming them. Good singing and dancing by a crowd lure the spirit to come out and speak through the host. This kind of spirit usually reveals its presence before or shortly after puberty. It will seldom show after marriage. Beattie (1969:46) maintains that if it is a female one, the host will marry, but if it is a male one a woman cannot marry or bear children, as it will hinder sufficient development of sex organs.

The *isangoma* spirit is both a doctor and fortune teller. The designation of the host is revealed in the acquisition of the spirit's selected attire which the host he must obtain unaided. He has to fight and kill an eagle, vulture and a python for bones which comprise his robe and girdle. He then comes back home singing as the snake hangs down from the neck over his shoulders. The *isangoma* spirit does not want to see corpses and the host has to try by all possible means to avoid seeing dead people. If a death occurs in the home, the spirit becomes restless and will leave the sick room well before it occurs. Divination is done in the presence of a big crowd or can also occur individually.

#### **5.4.4 The evil spirits**

Evil spirits do exist and dwell in people and make them vehicles. These are commonly known as witch spirits and are found in both men and women. They are believed to possess supernatural powers at night. The presence of these spirits in the home is linked with disturbances causing panic in the house. The belief is that the spirit leaves the host in his sleep and goes out to neighbours without breaking the link between it and the host. The incarnate spirit will usually go to places the host had visited in the day. If anything goes wrong the spirit will engage in terrorising people, and the host will also be affected in her/his sleep. Lloyd (1969:64) asserts that sometimes these spirits take the form of an animal such as hare, snake, bird or baboon to disguise them and these are known as

familiars. He says that if human flesh and blood are needed witches themselves go out themselves on hyenas. On seeing these familiars, the selected victim gets a terrible shocked and collapses. The grey owl is another terrible familiar dreaded by those who believe in witchcraft. Sometimes the witch's familiars make indistinct noises similar to children's utterances to frighten the victim. These witch familiars are said to be reared by the witches.

#### **5.4.5 The training of neophytes**

Very often a person is ill for years before it is discovered that the trouble is due to the fact that the spirits wish him/her to become a diviner. In his poem, *Iminqwamba Yamathwasa*, L.B.Z. Buthelezi compares the novice diviner with the novice poet.

*...Ngazilaya ngaziphaqula ngezimhlophe  
Ngaze ngazilaya,  
Ngihamba ngihhema ngedwa okhalweni.*

(...I blame myself by smearing with the white  
I blame myself loitering talking meaninglessly  
In the valley).

(Buthelezi, 1987:16)

The foregoing excerpt gives a vivid picture of the novice diviner. More often than not the novice diviner smears his face with red or white clay. In this context, he *uyaziphaqula ngezimhlophe* (to smear the face with white clay). This is done to invite and be accepted by ancestors as it is believed that the Nguni ancestors are white in complexion. The words *ngaze ngazilaya* (I blame myself) indicate that the novice is troubled by a spirit. His kin have to decide whether to allow him to train to be a diviner or whether to ask a doctor to lay the spirit. There are various ways of shutting out a spirit who causes discomfort such as bad dreams. Krige (1965:304) says that:

The patient is given medicine which acts as emetic and he is made to vomit into an ant heap hole. His face is washed and is taken back home again and must on no account look back.

If the initial method cited above does not help, the patient may be taken to a high mountain and made to vomit into a hole there. On his way back he is immersed up to his neck in a stream and only allowed to open his eyes after he has crossed it. It depends very largely on the nature of the person as to whether he will be able to get rid of spirit by these means or not. But it is said that if the spirit is determined to enter a person, nothing will prevent this and the host will continue to be plagued by ill health until steps are taken to make him a diviner. *Ngihamba ngihhema ngedwa okhalweni* (loitering talking nonsense in the valley) means the *ithwasa* (novice) is possessed by the ancestral spirit. He needs an experienced diviner to train him to become a fully fledged diviner.

The novice is expected to spend the night prior to initiation at *okhalweni* (in the valley or in the fields) sleeping on the naked earth. The novice is seen as coming from the earth, and the earth is the mother. The tutor (*uhamba ehhema*) sends him out in the evening from the tutor homestead and he returns to his mother, the valley. That is why he must be away that night knowing that it is the night of the valley, and then he appears at the house in the early morning. The novice returns to the homestead smeared with white clay. He carries in his right hand an earthenware vessel containing water:

*Kuthiwa ogeze kula madwala emifula.*

(They say who he washed himself on these rocks of the rivers).

(Buthelezi, 1987:17)

It is customary for the novice to collect some water as cited above. The novice fetches the water with a vessel at night from a waterfall. This water is believed to be pure. He then enters a hut furnished with new reed mats in *emsamo*. (Far Flank) The novice would sit behind a reed mat forming a secluded area between *umsamo* and the rest of the hut. The beer in the hut would not be touched at this stage as he is only allowed to drink water he brought with him. No food may be taken by the novice and nobody is allowed to enter the hut after his arrival.

The surrounding visitors break into jubilant shouting and handclapping, waving their knives and divination switches. The divination goes hand-in-hand with the slaughter of a beast. In the last stanza, the voice talks about the beasts:

*...ingikhumbuza uchibidolo wezinkomo.*

(...it reminds me of the herd of cattle).

(Buthelezi, 1987:18)

The foregoing excerpt shows how important the beasts are during the initiation period of the novice. That is the reason the voice says *ingikhumbuza* (it reminds me) when everything was plenty. Every ritual was blessed by slaughtering either a goat or a beast to appease and thank the ancestral spirit. In this regard, many beasts are called *uchibidolo wezinkomo*. The voice chooses an archaic word *uchibidolo* (plenty) to emphasise the abundance of beasts and know how the indigenous people attach the initiation custom verbatim. Soon thereafter the novice walks about the homestead as if lost, enquiring where the entrance to the cattle enclosure is. On being taken to it he enters the byre where the cattle have been kept since the evening before. He walks about looking at the cattle.

He stops at a cow and begins rubbing it on the back. After crying bitterly, he stands a little distance from the animal and shouts out, pointing at it. He says *eyeminqwamba* (it is for the hide stripes). Soon thereafter the novice appears dressed in one *umqwamba* (strip hide) which is hung from the left shoulder and over the right hip. Two gall bladders are fixed onto the tuft of hair remaining above the brow. After about an hour the neophyte emerges again from the hut and is jubilantly received by visitors. He is now dressed in a second *umnqwamba* falling from the right shoulder and over the left hip.

The gall bladder is inflated and tied to his hair. When this ritual is over, the novice becomes a fully fledged diviner; hence the topic of this poem is *umnqwamba yamathwasa* (the strip skins of the novices). One may detect that there are many gaps in this poem. The voice touches slightly on the *ukunqwambisa* ritual. Then he deviates and talks about how he was inspired to write poems by the works of the late B.W. Vilakazi.



The voice identifies B.W. Vilakazi as the tutor and him as a novice. He glorifies B.W. Vilakazi's poetry when he says:

*Ngibona ukwenza kwemijikijelo yakho  
Kumisa isangoma sisanganele  
Emathanjeni aso.*

(I see the action of your strikes.  
It makes the diviner motionless  
And becomes mad  
Resorting to his divine-bones).

(Buthelezi, 1987:18)

The foregoing extract suggests the poetic works of B.W. Vilakazi are too complicated to simplify. Those who dare to analyse them make use of different sources to substantiate their interpretation. It is noticeable even in this poem that there is too much distortion of ideas. In fact, there are evolutions of ideas concerning the *ukunqwambisa* ceremony, but only glorification of B.W. Vilakazi covers the greater portion of this poem.

#### **5.4.6 The training of traditional doctors by the experts**

To indigenous societies, the traditional doctors are the greatest gifts and the most useful source of help. Every village in Africa has a traditional doctor within reach and he is the friend of the community. He is accessible to everybody at almost all times and comes into the picture at many points in individual and community life. There is no fixed rule governing the calling of someone to become a traditional doctor. At most the boy who accompanies the *inyanga* (a traditional doctor) learns the art of healing and throwing of bones from the expert. In IsiZulu the boy is called *uhlaka* (the one who carries the bag of traditional doctor). On the other hand, there are traditional doctors who believe that spirits or the living dead called them in dreams and vision to become traditional doctors. In every case, the traditional doctors have to undergo formal or informal training. When a young man has made it known that he intends to become a traditional doctor, he is carefully scrutinised by his potential teacher to ascertain that he really means business. Mbiti (1990:163) goes further to state that:

He is given medicine to eat, which is believed to strengthen his soul and give him powers of prophecy.

The foregoing citation means he becomes initiated into his prospective job. The instructor takes him to a stream source and shows him the various herbs, shrubs and trees from which medicines are derived. While there are many who have a less formal training, part of the training always involves some form of apprenticeship. Candidates acquire knowledge in matters pertaining to the medical value, quality and use of different herbs, leaves, roots, fruits, barks and various objects like minerals and so on. He has to know the causes, cures and prevention of diseases and other forms of suffering and how to combat them.

The neophyte has to know the nature and handling of spirits and the living dead and various secrets, some of which may not be divulged to outsiders. When the training is over, the neophyte is formally and publicly initiated into the profession of the indigenous healers, so that everyone may recognise him and his qualification. In his poem *Ziphi izingedla ezinkulu* (where are expert traditional doctors), Buthelezi (2000:29) asks a rhetorical question regarding the whereabouts of the great doctors. The poem is about the poor healing performance of contemporary traditional doctors compared to those of the olden days:

*Luphi ugedla lwakwaGcwensa uManembe?  
Luphi ugedla lwakoSikhunyana uJeqe?  
Luphi ugedla lwakwaMazibuko uKhondlo?  
Owaphuma nesikhuni sivutha emanzini?  
Saze sabhubha isizwe.*

(Where is the expert doctor Manembe of Gcwensa?  
Where is the expert doctor Jeqe of Sikhunyana?  
Where is the expert doctor Khondlo of Mazibuko  
Who came with a big burning wood from water,  
The nation is perishing).

(Buthelezi, 1995:29)

The aforementioned excerpt is nostalgic. The voice asks about the whereabouts of Manembe and Jeqe who were renowned doctors during the reign of King Shaka, and were specialists in strengthening the army and training neophytes.

They doctored the warriors by preparing strong charm medicine to sprinkle on them and also prepared them spiritually for a fight to victory. Apart from doctoring the army, they fortified Shaka's homestead with pegs doctored with special medicines which keep away thunderbolts and lightning. Manembe and Jeqe had to train the neophytes in the Zulu temple *esibayeni* (cattle byre). Among other things, they taught them how to use the doctor's apparatus such as *insingo* (a sharp scalpel) and how to make an incision to the body of a patient. On the other hand, Khondlo was more of a magician. It is a pity that all those skills were buried with these great doctors, which is why the voice in the poem says *sabhubha isizwe* (the nation is perishing). It simply means that contemporary doctors are not that powerful compared to Manembe, Jeqe and Khondlo. They fail to cure diseases. In the following extract, the voice tries to revive the contemporary doctors:

*Zingoti lumbisani eyekhethelo  
Intelezi niyichele ihlome ihlasele.*

(Experts mix up the expensive medical charm  
Medicine sprinkle, arm and let them attack).

(Buthelezi, 1995:29)

The voice in the foregoing excerpt is calling for *izingoti* (experts) in medicine – they have to *lumbanisa* (mix up) herbs in a bid to cure various illnesses. He now calls upon the experts to come together to share ideas because the intensity of training the neophytes and the healing itself are not up to expected standards. The voice urges the experts to sprinkle *intelezi* (medical charm medicine). This mixture will give courage and strength and be preventing any ailment, since *intelezi* waters alleviate the strength of dangerous medicine. That is harmful to mankind:

*Zinyanga, lumbanisani amakhubalo anembayo,  
Lumbanisani amakhubalo anembayo,  
Nigome isizwe siqine  
Sivuke qingo!  
Umkhosi uhlatshiwe!*

(Traditional doctors' mix up effective medicine,  
Mix up effective herbs.  
Immunize the nation to be strong.  
It must wake up and be strong.  
The message has been spread).

(Buthelezi, 1995:29)

In the foregoing extract, the voice is calling *izinyanga* (traditional doctors) to maximise their performance in doing their job. There is a call to mix up effective *amakhubalo* (medicines). This is followed by another call to mix up effective *amakhambi* (herbs). This encourages the traditional doctors to come together to develop an effective system for curing diseases, both physical and spiritual. The voice in the poem seems to have qualms about the training of neophytes as the contemporary traditional doctors fail to detect and discern the cause of various illnesses, as well as how to combat or treat them.

The call is then referred to the doctors to *nigome* (to immunise) the *isizwe* (nation) to *siqine* (be strong) as nowadays the indigenous people are gradually having a shorter life span. In this excerpt, the voice is spreading the message to both the doctors and the nation, that the latter should *vuka qingo* (wake up and be strong) to stand the contemporary pandemic diseases:

*Lona yizinyamazane uzowushisa.*  
*Uwunuke uweqe!*  
*Lona owokubhema uthimule!*

(This one is buck burn it up,  
Smell it and jump over!  
This one is for inhaling and sneeze).

(Buthelezi, 1995:29)

The voice in the foregoing extract gives methodology on how to treat patients in an indigenous way. He commands the doctor to take *izinyamazane* (bucks) and *uzowushisa* (and burn it up). This is in line with (Magubane, 1990:80) when he concurs that *ukushunqisa* (to smoke out) is the treatment given to the newly born more often than not. The lid of a three legged pot is placed upside down on top of the coal embers.

Several dried medicines, barks, leaves, skins and fat and so on are placed on the hot lid. The new born is then passed over the fire fumes a few times to prevent allergic reactions at a later age. The child has to get used to all the dangerous elements of this world at birth. This is an excellent idea from which to build protection of the child services, that is vaccination and inoculation. Adult patients also use this technique, whereby a person sniffs a stronger oil to relieve headaches. The patient has to *uweqe* (jump over) the fumes in a bid to drive away evil spirits following the patient. The voice tells the incompetent traditional doctors to inhale powders (*umbhemiso*). The *umbhemiso* (inhale powder) is taken only by adults and not small children as its intensity is very strong. This medicine is powder-like and looks like a snuff.

The doctor then gives the patient a small pinch to inhale. If the patient's headache is not caused by evil spirits, he will sneeze (*thimula*) incessantly until the terrible headache subsides. But if the evil spirits are the cause, he does not *thimula* (sneeze) and the traditional doctor has to change his treatment to fight the evil spirits. Another remedy to headache is to sniff *idlonzo* (clematis branchiata). Its leaves are crushed and rubbed between the palms. A sharp pungent smell is emitted which relieves headaches. In the following citation, the voice makes a waking call to the indigenous diviners:

*Ziphi izanusi ezinkulu...*  
*Abathakathi bazichachazela nje.*  
*Bengasanukwa muntu!*  
*Maphi amakhosi amakhulu...*  
*Shayani bo!*  
*Siyavuma Makhosi!*

(Where are great diviners...  
 The wizards are doing  
 As they please.  
 No one shall smell them out!  
 Where are great female diviners!  
 You strike please!  
 We agree Makhosi)!

(Buthelezi, 1995:29)

In the above excerpt, the voice in the poem is dubious about the quality of training of contemporary diviners. Mfusi (1984:21) defines *isangoma* (a diviner) as a traditional diviner whose healing powers are specifically not Christian, but rather come directly from shades. He goes further, saying the role of the diviner is traditionally usually open to women. A man who becomes possessed is called *isanuse*, as indicated in the excerpt, and he becomes a transvestite as he is playing the role of a daughter rather than of a man. An *isangoma*'s healing techniques vary. For example, some will throw bones to divine while others will rely on dreams. Many indigenous practitioners place great emphasis on dreams which are used in both the diagnosis and treatment of sickness among patients. The indigenous practitioner is believed to be directed by the spirit world of the ancestors, which gives him supernatural powers that are to be the primary instruments through which the ancestors communicate with such healers. Bailey (1982:65) says:

For indigenous practitioners, dreams are regarded as  
a medium of communication with ancestral spirits.

The foregoing citation strongly puts forward that during sleep a person's spirit leaves the body and actually undergoes the dream experience. Thus practitioners' dreams about the ancestors are not merely seen as carriers of the ancestors' messages, but as actual experience of it. Consequently, many dreams do not require interpretation, but are acted upon directly. One wonders in this poem, whether these *zanuse* and *Makhosi* no longer dream, dreams and smell out the witch, since among the indigenous practitioners do not start their profession from personal choice.

In order to be elected into office, an indigenous practitioner must have experienced a very definite call into office either from the ancestor in the case of many indigenous diviners, or even more directly from God in the case of *umthandazi* (a faith healer). Many such calls are communicated through dreams, just as dreams play an outstanding role in the diagnosis and treatment activities of such practitioners. In contrary, the foregoing excerpt suggests that dreams may not be communicated well. As the voice says *abathakathi bazichachazela nje* (the witches do what they like to do), it may be safely assumed that the contemporary diviners fail to have dreams and vision about these wizards.

They fail even to see them in their dreams at night. Something is wrong in the training because dreams are believed to guide their work. In the treatment of patients' disease, an *inyanga* and *isangoma* would dream of an ancestral member who would show him what type of medicine and herbs are to be used in order to affect the cure. Thus, the indigenous practitioner acts as a mediator for the ancestral spirits, the accent book on communication. In other cases, the patient is expected to report his dream to an indigenous practitioner for analysis. If the patient is unable to do so, the healer would use a variety of methods for inducing dreams in their clients.

The indigenous doctor, who functions as diagnostician, interpreter and healer all in one, is believed to be a house of dreams, which is what gives him healing powers. There is development of ideas in the forthcoming quotation. It is a repetition method utilised by diviners. They say *Shayani bo!*, then the patients would respond by saying *Siyavuma Makhosi!* (We agree). This is a guide and the method of luring the spirits to come over, so as to be able to diagnose illness:

*Umhlolo usendlini hayi nasezaleni.  
Vumani bo! Siyavuma Makhosi!*

(The strange thing is in the house.  
No even on the edge of the dumping site.  
Agree with me! We agree Makhosi).

(Buthelezi; 1995:29)

The strange thing (*umhlolo*) in the foregoing excerpt means that there is something wrong somewhere concerning training of neophytes, and the general practices of the healer. It is believed that if a healer turns into a witch and contravenes taboo, he is barred from his medical practice. He becomes dead wood and everything he does, fails to bear fruit. Where does *umhlolo* (a strange thing or a problem) lie? The answer seems to be *endlini* (in the house) where everybody seems to deviate from the norm. The reference to *ezaleni* (a dumping place at home) signifies everything that is not good culturally is being discarded and dumped, not far away from home. It is typical of the diviner to rigmarole.

He mentions so many things and incidents that are not pertinent. When he is no longer gifted in smelling, he guesses and is guided by the response of the clients. If they respond loudly by saying *Siyavuma*, he continues with his correct guess. However, if there is no applause, he does not come out with any relevant diagnosis. In the following, the voice cries foul of the faith healers:

*Ziphi izingqungqulu zabathandazi  
Kubhidene izinto.  
Yindaba endala...!*

(Where are great faith-healers.  
Things are mixed up. It's an old story...)!)

(Buthelezi; 1995:31)

The foregoing excerpt goes hand in glove with the duties of the traditional doctors and diviners. The only one nuance is that *abathandazi* (faith-healers) diagnose illness and smite evil-doers through the spirit of God and, of course, ancestral spirits. The voice then resorts to *abathandazi* (faith-healers) and what goes wrong with indigenous traditions. People appear to be confused about how to lead a good life *kubhidene izinto* (things are mixed up). The main reason is that some of the people are jealous and do not want to see progressive people. This thing is recurring (*yindaba endala*) and no one dares to curb this kind of practice. Consequently, the very same unscrupulous indigenous people kill one another. This is evident in the following citation of this poem:

*Ngiyanengwa yinkasa yegazi.  
Ngiyanengwa ubungqizingqizi bezulu.*

(I am annoyed with this furrow of blood.  
I am annoyed with this thundering weather).

(Buthelezi; 1995:31)

It is obvious by the tone in the excerpt that the voice is nostalgic because during times of *Manembe* people did not kill others. They were conscripted by the King and fought in battles. The voice uses the emotional word *ngiyanengwa* (I am annoyed) as he sees daily innocent people being killed for no apparent reason.



He also uses *inkasa* (a furrow) to symbolise much innocent blood being wasted by the trigger. The voice is also annoyed to hear *ubungqizingqizi* (thundering). This thundering in the true sense of the word is not caused by the changing weather. On the contrary, *izulu* (weather) signifies machine guns and people dying prematurely.

The next stanza links well with the latter one:

*Ziphi izalukazi namaxhegu  
Ayekhula aze aphuziswe ubisi  
Ayekhula aze azigodukele  
Ayendlalelwa ngenkomo  
Adle isibindi?*

(Where are the old ladies and old men  
Who reached ripe age and given milk to drink.  
They grow up till they died of old age.  
A beast was slaughtered  
And were given liver to eat up)?

(Buthelezi; 1995:31)

The foregoing excerpt is also nostalgic for the days when people died of old age. Premature death was identified with the evil work of the wizard, with people dying because they were bewitched. In short, there was life longevity. That is why the poem talks of *izalukazi* (old women) and *amaxhegu* (old men). Nowadays most of the people die without a touch of grey hair. Brutal killers kill indiscriminately, whereas in the olden days the very old people - *izalukazi* and *amaxhegu* - usually died in their sleep (*babezigodukela*). In this context, *ukugoduka* (to go) means to die.

It has already been mentioned that the indigenous people believe in the life hereafter and that when they die they become the living dead. In the past when an old person can no longer walk, see and perform chores they become a burden to the younger generation. At such times a beast was slaughtered so that *wayendlalelwa ngenkomo* or *wayegoduswa* (a way was paved for him to go). After slaughtering the beast, a liver was grilled and the old person was given a piece of it (*adle isibindi*). During the very same night the old woman or old man would die in his sleep.

This does not occur nowadays. That is why the voice keeps on asking the living dead to come over and be of assistance:

*Sishiyeleni nisincinzele kulelo dlelo*  
*Siqabukele sithimule kuthi dwe!*  
*Siqabukele seshwama ukwindla kuthi phihli!*  
*Niyephi bomakadebona*  
*Nizobuya nini na?*

(Give us a pinch from that container.  
We will sneeze and feel good  
We will enjoy first fruit in autumn in abundance  
Where are you veterans,  
When will you be back).

(Buthelezi; 1995:31)

The voice in the foregoing excerpt is pleading with all the late experts to give him some strategy to overcome these predicaments. He wants only a pinch from a snuff container (*sincinzele kulelo dlelo*) signify the wish to have wisdom. These people led a life worthy of a human being and as such the voice admires their way of living, compared to the contemporary one. He feels that if he can follow suit everything will come to normal *sithimule kuthi dwe* (then we will feel good), and be wonderful again. He envisages abundance of first-fruit in autumn *seshwama ukwindla* (plenty of food in autumn).

When the indigenous people go back to the drawing board and pursue with their cultural practices is believed in the indigenous religion that when one calls aloud for a living dead, the living dead hear the call and answer his/her prayers. It is for this reason that the lateral-subject uses a rhetoric question *niyephi bomakadebona* (where are you veterans) and *nobuya nini* (when are you coming back?) He knows they are no more, but he is pleading with their spirits to return so they may motivate their descendents and bring a cure for incurable diseases:

*Nangu umankonkoshela esinkonkoshela*  
*Edla fumuka edla silaza.*  
*Nangu umaphoqoza ephoqoza*  
*Amaklume nemidiyokazi ediyekile.*

(Here is holding tightly persistently  
Persisting destroying young and old.  
He is a saboteur sabotaging the young,  
Beautiful and decorated).

(Buthelezi; 1995:31)

In the foregoing excerpt, the voice is using apostrophe pleading with the ancestors, to give a remedy to pandemic illnesses. He uses the word *umankonkoshela* (holding tightly persistently), since the disease that kills is incurable. It keeps on menacing the human race, *esinkonkoshele* (holding tightly obstinately) resisting any type of remedy. Ngubane (1977:78) has to say that among the indigenous people the source of pollutions essentially a happening associated with birth on the one hand and death on the other. The incurable disease *idla fumuka idla silaza* (kills both young and old), might be considered to be the wrath of the ancestral spirits, if people have deviated from the propriety prescribed by the living dead, and God Himself.

They inflict this disease even though it is not mentioned in the poem on the people to make mend their crooked ways. Both birth and death are mysteries associated with the other world from which people are believed to come and to which people return in spirit form. This world and the other world are viewed as two separate entities but the source of life is believed to be in the other world. It happens in this world. The cessation of life in this world is believed to mean continuity of life in the other world. The voice uses the word *phoqoza* (break up) to mean the untimely death of the young generation. The disease keeps on *phoqoza* (sabotaging), killing and destroying the young generation. Disease destroys the younger generation ferociously and without pity. In short, it creates the untimely cessation of life of *amaklume* (very young people), wherein the indigenous people pin their hopes in for future generation. In this context, Beattie (1969:65) says:

Among the indigenous people there is overlap  
between this world and the other world, which is  
called *umnyama* (darkness).

The *umnyama* cited above means the darkness that symbolically represents death, while the daylight represents life.

*Umnyama* (darkness), when used metaphorically to symbolise death, can be translated as pollution. Pollution then is viewed as a marginal state between life and death. *Umnyama* (*dark*), which is pollution in this context, is conceptualized as a mystical force which diminishes resistance to disease and creates conditions of poor luck, misfortune (*amashwa*) disagreeableness and repulsiveness (*isidina*) to those around him/her. In its worst form, *umnyama* is contagious.

One may concur with the foregoing excerpt because more often than not, people who suffer from incurable illness are stigmatized and also discriminated against. The poem is calling upon all the people, specifically the late praise-bards, the late kings, the late heroes, the late politicians and the late educated people, to be of help and to conscientize the indigenous peoples to obey cultural obligations. The indigenous people should observe behaviour patterns known as *ukuzila* (fast) to minimize the risk to life. This entails withdrawal from social life, abstinence from pleasurable experiences, avoidance of quarrelling and fighting. Since *umnyama* is graded according to its intensity, the extent of *ukuzila* is dependent on the intensity of the particular phase of *umnyama*, as it is envisaged in the last stanza, when the voice appeals to the Princess, (*uNomkhubulwana*) to come to his rescue:

*Ukuphi nkosazana yezulu?*

(Where are you Heavenly Princess)?

(Buthelezi; 1995:32)

The above mentioned quotation complies with the Zulu belief that everything pleaded from God should be directed through *Nomkhubulwana* (Princess) as God has a soft spot with her. Consequently the supplications are promptly answered. He asks *Nomkhubulwana* to conscientize the indigenous people on the real causes of pollution as it brings about misfortune. The cause of death is an important factor in assessing the degrees of pollution. For instance, a catastrophic death has a special degree of intensity in that its pollution is said to cling to the bereaved in such a manner as to cause further disasters and calamities. Unfortunate happenings, such as death owing to an accident or because of an incurable disease, are regarded as an unusual misfortune expressed as *umkhokha* (a persistent

misfortune). The bereaved in these circumstances have to take precautions to ward off not only *umnyama* that arises from death, but also the special kind of *umnyama* that is *umkhokha* (ill omen that is unfortunate and unpleasant consequence). As a precautionary measure against *umkhokha*, (unfortunate and unpleasant consequence) the indigenous people who die in accidents, who are struck by lightning or murdered in this poem *ubungqizingqizi bezulu* (those who are gunned down and killed) are never brought within the home premises. Instead they are buried without ceremony and weeping is restrained.

The same applies to those who die from incurable diseases such as AIDS, epilepsy and chronic chest diseases: the *umankonkoshela esinkonkoshele* (chronic killer) diseases mentioned by the voice in the foregoing excerpt fall under this category. Taking a human life idol is another dimension to the degree of pollution (*abathakathi bazichachazela nje*) (the wizards are doing as they please) as enshrined in the foregoing excerpt. The killer himself is polluted in a special way. He is polluted as loon as he takes a human life. Although pollution is a mystical force that shows no somatic symptoms, it is rather interesting that flouting of the correct behaviour *ukuzila* (fasting) is said to result in some form of neurosis. This notion is expressed as *ukudlula* (to pass). In this context of pollution, it means to flout social restraints and social expectations as if by involuntary compulsion.

A person who withdraws from society because of the polluted state is expected to, amongst other things, be soft spoken, control his/her emotions and avoids sexual intercourse. If they do not observe these rules, they may become sexually perverted, speak when they should not and be aggressive without provocation. S/he is said to have no control over his/her actions, as s/he is *dlula-ed* (not controllable). In case of a homicide, what is expressed as *iqunga* (lust to kill people), whereby, such a person is overly aggressive and ready to kill other people. The mental stresses and strains experienced during a major life crisis are seen as a possible cause of permanent damage to some people's mental balance. This is expressed as an outcome of flouting the behaviour pattern. To understand the meaning of *umnyama* (ill omen) amongst the indigenous people it is necessary to look closely into pollution at its highest points: birth and death.

## 5.5 Faith-healing

Faith-healers are professed Christians who may belong to either mission or Independent Churches and therefore also typically work within a supernatural context. The power of healing is believed to come from God indirectly through the shades. A period of training as a healer may or may not have been necessary. Zionism serves as one of the best examples in this regard and as such it will receive attention in this study. One of the most salient features of indigenous society historically and today is the recognition by most indigenous people, of the continuing role of the ancestral spirits. While the ancestral spirits are perceived differently, depending on the social circumstances of the descendants, usually the ancestral spirits are believed to exercise influence over the daily affairs of men and women. In cases of illness, it is always to the ancestral spirits that prayers are made in their recognition of ancestral spirits.

Zionists acknowledge that the ancestral spirits are responsible for various illnesses that are believed to be products of social tensions and conflicts. In their view, many of these tensions have arisen because customary sacrifices were neglected when new births, marriages or good fortune occurred. In their recognition of the ancestral spirits, Zionists reveal that their continuing belief in kinship and family ties are the basis of ordering and maintaining social relationships. In their ceremonial remembrances of the ancestors, Zionists follow such indigenous customs as slaughtering beasts and burning *impepho* indigenous incense. They conduct services while lighting the candles. This is done so that the ancestral spirits will consider themselves to be invited guests at the ceremonies. The indigenous concept of health is related to the maintenance of stability in one's surrounding natural and social environments. Sheldon (1982:46) maintains:

When someone becomes ill, the usual indigenous explanation is that this stability has been tampered with either intentionally or unintentionally.

The foregoing citation signifies that steps must be taken to first determine who or what has caused the illness and then to decide what actions are necessary to restore the stable condition that has been lost.

Zionists, like many other indigenous people, follow an anthropomorphic approach in diagnosing illnesses, for they begin with a person social as well as his physical and psychological situation to explain the causes of illnesses and determine their cures.

### 5.5.1 *UZayoni Engimkhumbulayo* (The Zion I recall) L.B.Z. Buthelezi

In this poem, the Zion religious services are considered in two perspectives, first, they are viewed in terms of their rituals and symbols, and secondly they are examined from the perspective of some of the social processes which occur during the Zionist rituals of worship and healing:

*Kahleni bo musani  
Ukungikhiph' amehlo  
Ngezimboko zenu  
Zilwane zakomhlolo!  
Nakwitiza ngangezwa  
Nithini?*

(No stop it; you must not  
Pull out my eyes  
With maces you great ones!  
You speak in tongues.  
I don't get you).

(Buthelezi, 1993:22)

The foregoing citation means the lateral subject is upset at seeing the Zionist church service for the first time. A typical Zionist always carries a mace while worshipping, *ngezimboko* (mace). These maces, called *izikhali* (weapons), are long and are meant to stab and drive demons and wanton spirits that disturb the smooth running of the service. The lateral-subject, from the look of things, was not part of the congregant but went to observe the process. That is why he says *musani ukungikhipha amehlo* (do not pull out my eyes). As he is not dancing together with them he is likely to be hurt. Burger (1969:39) says:

One can expect to observe a common core of social processes in Zionist services. These include talking and socializing, singing, dancing, and testifying which include reading from the Bible.

It is evident in the foregoing citation that all of these activities have a social dimension even though only a few persons may dominate some of them. Often Zionist services are conducted at a family residence. One arena is the sitting room but the space is too small. When exciting moments in the service occur, *nakwitiza ngangezwa nithini* (you speak in tongues, I do not get you), the bystanders are lured inside to watch as occurred to the voice in this excerpt:

*'Hhayi shodi wani mayi Godi!'*  
*Nithi kwenzenjani*  
*Kushoda wani?*  
*Nithi azivumi izithunywa*  
*kulukhuni*  
*Nithi mangithathe izingubo,*  
*Eziluhlaza*  
*Zibe nesiphambano.*

('No what is it my God!'.  
You say what happened,  
What is short of?  
You say the spirit  
Disagree, it is tough.  
They say I must put on  
Clothes, the green ones  
With a cross).

(Buthelezi, 1993:22)

The aforementioned excerpt explains how the Zionist smell out something sinister. Usually they anglicize isiZulu when prophesying. There is something lacking or short. The lateral subject has to join in as the new member of the congregation. He is initially puzzled by the paraphrase, *hayi shodi wani mayi Godi* (No what is in short my God). Seemingly the spirit of God *isithunywa* (messenger) tells them that something does not go well. The lateral subject is so inquisitive and asks them *nithi kwenzenjani* (you say what happened). The action is dramatic as it happens right in the church. The answer to the shortfall (*kushoda wani*) is simple. It is what the spiritual messengers do not agree. It is difficult. More often than not the Zionists are in need of more members. Before they could allow a new member they first consult with the spirits to ascertain whether the prospective member is eligible to



join in or not. In short the lateral subject is a chosen one, *zithi mangithath'izingubo* (they say I must put on clothes) meaning he is purified and may join in by putting on the green ones with a cross. Sheldon (1982:50) explains that, in indigenous thinking, considerable weight is given to the symbolic use of colour. The use of colour reflects the extent to which the indigenous people regard worshipping as a condition of a person's state of moral, social and even spiritual being. Health is equated with a state of moral purity when the voice says *eziluhlaza zibe nesiphambano* (the green ones with the cross).

Health is represented by the use of the green colour. On the other hand, sickness is linked with moral impurity and is symbolized by the colour red. While some Zionists have not altogether rejected the use of medicine (*umuthi*) in their practices, they do not themselves visit or recommend visits to indigenous doctors who use *umuthi* (medicine). Indigenous diviners are recognized by many Zionists as having a legitimate role in the practice of medicine and many Zionist healers pattern their approaches to diagnosis and healing after indigenous diviners:

*Kudidene izinto ekhaya,  
Kukhon' umfowethu ,  
Ohambahambayo,  
Ngesikabhadakazi.*

(We are confused at home.  
There is a brother who  
Is a witch at midnight).

(Buthelezi; 1993:23)

The foregoing extract shows that the Zionists also smell out the witch as people are perplexed at home, since one of the brothers is a witch. The word *kudidene* (confusion) shows the intensity of chaos at home (*ekhaya*) as the Zionists have detected that one of the family members is a witch. No one can think of that happening since one may think that witchcraft runs in the family. The voice uses *ukuhambahamba* (being a witch) signifying that this brother performs his iniquity (*kwesikabhadakazi*) at night and when few people move about at night he tacitly bewitches his own family members. Bate (1995:38) maintains that both the indigenous people and Zionist approaches to the practice of

medicine are based on the socially accepted and sanctioned roles for practitioners who use supernatural and symbolic as well as psychological powers in diagnosing and treating diseases. In most consultative healing, treatment is viewed by the healer as an extended process which requires a series of tasks and visits before the patient has recovered. Patients are told that they must go and purchase the materials for robes as it is indicated in the stanza:

*Ngithath' intambo ebomvu.*

(I have to take a red cord).

(Buthelezi; 1993:23)

Taking and purchasing of the cords and other materials is all prophesied, as cited above. When the illness suspected is sorcery, the materials are brought to the healer who has made them according to the prophecy. The patient has to buy all of the ritual objects that are normally used in the taking out of medicine that is believed to be causing illness. Such objects usually include razor blades, red and white candles and a black sheep's head. The Zionist healing may be identified as a defensive approach to treating illness. In every treatment prescribed by a Zionist healer, the patient is told to wear something that will, when worn, protect the patient from future attacks by evil spirits:

*UZayoni engimkhumbulayo ubetheleka  
Phakathi esizibeni  
Kusho izithunywa zaseZulwini.  
Ubungeke ungene nebhodlela...*

(The Zionist whom I recall,  
He jumped into the pool  
So say the heavenly messengers.  
You should  
Never dare to enter with a bottle...).

(Buthelezi; 1993:23)

The foregoing excerpt tells us that the Zionist lives in two worlds: that of indigenous practices and that of Christianity.

When the voice says *ubetheleka esizibeni* (He jumped into the pool), he refers to a Christian ritual (baptism) which signifies that a person is a fully-fledged Christian. It is well known that before entering into water, the leader or preacher prays first, fervently to God. He prays to ward off demons in water and to stave off accidents that may occur. All is driven by the state of ecstasy activated by *izithunywa zaseZulwini* (heavenly messengers). On the other hand, he combines both Christianity and indigenous practice, since he uses (*ibhodlela*) the bottle to draw up the water. Sheldon (1982:156) asserts that the Zionist approach differs from that found among indigenous practitioners in its emphasis upon the use of water rather than medicines for treatment. Although various ingredients are mixed with the water (*isiwasho*) which Zionist healer distributes, the water is most often used as a form of purification.

The message that is communicated by a Zionist patient who wears certain coloured robes and cords is not simply that he has been treated by the Zionist, but equally important is the fact that the individual has also been socialized into and has adopted a belief system in which there are a variety of symbols and rituals which are a necessary part of healing. For the Zionists, these include cleansing and purifying with *isiwasho* (cleansing water), praying, fasting and wearing colours that have been prophesied. The Zionist approach to healing thus orients both patients and healers towards a new framework of thought which places treatment within a ritual and a symbolic framework.

The severity of the patient's condition is usually regarded as proportionate to what is believed to be the power of the person who has inflicted harm. When violent illness is manifested in the patient, the Zionist believes that a strong medicine has been used to kill the victim. When a patient appears to be unstable or mentally confused, the Zionist healer invariably diagnoses the illness as a case of sorcery. He advocates a treatment of equal intensity and rigour and thus a Zionist healer advocates the preparation of strong solutions of water (*isiwasho*), salt ashes and sometimes a strong disinfectant whose purposes are symbolically those of neutralizing the harmful effects of the sorcerer's medicines. Kraft (1996:63) asserts:

The Zionist healers use different approach to sorcery than indigenous doctor.

It is true and one concurs with the foregoing excerpt in the sense that the indigenous healers usually prepare strong medicines directed at the suspected sorcery. On the other hand, the Zionist healers try to discover the medicine and get it out after which its potency is weakened through the use of water (*isiwasho*) and cleansing agents such as Jeyes fluid. In their approach to exorcising *ufufunyane* (spirits that cause madness), they urge the evil to return to its original source:

*Hhayi shodi wani mayi Godi!*  
*Nithi kwenzenjani kushoda wani?*  
*Nithi azivumi izithunywa kulukhuni*  
*Nithi mangithathe izingubo,*  
*Eziluhlaza zibe nesiphambano.*

(No what is lacking my God!  
You say what happened  
What is lacking of?  
You say the spirit disagree  
It is tough  
They say I must put on  
The clothes  
The green ones with a cross badge on it).

(Buthelezi, 1993:22)

The foregoing excerpt shows how fervently the Zionists pray when they call upon the Holy Spirit. They at times use English words, to communicate with the spirit. This actually happens when an ill or polluted person is in their midst. The spirit is aroused and the Zionist goes to a trance and soon thereafter they prophesied. Usually the Zionist will mention the cause of illness and the one who has caused the spell which is why the voice warns them to stop, *kahleni bafana bomoya* (No, stop it boys of the spirit). Sheldon (1982:63) agrees that, similarly, visibly strong physical force is used by a Zionist healer when he believes the person he is touching and praying over is victimized through possession by a particularly evil and stubborn spirit. The treatment ought to be symbolically and physically, if not naturally, equal to the potency of the illness.

Zionists direct much of their thoughts and many healing strategies towards symbols and methods which will protect members and non-Zionist clients against the invasion of physical and social impurities. In their protective approach, the Zionists also borrow from traditional indigenous medical practice which consists of taking strengthening medicine *intelezi* (charm medicine) so that one will not fall prey to the medicines of a sorcerer. The Zionists have modified the traditional use of strengthening medicines by adding a range of ritual and symbolic means for avoiding contamination. Through the wearing of different coloured robes, cords and other prophesied objects and by carrying specifically prophesied staves (*izikhali*), Zionists believe they will be successful in warding off physical and spiritual entities which threaten to do them harm.

In Zionist thought about illness, selective but well known uses of Christian practices, as well as the reliance upon indigenous customs are adopted as treatment. For example, one Christian teaching that is emphasized by the Zionist is the practice of fasting as a process for readying oneself to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. In addition to fasting, water is agitated and used for a thorough cleansing in order to obtain spiritual power. Zionists say that it is necessary for patients to be completely immersed in the water. Another Christian influence on Zionism is the practice of exorcism through the laying on of hands when praying. In their practices of exorcism, Zionist methods of treatment are unquestionably traceable to the model of healing practiced by Jesus. In this model, physical force and shouting are employed to cast out evil spirits.

From the very beginning of their history, Zionists emphasized spiritual healing as a central aspect of their religion. The principal ways of conducting spiritual healing have been through physical touching, displaying symbols and colours, and by enacting rituals which are intended to evoke those moods and emotions among congregants. These moods and emotions are manifested in dancing, singing, shouting, movement and other gestures which signify that one has received spiritual power, just like this shouting *ririri...ririri...namba wani*. This 'R' prosodic is meaningless, but *namba wani* (number one), may mean the Holy Spirit comes first:

*Kahleni mikhosi kaZion!*  
*Kahleni bafana benduku...*  
*Ngiyofikelwa ngubani lapho?*

(No you great Zionists!  
No you boys of the mace,  
How can I reach that point).

(Buthelezi; 1993:23)

The foregoing citation indicates that it is not an easy thing to gain the powers of the Holy Spirit which is why the lateral-subject is not moved to become a devoted Zionist. He says *kahleni* (no, stop it) because the Zionism comes with rigorous demands, like fasting et cetera. He says *ngiyofikelwa ngubani lapho* (how can I reach that point) since it is an uphill struggle to become a prophet. When the Zionists treat patients in worship services, they initially put their hands on the patients' shoulders and pray the Holy Spirit will enter these individuals and free them from their illnesses. As they touch congregants who submit to healing Zionist healers, often they receive visions of exactly which illnesses or evil spirits have possessed the congregants. When guided by these visions and voices, they proceed with their treatment.

The actions which follow the received vision include strong slapping or pressing movements accompanied by the healer's shouting in the patient's ear and exhorting the evil spirit to leave the victim. Whenever an evil spirit is driven from its victim, it must be replaced with a good spirit. The act of replacing a bad spirit with a good one lies at the heart of the Zionist concept of healing as a social process. Zionists also interpret healing actions as ones which involve the altering of one's status. As victims of the bad spirits, Zionist patients are seen as occupying lower statuses than congregants who already have been healed. Congregants who are ill, whether they are members or non-members, present a potential threat to any Zionist congregation because their illnesses can be easily contracted by other members of the congregation. The Zionist healer therefore acts not only on behalf of the individual patient, but also on behalf of the entire congregation. When touching and praying over persons who come forward and ask to be healed during Zionist services:

*Kahleni bafana bokuvuma.  
Thintani kahle ngizwe.*

(No, you singing boys.  
Do touch so that I can hear).

(Buthelezi; 1993:24)

The foregoing citation tries to explain two types of healings: consultative healing and ritual healing. The voice in the poem is willing to know the cause of the problem when he says *thintani kahle ngizwe*, which means in this context that he wants a prophesy so that he can be satisfied. This may fall under direct healing as the healer is specifically aware of the complaints of individual patients and prescribes specific cures for the patient's illness. In contrast, when indirect healing is administered, the healer present does not necessarily know which specific illness patients are afflicted by. Indirect healing is believed to be conducted by (*uMoya oNgcwele*) the power of the Holy Spirit. That is why the lateral subject calls the Zionists in the poem (*abafana boMoya*). The Holy Spirit uses individual healers and sometimes the entire congregation as its agent to heal the sick.

### **5.5.2 The relevance of indigenous religion and healing in contemporary scenario.**

In indigenous society today a number of social and mental disorder are explained as the result of spirit possession. Some forms of possession are by one's ancestral spirits, while other types of possession are not socially acceptable and must be treated. When an indigenous man or woman is believed to be possessed by evil spirits, witchcraft or sorcery are suspected. In these cases, the common method of treatment includes consultation with either an *isangoma* (diviner) or *inyanga* (doctor) to first determine the cause and agent of the illness and then rid the victim of the illness. This is done by using indigenous medicines and rituals, and often to send the evil spirit back to its source. Zionist ideas of spirit possession parallel those found among indigenous healers. Like most indigenous people, Zionists consider some forms of spirit possession acceptable, such as possession by the (ancestral spirits) *abaphansi*, because recognition of these types of possession tend to reinforce kinship and familial ties.

In these instances the victims of spirit possession are usually the relatives of deceased ancestors. Once possession has been diagnosed, the victims of the possession usually respond by offering sacrifices to the spirits of their deceased ancestors. Generally, possession by the spirits of an ancestor is seen as a treatable disease in indigenous society. Most forms of ancestral spirit possession are not considered harmful or as serious as possession by evil spirits which are attributed to sorcery. For the treatment of disease, the indigenous people have historically recognized two principal roles: *inyanga* (doctor) and *isangoma* (diviner). Occupants of both of these roles are expected to acquire the statuses they offer by enduring periods of intense training and demonstrating specific skills. The indigenous people see in the role of *inyanga* (doctor) one who is a specialist in preparing traditional medicines.

Usually this role is occupied by a man who has acquired knowledge about curative or poisonous properties of herbs and their combinations from a close relative or through dream from ancestral spirits. Secrecy surrounds the ways in which indigenous healers prepare their medicines. This fact accounts for one reason why the South African Government had imposed sanctions to control the activities of indigenous doctors. Under the health policies, a traditional doctor must apprentice himself to *inyanga*, a master doctor for a period of seven years. When applying for a license he must give proof of his District of Health Office Magubane (1990:78).

The model of the *inyanga* (doctor) is an important one for gaining a perspective on Zionist healers because it features not only the use of traditional medicines, but more importantly, specific sequences which reflect a symbolic and ritualized interpretation of the causes and treatment of illness. Like indigenous doctors, Zionist healers approach healing as an extended process which involves the patient in several transitional stages, through which the patient moves. First, the patient is decontaminated then purified and finally strengthened and protected. The indigenous doctor also initiates processes of decontaminated and purification by administering specially prepared medicines. Historically, the indigenous society has supported another type of practitioner who functions as *isangoma* (a diviner).



Unlike the indigenous doctor, the diviner is a practitioner who is specifically chosen for the profession by *amadlozi* (ancestral spirits). The *isangoma* (diviner) is the most relied upon to act as intermediary between the world of the living descendants and the spirits of deceased because such communication is frequently sought by the patients who approach the diviners with accounts of the illnesses for which ancestors are believed to be responsible. The diviners purify their bodies as well as their minds to enhance their powers of clairvoyance. Some of their purification activities include fasting, using purgatives to induce vomiting, and inhaling substances such as snuff and *impepho* (incense) in a bid to rid communication with ancestral spirits. In the role of the indigenous diviner, the Zionist prophets and healers are given a model which can be and is easily adapted and interpreted by them within their own contexts of prophesying and healing. Sheldon (1982:109) maintains:

The ability to predict and communicate is stressed as one skill which all indigenous diviners must master.

Likewise in the foregoing citation, these skills are a requisite for the roles of the Zionists prophets and healers. Like indigenous diviners, the Zionist prophets and healers fast and engage in various forms of bodily cleansing, such as vomiting, enemas and washing themselves. All these purifying activities bring these Zionist practitioners to a state of readiness where they will be able to hear and interpret the visions and voices which have been sent to them by the Holy Spirit. The call of the Zionist healer and prophet is also like that of indigenous diviner because it is associated with pain or sickness.

Finally, a similarity between the indigenous diviner and the Zionist healer and prophet can be seen in the types of spirit possession which both experience and manifest. When indigenous diviners are possessed by the ancestral spirits, they dance, yawn and snort. Their behaviour is generally intense and emotional. In the same vein, when the Zionists are possessed by the Holy Spirit, they also dance. Thus, in the minds of many Zionists, possession by one's ancestral spirits and the Holy Spirit are overlapping rather than experiences. This belief in the living dead is so inculcated in the minds of the indigenous people that it is part and parcel of their belief system.

Therefore, it is unthinkable as an indigenous person to completely do away with one's ancestors. Hence, Mbiti (1990:14) has convincingly argued that even indigenous people who are converted to other religions do not completely forget their indigenous roots and culture. In this regard, Dennis (1994:47) calls the Zionists the principal religious custodians of indigenous culture and traditional religion. They still believe that ancestors are able to communicate with God since they are god-like and are also like people. Therefore, they are at the other end of a long chain of intercessor whose ultimate function is to intercede on behalf of humankind. This belief has passed from one generation of the indigenous people to the next. That is the reason why Zionism encourages congregants to do whatever ancestor belief and veneration requires. In light of the foregoing paragraphs, it boils down to the fact that indigenous religion and healing are relevant in the present scenario. The custodians of traditional religion and healing (a traditional doctor, diviner and Zionist) are also relevant nowadays as there are diseases that resist western medical treatment and are eligible for indigenous treatments.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

Many forces during the scramble of Africa arrived with their religion and healing influence. Christianity, the biggest culprit, was brought with the early missionaries who transversed Africa and preached the wrong gospel. They denounced indigenous rituals, traditional doctors, diviners and ultimately Zionism with the indigenous religion being labelled as pagan and primitive. Little thought was given to the idea that the indigenous religions may not have been fake and are relevant today.

If an indigenous person abandoned his traditional religion and fails to observe rituals, he suffers the consequences. Day in and day out, misfortunes befall him until such time he consults with indigenous healers to help him out of the quagmire. These healers are not magicians, they are mandated by God through ancestral spirits who show them medicines and herbs for treatment of disease. It is of vital importance that the indigenous healers and Western practitioners should work together against incurable diseases rather than undermining each other.

Concerning the *Nomkhubulwana* ritual, it may be relevant if reinstated. This country suffers from severe drought, even in summer, simply because this ritual is no more in vogue. If the indigenous people may revive this ritual, food will be produced in abundance. The indigenous people recognize the existence of *Nomkhubulwana* and believe she is the Princess of God. What is remarkable in indigenous religion is the Africanisation of Christianity. The emergence of Zionism ushered in a new type of religion, wherein indigenous people use the Bible in conjunction with their ancestral belief. The ancestors are identified with Jesus, whereby the latter is labelled the Great Ancestor. The Zionists to a great extent use divination through the help of the Holy Spirit and to a lesser extent through the ancestral spirits. They use many devices like prayer and water, in the healing process.

At most, the Zionists are Holy Spirit driven in the healing processes. What is remarkable is that their firm belief in Christian faith in the healing processes is coupled with indigenous faith. The Holy Spirit, in this regard is a guide to detect the causes of ailment, and to detect the means of healing, embedded in indigenous faith, of course. In short, Zionists' healing goes hand in hand with ancestral healing, with assistance of Jesus, as the main ancestral spirit. In this regard faith healing and indigenous healing complement each other. This chapter leads to the conclusion and recommendation in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### General Conclusion

#### 6. Findings

This study has discovered that indigenous knowledge systems based on religion and healing are embedded in some of Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. It is envisaged in this study that God is the Supreme Being who is served by deities (the ancestors) who act as mediators between the living and God. The living dead and old ancestral spirits are the conveyers of messages between God and the living. These living dead are highly revered by the living. Rituals in the form of sacrifices are conducted to appease the ancestral spirits and through them, God, to a greater extent.

The infiltration and intrusion of foreign faiths into the Zulu indigenous cultures do not deter them from practicing indigenous religion. At most, indigenous people find themselves living in two-worlds, the one based on foreign influence and the other one guided by ancestral spirits. It goes without saying that religion and healing compliment each other. When one contravenes indigenous religion, various ailments are inflicted on him/her as reappraisal, whilst good religious observation ensures good health. The practitioners of healing aspects, the diviners, faith healers and traditional healers are entrusted by God, through spirits and ancestors, to carry out healing practices. In this way, indigenous people, to a large extent, rely on them for the execution of rituals and healing.

In the poetic works of Nxumalo and Buthelezi; this study has found many dynamic aspects. The traditional medicine brings in another dimension to cater for the emotional and the spiritual aspect. The indigenous system of medicine includes not only the visible, but also the tangible elements of nature. This highlights the concept of the natural and supernatural causes of illness and leads the traditional healer to seek, sometimes as a routine measure but more often at the request of the patient, such causes in invisible as well as visible elements. All peoples of the ancient or modern world have this one common goal, a desire to have good health and prosperity. Many people have founded their own system of medicine by using existing resources and facilities around them to stave away disease and ill health.

What is today regarded as ethno-medicine is the wielding together of indigenous medical systems of many peoples of the world. All the systems follow the same trend namely, casualty concepts, therapy and prevention strategies. Representative causes of illness listed in ethno-medical accounts include, as a consequence of the work of a sorcerer or supernatural spirit: angry deities who punish wrong doers (for example those who violate taboo); ancestors who feel they are too soon forgotten and not recognised; sorcerers and witches working for hire or for personal reasons; spirit possession or intrusion of an object into the body; the evil eye (*unya*) and loss of soul following a bad fright that jars it to loose from the body.

Indigenous medicine is holistic, while Western medicine sees only disease. On the other hand, contemporary villagers are rapidly modernising and transport is more readily available than in former times, which enables a process of acculturation. Patients now find themselves living in two worlds and are therefore in need of modern healer or an indigenous healer within or outside the village. In the same vein, the indigenous healers are relatively well-respected people because of their status and as such ought to be valuable allies in primary health care strategies and systems. It is true that elderly herbalists with a profound knowledge of indigenous remedies or famous shamans and priest curers may inspire confidence in patients and their families. Therefore, allopathic and indigenous medicine may not be missible, but instead need a peaceful coexistence with mutual co-operation between all actors to best curb disease.

More often than not, indigenous peoples dichotomise illness into two categories: firstly illness that physicians can quickly cure, and secondly, folk illnesses, the very existence of which physicians deny. One may argue that no single model can predict the care seeking behaviour of individuals during times of a health crisis, since in the final analysis people choose therapists, not medical systems. It is evident that most indigenous people visit the traditional healer before they see the modern practitioner, a clear vote of confidence in the indigenous healer. Physicians practicing in traditional settings are frequently ignorant of indigenous medicine. They fail to understand its vocabulary and rationale and hence have difficulties in communicating with patients.

On the other hand, the doctors who are born and bred in local regions, after independence from the apartheid system are what they are due to their culture. In this regard, the stereotypes are urged not to discourage the incorporation of indigenous healers into primary healthcare programmes. But rather as a caution against the uncritical acceptance of untested or untrue assumptions which will hinder rather than promote sound health policy and planning. That is based on the socio-cultural and religious bedrock of indigenous communities. They are founded on personal experience and observations handed down from generation, either verbally or in writing. They are used for the diagnoses prevention or elimination of imbalances in physical, mental or social well-being. All in all the impact of indigenous healers should not require proof, but should instead be linked up, in some way, to the official Western medicine system in order to obtain a more equitable and wider health coverage.

Religion is a difficult word to define and it becomes even more difficult in the context of indigenous people's life because, for indigenous people, it is an ontological phenomenon pertaining to the question of existence. Within the indigenous life, the individual is immersed in a religious participation which starts before birth and continues after his death. For him/her and for the larger community of which s/he is part, to live is to be caught up in religious drama. This is fundamental, for it means that men live in a religious universe. Both this world and practically all his activities in it are seen and experienced through a religious understanding and meaning. The sound of the drum speaks a religious language, the eclipse of the sun or moon is not simply a silent phenomenon, but one which speaks to the community that observe it, often working to warn of an impending catastrophe.

The point is that, for indigenous people, existence as a whole is a religious phenomenon. Man is a deeply religious being living in a religious universe. Failure to realise and appreciate this starting point has led many missionaries, anthropologists, colonial administrators and other foreign writers on indigenous religion to misunderstand not only the religion itself but the people of Africa. The indigenous people have their own ontology, which is a deeply religious ontology and to understand this indigenous religion one has to penetrate that ontology.

There are five hierarchical categories of ontology: the first, that God is the ultimate explanation of the genesis and sustenance of both man and all things; the second that spirits consists of extra-human beings; the third that the spirits of men who died a long time ago (man including human beings who are alive and those about to be born); fourth that animals and plants at the bottom of the ladder, and finally natural phenomena and objects without biological life expressed anthropocentrically, God is the Originator and Sustainer of man. The spirits explain the destiny of man, and that man is the centre of this ontology.

The animals, plants, natural phenomena and objects constitute the environment in which man lives. They provide a means of existence, and if need be, man establishes a mystical relationship with them. The anthropocentric ontology is solid unit which cannot be broken up or destroyed. To destroy and remove one of these categories is to destroy the whole sphere of existence and includes the destruction of the Creator, which is deemed impossible. One of the existences presupposes all the others and a balance must be maintained so that these modes neither drift too far apart from one another nor get too close to one another. In addition to the five categories, there appears to be a force, power and energy permeating the whole universe.

God is the source and ultimate controller of this force, but the spirits have access to some of it. A few human beings (such as the indigenous doctors, diviners, witches, priests and rainmakers), have the knowledge and ability to tap, manipulate and use this power, either for the good or for the ill of their communities. Within the context of this study, Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry covered all the foregoing introductory ideas. God is the origin and sustenance of all things. He is older than the indigenous people and is outside and beyond His creation. On the other hand He is personally involved in His creation so that it is not outside of Him or His reach. God is thus simultaneously transient and immanent. One has already, randomly studied Nxumalo and Buthelezi's work covering the above mentioned assertions. God is no stranger to indigenous people. In their traditional life there are no atheists, but rather the indigenous people's concept of God is strongly coloured and influenced by the historical, geographical, social and cultural background or environment of each person.

The indigenous believe in powers and personifications of natural phenomena such as *uNkulunkulu* (First Cause and the Creator of all things) and Heaven. In the main, the indigenous people believe that God is the one who oversees everything. Therefore it indicates that the indigenous people do have a concept of God. He created all wild animals, cattle, game, snakes, birds, water, mountains and all universal objects including the sun and the moon. Not only this, but he instituted the present order, gave men the spirits of their ancestors (*amathongo*), doctors for treating diseases and diviners. As it is enshrined in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry, it is He who arranged that the ancestral spirits should make known their wishes in dreams and that when a man is made ill by an ancestor, rituals will be performed to that spirit to make the patient recover.

In addition to God, indigenous people believe in a power called Heaven. The Lord of Heaven is deemed to be responsible for thunder and rain. This belief is based on the fact that the Lord of Heaven dwells above, but though he lives there, heaven does not belong to him. It was together with the sun and the moon, made by *uNkulunkulu* (God) who created all things, yet the Lord of Heaven does not spring from *uNkulunkulu*. The indigenous Zulus know little about him, except that he strikes, with lightning, anyone who has angered. The one that thunders with a deep roar is the male which does no harm and is not feared. The thunder of the female heaven is very shrill; it is as though it will split the head and so its thunder is bad. There are doctors, heaven herds, who are thought to be able to influence the heavens.

*Nomkhubulwana* is the daughter of God (*uNkulunkulu*). Buthelezi's poetry explicitly covers a great deal of *Nomkhubulwana*. If she meets a man she conceals herself and speaks to him, for it is said that if a man looks upon her face, he will be ill and soon die. When she speaks to the people, it is to tell them either that they will have a year of plenty or to make known her wishes. It is she who orders children to be weaned; to be made and poured out of the mountain. Everyone is afraid to disobey her word lest they should die. Her laws are obeyed and not despised. *Nomkhubulwana* presides over the growth of the corn and there are relics of some old worship to be seen in the *Nomkhubulwana* ceremonies of springtime when songs of honour of this goddess are sung.



Sometimes a plot of ground is planted and set aside for her. *Nomkhubulwana* is not, however, an ancestral spirit (*ithongo*) for she communicates directly with men on her own accord. The indigenous people also pray to her for their needs as she does not dwell with men. The concept of ancestral spirit is well documented in both *Nxumalo and Buthelezi's* poetry as the ancestors take a real interest in their progeny. They guard them from danger and attend to their needs, but in return they require sacrifices. All prosperity is ascribed to the favour of the ancestors and by extension of God, misfortune to their anger. Essentially, while the living are dependent on the dead for their welfare, the spirits in turn depend on their living dependants for praise and sacrifice.

If the dependants were to die out, the spirits would have no house to enter, and would have to wander about in valleys, a lamentable fate which the spirits would do their best to avoid. The ancestral spirits live underground and occupy the same relative position there as they did while alive. For they say the shadow is that which will ultimately become spirit when the body dies. It is believed that the long shadow shortens as a man approaches his end and contracts into a very little thing. The indigenous people believe that a dead body casts no shadow, but there is a short shadow which remains with a corpse and is buried with it. It is a long shadow that goes away on death and becomes the ancestral spirit (*idlozi*). The departed spirit is not, however, spoken of as an *idlozi*, till after the *ukubuyisa* (bring back) ritual has taken place.

It is after this ritual that the *isithunzi* (shade) becomes an *idlozi* (ancestral spirit). There are several ways in which the spirits reveal themselves to men and one of these is through dreams. This theme of dreams is also well covered in the poetry of both *Nxumalo and Buthelezi*. The spirits warn the people in dreams against unsuspected enemies or against oncoming danger. Dreams sent by the ancestral spirits can always be recognised, as they mostly come with a message from the dead, for example in *Nxumalo's Ngiyabonga Thabile* (*Thabile* thank you). All dreams are not, however, sent by the ancestors as some are sent by wizards. In many cases in which a man dreams of someone stabbing him, it is not the ancestors who are responsible but a wizard. It is also feasible for an ordinary man to send someone a dream by means of medicines; in this regard many a young man wins the heart

of his lady-love by causing her to dream of him. In addition there are dreams, just ordinary dreams that appear to have no real meaning. There are also summer dreams which are believed to come while winter dreams are believed to produce confused imaginations. The dreams of diviners and other people who are able to become ecstatic are however true and not confused like the dreams of ordinary people. Rituals are the means whereby the living can come into contact with the ancestral spirits in order to ask for favours or to think of them for their blessings. This aspect is also well covered in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetic works, namely Buthelezi's *Ababusi beAfrica* (The rulers of Africa) and Nxumalo's *Inkosi uMnikwa* (King *Mnikwa*) by Nxumalo. The spirits are believed to have the power to regulate the forces of nature and are therefore approached before all important undertakings. The indigenous people distinguish two classes of rituals: the *ukubonga* (thanksgiving) and *ukuthetha* (scolding).

This ritual cited above also holds good when the general life of the kraal has run smoothly. The scolding (*ukuthetha*) takes place when the people of the kraal die and when things are going wrong. In which case the officiator seriously inquires as to what they have done to be so persecuted by their ancestors. In both cases, that of thanksgiving and that of scolding, the procedure is more or less the same. It is only the content of prayer that differs. Doctors frequently sacrifice an animal for inspiration from ancestors. There may also be sacrifices for protection against lightning and after a new home has been built to procure the blessings of the ancestors on the new home. The officiator of rituals is typically the head of the family, the direct representative on earth of the line of ancestors. In tribal rituals, the only man who can officiate is the king.

To the indigenous mind, natural death, except from senile decay, is impossible. Consequently, when death intervenes before ripe old age, the departed one is looked upon as having been under the spell of the *umthakathi* (wizard) who is supposed to be continually exercising a malevolent influence over the community. In this regard, the services of a healer are needed to remedy the situation. The healer is more than a link between spirits and their descendants; he is the protector of society and the one capable of detecting the evil men who have acquired power to work evil on their neighbours.

There are three kinds of healers among the indigenous people: the ordinary medicine man who through knowledge of herbs can treat disease; the diviner; and the sky herd who protects people from thunder. Usually we find combined in one healer (*ugedla*) both the power to divine and a fairly extensive knowledge of herbs and roots, as it is described in *Ziphi izingedla ezinkulu* (Where are the great healers) by Buthelezi. The diviner is the person in greatest demand in indigenous society. The diviner is consulted when disease breaks out, when cattle are lost, when omens appear or a wizard is suspected of having caused harm. He will discover the cause and prescribe the steps needed to set things right again. The male diviner is called *isanuse*, whereas a female one is called *isangoma*. In works of Nxumalo and Buthelezi (*Iminqwamba yamathwasa* -The hoods of the neophytes) themes on indigenous diviners are well covered.

In addition to the diviners who are possessed by quite a spirit (*idlozi*) there is a type of diviner who is possessed by speaking spirits who themselves answer the questions in a whistling voice from the top of the hut. These ventriloquist doctors are called *abalozzi* (whistlers). In Buthelezi's poem, *Iminqwamba yamathwasa*, the initiation of neophytes is laid out. The first step taken when it is decided not to bar the spirit of the dead is to discover which set of spirits is causing illness, those on the paternal side or those on the maternal side. For this, two goats are taken, one from the mother's people and one from the father's.

These are then sacrificed to bring together two sets of spirits. The goats must be either black or pure white. The gall and stomach contents (*umswani*) of both goats are poured over the neophyte who is also made to drink a little of this mixed with medicine which make him/her vomit. After vomiting, the neophyte is bathed with *ubulawu*, (charm medicine) and then it is evident which spirit caused the illness. When they have discovered which spirits are causing harm, the neophyte will begin to feel much less pain and as soon as he recovers sufficiently, a *nqwambisa* goat will be slaughtered for *amadlozi* and the skin cut into *iminqwamba* (strips), which the neophyte will wear over his shoulders and crosswise round the body as doctors do.

After the *inqwambisa* goat has been slaughtered, the neophyte will under the guidance of his instructor, begin to divine. *Thakatha* means to bewitch or to cast a spell while the *abathakathi* are the living human beings who have learnt the secrets of nature. The *abathakathi* theme is well documented in the poetry discussed in this study, specifically in Nxumalo's *Akamxolelanga* and Buthelezi's *Ziphi izingedla ezinkulu*. The wizards in these poems delve into black magic and use their skills for anti-social purposes from the vast reservoir of knowledge at their disposal. They tap and siphon off whatever they need to wield bodily harm and spiritual trauma to mankind.

The means at their disposal range from the supernatural to the mundane. The mundane will include simple poisoning by using a high quality of herbs such as the *umahedeni* (*Phytolacca abyssinica* Hoffm), *ilozane* (*Tephrosia macropoda* Emry) *indloloji* and *umahamba nendlwana* (silkworm caterpillar) and so on. They even harness beasts and birds as familiars to aid them in their nefarious practices. The *abathakathi* also cause lightning to strike a kraal by securing grass above the door of one of the huts, or through ashes from the common ash heap, or may use the footprints of the intended victim. They burn these, together with rubbish from the path leading to his home, in the veld with the fat and feathers of the bird of heaven. The sky becomes overcast with thunder and the lightning. The lightning runs along the path on which the person has walked, reaches his home and strikes him.

Generally offerings of sacrifice are made to the ancestors who are known to the people, as they are the ones who are still personally remembered by someone in their family. The ancestors pass the requests, prayers and wishes of the people to *Mvelinqangi*, (God) who under normal circumstances is not involved in the day to day matters of the people on a personal level. The ancestors do communicate with their offspring in many ways and one of the most common methods is through dreams. Many of these dreams are simple enough for the indigenous people to remember the next day and interpret correctly. Very often the ordinary individual is not qualified and is not able to read the message of the ancestors in his dream. It is therefore imperative that they consult those who have the skill, such as the spiritual healer and the diviner, to act as mediums and provide a bridge between the

ancestral spirits and the populace at large. The *abathandazi* stand in the same relation to people and their ancestors as the mediums while the *abathandazi* and *izangoma* form the link between the living and the dead. The *umthandazi* (spiritual healer) interprets and carries over to the patient the communications from the *abaphansi* (ancestors) while the *umthandazi* is considered to be similar to a prophet.

He has been given, by God, discerning eyes to look and see into the future or the past as the case may be. The seer, *umthandazi*, is able to interpret the patient's dream and tell the patient what the dream portends. The spiritual healer adds the atmosphere of comfort in the prayer, the song and the words of oracle from *abaphansi* (the ancestral spirits). As the new Africa emerges and complexes appear, one finds large numbers of people who are confused by new situations and unsettled by new expectations. These people, both rural and urban, still tend to turn to the traditional healer (medicine man, herbalist, spiritual healer and diviners) to help with problems with which the person cannot cope. In this way, the *umthandazi* or Zionist is still very much part of the community. The *abathandazi* are there because they answer very pertinent questions for their patients within a frame of reference to indigenous ancestral spirits. They looked after them when they were alive and they are doing so in the life hereafter.

The striking facts in the foregoing discussion are evident in Buthelezi's works, most especially in the poem entitled *Umzayoni engimkhumbulayo*. The most encompassing finding of this study is that indigenous Zionism is a self-generating and self-sustaining movement which more than adequately fills many of the social, psychological, medical and religious needs of its members. There are inordinate sums of time and energy that *abathandazi* (Zionists) invest in their religious healing and congregational activities which take various forms. Participants of religious ceremonies take long trips on foot and by way of public transportation in order to attend weekly church services, monthly inter-church gatherings and frequent weekend gatherings at the homes of families who have invited the Zionist group to conduct special ceremonies. Participants also take time with meticulous preparations before leaving to attend religious services. These preparations include fasting, washing, starching and ironing their blue and white uniform.

The intensive personal investment which Zionists have in their religion is also seen in the disproportionate amounts of time that husbands will spend away from their wives and children while he attends services, and in the willingness of both Zionist men and women to remain present throughout an all-night service. From the foregoing evidence, one can also draw the conclusion that Zionism permeates the socio-economic and religious domains of indigenous people who subscribe to its disciplines and teachings.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

This study has covered aspects on indigenous religion and healing, encapsulated in Nxumalo and Buthelezi's poetry. Other venues of indigenous knowledge systems should be traversed and the prospective researchers should look to research indigenous foods and taboos, the indigenous calendar, and indigenous regalia to mention a few. The prospective studies may help to vitalise the intensity of indigenous religion and healing.

## **6.3 Conclusion**

In the light of the foregoing discussion, indigenous religion and healing are here to stay. Since God prescribed, for the indigenous people, methods of worship and communication with Him, failing to observe taboos and carry out rituals, incites the ancestors to anger and to inflict punishment on their descendants. Therefore, it is imperative for people to behave according to the propriety prescribed by the ancestors. What is remarkable with indigenous religion is that the indigenous people believe in the existence of God, and communication with Him, through deities. Surely, even nowadays, the indigenous people do believe in the existence of God, ancestors and other deities. There is no need for indigenous people to be converted into religion, since from cradle to grave, they are religious people. The traditional healers are diviners and are still relevant, because there are diseases and illnesses that resist Western medication. What is needed is the co-operation between Western practitioners and traditional healers in the treatment of diseases. More research and clarity into indigenous knowledge systems has to be conducted to detect the intensity and relevance of the indigenous practice.

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