

ORALITY AND ITS CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN
SOME ZULU TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES

by

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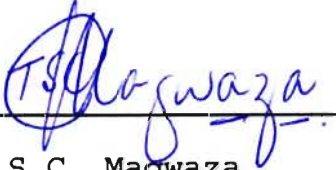
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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DECLARATION

I declare that "orality and its cultural expression in some Zulu Traditional Ceremonies" is my own work, both in conception and execution. All the resources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T S C Magwaza', written over a horizontal line.

T S C Magwaza

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DEDICATION

To my parents S'busisiwe
and the late Bhekifa Meyiwa

I am going to concentrate on this text as a social product for no text can be studied without its context. Aspects of a cultural life of a society should be studied if one is to grasp the essence of any text.

Chapter Two of this work therefore provides the context of the text which is presented in Chapters Three and Four. The context validates and justifies the practice, the structure, and the shape of the speeches and other acts presented in the following chapters. In this work the text is accordingly recorded with its context within which it is interpreted, putting the text back in its place.

This study also gives evidence that the ceremonies concerned adhere to traditional culture in spite of advanced urbanisation, industrialisation and western influence exerted upon the Zulus. The descriptions given in this study are based on the **umabo** and the **umemulo** ceremonies that I attended, participated in and also those that I watched on videos of such ceremonies from November 1987 - August 1993 (see 1.5 Methodology below for further details).

The material that I collected in these different ways shows immediately that these ceremonies include elements that have the characteristics of oral style, which are :

- a) Poetry which is orally performed without relying on a written text.
- b) Presence of the audience, which is not at all passive but participates actively in the form of hand-clapping, singing, responses of approval and dancing.
- c) Speeches made, characterised by formulaic language, with elements such as parallelism, assonance, alliteration, repetition - all of which are common characteristics of the oral style.
- d) Preservation of poetry, songs, chants and fixed phrases through memorisation.

- e) Symbols with a particular meaning understood by the Zulu participants used in certain contexts. Reality and the inner being of the people is represented with concrete symbols.
- f) Representation of abstract ideas in concrete form - that people easily identify with.
- g) Communal nature of the ceremonies, performed not for one person only, but actively involving the whole lineage and the visitors.

This study also examines oral tradition and its implications for the **umemulo** and the **umabo** ceremonies within the context of the Zulu understanding of them. Much of what is spoken in the ceremonies is not a conversation between two or a few people only, but is a communication that involves a large audience and also the ancestors of the people concerned. It is repeatedly pronounced, proclaimed, listened to, heard and remembered; hence it has not died and Havelock (1986: 142) believes this is a procedure followed in any oral exchange.

1.2 ASSUMPTION

This study assumes that the ceremonies studied are still to this day filled with oral elements and are likely to remain so for at least the next few decades. Christian and Western influence have not had such an impact that could wipe out the practices completely, like in some other spheres. Rather, I observed that alterations in some of the forms of the ceremonies have not affected their core. Of course, there are some differences from the way these ceremonies were practised three to four decades back. Changes in people's material, political, educational and spiritual life must result in some corresponding change in their oral tradition. But the task of this study is to determine that which recurs most often in the ceremonies and has been passed on from one generation to the next more or less intact.

1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Besides the changes over time, there are always regional differences in cultural practises and this work does not claim that its findings are universal for all Zulus. People differ in their practises from area to area, clan to clan, nuclear family to the next. Therefore one can obviously not expect everybody to perform and practice rites and ceremonies in an identical way. Oral records are never uniform nor fixed, but change with place, time, age, need, capability and circumstance.

Nevertheless, often there are recurrent patterns across regions and I examined over ten cases on each ceremony in order to establish such patterns for each one. The cases studies were from Durban and its surrounding areas, i.e Inanda, Kwa-Mashu, Umlazi, Cleremont, Ndwedwe, Maphumulo, and uMbumbulu. Information from Mahlabathini, Eshowe, and Vryheid areas was also gathered with the help a research assistant, Musa Zwane. Obviously, the information gathered does not claim to be universal for all the Zulus in South Africa. It was, however, noted that there are indeed certain repetitive patterns employed by most Zulus, this being one characteristic of oral thought and speech according to Ong (1982: 40). Use of set expressions for him is one indication of an orally patterned thought. This is true in all the cases of the ceremonies that were studied and this is one reason why it has been useful to draw on the existing literature on the Zulus, even though most of it is now several decades old. In addition, I have also consulted relevant general works on oral studies.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature covers the works of

- a) Raum (1973) who published work on Zulu taboo words and practices. In this work he also provides patterns and social functions of most Zulu ceremonies.

- b) Berglund (1976) published a book on the Zulu thought patterns and symbolism. This is a very extensive work which was of great help for a deeper understanding of the ancestors, their importance and the fact that Zulu society is actually a community of the survivors and the shades.
- c) Krige (1965) is concerned with a survey of the older literature on the life and the customs of the Zulus, from whom some patterns of the **umemulo** were drawn.
- d) Kohler (1933) examines the South African marriage customs, and specifically those of the Zulus.
- e) Vilakazi's unpublished Doctoral thesis (1958) gives background information on the Zulu marriage for both the Christians and the Traditionalists.
- f) Ong (1982) in his book **"Orality and Literacy - the Technologising of the Word"** gives the characteristics and nature of the oral culture which I find reflected in the Zulu ceremonies studied.
- g) Jousse (1981) provides oral technical terms and definitions. Some of his concepts were used in this work to back up the assumption that the ceremonies studied are indeed based on oral tradition.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Some of the material used for this study derives directly from my own personal experience in attending eight ~~the~~ **umabo** ceremonies, and I participated in one as a matron of honour (on my younger sister's wedding) and in one I was the bride. I have also physically been to four **umemulo** ceremonies and my parents performed **umemulo** for me. All these are indications of the fact that the descriptions and conclusions drawn are often first hand, as I was an eye witness of them. In addition to watching and

participating in these ceremonies, I recorded the songs, speeches, chants and interviews on audio tapes.

Beyond that, I watched several privately made videos of both ceremonies. These videos were even more useful as records, for they show much more context of a ceremony and are in that respect superior to sound tapes. Much of the actual performance, such as people reciting praises, the audience reacting and the place of occurrence, is clearly shown on a video and can be repeatedly viewed until one has grasped all the details. Audio recordings of the sound from the video tapes were also made to enable easier transcriptions of what was said or sung. Without the videos it would have been virtually impossible to get all the detail used in this study. As far as I know, this thesis is the first one that uses for academic purposes such privately made videos. It has come to be a trend among more prosperous Zulus to videotape important occasions. Being able to borrow some of these video tapes has contributed greatly to this study and I therefore draw attention here to the usefulness of such material.

I supplemented all these different kinds of observation with oral interviews with a number of informants, concerning the **umemulo** and the **umabo** songs, chants and traditional performances. The interviews were conducted in Durban and surrounding areas, and in Vryheid, Mahlabathini and Eshowe. In particular, before making the final analysis, I went back to some of the people who made speeches and who were more active in the ceremonies to interview them. These interviews were essential to the analysis, for they provided comments on obscure imagery and explained songs and chants. They were recorded with the aid of a battery-powered tape recorder. Informants were selected on the basis of : their age, their potential knowledge of the ceremonies, the fact that they participated in particular activities and on the basis of the areas in which they live and which I considered to be of interest for this study. Additional details on the performances and their context were noted by hand, in the course of some of personal experiences and observations. A few primary data were

also collected from ordinary conversation with Zulus in their homes and from some radio programmes. Secondary data were obtained from books, articles, theses and from **Ilanga**, the Zulu-language newspaper.

The two kinds of ceremonies studied make use of vernacular terms that would not carry the same weight as they do in Zulu, if they were to be simply translated into English and be used in the thesis without further reference to their original form. It is therefore necessary and convenient that these terms be defined and explained at this stage, after which they will often be used in the full or adapted Zulu forms without further explanation.

1.6 GLOSSARY OF THE ZULU TERMS USED

- ✓ 1 **Umemulo** is a ceremony for a girl reaching the marriageable age. Zulus refer to it as **ukuthomba** which is "blossoming forth" (of a girl into womanhood) .
- 2 (ukw) **Emulisa** cause the girl to grow. Of a father performing the ceremony for his daughter. Also, **ukukhulisa**. Doke et al 1990: 186 say it is to initiate a daughter into a new life, acknowledging she has reached marriageable age.
- ✓ 3 **Umgongo** is a hut set aside for a coming of age girl and her attendants. It is a seclusion hut or room in which a girl stays until the **umemulo** ceremony day. A girl for whom this ceremony is performed is referred to as **intombi egonqile** which means "to be sexually mature".
- 4 **Umhlwehlwe** the caul, a network of adipose tissue covering the viscera of a slaughtered beast and put over the shoulders of a girl on her **umemulo** day.

- 5 **Idlozi** it means a human spirit or soul. In this work it is used for ancestors in the plural form **amadlozi**, who are also referred to as:
- 6 **Abaphansi** the people who are underground, and as
- 7 **Amathongo** are ancestors as well, this noun is from the verb **thonga** i.e to be influential or to be prestigious.
- 8 **Impepho** is a species of a small everlasting plant with a sweet smell, (Doke et al 1990: 658). It is used for burning as an offering to the spirits. It opens communication with the ancestors and makes the sacrifice acceptable to them.
- 9 **Inyongo** is the gall-bladder and its precious (for the Zulu) contents , the bile. It is much used in traditional rituals.
- 10 **Ukuthetha** literally is "to scold". **Ukuthetha idlozi** linguistically gives one the initial impression of an aggressive kind of relationship between the ancestors and their descendants. In practice it is not so. The literal English translation is misleading. **Ukuthetha idlozi** is an expression that implies something different from scolding - it is *praying to* them.
- 11 **Isigcawu** an open space where people meet for various ceremonies.
- ✓ 12 **Ukujola** literally, to steal. In this work it refers to "love stealing", i.e being in love at an early age (engaging in sexual intercourse prematurely).
- 13 **Amabheka** bridewealth (**lobolo**) cattle.
- 14 **Ukwakha umuzi** to build a homestead, by bringing home a bride.
- 15 **Izithakazelo** praises attached to a particular descent group in which the clan's forebears are also referred to.

1.7 ORALITY IN UMEMULO AND UMABO CEREMONIES

These Zulu ceremonies are still largely oral. That they are "oral" means that they are handed down from one generation to the next through the oral channel. They are only communicated orally. All interaction takes place in a face to face situation. Even with the ancestors people maintain that **babhekene nabaphansi ngqo**, meaning they face the ancestors directly but they adopt a respectful attitude to them. Performing these ceremonies is one way of establishing communication between the performers and the audience, and because of this recurrent communication these ceremonies do not die. As they are essentially oral, they rely on performance for survival.

Even before a ceremony takes place there is a lot of consultation among the living, much of it concerned with ensuring that the necessary knowledge is available and properly conveyed. People consulted are usually the elderly, more experienced members of a community or a family. What has to happen and how it happens (procedures) are drawn from such people as they are regarded as the storehouses of customs, having lived long. It is held that the one who has seen most and lived longest is a major source of knowledge. The source of this knowledge is overwhelmingly oral since there is no written text on which people rely to conduct any traditional ceremony. I was once surprised to see in a bookshop English books on wedding preparations. These listed "what to do and what not to do" on and before the wedding day. The Zulu do not have such books, and I do not even see them being written in the next fifty years, except in theses like this one which, however, can not be a source of reference for the performance of these ceremonies. People enquire from other people who either have had particular ceremonies recently or from the elder members of the community. Such people know and recall details of the ceremonies in which they have participated because of these ceremonies have a fairly fixed form. It is not only the practical patterns that are fixed but also the verbal practices i.e phrases, poetry, and songs.

Furthermore during the ceremonies themselves one of the repeated themes is to convey *knowledge* of the event and its significance. The audience present and the ancestors are explicitly told about the ceremony and its purpose. It is particularly important, indeed imperative, to make the ancestors aware of what is going on for their "knowledge" of what is happening to and among their descendants is a key aspect of the ancestral cult. The ancestors are told in the form of **ukuthetha**. Failure by their descendants to inform the ancestors may cause them to incur the anger of the ancestors which might bring about sickness or death in the family. The performance of the **umemulo** and the **umabo** ceremonies - the speeches, songs and chants - would make little sense without a proper understanding of the Zulu ancestor cult. The next chapter on **amadlozi** intends to provide the major part of the context for the ceremonies. It is a social context from which the text of the ceremonies originates.

Much of what is described and analyzed in the subsequent chapters stems from the Zulu belief in ancestors. Therefore it is important to evoke first the substance and atmosphere of the ancestor cult within which the ceremonies occur. To understand fully the speeches that are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 is in fact impossible without some knowledge of that cult. The relationship between the three chapters is therefore yet another illustration of the general point I made earlier that no oral text can be fully understood without a knowledge of the social context from which it originates.

CHAPTER TWO - THE ANCESTOR CULT

2.1 ANCESTOR BELIEFS

The belief in ancestors strongly controls the moral and the social behaviour of the Zulu people. An intimate connection exists between the ancestors on the one hand and the acts of their living descendants on the other hand. Berglund (1975: 197) indeed points out that the Zulu society is made up of the survivors and the ancestors. The descendants can not survive separated from the existence of the ancestors. The two are closely tied together making, the individual and the ancestor of a lineage interdependent. The importance of the ancestors to Zulu society is seen in their continuing belief in them despite the immense changes Zulu people have experienced in the last 150 years or so.

Even now, that there is still a relative uniformity in the approaches to the ancestors by the Zulus. Berglund in his field work not long ago (1975) did note a few variations in the thinking about ancestors, such variations often being related to the difference in rural and urban settings. But despite these variations, many people do not doubt the fact that ancestors exist and are a reality that is strongly interwoven into kinship relations.

The persistence of the cult is partly explained by its connection with fundamental ideas about life and death. Raum (1973: 94) says the Zulu ideas about their ancestors are closely associated with the idea of life.

That idea includes a particular interpretation of the phenomenon of death, as not the final end of an individual, since the belief is that a part of a human being, i.e the soul, survives after death. The surviving soul becomes a spirit - an **iDlozi** or an **iThongo**, as they refer to it. The death of an old person is accordingly regarded as a natural development and continuation of the existence of a man.

In connection with the belief in the surviving soul, Berglund mentions that the Zulu have a habit of watching the grave after the funeral. This is done so as to guard against the work of the evil doers, **abathakathi**. To this day people are still extra cautious about things that were and are used for the burial of the body. The soil of the grave, fresh flowers and clothes that a person used to wear are kept under a very strict eye lest the witch, **umthakathi**, uses it to turn the soul of the dead against its people and make it a bad **idlozi**. The Zulu are conscious of the need to ensure that a person who has died become a good **idlozi**.

Some bereaved people tell the mourners (not of the deceased's lineage) not to bring any flowers for the funeral out of fear of witchcraft. It has come to be a normal thing for this wish to be announced on radio Zulu along with the funeral announcements. These precautions are due to the belief that ancestors are important and that it is the duty of their descendants to ensure that they do not "die" for their descendants, by becoming bad spirits. Berglund clarifies this thought pattern by noting,

"... the disturbance of the life of the shade is far more serious and must be avoided at all costs. No evil could surpass that of the destruction of the shade" (1975: 81).

Thus the **idlozi/ iThongo** is thought of as the life-soul which continues the "existence" of the individual when the physical body perishes in death. One then understands why the Zulu people do not regard their dead, as really dead hence the use of the term **abaPhansi** (those who are underground) which is a generally accepted term implying a continuing existence there, rather than the concept of being "Dead". This continuity implies in turn the relationship between them and their descendants.

In this thesis, I commonly use the convenient terms "cult" or "worship" to refer to this continuing relationship between the living and the ancestors. I know some may dispute the use of these terms, particularly "worship". This word has been used to

convey the ritual practices, the accompanying beliefs and the respect people have for their ancestors. However, many Zulus who know of this use of "worship" are prone to insist that they do not at all worship the ancestors, but rather love, honour, revere and respect them. Zulus worship God or **uMvelinqangi**, not the ancestors. **uMvelinqangi** is worshipped mostly by traditionalists and understood as the supreme being and the Creator of **amadlozi** as well. Berglund (1975: 198) also argues for this view, saying veneration of the ancestors is not known to the Zulu, rather they refer to their communication with the ancestors as speaking to them, **ukuthetha**, telling them what they ought to know. Still, if we understand the terms "worship" and "cult" to include these aspects of Zulu thought, they are useful summary terms.

In practise, the cult is orally based. There are no written texts on ancestor worship that enable people to render the same kind of worship all the time. This religion is rather passed on from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Moreover, ancestors are not worshipped in silence. It is a verbal worship expressed in an oral style which also involves an audience. People listen to what is said and participate to a limited degree in the ceremonies performed. They copy the performances and later use them or part thereof in their own situations.

Each Zulu traditional ceremony presupposes the ancestor cult. The Zulus see it necessary that they tell their ancestors what is to happen. The key concept is that they must *know* about the occasions. This is why, then, the speeches in chapter 3 and 4 take the shape they do, each speaker makes reference to the ancestors in one way or another. It is not sufficient to take for granted that the ancestors know what is being done on such an occasion, but it is imperative that they be told of what is happening.

Failure to inform the ancestors of what is to happen causes problems. The Zulus know that the role of the ancestors cannot be taken for granted, i.e they cannot be expected to look after

the well being of their descendants and bless them with abundance without being asked to do so. If the ancestors are not told about what happens, they cannot approve of it. The consequences would therefore not be owed so much to anger the ancestors may have against their descendants for not informing them, as to their ignorance which prevents them from conferring the expected blessing on the event and those involved in it. This is seen in the fact the ancestors often do not react immediately after a failure to inform them, but some time later, usually after a year or more. It is therefore clear that the key aspect of the ancestral cult is "letting them know". They are informed not only verbally, but also through practices like cattle slaughtering, burning of the **impepho** and treating the **inyongo** reverently.

Letting someone know something is obviously a feature of orality. which is actually often about conveying knowledge. Repetition that is so abundant in speeches, as we are to see later, is done so as to ensure that the ancestors really do get the message their people are trying to put across. As Ong (1982: 33) mentions, words, in an oral society, confer power or influence over things. This is also true for the Zulu ancestral cult. Words used in ancestor worship are characterised by rhythm, repetition and fixed formulae. These features also have an impact on the living audience which makes it easier for them to recall those words and use the same forms later for their own specific situations. That is one reason why this oral tradition has survived long in spite of the existence of powerful Western influence.

Ancestor worship has also survived because of it is believed they have a strong influence on the people's everyday life. No one can ignore completely something that can positively or negatively affect his well-being.

Berglund (1975: 127) stresses that ancestors are important in the direct and immediate intervention in the life of the Zulu. He says they can cause suffering, even causing a person to be completely mad if they are ignored. The trouble they cause is not

bad because it is meant to return the wrongdoers to a better way of living. So the presence of the ancestors is a necessity for a normal and prosperous life.

There are of course Zulu people who claim to be staunch Christians and have nothing to do with the ancestors. It is, however, interesting to see these very people performing traditional rituals when confronted with problems they suspect might have something to do with their neglect of the ancestors. They also observe customs that involve ancestor worship during their offsprings' puberty and wedding ceremonies. They perform rituals saying "just in case something odd in future happens." Christians who thus honour their ancestors do not see a conflict between their Christian belief and respect for their ancestors. This large group of Zulu has therefore contributed to the continuing importance of the **amadlozi**. One example was given to me by Mpiyakhe Khanyile of Embotsheni (Dlebe area of Mahlathini in Northern Zululand) a Christian who sees no conflict between the two sets of beliefs and practices. He says his younger brother, Nkonyana, could not have children for 11 years, and when he finally had a child in the 12th year, Nkonyana invited all the Christians and ministers to a party to thank God for the blessing of a child. The following day Nkonyana slaughtered a beast which was meant to thank the ancestors for making it possible for his wife to have a child.

The ancestor cult persists, in spite of Christian and other influences, largely through its oral nature. People who attend and take part in the worship have in their minds clear memories of the practices. They bear memorable thoughts of the rituals because of the ritual's oral nature which consists of formulaic expressions, repetition and the dramatic actions which form the central core around which belief and activities rest. At the same time, there are dramatic, repeated actions in the rituals which they also learn through continually performing and witnessing them.

2.2 ANCESTORS AND RITUAL PRACTISES

People find themselves bound to respect the ancestors as they control their destiny. Raum (1973: 391) says "ancestors are the dispensers of luck". He says, for the Zulu, luck amongst other things can be earned by the peoples' respectful conduct and by obedience to customs. It is believed that a person who respects and makes sacrifices to ancestors according to tribal norms attracts good fortune. Whilst on the other hand omission of ritual obligations chases luck away. As ancestors are believed to have control over the good and bad fortune of their descendants, the latter have means of securing benefits. The following are the practices that have power to secure fortune and blessings from the ancestors, nearly all of them accompanied by addresses **ukuthetha**, to the ancestors:

- 1 Sacrifice of living animals to the ancestors - cattle, goats or fowls depending on the economic standing of the individual.
- 2 Visiting the graveyard before a traditional ceremony and before other modern occasions, like graduation parties, are performed.
- 3 Burning the incense (**impepho**) and / or bones of a slaughtered animal thus inviting the ancestors to be part of the celebration. This **impepho** plant is specifically chosen as a plant for the ancestor because of its nature. The Zulus believe it is an everlasting plant just like the ancestors themselves, it does not die as ancestors do not die. Its flower does not wither nor change its colour. The Zulu maintain that the **impepho** and the ancestors have something in common. This plant, according to Berglund, (1975: 114) is picked with great care, people do not look at the earth when they break it off. He says looking at the earth is actually looking at the ancestors which is unethical for the Zulus. Ancestors are believed to be near the plant in the earth. Also, that the **impepho** is not eaten by the cattle is a strong indication of the close

relationship between the plant and the cattle. The things of the ancestors do not eat each other.

4 In ceremonies like the **umabo** and the **umemulo**, recitation of ancestral praises and the enumeration of the agnatic forebears, all of which is customary in such ceremonies.

5 Treating gall-bladder and its precious contents, the bile, reverently. The family head ensures that it is hidden in the "apse" (the far back of a hut), **umsamo**, and that no stranger touches it lest it be misused. The **umsamo** is sacred, for it is where the guardian spirits of the homestead abide. In urban areas, the **umsamo** is only observed as a sacred place when there is a traditional occasion, not everyday as is the case in rural areas. The **umsamo** is set aside for ancestors with the aim of letting them know that their descendants are looking to them. Berglund says at the **umsamo**, vessels, clothing and precious articles are stored. An empty **umsamo** says to the ancestors "we do not know you". Putting things at this sacred place is to tell them that the home is theirs. Meat and beer are put there overnight before the day of the ceremony. When this food is the **umsamo** the ancestors "lick" the meat and "drink" the beer. The **umsamo** is without any doubt used by the people to communicate with their ancestors, however, not always verbally. This indicates that there need not only be words for communication to take place.

6 Putting aside certain meat portions and beer to be "eaten" by the ancestors. Their eating is however invisible. Seeing the meat at the **umsamo** pleases them and that is the way they enjoy it.

7 Reporting - **ukuthetha** to the ancestors telling them about the occasions about what is about to happen and what is happening. The **ukuthetha** practice is an important component of the ceremonies studied, it is often contained in or implied by the other practices listed above.

The above practices are all forms of communication in one way or another. They usually involve speeches and practices that are

oral in nature and full of formulaic expressions which allow later recurrence. These practices also recur because they are communal in nature, involving not only one person but the whole family, lineage or community which explains their being passed on from one generation to the next without fail. Also, the fact that these practices are not solely verbal, but also involve non-verbal concrete mythical symbols (e.g the gall symbolising the presence of ancestors) makes it unlikely for them to die.

There are also many acknowledgements of the ancestors made outside the sphere of ceremony and ritual. According to Kohler, (1933: 93),

..the power ancestors have over their descendant's life and death is well brought out in their everyday spoken language.

Below is a list of phrases in which the belief of the people in ancestors is illustrated. Most interesting is what I have observed, that these phrases are also used by those Zulus who claim to have nothing to do with the ancestors.

1 **Ubizwa ngabaphansi.**

He is summoned by those below.

(i.e he is dying)

2 **Ngibhekwe yidlozi lami.**

I have been watched by my ancestor.

(i.e I am fortunate)

3 **Nginedlozi.**

I have an ancestor / I am possessed by a spirit.

(i.e I am lucky)

So, the Zulu word for "ancestor(s)" is often equivalent to luck and fortune.

4 **Unedlozi elikhulu.**

He has a powerful ancestor.

(i.e he has a powerful guardian spirit - used also by Zulu Christians referring to the work of the Holy Spirit)

5 **Lowaya muntu ufulathelwe yidlozi.**

That person has the back of his ancestors turned on him.
(i.e he has had bad luck)

6 **Izwe elifulathelwe ngamadlozi.**

A country that has the back of the ancestors turned on it.
(i.e a God - forsaken country, like violence- stricken South Africa)

7 **Limbhekile elakubo / Limlahlile elakubo.**

His ancestor has looked after him / His ancestor has forsaken him.

This sentence has the subject concord **li-**, the object concord **m** and the verb **bhekile \ lahlile** without an explicit subject. The subject is understood by all the Zulu people to mean "ancestor". **Li-** subject concord is from the full prefix of **idlozi**, i.e **ili-**.

8 **Akudlozi laya endlini ladela kwabo.**

There is no ancestor who ever went into another hut and left his own.

(i.e our own ancestors will always help us)

9 **Idlozi liyabhekelwa.**

The ancestor needs to be helped in his work.

(This is a proverb with a symbolic meaning i.e do not intentionally get yourself into sticky situations hoping ancestors will rescue you)

The continued existence of ancestor belief is therefore ensured in the people's prayers, sacrifices and in phrases of the daily spoken language. This helps this tradition not to die. What also contributes to the survival of this tradition is the fact that the ancestors are believed to have power to manifest themselves in concrete symbols that are easily understood by their descendants.

2.3 ANCESTOR MANIFESTATIONS

This is a means by which the ancestors let themselves known to their offspring and inform them of their wishes. Communication between the descendants and the ancestors is preceded by the

manifestation of the latter. According to Berglund (1975: 94), ancestor manifestation is of crucial importance to the Zulu social life and general well-being. Ancestors appear to their offspring in a variety of ways, however it is impossible to draw up a dogmatic list of manifestations. What is more important is the symbolism attached to any manifestation.

- 1 Dreams play a very important role for the Zulu as the main means by which the ancestors reveal themselves. Everyday communication with the ancestors is maintained in dreams. Berglund says (1975:97) people become anxious and have fearful nights if they no not dream any more. He says they hold that living is impossible without dreams and lack of dreams is regarded as an absence of communication between the ancestors and the survivors. There is a claim that the ancestors may indicate a lack of interest in their descendants by not appearing in dreams. A lack of interest would have been instigated by the descendants themselves. In dreams, a channel of communication with the ancestors is maintained, wherein the latter become concrete and intimate.

The ancestral spirits appear to the living in dreams, giving instructions to them. A diviner at times may interpret dreams, if there is no one in the family who has the ability to do so. Dreams are taken as warnings from ancestors forecasting danger or impending important decisions concerning which they express their wishes. A person dreaming can possibly see his ancestor as he knew him, wearing clothes he used to wear or possibly speaking as he used to. Ancestors can also appear to people who never knew them personally. If such a person has a dream, those who know the ancestor merely say who the ancestor is. This appearance happens if ancestors want to issue certain orders.

- 2 Angry ancestors manifest themselves in illnesses. In the absence of sorcery, the misfortune is attributed to the intervention of some offended or neglected ancestor whose spirit should be appeased before relief can be expected. These ancestors do not give instructions; they rather cause disaster because of neglect. There is a possibility of a curse on an innocent person, can be seriously ill, be mysteriously severely burnt or simply become a lunatic. This manifestation usually happens when there is a custom that has not been honoured. Such an unpleasant consequence as a result of disobedience is known as **umkhokha** (**ukukhokha** is the verb "to pay", i.e people pay for the wrongs done). It is conceived as a curse to those who have disobeyed or disregarded the ancestors.

- 3 The ancestors can also manifest themselves in the form of pain in the shoulders, back and/or chest. This manifestation is not necessarily a bad one but may indicate ancestor possession especially of people whom they want to be diviners.

- 4 Ancestors also manifest themselves in snakes. However, the Zulu people do not believe their ancestors are snakes as such, they do not at all refer to the spirits as snakes in the literal sense. For them it is the ancestors that are communicating all the time through the snakes.
 - a) A black mamba's appearance means that the ancestors are very angry, hence its appearance is known as **isishingili** i.e a sudden turning of the back. People then go to a diviner to find out what has gone wrong. If it enters the house, it is even more dangerous. Some people believe that a black mamba represents the family's grandfather (father of the head of the family).
 - b) A green mamba's visit is welcome and people rejoice at its "visit". However, if it enters the house, that is

not welcome, as there is a belief that, it means ancestors have been offended.

- c) A female ancestor may also visit her offspring and she manifests herself as a small brown snake known as **umzingandlu** (a stay at home). This term refers to a person who does not go out with others on their expeditions, but stays at home because of love for peace. The word also refers to a species of a small, brown harmless snake normally found near dwellings (house snake).

- 5 My informant, Musa Zwane, tells me that in rural areas like the area around the Black Mfolozi, near Vryheid, it is held that ancestors can send messages and warnings in the form of a bull that collapses through either weakness or exhaustion. This is a manifestation predicting a disease to be directed at the head of the family whose cause is unknown, possibly a disease that might cause his death.
- 6 The African Pied wagtail, **umvemve**, (*Motacilla aguimp*) is known as the ancestor's bird. In times of peace when it gives voice, that is interpreted as a warning of a coming visitor. In times of unrest it is a warning of an impending war or of enemies planning to attack.
- 7 Msimang (1975: 24) says **umbangaqhwa**, the South African Thick-Knee or Cape Dikkop (*Burhinus capensis*) is another bird known as the ancestor's bird. **Umbangaqhwa**, literally, causer of frost - as its name suggests, this bird causes trouble, it is a warning for war.
- 8 An owl, **isikhova**, is widely known as the witches' bird which the ancestors send to warn people of possible death in the family. If it comes to the peoples' dwellings, it is a bad omen foretelling a definite death in the family.

9 Another bad omen is a dog's night howl, **umkhulungwane**, it is also interpreted as indicating the possibility of death in the family. Dogs making this howl are hit so as to stop it.

Ancestor manifestations compel the Zulus to do something about them. They perform relevant rituals for specific situations and by so doing ensured their ancestors' favour. It is important that on an occasion like a wedding one follows procedures considered by a lineage and its ancestors to be proper as required by a particular custom. People perform certain rituals because of fear, coupled with honour and love for the ancestors.

Although ancestors are supposed to cause sickness and dreams that disturb, this they do for good reason. The pressure they exert, though it appears negative, usually turns out to have a positive outcome. The sickness they bring is different from the one caused by witchcraft and sorcery. The latter intends to kill, while ancestor pressure aims at drawing attention of the whole family to the needs of the ancestors. Failure to listen and to do that which the ancestors expect of their descendants would incur ancestral spirit's anger. This, then compels the offspring to be considerate of them. On occasions like weddings they do not forget to report, **ukuthetha**, to them what they are doing and ask for blessings.

The slaughtering of a beast that accompanies the Zulu marriage is not done merely for the sake of eating the flesh of the animal. The gall is more important, some people maintain that it is the gall alone that calls for the slaughtering. It is essential that the gall be from a slaughtered animal and not be bought from a butchery, if this could be possible.

2.4 THE ANCESTRAL ASPECT OF MARRIAGE

In a wedding situation, both parties, the bride's and the groom's, slaughter beasts and/or goats, as a way of reporting the ceremonies to ancestors. The beast is important to the Zulus

because of its symbolic significance - the blood it sheds and its gall, **inyongo**. The people concerned are sprinkled and anointed with the gall. It is widely held that ancestral spirits are fond of blood and the gall. **Ukuthetha** is made both explicit in the form of speech and implicit, in the very sprinkling of gall.

Berglund (1975: 10) refers to the importance of the gall-bladder to the ancestors by pointing out that the bladder appearance is liked by the ancestors. He says ancestors like the gall, because it does not have an exit but has only an entrance. It is therefore a hut to them, because it is dark and they like working in darkness, e.g in dreams and at **umsamo**. Berglund clarifies this idea thus :

The gall is the place of the shade in a cow or ox and even in the bull. It is the place where the shades live in a beast. If the shade is not in the gall, then the beast becomes sick. Nothing will be able to cure it because the shades have left it (1975: 10)

For Vilakazi (1958: 175), the gall bladder is a sign of belonging to a particular kinship group, of honouring and of thanking the ancestors. Raum (1973: 390) also sees the gall as a symbol and an instrument for achieving unity. This is an important element in a marriage - unifying the two families, nearly all authors who write about ancestors do not forget to make mention of the **inyongo**.

The objective underlying the simultaneous slaughtering of the animals is to ensure the mutual acceptance of the bride and the groom by the ancestors of the two families. Animal slaughtering is a sign that the shades of the groom and of the bride now agree to work together for the well-being of their descendants. The **inyongo** is very precious and valuable so that the Zulu maintain strangers must not be allowed to touch it lest it be lost or misused. It is feared that strangers might use it for witchcraft.

The gall (bladder) is treated reverently owing to the fact that it reminds people of their ancestors to whom they are thankful for their protection and their interest in the family's welfare.

The fate of the family is identified with the gall-bladder, this is demonstrated by the family head's care for the bladder when he cuts it up and buries it in the apse after it has shrivelled.

During marriage negotiations, when the groom's party take part of the **ilobolo**, (bridewealth) to the bride's people, the latter give dignity (as the Zulus put it) to the main **umkhongi**, (go-between). He is given the inflated gall-bladder of a goat that was slaughtered for him, and it is tied on either his wrist, coat or hat for everybody to see that he has handled the negotiations successfully and has been cordially received. The phrase **ukufaka inyongo** (literally to put on a gall bladder), means "to make important". The bladder as an important symbol is believed to have power to make a person important as well. The bladder is fixed on the person for whom a beast has been slaughtered. It is meant to inform the ancestors about what has been done for the person and also to ask them to look after that person well. The gall-bladder thus singles out the person the ancestors must attend to. It is a sign and a means of communicating with the ancestors - an oral characteristic style of communicating.

Orality is not only a feature of orally passed on information but also refer to activities like **ukufaka inyongo**.

When the girl goes off to get married, her father slaughters a goat/beast known as the **umncamo** for her, the word derives from the verb **ukuncama** i.e to eat before commencing a journey, the girl's marriage is figuratively considered as a journey. The father sprinkles and anoints his daughter with the gall on the day she leaves or the day before she leaves for her in-laws' place. The father pours the gall over the left hand and the left foot and addresses the ancestors.

I remember my father's brother did **umncamo** for me, when I went off to get married as my father had died long ago. He addressed, **ukuthetha**, the family ancestors. This was recorded on my wedding,

in January 1991, and in a passage taken from a video for the purpose of this study, he said

Anginazise bobaba ukuthi umntwana wenu

Let me tell you fathers that your child
useyaphuma manje.

is leaving now.

Hambani naye-ke, nimbheke futhi nimlungisele

Go with her, take care of her and sort out things
for her

yonke into ningakhohlwa ukuthi kufanele

everything for her not forgetting that she should
ukuthi azale abe nabantwana.

be fertile and have children.

Loko kuyokwenza ukuthi abasemzini basihloniphe.

That will make her husband's people respect us.

Nani mathongo bayonihlonipha ngaloko.

And you ancestors, they will respect you for that.

Hambani naye, nimbheke, nenze abe nenzalo.

Go with her, look after her, make her bear
children.

This ritual invokes ancestral blessings on the girl. The girl may wear the gall-bladder of the **umncamo** beast from her home to the groom's place as a protection. The ritual joining of the departing bride to her ancestor's lineage by means of the **umncamo** gall is symbolic of the fact that her own ancestors will go with her to the husband's place and assist her there. Berglund, from the conversation he had with his informants in Zululand, deduced that the gall-bladder is not only important as a dwelling for the ancestors. Firstly he notes (1975:110) the fact that cattle are important as they give birth as humans do i.e in the tenth lunar month. Secondly, the resemblance between the bladder and the womb underlie the Zulu sentiments attached to fertility and prosperity which as we have seen in 2.2 above and to be seen in chapter 4 are important in Zulu life. Some people believe the ancestors go with the bride and stay in her womb for fertility purposes.

The gall is used also for initiating or incorporating a new member into the lineage. This is evident from its use at the groom's place, when a beast for welcoming the bride is slaughtered. By making this ritual slaughter, the groom's kinship group invoke their ancestral spirits to take over in looking after the bride. As she is now in a new kinship group, it would be improper for her to be solely possessed by her own ancestral spirits in her husband's home. The new gall-bladder is removed and taken to the room where the bride and her attendants reside, there its contents are poured over the bride. Vilakazi (1958: 175) says this rite secures a ritual link between the bride and the groom's ancestors or his kinship group. Berglund (1975: 118), about the practice of putting on the gall says

... is a symbol that the shades of the two parties concerned agree to do their work with the woman; ... that it is poured out only on the feet of the bride and not the male must be seen in terms of Zulu concepts of fertility.

This is to ask the ancestors to look at the bride favourably and bless her with children.

This rite symbolises the new relationship set up which Raum maintains means, a man may not marry into his mother's people,

For his mothers' family has been treated with the gall of the cattle of the man's kinship group. He and they have shared a gall, ... this process sets up an interdict against intermarriage (Raum, 1973: 391)

The use of the gall bladder is a non-verbal form of communication. It is a means of expression, it does not only stand for communication but also for a thought, desire, and a wish that people might have. With the use of the gall, we see the abstract reality put in concrete terms, each time the Zulu see the gall they are reminded of their ancestors. The message is encoded in the gall, it is used to convey a wish for unity.

With the gall, people are able to communicate with the ancestors something that would otherwise be impossible, thus it is a tool for bridging the gap between the two. We see that there need not only be a verbal means of communication for people to be able to

interact, but also a non-verbal means has power to establish communication as well.

We have seen that ancestor presence and existence is not doubted by many Zulus. They are part of the peoples' lives and so important that descendants ensure that communion with them is always maintained because inability to do so might bring about disaster. People communicate with the ancestors in ceremonies, like in **umabo** and **umemulo**. Communication is maintained in the form of speeches made, songs and dancing, engaged in, in these ceremonies. Ancestors are told of the occasion and are invited to be part of the feasting. One important aspect of both ceremonies is conveying knowledge. Knowledge is conveyed to both the living (guests) and more importantly to the ancestors. The presence of the ancestors, the Zulus maintain, is also necessary for a peaceful and blessed day. It is in this context that I provide my detailed analysis of the ceremonies in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE - THE UMEMULO CEREMONY

3.1 THE MEANING OF THE CEREMONY

This ceremony is traditionally held for a girl reaching the physical condition necessary for the marriageable state. Most Zulu people think it is very necessary to **emulisa** their daughters. To most it is a custom that must be observed this be done before a girl marries, lest there be problems in her marriage because the ancestors will not have been told about the girl's "coming of age". In some families the **ukwemula** of the first daughter only is sufficient to represent all other daughters' **ukwemula** in the family.

In olden days performing this ceremony was connected with menarche, but nowadays that is not the case. From the ceremonies I studied, I observed that parents either perform the ceremony for their daughter when she has either finished her studies - her graduation party is held on the same day with the **umemulo**, or reached twenty one years of age, or just before she gets married or when her lover's people have indicated their wish to **lobola** her.

Referring to this ceremony as **ukuthomba**, a "blossoming forth" of a girl into womanhood is evidence that makes it quite clear that the ancestors would not regard their girl as mature for marriage without it. Thus in turn she would not be blessed with children as she would still not be regarded as a woman ready to bear children, but as still a girl. This shows that social maturation involves much more than the physical signs of a reproductive capacity. The Zulus believe that ancestors bless their offspring with children because the **umemulo** was performed to inform them about her new state.

Fear of the ancestors' possible anger if they are not informed encourages people to perform this ceremony. This is one major reason that makes people sometimes perform this ceremony during

the actual marriage negotiations, either before the wedding itself or just immediately after the boy's people have announced their wish to commence marriage negotiations.

There are also other reasons for ensuring that the ceremony is done. Through the **umemulo** ceremony, the girl's father publicly thanks his daughter for having behaved herself, i.e for having

- a) respected her elders by not talking and/or behaving rudely towards them, as young people commonly do nowadays.
- b) listened to her parent's advice on how to conduct herself.
- c) generally been obedient. Some parents will perform the ceremony for their daughters, because they managed not to have children before marriage, however this has become less common as the sole reason for performing the ceremony for a girl.

The ceremony is performed to make the girl happy and to show her appreciation of her good character. The father also thanks the ancestors for giving him a daughter and for looking after her. The father then expresses his great joy by giving what is valued most highly by the Zulus, an ox, part of which is for the ancestors. He slaughters an ox for his daughter also to congratulate her for reaching or passing a certain age (usually twenty one years), as most of the ceremonies I attended and watched on video indicated. This version is an adaptation of the Western "coming of age", at the twenty-first birthday.

* By performing **ukwemula** for the girl, the father actually introduces his daughter into adulthood. Hence the **umemulo** is normally referred to as **ukukhulisa intombazane**. **Ukukhulisa** is a causative verb, its literal meaning being, to cause to grow, but can be translated here as, to acknowledge her coming of age. The performance of this ceremony means becoming a new social entity for the girl, she enters adulthood. Success in the changed status needs ancestral blessing, which it is believed can be secured by placing the girl in a separate room where the ancestors can

easily reach her. She therefore enters the **umgonqo** before the **umemulo** day of celebration.

3.2 SECLUSION IN UMGONQO

The commencement of the celebration is marked by the girl being kept in strict seclusion, when she enters **umgonqo**. This is a seclusion room or hut in which a girl stays with her age-mates. In this room they live a secluded and strictly regulated life. The girl is meant to stay in the seclusion room for about a week (depending on whether she attends school, is working, is on holiday or is always at home) before the **umemulo** day of celebration, which is usually held on a Saturday.

She is not allowed to leave this room except at night, when fewer people can possibly see her. Seclusion ensures that she is not affected in anyway by sorcery, for this is the period during which she must be more acquainted with the ancestors. Ancestors in turn give her blessings for her new state. Whoever wants to see the girl or give her a gift has to come to her room, not outside the room. Whenever she goes out of the **umgonqo** even for a limited period, she adopts a shy attitude.

Raum (1973: 280) says that neither the parents nor her brothers may enter the hut. He further says when speaking to these people she must whisper. However, these people may be allowed in the room, if they have brought presents for her.

He then enumerates special practices associated with the girl's seclusion :

- a) She must not talk much, be noisy or laugh aloud, for fear of becoming a habitual scolder of her husband.
- b) She drinks water medicated with a pinch of ash to make her a good cook.

- * C) To become fertile she eats bitter roots of the impindisa shrub. According to Doke's dictionary (1958: 663) this shrub is a species of a flowering climbing plant of the coffee family which is used against impotence.
- d) Prohibition of sour milk is the most generally reported.

Whilst in the umgonqo the girl puts red ochre on her face, arms and legs. Girls who are her age-mates are invited to keep her company during her seclusion. The other girls only put the ochre on their faces. This is a mark referred to by Msimang (1975: 216) as indicating seclusion and meant to invite the ancestor's presence. He says men are not meant to see girls that have red ochre on their faces, hence on seeing these girls they should run away from them. This, Msimang says would be done by men because of respect they have for the ceremonies and the ancestors subsequently in which there is smearing on of the ochre. During the seclusion period a girl is believed to be more in contact with the ancestors, the most revered spirits.

* Whilst in seclusion the girl is admonished by elderly women. She is told about accepted behaviour patterns as she is now entering womanhood. She is advised about the behaviour expected in the new state and the responsibilities associated with it. Staying in the umgonqo is not a nice experience because there are a number of things that a girl is not allowed to do. Mrs Nokuthula Dlamini of Kwa-Mashu who has performed the ukwemula for her two daughters, tells me that staying in the umgonqo is not at all meant to be pleasant. She says the girl must stay in the umgonqo, so as to have a taste of of the harshness of life in marriage. The girl is made to anticipate marriage hardships, i.e not eating sour milk, adopting a shy attitude and generally being secluded from people as she will experience this when she becomes a new member of her husband's family.

To liberate a girl from umgonqo a goat is slaughtered or money is given to her. The girl's father thereafter slaughters a beast for the girl. People are invited to the umemulo ceremony to

4 | feast, dance and sing. According to Zulu custom, the ceremony
 informs the girl that she is ready for marriage. It is regarded
 as the girl's father's permission granted to his daughter to look
 past about for a husband. (Traditionally) this ceremony was associated
 with puberty, however it is not the case now as it is often
 present performed for girls who are twenty one years or older. Through
 this ceremony the girl is non-verbally informed about her new
 state, the meaning of which is encoded in the practices
 performed. She is not explicitly told about the meaning of the
 ceremony and she herself does not ask because she knows it from
 her predecessors. She has seen, heard and participated in similar
 ceremonies before. People easily identify with the philosophy
 expressed by this ceremony. It is well known because the Zulus
 venerate tradition and that which has been passed on to them by
 countless generations.

The **umemulo** is believed to be a ceremony that must be performed
 for every girl at some stage or at least for the eldest daughter
 with some people. If for any reason the girl's father or anybody
 on behalf of the father is unable to **khulisa** (accord her
 maturity), the people maintain that the girl will later
 definitely experience problems at some stage in her life. She
 might not get a husband or might marry but turn out to be
 infertile. This is based on the belief that ancestors would still
 consider her as a girl, not a woman fit to have her own children.
 Therefore she will be without the blessings of her ancestors,
 something which is very important and needed for a marriage to
 be successful. Communication with the ancestors secures
 blessings, offsprings therefore have to tell them about the girl
 and the occasion. They cannot know from their position being
 underground, and the knowledge that ancestors normally accompany
 their descendants wherever they are is not enough. They cannot
 automatically know about the occasion unless they are officially
 told, and telling is oral.

Ancestors must be formally alerted to what their descendants do
 or are about to do, otherwise disaster or misfortune will be upon

them. This explains why we find certain people performing this ceremony long after the girl has married and appears to be experiencing problems. Possible problems might be

- a) mysterious illness
- b) inability to have children
- c) troublesome husband
- d) quarrelling with the in-laws every time or any other problem that it might be thought requires the **umemulo** ceremony to be performed for the girl.

I know cases in which problems were solved by performing the ceremony. Sizo Ntshangase of Umlazi, R section had **umemulo** after ten years of married life without children. After consultation with the diviner, she was sent back home by her in-laws so that her family could perform the ceremony for her. Since her father had died, her brothers took the responsibility, they first appeased the ancestors before performing the ceremony. Three months later she conceived and has since had two children.

Zodwa Bhengu of the Oyaya Sonani area in Eshowe was supposed to have got married long ago, considering her age according to Zulu belief, she was called the **umjendevu**, old unmarried woman (36 years). The epithet is utterly derogatory. Her father, a staunch Christian felt it necessary to perform the ceremony for her so as to invite good fortune for his daughter.

Three years after the ceremony she got married.

ON THE UMEMULO DAY

When the seclusion is over, i.e after a week or so, the girl is released and the celebration is held on the actual **umemulo** day. Raum (1973: 282) refers to this day as "the coming out" pointing out that it is a release rite. Relatives, friends and acquaintances of the family that is performing the ceremony are invited to attend the **umemulo** proceedings on a certain date fixed before hand. On this day the girl's marriageable state is publicly recognised. The girl and her age-mates who stayed with

* her in the umgonqo wear married woman's leather kilts, izidwaba, borrowed from older women. Nowadays the traditional attire can also be hired from shops specialising in traditional wear. * Wearing izidwaba indicates a new state, i.e of readiness to marry.

The girl and her age-mates go out of the umgonqo very early in the morning. They wash off the red ochre from their faces. The washing of the earth symbolises relief from the constraints to which she had been subjected and freedom to be spoken to even by men. The girls then go to a place far away from home, they stay there until they are called. They temporarily wait either under a tree, next to a friend's or relative's house or just in an open space not visible from home. They stay there until the girl's father sends a message calling them back. Coming back they sing special songs relevant to the occasion. The following are some of the songs I recorded from the ceremonies I attended :

A **Leader : Ubaba uthe angimule**

Father said I must celebrate coming of age

Girls : Awu yehheni ngiyakwesaba

Oh no I am afraid of it (i.e **ukwemula**)

* **Leader : Khona ngizoba intombi**

So that I will be a marriageable girl

Girls : Awu yehheni ngiyakwesaba

Oh no I am afraid of it - i.e **ukwemula**

* **Leader : Khona ngizokweshelwa**

So that I may be courted

Girls : Awu yehheni ngiyakwesaba

Oh no I am afraid of it - i.e **ukwemula**

(from Sidudla Hlomuka's **umemulo**)

B **Leader : Mina ngeke ngibalekele ikhaya labazali**

I won't run away from my parent's house

Girls : Ngeke ngilibalekele noma sengikhulile

I won't run away from it even when I am a grown up

(from Gugu Majola's **umemulo**)

These songs are relevant for the occasion; they are meant to communicate the girls' predicament, her fears and her wishes. The girls prefer to use songs that are symbolic not just any songs. Singing is part of this ceremony. We see girls representing their promises and wishes in a symbolic way. This they express in and with their bodies, voice, dance and faces. This Peeters mentioned as one aspect of orality in his seminar on the "Old French Epic" in an oral studies' lecture.

Song A expresses fear and tension about the new state. The change frightens the girl as it she does not what it will bring her. She is afraid that she will now be courted and possibly later marry and stay with her in-laws. This is indeed a frightening thought. Song B expresses the girl's love for her home and promises to be always with her people in spirit even if she marries.

The girls come back from their temporary habitat, in leather kilts, and the girl for whom the ceremony is held, returns with a spear in her hand. The girl usually gets the spear from her father, father's brother or her maternal uncle if the father is late. In rare cases (a lover known by the girl's parents) I am told, might be asked by the girl to buy it for her. However, this is not usual according to the custom. It is a rule though, that she does not buy it for herself nor carry out the expense of her **umemulo**. As it is not a fighting spear that she carries, white beads are put around it. Berglund (1975:98) says white is a sign of the shades and their agreement to what the girl does, He further says that white is used in the puberty ceremony for the purpose of ancestor brooding. My informant, Nokuthula, adds that "white is symbolic of peace and love". It is the girls themselves who, during seclusion in the **umgonqo**, assemble the beads and put them around the spear. I have also observed that some people put a paper, a cloth or a potato at the tip of the spear's blade. All this is indicative of the fact that the spear is not for fighting, but is for goodwill. Asking Mr Mahlanaza Makhoba of Dlebe in Mahlabathini district what the implication of this practice is, he said:

Although the girl's spear is not for fighting, it however symbolises her victory, having fought and won childhood and teenage battles which to some are difficult to conquer. And because she conquered childhood illnesses that killed some, her father amongst other things sees it necessary to perform the ceremony for her. She also conquered teenage immoral acts that led many to have illegitimate children. The spear symbolises the fact therefore that she is indeed a conquering hero, as no coward or loser can be made to carry a spear in public.

Makhoba's explanation is in line with what Ong (1982: 37) refers to as an orally based thought, which tend to be:

a) additive rather than subordinative -

Ong's contention is for the English but it is equally true for Zulus. Makhoba's explanation has a lot of **futhi**, "ands" at the beginning of some sentences. Orally patterned speech according to Ong is determined as totally independent of grammar and its linguistic structure.

b) Aggregative rather than analytic -

Oral utterances have epithetic expressions, Makhoba refers to a girl for whom **ukwemula** is performed, as a conquering hero not just an ordinary hero.

Mthelo Hlela, another informant, tells me that by traditional right the girl's father performs a ritual for this ceremony in the cattle kraal. Due to urbanization and unavailability of cattle kraals, the important rite in the **unemulo** is now performed either in the house or in a chosen open area outside. When the girl comes back from where she had stayed whilst away from home, her father smears her thumbs and the big toes with the gall of a the beast that had been slaughtered the day before the ceremony. He then ties the **inyongo** around her daughter's wrist. The gall actually invites the ancestors to be with the girl and especially look after her in a new state.

The majority of Zulus are convinced that the ancestors lick the gall whenever it is poured without the people concerned noticing it. A day before the ceremony the bladder is kept in a safe place, with its precious contents, the gall, **inyongo** hidden at the **umsamo**, lest it be tempered with by outsiders. It is believed that as the gall is associated with the ancestors who bring luck to their descendants it should be looked after very carefully otherwise witches may turn the family's ancestors against the whole family and these might bring misfortune.

The beast's caul, **umhlwehlwe**, is put by the girl's father over the girl's shoulders and breast which Msimang (1975: 248) says is meant to invite the ancestors for the girl's good. Whilst performing this rite the father shortly addresses the ancestors, **thetha**, thanking them for his daughter, for having looked after her well being and further asks for more blessings on her behalf.

The father and his daughter then go to the chosen open area, the **isigcawu** where the rest of the performance is to be held. This is the meeting place where everybody has been waiting for them. The pouring of the gall on the girl is not done in front of everybody invited to the ceremony. This proves that the gall is very precious and delicate, as it is associated with the ancestors who are believed to shape the fate of persons who belong to them. Therefore the Zulus treat the gall very dearly and carefully lest the ancestors turn their backs on them and dispense misfortune.

At the **isigcawu** the father addresses the guests and the ancestors telling them what the occasion is all about. This is the most important part of the occasion because the ancestors have to be informed about what is happening. We see that it is not only the living who are told but also the dead, who would be offended and cause trouble, if not told formally. One vital function of this oratory is to inform the ancestors, invite them to be part of the celebration and ask for their blessings. The head of the family tells the guests what the purpose of the occasion is, even if

they already know about it. In his speech the father also tells his daughter how happy he is about her and appreciates her long obedience to him. The speech also include tracing genealogy. This tells other people who you are. This is an important aspect as society depends on knowing one another, the dead also need to know and be made known by their descendants.

There is also the performance of clan praises and/or personal praises of the living and the ancestors. Recitation of praises might be performed by a family member older than the girl's father, if there is one at the ceremony or by a person who has proved to be talented in **ukuthetha**. Berglund says the importance is given to the officiant's ability to address the shades. Ancestors must be approached in a convincing manner that will not make them cause trouble, hence eloquence in the address to the ancestors is of such importance. Ancestor favour should not be taken for granted as just a mechanical result of slaughtering a beast, it involves more than that. The ancestors must be made aware of what happens in a formal manner. The Zulus indeed do not take the role of the ancestors for granted, they know that it is not automatic and passive. This is demonstrated in the speeches they make at the ceremonies like the **umemulo** and the **umabo**.

* 3.4 ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECHES MADE BY THE FATHERS OF THE GIRLS AT UMEMULO CEREMONIES.

3.4.1 SIBUNGU SEKHWANI'S SPEECH

I recorded this speech from the video taken at the ceremony which was performed at UMBumbulu. Sibungu is 53 years old and is a factory worker.

- 1 **Uma umuntu elimile ensimini, uyavuna.**
When a person has sown in the field, he reaps.
- 2 **Uma evuna, uyazidla izithelo.**
When he reaps, he eats the fruit.

- 3 **Induku le ikhombisa ubuqhawe,**
This stick (referring to the spear) shows bravery,
4 **akekho umuntu olwa ngaphandle kwesikhali.**
Nobody fights without a weapon.
- 5 **Induku le ikhombisa ubuqhawe bakhe,**
This stick shows her bravery,
6 **Ngoba ngempela akekho umuntu ongalwa ngaphandle**
7 **kwesikhali sakhe.**
Because indeed nobody can fight without his weapon.
- 8 **Le nto le nguphawu lokukhombisa ukuthi usekhulile.**
This thing is a symbol proving that she is now grown
up.
- 9 **Useyibambile impi wayilwa, wayilwa, akaqhubeke**
10 **nokuyilwa.**
She has fought the battle, and fought, let her
continue fighting.
- 11 **Lona kuyoze kube ngumkhonto wakho wokulwa njalo**
12 **njalo ndodakazi yami.**
This will be your fighting spear always, always my
daughter.
- 13 **Ungihloniphile gugu lami, ngalokho-ke ngithi**
14 **ngiyabonga Mshengu.**
You have shown me respect my precious thing, because
of that I am saying thank you Mshengu.
- 15 **Sihlangene lapha bantabenkosi ngalo mntwana uGugu.**
We have met here today children of the king because of
this child, Gugu.
- 16 **UGugu lo ungiphathe kahle ngaphenduka ingane kuyena**
17 **ekubeni mina ngimdala.**
Gugu has treated me well and I was like a child to
her, whereas I am old.
- 18 **Ungiphathe ngenhlonipho, nami ke kanjalo**
19 **ngamhlonipha njengengane ngoba engihloniphile.**
She respected me, I therefore in turn like a child
honoured her because she acted respectfully first.
- 20 **Ngiyabonga, ngibonga kule ngane. Ngiyabonga Gugu.**
Thank you, thanks to this child. Thank you Gugu.

21 **Futhi ngibonga kinina futhi abaphansi bakaMajola,**
 22 **bakaMacingwane, bakaMshengu. Gugu bathi futhi**
 23 **angibonge kuwe abakaMshengu.**

Again I thank you the ancestors of the Majola, of the Macingwane, of the Mshengu. Gugu, the Mshengu say I must again thank you.

24 **Bathi angibonge, nomkhulu uStefani, uStefani ozala**
 25 **uMcondo, uMcondo ozala mina, uSibungu sekhwani,**
 26 **uSibungu-ke ozala uGugu lo.**

They say I must thank you, and my grandfather Stephan, Stephan who begets Mcondo, Mcondo who begets me, Sibungu sekhwani, Sibungu who then begets this Gugu.

In lines 1-4 of this speech the speaker uses examples and comparisons so as to make his audience understand the importance of his daughter's **umemulo**. Sibungu's speech describes everything by means of imagery i.e :

- a) a sower reaping that which he has sown, rejoicing as he is now eating the fruit of his labour. This imagery is an adaptation from the Bible.
- b) a hero who uses his weapon effectively, who does not take it for granted that he has fought several times before, and thinks therefore he can at times leave his weapon. This imagery is similar to the one used by Makhoba, refer to the heading 3.3 above.

Sibungu likens the two successful people to his daughter who has always been respectful. He uses concrete facts for his audience, to make it easy for them to grasp the abstract facts concerning his daughter's **umemulo**. He uses a familiar language and familiar concrete objects.

In lines 3 - 7 Sibungu uses the stick metaphor which he says is symbolic of bravery. In all these lines, at first sight there seems to be no connection between the stick and the girl, he however, step by step, explains the importance of the stick (weapon) for a person who has to fight to survive. It is in line 8 where there is the culmination of his description, when he says

the stick is a signal of the fact that the girl is grown up. We see him leading his audience to a better understanding of what he says, developing the idea, a characteristic common in the praise poems of king Shaka. Sibungu's metaphor resembles Makhoba's explanation in 3.3 above of the carrying of a spear by a girl who is having the **umemulo**. Both men metaphorically refer to the girl as a victor and to the occasion as a celebration of victory.

In lines 9 - 12 he asks his daughter to continue doing the right things. Honouring parents and elders is a valued act to the Zulus hence it is in their culture to refer to every male or woman who is father's or mother's age as **ubaba** and **umama** respectively. These Zulu words are used without possessives, but are understood to mean my father and my mother respectively. This reflects the Zulu cultural value and respect of elderly people.

In line 13 the father says his daughter is **igugu** i.e a precious object, this is metaphoric - coincidentally it is the girl's name as well. It is worth noting that the Zulus do not randomly name their children, rather the parent's wishes, circumstances surrounding the child's birth (before or after the child's birth) will give a child his name. It is believed also that names can have power to determine a person's behaviour and future.

Lines 18 - 19 see an emphasis on the "honouring" and the "respect", concepts which are highly valued by the Zulus. These values are reinforced in Sibungu's speech through the use of repetition, This, Ong (1982: 40) says is characteristic of an oral thought and speech and surely helps to keep both the speaker and the hearer on the track. Towards the end of his speech Sibungu thanks his ancestors, this he does not forget to do once more, although he has thanked them before. Ancestors as founders of the moral and the social order, are thanked for enabling his daughter to uphold morals. Lastly he briefly praises them all using the lineage praises.

Mzolo (1977: 72) says clan praises are held in high esteem by the Zulu and demonstrate respect for a particular people. There is genealogy recitation at the end of the speaker's speech, which occurs in all the occasions studied. I observed that there is genealogy recitation in all the **umemulo** ceremonies I studied. This is where people make themselves known to the public, informing them that they are a people with a respectable, authentic lineage because they do have traceable ancestors. Genealogy shows that a person is somebody from somewhere. To belong to a particular people makes someone significant in the society. It informs others that one is not a stranger, inability point to a lineage will mean one is a stranger and is not a proper Zulu.

Kohler (1939: 123) says the order of descent is a form of praying which is significant to the Zulu people's customs. During the recitation of the genealogy, the ancestors are enumerated in the putative order of their descent. Mostly it is the founder of the lineage that people start with. However in the above speech Sibungu starts with the most recent ancestors and he goes only three generations back.

This speech has a recognisable oral patterning characterised by metaphor and repetition. Sibungu's speech was also accompanied by gestures, in it the spoken word was coupled with gestures in a very effective way. Jousse (1988: 39) says the role of the voiced language has an important function of expressing and communicating ideas, but contends that manual gesticulation contributes in making people understand easier what a person is saying. It is true, we understand a person without difficulty if we see his gestures. Sikhwani's movements are clear as they were captured from the video. Talking about the sower and the warrior Sibungu imitates the characters in his mind using movements of his imagination. With his gestures he imitates and describes his characters. Jousse (1988: 41) refers to actions like Sibungu's as the visible, more expressive manual gesticulations that have

survived and prevailed even in literate societies because of their superiority.

3.4.2 MOFFAT DLAMINI'S SPEECH

I recorded this speech from an **umemulo** I attended at Kwa-Mashu. Moffat is 49 years old and is a social worker by profession.

- 1 **Lo mcimbi esiwenza namhlanje kuwukubonga**
- 2 **abangasekho, kuwukubonga futhi nakuMvelinqangi.**
This ceremony we are performing today is to thank the ancestors, and it is also to thank Mvelinqangi (the supreme being).
- 3 **Kuwukubonga futhi kakhulu kumama kaLindelwe.**
It is to thank also especially Lindelwe's mother
- 4 **Ngiyabonga Nyokana, wena kaLubhedu.**
Thank you Nyokana, you of Lubhedu.
- 5 **Wena kaMahlobo kaSidinana.**
You of Mahlobo of Sidinana.
- 6 **Sunduza uSuthu, mgoqo ovalela izinkomo zaseMayaya.**
You shift the Suthu regiment, wooden bar that shuts in the cattle of Mayaya.
- 7 **Wena owadla washiya kwaze kwadla nanjakazi.**
You who ate and something left over for the dogs to eat.
- 8 **Mahlobo kaSidinana, Nyokana umabonwa abulawe.**
Mahlobo of Sidinana, Nyokana who is killed on sight.
- 9 **ULindelwe-ke manje usephumile ebuntwaneni,**
- 10 **usengene ebudaleni.**
Lindelwe now has come out of childhood, she has entered adulthood.
- 11 **Lesi sigcawu sakhiwe nguLindelwe, ngiyabonga**
- 12 **ngiyajabula futhi ukuthi ungihloniphile.**
This function is at the instance of Lindelwe, thank you I am happy also that you respected me.
- 13 **Namhlanje usuku engiziqhenya ngalo kakhulu.**
Today is the day I am very proud of.

14 **Kunginikeza iqholo elikhulu kakhulu njengoyise.**

This makes me feel very proud as her father.

15 **Kukhona umfowethu omdala, inkosana yendlu enkulu.**

There is my elder brother, eldest son of the great house.

Moffat calls the **umemulo**, a thanksgiving occasion and enumerates people to be thanked. The ancestors in general obviously come first, being the very important beings since the well-being of the family depends on their goodwill. The belief that ancestors are always present on such occasions is the motive for respectful behaviour towards them i.e addressing, praying and giving thanks to them. It is usually the father and/or his brother, not the girl's maternal relatives, who address the ancestors because, as Kohler (1933: 123) contends that the ancestors' power to control the living rests mainly with the patrilineal line.

The continued existence of the ancestors is ensured in the speeches and the prayers made by their descendants during most celebrations they have; it does not necessarily have to be a traditional ceremony. At my maternal cousin's graduation party, her father addressed the ancestors, thanking them for making it possible for his daughter to study hard and attain a degree. The belief in the ancestors' role in the success of their descendants makes some people, I am told, put their first salary cheques for at least a day at the **umsamo**, where ancestors are believed to reside. This they do, also burning the incense **impepho**, thanking the ancestors for the good they have done for them. This practice ensures that the belief does not die and has also kept the memory of the ancestors alive to this day.

In lines 3 - 8 Moffat also gives thanks to his wife for having cared for their daughter, taught her, and instilled in her good morals. He then shows his appreciation of his wife's efforts by reciting her descent group's praises or **izithakazelo**. Mzolo (1977: 112) says such praises are recited to make people feel good, people recite them if they want to be pleasant to a

particular person or group. When Moffat recited these praises, his wife's people were pleased and they expressed their happiness by reciting with him and shouting **wazi thina ngempela** (you really know us). Orality is about conveying knowledge and knowledge is the basis for life. Moffat displays in his performance that he knows his wife's people by reciting their praises. Society depends on knowing one another, the dead must be similarly happy about the fact that their **umkhenyana** really knows them. When the whole group on Moffat's wife's side felt heard the praise they were filled with emotion and the women, out of excitement, uttered shrill cries, (**kikiza**).

The noun **isithakazelo** is from the verb **thakazela** which Doke and Vilakazi (1990: 787) translate : to show courtesy to, to adulate, to congratulate, to laud and praise flatteringly, all of which appear to have been Moffat's wish for his wife and her kin.

In lines 4 - 8 a metaphorical image is used as the strength of the Gumbi group (that of Moffat's wife) is likened to that of Cetshwayo's (a Zulu king) strongest regiment, **uSuthu** - Cope (1968: 210). The Gumbi strength, Nokuthula tells me, was seen when they had a faction fight with the Mayayaya group. The Gumbi became like barring logs to the Mayaya group. The former are also financially well off (7). Nyokana, small snake, though singular, collectively refers to their naturally thin physical build.

In lines 11 - 12 Moffat uses figurative language, when he says the **isigcawu** has been built by his daughter, meaning people are gathered for the occasion because of the good she has done i.e respecting her parents and the elders. This provides justification, for this occasion. The father thanks his daughter for the good morals, in an appealing, not easy to be forgotten way. He uses the words to achieve this - that she has **built isigcawu**, meaning due to her behaviour there is now celebration.

In lines 13 - 14, Moffat thanks his daughter also by expressing how proud he is of her. These lines have a patterned repetition, using **ukuziqhenya** (to be proud) in line 13 and **iqholo** (pride) in

line 14. Walter Ong refers to this, (1982: 34) as mnemonic patterning, where thoughts come into being in repetitions and other formulary devices, and are recalled readily.

The father's elder "brother", next takes the floor to recite the genealogy of the "family" as appointed by the head of the family (girl's father). In the English sense, the two men are not brothers, they have one great grandfather, Nongacu. Kohler (1933: 123) maintains that it is the senior representative of the lineage, who addresses the forbears either as a group or as individuals. The girl's father rightfully appoints his "elder brother" who then recites the genealogy thus :

- 1 **Kuhle ukubonga umntwana, wenze kahle mfowethu.**
It is good to thank the child, you have done well my brother.
- 2 **Ngibonga ubuhle bokuziphatha.**
I appreciate the beauty of good behavior.
- 3 **Lo mntwana uzalwa nguMofethe, uMofethe yena ezalwa**
This child is born by Moffat, Moffat himself born by
- 4 **nguGesi, uGesi yena ezalwa nguSiyobi.**
Gesi, Gesi himself born by Siyobi.
- 5 **Mina-ke nginguFisani, ongizalayo nguMsemane,**
I am Fisani, the one who begets me is Msemane,
- 6 **uMsemane kaShevu, uShevu lo ngumfowabo kaSiyobi,**
Msemane of Shevu, this Shevu is Siyobi's brother,
- 7 **uSiyobi nguyise kaGesi,**
Siyobi is the father of Gesi,
- 8 **uGesi-ke ngubaba wakhe lo Mofethe.**
Gesi is the father of this Moffat.
- 9 **UMofethe okaGesi kaSiyobi.**
Moffat is the son of Gesi the son of Siyobi.
- 10 **USiyobi okaNongacu kaMdladla kaNdulu.**
Siyobi is of Nongacu of Mdladla of Ndulu.

(Fisani Dlamini's genealogy recitation)

From lines 3 - 8 Fisani gives in order of ascent starting with the girl for whom the **umemulo** is celebrated. There is repetition of each name mentioned, this is intended for the audience to retain and easily follow that which is being said. Saying the same thing twice helps a part of his audience who might have missed the first mentioning of the name to get the second one. He goes six generations back (8) and in lines 5 and 6 makes mention of how he is related to the girl's father. He is actually Moffat's grandfather's brother's son, quite a distant cousin in the English terminology, but a "brother" in the Zulu classificatory relationship terminology. Earlier on the girl's father refers to him as his elder brother, because he is of the great house, **indlu enkulu** - whom the father asks to recite the lineage's genealogy.

After the father's speech and the recitation of the genealogy, the girl is given gifts. Some of the girl's gifts are brought before this day. The girl with the spear in her hand heads straight to her father and sticks it in the ground in front of him. This is a symbolic action which implies asking for a gift. The father then puts money on her head, hat, or on an umbrella provided. In the girl's father's absence, the father's brother or any male relative, preferably of the patrilineal lineage becomes the first one to put the money on the girl's head.

The girl then moves around and people pin money on her hat. It is only paper money that is put on the hat, I have never seen coins put on the girl's head. In olden days the girl would go from house to house before the **umemulo** day asking for gifts, this act was known as **ukucimela**. In those days, gifts were not mainly given in money, but could be anything ranging from beads to slaughtering of goats for the girl. Moving from house to house would not be feasible today as it was in the past. Today people spend most of their time at their work places. Also, relatives and friends live far apart, not in village clusters as was the case in the past.

Owing to these prevailing conditions, the traditional way of asking for gifts has been replaced by:

- (a) the giving of a variety of gifts on the actual **umemulo** day and
- (b) money gifts (more commonly), given instead of livestock, beads, animal skins and/or vegetables.

Umemulo performance does not compare only the speeches and the giving of gifts but also dancing accompanied with songs relevant for the occasion.

3.5 UMEMULO SONGS

After the giving of gifts people then dance, sing and feast. I observed that most of the songs sung and chants recited on this day are not randomly chosen but are those relevant for the occasion, and which relay a certain message, as portrayed in the songs above (3.2) and in the following songs.

(i) **Leader : We tshitshi elijolayo**

Hey young girl who has a lover

Girls : Siyobona ngesisu

We will see by a pregnancy (lit. with a stomach)

Leader : Siyobona ngesisu

We will see by a pregnancy

Girls : Siyobona ngesisu

We will see by a pregnancy

Leader : We tshitshi elilalayo

Hey young girl who have sexual intercourse

Girls : Kuyokhuluma isisu

Pregnancy will tell

Leader : Kuyokhuluma isisu

Pregnancy will tell

Girls : Kuyokhuluma isisu

Pregnancy will tell

This song was recorded at an **umemulo** held at Mahlabathini, a rural area of Northern Zululand where the ceremony is still practised in the traditional way - only performed for a young girl reaching menarche and one who has behaved herself well.

This song is teasing the young girls whose fathers cannot perform the **umemulo** for them because they have misbehaved by getting involved in love affairs and thus have become sexually active. The first line has the verb **jola**, which Doke et al. (1990: 363) say means steal. The stealing in this case refers to getting involved in love affairs prematurely. Girls, in this song regard such love affairs as stealing, because the fathers would have not given their daughters permission in the form of the **umemulo** to do so. The girls in this song refer to teenage pregnancies that are evidence of **ukujola**. There is also an implication of pride in the song, as the particular girl in their group has **umemulo** because she did not involve herself in such "stealing".

(ii) **Leader : Uyakhala umama**

Mother is complaining

Girls : Yaqoma isencane ingane kababa

Inamadoda amahlanu

Father's child has love affairs very young

She has five lovers

Leader : Uyakhala lo mama

This mother is crying

Girls : Yaqoma isencane le ngane, igangile

This child has love affairs, too soon she is naughty

This song, sung at **umemulo** at Umbumbulu, expresses concern for a mother of a very young girl who is involved in multiple love affairs. She makes her mother complain (cry) because of her ill behaviour. The song intends to warn girls against low morals, and that mothers, especially, feel hurt and are ashamed of what they do.

X (iii)

We mabhungu nibonani ?

Hey young men what do you see

Nansi iyadlala ingane

Here is the girl dancing

Indodakazi kaSiyobi iyadlala

Siyobi's daughter is dancing

Ayinabhabhalazi ingane kababa

Father's girl does not have a hangover

Senibonani ?

What do you see now ?

Mabhungu ake niyeke istawoti

Young men stop drinking milk stout

Nibone nayi ingane kababa wethu

And see this child of our father

This song, challenging all the young men, was recorded at Kwa-Mashu. Now that the girl is in a marriageable state, girls are inviting the young men to consider courting her. This song is sung whilst the girl in question is dancing, calling the young men to look at her and see how pretty she is. The girls daringly ask the young men what they are waiting for because the girl is "available" now and is not addicted to drink. Young men are further accused of drinking liquor instead of courting girls. Songs are sung before and/or after the speeches. We have seen that speeches form an important part of the **umemulo**, their main function being to inform both the living and more so the ancestors about the occasion. This is also true of the **umabo**. Both ceremonies intend to make people aware of the circumstances and thus make sense of what is happening in a ceremony.

McAllister (1988: 65) says in the course of such speeches amongst the Xhosa, people hearing them learn and those who already know reinforce their knowledge about the nature of the relationship between the living and the dead and also learn about the responsibilities of a homestead head. Such a speech is for the Zulu the **umemulo** and the **umabo** also crucial to the setting up of a ritual frame in marking that which is to take place.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE UMABO CEREMONY

4.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE CEREMONY

This is the giving of gifts ceremony. It is the bride and her group who give gifts to her in-laws. In most areas this ceremony is performed after a church wedding ceremony. The **umabo** is either held on Saturday afternoon after the church ceremony or usually on Sunday, the next day.

The **umabo** is held at the bridegroom's place. This is a very important occasion and it is generally believed that it must be performed. Vilakazi (1958: 177) contends that the Zulu give these gifts out of fear of the ancestors who might punish the bride for failing to recognise the importance of this ceremony for informing them. He further says that the **umabo** gifts have a ritual component as they have an effect of binding the bride personally to the different members of the lineage, even to those who are dead.

People to be given gifts are not chosen by the bride or in any arbitrary fashion by the groom. Old people of the family are consulted to decide on this. There is no fixed list of people to be given gifts for among the Zulus, but the elders of the "family" and the groom's parents are not left out. The dead are also given and considered the most important recipients. People find themselves bound to keep this custom because of the belief that ancestors control their destiny and their well-being is largely dependent upon them.

I know of women who gave these gifts after they had been married for years. They gave gifts to appease the ancestors and to ask their blessings usually in a troubled marriage or childless marriage. A friend of mine who lives in Pietermaritzburg, got married in 1989, three years after her mother-in-law's death. The friend had a troubled marriage immediately, her husband having countless extramarital love affairs that affected their marriage and her health.

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The mother-in-law came to her in a dream asking her (the bride) to give the **umabo** gifts for her mother-in-law as her spirit was not at rest. The mother-in-law in a dream claimed she (dead) was neither accepted by her own ancestors nor by her in-law,s ancestors.

The dead mother-in-law said her own ancestors could not accept her beyond the grave as she was not considered one of their family any more, because the **umncamo** beast was slaughtered on her wedding day and the ancestors were formally informed of her departure. Her husband's ancestors, on the other hand, did not regard her as their **umakoti**, as they didn't receive any gifts from her on her wedding. My friend then felt obliged to give the gifts, as she herself believed that her mother-in-law's spirit that was not at rest had brought trouble upon her own marriage. She indeed gave gifts for her mother-in-law and eventually her own marriage problems noticeably lessened.

Belief in the ancestors made her perform the ceremony, and had she been a staunch Christian she would not have acted on the dream. The belief that ancestors are the family guardians compels people to perform ceremonies that involve ancestors lest misfortune be upon them. Failure to give gifts from the girl's party would incur the anger of the husband's ancestral spirits; hence gifts are also given to the deceased members of the lineage as if they were living.

The actual **umabo** ceremony follows a patterned sequence which conveys the main messages of it. Arriving at the groom's place, the bride's people are given a room or hut to use as theirs temporarily. The most important ritual aspect of a marriage according to Vilakazi is the incorporation of the bride into the groom's lineage group. The groom's people report to their ancestors that the **umakoti** now enters their homestead and is joining the family. This is symbolically done by slaughtering a beast and/or a goat. The slaughtered beast is meant to serve two important functions

- (a) the entertainment of the bridal party
- (b) and the incorporation of the bride into the groom's lineage group.

The ritual killing made by the groom's kinship group invokes their ancestral spirits to take over the bride's well-being. This is done for it will be improper for her to be protected solely by her own ancestral spirits in her husband's homestead. The **inyongo** of the animal killed is smeared on the bride's thumbs and feet as a symbolic act of incorporation. Whilst this is performed no verbal utterances accompanying it are made. The act, in itself, is considered sufficient to inform the ancestors about the bride's arrival. The **umkhongi** (the marriage go-between) is the one who performs this act, now completing his task of unifying the two families with the tool of unification, the gall. It signifies that a party and a person is accepted by the people performing the act. The groom, whilst negotiating for the marriage, is smeared with the **inyongo** by the bride's people, to show that he is accepted and so are his **lobolo** cattle.

The gall as a means of communicating with the ancestors is also seen when the father of the girl puts it on her to inform the ancestors of her departure. An animal he slaughters to celebrate her departure is known as the **umncamo**.

At the groom's place the bridal party is shown the open spot known as the **isigcawu**, where they will call upon the groom's people to be given gifts, dance, sing and where the speeches will be made. The girl's father, or in his absence, usually a patrilineal male relative makes a speech e.g. the father's brother informs the groom's people of his mission i.e to bring his daughter to "build" the kraal. The girl is spoken of as own daughter even by a guardian. The Zulu prefer that the speeches be made by a senior representative of the lineage for they are greatly respected as they are believed to be closer to the ancestors.

The girl's father praises his own group by reciting its praises. He then touches on the **ilobolo**, a very important matter. If it has been paid in full he says so, if some cattle are still outstanding he also acknowledges that fact publicly, at **esigcawini**. The father then talks about his daughter and lists all her good qualities. Generally her character is briefly discussed. He also tells the groom's people that he has taught his daughter all house chores, meaning that his wife and relatives have done this. One important thing that the father does not forget to do is to plead for a good home for his daughter. He tells them that they have taken his daughter from him therefore he expects them to treat her well. As the bride's father is talking, the women of his side emulate the cattle by walking as the cattle do, with parts of their bodies bending and faces turned down. This confirms and is symbolic of the fact that the bride-wealth cattle were indeed received. The **umabo** gifts are given after the father's speech. The bride does not give the gifts herself, but somebody else (a female, usually the bride's mother's relative) does it on her behalf.

Following are the gifts that are given on **umabo** day :

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 | izingubo | blankets |
| 2 | amacansi | sleeping mats |
| 3 | imicamelo | pillows |
| 4 | imishanelo | brooms |
| 5 | amavovo | beer strainers |
| 6 | izinkamba | beer pots |

These have come to be regarded as the proper gifts to give. Blankets have come to replace the traditional sleeping skins of either goats or sheep that were given in the olden days. Gifts 4 & 5 are specifically for women and 6 is for men. Nowadays some people might want certain gifts to be replaced by any other gift they might choose to have. In one **umabo** I attended young girls had asked for bath towels, instead of sleeping mats and blankets. In another, depicted on a video tape, a person who does not drink liquor was given a modern water set and a tray instead

of a traditional beer pot. Whilst gifts are given, the bride sits on the ground or kneels. This is a form of respect for her in-laws and their ancestors. She generally adopts a shy manner. By giving gifts to the members of the groom's family, the bride gets to know them, their importance and their ancestors: This is one way in which she is introduced to the members of the groom's family.

Whilst gifts are given, the women from the groom's side **kikiza** (utter shrill cries of pleasure) thanking the bride for gifts. People getting gifts may also recite chants, sing or recite personal praises in thanking the bride. It is particularly interesting to note that some women have replaced this thanking by Christian hymns thanking God for the bride.

The women from the groom's side normally wear scarves or robes across their shoulders, this is known as **ukuhiza**. **Ukuhiza** is a form of respect for the homestead, insistence on respect for the homestead rests on the belief that the **izithunzi** (shadows of ancestral spirits) are always in the homestead. MaKhumalo tells me that not wearing the scarves or anything that shows respect (by women) offends the ancestors. Offending them is to invite sickness or misfortune for the whole homestead. This explains why then the groom's people in giving **ilobolo** to the girl's people also give a scarf or a hat to the bride, something that had not been asked for as part of **ilobolo**. They do not forget to insist that the bride must wear the scarf when visiting their homestead and when she is in its vicinity.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE BRIDES' FATHERS' SPEECHES DELIVERED AT ESIGCAWINI

4.2.1 SIPHIWE MEYIWA'S SPEECH

This speech was recorded from the **umabo** which I attended at Maphumulo's rural areas, next to Tongaat. Siphawe represented the bride's father as the latter had died, he is the bride's "father" in the Zulu sense as he is the brother to the dead father. Siphawe, 50 years old, lives in Queensburgh and is employed by the Coca Cola Company as a sales manager.

- 1 **Silethe intombi yethu ukuba izokwakha umuzi**
We have brought our daughter to build a home for you
- 2 **Thina-ke singabakwaNomndayi, singabakwaPhingoshe**
futhi singabakwaGcogcobane
We are of the Nomndayi lineage, we are of the
Phingoshe lineage and we are of the Gcogcobane lineage
- 3 **Sadilika ngoMzungulu wasala wabola**
We came by means of the Mzungulu bark and it remained
to rot
- 4 **Intombi yami le angethemi ukuthi ngizozwa okusha**
5 **ngayo, ukuthi "umakoti akapheki, akakwazi ukuwasha"**
I do not think I will learn something new about this
daughter of mine, that "the bride does not cook, she
cannot wash clothes"
- 6 **ngoba ngiyifundisile yonke into.**
because I have taught her everything
- 7 **Sinonina siyifundisile isikole,**
With her mother we took her to school,
- 8 **sayifundisa ukupheka, sayifundisa ukuwasha,**
we taught her how to cook, we taught her how to wash
the clothes
- 9 **sayifundisa nokuhlansa indlu.**
and we taught her how to clean the house
- 10 **Lo mntwana ngimlethe lapha ekhaya ngothando,**
I have brought this child here out of love

- 11 **uzokwakha ubuhlobo obuhle.**
she has come to establish good relations
- 12 **Sengishilo-ke ukuthi lo mntwana uyitholile imfundo.**
I have said that this child got education
- 13 **Sengishilo-ke ukuthi lo mntwana uyakwazi ukupheka.**
I have said that this child knows how to cook
- 14 **Sengishilo-ke ukuthi lo mntwana uyakwazi ukuwasha.**
I have said that this child knows how to wash clothes
- 15 **Sengishilo-ke ukuthi lo mntwana uyakwazi ukuhlanza indlu.**
I have said that this child knows how to clean the house
- 16 **Lo mntwana uzalwa nguBhekifa, oyena yise wakhe.**
This child is born by Bhekifa, who is her father
- 17 **UBhekifa-ke ezalwa nguYingi,**
Bhekifa being born by Yingi,
- 18 **UYingi ezalwa nguGqabula,**
Yingi being born by Gqabula,
- 19 **UGqabula ezalwa nguMagula,**
Gqabula being born by Magula,
- 20 **UMagula-ke ezalwa nguMbikana.**
Magula being born by Mbikana.
- 21 **Zinyanya zakwethu, mbhekeni lo mntwana wenu,**
You, our ancestors, look after this child yours,
- 22 **Wande futhi umuzi wakaMaphumulo ngale ngane.**
Let Maphumulo's homestead multiply due to this girl.
- 23 **Le ngane ifike ibe nabantwana njengoba ifike la ekhaya,**
Let this child have children as she has come to this home,
- 24 **Izale yandise umuzi.**
Let her be fruitful and cause the family to grow.
- 25 **Emabhekeni bahambise kahle.**
The bridewealth cattle have been duly paid.
- 26 **Kodwa kusasele, kusasele, kusasele Mashimane.**
But a few are outstanding, a few are outstanding, a few are outstanding Mashimane

27 **Nawe uyazi, zimbili izinkomo ezisele, ubozilungisa.**

You know that yourself, two cattle are outstanding, see that they are paid.

In line 1, Sphiwe refers to the bride's mission to her in-laws as that of bringing a new life to the family. He uses the common expression i.e. **ukwakha umuzi** generally used in weddings, reference to the girl's role in the new family. This is an element of oral tradition - a widely used expression in weddings. It is figuratively understood to mean "the bride is essential for building a new homestead". McAllister (1990: 143) describes how establishing a new homestead is of crucial importance for the Xhosa who use the same phrase. It is true for the Zulu as well. He says "building a homestead" has three meanings:

- a) to ensure ancestral favour
- b) imply a change in the status of women - now incorporated into a new family
- c) for men, creates a new social entity and changes one's social standing in the community.

Each wedding ensures that a homestead does not die out. The boy's people rejoice when a bride enters home and express their great joy by also shouting **wavuka umuzi**, lit. "the homestead has been brought back to life" - meaning the homestead is now going to be built anew.

Line 2. praises the bride's clan. This is a form of traditional discourse which is still widely performed orally in wedding ceremonies and in other traditional gatherings. This form of discourse does not rely on a written text at all. Although today we do have some written **izithakazelo**, people reciting them do not refer to such written sources and most reciters are not even aware nor care that there are such sources.

In line 2. the father identifies his daughter with the clan. He then traces the origin of the clan, i.e they are from **umzungulu**. This is the species of a bush climber whose fibre is used for binding. Sphiwe tells me that this refers to the fact that the

clan is as strong as **umzungulu** shrub which can bind things even when it is dry.

That the daughter has been taught everything that would be expected of a married woman is made mention of in lines 4 - 9. The father by these lines assures the in-laws that the **ilobolo** cattle they paid were worth paying, and they equal in value his daughter's formal and informal education.

In lines 6 - 9 the father enumerates things that he and the girl's mother have taught the girl. Lines 12 - 15 are a repetition of lines 6 - 9. This is not an exact repetition, rather it is an emphasis of what has been said before. In such a speech that is purely oral listeners cannot readily preserve and recall that which is said without the help of this sort of repetition, amongst other things. These lines show that the speaker does his thinking in mnemonic patterns. Ong (1982: 34) says

the problem of retaining and retrieving articulated thoughts requires mnemonic thinking for it to be solved.

Meyiwa's repetition makes it easy for his listeners to retain and later retrieve these lines. This is made possible by a repetition that is not boring and monotonous, i.e

- a) Line 7. has school which is repeated in line 12. as education.
- b) Line 8. has taught how to cook which is repeated in line 13. as know how to cook.
- c) Line 8. also has taught how to wash clothes which is repeated in line 14. as know how to wash the clothes.
- d) Line 9. has taught to clean the house which is repeated as know how to clean the house.

Lines 16 - 20 are a recitation of the family's genealogy.

In these lines Siphwe traces the girl's proper origins, because she is not his real daughter, and identifies her with her immediate family and the lineage at large. Siphwe has spoken of

the girl as his daughter in the previous lines. She is his daughter by Zulu understanding of lineage relationship, as she is his brother's daughter. A Zulu family consists of the members of the so called "extended family". A child refers to her father's brothers as **obaba** - fathers. In the lines 16 - 20 genealogy goes back four generations. There is a poetic feature of cross linking in these lines. In this repetition the last word in the previous sentence becomes the first one in the next sentence.

Ancestors are believed to be the guardians of the family, this is seen in lines 21 - 24 where they are asked to look after the girl and bless her with children. These lines portray another kind of repetition referred to by Cope (1968: 39) as common in Zulu praise poetry, i.e repetition of a statement which is of identical construction however made of different words expressing the same idea. The words **anda** (multiply) and **zala** (be fruitful) portray this type of repetition.

4.2.2 NGCOBO'S SPEECH - THE BRIDE'S GRANDFATHER

This speech was taken from an **umabo** video. The event took place at Kwa-Mashu. Ngcobo, 70 years old, an ex-teacher is retired.

- 1 **Ngiyafika, kwaMthabela ngiyakhuleka.**
I have arrived, I am greeting the Mthabela's.
- 2 **Ngithi uyakhuleka okaMakhanandela oyimfihlo.**
I am saying the one of Makhanandela who is a secret is greeting.
- 3 **Uyakhuleka okaSango, okaMkhono umbiwa amakhosazane,**
The one of Sango is greeting, of Mkhono who is dug up by the ladies,
- 4 **Ngoba wangcwatshwa ngodadewabo baseMkhukhuze.**
Because he was buried by his sisters of Mkhukhuze.
- 5 **Ngubaba mkhulu-ke lowo.**
That is my grandfather.

- 6 **Uyakhuleka oka Mhlanekazi webululu,**
The one of the huge back of a puff adder is greeting,
- 7 **Uyakhuleka okaSibhavu umanquma ulimi,**
The one of Sibhavu who cuts the tongue is greeting,
- 8 **OkaMbungabungane, izimpukane namaphela,**
Of Mbungabungane, the flies and the cockroaches,
- 9 **OkaSifuba sabeSuthu esinamafinyila ngokukhala njalo.**
Of Sifuba of the BaSothos which has mucus due to
crying all the time.
- 10 **Uyakhuleka kwaMthabela, ngikhuleka okuhle okumhlophe
Mthabela.**
I am greeting the Mthabelas, I am praying for a good
time Mkhabela.
- 11 **Uyakhuleka okaKhehlekhehle - Mpondozabaphangi,**
The one of Khehlekhehle - Mpondozabaphangi, is
greeting,
- 12 **Mkhombe kazaVivithi, Msundu yephuka,**
Mkhombe of Zavivithi, Msundu get broken,
- 13 **Kudala bathi inkundla imele ini ?, inkundla**
14 **ngokusobala imele ukusinwa.**
In the olden days they asked what the dance floor is
for ?, the dance floor is obviously for dancing.
- 15 **OkaMaphatha ayiphathe, ngiyawuphatha nalapho**
16 **ungaphathwa khona ubhasikidi.**
The one of Maphatha who carries it, I do carry a
basket even in places where it is not permitted to do
so.
- 17 **Khetha eyakhe, okaMaphatha ayiphathe nalapho**
18 **ungaphathwa ubhasikidi, khetha eyakhe.**
Choose his own, so that the one of Maphatha may carry
it where it is forbidden to carry a basket.
- 19 **Uyakhuleka okaFusibanyile kaDokotela**
The one of Fusibanyile of the Doctor is greeting
- 20 **Kwandlela zimagombi, aziqondile neze,**
At the crooked paths, that are not at all straight,

- 21 **Bathi izindlela zimagombi njena befunani kwaMtebetebe.**
They say the paths are crooked, in any case what are they looking for at Mtebetebe.
- 22 **Umvunisi ubuya nenggobe.**
The one who helps in the reaping comes back with some gleanings.
- 23 **Sinothongo singenamathumbu,**
The sleepy looking one without intestines,
- 24 **Inkuku eyaduka emini bayithola ngakusihlwa,**
The fowl that got lost at mid-day and was found at dusk,
- 25 **Ezinye izinkuku ziduka emini kodwa zizibuyele,**
Other fowls get lost at mid-day and do get back on their own,
- 26 **Yona iduke emini yaze yatholakala ebusuku.**
As for it, it got lost at mid-day but was eventually found at dusk.
- 27 **Uyakhuleka okaDel'futhi khetha eyakhe,**
The one of Del'futhi choose his own is greeting,
- 28 **Wayikhaba waze wayikhahlela impela.**
And kicked it until it really got kicked.
- 29 **Liyakhuleka ithole likamaDlamini,**
The calf of maDlamini is greeting,
- 30 **Elibhonge labhovumula phezu kwemizi yamadoda,**
Which roared and growled on top of the men's homes,
- 31 **Amadoda ahlehla ahlehleleza.**
And the men moved back and got pushed aside.
- 32 **Uyakhuleka uNomjama, ojamele phezu koMfolozi,**
Nomjama, he who threateningly looked over the Mfolozi is greeting,
- 33 **Amadoda aqala ukuyibubulela ukuthi ijameleni,**
The men began to complain of its threatening look,
- 34 **Ijameleni le nkunzi phezu kwemizi yamadoda na ?**
Why is this bull threateningly looking over the men's homes ?
- 35 **Uyakhuleka lo Jamludi bathi khongolo,**
This Jamludi is greeting they say, the bald men,

- 36 **We Khongolo, ngoba kwenzenjani, webuya Ngcobo**
Hey Khongolo, because what has happened, hey you
Ngcobo
- 37 **Bathi Jamludi obomvu, unjengengontolwane.**
They say red Jamludi, you are like a veld shrub.
- 38 **UKhisi noGobela, ukhongolo okhwela ngamanhlonhlo ?**
Khisi and Gobela, the baldness that starts from the
front hair ?
- 39 **Ngoba abanye bathi bazomkhwela kanti abazukumkhwela,**
Because others say they will ride him whereas they
won't ride him,
- 40 **Ngoba amanhlonhlo awavumi.**
Because the front hair does not allow that to happen
- 41 **Uyakhuleka okaMshumpu uyashelela,**
The one of Mshumpu that is slippery is greeting
- 42 **Bathi ushelele kanjani webuya Ngcobo.**
They say how did you slip hey you Ngcobo
- 43 **Uyakhuleka uBhudula aze ayithole,**
Searcher until he finds it is greeting,
- 44 **Ngoba uyibhudulile maqede wayithola into yomntwana.**
Because he searched for it and eventually found the
child's thing.
- 45 **Bathi abanye beyifuna kodwa kabazange bayithole.**
But when the others looked for it they never found it.
- 46 **Liyakhuleka ithole elimanqindi elagqama phezu
kwabantu,**
The calf with cut horns which stood out above people
is greeting,
- 47 **Bathi abantu bezakuwela umfula kanti abazukuwela,**
People thought they were going to cross the river
whereas they were not,
- 48 **Ngoba inkunzi ibajamele ngaphesheya komfula.**
Because the bull is threateningly looking at them on
the other side of the river.
- 49 **Ngamanqindi bathi ijame kanjani le nkunzi,**
With the cut horns they wonder how this bull is
blocking the way,

- 50 **Ngoba le nkunzi ayinampondo njena. (nguyise lowo)**
Because this bull has no horns.
(that is her father)
- 51 **Nansi intombi ezokwakha lo umuzi.**
Here is the girl who has come to build this house.
- 52 **Siyabonga nina bakaMthabela, sicela inkonzo enhle.**
Thank you, you of the Mthabela house, we are asking
for suitable conditions for service.

Mkhombe, throughout his particularly elaborate address uses the word **khuleka** to greet rather than the usual **sanibona**. The former shows high respect for a particular people. Mkhombe uses **khuleka** to show respect towards the grooms' people and later when he refers to his forefathers, informing them of his mission. Lines 2 - 5 praises Mkhombe's grandfather. He identifies himself and his granddaughter, the bride, with his grandfather. This is confirming the fact that they are a family with a proper lineage. Makhanandela, Mkhombe's grandfather, was a secret as he was born out of wedlock. Makhanandela was "buried" , kept a secret, by his half-sisters who saw to it that their mother knew nothing about this child of an extra-marital affair.

Lines 6 - 22 are the praises of Mkhombe's father, Mhlanikazi. His praises make reference to his physical attributes - that he was of huge build, was hefty and tall. People who stood next to him appeared like ants. His build made him sweat easily, this is figuratively expressed in line 9 as "mucus due to crying". In spite of his size, he was able to dance and dominate the floor. Lines 15 - 22 refer to the fact that Mkhombe's father was a traditional doctor who practised in places where such practise was not permitted, e.g amongst Christians, "carrying a basket in forbidden places". People would say his practise was not good, "crooked paths".

These lines are characterised by the following poetic devices:

- a) Initial linking in lines 6,10 & 11 by **uyakhuleka**
- b) Internal linking in lines 20 & 21 by **ndlela zimagombi**

c) Parallelism of ideas in lines 20 & 21 by **azigondile** (they are not straight) and **zimagombi** (they are crooked)

d) Alliteration in lines 9 & 15

9 = **okaSifuba sabeSuthu esinamafutha**

15 = **okaMaphatha ayiphathe, ngiyawuphatha nalapha
ungaphathwa khona ubhasikidi**

e) Metaphor

- the verb **umbiwa** in line 3 means he is dug up; the implication is that Mkhombe's grandfather was made known to his family by his mother's sisters.

-the verb **wangcwatshwa** in line 4 means he was buried; implying he was kept a secret.

-the noun **mhlanekazi webululu** in line 6 means huge back of a puff adder, it refers to a huge physical build.

- the noun **Mpondozabaphangi** in line 11 means the robbers' horns, implying that Mkhombe's father was a problem to the robbers, his medicines could tell the thieves.

f) Symbolism - line 22 **umvunisi ubuya nengqobe** is used as a representation that describes what happens when one engages one's self in fruitless activities, "the wrong doer suffers the consequences".

Lines 23 - 26: Mkhombe's son, Nkonzo, one of the people who accompanies the former to the **isigcawu** takes over recitation. Four men are at the **isigcawu** when Mkhombe recites, they are all moving around and they themselves recite certain portions which are part of Mkhombe's recitation. These lines are full of metaphor, they refer to the father of Mkhombe, who is likened to a fool and a fowl because on his first day from school, he got lost as he could not see his way back home.

Mkhombe resumes reciting in lines 27 - 28, where he mentions his father's praise-name, Del'futhi, meaning a tripod stand. He got this praise-name, because he used a walking stick (two legs and a walking stick = tripod). His style of walking is also referred to, it is similar to kicking.

Lines 29 - 34 are Mkhombe's personal praises; his brother (paternal cousin), Mkhathi, takes over reciting these praises. Mkhombe is compared to a bellowing calf, this metaphorical image is based on animal life. He is associated with a powerful **ithole** that wields a spear that also pushes aside other men. I am told this refers to his outspoken nature in community matters. He forced the Nquthu (where he lives) people to contribute from their own pockets in building a school, pushing aside the idea of expecting the government to take the initiative. His insistence on this matter made people complain, **bubula** (moan with pain), saying they did not have enough money for the project. He, however succeeded in persuading them and the school was built. He is then in line 37 regarded as a bull, no more a calf as was the case in line 29.

Lines 35 - 40 are a continuation of Mkhombe's praises, but he himself recites these lines, the descriptive lines referring to his physical attributes. He is light in complexion, which is compared to his red ox. Lines 37 - 40 refer to the fact that one would expect him to be bald by now like his brothers, but he is not. His head, full of hair is compared to a veld shrub.

Mkhombe's son, Nkonzo, again takes over from his father to finish off Mkhombe's praises. Lines 41 - 45 is actually a version of 29 - 34 which praises Mkhombe for encouraging his community to build a school, he gets the praise name **Bhudula**, searcher for the good, i.e children's education.

Mkhombe concludes the praising by reciting the praises of the father of the bride, who is deceased. Lines 46 - 50 refer to the bride's father as a bull that is without horns, but is a threat to other bulls (metaphor). This implies the high status he held as the tribe's headman. He got this position when people thought he did not deserve it as he was still too young, however, he managed his position well. Lastly the bride's grandfather pleads the groom's people to treat her well.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECHES BY THE GROOMS' FATHERS

The father of the bridegroom greets the bridal party and expresses his joy at their arrival. He then invites them to the wedding activities i.e dancing and feasting. In rural areas the gathering takes place in an open space outside the cattle kraal, **isigcawu**. Blose, an informant, tells me that the cattle kraal is sacred and an important place for the ancestors. He says the cattle kraal is usually surrounded by a fence of agaves (plant with spiny leaves, flowering only once), under which the family's dead rest in their graves.

Blose further says that the spirit of the ancestors having seen how the bridewealth cattle left their kraal now are reconciled to the loss by the sight of **umalokazana**, the bride arriving in the cattle's homestead. Kohler (1933: 82) maintains that the bride's fruitfulness (giving birth to girls especially) is believed to increase the wealth of the homestead. In the urban areas money is spoken of as cattle. The bride's fruitfulness maintains the ancestor's position of honour and adds to the strength and prestige of the group.

The bridegroom's father praises the group's ancestors by reciting their **izibongo**. Kohler points out that the bride's fertility makes the contact closer between the spirits and the life in the boy's father's kraal. The dead rejoice when the bride is fertile, because it means the family's name will not die out. This makes the father recite his ancestor's praises. This oration is applauded with the clapping of hands and shouts of approval by the audience. The boy's father also thank the girl's father for his kindness in consenting to part with his daughter.

4.3.1 SPEECH BY VIKINDUKU BLOSE

This speech was recorded from the **umabo** video tape I watched which was recorded at Kwa-Mashu. Blose is 57 years, lives at Kwa-Mashu and is a factory worker.

- 1 **Ziyabonga izinkomo,**
The cattle are giving thanks,
- 2 **Ziyabonga izinkomo zakaNdelu,**
The cattle of the Ndelu people are giving thanks,
- 3 **Ziyabonga izinkomo,**
The cattle are giving thanks,
- 4 **Izinkomo esezilethe nangu umalokazana engena ekhaya.**
The cattle which have brought the daughter-in-law here she is entering home.
- 5 **Ziyabonga izinkomo zakaBlose, kaNdelu, kaShinga,**
The cattle of the Blose of the Ndelu, of the Shinga house are giving thanks,
- 6 **ZikaChobile, kaNgcenga, kaZihlabathi zolwandle,**
Of Chobile, of Ngcenga, of Sands of the sea,
- 7 **Nina bakaMhlabethe Zukuzela,**
You of Mhlabethe Zukuzela,
- 8 **Nina bakwaBhulose elingakhi, nina bakwaNdelu.**
You of the Block that does not build, you of the Ndelu house.
- 9 **Ziyabonga izinkomo zakaNdelu,**
The cattle of the Ndelu are giving thanks,
- 10 **Ngoba nangu umfazi ungena ekhaya.**
Because here is the wife entering home.
- 11 **Namhlanjena sezimlandile,**
Today they have fetched her,
- 12 **Sezimlandile izinkomo zakaNdelu.**
The cattle of the Ndelu have fetched her.
- 13 **Uma zimlanda zimbeka phakathi kwaleli khaya,**
When they fetch her and place her in this home,
- 14 **Ayabonga amaNdelu,**
The Ndelu are thankful,

- 15 **Ebonga amaNdelu ethokoza, ebonga inhlanhla emhlophe,**
The Ndelu are appreciate and happy, thankful for the
good fortune,
- 16 **Engena phakathi komuzi wamaShinga angashingi.**
Which is entering inside the homestead of the Shinga
who do no wrong.
- 17 **Akushingi thina kodwa kushinga isibongo.**
It's not us who do the wrong but it's our surname that
does the wrong.
- 18 **Nina bakaNdelu, nina bakaChobile,**
You of Ndelu, you of the Chobile,
- 19 **Nina bakaNgcenga, nina bakaSibhulusemati.**
You of Ngcenga, you of Sibhulusemati.
- 20 **Ngibikela nina makhehla amakhulu, nina bobaba nogogo.**
I am reporting to you great old men, you fathers and
you grandmothers.
- 21 **Nani nonke ngiyanibikela ukuthi,**
And you all I am reporting to you that,
- 22 **Nangu umakoti esengena ekhaya.**
Here is the bride now entering home.
- 23 **Uma esengena ekhaya, ngicela nimbhasobhe naye abe
ingane yami.**
When she enters home I ask you to look after her and
she be my child.
- 24 **Abe yingane yala ekhaya, ngani ?**
Let her be the child of this home, why ?
- 25 **Ngoba usengene la ekhaya.**
Because she has now entered home.
- 26 **Abe yingane yala ekhaya naye ngani ?**
And be the child of this home, why ?
- 27 **Ngoba usethathiwe phela ngezinkomo zala ekhaya.**
Because she has now been indeed taken with the cattle
of this home.
- 28 **Nina bakaMaminza, nina bakaMphinjana,**
You people of Maminza, you people of Mphinjana,
- 29 **Nina bakaNkayishana kaMenzi, nina bakoBhohwana.**
You people of Nkayishana of Menzi, you of Bhohani.

- 30 **Ngikhuleka kuwena baba mnikazi wekhaya, Jakobe.**
I salute you father, owner of this house, Jacob.
- 31 **Wena Phuthaza izulu, wena unenkani njengeyeselesele.**
You who reaches the sky, you are as stubborn as a frog.
- 32 **UMavika ngebhayibheli amadoda evika ngesihlangu,**
Shielder with the bible whilst other men use a shield,
- 33 **UGquza lomgquzalala,**
The perfect Poker,
- 34 **UZinja ziyamgquzula zimthela kofenisi.**
The one dogs attack and force against the fence.
- 35 **Ngibikela wena bab'omkhulu,**
I am reporting to you grandfather,
- 36 **Ngibikela wena Gqam! njengomentshisi.**
I am reporting to you sudden flarer! like a match.
- 37 **Sigawula semithi emikhulu ngoba emincane iyaziwela,**
Chopper of the big trees for the small ones fall on their own,
- 38 **UNdaba zaphela emasimbeni njengokunyiwa.**
Matters that are completed in disgraceful circumstances like.
- 39 **Untuthane inezoso,**
The ant that has meat for roasting,
- 40 **Awuzange uyibone intuthane inezoso.**
You have never seen an ant on roasted meat.
- 41 **Untuthane iyazosa kaBhohwana.**
An ant that roasts itself of Bhohwana.
- 42 **Ubufushane bangenza, wena omfushane ongedosha.**
Shortness defraud me, you who is short like a snuff-box.
- 43 **Ngibikela wena mfowethu,**
I am reporting to you my brother,
- 44 **Ngibikela wena Gquzu ! makhala kaBhozo.**
I am reporting to you Gquzu ! the nose of Bhozo.
- 45 **Ngibikela wena mfowethu Mpisi,**
I am reporting to you my brother Mpisi,

- 46 **Inkomo esengwa yiviyo phansi kithi kwaMandlakazi.**
The cow that is milked by a group of people down there
at our place of Mandlakazi.
- 47 **Ngisho ngithi nginibikela nonke makhehla amakhulu,**
I say that I am reporting to you all old men,
- 48 **Nina bakaNdelu, nina bakaKothayo.**
You of the Ndelu, you of Kothayo.
- 49 **Mashona, ovele alale aphume nenkunzi.**
Mashona who simply sleeps and come out with a bull.
- 50 **Zinyane zilala intaka,**
Young animal on which finches sleep,
- 51 **Zehla zilandelana oqaqeni,**
They come down following each other on the edge of
rocks,
- 52 **Bhunsu, bhunsu ! zinyane zikaNomlaka,**
Heavy fall, heavy fall! young animal of Nomlaka,
- 53 **Mhlehlelezi weNhlumano.**
Mover aside of the Nhlumano people.
- 54 **Ngibikela wena baba,**
I am reporting to you father,
- 55 **Ngibikela wena baba Phuthuma,**
I am reporting to you father Phuthuma,
- 56 **Sungulo oluzibunubunu, ngathi ngiyaluthinta
ngazithela,**
The long needle that pricks on its both sides, when I
touched it I put myself into trouble,
- 57 **Ngathi ngiyaluthinta ngapha ngazithela, ngani ?**
When I touched it the other side I taught myself
painfully, why ?
- 58 **Ngoba luyahlaba.**
Because it pricks.
- 59 **Ngize kuwena mfowethu, Guduza kaLuphondo,**
I now come to you brother, Guduza son of Luphondo,
- 60 **Phondo kaluchathi, luchatha ngapha nangapha.**
The horn that doesn't just administer an enema a
little, but administers it both sides.

- 61 **Phondo lukaMangcengeza.**
The horn of Mangcengeza.
- 62 **Ngasho njalo mina Qedicala, Vikinduku kaJakobe.**
I, Qedicala, Vikinduku son of Jacob am saying so.
- 63 **Inkunzi ebomvu neshoba layo.**
The bull that is red and its tail.
- 64 **Udansadansa, Amanzi akhwela intaba.**
The trudging gait, Water that ascends the mountain.
- 65 **UMhlakaza nhlansi zibashise.**
Dispenser of the fire spark that burns them.

In this again elaborate speech, Lines 1 - 3 are figurative. The phrase "ziyabonga izinkomo" is commonly used by the groom's people when they express thanks for the arrival of the bride. The phrase means the cattle that were taken to the girl's family are grateful on behalf of the whole homestead and are happy at her arrival. These are an exact repetition that is, however, broken in line 2 by the extension ...**zikaNdelu**. Vikinduku tells me that the phrase is meant to tell the bride's people that the arrival of their daughter is highly appreciated and also softens the blow felt by them at her loss. Vikinduku says **phela ukuhamba kwentombazane kumuncu isibili ekhaya** (indeed the girl's departure is very bitter to her people). Since this is not a token pleasantry, Vikinduku occasionally repeats the phrase up to line 15, interspersed with the clan praises intended to show that the ancestors of the lineage are also happy. Lines 11 - 13 are a repetition that is, however, not exact. The idea of the bride that has been brought home is reinforced.

Lines 14 - 22, Vikinduku thanks his ancestors for the bride, whom he compares to a fortune (metaphor). In thanking the ancestors, he recites the clan praises whilst also reporting to them that the bride is now entering home. These lines portray the following poetic devices :

1. initial linking (14) **ayabonga amaNdelu ...**
(15) **ebonga amaNdelu ...**

2. cross linking (16) ... **angashingi**
 (17) **angashingi** ...
3. metaphor (15) **inhlanhla emhlophe** (likened to the
 bride)

In lines 23 - 29, Vikinduku asks the ancestors to look after the bride and accept her as one of the children of his family. He says they have to accept her as she has been "secured" with their cattle. Lastly he praises the ancestors and identifies them with his lineage by reciting the clan praises.

Lines 30 - 34 are more specific, Vikinduku tells his father, Jacob, about the occasion. This is an important thing to do, as according to Zulu tradition, Vikinduku (son) does not have a house, but the house that he himself builds is for his father (Jacob). The house to be built by his son (the groom), if he does, will be regarded as his (Vikinduku's). It is therefore essential that one informs his father about what happens in his "father's house", even more so important if the latter is an ancestor. In praising his father, Vikinduku compares (simile) his father's stubborn nature to that of a frog when it refuses to go out of the house.

Line 32 is metaphoric, referring to the fact that he was converted to Christianity, "shielding with a bible" when most of the people in his village were still traditionalists and did not want to have anything to do with Christianity. With lines 35 - 42, Vikinduku informs his grandfather about the occasion and then recites his (grandfather's) praises. These lines are full of images in describing the personal character of Vikinduku's father

- 36 = uses a deideophonic noun, **Ggamu**, which is from an ideophone of sudden flaring up flames. It is used as a praise name with the simile, **njengomentshisi** (like matches).
- 37 = his temper could be so raging that its power could "chop down big trees" and the small ones out of fear "fall on their own".

- 38 = Vikinduku could not explain the line "matters that get completed in disgraceful circumstances like when one relieves himself", except that his grandfather liked to say it and knew that his grandfather would delight at hearing it, now as an ancestor. Sometimes such obscure lines are found in **ukuthetha** and **ukuthethelela**. The living have no understanding about them but ancestors do, and they are a part of the audience addressed.
- 39-41 = the grandfather is compared to **intuthane**, the busiest ant because of his extreme diligence.
- 42 = Ggamu's shortness (height) is likened to a snuff-box, (simile).

Lines 43 - 46 report to Vikinduku's elder brother, Mpisi, another family ancestor, about the occasion and recite his praises. He is metaphorically compared to a mad cow that requires a group of men to milk successfully. Mpisi was a fearsome person who could only be outfought not by just one man but a group of men.

Lines 47 - 53 are a report to all the ancestors, in the form of lineage praises they are told about the bride's arrival. Vikinduku says lines 49 - 58 were once personal praises for ancestor Mashona but were later incorporated into the praises of the lineage, however not of the Blose clan.

Lines 54 - 58, are the praises of the most recent ancestor, Phuthuma, Vikinduku's father's brother. Phuthuma, though not a traditional doctor had a profound knowledge of traditional medicines. He is therefore compared to a needle that pricks both ends, implying he could also use his knowledge of medicine for witchcraft if offended. It is interesting to note that in praising Phuthuma, Vikinduku in line 57 pauses to ask the audience why this "needle" is hard to touch, in line 59 together with part of the audience he gives an answer "because it pricks". He involves his audience in reciting.

Lines 59 - 61 refer to the reciter's brother who had just died. Asking him about these lines, he said he was not in a position to comment about them as **ukubuyiswa** ceremony had not been performed for him. **Ukubuyiswa** (to be brought back) is a customary ceremony performed usually a year after a person has died. Zulus believe a dead person cannot be an **idlozi** before this ceremony is performed, which explains why Vikinduku was not at ease to talk about Phuthuma.

Lastly, Vikinduku recites his own praises, in lines 61 - 64. These lines refer to his fair complexion (62), and to the events that happened before his birth. He says his father, Jacob named him Vikinduku (parry a blow from a stick) because Jacob's father-in-law did not like him as a son-in-law, therefore he would hit him (Jacob) when visiting his fiancée, so as to discourage the relationship. Jacob, then would say to his son "you are a water that ascends a mountain", meaning his son reminds him of the difficult time he had with his father-in-law.

4.3.2 SPEECH BY MUSA MAPHUMULO

This speech was recorded from the **umabo** tape recorded at Maphumulo. Musa, 59 lives at Umlazi but preferred to perform the ceremony at his father's place. He is an insurance broker.

- 1 **Leli khehla elingizalayo aliphathekile kahle,**
This old man who begets me is not well,
- 2 **Ngokomthetho kufanele ngabe yilo elime lapha.**
By right it's he who is supposed to be standing here.
- 3 **Ngithanda ukuzwakalisa ukuthi Phingoshe namukelekile.**
I wish to let you know Phingoshe that you are welcome.
- 4 **Namukelekile lapha emzini kaMini.**
You are welcome here at Mini's house.
- 5 **Ngaphandle kokwamukelwa nguMini namukelelwa ngoZichwe.**
Besides being accepted by Mini you are accepted by Zichwe and others.

6 **Njengoba lobu buhlobo bakhekile phakathi kwabakaMeyiwa nabakwaMaphumulo,**

As this relationship has been built between the Meyiwa and the Maphumulo,

7 **Siyocela ukuthi bubhebhetheke lobu buhlobo,**

We will ask this relationship to grow rapidly,

8 **Bubhebhetheke njengomlilo wequbula.**

To grow rapidly like the grass spared from seasonal burning.

9 **Bungathelwa ngamanzi azobuye abudambise.**

And not have water poured on it that may weaken it.

10 **Kufanele futhi ukuthi kube khona ukuxhumana phakathi kwezinyanya zabakwaMeyiwa nabakwaMaphumulo.**

There also must be communication between the ancestors of the Meyiwa and the Maphumulo.

11 **Lobu buhlobo siyothanda ukuba bufakwe usimende,**

We would like this relationship to be cemented,

12 **Bufakwe usimende bukhonkwe.**

To be cemented and be plastered.

13 **Manje ngizodedela umnewethu omdala,**

Now I will get out of the way for my elder brother,

14 **Ubudala bubalulekile asikukhohlwa loko.**

We do not forget that seniority is important.

15 **Uzochaka zonke izithutha zalapha kwaMaphumulo.**

He will report to all the ancestors of the Maphumulo.

Musa, the groom's father welcomes the girl's people as if he is welcoming only one person, Phingoshe - a collective welcome, because Phingoshe is the name of the Meyiwa ancestor. Referring to the people collectively by one ancestor makes them feel good. Musa says they are welcome by Mini (oldest surviving member of the family who is Musa's father) and by the whole family, i.e. oZichwe called by their ancestor. In lines 7 - 12, Musa uses an image of a seasonal wild fire that is so strong that the water is unable to extinguish it. He expresses his wish that the new relationship built be strong like the wild fire that gets fanned by wind. He also wishes that the relationship be as firm as an

area plastered with cement. His wishes for a long lasting relationship between the two families are illustrated in the imagery he uses, of wild fire and of a cemented area. The groom's father then leaves the floor for his elder brother (paternal cousin) who then addresses the ancestors.

SPEECH BY HLAWUKANA MAPHUMULO

Hlawukana, 67, is a retired bank teller. He lives at Maphumulo area in the lineage village.

- 1 **Sibonga ngezinkomo esiziyise kwaNomndayi,**
We express our thanks with the cattle we sent to
Nomndayi.
- 2 **Ziyabonga izinkomo la emzini kaMini.**
The cattle of Mini's house are giving thanks.
- 3 **UMini usekhona kodwa usesocansini,**
Mini is still alive but is on the sleeping mat,
- 4 **NguSikhumba sofudu lowo, uManwebeka.**
That one is the tortoise's skin, the stretcher out.
- 5 **IMbuya engadliwa yizimbuzi,**
The weed that is not eaten by the goats,
- 6 **Ngoba ngeke ziyidle iyababa.**
They can not eat it because it is bitter.
- 7 **IMbuya yabaThwa, nguMini lowo, uyisemkhulu walo
mntwana osinelwayo.**
The San's (Bushman's) weed, that's Mini, grandfather
of this child who is being married.
- 8 **Sengiya enkosaneni yakwabo bese ngehla nabo-ke.**
I am now moving on to his (Mini) elder brother and
descend with them (in addressing them).
- 9 **Bhulande kaSkiti, UMvunywa ovunywe yiPitoli,**
Bhulande of Skiti, the accepted one who was accepted
by Pretoria,
- 10 **UMomozi yangqofa.**
The female vulva that pecks furiously.

- 11 **Bese ngiya kubaba yena omdala, ikhanda labo bonke.**
Then I move on to the father, eldest of the houses.
- 12 **NguNtulini ngubaba ozala mina lowo.**
That's Ntulini the father who begets me.
- 13 **UMandolozana umseshi ongemesishi,**
Mandolozana the detective that's not a real detective,
- 14 **Umaphoyisana ozishaya ufokisi,**
The policemen who pretends to be a detectives,
- 15 **UMncane, nguMandolozana-ke lowo.**
The young one, that is Mandolozana.
- 16 **We Mboza mboza ziphuma etayitini,**
Hey you coverer that covers them, going out of a
sticky situation,
- 17 **Chakide uphume nini emafukwini ?**
Mongoose when did you get out of the thicket?
- 18 **Mshayi sendoda ithakatha.**
Beater of a man who practices sorcery.
- 19 **Ngubaba futhi lowo olama lowo.**
That is the father who comes after the previous one.
- 20 **Bese ngiya kuMbabalandi wezinkobe zilukhuni,**
Them I move on to Eater of the half cooked mealies,
- 21 **UMBokodwe eluhlaza ayigayisani nezinye izimbokodwe,**
The stubborn grinding stone that does not grind with
other stones.
- 22 **Ngoba ukudla kuzogedezela.**
Lest the food be rough.
- 23 **Ngubaba futhi lowo uTshelenyama.**
That's father also, Tshelenyama.
- 24 **Bayelamana njalo, ngumagcino lowo.**
By the way they come after each other in birth, that
is the last born.
- 25 **Sengiya kuMacuphela wempunzi.**
I now move on to the Snarer of the duiker.
- 26 **Mncedo wexhegu, uyingcuphe, uyingcuphe ngcelele.**
The penis cover of an old man, you are precariously
poised, you are in danger.

- 27 **Ngubaba-ke futhi lowo wakwenye indlu-ke,**
That's father also of another house,
- 28 **Lowo nguNgcuphe.**
That is Ngcuphe.
- 29 **Sengiya-ke kuSihlwathihlwathi singahambi ngandlela,**
I now move on to the blind walker that does not use
the beaten track,
- 30 **UNkom'udela, uSiphukuphuku simadela imiyalo.**
The stubborn beast, the fool that refuses advice.
- 31 **Angibaqedi bonke angizihayi zonke.**
I am not praising all of them nor reciting all of
their praises.
- 32 **Sengiya kuGqobho kaSipikili.**
I now move on to Gqobho of the Sipikili.
- 33 **Gqobho kaSipikili, mlungu ubethela kanjani ?**
Gqobho of Sipikili, white man how do you hammer ?
- 34 **Umlungu ubethela kanjani kumesisi ?**
How does a white make love to his wife ?
- 35 **Sengiya ekhanda, endlini engenhla impela.**
I now move on to the senior, to the first house.
- 36 **Sengiya kuMqwakuza nkobe zilukhuni,**
I now move on to Mqwakuza the hard mealie grain,
- 37 **Ngubaba lowo uManzini, bayamazi uMdelisango.**
That's father Manzini, they know Mdelisango.
- 38 **Bayamazi, uyise kaLukha lowo noLukha bayamazi.**
They know him, that's Luke's father they also know
Luke.
- 39 **Sengibuya-ke sengiza kubabamkhulu-ke uQolotha
kaMbango.**
Now I come back to grandfather Qolotha, son of Mbango.
- 40 **UMbango ongadliwa nkomo ngoba nezinye ziyawuqolothela.**
Mbango which no beast eats because others even avoid.
- 41 **Umuntu akathengwa, noma umuntu ungamthenga akathengwa
ngabakoMeseni.**
A person is not bought, even if you buy him he is not
bought by the Meseni people.

42 **USikhova uManhinhi, impisi ukuthutha ngesamba kaZichwe.**

The owl Manhinhi, the hyena of the Zichwe people that carries things away in bulk.

43 **Sengiya eMbavumaneni, uNgcede omagwilikicana.**

I now move on to the Growler, the warbler of crafty speech.

44 **Ngoba ugwilikiqele wadla amadoda.**

For with his crafty talk he excelled the men.

45 **Wadla oMlahlwa, wadla oNzawu.**

He excelled Mlahlwa, Nzawu and others.

46 **NguMthelo lowo, ilona ikhanda elikhulu.**

That is Mthelo, that's the first born of the great house.

47 **Ngize kuntombi kaMabhayi,**

Then I come to the daughter of Mabhayi,

48 **uShuqu kanye notsodwana lwakhe,**

The short one and her ugly looks,

49 **Intombana yaseMandlobeni,**

The young girl of Mandlobeni,

50 **UNdayi-ke lowo.**

That is Ndayi.

51 **Ngiya kuMchwayiza, udwendwe oludlanayo lukaZichwe.**

I move on to Mchwayiza, the ferocious son of Zichwe.

52 **Ngoba luthe uma ludlana lwahlala amadlangala lwadla uMwayiza,**

For when they fought each other they entered temporary shelter and ate Mwayiza,

53 **NguPhupha lowo.**

That is Phupha.

54 **Sengibonga inkosi-ke manje.**

I now praise the chief.

55 **Sengibonga-ke iNgcwashi ebomvu,**

I now praise the red Ngcwashi,

56 **Ngeyakithi, ngeyakwaNhlanhla.**

He is ours, he is of the Nhlanhla.

- 57 **Ibeka amabala ayizinzobe,**
It sports variegated coat,
58 **Kungathi abekwe njengawezimbuzi.**
Arranged like the ones on a goat.

In lines 1 - 2 the cattle on behalf of the boy's family are giving thanks for the arrival of the bride. Hlawukana says Mini, the groom's grandfather, is supposed to be the one who addresses the people because the house is his. Traditionally a house built by a son belongs to the father, the former will only have "his" house when his own son builds one. Line 3 says Mini is "on the sleeping mat" meaning he is confined to bed.

Lines 4 - 7 present Mini's praises. Metaphorically his being referred to as the tortoise's skin that easily stretches, means he easily adapts to any situation. I am told this image also refers to what he used to do in church. He wanted to make more contributions than any other person. Sandile, his grandson, says if after having made his contributions, somebody came up and gave more than he, he would go back and give even more. He was the sort of person that could not be easily beaten, hence he got the praise line **imbuya engadliwa yizimbuzi**, the goats (fellow Christians) could not eat (surpass) the weed (him - Mini).

Lines 8 - 10 praise Mini's elder brother, Bhulande, who was a chief. These lines refer to the fact that his chieftainship was approved by Pretoria amidst his tribe's scepticism on the issue. An image of a female vulva that pecks (means seeing each problem as a challenge to be met) is used to describe how he persistently insisted on having his appeal approved by the Pretoria authorities.

Hlawukana in lines 11 - 15 praises his father, Ntulini, who is a brother to the groom's grandfather. Ntulini is compared to a policeman (14) and a detective (13) - metaphor. He is compared in this way because of his inquisitive nature.

Lines 16 - 19 praise Mboza, Hlawukana's father's brother, who comes after Ntulini. He is praised for the ability he had in catching witches, **abathakathi**. He is likened to Chakide, a famous Zulu folktale trickster who always succeeds in employing his tricks on his victims.

Lines 20 - 23 praise Tshelenyama, another brother of his father's. These praises are descriptive of his stubborn nature, which is compared (metaphor) to a self sufficient grinding stone that does not need another stone to grind. He would never go out to ask for other people's help. He was a loner and thought he could manage anything on his own.

Lines 25 - 28 praise Ngcuphe for the help and support he gives to the aged, however, his help is questioned because the latter would thereafter report their possessions lost. Lines 32 - 34 praise Gqobho who used to have sexual relations with his employer's wife. Hlawukana says the relationship Gqobho had with the white woman was once the most talked about issue, it then found its way into his praises in an implicit way (imagery) - **bethela**, (hammer) is used to mean an active sexual relationship.

Hlawukana, in lines 39 - 42 praises his grandfather, Qolotha, for his good morals. He was also a staunch Christian who did not want to associate himself with any evil, hence the use of the image where he is referred to as "steep incline where no beast eats", i.e evil does not find its place in him. To the heathens he was like an owl (42) - metaphor. **Isikhova**, owl is a symbol of evil and witchcraft to the Zulu). Qolotha was like an owl to those who hated goodness. The owl image is used here to mean the opposite of what the Zulu say about owls, representing the good. However, to the wrong doers it is bad, as it fight against the evil they love. The owl image here indicates the good among the bad.

Lines 43 - 46 are the praises of Mthelo who is praised for the ability he had in the use of the spoken language. He could speak

people into doing things they had never intended to do, hence metaphorically called "Growler" .

In lines 47 - 50 a female ancestor, Ndayi, is praised - something quite unusual. Hlawukana says he mentions her because she lived long, dying between age 112 - 115. He says whilst she was still living, the family simply called her **idlozi** and was much loved because of her age. Her praises are descriptive of her physical characteristics - very short with ugly looks. Phupha popularly known for his rebellious nature is praised in lines 51 - 53.

Lastly, lines 54 - 58 praise the chief of Hlawukana tribe, Nhlanhla of the Maphumulo. He mentions that the chief is very fair in complexion, using "red" to express this. Line 57 with the image of "variegation" refers to the chief's exceptional good looks.

4.4 UMABO SONGS AND CHANTS

People recite chants and sing songs before and/or after the speeches. Most songs sung are appropriate for the occasion. Visits of each family to the other during marriage negotiations help each party to note the idiosyncrasies of each family, general routine of the home, social precedence observed by the people and the habits of each other. The fine details incidentally find their way into the songs and chants that are chosen and/or composed for the wedding. It is interesting to note that the songs sung carry certain messages either directed to the groom's people or to the bride herself.

4.4.1 SONGS SUNG BY THE BRIDAL PARTY

i) Aniboyigcina le ntandane

Please look after this orphan

Ngoba kusasa nizothi uyeba

Because tomorrow you will say she is a thief

Nithi uyathakatha

And say she is a witch

Nithi udla amaqanda umakoti

And say the bride eats eggs (a taboo for brides just like sour milk from the cows of the groom's homestead.)

The bride is referred to as an orphan as she will now not be living with her own people. The song pleads for the groom's people to look after her well and not make her feel that she is not one of them. It is also asking for untiring love for her, they say -let her be always loved as she appears to be today and not later be called names.

ii) **Ubuhle bendoda zinkomo zayo, uze ungalibali ntombazane**

Man's worth is his cattle, don't forget that girl

Uze uziphathe kakuhle emzini wakho ntombazane

Behave yourself well in your new home girl

Ubobhala, ubobhala, ubobhala.

Please to write, write, write.

This song is meant to remind the girl that her getting married meant a loss of lobola cattle of her in-laws and her husband in particular. Her people in this song admonish her to behave in an acceptable manner as a married person. Lastly they ask her to keep in touch informing them of her stay at the new place.

iii) **We Bongani ubomonga**

Hey Bongani look after her well

Ubomonga usisi wethu

Look after our sister well

Ubomondla, ungabomshaya udade

Support her, don't hurt our sister

Ubomonga usisi uyagula

Look after our sister, she is not well

The girls in this song plead with the groom to treat their sister well. They further make mention of the fact that she is not well. The bride about whom this song was sung was an asthmatic case, the girls wish to remind the groom about this.

4.4.2 SONGS SUNG BY THE GROOM'S PARTY

- i) **Umakoti ungowethu. Siyavuma**
The bride is ours. We agree
Usengowethu ngempela. Siyavuma
She is now ours indeed. We agree
Savumelana ngothando
We agreed in love.
Siyavuma, sithi yebo yebo yebo siyavuma
We agree, we say yes yes yes we agree
Uzosiwashela asiphekele. Siyavuma
She will wash and cook for us. We agree
Siyavuma, sithi yebo yebo yebo siyavuma
We agree we say yes yes we agree

The people's happiness that the bride is eventually theirs is expressed in the song. They also challenge her to be diligent.

- ii) **Nampa abantu besibiza**
People are here calling us
Bayasibiza mama
They are calling us mother
Nampa abantu besibiza
People are here calling us
Bayasibiza baba
They are calling us father
Bayasibiza, bayasibiza, bayasibiza
They are calling us, they are calling us, they are calling us
Wozanini sizothatha umakoti
Come let us take the bride

This song is sung when the bridal party is at the gate waiting to be called in and singing songs themselves. The groom's people happily sing this song calling others to come and fetch their bride in big numbers to show that she is indeed welcome by everybody.

4.4.3 CHANTS RECITED BY THE BRIDE'S PARTY

- i) **Leader: Ungayishayi inja isuthi**
Do not beat the dog when its stomach is full
- Audience: Yebo ungayishayi uma isuthi**
Of course do not beat it when its stomach is full
- Leader: Ungayithinti inja isuthi**
Do not temper with the dog when its stomach is full
- Audience: Yebo ungayithinti inja isuthi**
Indeed do not temper with the dog when its stomach is full

This chant was recited by the bride's father (Siphiwe Meyiwa) after his speech. He had told the groom's people that his daughter was not getting married because he (the father) was failing to support her. He said if they later became unhappy with her they would have to bring her back home rather than ill-treat her. The chant warns the groom's people to look after the bride well lest her people take her back. The father says that ill-treating her will be like beating a dog with a full stomach is not desperately hungry for its master's food. Such a dog can be dangerous for it can retaliate in anger. This appears rude, but it is normal for a bride's father to say words of this kind, meant to scare the groom's people from ill-treating his daughter.

- ii) **Thina singabomuzi woMkhomazi**
We are of the Umkomaas region
- Wathinta thina uyafa**
If you provoke us you die
- Ngoba singabomuzi woMkhomazi, siyimpi**

Because we are of Umkomaas, we are a hostile band

The groom's people are warned not to dare insult them (girl's people) by ill-treating their daughter. They say doing any harm to her will be provoking war. This chant was recited by a group from Umkomaas one of whom, Muntu, told me that they were the bride's mother's relatives. We thus see that it is not only the bride's paternal people who concern themselves about the

well-being of the bride, but also her maternal relatives. Many people are involved in such a relationship, it is not only the nuclear family that worries about the girl's well-being, but the lineages of both the girl's father and mother. A marriage relationship then becomes the concern more of a community than of an individual.

4.4.4 CHANTS RECITED BY THE GROOM'S PARTY

- i) **Leader:** Wabuya umakoti
The bride comes home
Audience: Siyabonga ndodana, siyabonga ngomakoti
Thank you, son, thank you for the bride
Leader: Wabuya umakoti
The bride comes home
Audience: Siyabonga ndodana, siyabonga ukukuzala
Thank you, son, thank you that we beget you

The groom's people give thanks to the groom for bringing the bride home. The chant expresses their happiness for the groom's decision to get married. The chant also appears to inform the bride's people that they themselves are happy with their son's choice and decision. This implies the people will look after the well-being of the bride.

- ii) **Leader:** Uyavuka umuzi
The homestead is resurrected
Audience: Sewakhiwe umuzi
The homestead is now built

This chant actually incorporates the concept of "building the homestead" and is recited out of joy that the family's name will not die. As we have seen in 4.1 above, Zulu (and Xhosa) refer to their son's marriage as "a building of the house". It is a given assumption that the bride will bear sons who will ensure that the family's name does not die. Each wedding is referred to as "homestead re-building" i.e. ukwakhiwa komuzi / ukuvuka komuzi.

Many people making speeches in **umabo** employ the phrase "building of the home", this is one major aspect that speeches emphasise. Words spoken in ceremonies thus tend to follow a common structure and the speakers noticeably employ a language different from the one they use everyday. I therefore consider such general features next.

4.5 LANGUAGE AND GENERAL STRUCTURE OF SPEECHES MADE AT UMEMULO AND UMABO CEREMONIES

4.5.1 LANGUAGE

We have seen that, although ancestors are present throughout their descendant's performances, the latter initially establish intimate communion with them through ritual killing, use of the gall and accompanying speeches. Both ceremonies would be invalid without the invocation of the ancestors and the speeches that feature dignified language. There is much care that is given to the choice of words used in the speeches. Speakers use poetic and extremely beautiful Zulu, demonstrating that they are speaking to the ancestors.

Along side the care taken in the use of language, speeches are always accompanied by **ukugiya**, a ritual dance - concrete performance. Berglund (1976: 235) points out that this type of dance is one of the significant details on which positive ancestor reactions depends. Ancestor favour is not taken for granted as a mechanical result of slaughtering and of care for the gall. Berglund maintains the dance is meant to awaken the ancestors, and the Zulu maintain that no ancestor can remain passive having seen the enthusiastic dance. Ancestors are aroused so as to do something (bless, protect, give fortune) to their descendants.

4.5.2 GENERAL STRUCTURE

The speeches made follow a similar procedure that appears to conform to certain accepted rules and conventions. McAllister (1990: 43) says all Xhosa ritual oratory is characterised by stylistic devices. This holds true for Zulu ceremonial speeches as well. The information is presented in a way that is standardised. McAllister (1988: 50) notes themes that recur in the speeches of traditional occasions:

- a) the audience and the ancestors have to know the nature of the event and reason for holding it. A reason is officially and formally announced.
- b) emphasis on being receptive and responsive toward the ancestors e.g. host being attentive to the wishes of the ancestors.
- c) responsibility of the homestead head - to talk and \ or introduce a person to recite lineage praises.

In addition to the above themes, one notes the following in the speeches made:

- 1. identification of the person for whom the ceremony is held with the ancestors in the form of genealogy recitation.
- 2. information about the place of origin and possibly the river the family uses as its water source.
- 3. behaviour expected in the new role and the responsibilities associated with it. Speaking is a means of publicly expressing and reinforcing the norms relating to married couples, the groom's people and to a daughter for whom **umemulo** is performed.
- 4. use of symbolic language that helps to attract, focus and order attention.

Speaking therefore has its own intentions, It is meant to :

- i) help define the relationship between living people.
- ii) define relationship between the living and the dead.
- iii) legitimise ritual actions and existence of ceremonies.

traditional attitudes, beliefs and values. McAllister (1990: 5) reiterates this idea by pointing out that one aspect of oral tradition is the function of preserving and transmitting culturally useful information - culturally approved behaviour patterns, attitudes and beliefs seen in the ceremonies. We have seen this cultural information performed - verbalised, acted out through the speeches.

The **umemulo** and the **umabo** form part of the Zulu society's literature and involve the whole community. The content of the two ceremonies is largely performed and performance implies presence of an audience. What enables these ceremonies to survive is the fact that they are performed. Performance re-enacts knowledge and therefore eliminates the dying out of a tradition. Performance involves action on the part of the audience. They actively participate - recite along with the speaker, utter shrill cries of joy at what is said, sing and dance. Audience involvement is vital to the life, success and survival of a tradition. Their presence tells of the communal nature of the Zulu traditional ceremonies. However, that the audience is present at the performance does not, on its own, guarantee the survival of a tradition. The performer has an important task of ensuring that what he says is easily kept in memory. He does this by being extremely careful in the use of words. He attracts his audience by using aesthetic language featuring on imagery, repetition, symbolism and a traditional structure discussed in section 4.5.2 above. The traditional core used makes his audience happy because it deals with deals with something they partially know. Although there is no rigidly fixed form for the speeches and their content, people, however, feel at home with the general structure with which they are familiar and can easily identify.

People show great respect for their ancestors in the speeches they make. They use dignified, beautiful, poetic language also in an attempt to invite ancestor favour and fortune. Respect for the ancestors and the wish for fortune are seen in the everyday spoken language. The Zulu use phrases that portray the belief and

hope they have in the ancestors who are the ultimate audience for the whole performance and which they validate by their presence.

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