

XHOSA BEER DRINKS AND THEIR ORATORY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iv
List of maps, tables, figures and appendices	v
Abstract	vii
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	1
Why beer drinks?	1
Fieldwork methods	4
The social significance of food	11
Beer drinks and the ethnography of communication	21
CHAPTER TWO - 'THE FOOD OF MEN'	39
Beer among southern Bantu-speaking people	39
'Nocturnal Jollifications' - beer among the Cape Nguni 1800-1950	47
Shixini people	58
Labour migration and the local economy	60
Kinship and neighbourhood	67
Beer and beer drinks in Shixini	74
What is a 'beer drink'?	79
Notes to Chapter 2	96
CHAPTER THREE - THE A TO Z OF BREWING AND DRINKING BEER	101
Brewing (ukusila)	101
Preliminary beer distribution	107
The beer drink proper	111
Spatial arrangements	117
Preliminary beakers and iminono ('gifts')	132
Explaining the event	139
The injoli and the 'arranging of the hut'	140
Amasiko ('customs')	143
The main drink	155
Ukurhabulisa ('offering sips')	160
Women's umlawulo	168

Iqwele ('the last drop')	173
Concluding beakers	178
Speech	180
Notes to Chapter 3	182
CHAPTER FOUR - BEER DRINKS AS DRAMATIC CULTURAL PERFORMANCES	186
Reflexivity	192
The role of speech in beer drink performances	200
Explanations and requests	201
Discussions and debates	214
Notes to Chapter 4	229
CHAPTER FIVE - BEER DRINKS AND SOCIAL PRACTICE	231
Beer for sale	233
Work party beer	240
Young men at beer drinks	260
Umsindleko	267
Notes to Chapter 5	280
CHAPTER SIX - BEER DRINKS AND STATUS CHANGE	281
Releasing the widow	281
Promoting the wife	308
Making known the homestead	315
Notes to Chapter 6	331
CHAPTER SEVEN - A CONCLUSION IN THREE PARTS	333
Part one - Beer drinks and the ancestors	333
Part two - Beer drinks and the social order	345
Part three - The ethnography of communication at beer drinks	353
Notes to Chapter 7	362
Appendices	
References	

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## LIST OF MAPS, TABLES, FIGURES AND APPENDICES

### MAPS

Map 1	Districts of the Transkei	5
Map 2	Shixini and adjoining wards	7
Map 3	Sub-wards of Shixini	8
Map 4	Homesteads and sections in Folokhwe sub-ward	69

### TABLES

Table 1	Agnatic and sub-ward section distribution of Folokhwe homesteads	69
Table 2	Varieties of beer drinks in Shixini	93
Table 3	Characteristics of beer drinks and ritual killings	95
Table 4	Outline of the main stages of a typical beer drink	113
Table 5	Distribution of iminono	135

### FIGURES

Figure 1	Classification of food and drink in Shixini	75
Figure 2	Differentiation of space within the homestead	120
Figure 3	Allocation of seating places to sections within Folokhwe sub-ward	122
Figure 4	Descendents of the right hand house of Hintsa	123
Figure 5	Division of space within hut into segments	124
Figure 6	Seating places allocated to Jotelo and Ndlelibanzi in Folokhwe	126
Figure 7	Outside seating places in Komkhulu section of Folokhwe sub-ward	130
Figure 8	Outside seating places in Ndlelibanzi sub-ward	131
Figure 9	Seating places of women at Nontwaba's homestead in Komkhulu section	171
Figure 10	Seating places at Ngangethole's 'beer for hoeing'	247
Figure 11	Stages of mourning and widowhood	282
Figure 12	Thwalingubo's agnates	317

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Glossary of Xhosa terms and phrases	363
Appendix 2	Notes on the Xhosa transcriptions and translations; Xhosa originals of speeches in the text	368

## ABSTRACT

This is a study of 'beer drinks' among Xhosa people living in the Shixini administrative area of Willowvale district, Transkei. Beer drinks are defined as a 'polythetic' class of events distinguishable from other kinds of ceremonies and rituals at which beer may be consumed, and an attempt is made to outline their major characteristics. A detailed description of the way in which beer drinks are conducted is provided in Chapter 3, with emphasis on the symbolism involved in the allocation of beer, space and time, and on the speech events (including formal oratory) that occur.

The main theoretical argument is that beer drinks may be regarded as 'cultural performances' in which social reality or 'practice' is dramatised and reflected upon, enabling people to infuse their experience with meaning and to establish guidelines for future action. This is achieved by relating social practice to cultural norms and values, in a dynamic rather than a static manner. It is demonstrated that the symbolism involved in beer drinking is highly sensitive to the real world and adjusts accordingly, which means that 'culture' is continually being reinterpreted.

Despite poverty, a degree of landlessness and heavy reliance on migrant labour, Shixini people maintain an ideal of rural self-sufficiency and are able to partly fulfill this ideal, thereby maintaining a degree of independence and resistance to full incorporation into the wider political economy of southern Africa. They achieve this largely by maintaining a strong sense of community and of household interdependence, linked to a sense of Xhosa tradition. It is this aspect of social practice, manifested in a variety of forms - work parties, ploughing companies, rites of passage, and so on - that is dramatised, reflected upon and reinforced at beer drinks. In a definite sense then, beer drinks may be regarded as a response and a way of adapting to apartheid, and this study one of a community under threat.

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Why beer drinks?

When I first went to Willowvale (Gatyana), Transkei, in 1976, it was with the intention of examining the relationship between labour migration and ritual. At the time I was part of a fairly loosely co-ordinated team of six anthropologists involved in a project aimed at examining various aspects of migrant labour, being conducted by Rhodes University and led by Philip Mayer, and funded by the Chamber of Mines of South Africa. At the start of the project, in 1975, I had conducted a pilot study in three Transkei districts - Elliotdale, Umtata and Ngqeleni (See Map 1, p.5). In the course of these two months I learned that Xhosa migrants would occasionally time their trips home to co-incide with some important ritual, that misfortune at work might drive a worker home to fulfill some outstanding obligation to the ancestral shades, that newly circumcised youths were expected to go out to work "to change the khaki", and various other things that indicated that labour migration and ritual life were to some extent connected.

In order to pursue this topic I decided to work in a conservative area, where the ancestor religion was still strong. Philip Mayer suggested Shixini 'location' in Willowvale, where he had worked fifteen years earlier. So it was to Willowvale that I went, accompanied by two research assistants, one of whom was the late Percy Qayiso, who had worked with the Mayers in the past, and also for W.D. Hammond-Tooke. He proved invaluable during the four to five months that he assisted me.

For the first six weeks in Shixini my helpers and I pursued the question of the relationship between ritual and labour migration. We questioned people, attended rituals and spoke to the participants, sought out people who were regarded as knowledgeable or who had recently performed rituals, and interviewed migrants who had recently

returned home. In this way we collected a fair amount of information, but there seemed to be something missing. The data we had collected seemed lifeless. One of the reasons for this was that it consisted of disconnected bits and pieces; another was that it was based mainly on interviews. We would sit down with someone and ask, for example, if he had ever had to return home from work in order to perform or be present at some ritual, and he would scratch his head and say 'yes', and try to recall something that had happened perhaps five or ten years earlier. Or we would ask a senior man if the absence of many of his agnatic kin affected the performance of rituals, and he would say 'yes', but add that it did not really matter because they were present in spirit anyway.

During this period we did learn a bit about the area and its people, about the political and kinship structure, the composition of homesteads, and so on, but the bulk of the data collected has remained unused and unusable. It is second hand data elicited (in the worst sense of the word) from informants to fit a pattern of questions conceived on the basis of only a little knowledge of the subject. In asking 'how do migrant labour and ritual affect each other?' I had placed in a central position an issue that was only of peripheral interest and importance to the people themselves. What I ought to have done right from the start was to let what was happening and what people were doing and talking about determine the focus of my study, rather than to ask so many questions.

The signs were there although I did not recognise them at first. During the initial six-week period in the field there was a beer drink in the immediate vicinity virtually every day. Frequently our inquiry for a person whom we wished to speak to was met with the response usetywaleni ('he/she is at a beer drink'). Since I did not think that beer drinks qualified as 'ritual', we did not bother to attend. My assistants had, it seems, like me, accepted the conventional wisdom (implied in terms like 'beer parties' rather than explicitly stated) that beer drinks might be fun, but not really worthy of serious study. Later, we thought we might be able to pursue our inquiries by attending beer drinks and questioning people there, but on our first

attempt were gruffly told that such things (concerning the ancestors) were not discussed at beer drinks.

Secondly, two weeks after arriving in Shixini I recorded in my diary that a beer drink had been held "by a man who has just returned from work". A fortnight later we learnt that it was 'required' that a beer drink be held for a returned migrant. It was also clear that returned migrants were expected to distribute bottles of brandy and other gifts, and one protracted dispute concerning such distribution indicated that people took this practice fairly seriously. The implication of these events, however, escaped us, at least until after I had spent a month in Grahamstown organizing the material we had collected, before returning to Shixini. Shortly after returning I was told that a beer drink called umsindleko was about to be held for a returned migrant. Slowly it dawned that there were possibly ritual and symbolic activities integral to the departure and return of migrants. Attendance at this umsindleko made us realise that there were 'rituals of labour migration' in Shixini. I spent the next five months studying these, which formed the subject of my Masters thesis (McAllister 1979).

The rituals of labour migration that I discovered in Shixini and discussed in the M.A. thesis included three different kinds of beer drinks, as well as a variety of other ritual actions. After realising something of the significance of beer drinks I started to attend them more regularly and to try to understand them. What emerged initially was that there was a wide variety of kinds of beer drinks, held for a variety of purposes and frequently named accordingly. Secondly, regular attendance at beer drinks made me realise that what seemed at first to be noisy, chaotic and unstructured affairs, a sort of Xhosa version of Friday night at the local pub, were in fact orderly and carefully regulated. Clearly, to make sense of beer drinks I had to identify this structure and the variations on it, which seemed to be linked to the reason for brewing. Thirdly, beer drinks were marked by much talking, debate, discussion and other kinds of verbal activity. There were frequently long and heated arguments, and also more orderly speeches which obviously provided senior men with an opportunity to

display their oratorical skills. At first I was interested mainly in the content of what people said, as an aid to my understanding of what was going on at beer drinks. Later I started to realise that why and how people said things, and who the people were who said them, were important independently of what was actually said.

Beer drinks were so common in Shixini and of such obvious importance in everyday life (however long it took me to realise this) that they could not be ignored. However, I could find virtually no published work on this subject in the literature on the Cape Nguni. Hunter (1936 *passim*) had a fair amount to say about beer drinking in Pondoland, and Davies (1927) had published a three page article on Bomvana beer-drinking customs, a topic dealt with also by Cook in his book on the Bomvana (1931, 26-30). As far as other Bantu-speakers were concerned Krige (1932) was the only publication I could find dealing specifically with the social significance of beer. Although virtually all the ethnographies mentioned beer and its importance in social life, especially its role in ritual and its use as a reward for participants in work parties, it was apparent that beer drinks, or 'beer parties', was a neglected field of study.

#### Fieldwork Methods

The principal method used in the collection of material for this thesis was the conventional anthropological one of participant-observation, involving residence with the people being studied and participation (as far as possible) in their daily lives. I spent eight months in Shixini between June 1976 and August 1977 and undertook a number of shorter visits, usually of two or three weeks duration, in October 1978, November 1979, June-July 1981, December 1981, July-August 1982, January-February 1983, December 1983, June 1984, December-January 1985-6, and June-July 1986.

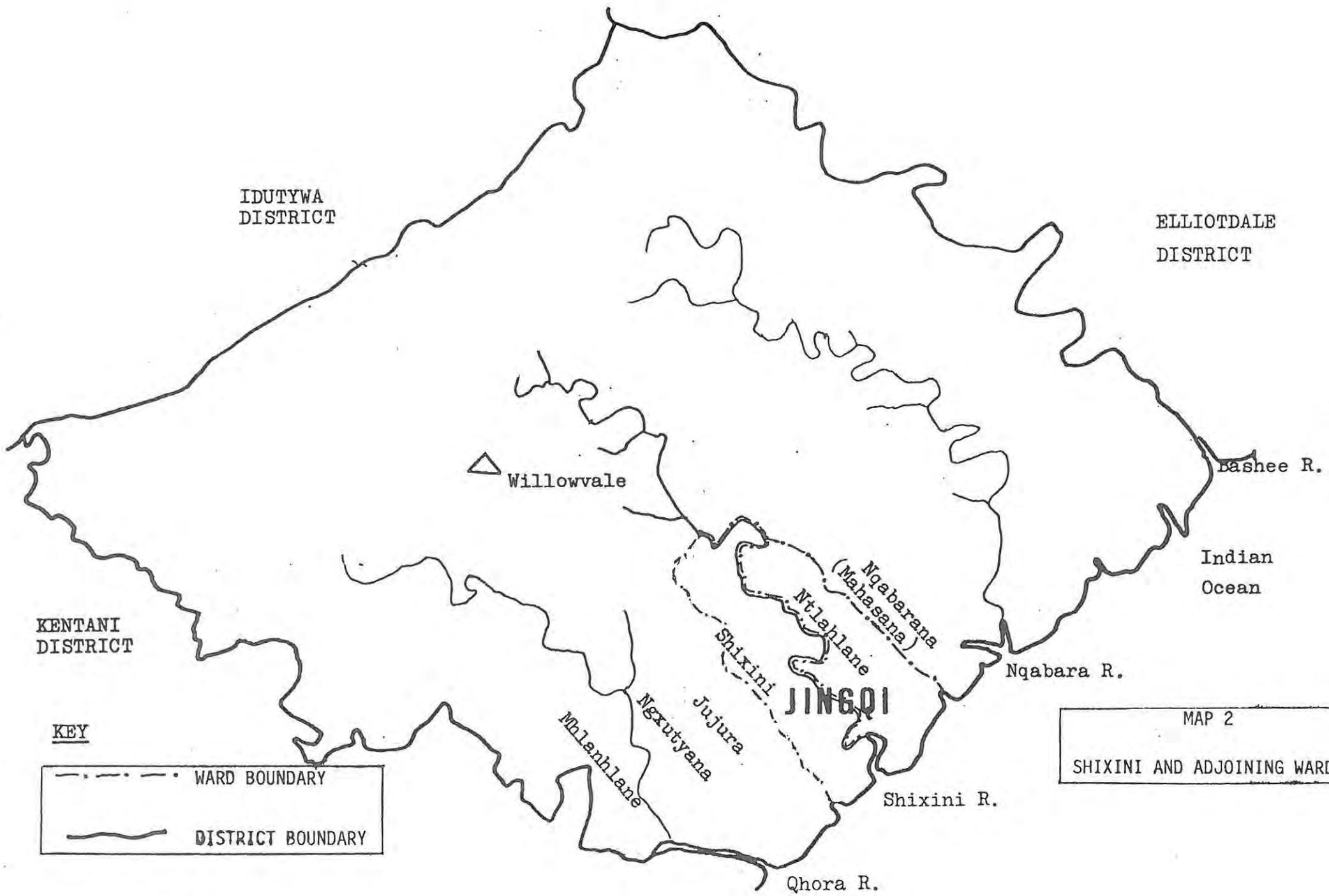
In Shixini I lived in Ndlelibanzi sub-ward for a few months and spent the rest of the time in an adjoining sub-ward, Folokhwe, in the homestead of Mzilikazi and Nothusile Tshemese. It is in Folokhwe that most of the data for this study were obtained. It is a relatively

MAP 1 DISTRICTS OF THE TRANSKEI



small area, consisting of 81 homesteads. This meant that I was able to get to know virtually all the adult members of the sub-ward, as well as many of those from adjoining sub-wards. The advantage of this was that I was eventually able to identify most people present at a beer drink and to record, with relative ease, who sat where, who spoke, who was allocated beer, who called who for a sip, and so on. I also attended beer drinks and other events in other wards such as Ntlahlane, Mhlahlane, Gojelo, Jujurha and Ngxutyana (see Map 2, p.7) as well as in other sub-wards of Shixini - Ndlelibanzi, Nompha, Jotelo, Mngwevu and Mandluntsha (Map 3, p.8).

Most of my information was obtained first hand by attending and taking part in beer drinks and other events, and by tape recording what was said for later transcription and translation. After the first six weeks I did little interviewing except during my last two spells in the field. I administered no questionnaires and I conducted no surveys except for an initial household census. In all, I attended approximately fifty beer drinks, and made detailed notes and audio tape recordings at thirty of these. As time went on I became more and more aware of the importance of the public speaking that took place at beer drinks, and of the need for detailed recordings. Much of the data presented in this dissertation is in the form of or derived from transcriptions of those recordings (see Appendix 2), and speech is one of the key factors on which my conclusions are based. I also attended many other kinds of ancestor rituals and public events, such as mortuary rituals, male and female initiation ceremonies, meetings of the sub-ward court (ibandla) and of the Tribal Authority, and so on. This enabled me to compare beer drinks with other kinds of events and to determine their specific characteristics more clearly (see Ch 2). I was usually accompanied by a Xhosa-speaking assistant, who was always someone from outside the area. Tape recordings were transcribed and translated in the field or later, in Grahamstown, my assistant and I collaborating in this task. Often it was necessary to play the recording to the speaker to obtain an accurate transcription and to inquire into the meaning of what was said. A fair amount of information was obtained simply by walking around the sub-ward, talking to people on an informal basis, observing (and occasionally



IDUTYWA  
DISTRICT

ELLIOTDALE  
DISTRICT

△ Willowvale

Mashee R.

Indian  
Ocean

KENTANI  
DISTRICT

Nqabara R.

KEY

	WARD BOUNDARY
	DISTRICT BOUNDARY

MAP 2

SHIXINI AND ADJOINING WARDS

Shixini R.

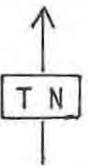
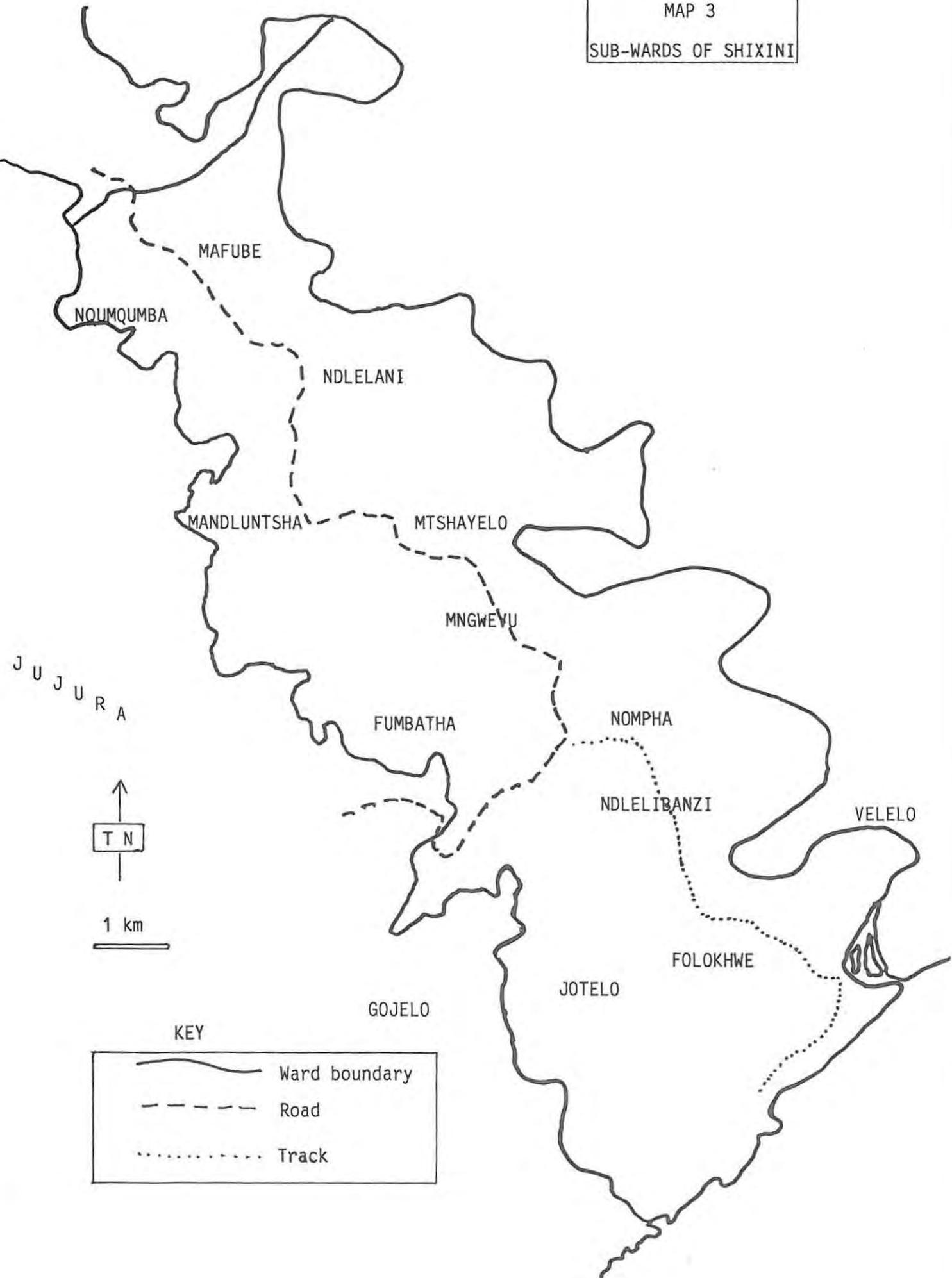
Qhora R.

JINGQI

Mhlanhlane  
Nxutyana  
Jujura

Shixini  
Ntlahlane  
(Mahasana)  
Nqabarana

MAP 3  
SUB-WARDS OF SHIXINI



1 km

KEY

	Ward boundary
	Road
	Track

taking part in) work parties, and so on. In addition, people came to know that I had a hut in Mzilikazi's homestead and frequently dropped in to say hello and to chat, often on their way to and from beer drinks and other events.

Beer drinks as a subject for participant observation had many advantages. Anthropologists often do a great deal of observing and questioning and rather little participating, at least in the subject that they are studying. In the case of beer drinks it is almost impossible not to be a participant. The beer is nutritious and refreshing and one soon develops a taste for it. Even people who do not drink beer, however, attend beer drinks, and are offered sips from the beaker, which etiquette demands they may not refuse, but pass on to a friend or relative. Everyone present is allocated a seating place and is included in the allocation of beer. There is simply no such thing as an 'observer' at a beer drink. I was frequently given beer prestations (iminono) and had to decide who to call for sips from such beakers, or who to pass a beaker to after I had received and drunk from it. Shixini people were more than willing, in such situations, to instruct me in the correct etiquette involved in giving and receiving beakers, drinking from a beaker, and so on.

At imbarha beer drinks (see Ch. 5) I was able, like other people, to buy beakers for people to whom I was indebted or with whom I wanted to maintain good relations. As a resident of Mzilikazi's homestead I was regarded, for the purpose of the seating arrangements at beer drinks, as a member of the sub-ward section that Mzilikazi belonged to, Komkhulu, and on one occasion when my assistant and I were present at a beer drink in another part of the sub-ward and Komkhulu men were occupied elsewhere eating an ox that had been slaughtered due to old age, it was considered by the hosts that 'Komkhulu' was present and that the beer could thus be given out. No doubt this was because the men present were thirsty and wanted to get on with it, but it seemed at the time also to be a sign of a degree of acceptance.

It would clearly be naive to claim that my presence at beer drinks did not affect the proceedings in any way. Apart from the above mentioned

factors there were times when the presence of a tape recorder influenced speakers. On one occasion an elder brought some light relief during an argument by turning to me in the course of his speech, pointing to the tape recorder, and saying "don't write this down Pat!". On another a speaker said that there was "a 'machine' to be filled up". The same individual was once told to be quiet and sit down by others because it was clear that he was talking in order to be recorded. In general, however, I am confident that most people simply forgot about or ignored the tape recorder, and behaved as they would have had I not been present. I attended a number of beer drinks without notebook and tape recorder and noticed no difference in the proceedings or character of the speeches.

My presence did at times create, or help to create data, such as the occasion when beer was brewed in my honour, or when I was called for sips by others or given an umnono beaker. I have not regarded such occurrences as data to be included in my analysis. On one occasion at a beer drink in Elwandle section of Jotelo sub-ward, which I was visiting for the first time, the homestead head and host placed my assistant and I with his own (Elwandle) group. Dlathu, the man with whom we had gone to Jotelo, was also put with Elwandle, because there were no other Folokhwe people present. Soon afterwards, some other Folokhwe men arrived, Folokhwe was given its proper seating place, and Dlathu joined the others there. However, my assistant and I were told to remain with Elwandle, because as visitors from the 'rhulumente (government) we should be given respect (imbeko) by being seated with the hosts.

There was some disagreement about this and both Folokhwe and Jotelo men pointed out to the host that we had been attending beer drinks for some time and should be seated with Folokhwe. This placed me in something of a dilemma. I wanted to correct the impression that we were working for any government and, more importantly, since Folokhwe people treated me as a member of one of their sections at beer drinks in Folokhwe, I was not keen to seem to want to sit apart from Folokhwe people here. At the same time I did not want to offend the host by saying that I did not want to sit with his group and accept the imbeko

being offered me. The other problem was whether to remain silent, a non-participant, and allow the argument to run its course, or whether to participate, as any local man might have done in a similar situation.

Since members of the host's own section disagreed with him (and it was not the only occasion in the course of the beer drink that this was the case) I decided to speak in order to identify myself with Folokhwe and to point out that I had not been sent by any government. I did so and, after further argument, Elwandle people as a group overruled the individual host/homestead head, and decided that we should go and sit with Folokhwe, saying that we should 'go to our home'. The host objected, but as one of the Elwandle men put it, "It is the ilali (Elwandle section) which is releasing them, it is not up to you." A number of interesting points emerged from this debate, but since it is data of a rather dubious nature, manufactured in part by my presence and participation, I have not used it in this study. There were also other cases, however, where my participation sparked off some discussion and led to interesting findings. In these cases, however, I was a passive rather than an active participant, and I have used some of them in the chapters which follow.

#### The social significance of food

This dissertation attempts to demonstrate that beer drinking, at first glance an apparently unimportant form of social activity, is far from trivial as far as Shixini people are concerned, but is a vital part of their lives. It is an activity of great social significance, and provides insights into such diverse aspects of social life as religion, co-operative labour, adaptation to apartheid, witch beliefs, labour migration, death, socialization, and many others. As Mauss (1954, 1) said of gift giving, beer drinking is a 'total social phenomenon'. This is not, I suppose, really surprising. Anthropologists have long been concerned with the social significance of food and drink (beer is both of these - see Ch. 2) usually in relation to rituals, feasts, sacrifices and other 'religious' phenomena, but also in exchange relationships, political life, and so

on. It is not my intention to provide a comprehensive survey of anthropological studies of food here, but merely to highlight the major trends, and to examine recent studies on the social significance of drinking behaviour.

In the nineteenth century, interest in food by scholars such as Frazer, Robertson-Smith and Durkheim, was linked to the study of totemism, taboo, sacrifice, communion, and other aspects of 'magic and religion' (Goody 1982, 10-12). In his study of sacrifice Robertson-Smith drew attention to the social and moral dimension of the consumption of sacred food, and the implications of this for community solidarity. To Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown it was around food and its consumption that the sentiments required for orderly social life were generated and maintained. Food thus had a symbolic or 'expressive' function.

This was also one of the main emphases in later 'functionalist' studies, such as that of Richards' (1939) among the Bemba, inspired partly by Malinowski's Coral Gardens and Their Magic (ibid., x), and of Firth's Tikopian studies, where he paid much attention to the functions and logic of food symbolism and exchanges. In Tikopia, he claimed, food and its exchange was the major means through which kinship ties were expressed, relative rank symbolized, and political unity reinforced. Food and food gifts served as "a symbolic mode of emphasizing some basic principles of the social structure...." (Firth 1973, 258). Xhosa beer drinks may be regarded in this way too, but they also do much more than this.

Up to about 1970, anthropological studies of alcohol consumption were of two broad types. Firstly, there were those which, like the work of Firth and Richards, concentrated primarily on the social functions of the consumption of alcoholic beverages in traditional societies. These studies included a number on beer drinking in Africa and elsewhere, such as Central and South America, which placed the emphasis on the various contexts (ritual, political and economic) in which beer was used, and on the functions that beer drinking fulfilled within these contexts. Beer drinking was found to express and maintain social

relationships, and to reinforce social solidarity. It provided a channel for communication, decision making, and the exchange of information, for the organization of and reward for labour, and so on. Beer was used in rituals, where it functioned to facilitate communication with supernatural beings, and it was used as a means of social control (Krige 1932, Hellman 1934, Sangree 1962, Heath 1962, Kennedy 1963, Netting 1964, James 1972). A fuller survey of the role of beer in African societies is provided in the following chapter.

Secondly, there were a number of studies of alcohol use in complex societies or in societies undergoing processes of transition or 'modernization' (such as North American Indian communities and Australian aborigines). These studies were concerned with problems of alcohol abuse and their relation to social factors (see for example some of the contributions to Pittman and Snyder 1962) and have recently been reviewed by Room (1984). Room argues that the functionalist approach to drinking behaviour deflected attention away from and 'deflated' the problem of alcohol abuse and its relation to social factors, and that this problem needs to be re-examined.

There were a number of exceptions to this ideal-type dichotomy between functionalist and problem-centered approaches to drinking behaviour. MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969), for example, seemed to combine the two, seeking functionalist explanations for the heavy use of alcohol and the behaviour of the inebriated in the notion of 'time out' and other forms of 'drunken comportment'. Other studies, such as those of Davies (1927) on Bomvana beer drinking customs, and Honigman (1963) on drinking in an Austrian village, were merely descriptive, being concerned with neither the functions of drinking nor the pathology of heavy drinking. In urban areas the economic and political aspects of beer drinking have received attention (Hellman 1934, Wolcott 1975). More recently there have been studies of the role of municipal beer halls in South African cities (for a summary of these see de Haas 1986) and of the role of the bar and drinking groups in Witwatersrand gold mine hostels (McNamara 1980).

Another exception was Frake's (1964) analysis of "How to ask for a

drink in Subanum", which went well beyond conventional functionalist analyses. Frake paid attention to the speech acts accompanying beer drinking, and provided a brief sociolinguistic analysis of 'drinking talk'. In this way he was able to show that not only were there important functions associated with beer drinking, but that performance at beer drinks affected one's influence, standing and potential power in the community. A beer drinking session was "a structured setting within which one's social relationships....can be extended, defined and manipulated through the use of speech" (1964, 130). Frake was ahead of his time. A careful analysis of a similar kind of event - saké drinking in rural Japan - conducted some twenty years later, relies heavily on Frake's article and produces similar findings (Moeran 1984), though cast in the more modern idiom of 'performance' analysis (MacAloon 1984).

In the post-functionalist era there have been two major theoretical approaches to the study of food (and drink) in society. The first of these, represented by Levi-Strauss, is the 'structuralist' approach. As is well known, Levi-Strauss has been concerned, among other things, with the relationship between cooking as a classificatory set and system of symbolic communication, and other symbolic structures in society, i.e with the 'homologous relations of formal similarity' between food, or cooking, and other aspects of culture. Such relationships are sought at the level of 'deep structure' rather than at the level of readily observable behaviour, largely through binary analysis, with the aim of finding universal food meanings. Levi-Strauss' ultimate concern is with what the analysis of food can tell us about the structure of human thought in general. Empirical reality is but a means to this end (Leach 1970, 42; Goody 1982, 24-25).

While there is no doubt that food is a symbolic system through which people communicate with and relate to each other, and about the value of Levi-Strauss' work, it is important not to divorce symbols from concrete social realities, or from their relationship with other symbols at the level of surface structure, insofar as this is possible. Levi-Strauss emphasises the underlying or unconscious symbolic dimensions and neglects human action or 'practice', for which

he has come in for criticism (Cohen 1969, Douglas 1975, 259; Goody, 1982, 25).

Noting the lack of theoretical development in anthropology over the last twenty years, Goody suggests that the way to advance is to concentrate on the comparative study of micro-scale social realities - on things like eating, drinking and speaking. Indeed, the similarities between beer drinking among Xhosa speakers, as detailed in this study, and the drinking of beer and other alcoholic beverages in places as widely dispersed as West Africa (Nolan 1971), the Sudan (James 1972), Japan (Moeran 1984), and central America (Heath 1962, Kennedy 1963), are remarkable, and provide, in my estimation evidence of human universality as acceptable (if not more so) as that found at the level of 'deep structure'.

It is possible, as this study attempts to show, to unravel the 'messages' carried by food and drink without recourse to notions such as 'deep structure', and to relate these messages to everyday social relationships. These messages are, in Douglas' words, about things like "different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transitions across boundaries" (1975, 249). Douglas represents the second major post-functionalist approach to food, one that might be called the 'cultural' approach. She proceeds from similar assumptions to those of Levi-Strauss - that food is a code containing messages, and that its use is culturally patterned. Identifying the pattern and analysing its structure will allow the anthropologist to crack the code and reveal the hidden messages that it contains.

Critics of the 'cultural' approach to the study of humanity claim that it tends, at times, like Levi-Straussian structuralism, to confine the analysis to relations between parts of an abstract 'cultural system'. Geertz, Turner, and D. Schneider, as well as Douglas, have been subjected to this critique (e.g. Ortner 1984). Too little weight, it is claimed, is given to material factors, hierarchy, conflict, differentiation, and other aspects of practical reality. Too much emphasis is given to cultural unity, too little to history and change

(Goody 1982, 32-33). Perhaps this is truer of Schneider than the others. In Purity and Danger (1966), for example Douglas' main theme is that food taboos are social, and that one demonstration of this lies in relating the symbolic system to the social system. The manipulation of food is seen as an attempt to organize the environment, to create order, and this occurs at the level of both culture and social life. Later she states that "unless the symbolic structure fits squarely to some demonstrable social consideration, the analysis has only begun. For this fit between the medium's symbolic boundaries and the boundaries between categories of people is its only possible validation" (1975, 259). Admittedly, this takes us only part of the way towards understanding food symbolism, for we still need to know the practical implications of the social boundaries and hierarchies involved, how people actually interact within and across them, and so on.

Geertz's approach to the study of 'cultural symbols', despite claims to the contrary (Ortner 1984), is similar, as Turner (1975) has pointed out. Geertz insists that "it is through the flow of behaviour - or, more precisely, social action - that cultural forms find articulation" (1973, 17. Cited in Turner 1975, 147). As Shankman (1984) and others have pointed out however, Geertz has not consistently followed this injunction. Turner himself is well known for his insistence that symbols must be seen as part of the social process, as discussed in Chapter 4. Despite this however, Ortner (1984) has argued that symbolic or 'cultural' anthropology has lacked "a systematic sociology" and has suffered from "an underdeveloped sense of the politics of culture" (1984, 32). What is emerging as the trademark of eighties anthropology, she suggests, is the genesis of a practice theory that seeks to explain how a cultural and social system is produced and reproduced, how it has changed in form and meaning over time, and how it might change in the future. The key question is 'how is action related to the system?' While accepting that culture guides and shapes behaviour, we need to ask also how action (behaviour) affects the system. This means seeking out the links between symbolic behaviour, especially when 'framed' by ritual or dramatic mechanisms, the meaning of symbols, and ordinary everyday

social interaction.

Without this orientation, one falls easily into the main pitfall of the cultural approach, namely "unchecked and uncheckable speculation" (Goody 1982, 32). Some recent studies of drinking behaviour seem to have done just this, despite (in some cases) making useful contributions to our understanding of symbolism. For example, Kondo (1985) analyses the Japanese tea ceremony as a "communicative and performative act", a cultural event which creates "a distilled form of experience set apart from the mundane world" (ibid., 287, 302). She claims that the tea ceremony 'says something' about what it means to be Japanese. Similarly, Peters' analysis of Bedouin tea drinking indicates that the point of the ceremony is not to drink tea but rather to make a statement about conformity to Bedouin norms and ideals by drinking it in a particular way (Peters 1984, cited in Cohen 1985, 43). While Kondo relates tea drinking to other aspects of Japanese culture, her analysis makes no mention of the everyday world of politics, economics, and other forms of interaction and behaviour - to the world as lived rather than the world as imagined.

Another example is Gibson and Weinberg's (1980) study of wine consumption in a Swiss Alpine village. The authors claim that the function of drinking by villagers is "cultural preservation through boundary maintenance" and that the rules governing drinking "define protective boundaries between insiders and outsiders and effect social control on insiders ...and sustain the identity of the community whose cultural survival is threatened by....modernization" (ibid., 112). Apart from the question of whether these villagers can legitimately be seen as 'a culture', and of how this 'culture' is linked to Alpine/Swiss/European 'culture', the authors fail to relate the rules and etiquette of wine drinking to any kind of practical, everyday reality. They are seen as symbols that exist "to validate the social contacts that bind the families" of the village (ibid., 116) and to maintain an ideal of household autonomy, self sufficiency and independence, which can no longer be attained in practice. What these 'social contacts' are is not mentioned, and the result is that one symbolic cluster is 'explained' in terms of another.

In the African context, Karp (1980) commits the same kinds of errors as the above mentioned writers, in his analysis of beer drinking in Iteso society. Beer drinking, he claims, "provides a synthetic image in terms of which Iteso represent to themselves contradictions in their social experience" (ibid., 83); it expresses "an implicitly held set of ideas about the nature of their social world and their experience of it " and it "reproduces the primary social forms through which the Iteso acquire membership of society..." (ibid., 101). However, Karp does not relate the symbolism of beer drinking to these 'contradictions', tell us about the nature of the Iteso social world as lived , or link the structure and symbolism of beer drinking to the practice of socialization.

In certain circumstances the relationship between social practice and symbolic action may undergo changes, the latter coming to represent not life as lived but a kind of golden past, life as it used to be. Ritual symbols in such circumstances come to be linked to the maintenance of a sense of common identity or heritage, and to reinforce the boundary between groups. Cohen's (1985a) analysis of the drinking 'spree' and of funerals in Whalsay, Shetland, is a case in point. Cohen regards these two institutions as 'boundary maintaining' devices, old forms which have been invested with new meanings in circumstances of social change which have "undermined the former structural basis of boundary" (ibid., 307). In everyday social and economic life, the boundary between the islanders and outsiders has been broken down as they have been drawn into a wider economy. In the process the old local collaborative groups based on kinship and neighbourhood have become materially redundant, though they may still be socially important. Funerals and the 'spree' symbolically recreate the old groupings and the principle of reciprocity on which they were based. Current economic practice is overlooked in favour of a past ideal. Cohen does not speculate on whether the next generation will maintain these symbols or not.

As is evident from the above there has been something of a resurgence of interest in 'the anthropology of food and drink' over the last decade or so. This is apparently due to a number of things, such as

the renewed interest in the comparative method (Goody 1982), the unease with theoretical abstraction to the neglect of social practice (Ortner 1984) and, linked to this, a sort of 'back to the roots' movement in anthropology which calls for attention, as Malinowski did, to the minute details of everyday life and stresses 'the native's point of view' (1922, 25). This sort of trend is evident also in related disciplines. The Annales school of social historians has emphasized the study of food (among other things) so as "to recapture the lives of the mass of the inarticulate", and because of the realisation that food is indicative of a wider range of social and cultural phenomena (Forster and Ranum 1979, vii).

There has also been growing interest in the kinds of activities in which food and drink play an important role - festivities, 'celebrations', and other kinds of 'social dramas' (MacAloon 1984, Moore and Myerhoff 1978, Turner 1982). In addition, the role of food in religious rituals continues to receive attention (e.g. Bloch 1985, Parry 1985). It is not necessary to review these studies here; their findings and insights will be drawn on and referred to, where relevant, in the chapters that follow. However, some idea of recent analyses of drinking behaviour is required in order to put the present study into context. Some of these have already been mentioned. With the exception of Room (1984), most have been concerned with drinking as 'cultural' behaviour. In some cases, as indicated above, the link between culture and social practice has not been explored by these writers, but other studies do not suffer from this limitation.

Collman (1979), for example, in a study of drinking habits among impoverished Australian aborigine shanty dwellers, argues that spending surplus cash on booze for a 'spree' for other members of the community is an economic strategy through which men establish their economic and political credit with others and a right to call on the resources of others in the long term. He is able to relate drinking patterns to patterns of employment and unemployment, economic mobility, and the pattern of economic relations existing among the members of the community. Drinking, claims Collman, "is fundamentally related to the ways in which aborigines assess their own social

situations, rationally adapt to current circumstances, and thereby participate in (if not determine) the construction of their social lives" (ibid., 208).

Moeran's (1984) study of saké drinking in a rural Japanese pottery community has demonstrated, like Fraake(1964) did before him in Subanum, the political significance of this behaviour, as "the idiom in which decisions are made" (ibid., 98) in the community, influence and authority maintained and gained, and hierarchies defined. Certainly, saké drinkers often overindulge, as do the Northern Territory aborigines studied by Collman, and there may be social factors as well as unpleasant social side effects attached to their overindulgence, but this is not the focus of interest of these two writers. It is interesting to note that both Moeran and Collman could have interpreted drinking symbolism purely in terms of the maintenance of 'cultural identity' - one all but lost in the case of the aborigines studied by Collman, but still strongly present in the case of Japan - and it would be impossible to show that their analyses along these lines were incorrect. To do so would have meant, however, a neglect of the realities of life in which the people they studied were involved.

Other studies have focussed on the relationship between drinking and the creation and maintenance of economic, political and kinship networks (Trouwborst 1973, Gilmore 1985, Pinson 1985), and on the role of drinking behaviour in the maintenance of a self-identity that is threatened in everyday contexts (Driessen 1983). Driessen argues that bars in rural Andalusia are a forum where men can assert their masculinity symbolically. Although women are subordinate to men, the ideal of male dominance and of men as economic providers is threatened by women's economic power and household role. Implied in such studies is the notion that since food becomes part of man there is a relationship "between the idea he has formed of specific items of food and the image he has of himself and his place in the universe" (Soler 1979).

Beer drinks and the ethnography of communication.

In this dissertation, beer drinks are viewed and analysed as social and cultural 'dramas' or 'performances' (MacAloon 1984), events in which the social principles on which society is based and the realities in terms of which social life is lived are acted out and made explicit, through the use of dramatic and symbolic devices, such as the allocation of beer. Perhaps the first point that needs to be made in this connection is that although an interest in 'culture' is fundamental to anthropology, a view of beer drinks as 'cultural performances' does not imply that the people who form the subject of this study form a distinct 'culture group' or part thereof, that it is possible to draw the boundaries between distinct cultures, that culture correlates with race, religion, economy, language or any other such criteria, that culture cannot be learned, or that there are inferior or superior cultures.

Nor does it imply that culture cannot change. After providing a detailed description of beerdrinks (Ch. 3) it will be argued that these events should be viewed as dramatic cultural performances, which provide an opportunity and a 'frame' within which members of society are able to portray, reflect upon and consider, and to reaffirm, renew or reconstruct their socio-cultural system (Ch. 4). In Chapter 5 examples will be provided to indicate the relationship between beer drinks and social practice, and to show that social and economic change, and changes in 'world view' can be accomodated within these 'dramas' (Ch. 6). Like all ritual, beer drinks ultimately convey a message of continuity and order, by reaffirming the bases of social and economic life. But the important point is that the nature of the drama is closely tied to the nature of reality, and reflects changes in real life. The symbolic structures of beer drinks (which vary according to the nature of the beer drink) are modelled primarily on social practice, on social life as lived.

In doing so, beer drinks create order out of the haphazard experiences of everyday life and communicate this order to people in symbolic form, both verbal and non-verbal. They make things like groups and

relationships, and the principles that operate in everyday life (such as good neighbourliness and the interdependence of homesteads) tangible, by giving them dramatic form. They dramatise and objectify significant social groups and categories, and the actual, past or potential relationships between such groups and categories. Beer drinks thus allow for the expression of experience, thereby completing experience (Turner 1982, 13), for examination of and reflection upon experience, and also for the consideration of alternative kinds of realities. In other words, the experience of beer drinks is a meta-experience, in which life as lived is made comprehensible and meaningful, through the symbolic deconstruction and reconstruction of reality.

In the process, beer drinks involve a great deal of talking, and it became obvious at an early stage of fieldwork that any consideration of beer drinks without taking into account the role of speech would be incomplete. Beer drinks are dominated by verbal communication of various kinds, including the airing and settlement of grievances, the expression of support and praise for the hosts, the provision of admonitions and criticism, and, most frequently, discussions and debates about the allocation of beer and seating places. The people who attend beer drinks often speak about the importance of speaking, frequently saying that the reason for brewing is so that 'words should be spoken'. Much of the speech is of a formal kind and may be classified as oratory or rhetoric, defined by the OED as 'the art of making speeches' using 'eloquent or exagerrating language'. However, this does not mean that the speaking at beer drinks is merely expressive. Rather, the use of an oral literary form is largely a communicative strategy through which a variety of acts can be performed and intentions realised, and which is a major factor linking the beer drink to the socio-economic, political and cultural realities outside it. Furthermore, it will be argued that beer drink oratory is an integral part of people's meta-experience, and thus an essential component in the celebration of society. As in many societies, Xhosa speakers try to put their meta-experience into words (Turner 1982, 19). Myerhoff (1982, 118) rightly points out that anthropologists have failed to deal with the question of how people experience rituals

that they participate in, and that this is "an enormous barrier to our understanding of the subject". Admittedly, the ethnographer cannot experience events in the way in which the people he studies experiences them. No matter how much he participates, the ethnographer's point of view is, by definition, different from that which he is trying to understand - the 'native's'. For this reason, unable to perceive as the natives perceive, the ethnographer must learn as much as he can about what the natives perceive 'with' (Geertz, 1983, 58), i.e. about the symbolic system, which includes speech. It is remarkable how little attention has been paid to speech in this regard, as distinct from the great deal of work on symbolism of other kinds, and on 'folklore'.

Ritual very frequently consists of words and actions, and these two aspects need to be examined together, and the connection between them explored and, hopefully, explained. Some anthropologists, such as Tambiah (1968, 1973), Bloch (1975), Finnegan (1969) and others have recognised this, though they differ in their interpretations of the role that ritual speech plays. There are various ways in which speech can be used in ritual (as distinct from the functions that it might perform). It may be part of the enactment of the ritual itself (e.g. invocations to the gods or spirits); it may include explanations or directions to the participants and/or an audience; those present may speak about what they are doing among themselves, comment on what is happening, and so on. Speech may be part of the process of perception, it may accompany perception, or it may be commentary made in situations where people experience or perceive things through other symbols. As such, speaking may form part of what Turner (1967, 50) called the 'operational' meaning of a symbol, which includes what people say about, to, around or with their symbols, in addition to what they do with and how they act towards symbols.

At beer drinks, speech is used in all of these different ways, and has to be taken into account in order to make sense of what is going on. I am referring, of course, to natural speech in natural situations, and I am referring to speech, as distinct from grammar, lexicon, phonology, and so on. I am not referring to exegesis for the benefit

of the ethnographer, be it by ordinary people or by specialists. If we are to avoid ethnography that consists of "a representation of other people's representations" (Basso and Selby 1976, 4) we cannot base our conclusions simply or solely on statements elicited from informants, whether through 'in-depth' and 'open-ended' interviews or through old fashioned questionnaires.

Putting what is happening into words at beer drinks, and speaking about what is happening, as well as about other things which have, on the face of it, nothing to do with the particular beer drink itself, is part of the dramatic process, part of the meta-experience itself. In large part, beer drinks consist of people 'speaking to each other about themselves'. Words are one of the symbolic forms through which people express themselves, their relationships, their principles, and their values, to themselves. Speaking is part of the celebration of society, since it is through speaking, in conjunction with the other symbols, that 'society' is recreated in the minds of the participants. This is not always obvious or straightforward, because speech, as with other symbols, needs to be interpreted and understood within the overall context in which it occurs.

But the words spoken at beer drinks are also a means through which the observer gains entry to what is going on. This applies to many of the situations, events and issues studied by anthropologists. It certainly applies to most rituals. In other words, what people say constitutes a large part of the evidence that the ethnographer uses in his analyses and in coming to conclusions. If this is so, I would like to argue that the ethnographer must present this data and his analysis of it and not merely represent what is going on to his colleagues. We need to record, present and analyse the texts which make up the evidence (or a large part of the evidence) on which our findings are based. Furthermore, we need to develop systematic methods through which to conduct such analyses, and to make these methods explicit in what we write. This takes us into the field (if we are to do it properly) of sociolinguistics. If we are going to suggest criteria for 'adequate ethnography' (McDermott et al 1978), be it of ritual or anything else, then one of the things we have to do is

develop adequate means for the analysis of speech, because people speak in just about everything they do.

To summarise at this point three basic steps are necessary:

- 1) The data to be collected in the field should include records of the speech that occurs in the situations or events being studied.
- 2) Such speech needs to be systematically analysed, according to accepted criteria in the same manner that other kinds of data are analysed.
- 3) This analysis, together with (at the very least) representative examples of the speech itself, should form part of the ethnographer's report.

If we have a look at southern African ethnography published over the last fifteen or twenty years, there is little that meets these expectations. In many cases the level of abstraction is so high that virtually none of the data itself is presented. Thus we have, for example, studies of independent churches without a single hymn, prayer, sermon, prophecy or dispute reproduced for the benefit of the reader (West 1975), studies of social change and urban life without any examples of how people speak (in natural situations) about change or life in towns (Reader 1966; Kileff and Pendleton, 1975), and of migrant labour without any inkling of what people actually say about it (Murray, 1981, and most of the contributions to Mayer, 1980).

In many cases what people say to the ethnographer is the primary source of data, rather than what they actually do or say (and speaking is, after all, doing). For example, Gordon (1977) attempts to describe 'the world of black workers' on a Namibian mine, in a study which places central importance on "the black worker's perspective of his situation" (ibid., 3). In doing so, he makes extensive use of extracts from responses to questions asked by him or his assistant, to show what black workers 'feel' and 'believe' about their position on the mine. A similar technique is used by others, including Mayer's study of migrants in East London. Like 'red' Xhosa in East London, the migrants studied by Gordon cope with their situation largely by a kind

of 'encapsulation' (Gordon calls it 'brotherhood'), one of the most important aspects of which is drinking together (*ibid.*, 116). Gordon tells us what, where, and why people drink, describes drinking activity, and reports what people say about drinking, but leaves us in the dark about what people say to each other while engaged in this activity. Mayer's approach to the drinking 'sets' of migrants in East London is very similar (Mayer 1961, 111 ff).

There are many other examples. Alverson (1978) writes of self-identity among Tswana without providing any data on how Tswana speak to each other about themselves, or on what they say that might reveal something about their view of themselves. Again, citations from interviews with respondents are used, and recourse is made to praise poems and folk tales collected by others, but without providing any 'context of situation' for these. Ngubane (1977) discusses Zulu concepts and practices regarding health, pollution and the treatment of illness, with reference to only the odd invocation to the shades and, as with the others, citing explanations given to her by informants. Even in Berglund's (1976) account of Zulu thought patterns and symbolism, the Zulus who speak do so in response to Berglund's questions. The ethnographies of the San, described by Marshall as "the most loquacious people I know" (1976, 289) and by Lee as "among the most talkative people in the world" (1979, 372), pay virtually no attention to this admittedly outstanding characteristic of the people. Marshall devotes a five-page section to talking among the !Kung, Lee even less to a section on arguments and verbal abuse, while Silberbauer (1981) has virtually nothing to say on this score.

There are, of course, a number of exceptions, especially in the fields of religion, politics and law. Dubb (1976), Pauw (1975) and Sundkler (1976) make extensive use of actual sermons, prayers, hymns and so on in their respective analyses of Bhengu's church, Xhosa Christianity and Zulu Zionism. Hammond-Tooke (1975) provides verbatim transcripts of the proceedings at the meetings and deliberations of local moots in the Transkei, and of other kinds of verbal activity (e.g. songs, prayers) in his study of Kgaga symbolism and world-view (1981). Comaroff (1975) has used the evidence of political rhetoric to good

effect in his analysis of chieftainship among the Tshidi, and Kuper (1970) uses extracts from legal proceedings in his book on Kalahari village politics.

In virtually all of these cases, however, and probably also in those which I have not surveyed, the evidence of speech is used largely in the form of 'apt illustration' and speaking in itself is not the subject of analysis. It is the content of what is said, the referential quality of speaking, that is regarded as important, and the examples are selected on this basis. Rarely does the speaking itself provide additional or independent evidence. Comaroff is the most notable exception here, using a modified version of Bernstein's (1972) distinction between restricted and elaborated codes to assist him in his analysis.

If I have overstated my case in the foregoing, and not done justice to the many outstanding ethnographies and elegant analyses of southern African peoples and issues produced over the last twenty years, some of which are cited above, I have done so for rhetorical effect. My purpose is to indicate a way forward, as far as our lack of attention to speaking is concerned, and this is to look to what has become known as 'the ethnography of communication'. This is not necessarily the only sociolinguistic approach available to anthropologists, but it has the advantage of having been developed by an anthropologist, it is relatively non-technical, unlike pragmatics or discourse analysis, and it can be applied to a wide variety of data and situations. Furthermore, it is possible to apply to large amounts of data, unlike pragmatics, which is geared towards minute analyses of relatively small amounts of data.

As a field of inquiry the ethnography of communication or the ethnography of speaking, as it was originally called, dates to Dell Hymes' seminal, programmatic essay published in 1962, in which he identified speaking as a neglected area in anthropology, and defined a new sub-discipline, concerned with "the situations and uses, the patterns and functions, of speaking as an activity in its own right" (1962, 16). Hymes called for a comparative study of speaking, a study

which took the use of language in social life - natural language in natural situations - as its central focus (ibid., Saviile-Troike 1982). Such a focus would be distinct from that of linguists, who were concerned with what language is, with the study of language abstracted from usage and social context, and distinct from that of anthropological linguists, who studied the languages of small-scale, non-literate peoples and the historical links between languages. The focus of the ethnography of speaking was social, and rested on "the cultural rules by which the social use and non-use of the language is organized" (Bauman and Sherzer 1975, 96).

Unlike many linguists, anthropological linguists, folklorists, and the like, Hymes emphasized that speaking is "embedded within and instrumental to the conduct of social life" (Bauman and Sherzer 1975, 108). The ethnography of speaking is, in other words, sociolinguistic, although it emphasises the need for comparative studies. Its basic premise is that speaking, or communication, "is patterned within each society in culture-specific, cross-culturally variable ways" (ibid., 98). In a sense then, the ethnography of communication is to sociolinguistics what anthropology is to sociology in its broader sense.

Naturally, one cannot separate what language is, as an abstract code, from how it is used, but ethnographers of communication are interested in the way in which the use of language is patterned and organized in society rather than in the grammatical rules required to use and recognize it. It seemed to Hymes that anthropologists, on the other hand, though they had pondered over the nature of the relationship between language and culture, had made a speciality of the study of social life without recognizing the role played by speech and the importance of speech as an activity in its own right in communities. In part, this was due to anthropologists' concern with 'social structure', to the neglect of what people actually did in real situations. The result was that they were, and to a degree still are, "largely ignorant of the role of language and other modes of communication in the realization of social life" (Saviile-Troike 1982, 280).

The development of the ethnography of communication was in part inspired by the move in anthropology away from structural-functionalism towards the study of social process, and the need to take into account, in analyses, of the actual events, situations and activities of which social life as lived was composed. It was linked also to the recognition by some linguists that the study of language in the abstract was somehow sterile, and that there was a need to recognize and study language in its full complexity, including its social context (Hymes 1964,5-6).

A good example of the kind of motive that led anthropologists to turn to verbal behaviour and which helped to generate an ethnography of speaking, together with those interested primarily in language and its use in social life, is Kuckertz's recent study of the Mpondo village of Caguba. In his preface Kuckertz tells of how he became disillusioned, during fieldwork, with the search for social institutions and a 'social structure' which did not exist in reality. So he began concentrating on individuals and their interactions with each other, and on what was relevant to them in these interactions. In his own words, "the verbal behaviour of Cagubans thus became the focus of my research" (Kuckertz, 1984, X). Unfortunately, his study includes relatively few examples of this 'verbal behaviour' and of how his conclusions are linked to such evidence.

Hymes felt that the ethnography of speaking, arising as it did out of the traditional concern in anthropology with the relationship between language, culture and society, could combine the above-mentioned trends, and that it would contribute towards "a general theory of the interaction of language and social life" which would encompass "the multiple relations between linguistic means and social meaning. The relations within a particular community or personal repertoire are an empirical problem, calling for a mode of description that is jointly ethnographic and linguistic" (Hymes 1972,39). Both grammar and ethnography use speech as evidence for other relationships and patterns, but neither "brings it into focus in terms of its own patterns" (Bauman and Sherzer 1975, 99). Before Hymes called attention to the need to study speech, most anthropologists saw the language of

the people being studied as "the route to underlying principles about which the natives were assuredly ignorant" and not "part of the discovery itself" (Parkin 1984,346). Hymes pointed to the need to recognize that speech, like language, "is patterned, functions as a system, is describable by rules" (1962,46). Once we recognise this, we can use the principles of the ethnography of speaking to good effect in virtually any kind of anthropological study.

Since the ethnography of speaking aims to identify and describe 'ways of speaking' in society, to analyse the patterns and rules that govern speech and the functions performed by speech, and to relate these patterns, rules and functions of speaking to the social contexts in which speaking takes place (Saville-Troike 1982), the basic method by which such studies must be undertaken is participant - observation. In this respect the ethnography of speaking seeks the 'native point of view' on the nature of speech and speech genres or categories, and the values and attitudes attached to and which affect speech in society. In the investigation of speaking in a community, "the starting point is the ethnographic analysis of the communicative habits of a community in their totality, determining what counts as communicative events and as their components, and conceiving no communicative behaviour as independent of the set framed by some setting or implicit question." (Hymes 1964, 13). Obviously, such a task calls for the traditional anthropological approach, involving lengthy residence with the people being studied.

A complete ethnography of communication in any one society is clearly a tall order. Among Xhosa speakers in Willowvale, beer drinks are only one of many speech situations. An ethnography of communication in such an area would have to include a look at a dozen or more different situations in which speaking takes place, ranging from various kinds of ancestor rituals to meetings of the local court or moot, rites of passage such as birth, marriage, initiation into adulthood and death, meetings of the various youth organisations, informal conversations, bridewealth negotiations, meetings of kin groups and neighbourhood groups, and so on. It would also have to encompass the various forms of oral literature, music, song and dance.

This would be too large a task for a single person or a single study. The kind of "complete ethnographies of speaking" advocated by Hymes and by Baumann and Sherzer (1975, 114) may be possible in some communities, but not in a place like Willowvale.

How does one go about doing an ethnography of speaking? What sorts of concepts and methods are needed? Hymes (1962, 1972), Saville-Troike (1982), and others, have addressed these questions, developed certain basic concepts, and suggested "criteria for gathering information on rules of speaking..." (Hymes 1972, 36). Hymes' object was to work towards the achievement of 'observational adequacy', "in the sense of being able to record what is there in acts of speech" (ibid., 51), as a necessary prelude to analysis. Obviously, such an approach will contribute to 'observational adequacy' in a more general sense also.

By 'rules of speaking' Hymes meant "the ways in which speakers associate particular modes of speaking, topics or message forms, with particular settings and activities. The concern is, first of all, with the attitudes and knowledge of members of the community, as manifest in contrasts in native terminologies and conduct" (ibid., 36). As this implies, the basic unit of analysis is a community or social group, not a particular language or dialect. To discover the rules of communication within such a community involves looking at how people speak, what they say, who they say it to, what they speak about and for what purpose, in relation to other communicative acts and events (Saville-Troike 1982, 56).

Closely linked to the notion of rules of speaking is that of 'communicative competence', which consists of what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately, that is, according to the rules operating within a specific speech context, in that community (ibid., 2). Communicative competence includes linguistic and sociolinguistic rules for communication, rules governing social interaction, and knowledge of the culture and context in which the communication occurs. Expressed more succinctly, communicative competence consists of the knowledge of "what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation" (ibid., 22).

The communicatively competent person is also 'culturally competent', since communication is embedded within a larger social and cultural whole. To communicate competently and to interpret communication competently, one has to know the meaning of the social situation in which communication occurs. Thus the ethnographer of communication must include a look at "the larger socio-political contexts within which culturally situated communication takes place, because these contexts may determine features of communication in ways that are not evident from a focus on communicative patterns alone" (ibid., 11). So an ethnography of speaking cannot be done without a general ethnography, involving an analysis of the institutions and structure of the community, and understanding the relationship between the community and the larger context of which it is part. This is, of course, a tall order.

How does one go about identifying rules of speaking and the nature of communicative competence in a community? Firstly, the notion of community must be firmed up a little. Ethnographers of speaking use the term 'speech community', by which they mean a group of people sharing rules of speaking and for the interpretation of speech, and not necessarily all the speakers of a particular language or dialect. It is a social rather than a linguistic entity, within which people communicate in a variety of ways (speech, song, etc.). Speaking within a community is participation in the community and indicates acceptance by the members of that community. There may be a number of speech communities in a society or language group. For example, English speakers in South Africa do not form a speech community, whereas English speaking academics at South African universities might well.

Within a speech community there are a number of units of analysis which may be used in the study of communication. These include the following:

Speech situation - a context in which communication occurs, a situation associated with speech, or its absence, or other forms of communication. A speech situation is what Malinowski called a 'context of situation', such as a ceremony of some kind, a meal, or a beer

drink. Rules of speaking, genre, and so on, vary from situation to situation.

Speech event - In practice, ethnographers of speaking have tended to conflate the concepts 'speech situation' and 'speech event'. I shall use the term speech situation for the general context in which speaking takes place (e.g. a sitting of parliament) and speech event as a particular discourse within the speech situation (e.g. a speech or a debate). To Hymes, a speech event was "best described in terms of rules of speaking" while a speech situation was a context "in which speaking occurs but which is organized in terms of another order of activity" (Bauman and Sherzer 1975, 109). A political debate is an example of the first, a football match of the second.

Speech act - the units of which a speech event is composed. A conversation may include a request, a joke, and an expression of thanks - these are individual speech acts. Often speech acts follow a predictable sequence, involving set formulae. The same kind of speech act may occur in different kinds of speech events, and the same kind of speech event may occur in different kinds of speech situations. A speech act is identified in terms of what Austin called the 'illocutionary force' of speech - i.e. in terms of what an utterance does or what its functions are. The recognition of speech acts and their appropriate use are an indispensable part of communicative competence. Thus the English 'Hello, how are you?' is a greeting between friends, but a request (for information) between doctor and patient. This example also indicates that speech acts do not depend for their interpretation on linguistic criteria, but on contextual and para-linguistical ones.

Saville-Troike (1982, 137 ff), drawing largely on Hymes' essays, suggests the following guidelines for the analysis of speech. In such analysis, there is a need, firstly, to define the situation, or the 'scene'. This may be done in terms of the following:

(i) The genre used - oratory, myth, conversation, legal argument, etc. The nature of the genre and the nature of the event often co-

incide; some speech situations are marked by the use of a particular register or code.

(ii) The topic or referential focus - here one asks 'what is the communication about?', taking into account the extrinsic factors needed to make such interpretation.

(iii) The setting, which includes the physical and temporal features involved, and the way in which these are organized, as well as the members of the community taking part and their interpretations of the setting.

(iv) The purpose or function of the event and of individuals within it. Members of speech communities categorise talk in specific ways, and these categories of speech need to be identified. In Willowvale there are many such categories - some of those relevant to beer drinks are 'thanking' (ukubulela), 'admonishing' (ukuyala), 'requesting' (ukucela) and 'informing' or 'explaining' (ukuchaza, ukucacisa or ukuxela).

Each of the speech categories in a community may have distinctive communicative features. Clearly, one can look at these categories in terms of their functions, or in terms of the theory of speech acts, attempting to identify the illocutionary force of different utterances, and of speech events as a whole. Doing so will tell us something about the overall nature, purpose or goal of the event or scene. Language use is also related to functions in a broader sense. Speech can mark or identify social roles and categories (e.g. a 'real' man is one who speaks well), effect social control, maintain and manipulate relationships, and perpetuate a particular political ideology or social inequalities (as Bloch (1975) has argued). Language use may function as a criterion for group membership (as the notion of speech community implies) and as a marker of group identity, sometimes by its role in maintaining a particular set of attitudes or world view. It is necessary to look at the functions of speech in conjunction with the other functions being fulfilled by the overall situation of which speaking is a part, and also in relation to

individual speakers.

Speech acts, too, are linked to the scene in which they occur, and the scene may be defined in terms of what is judged as appropriate in relation to it (Hymes 1972, 60). The scene establishes a frame, which serves as a metacommunicative device in terms of which judgements about appropriateness are made and which "signals the interpretive context within which a message is to be understood, a set of interpretive guidelines for discriminating between orders of message" (Bauman and Sherzer 1975, 106, citing Bateson 1972, 177-93, 222). Important in this respect is what Hymes calls 'key' - the tone, manner, mood or spirit in which speech acts are performed. Speakers may be solemn and perfunctory, gay and loquacious, serious or lighthearted. Key is stylistic and serves an expressive function, and as such may override content (e.g. in the case of sarcasm).

Secondly, one must examine the participants in the speech situation - the speaker or sender of the message, the addressor, the hearer or receiver, the addressee, and the audience. Participants need to be identified in terms of age, sex, political status, and other relevant criteria, such as the territorial or other divisions or links between them. Their social roles must be made explicit, and related to things like the use of language, attitudes to speaking, hierarchy, categories and functions of speaking, etc.

In speech events, the content and the form of the message are of obvious importance. 'Message content' refers to what is said, left unsaid, and understood, and to what may or may not be said, and how this varies across situations. How something is communicated ('message form') is an important aspect of what is communicated. The form used (vocal/non-vocal, spoken/sung) and the paralinguistic features (which may constitute the form by themselves) must be specified. Features of form are not always easily detected. As Hymes points out, "the more a way of speaking has become shared and meaningful within a group, the more likely the crucial cues will be efficient, i.e. slight in scale" (1972, 59).

Message form raises the question of the linguistic and paralinguistic resources available to members of the community - the various forms of speech, the specialized uses of language, and the variety of codes and registers (Bauman and Sherzer 1975, 103). One has to identify the 'code markers' which identify the different varieties, which may be linked to function- i.e. the markers may be identified with a particular purpose. For example, admonitions may be characterized by imperatives. Varieties may also be marked lexically (see Glossary (Appendix 1) for a specialized beer drinking lexicon), morphologically (e.g. deferential, humorous), paralinguistically and kinesthetically (gesture, body movement, proxemic features), and stylistically (rhythm, pitch, stress, intonation) (Saville-Troike 1982, 82).

Three other elements of speech acts need to be listed. These are the act sequence - the ordering of communicative acts within an event (within a speech or discourse), which may be related to function; rules for interaction, which refers to rules concerning things such as turn-taking, not interrupting, and so on; and the norms of interpretation, by which is meant all the other information needed to understand the speech event and to interpret it, given the particular setting.

It is clear from the above that the approach of the ethnographers of speaking may provide useful cues as to how to handle much of the primary data that ethnographers deal with, i.e. speech. As such it may be regarded as a method, and as an analytical device which can be used to enhance the quality of our ethnography in general. Clearly, an ethnography of speaking cannot be carried out without ethnography in the conventional sense, involving an understanding of social relationships and institutions within a community and of the relationship between the community and the larger context of which it is part. Similarly, a general ethnography, or a study of any aspect of socio-cultural life, needs to take into account the nature of communication relevant to that situation. This has been demonstrated in a number of studies, of things like divination (Werbner 1973), politics (Comaroff 1975, Parkin 1975), ritual and magic (Tambiah 1968, 1973), bridewealth (Rosaldo 1973), marriage (Keenan 1975), and others.

As far as the present study is concerned it will become clear that the option of conducting a study of Xhosa beer drinks or of Xhosa beer drink oratory is not a viable one. This study of necessity encompasses both of these, but it emphasises the former. It is not an ethnography of speaking of the kind advocated by Hymes and Saviile-Troike, but an ethnography of beer-drinking which relies partly on the methods and approach of the ethnography of speaking. My starting point is not rhetoric, but a particular kind of social institution, within which attention is paid to the nature of speaking. My method of fieldwork and analysis has relied heavily on what is said by people at beer drinks, and also on how, by whom, and to whom things are said. As indicated above, these are generally also the concern of ethnographers of speaking. Beer drinks are viewed as speech situations within which speaking is governed by various rules and conventions. However, my primary concern has been an analysis of beer drinks, and beer drink oratory is analysed from this point of view rather than as 'an activity in its own right'. Certainly, an understanding of the rules and conventions of speaking is an essential element in the study of beer drinks, but it is not the end of the study. This study does, however, attempt to contribute, in a modest way, towards an ethnography of speaking among Xhosa speakers. More particularly, it focuses attention on Xhosa oratory, on which there is (to my knowledge) no published work.

In her survey of studies of oral literature in Africa Finnegan (1970) pointed to the dearth of studies of oratory in African societies, where there had been "little documentation of public speaking as a skill in its own right" (ibid., 445), despite the fact that Africans have been described as 'born orators'. Notable exceptions to this at the time were her own studies of Limba oratory (Finnegan 1969) and Albert's work on Rundi rhetoric (1964). Until recently, British anthropologists have been little interested in oral literature (Howell 1982), probably due to the association between nineteenth century evolutionism and 'folklore', the latter linked by Frazer to the study of survivals (Finnegan 1969a, 62). Later, structural-functionalism mitigated against studies of oral literature. Myth and other kinds of spoken art were seen purely in terms of their functions in society,

and relevant only insofar as they were related to the social structure (ibid.) As structural functionalism waned so the situation regarding oral literature improved, although the tendency in Britain has been to view speech patterns as important primarily as a way of getting to grips with local politics (Parkin 1984). The American ethnographers of speaking, however, have tended to recognise oratory as verbal art and to examine it both in its own right and in terms of its role in society (e.g. Rosaldo 1973, and most of the contributors to Bauman and Sherzer 1974).

Since Finnegan's survey in 1970, a number of studies of African oratory have appeared in print. It is not necessary to survey these here. Some have already been mentioned, others will be referred to in the chapters which follow. It should be noted, however, that with the exception of Comaroff (1974, 1975) virtually no attention has been paid to the oratory of southern African peoples. This is not the case with other forms of verbal art such as praise poetry (see bibliography in Opland 1983), riddles (Sobukhwe 1971), proverbs and idioms (e.g. Nyembezi 1954, Doke 1947, Mesatywa 1954), folk tales, myths and legends (e.g. Scheub 1975, Jordan 1973), clan praises (Mzolo 1978) and hlonipha language (e.g. Finlayson 1978). However, most of these studies are 'folkloristic' in character, and largely ignore context.

## CHAPTER TWO

## 'THE FOOD OF MEN'

Beer among southern Bantu-speaking people

Beer, an alcoholic drink produced from fermented grain, is universally made among the southern Bantu (Shaw 1974) and probably in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> As de Haas (1986, 2) has put it, "a rich ethnographic record attests to the importance of beer in the societies of East, West, Central and Southern Africa." In southern Africa the earliest evidence we have of beer brewing comes from the accounts of shipwrecked sailors and of early European travellers. Portuguese survivors from the wreck of the 'Saint Albert', which ran aground in 1583 at the 'Rock of Fountains', "where the land of Natal commences" reported that the indigenous inhabitants of the country made 'wine' from millet, which they mixed with water and allowed to ferment, before consuming it "with great enjoyment" (Theal 1898, II, 293). Dos Santos, writing in 1609, tells of a drink called pombe made from millet near Sofala, "which is very strong and intoxicating" (ibid., VII, 190, 196). He gives a brief description of how pombe was made, recognizable to anyone familiar with the brewing of maize or millet beer today, and points out that it was used in feasts and in rituals directed at royal ancestors (ibid., VII, 210, 307). Dampier, who explored Natal in the late seventeenth century, mentions a 'bitter' drink made from grain by the native inhabitants, "purposely to make merry with, and when they meet on such occasions, the men make themselves extraordinary fine with feathers stuck in their caps very thick" (Bird 1888, I, 58). Some of the survivors of the 'Stavenisse', wrecked 100 km south of Durban in 1686, spent nearly three years among Xhosa-speakers, who, they reported, brewed beer "both small and strong, which is not unpleasant in taste..." (ibid., I, 32; Wilson 1969).

The historical sources indicate regional variations in the preparation of beer, its uses, and in the sheer quantity of beer available. Accounts of the Zulu kingdom in the period 1830 - 1850 indicate that

beer was in plentiful supply there, at least at the King's kraal, to which it was brought in large quantities on a daily basis, and served to visitors, councillors and regiments of warriors (Bird 1888, I, 77; Krige 1936, 265). Champion, a missionary, reported that beer was "brought to the king daily by twenty or thirty (perhaps more) beer wagons, as the servants are called..." (Bird 1888, I, 206). Gardiner makes a number of references to the serving of beer to Dingane's warriors, and states that "the whole food of the soldiers, consisting of outchualla (utshwala) in the morning, and beef in the evening, is provided at the King's cost, and partaken of in public. It is no unfrequent thing to see a string of thirty or forty women proceeding to the Issigordlo (isigodlo - section of the king's kraal where the wives, children and certain servants of the king lived) with bowls of outchualla on their heads, singing as they go..." (1836, 54-55). The Rev. F. Owen made a similar observation (Bird 1888, I, 336).

The Zulu regarded beer, maize and meat as 'hard' or 'strengthening' food, suitable for warriors (Krige 1936, 265. See also de Haas 1986, 51) and everywhere in southern Africa beer was not just a drink but also a nourishing or even 'essential' food, in the opinion of both Bantu-speakers and their ethnographers (e.g. Krige 1936, 58; Soga 1931, 399; Richards 1939, 76-78; Monnig 1967, 191). Cetywayo told the 1883 Commission on Native Laws and Customs that beer "is the food of the Zulus; they drink it as the English drink coffee" (1883, I, 529). This is probably true of the whole of the African continent. The LoDagaa called beer and porridge by the same name (Goody 1982, 72-3); the Uduk compared beer to mother's milk, "and the point of comparison lay in its nourishing goodness" (James 1972, 22). Basotho identify beer with life, and beer making with the making of a human being (Bosko 1981).

Beer formed an important foodstuff, being rich especially in B vitamins, which was otherwise lacking in the diet. Fox (1938) surveyed various studies of the nutritional value of 'Kafir Beer' and concluded that the view of beer as foodstuff rather than alcoholic drink was justified. Beer contained around 5-7 percent solids, 'appreciable quantities' of Vitamins B and C, mineral salts, and

proteins. The alcohol content was between two and four percent, but this was not necessarily related to the degree of intoxication that it produced. Some of the illegal urban brews of the time (isikokiyana, etc) had similar alcohol levels but were much more potent because of the ingredients (carbide, brown bread, and suchlike) that went into them. It had the added advantage that grain not suitable for consumption, such as musty maize or 'rusted' sorghum, could be used for brewing and thus saved (Ashton 1967, 129; McAllister 1979, 109-110). That beer was food rather than an alcoholic drink is indicated by the fact that it was possible to subsist on beer for days on end, and that in the past it formed the bulk of the diet of certain people, such as old men and chiefs (Theal 1901, VII, 210; Tyler 1891, 121; Schapera & Goodwin 1937, 133; Richards 1939, 77). According to Leslie (1875, 78) beer was an important food in Zululand, "as most of the great people live nearly entirely upon it, with the occasional addition of a little beef." It had a low alcohol content, usually around 2% and seldom exceeding 4% (Fox 1938; Bryant 1949, 276; Richards, 1939, 78). Due to this, and to the etiquette of beer drinking, which limited the amount consumed,<sup>2</sup> intoxication was uncommon. There were, however, ways of increasing its potency, and variations in potency from place to place. Champion regarded the Zulu king's beer as too strong "for any man to drink much of" (Bird 1888, I, 206). This may have been impoba, a strong brew distinguished from the usual utshwala (Krige 1936, 59). Doke refers to Lamba beer as 'very intoxicating' and Bemba beer, though low in alcohol, was drunk hot, thereby possibly increasing its potency (Doke 1931, 107; Richards 1939, 77). Kay says the Mpondo used a bitter root which seemed "to increase the inebriating quality of the liquor itself" (1833, 331). The Lovedu made kapea and kekoakoakoa, both strong beers, through a process of double fermentation. These were drunk privately or in small groups, and not used in beer parties and beer exchanges (Krige 1932, 345).

Apart from the common utywala (Xhosa), utshwala (Zulu)<sup>3</sup> or bjalwa (Sotho), made in earlier times almost exclusively from sorghum but nowadays mainly from maize,<sup>4</sup> a variety of similar but non-alcoholic beverages were made. These include marhewu<sup>5</sup> (Xhosa), igwele and

isibebe (Zulu), and kepye (Lovedu), which are fermented drinks made from maize meal; umqombothi (Xhosa), unmaturing beer with no alcoholic content<sup>6</sup> and mabudu or mapoto (Lovedu) which is light beer (Soga 1931, Broster 1976, Krige 1936, Krige 1932, Krige & Krige 1943). It has been claimed that there are more than fifty varieties of native beverages "which take cover under the general name of Kafir beer" (Bud-Mbelle 1926, 131). These include alcoholic drinks made from sugar cane, pineapples, sweet potatoes, prickly pear, the maroela fruit, honey, and so on, as well as those made from various grains.

However, beer was and is very much more than simply a nutritious food. Among the Lovedu, who refer to beer as 'food of the gods', "no occasion, whether social or ritual or economic, is complete without beer" (Krige & Krige 1943, 288), while Stayt says of the Venda that "the whole social system is inextricably linked up with this popular beverage" (1931, 48). Beer features in folktales, songs, myths of origin and proverbs.<sup>7</sup> It was of political importance, and was given as tribute to political leaders.<sup>8</sup> People's reputations depended on the regular brewing of beer, and among Lovedu beer was part of the institutionalized gift exchange system (Krige & Krige 1943, 288).

The ritual significance of beer, common throughout Africa, seems to have been greater among Sotho-speakers and Venda than among Nguni. Among the Pedi "beer is nearly always the medium of sacrifice" though it was sometimes accompanied by a beast (Monnig 1967, 61). Accounts of the Venda and Lovedu (and also of the Shona) present a similar picture. Beer offerings were the usual way of propitiating the ancestors among the Lovedu, where blood sacrifice was rare (Krige 1932, 355). Shona beer was "an essential requisite in most of the religious ceremonies..." (Gelfand 1959, 9). This appears to have been the case also among central Bantu-speaking groups such as the Bemba, Nyakyusa, Ndembu and Lamba (Richards 1939, Wilson 1957, Turner 1957, Doke 1931).

Beer played an important part in Nguni rituals, and beer could be "the sole substance of an offering for a sick person with the ritual centering round it" (Hunter 1936, 253). Among 'traditionalist' Zulu,

beer was 'the food of men' ('men' here includes both living and dead) and communication with the shades through ritual beer drinking was common (Berglund 1976, 209).

The ritual use of beer was widespread and varied. It was used in all life crisis rituals,<sup>9</sup> and was brewed as part of the now extinct first fruits ceremonies<sup>10</sup> (Krige 1936, 253; Hammond-Tooke 1962, 192). Everywhere, it was regarded as a means of communicating with the shades, and might be brewed as a result of a dream, or because prescribed by a diviner (Berglund 1976, 209; Monnig 1967, 59).<sup>11</sup> Often, brewing took place in conjunction with the killing of a beast, though beer could be used on its own, or as a substitute for a ritual killing (Berglund, 1976, 207; Hunter 1936, 253). In a case recorded by Bigalke (1969, 139) two of the four reasons given by a diviner for the failure of a sacrificial beast to bellow were that some wives of lineage members had not helped with the brewing before the sacrifice, and that no beer had been made for lineage members when they got together to arrange the ritual. Sometimes beer for use in ritual was prepared in a special way or medicines added to it (Ashton 1967, 83; Junod 1927, II, 397. See also Wilson 1957, 157). In some cases the beer used in ritual was symbolic beer, consisting simply of an unfermented mixture of grain and water (Hammond-Tooke 1981, 89).

Beer was widely used in rituals of affliction where the cause of misfortune was thought to be the anger of the ancestors. In Pondoland such beer was left to mature for three days at the back of the hut (a place closely associated with the shades), where "the amathongo are thought to come and drink it at night" (Hunter 1936, 256). Beer was also brewed in gratitude for favours received from the shades, manifested as good harvests (Krige & Krige 1943, 77), a narrow escape from danger (Berglund 1976, 210-212), safe return from work (McAllister 1981)<sup>12</sup> or continued health and prosperity (Monnig 1967, 59). Among some groups beer, substitute beer, or beer residue, was at such times poured onto ancestral 'altars' or shrines, or left at places closely associated with the shades, such as the graves of dead members of the kin group (Bigalke 1969, 120; Junod 1927, I, 341; Monnig 1967, 59). The Nyakyusa invoked the shades by pouring beer

onto the hearth stones or onto a sacred banana grove (Wilson 1957, 182). Zulu poured beer onto the back of a sacrificial cow while calling on the shades, and kept fermenting beer at umsamo, the far back of the hut (Berglund 1976, 102, 205).<sup>13</sup> Beer was poured onto a Lovedu shrine (tukula) and was important in the consecration of the tukula ox. This 'ox of the spirits' was made to drink beer in cases of human illness, "for it is thought that the gods are hungry" (Krige 1932, 356).

Whenever beer is drunk in a Kgaga homestead, some of it is poured over the ancestral shrine. Its function in this context is to 'cool' the shades (i.e. ensure their beneficence), and among Sotho-speakers beer is associated with other 'cooling' substances (Hammond-Tooke 1981, 144). In Zululand, beer may be used together with cooling substances, although it is generally associated with 'heat'.<sup>14</sup>

As indicated here beer has strong religious associations even when brewed outside of strictly 'ritual' contexts. Berglund (1976, 210) noted that the differences between beer brewed for ritual purposes and beer for household consumption were minor, and denied by some Zulu, who said that whenever beer was drunk the shades partook of it. This was evident, for example, in the preparation of beer; a woman could not be 'hot' when she prepared beer, lest the shades be offended; the grinding had to take place near the hut's doorway, or near umsamo, both places closely associated with the shades; and the water used should be 'living' water,<sup>15</sup> from a running stream (ibid., 210). Similar prescriptions existed among other Bantu-speakers (e.g. Wilson 1957, 138). Hunter felt that it was difficult to distinguish beer brewed "to drink with friends" from that brewed for ritual purposes (1936, 253) but later distinguished beer brewed for the ancestors from beer made 'just to drink', for work parties, and for sale (ibid., 358). Cook (1931, 27-28) makes a similar distinction.

According to Junod (1927, II, 341) a Tsonga headman was 'obliged', before a beer drink commenced, to pour a little of the beer onto the gandjelo (altar or place of worship). At any Pedi beer drink the last few drops from each ladle-full were poured on the ground "as a minor

thanksgiving to the ancestors", and the beer pot, when empty, was turned upside down "as is also done at the grave of an ancestor during a sacrifice" (Monnig 1967, 191). Among Xhosa speakers too, as will be shown below, there is no occasion when beer is not to some extent religious.

All over Bantu-speaking Africa beer is associated also with sociability, commensalism, communal harmony and neighbourliness. It is perhaps for this reason that rituals aimed at effecting reconciliation between quarreling or disputing parties frequently involve beer-drinking as a symbol of the re-establishment of friendly relationships and the ending of feuds and disputes. This is an important theme in Xhosa beer drinking, and will be discussed more fully below. Generally, whether brewed for ritual purposes or not, beer is regarded as communal rather than as private food, and every householder is expected to brew beer for public consumption at regular intervals. A person's reputation for generosity and good neighbourliness depended on the fulfilment of this social obligation, and one who failed to brew was frowned upon (Soga 1931, 400; Krige & Krige 1943, 288; Richards 1939, 80).

Beer parties were held largely in winter, after the harvest, and were open to all who cared to attend. No invitations were extended, since everyone in the vicinity knew when the beer would be ready, and were expected to attend (Van Warmelo 1967, 1077; Hunter 1936, 21; Bryant 1949, 277; Soga 1931, 400). Tyler claims that Zulu homesteads took it in turn to brew "for parties of forty or fifty men, whose time is chiefly occupied in going about searching for that sine qua non of comfort". In winter "both sexes assemble almost daily for drinking and dancing" (1891, 121). Beer drinking was the "favourite pastime" of Tsonga men (Junod 1927, I, 34) and in Pondoland after the harvest "men and amadikazi<sup>16</sup> often go on from one beer drink to another, sometimes not returning to their homes for a week" (Hunter 1936, 357).

Ashton speaks of "small private beer drinks" among the Sotho (1967, 95) and Soga says that although beer was "seldom made for private use" among Xhosa-speakers, a small brewing for household consumption was

"facetiously called ama-rewu (i.e. a non-alcoholic fermented maize drink)" to indicate its private nature (1931, 400). Even where beer drinks were held for specially invited guests other members of the community could attend, and received something to drink (Richards 1939, 81). Reader mentions Makhanya beer drinks held exclusively for members of a descent group or a section of such a group, to discuss matters of common interest (1966, 148-149). This type of beer drink is the exception rather than the rule, which was that beer was communal food to which all members of the local community should have access, even though it may be brewed by an individual household. As will become apparent in Chapters 4-7, the commensality so closely associated with beer drinking is of some religious significance.

Beer was the common form of recognition for assistance with economic tasks whether this involved a small group of neighbours or a larger, more formally constituted work party such as the Zulu and Xhosa ilima and isitshongo (Hunter 1936, Krige & Krige 1943, Kuper 1947, Reader 1966, Bigalke 1969, Kuckertz, 1984). As Hammond-Tooke (1962, 145) puts it, "beer is the sanction par excellence for work parties", though it is not regarded as a payment. Beer brewed to reward members of a work party was also consumed by others (non-workers), though sometimes under the control of the workers. At a Pondo ilima for ploughing, for example, "the beer is not distributed until the ploughs have returned at midday, and then a pot is set before each owner of a span of oxen which has worked, and he distributes it among his friends" (Hunter 1936, 89). At an ilima for hoeing pots of beer might be taken to the fields for the workers, but consumed also by those not working (Hammond-Tooke 1962, 144). If one is to regard such beer as payment it is hard to understand why it was distributed to all and sundry, unless by 'payment' we mean the social recognition and elevation of the workers. Reader (1966, 42) thus suggests that it should be regarded as "a social recognition of, rather than a reward for, the voluntary communal labour performed". The Kriges put it similarly - one pays for something with money, but thanks with beer (1943, 288).

In the case of the Lovedu, beer was the basis for a group called

valejana (lit. 'those who eat together'). This was a group of people "composed largely of kin and neighbours who often co-operate in economic activities: this group cuts across the lines of the district...and the main obligation of its members is to call fellow members to any beer that is available" (ibid., 288, emphasis mine). This seems neatly to reverse the usual relationship between economic assistance and beer, for it implies that assistance was given in recognition of a relationship that hinged on calling each other for beer.

Beer was usually consumed with some formality and according to rules of etiquette which determined how the beer should be apportioned and drunk. Frequently mentioned in this regard are divisions according to sex, age and territory. Men and women tended to receive beer separately and in different proportions, and to consume it in different places (e.g. in different huts); older people received more beer than younger and were the first to drink; groups of people were allocated beer according to their territorial or political affiliation (Krige & Krige 1943, Krige 1936, Lestrade 1937, Monnig 1967, Broster 1976, Richards 1939, Bryant 1949, Soga 1931). Highly ranked people were served before ordinary people, important kin or distinguished visitors were given a special pot of beer (e.g. Junod 1927, I, 341) As this study attempts to demonstrate (Ch. 3), the distribution of beer can be extremely complicated, and is of great social significance. As the survey above shows, much attention has been paid to the functions fulfilled by beer and beer drinking, very little to the manner in which it is actually consumed (a recent exception to this is Kuckertz 1984, Ch 8) or to the speech events that occur at beer drinking occasions.

#### 'Nocturnal jollifications' - beer among the Cape Nguni 1800-1950

In 1800 a missionary among the Xhosa, van der Kemp, wrote that the 'caffres' drank a beverage called 'tjaloa' (utywala) made from millet (van der Kemp 1800, 438). According to Alberti, who travelled among Xhosa speaking people in 1803-06, beer was drunk "only seldom, and more for the sake of giving themselves a treat". He does not mention

beer parties or beer-drinking gatherings, but says that dancing was "the most common form of communal entertainment" (1968, 24). John Brownlee, too, mentions Xhosa beer, with a taste "far from disagreeable" (1827, 360), but Kay, a careful observer who made detailed notes on Xhosa diet claimed that the Xhosa were "not acquainted" with intoxicating liquors, although they made a drink from wild honey, which they sometimes drank "to excess" (ibid., 109, 123-24). When travelling among the Mpondo, however, he noticed that they made large quantities of beer, and used it on all festive occasions. Since he also observed Xhosa ceremonies and rituals he would in all likelihood have noticed if beer had been present. It is probably due to this observation that the belief arose that the Xhosa learnt the art of brewing beer from refugees from Natal (the 'Mfengu') (Fox 1938). This is contradicted by the evidence of van der Kemp, Alberti and Brownlee.

From the available evidence one can assume then that the Xhosa did not make a great deal of beer in the early nineteenth century. Fifty years later the picture is rather different, as indicated in the following extract from the evidence of Rev J.A. Chalmers to the 1883 Commission on Native Law and Customs:

The drink of Kafir beer has changed within the last few years, and it is no longer what it used to be among the Kafirs. Only old men were allowed to drink it in olden time, and there were no such immense gatherings as there are in the present day. Up to within a few years milk was the one great beverage at all feasts (Cape of Good Hope 1883, 136-137).

What sort of explanations could there be for geographical and temporal variations of this nature? One possibility, as Chalmers implied, is that when cattle were plentiful and sour milk the staple diet, beer was not frequently made. In this regard it is necessary to consider the relationship between the availability of milk and grain production. It seems quite clear that the production and consumption of beer was directly related to the availability of grain and

fluctuated accordingly. Beinart (1982, 52) states that the amount of grain consumed as food in Pondoland was relatively elastic, and a glut of maize "tended to result in increased consumption" in the form of beer parties. Hunter, working in Pondoland in the 1930s, pointed out that more grain was available than previously due to larger areas being cultivated, and that older people were "emphatic that far more beer is drunk than when they were young" (Hunter 1936, 357). In adjoining Bomvanaland the frequency of beer drinks had increased greatly in the 1920s and this was a cause of 'great concern' among the older men (Cook 1931, 26).

Fluctuations in grain production and beer drinking go back to at least the 1830s, as indicated in the following extract from Gardiner (1836, 266), which also links grain production to the milk supply:

The Amapondas having suffered so severely in their wars with Charka have, in consequence, become great beer drinkers; and even now that they are recovering their losses by the increase of their cattle, still I fear this baneful habit, induced by the scarcity of milk, is likely to be of long continuance. When reproached for their frequent inebriety (for they often meet in large parties, and drink until they are stupified) they archly reply, "what can we do - we have no cattle - this is our milk". Even Faku ... is said to have been frequently found sealed in a torpor induced by outchualla(sic).

Similar fluctuations occurred in other parts of the country. Among the Lovedu, greater agricultural output as a result of the introduction of ploughs helped to eliminate milk from the diet of adults, due to more land being cultivated at the expense of grazing. This "militated against husbanding the food resources; (and) stimulated excessive beer drinking" (Krige and Krige 1943, 41). Berglund (1976, 207) suggests that beer drinking was more frequent among those Zulu without livestock and had taken the place of cattle and goats in ritual. These accounts point to the brewing of beer as a social, political and economic resource, the use of which must be

understood within a wider context of events and circumstances. Many of the complaints about beer drinking by government officials and farmers in the late nineteenth century may be seen in this light.

Changes in beer drinking habits have also occurred due to factors such as government regulations prohibiting brewing, and missionary influence. Converts to the mission churches were not allowed to attend beer drinks (Tyler 1891, 122; Bigalke, 1969, 15), which were associated with pagans. The Rev J. Harper, for example, who regarded 'heathens' as "dreadfully immoral", felt that although beer itself was no great evil, beer drinks should be suppressed "in every possible way" (S.A. 1905, II, 693). Another missionary, the Rev. F. Roach, put it this way: "The mother comes home in a state of semi-intoxication, the children have to go to bed hungry, and see their mothers lying on the floor like beasts. That is all through beer drinks." (ibid., III, 853).

There were, of course, exceptions, such as the Rev. J. Scott, himself a teetotaler who disapproved of beer in principle, but who pointed out to the commission that in all his experience (in Pondoland) he had only once seen a person intoxicated as a result of beer drinking. The association between beer drinking and traditionalism persists, however. A song composed by a Bhaca teacher, about three kinds of Bhaca - Christian, pagan and neo-pagan - refers to the pagans as 'people of beer and beer alone' (Hammond-Tooke 1962, 65).

'Excessive' beer drinking in Eastern Cape districts was frequently mentioned in the Blue Books on Native Affairs, and was linked by officials to crimes such as assault and stock theft, and there were sometimes calls for its prohibition or regulation. In some areas, such as Grahamstown and King William's Town, it was reported that people mixed beer with 'Cape brandy', "making them violent and quarrelsome", and leading to cases of stabbing - "quite a new feature in their mode of settling their quarrels" (DNA 1887, 5).

That it was brandy that was responsible for drunkenness rather than beer is indicated also in a report from East London division, which

claimed that although there was much beer drinking in the area in 1886-7, there was less drunkenness than in previous years due to a shortage of cash for brandy. In the same period it was reported from King William's Town that: "Not very long ago Kaffir beer was a comparatively harmless drink, and but slightly intoxicating only if consumed in very large quantities." Now it was fermented to a greater degree, or mixed with brandy, which made everyone "helplessly drunk" (DNA 1887, 33). It was felt that legislation was needed to prevent this.

What officials seemed not to realise was that beer brewing and selling (in some cases) was symptomatic of the appalling conditions under which people in or near places like King William's Town had to live. As Dick put it in his report for 1883, in the villages adjoining King William's Town one saw "wretched huts patched up with pieces of tin and old sacks, dirty, squalid occupants...no cattle kraals, no cattle or stock of any description - and the people with but one idea in their minds - the insatiate craving for brandy!" (DNA 1883, 88). In a later report he said that there was no need to be concerned with the fights that occurred at beer drinks, since these were "more or less accidental" (DNA 1887, 34), but by 1904 he had changed his mind on this score, referring to beer drinks as "carnivals of booze and demoralisation" which led to many assaults and which needed to be checked (DNA 1904, 27).

There were similar calls in 1904 from other districts, many of which had experienced very good harvests, resulting in increased beer drinking. In Komga, for example, there had been 'exceptional' harvests, resulting in many beer drinks, "to the utter demoralisation of the tribes" (DNA 1904, 32). Even when the harvests were poor, however, there were still reports of excessive drinking from places like Grahamstown and King William's Town, though the problem was not as severe as when harvests were good (e.g. DNA 1886; 1884, 30-31).

In more recent times, Xhosa beer drinks have been adapted to function as rituals of labour migration (McAllister 1981), including the deliberate substitution of beer drinking for the blood sacrifice that



used to be performed to welcome back a migrant worker. In this case a killing became unsuitable not because of a shortage of livestock, but because of social-structural and economic changes, such as those in the size and composition of rural households and in homestead production, which altered the nature of the relationship between neighbouring homesteads and between father and son. The switch to a beer drink was made to accommodate these changes, and to make migrant labour meaningful in terms of them. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Fluctuations in the brewing of beer may also be linked to Xhosa resistance to white domination, sometimes manifested in millenarian form. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, resistance to oppression by white farmers in the Eastern Cape led to the development of informal associations of Xhosa farm workers and tenants, organized around beer drinks and dances (Crais 1985, 31). Reports to the Department of Native Affairs and the evidence to the 1903-05 Commission include a number of references to farmers' complaints about the effects of beer drinking on their workers. Beer drinks were held over weekends, with the result that workers frequently did not turn up on Mondays. When harvests were good in the labour supplying areas beer drinks were plentiful, and it was difficult to get labour at all. Similarly in Natal in the 1880s, "plentiful crops and large quantities of beer were associated with the unwillingness of blacks to sell their labour" (de Haas 1986, 17).

R.P. Edwards, a farmer who gave evidence to the 1903-05 Commission, said that he had tried to prohibit the holding of beer drinks on his farm, but had been unable to do so because people would not work for him under such circumstances. His workers went to beer drinks on neighbouring farms "almost every weekend", and "were anxious to be allowed to return the hospitality of others." (S.A. 1905, II, 766-7). Farmers also complained that beer drinking led to a craving for meat, and that they lost livestock to people passing through or near their property on their way home from beer drinking gatherings.

Lewis (1985) has shown how Xhosa in the Eastern Cape were able to use

beer as a resource with which to resist both exploitative grain prices and the necessity of labour migration. In 1884/5 a bad drought forced the price of maize up to forty or fifty shillings a bag. The price fell dramatically in 1886/7 due to a bumper harvest, and those trying to sell surplus maize were offered only a 'few shillings' a bag. People therefore decided not to sell their surplus maize but to brew large quantities of beer (some of which was sold) instead. With plenty of food and beer available the supply of labour to the mines and farms fell dramatically. The festive occasions at which beer was normally consumed (e.g. the feasts held in association with initiation and marriage) were lengthened to accommodate the larger quantities of beer available.

It is also likely that the period of seclusion for boys undergoing initiation (abakhwetha) was lengthened, due to the plentiful food supply. It was reported from Middledrift in 1886 that the recent good harvests had led to "a beer and bakweta orgie, with its inevitable attendant immorality, lasting six months...in almost every location throughout the land" (DNA 1887, 35). It is unlikely that boys undergoing initiation would have stayed in seclusion for six months without a plentiful supply of grain in the community. Farmers and other employers complained that the prolonged festivities affected their labour supply, and the result was further calls for the regulation of beer drinking which, together with pressure from local officials and missionaries, led to the passing of the Abakhwetha and Intonjane Dances Prohibition Act (Act No 19 of 1892) by the Cape Parliament.

In the Transkei during this period, beer drinking seldom featured in the reports to the DNA. Here too, good harvests led to lots of brewing, but this was seldom associated with problems such as crime and "immorality" by the local officials. There were, of course, exceptions to this general pattern. In 1883-4 in Butterworth there were a number of prosecutions resulting from fights that developed at beer drinks, which had increased in frequency due to the good yields. In Mqanduli, however, it was reported that there had been no increase in crime despite large beer drinking gatherings (DNA 1884, 100, 107,

130). In 1904 in Qumbu there were "three or four" serious cases of assault resulting from beer drinks, while in Willowvale crime was on the decrease despite the increase in beer drinking (DNA 1904, 83, 95). Comparing this with the reports from places like King William's Town and Grahamstown, places where there were settlements of landless, displaced people, it seems evident that in the latter situations beer drinking is more likely to become associated with crime and violence than in the former (the rural areas of Transkei). Such a conclusion, however, remains tentative.

Beer drinking may, however, have been associated with rural resistance in the Transkei in the periods 1909-1919 and 1927-1928. Both these periods were marked by attempts in the Transkeian General Council to regulate beer drinks and beer drinking at dances and feasts. In 1908 it was claimed that beer drinks were on the increase, and that they were being attended by 'children'. Some councillors wanted to prohibit beer drinks altogether, though the motion calling for stricter regulation of these events was lost. In terms of Proclamation No 221 of 1905 a chief or headman had to be 'notified' if a beer drink or dance (such as the boys' umtshotsho) was to be held at a homestead. In 1912 the Council asked the South African government to amend this proclamation to the effect that a homestead head would have to obtain the 'permission' of a chief or headman to hold a beer drink or a dance. The object was to tighten control over "these customs of heathendom" (UTTGC 1912, 51). This request, along with one calling for the prohibition of beer gatherings on Sundays, was turned down.

The question of regulating beer drinks cropped up again in 1914, however, with those in favour of such regulation claiming that the attraction of beer kept people away from public meetings. Contrary to established practice "it was now the custom to brew beer in large quantities...(and)...a whole location would brew beer at the same time" (UTTGC 1914, 109). The Sunday Observance Law was being flouted by holding beer drinks and dances on that day, and beer drinks were being attended by women, young men and girls. The Select Committee on Kaffir Beer Drinking and Dances, however, came to the conclusion that existing legislation was adequate for the control of these events.

These issues were raised again and again over the next five years, with further unsuccessful attempts being made to control what came to be known as 'nocturnal jolifications' (sic) or 'night merriment' (UTTGC 1918, 67).

The period 1913-1917 in the Transkei was characterised by fairly widespread resistance to cattle dipping (Beinart and Bundy 1980) and it is possible, perhaps even likely, that beer drinks provided a forum for the expression of anti-dipping views and for organising resistance to the dipping laws. It is also possible that beer drinking had become more frequent during this period in response to a shortage of milk as a result of the loss of large numbers of cattle due to East Coast fever (which is what led to stricter enforcement of the dipping laws at this time). In the absence of evidence however, this remains speculative. Present day beer drinks provide a forum for just about any burning issue, and it is thus more than likely that dipping was discussed at beer drinks in the Transkei in 1913-1917. Whether beer was brewed with the express purpose of bringing people together to discuss or facilitate resistance to the dipping laws is, however, another matter. On the evidence of present day beer drinks this is unlikely. At the time many council members were opposed to stricter regulation of beer drinks and dances. They were worried about antagonising people unnecessarily, passing legislation which could not be enforced, and about the possible abuse of such regulations by headmen and chiefs (UTTGC 1916, 40-41).

In the period 1927-8 the attempt to regulate beer drinking was taken up with renewed vigour, and the list of 'evils' associated with beer grew dramatically. It was because of beer, it was claimed, that people did not obey the government, that taxes were not paid, that the country's gaols were full, and that men would not go out to work (UTTGC 1927, 62). Children were being fed on beer, drinking with their fathers and not attending school. Women were never at home because they were out looking for beer, and young children were being neglected. It was due to the presence of women that fighting took place at nearly every beer drink, and these 'disgraceful' things were ruining people's good names and "keeping them back as a nation" (UTTGC

1928, 58). It was said that beer drinks served to spread diseases such as TB and a kind of rheumatism, and that children were being born weak because their mothers lived on nothing but beer. When magistrates tried to meet with their headmen in their districts they were unable to do so, because headmen, too, were at beer drinks all the time. There were so many beer drinks being held that people were doing no work and neglecting to plough (ibid., 56). It was the duty of the Council, some felt, to look after the welfare of the people by putting a stop to these abuses.

It would seem then, in the eyes of the authorities at least, that people were drinking beer with an almost millenarian frenzy. Indeed, it was said in the Council that beer drinking was associated with the millenarian movement founded by Wellington Buthelezi which, along with other similar movements, became active in the Transkei in the late 1920s. Buthelezi preached that a day of judgement would arrive when believers would be freed from white oppression; Afro-Americans would arrive in aeroplanes bearing goods such as clothing; taxes would be abolished and factories established. Allegiance to the movement, to which a number of headmen defected, was characterized by hostility to the authorities and the institutions of government. People refused to pay taxes and dipping fees, took their children out of school and placed them in schools started by the movement (Beinart and Bundy 1980). There is some evidence to indicate that increased beer consumption was also a feature of the 1857 'cattle killing' episode, which involved not only the destruction of cattle and grain, but also much feasting and dancing. At least some of the animals killed were eaten, and grain was cooked and turned into beer (Long 1948, 192-193).<sup>17</sup>

Again, although there seems to have been a link between the Wellington movement and beer-drinking, with beer drinks possibly functioning to assist in spreading the teachings of the movement, these attempts to control beer more strictly were not successful. Some councillors pointed out that beer was the 'national beverage' and beer drinking a 'national institution' which ought not to be legislated against (UTTGC 1927, 62). Existing legislation was thought to be adequate, and

Proclamation No 246 of 1929 consolidated these.

Another example of the strategic use of beer to adapt to changed circumstances is the brewing of beer for sale, a common practice in other parts of Africa (Saul 1981; de Haas 1986, 12) and in urban areas (Hellman 1934; de Haas, 1986). Beer was brewed for sale amongst Xhosa speakers at least as early as the 1880s and this practice continues today. Officials were keen to put a stop to the 'extensive' selling of beer in Aliwal North in 1886-7 (DNA 1887, 7), and J Landry, a farmer, complained to the 1903-05 Commission that 'reds' (traditionalist Xhosa) were selling beer near Peelson (S.A. 1905, II, 863).

In the 1930s and 40s the question of selling beer was raised a number of times by the UTTGC. Proclamation No 107 of 1918 prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquors, in which 'Kaffir beer' was included, except under licence. Nevertheless, the sale of beer was widespread in both town and countryside, and constituted an important source of income for some people (UTTGC 1946, 42). The prohibition of the sale of liquor to Africans (Act 30 of 1928) was applied in the Transkei in the form of Proclamation No 53 of 1933. 'Kaffir beer' was defined in the Act as containing not more than 2% alcohol, and was permitted on farms and in the reserves, but not in urban areas. The Native Economic Commission 1930-32 found that this led, in towns, to the development of "quickly manufactured drinks of high alcoholic content" (S.A. 1932 110; Hellman 1934), and it recommended that the prohibition on brewing utywala in towns be dropped.

Techniques for increasing the potency of maize or sorghum beer quickly found their way to the reserves, where such beer was brewed and sold. Proclamation No 53 of 1933, however, did not define the alcoholic content of 'Kafir beer' so these new 'concoctions' could be brewed quite legitimately, though their sale, of course, was illegal. In 1945 the UTTGC passed a motion requesting that this be remedied, "so that our national drink, kaffir beer, should not be adulterated by concoctions brought from other countries" (UTTGC 1945, 40). Attempts were made also at other times to tighten up control over the selling

of beer in the Transkei, but with little success (UTTGC 1955 24, 96).

### Shixini people

The people who inhabit Shixini ward ('location') and adjoining areas are members of what was, historically, the Gcaleka chiefdom, the senior branch of the Xhosa 'proper' (Hammond-Tooke 1975). The present expression of this legacy lies in the existence of the 'Gcaleka Regional Authority' as part of the Transkei's administrative structure, and the chairmanship of this Authority, which is held by the Gcaleka Paramount, Xolilizwe Sigcau. The Authority includes the district of Willowvale, where Xolilizwe resides, and also Idutywa and Elliotdale, parts of which were occupied by Gcaleka in the past. Shixini people do refer to themselves as 'Gcaleka' from time to time (mainly in ritual contexts), but they are nowadays perhaps best regarded simply as Xhosa-speakers. The term Gcaleka implies a unity and an exclusiveness, political and cultural, which does not actually exist.

Shixini is one of the 39 Administrative Areas or wards, which are grouped into Tribal Authorities, that make up Willowvale district (now called Gatyana), together with the village and its commonage, more or less in the centre of the district (see Map 2, p.7). Shixini had a population of 3056 people in 1970, and together with the adjoining ward, Ntlahlane, makes up Jingqi Tribal Authority, the chairman of which, Chief Mandlenkosi Dumalisile, is also Shixini's headman. The ward is divided into eleven sub-wards, each under a sub-headman (isibonda), who acts as an intermediary between the chief and his subjects.

Most of the people who live in Shixini are relatively conservative, conforming to what used to be called 'Red' people (because of their use of red ochre) (Mayer 1961, 1980). Very few have much formal education or belong to any kind of Christian church, but continue to practise the ancestor religion. In Folokhwe, one of Shixini's sub-wards, there were only two nominal Christians in 1977. Nowadays there are around ten or twelve, mainly women and children. They participate

in a Zionist-type church based in another sub-ward. In 1977 the average level of education was exceptionally low. Of 59 male homestead heads interviewed, 52 had no formal (school) education at all. Of 73 adult women interviewed, 60 had never attended school (McAllister 1979, 257). Economically they are dependent primarily on male labour migration (see McAllister 1979, 26 ff), but they adhere to an ideal of a rural agricultural lifestyle and economic self-sufficiency. This is particularly true of the coastal part of the ward, where the bulk of the fieldwork for this study was done. These four coastal sub-wards - Folokhwe, Ndlelibanzi, Jotelo and Nompha - had a population of approximately 1700 people in 1983, distributed in some 300 widely scattered homesteads.

Many anthropologists have remarked on the especially deep rooted and persevering nature of Xhosa conservatism, and on the division between 'Red' and 'School' people among Xhosa speakers, though this division is nowadays blurred. Mayer has attempted to portray Red and School 'folk cultures' as "profoundly contrasting responses" to white domination, separate resistance ideologies which expressed "their denial of the legitimacy of the dependency structures as well as their passive or active opposition to the status quo" (1980, 3). The element of resistance is explicit in the 'Red' ideology and the strategies that Reds have adopted are clearly attempts to protect themselves from the effects of white dominance and to limit their involvement in the wider economy.

In the nineteenth century, for example, Reds sold their surplus agricultural produce and livestock, as an alternative to wage labour and "to defend their position of minimum involvement" (Mayer 1980, 15). In the 1940s and 1950s their resistance to agricultural betterment schemes in the Transkei was an attempt to counter the threat of proletarianization that reduction or loss of their rural means of production would have entailed (McAllister 1985a). Where Reds still exist today, their main strategy is resistance to consumerism and withdrawal to their rural homes for as long as possible, and investing in rural agriculture "as the only ways in which a Black man in South Africa could hope to retain his dignity and

a shadow of independence" (Mayer 1980, 43).

Mayer (1980), Mafeje (1975), Wilson (1969) and others have correctly seen conservatism as an ideology of resistance, and the strategy of remaining tied to a rural home as an attempt to protect themselves from white domination. However, how Red people have been able to do this is something that they have not explained. The argument presented below is that they resist further incorporation through maintaining a degree of homestead production, and that they maintain homestead production through a recognition of the economic interdependence of homesteads, based on social principles of a 'traditional' kind - kinship and neighbourhood. So a 'traditional' orientation in Shixini is not some outmoded, irrational clinging to the past, but a vital element in people's attempts to cope with a precarious economic and political situation. I suggest that beer drinks are to be at least partly understood in this light, reflecting and reinforcing the values involved.

#### Labour migration and the local economy

It is well established that migratory wage labour provides the bulk of the cash incomes of rural Transkeians. In 1983 372,814 Transkeians out of a total population of 3,3 million were registered as workers in South Africa, the vast majority of them migrants (S.A.I.R.R. 1984, 257). In Shixini ward, roughly 80% of all males aged sixteen years and over are regular migrant workers, working primarily in the western Cape and the Transvaal. It is by now also well established that the maintenance of local economic activity in the rural periphery of southern Africa depends either directly or indirectly upon the cash reaching these areas as a result of migratory wage labour (Spiegel 1980; Murray 1981). Thus the two means of making a living are in practice closely interrelated and form a single system. People depend on continued participation in the migrant labour system for the maintenance of local economic activity.

To understand conservatism, of which beer drinks are one manifestation, we need to look at how Shixini people cope with this

fact, i.e. at how they cope with the incorporation of the rural areas and the economic activities that take place within the orbit of the rural home into the wider southern African political economy.

In theory each homestead in Shixini is entitled to both a field and a garden in which to cultivate maize and other crops. In practice many homesteads lack fields, gardens or both. In 1977 21 (25%) of the homesteads in Folokhwe sub-ward did not have fields, 6 (7.4%) did not have gardens and 10 (12%) had neither garden nor field. Only 53% of homesteads had both a field and a garden to cultivate. Figures like this can, of course, be misleading. As shown below, the lack of a garden may be more serious than the lack of a field. In addition, it is necessary to examine not only the question of landlessness, but also the allocation and use of land, both of which are essentially social.

There are three ways in which a Shixini resident may obtain a field: (1) by inheriting one (usually by primogeniture); (2) by applying for one previously allocated to someone else; and (3) by waiting for new areas to be opened up as arable land and applying for a field in such an area. In the case of inheritance the heir simply applies, via the subheadman (isibonda) to the chief for the field to be registered in his name. In the case of the other two ways of obtaining a field the matter is more complicated. A homestead head wanting a field and not expecting to inherit one usually first discusses the issue with kin and neighbours to establish whether there are any presently unused or abandoned fields that are worth applying for. If he/she wants to apply for such a field the agreement of the person in whose name it is registered must be obtained. If the field is officially abandoned then this step is not necessary, and the applicant approaches the subheadman to make application for the field. The application is discussed at the next meeting of the sub-ward moot (ibandla) consisting of all the senior men of the sub-ward. If there is no objection the ibandla goes on an appointed day to inspect the field in question and to verify its boundaries. Later, the isibonda and the applicant travel to the chief's place to inform him that application has been made for the field and approved by the men of the ward, and

the chief registers the field in the name of the applicant. The chief may later visit the area to verify the allocation. A similar procedure is followed when fields in an area newly set out for cultivation are allocated.

Kuckertz (1984, 191 ff.) argues that the right to land is a divisive factor in Mthwa (Mpondo) society. His argument is based on the individualistic nature of the homestead economy, which includes the association of each individual homestead with an individual field. In Shixini too each homestead is associated with a particular field (ignoring for the moment those who do not have fields) but this does not act as a divisive factor. As the process of land allocation indicates, the right of each homestead to land is socially sanctioned. It is a right that can be exercised only if the homestead follows a social procedure in which the rights of other members of the community are recognised. This is symbolised by the brewing of beer for the local community once new sites or fields are granted (see above p.90).

It should be evident from the above that the number, size and location of fields is fixed. There are a certain limited (and usually inadequate) number of fields available in any one sub-ward, and each field has set boundaries. Most fields have been cultivated more or less continuously year after year, for a long period, with the result that the fertility of the soil has diminished considerably. This is clearly indicated by the type of vegetation that occurs on abandoned fields (see McAllister 1985a) and, in the case of old fields still used, by the relatively low yields. As a result of low yields, fields are sometimes abandoned by their holders or cultivated relatively infrequently (perhaps once every four or five years) or not at all. Lack of labour power was also sometimes cited as being a reason for not using fields.

To obtain land for residential purposes a similar procedure is followed. An existing homestead head applies for a homestead site on behalf of his son, daughter, younger brother, or whoever (e.g. it may be a clansman who lives with him). The site is granted on condition that those living nearby agree, and that the ibandla approves. In

this respect the criteria are social ones. A relative newcomer to the area has a weaker claim than an established resident, an unmarried man a weaker claim than a married one. Every homestead has the right to an adjoining garden site, and those without gardens are usually new or impoverished homesteads, without the means to acquire fencing material and suchlike, or without the necessary labour. Shixini people rely heavily on their gardens for a supply of food and other products. Gardens are usually smaller than fields, though there are many exceptions to this. Some are as much as 6 to 7 acres (2,42 ha) in extent, and have been developed to this size due to the infertility of the homesteads' fields.

In a place like Shixini it is extremely difficult to measure yields with any accuracy, for a variety of reasons. Responses to the question: 'How many bags of maize (off the cob) did you harvest last year?' indicated that the average maize yield in Folokwe sub-ward was 7.02 bags in 1975 and 6,16 bags in 1976. Such figures must be treated with a great deal of caution, and are probably underestimates (see McAllister 1979, 19 ff.). Furthermore, there are a large number of other crops grown, and it is difficult to obtain any sort of figure for yields of such crops. Many of these are eaten directly from the gardens and not stored.

Gardens are more fertile than fields. A comparison of the yields obtained from gardens and fields for 15 Shixini homesteads in 1975 and 13 homesteads in 1976 revealed that the average yield for gardens in these years was 5,06 and 6,6 bags of maize respectively per homestead while that from fields was 3,7 and 4,0 bags per homestead. Differences in soil type aside, this may be due to reasons already indicated. Another important factor is that the boundaries of gardens are not fixed, as is the case with fields. Gardens are continually being extended, their boundaries changed, their location slightly altered. To do so a homestead head must consult his/her neighbours and obtain their approval and then obtain the permission of the sub-headman.

In fields, maize monoculture is the norm, although one sometimes finds

crops such as beans or peas growing in them. In gardens a large variety of crops are grown apart from the staple maize. These include beans, peas, pumpkins, melons, tobacco and so on. This difference is due no doubt to differences in soil fertility and also to the distance of fields from homesteads.

Although Shixini people attach great value to livestock, particularly cattle, which have social, religious and political as well as economic value, they obtain very little of their subsistence needs directly from this source. In 1976 there were 591 cattle, 515 goats, 1 267 sheep and 30 horses in Folokhwe sub-ward. Virtually every homestead also kept some poultry and a few pigs. The mean average figures of 7.7 cattle, 16,7 sheep and 6,7 goats per homestead are, however, misleading, because a large proportion of the livestock was concentrated in relatively few hands. Thirty homesteads had no cattle at all, forty had no sheep, and thirty-nine no goats. Twenty-two homesteads had none of these kinds of livestock. On the other end of the scale, there were 22 homesteads with six or more cattle, sixteen with eleven or more sheep and fourteen with eleven or more goats. Clearly, however, not a great deal of the food requirements of Shixini people is met by animal husbandry.<sup>18</sup>

Local economic activity, despite its dependence on migrant labour for the necessary cash inputs, also suffers as a result of the involvement of people in migrant labour. The most obvious factor here is the absence of many able bodied men from the rural areas, with the result that the bulk of the agricultural labour and decision making is placed on those who remain behind - mainly women. Migrancy also threatens the viability of rural agriculture in other ways. Participation in local economic activity involves a commitment to the rural home and to a rural lifestyle. Oscillating labour migration removes people from their home areas for long periods of time and exposes them to an urban-industrial lifestyle. Migrants are placed in a position where earnings designated for use at the rural end may be 'wasted' (as Shixini people put it) on consumer items or 'town women'.

So the problem with migrant labour, as far as most Shixini people are

concerned, is that it threatens the maintenance of local economic activity even though it is essential to support it. It threatens the commitment to the rural home and at the same time is needed for the physical survival of that home. People are well aware of the ambiguous quality of going out to take wage employment, and take steps to attempt to resolve this ambiguity at the symbolic level.

Shixini residents regard oscillating labour migration as an inescapable, even 'customary' (in the sense of 'long established practice') part of their lives, as a necessary evil. However, they rationalize migrant labour by relating it to the objective of 'building the homestead' (ukwakha umzi). The term 'building' here has a number of interrelated meanings. There is an economic meaning, firstly. The homestead and things associated with it - livestock, garden, fields - must be maintained and if possible improved. Secondly, there is a social aspect: On the evidence of public statements at beer drinks, a 'true' homestead is a social entity, part of a community, one that cooperates with neighbours and with kin. A homestead ought to provide food and shelter for visitors, it ought to brew beer for the community from time to time, and so on. A third aspect is religious and concerns the work of the shades. Successful building of a homestead includes the performance of the customary obligations and rituals for the shades, in order to secure the blessings and protection on which it depends.

The terms used to refer to the workplace have negative connotations or reflect the instrumental nature of migrancy. An absent migrant is said to be 'at war' (emfazweni), 'in service' (enkonzweni) or 'at the place of the white man' (emlungwini). The implication of such usages is that the workplace is strange, foreign and dangerous, and that entry into it is undertaken only to serve the rural home. One of the consequences of this attitude towards migrancy, based as it is on an appreciation of its ambiguous character, is an attempt to limit involvement in it. A characteristic of labour migration in Shixini during 1976-1977 was that migrants spent almost as much time at home as they did at work (McAllister 1980).

In recent years (1980-1986) this has no longer been possible, as conditions of service on the mines have changed, allowing men only short spells at home between contracts, and as jobs in general have become scarce. Nevertheless, there is always a relatively large proportion of men at home, made up of the temporarily jobless, the retired, the few non-migrants, and those on leave. Some of the industries which employ large numbers of Shixini men, such as the fishing industry in the Western Cape, still allow relatively long spells (2-3 months) at home between contracts.

Associated with this particular attitude towards migrant labour is a series of ritual actions performed by and for migrant workers on their departure for work and again on their return home (McAllister 1980). The most elaborate of these rituals of labour migration is a large beer drink called umsindleko, at which a recently returned migrant is welcomed home and formally addressed by the elders and seniors of the community. In these speeches the migrant is praised for his success at work and reminded that the object of going out to work is to serve his rural home. He is praised for his efforts on behalf of his home and urged to repeat his performance in the future. The beer drink is also seen as an invocation to the shades to continue to help and guide their descendents. Above all, the object of umsindleko is to ensure that the migrant interprets his migratory experience correctly - that is, as an end designed to serve the rural home and to reinforce the commitment to rural values. Such rituals help to make migrancy meaningful to people, by reinforcing the commitment to 'building the homestead'. In doing so it seems likely that the disruptive effects of migrancy are minimized.

It should be evident from the above that the resistance to fuller incorporation in the wider politico-economic system is expressed in the idiom of Xhosa conservatism or 'tradition', which rejects an urban industrial lifestyle, consumerism, Christianity and other 'ways of white people'. It is this 'Red' ideology (ubuqaba) that provides the backing for the particular way in which Shixini people attempt to cope with poverty. It is an ideology that is expressed primarily in the value that it attaches to a rural lifestyle, the ancestor cult and

'building the homestead'. Faced with the obvious inequities of apartheid, Red people have responded by turning their backs and affirming the moral superiority of another reality. This 'reality' however, along with the response to migrancy outlined above, and the exploitation of rural resources, is a social one. So it is to the main principles of social organization that I turn next.

### Kinship and neighbourhood

In Shixini, homesteads are widely scattered on the hilltops and ridges, though more or less distinct clusters or 'hamlets' of from three to eight homesteads can often be identified. Individual homesteads are frequently inhabited by some kind of extended family unit (McAllister 1979), though the tendency is for a man's sons or younger brothers to establish their own independent homesteads soon after marriage.<sup>19</sup> In doing so they often choose a site near to that of their father or other paternal kinsman, with the result that adjoining homesteads are often agnatically related - members of the same 'agnatic cluster' (Hammond-Tooke, 1984). The terms used to denote the local agnatic group (amawethu, imilowo) are also used to refer to all local members of the clan, who are involved in each other's ritual, economic and socio-political affairs. Members of a patronymic clan recognise common descent but cannot trace any genealogical link with each other. Clansmen are widely scattered throughout the Transkei and beyond.

Within areas like Shixini are a number of smaller groups, variously called patrilineages, clan-sections or lineage segments. Members of this group know their exact genealogical relationship with each other, and call each other to important ancestor rituals. This is the only time that they come together, and they are thus not, as Hammond-Tooke (1984) has shown, corporate groups. What Hammond-Tooke calls the 'agnatic cluster' is a localised section (not necessarily 'segment') of this larger clan section. In Shixini, when the agnatic cluster celebrates ancestor rituals, other local members of the clan i.e. members of other agnatic clusters with the same clan name, participate fully. This, and other kinds of co-operation between clansmen, blurs

the division of Shixini people into agnatic clusters and clan sections (and has important implications for the nature of the ancestor religion in Shixini (Ch 7).

In addition to this, homesteads (individually or in small groups) which are the only local representatives of their clan frequently become closely associated with larger, localized agnatic groups on the basis of the affinal or matrilineal links between them. Secondly, there are a number of homesteads associated with, and economically and politically dependent on, one or other of the larger agnatic groups, without there being any close kinship tie between them. Usually these are fairly poor homesteads, often headed by widows, and the only local representatives of their dead husbands' clans. The basis of the relationship is largely one of mutual assistance and the moral obligation to assist those in need. The dependent homesteads look to the larger, wealthier group for economic and political support and view the heads of these groups as their leaders and spokesmen. The 'agnatic cluster', then, is by no means a functionally and ideologically isolated unit. These homesteads are embedded in a wider system of relationships which involves neighbours and fellow members of the community.

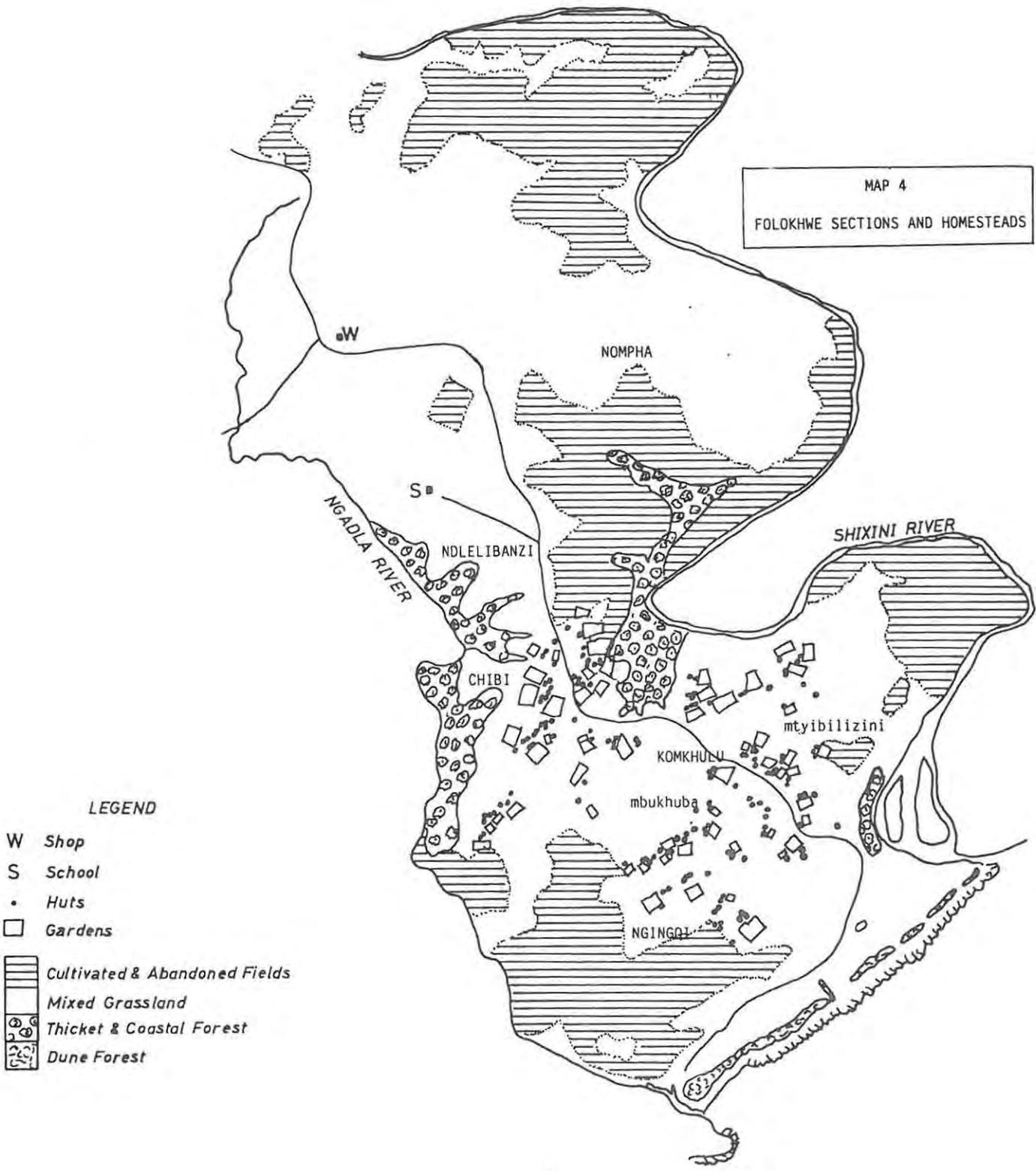
Sub-wards correspond to what are sometimes called iziphaluka (Hammond-Tooke 1984, 79) but the more commonly used term for sub-ward in Shixini is ilali ('area' or 'location', from the Afrikaans laager). Ilali is sometimes also used to refer to the ward (i.e. Shixini) as a whole, or to the sub-ward section. The latter is also sometimes referred to as ilalana ('small ilali'). Sub-wards are usually divided into two or three sections (depending on their size), which are largely but not entirely geographical divisions. These divisions, or sub-ward sections, form the largest social units within the sub-ward. In Folokhwe sub-ward there are three sub-ward sections, which are named and hierarchically ranked. Komkhulu is the highest ranked, above Chibi and Ngingqi. In some cases the sections are further subdivided into sub-sections, which sometimes correspond to what have been called imimango among other Cape Nguni groups (e.g. Bigalke 1969, 10-11). These sections and sub-sections are discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

Although kinship is of basic importance to Shixini people we have seen that kin group boundaries are not easily definable and that such groups may include non-kin and distant or classificatory kin. Sub-ward section organization forms a counterpart to the kinship system and provides a second basic social principle, that of neighbourhood or community.

Just as the local agnatic group may, for practical and ritual purposes, include people who are not agnates, with the result that we may say that neighbourhood encroaches on kinship organization and tends to blur the division into agnatic groups, so does agnation enter into sub-ward section organization, making it difficult to ignore kinship in what is essentially a territorial division. Similar patterns have been noted elsewhere (Kuckertz 1984, 28; Bigalke 1969). The table below indicates the association between section and agnation and clanship in Folokhwe sub-ward. While each section is strongly associated with two or more of these groups, only one of them (Yalo clan) is found only in one section (the table excludes the smaller clan and agnatic groups consisting of only one or two homesteads).<sup>20</sup> Also, each section contains representatives of at least nine clans/agnatic clusters, and no one section is identified exclusively with only one agnatic group.

Clan	No. of agnatic clusters	No. of homesteads per cluster	No. of homesteads per sub-ward section			Total
			Komkhulu	Chibi	Ngingqi	
Tshezi	2	1,3	3	1	-	4
Cirha	3	5,5,2	11	-	1	12
Gqunu	1	8	-	2	6	8
Kwayi	2	1,4	-	1	4	5
Yalo	1	3	-	-	3	3
Ntlane	3	1,1,9	3	6	2	11
Ntshilibe	3	1,1,12	1	13	-	14
Bamba	2	1,6	1	6	-	7

MAP 4  
FOLOKHWE SECTIONS AND HOMESTEADS



(Map by D. Everard, Rhodes University)

As we shall see below, the organizational principles of kinship and neighbourhood are given symbolic form at public events. The division of the ward into sub-wards and of the sub-ward into sections, is seen most clearly at beer drinks, where the allocation of seating positions and the distribution of beer express and reflect the relative status of the sections and sub-wards and the relationships between them (see Ch. 3). The values of good neighbourliness (ubumelwane) and mutual support, and of ties of blood and marriage, are acted out in the distribution and consumption of beer. Similar principles operate at rituals and feasts (imigidi).

Sub-ward sections perform a number of vital functions in Shixini, and this, I will argue, is reflected in the symbolic structure of beer drinks. They play an important (unofficial) role with regard to land rights and the control of pasturage. A section may 'close' areas of grazing in order to allow the grass to recover, and until recently it was generally accepted that a man does not graze his stock in areas controlled by sections other than his own without asking for permission to do so. Decisions such as these are reached by consensus among the senior men of the section. For uninhabited land areas to be made available for homestead sites requires the agreement of the section concerned and applications for sites in already inhabited areas must be approved by those living close to the proposed site. A section may also apply as a group to the chief to have part of its area proclaimed as land for cultivation.

The sections are, in effect, closely knit neighbourhood groups, playing a vital role in many aspects of social and economic life, including ritual and ceremonial matters. When Rhwatiti's baby daughter died, for example, some 40 men and a similar number of women from all parts of the sub-ward attended, but it was the members of his section, Komkhulu, who were the first to arrive and the last to leave. It was the young men of Komkhulu who dug the grave, a Komkhulu woman who went to buy the coffin from the shop, the senior Komkhulu men who prepared it and who nailed the lid down firmly, and the senior Komkhulu women who arranged the body in the coffin and who gave formal explanations of the events leading up to the death to the other women,

as they arrived.

Sub-ward sections do not have formal leaders, but all the senior men of a section constitute its ibandla (moot). This ibandla meets to discuss issues such as those regarding land, mentioned above, to make decisions, settle disputes and try offenders. Decisions made may be forwarded to the sub-ward ibandla for further discussion and ratification. Minor disputes between members are ideally resolved within the section while more serious offences go to the sub-ward ibandla, from where they may be forwarded to the Chief's court or the Tribal Authority. In effect, then, the men of the sub-ward section constitute a court, corresponding to the court of the 'mat-association' discussed by Kuckertz (1984, Ch 4). In fact, Kuckertz states that the mat-association "gives the impression of a ward section" (ibid., 20). However, there are important differences between the ward sections and Mthwa mat associations. The latter have formal leaders elected by their members, and seem to be of little importance economically (ibid., 31). The mat associations do not play a role in beer drinks, while Shixini beer drinks are, as shown in Chapter 3, controlled and structured in terms of sub-ward sections. There are also similarities. For example, both mat associations and the sub-ward sections are numerically dominated by particular agnatic groups, though membership cuts across agnatic and territorial boundaries (ibid., 32).

Some indication has been given of the importance of kinship and neighbourhood, the two major organizational features of social life in Shixini. We have been concerned with this because it is within this framework that the Red response to migrancy is acted out, and that economic activity takes place. It is this framework within which beer drinks are organized, and which they reflect back on and help to sustain. In this section a more detailed look at the economic dependence of homesteads on both kin and neighbours is provided. It is against this background of economic practice that much of what happens at beer drinks makes sense.

Relationships involving livestock, particularly cattle, feature

prominently in the lives of Shixini people. People give and receive stock on loan, pay for various services (such as that of the diviner or herbalist) with stock, make and receive stock prestations, nqoma (put out) their cattle to other homesteads, are involved in bridewealth transactions, help each other to meet bridewealth obligations, and so on. Homesteads group their cattle together for herding purposes, and combine them in ploughing groups.

The most extensive form of economic cooperation and organisation in Shixini is in ploughing "companies". In Folokhwe sub-ward there were ten of these in 1976, involving sixty-one out of the seventy-nine homesteads plus two in a neighbouring sub-ward. Some informants state that "a man ploughs with whom he likes" and that these companies have no link with clan or lineage affiliation, but in practice the two overlap. For example, in Folokhwe all the local members of the Ngqunu agnatic cluster (8 homesteads) are in one company and the Bamba (6 homesteads) in another. The Ntshilibe agnatic cluster (12 homesteads) is divided into two companies, reflecting the division between the great and right-hand houses in this group, and all but two of the eleven Ntlane homesteads are divided into two companies, though this division is a function of spatial rather than genealogical distribution.

All these groups also include members of other agnatic groups and clans, some of which are widely distributed among the ten companies. The majority of members of any one company are invariably of one sub-ward section but only three companies do not have members of more than one section and one includes two homesteads from another sub-ward. Herding groups, too, are almost always made up of homesteads of the same sub-ward section (McAllister 1979, 267). How widespread the existence of co-operative ploughing and herding 'companies' is in the Transkei is not known. Kuckertz (1984, 199, 202) indicates that they do not exist in the area he studied (the Mthwa chiefdom in Western Pondoland) where each homestead has to borrow the oxen it needs to plough and harvest each year. In Mthwa people with plenty of cattle do not, obviously, have to borrow. In Shixini, such people are at the core of the ploughing companies.

Ploughing companies partly overcome the problem of shortages of oxen, implements and labour and enable many to plough at what they consider to be the right time and to get the work done quickly once the decision to plough has been made. In addition to this many people, including the families of absent migrants, would not be able to cultivate at all without the assistance of others due to their lack of some or all of the necessary inputs.

Each company has a head or leader and a nucleus of long standing members (a 'core'), and some have a number of affiliated members, defined as such by the fact that they "asked to join" an already established company. The companies are named according to their heads or past heads, and are often referred to by the clan names of the majority of their members, reflecting the association between agnation and core membership. However, core members are not necessarily all of the same agnatic group, and frequently include neighbours, friends and other kin. There is another class of affiliated members consisting of homesteads which are poor in cattle and labour, with few prospects for improvement. Often they are headed by widows, and are entirely dependent on their company for ploughing and planting.

A prominent feature of economic life in Shixini is the reliance on work parties for a wide variety of tasks. These are essentially ad hoc groups which come together in response to an appeal by an individual homestead to perform tasks such as harvesting, cutting thatching grass, fencing and so on. There are various kinds of work parties, ranging from a small group of three or four neighbours, to large ones which draw participation from the entire sub-ward. As indicated in Chapter 5, where these groups are discussed in more detail, neighbourhood and section are important criteria in defining the nature of the work party and the obligations between homestead head and worker. As with many other forms of economic cooperation, the evidence on work parties in Folokhwe confirms the finding of Wilson et al (1952, 70) that the obligation to assist kin is not greater than that towards neighbours, given the fact that, as indicated above, cohesion based on kinship and cohesion based on neighbourhood overlap and are difficult to distinguish in practice.

The various forms of economic co-operation and mutual assistance discussed above all involve a certain amount of formality and organization and in this sense are atypical, for by far the most frequent manifestation of economic assistance to others is informal and ad hoc, occurring on a daily basis between kin, neighbours and friends, usually within the same sub-ward section, and involving smaller tasks or less important forms of assistance. Clearly, economic survival in Shixini depends to a significant extent on being able to rely on an established, though not necessarily static, pattern of social relationships, in which neighbourhood features as prominently, if not more so, than kinship. This applies in all spheres of life, not only in economics.

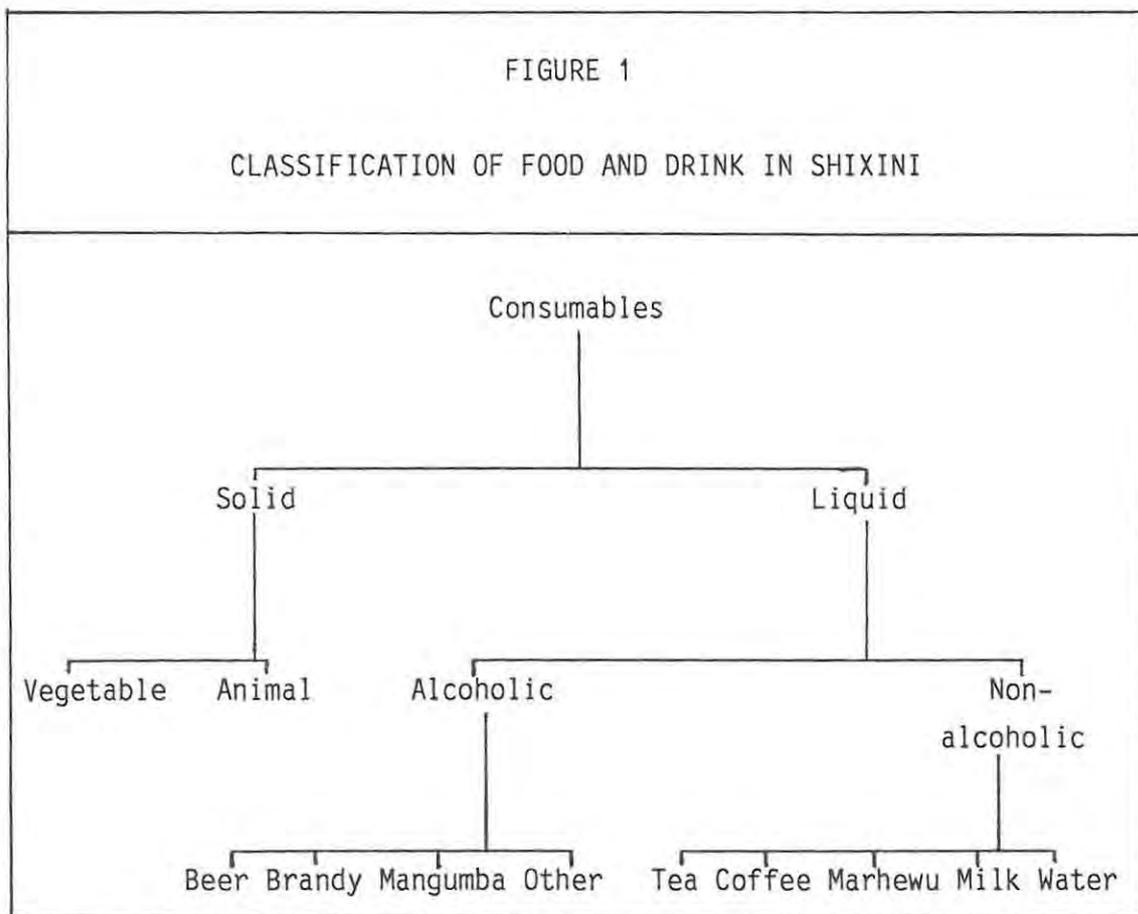
In summary, homestead production must be seen as an essentially social process - from the land tenure system and control over resources such as residential sites and grazing, to the process of production and activities like harvesting and storing the product. Neighbourhood groups, sub-sections and sections of the sub-ward, play a vital role in this respect. Each homestead depends on involvement in such groups for the maintenance of its domestic economy. Beer drinks, as we shall see, are a vital part of this process.

#### Beer and beer drinks in Shixini

Beer plays an extremely important part in the lives of Shixini people, as it does, or did, among other Bantu-speakers. It is associated with sociability, and most social events, whether of an economic, ritual or festive nature, are marked by the brewing and consumption of beer. This does not mean, however, that beer has the same significance or plays the same role whenever it is drunk, or that all events at which there is beer can be called 'beer drinks'. However, Turner (1967), Douglas (1966, 1975) and others have established the principle that something like beer drinks must be looked at and understood in relation to the range of events at which beer is consumed, because each of these carries something of the meaning of the others. Similarly, any one type of beer drink must be understood within the context of the general category 'beer drinks'. In addition to this,

the 'meaning' of beer must be related to everyday realities, in conjunction with the particular social context in which it is used. This will become clear in later chapters. In this section, an attempt is made to outline people's attitudes towards beer, illustrate the range of situations in which beer is used in Shixini, and define 'beer drinks' as a class or category of events distinguishable from the other social occasions at which beer is present. An outline of different kinds of beer drinks will also be provided.

It is necessary, firstly, to provide some idea of the status of beer as alcoholic beverage and food because this is directly related to the way in which it is used in social life. The simplest way of doing this is to compare it with the other alcoholic beverages with which it may be classified (Figure 1).<sup>21</sup>



After beer, the commonest alcoholic drinks are 'mangumba and brandy. 'Mangumba, which in other parts of the Transkei is called jabulani, is a kind of 'beer' made from processed, packaged ingredients bought from the local shop. It is made fairly easily and is ready to drink after about 24 hours, in contrast to maize beer, which takes from five to eight days to brew. Many people dislike 'mangumba and say that it is too highly intoxicating and leaves one with an unpleasant hangover (ibhabhalaza). It is looked down upon, and to some extent associated with women. It is often brewed by women to reward those who make up a small hoeing party or other kind of work group, and informants often referred to 'mangumba as "merely something for hoeing". "It is to speed up the hoeing; you make boys (amabhoyi - i.e. labourers) with it, so that they get rid of the weeds quickly." A few women, all widows or deserted by their husbands, make 'mangumba on a regular basis and sell it in their homes. It is bought and drunk without formality or ceremony, quite unlike the sale of beer, which is highly formalized (see Chapter 5). "'Mangumba has no umtetho" - i.e. it is not drunk according to rules. "It is just something one likes to drink with a friend. We just make it and drink it (without ceremony)." Note that 'mangumba is 'made' (-enziwe) while beer is 'brewed' (-siliwe). 'Mangumba is not used in any ritual contexts, or for social events of any kind other than small, informal work parties.

Of the bottled or 'Western' alcoholic beverages, brandy ranks the highest, although gin, fortified wines, beer (ibiya), wine and various kinds of cheap 'punch' (with brand names like 'Brandyale' and 'Club Mint') are also bought. Some of these, chiefly brandy and beer, are sold by local women, who obtain supplies from the bottlestore in Willowvale town. Brandy is purchased chiefly for occasions like the arrival and departure of important visitors, payments or the giving of 'gifts' to some local official, or when one wants to express thanks for a favour received. Brandy is also of some ritual significance and is used, for example, in bridewealth negotiations, male initiation ceremonies, and rituals of labour migration (McAllister, 1980). When brandy is drunk, it is distributed tot by tot in a formal, ceremonial manner, modelled on the way in which beer (utywala) is distributed. For example, the first drops from a bottle may be poured onto the

hearth, or on to the floor of the cattle-byre, in a manner similar to the offering of beer to the ancestors at certain rituals. Tots are distributed in order of seniority, and the last portion of the bottle is reserved for elders and called iqwele, as is the case with beer. Whenever one has brandy in the home, close neighbours are invited to come and partake.

The difference between beer and brandy, however, is considerable. The one is utywala besiXhosa (Xhosa liquor), the other utywala besilungu (European liquor). Beer is cheap, regularly available in large quantities, with a low alcohol content and high food value. Brandy is none of these, being expensive and therefore scarce, and highly intoxicating. Beer is the only drink that is regarded as both alcoholic beverage and food. Although brandy has been incorporated into Xhosa life and values, it is beer (in Shixini at any rate) that features most frequently and pervasively, in social contexts of all kinds. The use of brandy is not yet as widespread, elaborate, prolonged, symbolism-laden and socially significant, as the use of beer.

People in Shixini love to drink beer, and do so frequently and in large quantities. Men sometimes spend three or four days at an umgidi (large feast) in a neighbouring or more distant ward without solid food, returning home only when the beer is finished. People enjoy talking about the quality and quantity of beer, they frequently ask each other about the whereabouts of beer, discuss forthcoming beer drinks and imigidi (feasts), or bemoan the fact that there is no beer about. Because of its low alcoholic content it is possible to drink beer in large quantities, and one way of praising someone is to comment on his beer drinking ability. At a ritual killing for a deceased father, one of the guests spoke about the character of the ancestor being honoured, saying that it was appropriate to provide meat and beer for him - "Have you ever seen anyone as short as he was who liked beer as much as he did?...I have never seen a person of his size who was able to drain the last drop from an iqhwina (a 10 litre beaker) by himself, with ease..."

Although people do not often become intoxicated as a result of drinking beer, drunkenness is quite acceptable, as long as it does not lead to wrongs such as fighting or abusive behaviour. The 'rights' and 'wrongs' of beer drinking concern other matters - the status of the drinkers, questions of generosity and selfishness, and so on. It is regarded as shocking, for example, for boys and men to drink together (though there are circumstances when they share beer - see Ch. 5) and the person who brews beer but gives it out reluctantly, holding back a more than acceptable amount for himself, is frowned upon and sanctioned (see Ch. 4). Brewing beer for people indicates one's generosity. "If you are a (proper) man you cannot say 'I have no maize' and drive people away from your homestead. Similarly, you cannot be stingy with beer. If it is there, it must be distributed." Furthermore, beer must be given out in a socially approved manner.

At a beer drink in Ndlelibanzi, the younger brother of the local shopkeeper came driving past in his truck, having been making deliveries in Folokhwe. Seeing men gathered together and drinking beer, the young man (a qualified schoolteacher) stopped the truck, jumped out, and went over to the nearest beaker, snatching it away from the man holding it and helping himself to a drink. The response was muted (due to the important position of the young man) but revealing. There was much clicking of tongues and shaking of heads; some people called out comments like 'uyintoni wena?' (who do you think you are?) and 'He, usetywaleni ngoku man!' (Hey, you are at a beer drink now fellow!). Another called him an 'irhumsha' (traitor to the Xhosa lifestyle). He left. Clearly, this was not the way things were done.

Beer is not something brewed 'just to drink', like 'mangumba', but something in which people have 'rights' (amalungelo), and which must be drunk according to certain rules (imithetho). What these rules are, how they vary from event to event, and why they take the form that they do, is largely what this dissertation is about.

Brewing beer is regarded as an important part of being a social human being, and as essential for the wellbeing and prosperity of the homestead (umzi) and its inhabitants. Men often refer to this in their speeches at beer drinks: "There are two things that a homestead needs - blood (ritual killings) and maize, with which to brew beer. There is no third thing." Brewing indicates the homestead head's good character and spirit (umphefumlo womnikazi), and that the homestead is part of the community. "A homestead without the smell of intsipho (maize sediment) is no good...". There is a social and moral obligation on every Shixini homestead to brew beer at regular intervals, and often the sole reason given for brewing is: "I have not brewed for a long time".<sup>22</sup>

Beer is closely associated with the ancestors, who liked to drink it while they were alive and must therefore be offered it by the living. It is metaphorically spoken of as ubulawu ('medicine of the home') and may be used as a substitute for ubulawu in certain ritual contexts. It is important to the shades that their descendants brew beer at regular intervals. Thus beer has a dual significance - one religious, one social. The connection between these two is explored in Chapter 7 and leads to a different perspective on Nguni religion from the conventionally accepted one.

#### What is a 'beer drink'?

A 'beer drink' as the term is used in this dissertation, is a public event, complete in itself, held in an individual homestead and for a particular purpose, at which beer is the central element and is distributed and consumed in a prescribed manner according to set rules.

As a definition this requires some elaboration and clarification:

a) a public event - Beer drinks are open to all adult members of the community (residents of the ward and of neighbouring sub-wards) as well as to visitors from more distant areas who happen to be present in the ward. Only children, youths, newly married women and young men who have not yet been 'admitted' to beer drinks, may not attend. As a

result, beer drinks attract relatively large numbers of people - never less than 30, sometimes as many as 300. Beer drinks are 'public' also in the sense that no element of the formal proceedings takes place in private, with attendance being restricted by some or other criterion. Generally, no one is specifically invited to attend. The long brewing process (Ch 3) is advertisement enough, and people soon learn by word of mouth when the beer will be ready. Cook (1931, 27) comments that "the Bomvana simply feels the presence of beer".

b) complete in itself - A beer drink is not part of a series or cluster of ritual or ceremonial activities but an event that, as a ritual or ceremony, is complete in itself. This does not mean that a beer drink is not part of a context, or that it does not have anterior or posterior events, but simply that these are usually of an economic or political nature, and that the beer drink is not tied to or dependent on other ceremonials or rituals.

c) held in an individual homestead and for a particular purpose - With one exception (inkazathi beer drinks - see Ch 5) a beer drink is organised by an individual homestead and held in that homestead. The reason for holding a beer drink may be of a religious, social, economic or political character, or a combination of these. The purpose or goal of the beer drink is achieved through brewing beer, the attendance of people, the consumption of the beer by those who attend, and by the words spoken by the participants. Furthermore, it is only in this way, in practice, that the goal can be achieved - there are no alternative ways of achieving the same aim.

d) at which beer is the central element - A beer drink revolves around the distribution and consumption of beer, which is of primary importance, the only foodstuff or beverage provided, and the main focus of attention. The beer cannot be substituted for by something else.

e) and is distributed and consumed in a prescribed manner according to set rules - The beer is given out and drunk in a particular, sanctioned way, according to principles of territory, age and sex,

and, to a lesser extent, individual kinship links and individual statuses. The proceedings take place inside a hut and outside next to the inkundla (area between huts and cattle-byre), and never in the inkundla or in the cattle-byre.

The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with the question of how beer drinks thus defined differ from other occasions at which beer is consumed, and with an outline of different kinds of beer drinks. In that this involves classification it is important to realise that beer drinks are a 'polythetic' concept or class rather than a 'monothetic' one (Needham 1975) in that they involve a cluster or aggregate of characteristics, no one of which may be regarded as a 'defining characteristic', and no one of which is necessarily possessed by every member of the class. No individual member of the class necessarily has all the properties attributed to that class. Other social events at which beer is consumed may possess some of the characteristics that are attributed to beer drinks, which means that the difference between beer drinks and other (equally polythetic) classes are average differences and not absolute ones. As with other polythetic classifications, the boundaries between the classes of Xhosa social events are not clear cut but overlapping, and there are borderline cases. These points are clearly indicated in Table 3, above (p.95). It is nevertheless worthwhile making the attempt to classify due to the specific focus of this study on beer drinks rather than on beer drinking. The failure to make this distinction is one of the main difficulties with other studies of this topic, and can lead to a superficial view of beer drinking having the same significance whenever it takes place (e.g. Karp 1980).

That this is not an entirely arbitrary classification, however, is indicated by the fact that Shixini people (and other Xhosa speakers) make a distinction between iindywala (beer drinks), imigidi (large, public feasts) and izizathu or izisisusa (ancestor rituals). Although these terms are sometimes used fairly loosely in everyday speech, to say 'I am going to a beer drink', 'I am going to a feast' and 'I am going to an ancestor ritual' generally mean rather different things.

A convenient point at which to start is with the essentially social nature of beer drinking. Beer is not something for everyday, private consumption, but a drink to be shared with others, with a degree of formality or ceremony. Even if only a small quantity is brewed, say four beakers (30 litres), for an honoured guest, or to welcome a son back from the mines, close neighbours are always invited to the homestead to partake of it. The formalities on such occasions include at least a short explanation by the homestead head as to why people have been called, and a short formal reply from one of the visitors. The beakers are allocated to men and women separately, and people sit according to sex and age - women on the left, men on the right (when viewed by someone looking out of the hut), seniors towards the door, juniors at the back (see Ch. 3). Usually, men are given more beer than the women, and seniors of both sexes drink before, and more often than, juniors. These small occasions, attended perhaps by a dozen people or less, twenty at the most, are not 'beer drinks' in the sense that I use the term in this dissertation, although their formal or structural elements occur at beer drinks. They are not beer drinks because they are not fully public, because other foodstuffs (bread, tea, samp, etc) and other liquor (e.g. brandy) may be provided and because beer is but one option among many on occasions like this. The guest can just as easily be honoured with the slaughter of a pig or sheep; the migrant's exact day of return is seldom known, and brewing beer for him is the exception rather than the rule - what is important is that people gather to welcome him, and to drink the bottles of brandy that he brings for them (McAllister 1979).

Beer is sometimes made for the umtshotsho dances of boys and girls, usually at Christmas time, and for the intlombe dances of young men and older girls.<sup>23</sup> It is an important part of the umtshawuzo dances attended by senior men and amankazana (unattached women) who belong to the umtshawuzo organization, and who are collectively known as amatshawuza (McAllister 1981, 30). All three of these events, however, are not regarded as 'beer drinks' because the main focus is on other matters such as dancing, display and courtship. The beer is a secondary element. Umtshotsho and intlombe are usually held without it, though not umtshawuzo. Furthermore, none of these events are

public in the sense that participation is open to all, but attendance is restricted by criteria of age, marital status and subscription. Umtshotsho, intlombe and umtshawuzo do attract spectators, but participation is limited to those recognized as members.

Beer is an important element also in large elaborate events such as male initiation, most stages of which are accompanied by beer drinking. These stages include the cutting (ukugawula) of poles and thatching for and the construction of the seclusion hut, the rite at each boy's homestead prior to circumcision (ukuncamisa), which is the first stage in the abandoning of boyhood (ukuncamisa means 'to cause to abandon'),<sup>24</sup> the umgidi (public feast) which starts immediately after circumcision and entry into the seclusion hut, the ukojiswa rite at the circumcision lodge a week or so after circumcision, after which the initiates start eating normal food again; the umgidi that accompanies ukutshila, the dance of the initiates (nowadays rather rare); and the umgidi to mark the 'coming out' of the initiates and their entry into manhood. Some of these rites (ukuncamisa and ukojiswa) involve the killing of an animal, usually a goat, in a prescribed ritual manner, and could be successfully carried out without beer, while others (ukugawula and the 'coming out' umgidi) often include the distribution of brandy and food in addition to beer. Some are fully public, others exclude certain categories of people. For example, women cannot attend ukojiswa, people from other sub-wards do not usually attend ukuncamisa (though they are not turned away if they do). To call male initiation a 'beer drink' would clearly be unsatisfactory, as would be separating out certain aspects of it, such as an umgidi, for consideration outside of the context of the larger process. Similar considerations lead me to exclude other large rites of passage such as marriage and intonjane. These too proceed through a number of stages, some of which involve ritual killings and the consumption of beer, have public and private elements, and so on.

Beer drinks must be distinguished from ancestor rituals or 'ritual killings', a term I prefer because these rituals usually include the killing of an ox or a goat (though these may occasionally be substituted for by beer) and because beer drinks (as shall be

demonstrated in what follows) are also rituals involving the ancestors.<sup>25</sup> For convenience, however, I shall speak here of 'rituals' to mean ritual killings. In Shixini, as in other Xhosa-speaking areas, beer is an important part of rituals such as ukuguqula (ukubuyisa), to effect the 'turning back' of the spirit or 'shade' of a deceased man to his homestead; ukupha ('to give'), which involves the 'gift' of an ox or a goat to a designated male or female ancestor; and intambo, which is a 'piacular' ritual, or ritual of affliction, through which a cure is sought for a person whose illness is believed to be caused by the shades. By all accounts other rituals involving animal sacrifice, such as that for remote ancestors or diviner ancestors, called izilo (Bigalke 1969) or amarhamncwa, that for 'making known a (new) homestead' (ukwazisa umzi), and inkobe, the killing of a goat for a deceased mother, also involve beer brewing.

From my observations in Shixini, beer is not brewed for ukukhup' umtana, the killing of a beast (usually a goat) which marks the end of the seclusion period for a new-born child and its mother (also called ukusindela or ukubingelela); it is not brewed as part of the burial rites, nor for the ukuzila ('mourning') ritual, held some time (ideally one year) after the burial (called ukukhapha elsewhere).<sup>26</sup> Beer is also not brewed for an ancillary mortuary ceremony called 'allowing women into the garden' (ngokungenis' abafaz' egadini). This is performed some weeks after the burial of a homestead head, if the grave is in the garden (at the site of the original cattlebyre). It involves the removal of the restriction on close female affines from entering the garden and walking near the grave.

The above are, for the purpose of this dissertation, 'rituals' rather than beer drinks. This is obvious enough in cases where no beer is brewed. In the case of the others, such as ukuguqula or ukupha, beer is an important element, but it is secondary to the achievement of the aims of the ritual, and is but one of many elements designed to facilitate the success of the ritual and the aim of communication and communion with the ancestors. The animal that is killed is of primary importance. One can guqula ('bring back') a dead father, for example,

with the animal alone, brewing beer at a later date when maize is available, but one cannot effect the return of the shade with beer, and follow this up with an ox at a later date. In such a situation one can but 'beg pardon' (ukungxengeza), by brewing beer or by killing a goat, assuring the shade that he has not been forgotten and that he will be returned as soon as an ox is available. The ritual tasting (ukushwama) takes place first with meat, then with beer. On all three days of a ritual like ukupha, the feasting follows this order; meat comes first, beer follows. The secondary importance of beer is indicated also by the fact that some of it is distributed in the idiom of meat. For example, the beakers given out on the first day are called imibengo (lit: collops or strips of meat).

There are a number of important characteristics of ritual which mark such events as being religious rituals designed to communicate and commune with the ancestor(s) and which distinguish them from beer drinks. These include the manner in which the animal is killed (in the cattle byre, using the 'spear of the home', not spilling blood, etc - see Hammond-Tooke (1978, 1985) for fuller details), the necessity for the animal to cry out, indicating its 'agreement' to mediate between man and shades and its acceptability to the latter, and the use of special portions of meat (e.g. intsonyama, isiphika) which are ritually tasted by the subject of the ritual (e.g. in the case of intambo) and/or by members of the kin group.

Other ritual materia include 'medicine of the home' (iyeza lasekhaya, or ubulawu) with which the afflicted person washes as part of the intambo ritual, and beer, which is ritually tasted in a similar manner to the special portions of meat, and which is used as a libation to the shades, being poured on to the manure at the entrance to the cattlebyre. Actions such as these are designed to facilitate communication with the shade(s), and there is also usually a formal invocation to the shade(s) (unqulo) by the chief officiant, and sometimes also by others, in which the purpose of the ritual and the response required from the shade(s) is made explicit. At beer drinks the religious aspect is less explicit. No animal is killed, and no materia as such are identifiable and ritually manipulated. There are

no specific actions which can be seen as set apart from others, the purpose of which is to invoke or commune with the shades. Most rituals are directed at a specific ancestor or are held for specific living people (e.g. a sick person, a mother and child). Some beer drinks do mark changes in individual status, but (with one exception) beer drinks are not held for a specific ancestor and they are not held to cure illness.

Members of the agnatic group or 'clan-section' (see Kuckertz 1984, Hammond-Tooke 1985) and other kin (see Ch. 7) are specifically called to attend major rituals such as ukupha, ukuzila, intambo, and others, and are required to stay at the homestead for the duration of the event, which may take three or four days. The religious corporateness of this group is expressed in a number of other ways too, such as the use of special ('traditional') dress and decorative items of ritual importance. Male members of the kin group sit together in the cattlebyre, where most of the action takes place, irrespective of their territorial affiliation. They are allocated meat and beer as a group, and certain portions of the animal are reserved for them. Other men sit and are given food according to their home areas. Most of the ritual takes place in the cattle byre, in public, but there are aspects which are private, attended only by kin. The division between kin and non-kin is symbolized in this manner. Further details on the composition of the kin group that participates in ritual are provided in the final chapter, where the religious nature of beer drinking is compared with that of ritual killings.

This does not mean that non-kin are present at rituals merely as spectators, interested only in getting something to eat and drink, and whose participation in the event is wholly secular. Bigalke (1969) has recognized the importance of unrelated clansmen, neighbours and village members in ritual. This is also the case in Shixini (McAllister 1979, 61 ff.), though it is an issue that remains to be more fully documented. For present purposes the important point is that at rituals the kin group plays a key role in the proceedings, and displays its solidarity and exclusiveness in a variety of symbols. The division between 'us' (kin) and 'them' (non-kin) and the exclusion

of non-kin from participation in certain aspects of the proceedings, marks rituals as distinct from beer drinks as defined earlier.

In the case of some beer drinks there is a (relatively small) private element, but I have included them in the category of beer drinks because the public aspect is absolutely necessary for the success of the occasion, and because the other characteristics are those of beer drinks rather than of ritual killings. While the importance of certain kinship ties is recognized at beer drinks, there is no suggestion of kin as a group sitting separately from the others, or receiving an allocation of beer as a group. Instead, what counts is neighbourhood and territory, and it is this spatial principle that forms the basis for the allocation of both seating places and beer, as we shall see below. Kin who live nearby (e.g. in the same sub-ward) are sometimes called to be present at some beer drinks, but they are not obliged to attend, and lineage members who live far away (e.g. in another ward) are not informed or called.

In what follows the various kinds of beer drinks with which this study is concerned are outlined.<sup>27</sup> It will be seen, however, that 'beer drinks' do not form a hard and fast category, and that the boundaries between beer drinks and rituals, on the one hand, and beer drinks and certain economic activities, on the other side of the continuum, are fuzzy.

A number of beer drinks are held for what seems, initially, to be no particular reason. Shixini people say that every homestead 'ought' to brew beer once or twice a year, because it is a 'good thing' to do so. Such beer drinks are called by a variety of names - isichenene ('a little drop'), 'ntselo ('a drink'), 'ntwana ('something small'), or any of these with nje ('merely' or 'only') appended - e.g. 'ntwana nje or isichenene nje. When asked, people are vague about why they decided to brew for such a beer drink, or why they decided to do so at that particular time. Beer is brewed from time to time, said Ndlebezenja, in the course of a speech at a beer drink, "so that there should be a saddle seen by people passing by on the road (who will say), 'there is a horse over there, with its saddle on; let us call

in there men, whoever's home it might be. That is what brings good luck". At a beer drink held for no particular reason other than to provide beer for people, as part of an informal system of generalized reciprocity, those who attend are told simply that "this beer does not proclaim anything (abumemezi eny' into) I have brewed simply so that there should be drinking in the area (ilali)".

Some people brew more frequently than others, but I came across no homesteads which did not brew at all, and informants in Folokhwe did not know of any. The frequency of brewing depends, it seems, on a combination of factors - the availability of money or maize, personal inclination, and circumstances affecting the homestead and its inhabitants. A person brews "when he has maize, and when he feels like doing so", "when he feels in his heart that it should be done", "when you realise that it has been a long time since brewing...(and) you have the means (amandla, lit. 'power') to do so..."

Despite the fact that events like isichenene are apparently brewed simply to provide beer for people, there is often some deeper, more important but less explicit (sometimes concealed) motive. All beer drinks are thought to benefit the homestead by calling the attention of the shades and helping to ensure their continued general beneficence. Secondly, because of this, a homestead head sometimes decides to brew isichenene or ntwana nje as a prelude to the holding of some larger and important ritual, such as ukuguqula. The beer drink focusses the attention of the shades on the homestead and ensures that they will respond favourably to the ritual that follows, when the achievement of something specific is sought.

Certain cases of 'ntwana nje have as their primary objective the introduction of a new homestead to the community and the shades, and are substitutes for the ritual of ukwazisa 'mzi. Other cases are held prior to the departure of a migrant worker, with the covert objective of ensuring good fortune at work. One of the isichenene beer drinks that I attended, I was told privately, was being held because the homestead head had recently returned from work (though nothing to this effect was said publicly. Similarly, a migrant about to leave for

work might brew, to ensure that he has a safe journey and a successful stay at work (see McAllister 1980).

Other beer drinks are associated with more specific motives, often of a religious nature. At these events people speak of the beer as 'beer of the home' (utywala bekhaya), a term also used for beer brewed for izizathu, as distinct from the 'beer just to drink' (intselo nje) made for events such as isichenene. However, when comparing isichenene or 'ntwana nje with imbarha (beer for sale), informants spoke of the former as 'beer of the home' or 'true beer', while the latter was not seen in the same light. One of the commonest beer drinks held in Shixini is 'beer for harvest' (utywala bomvuno) which is brewed some time after the harvest has been brought in from the field or garden and stored, in order to 'give thanks' for what was obtained, and to ensure that the next year's harvest will be as good or better. A more elaborate form of this beer drink is called utywala benkabi ('beer for the oxen'). These beer drinks are discussed in Chapter 5 (below).

There are three other beer drinks where the religious component is quite explicit. Two of these, inkobe and certain instances of 'ntwana nje are substitutes for ritual killings while one, umsindleko, was developed to take the place of a killing. When inkobe is performed as a substitute for the killing of a goat (for a deceased mother) in the prescribed ritual manner, it loses most of the characteristics of izizathu and takes on those of a beer drink, which become essential elements in ensuring the success of the occasion. It is for this reason that I consider it to be a beer drink rather than simply an isizathu performed with beer instead of a goat. The substitution of beer for the goat changes the character of the occasion, as will become evident when this process is discussed more fully below (see Ch. 5). The same applies to 'ntwana nje, which can be a substitute for ukwazisi' umzi. Umsindleko, as I have demonstrated elsewhere (McAllister 1981) is a beer drink held to welcome home a migrant worker, thank the ancestors for looking after him and for the success of his workspell, and plead with them to continue to do so in future. It is an event which developed from an earlier form, a ritual killing called umhlinzeko, and which changed in character in doing so

to meet changed socio-economic circumstances.

Both umsindleko and ntwana nje for a new homestead involve transition or change in status - in the one case from absent migrant worker to returned member of the community and resident of the homestead: in the other from non-homestead head to homestead head.

There are a number of other beer drinks involving transitions but which are not, to the best of my knowledge, substitutes for ritual killings or developments from these. These beer drinks include the promotion of a woman from the status of junior married woman to senior married woman (ukuqhutywa umfazi), the lifting of the restrictions of mourning on the close kin of a deceased person (ukukhulula usapho) and on the widow of a deceased homestead head (ukukhulula umhlokokazi). These three beer drinks, together with those instances of 'ntwana nje' which also involve transition, are discussed in Chapter 6.

Other beer drinks revolve around a service rendered or work done by other members of the community. For example, beer is brewed in conjunction with the allocation of a homestead site, and also when a field is allocated. As discussed earlier an application for a site is made to the sub-ward moot (ibandla), consisting of all its senior men. The ibandla, in considering the application, concerns itself primarily with what those living in the vicinity of the proposed site feel. If the applicant's future neighbours are happy about the site being granted, the ibandla approves the application and sets a date for a visit to the site, so that its exact location can be verified. On the date set the men of the sub-ward go down to the site, and the applicant (or his/her father or other senior kinsman) makes available the beer brewed for the occasion. The beer drink then follows the inspection of the site, and is referred to as utywala benxiwa ('beer of the site'). According to informants, the procedure is similar in the case of an application for a field, with the beer drink taking place after the location of the field and its boundaries have been confirmed by the ibandla.

There is some difficulty, this time at the secular end of the

continuum between beer drinks and other types of events, in identifying what might be called 'work party beer drinks'. In theory, beer may be brewed for a small group of two or three people in recognition of (or reward for, depending on one's point of view) work done by them. In practise this seldom, if ever, occurs. Since brewing beer entails considerable effort it is not practical to brew very small amounts. Small work groups of two or three women are almost invariably based on reciprocity. A woman wanting a few others to assist her in her garden, for example, goes and asks those whom she has assisted in the past. Tea or marhewu might be made, or isopi (a watery samp and bean mixture), or perhaps just plain inkobe (boiled maize). Shixini people say that such groups are based on ukuvana ('friendliness' or 'mutual sympathy and understanding'), or on ukuncedisana ('reciprocity', lit. 'helping each other') and distinguish them from other, larger work parties. Slightly larger groups, say of eight or ten people, may be constituted on the same basis, but often a woman will buy some beer from a nearby imbarha (see Ch. 5) or make mangumba, which can be brewed in 24 hours quite easily, as an attraction for people to come and help her. In such cases even women with whom she does not have a long-standing relationship of reciprocal assistance may come and work.

For other work parties, however, it is necessary to brew beer. If a group of men is asked to do a job such as fencing the garden, cutting poles for building, and suchlike, beer is brewed for them. Similarly, beer must be brewed if one wants a large number of people to do a job like hoeing a large field in one day. Such beer is termed 'beer for fencing' or 'beer for hoeing', or whatever, and may be fairly large in quantity (not less than 60 litres). One of the commonest of these beer drinks is one called umgqibelo ('Saturday') after the name given to the group that does the work. An umgqibelo is a ploughing group, made up of two or more of the established ploughing 'companies' in the area (see above). The companies come together at the request of any homestead head, plough and plant his field more rapidly than he would by using only the company that he belongs to, and are rewarded with beer brewed by him.

Although meant primarily for the workers, other people also come along to work party beer drinks in the knowledge that beer will be distributed after the work has been completed, and that all who are present will get something to drink. I regard such public events as 'beer drinks' because it is only by brewing beer that a homestead head can achieve the result he desires (e.g. get the garden fenced), because it is primarily for beer that people assemble (although the beer drink follows a spell of work) and because the beer is distributed and consumed in a formal, prescribed manner.

Finally, there are beer drinks at which the bulk of the beer is sold. These are imbarha, which is brewed and sold by an individual homestead, and inkazathi, which is a communal effort, held in order to raise money for something (e.g. school funds). These beer drinks are not quite as formal and as highly structured as those at which beer is not sold, as indicated in Chapter 5, but they are more than just commercial events.

I have excluded from this analysis beer drinks that I have been told about but which I have not witnessed or which no longer take place. These include beer to 'initiate' a new cast-iron pot of the largest size; beer for a race horse (to help it win or to praise it for doing so), and beer brewed on instructions from a diviner, as when lightning strikes a homestead (the beer is meant to 'wash', i.e. purify from pollution, the homestead, its occupants and close kin) and when bees swarm into a hut or cattle byre (the bees are referred to as 'visitors' or abahlekazi - 'great sirs', and are associated with founding clan ancestors). I have also excluded beer brewed in restitution for an offence. People often mentioned to me that misdemeanours could be punished by sentencing the offender to a fine of a certain quantity of beer, which was then consumed by the community, but only one such case occurred during fieldwork and the sentence was, in effect, suspended (see p. 223-4). I also did not come across any case of beer brewed for agnates when they meet to arrange an ancestor ritual, as occurs among the Ndlambe near East London (Bigalke 1969, 139). Excluded too are the Christmas and New Year's Day festivities, when beer, other liquor and food (mainly meat)

are consumed. On these occasions, people who do not brew go from house to house to drink the beer brewed by others. Within a small locality such as a sub-ward section there are usually two or three small beer drinks on each of these days (six to ten in the sub-ward as a whole) attended mainly by the people in one's immediate neighbourhood.

In summary, then, the 'beer drinks' discussed in this dissertation include those tabulated below (Table 2)

TABLE 2	
Varieties of Beer Drinks in Shixini	
1.	<u>Beer brewed for no apparent or obvious reason</u> - isichenene, ntselolo, or 'ntwana nje
2.	<u>Beer brewed for religious motives</u> - beer for harvest and beer for the oxen - beer brewed as a substitute for a ritual killing, such as inkobe - umsindleko, for a returned migrant
3.	<u>Beer brewed to mark change in status</u> - ntwana nje for a new homestead - ukukhulula usapho - ukukhulula umhlolokazi
4.	<u>Beer brewed in association with a service or work performed</u> - beer for a site or a field - umqibelo - beer for hoeing, beer for fencing, etc
5.	<u>Beer for sale</u> - imbarha - inkazathi

These categories are not mutually exclusive. All beer drinks have something of a religious element; beer for the oxen includes a recognition of the services provided by men (and oxen) from other

homesteads; beer for harvest marks the 'transition' between seasons; and so on.

It is obvious from the above that beer is a 'key' symbol in Shixini. It is used in a variety of contexts, is highly valued, and is surrounded by considerable 'cultural elaboration' (Ortner 1973). Brewing, as shown in the following chapter, is a skilled and finely perfected technique, and there is a relatively large vocabulary of specialized terms referring to beer, its preparation, and its consumption (see Glossary, Appendix 1). This is the case also in other parts of Africa (e.g. Nolan 1971, Karp 1980). Like other 'key' symbols beer is used according to a detailed system of rules and procedures, and evokes a wide variety of significations. In Turner's terms it is a 'dominant' symbol, sharing the multivalent or polysemic character of such symbols in general (Turner 1967, 1982).

TABLE 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF BEER DRINKS AND RITUAL KILLINGS

	BEER BREWED/CONSUMED	NO BEER	BEER IS SECONDARY	BEER IS OPTIONAL	KILLING ESSENTIAL	PRIVATE ELEMENTS	KINGROUP SOLIDARITY EMPHASISED	INVOCATION (UNQULO)	RITUAL TASTING	STATUS CHANGE EFFECTED	PERFORMED FOR LIVING INDIVIDUAL(S)	PERFORMED FOR INDIVIDUAL ANCESTOR	CONDUCTED IN CATTLEBYRE	SPECIAL DRESS WORN	BEER THE CENTRAL ELEMENT	COMPLETE IN ITSELF	CONDUCTED IN A HUT	OTHER FOOD/DRINK PROVIDED	A SUBSTITUTE RITUAL	NO ONE CALLED TO ATTEND	FULLY PUBLIC	A PARTICULAR ANCESTOR	ANCESTORS AS A GROUP REFERRED TO	
UKUGUQULA	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x										x	x*	
UKUPHA	x		x	x**	x	x	x	x		x	x	x											x	x
INTAMBO	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x***	x	x+	x	x										x	x
UKUZILA		x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x											x	
UKUKHUPH' UMTANA		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x												x	x
UKUNCAMISA	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x											x	x
UKOJISWA	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x++	x											x	x
UKUNGXENGXEZA			x°	°	x	x	x	x		x	x												x	x
IMIGIDI	x				°°	x				x			x	x									x	
BEER FOR VISITORS			x		x					x														x
UMTSHAWUZO	x		x		x								x	x	x	x	x							x
ISICHENENE	x												x	x	x								x	x
BEER FOR HARVEST	x												x	x	x								x	x
INKOBE	x				x	°°°		x		x			x	x	x								x	
UMSINDLEKO	x								x	x													x	x
NTWANA NJE (new umzi)	x								x	x													x	x
RELEASING THE WIDOW	x				x				x	x			x	x	x								x	x
PROMOTING THE WIFE	x								x	x			x	x	x								x	x
BEER FOR A SITE	x												x	x	x								x	x
BEER FOR HOEING	x												x	x	x <sup>⊖</sup>								x	x
IMBARHA	x												x	x	x								x	x

\* AT UKUGUQULA, AND ALSO AT UKUPHA, THE INDIVIDUAL ANCESTOR MAY BE INVOKED, OR SIMPLY MENTIONED IN SPEECHES, WITH THE INVOCATION BEING TO THE ANCESTRAL GROUP

\*\* EVEN IF AN ANCESTOR IS THOUGHT TO BE ASKING FOR EITHER MEAT OR BEER, BOTH ARE USUALLY PROVIDED

\*\*\* IF THE PATIENT IS CURED THE TRANSITION IS FROM ILLNESS TO HEALTH

+ ONLY IF AN INDIVIDUAL ANCESTOR IS THOUGHT TO BE THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM

++ IN THIS CASE THE BYRE IS SYMBOLIC, MADE FROM THORNY BRANCHES NEXT TO THE SECLUSION HUT

° UKUNGXENGXEZA MAY BE HELD WITH BEER OR A GOAT

°° IN A SENSE AN UMGIDI IS A PUBLIC FEAST, THOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE THE FEASTING FROM THE OTHER ACTIONS AND RITES WHICH OCCUR ON THE SAME DAY AS PART OF THE SAME OVERALL EVENT- E.G. CIRCUMCISION, OR THE ENDING OF THE SECLUSION PERIOD, WHICH INCLUDE PRIVATE ELEMENTS

°°° WHEN BEER IS BREWED FOR INKOBE ONLY THOSE KIN WHO LIVE NEARBY ARE CALLED AND THEY RITUALLY TASTE THE BEER BEFORE THE PUBLIC BEER DRINK. AT THE LATTER THEY DO NOT SIT SEPARATELY OR RECEIVE A SPECIAL PORTION OF BEER

⊖ LIKE OTHER WORK PARTY BEER DRINKS THIS VARIES. PART OF THE EVENT MAY BE HELD IN THE FIELDS

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Alcoholic drink of some kind is found in all societies, and beer has been an important part of ritual and social life from at least the third millenium B.C. (Lucia 1973, cited in de Haas 1986).
2. Richards (1939, 81) estimated that a senior Bemba man or woman might drink about one and a half pints of beer on the night of a beer drink. Younger people received considerably less.
3. Also known as bojalwa (Tswana), bjalwe (Kgaga), byalwa (Lovedu), halwa (Venda), umbwalwu (Bemba) and ubwalwa (Lamba).
4. Nowadays beer is made from maize in most parts of the country, though in the past it was made mainly from millet (sorghum, guinea corn, Kaffir corn). Bryant (1949) says that Zulu beer was made originally from eleusine (upoko) and pennisetum (unyawoti) while sorghum was used primarily as a (hard) foodstuff. As maize replaced sorghum as the main food crop, the latter came to be used primarily for beer.
5. Marhewu has been called 'Christians' beer' because it is non-alcoholic. The word is probably derived from the Afrikaans 'gou' (quickly), probably because it is quick to prepare (Bud-Mbelle, 1926, 131).
6. Kropf (1915, 358) refers to umqombothi as 'light' beer. Among Xhosa speakers it has become synonymous with utywala (beer). Bigalke, for example, refers to beer as umqombothi (1969, 15). There is some evidence that utywala is the generic name for alcoholic drink, umqombothi for maize beer (Fox 1938).
7. Survivors from the 'Stavenisse' reported that the Magosse (amaXhosa) "deduce their origin from a certain man and woman, who grew up together out of the earth, and who taught them to cultivate the ground, to sow corn, to milk cows, and brew beer",

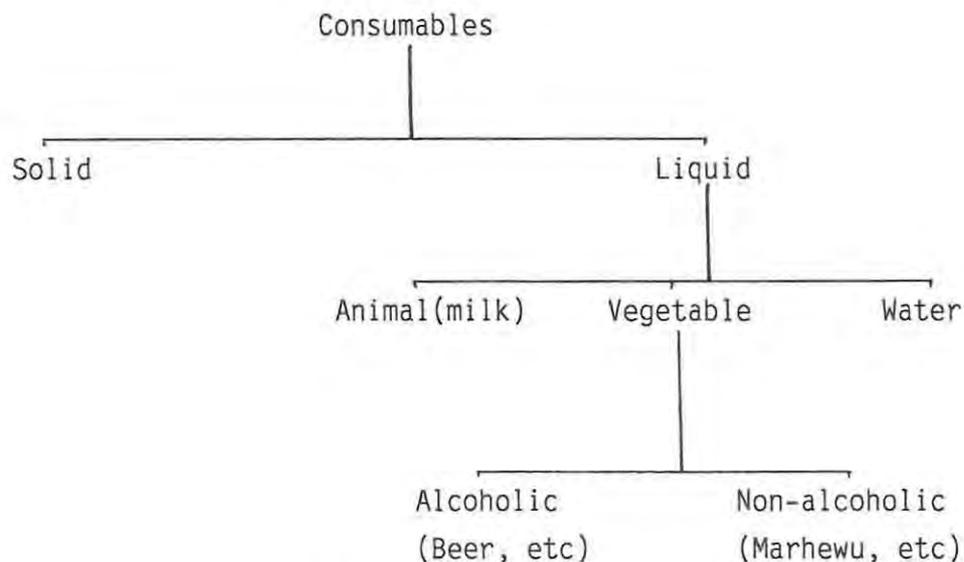
although they had "not the slightest trace of religion" (Bird 1888, I, 45). The Zulu 'sky-princess' Nomkhubulwana is said to have taught men to plant millet and to brew beer from it (Bryant 1949, 57). See also Junod (1927, II, 238), Junod & Jaques (1957), Hammond-Tooke (1962), Broster (1976), Mesatywa (1954), Nyembezi (1954).

8. This also served to inform political authorities that brewing was taking place and to obtain their sanction for this (Monnig 1967; Krige & Krige 1943).
9. For example, beer was brewed to mark the end of the isolation period for a mother after the birth of a child (Krige 1936, 69; Hunter 1936, 155); it was used in name-giving ceremonies to introduce a child to the ancestors (Monnig 1967, 106); and in the initiation ceremonies of both boys and girls (Ashton 1967, 53; Hunter 1936, 365; Monnig 1967, 120; Hammond-Tooke 1962, 82-3; Krige 1936, 91-2). Beer was an important element in marriage rituals (e.g. Bird 1888, I, 477; Junod 1927, I, 117; Krige 1936, 131-4) and in mortuary rites (e.g. Kuper 1947, 186; Ashton 1967, 111; Gelfand 1959; Wilson 1957, 41-2).
10. Among the Zulu it was also brewed for the ceremonies associated with Nomkhubulwana.
11. Beer was used in the initiation of a Zulu diviner and in divination. "In umsamo (the back) of a diviners house there are often a number of beer vessels...(which)...may never ever be completely empty..." (Berglund 1976, 166, 176).
12. Berglund (1976, 210-212) describes the ritual brewing of beer in gratitude for a boy's narrow escape from death after having been gored by an ox. The circumstances, the form of the ritual, the procedure followed, and the symbolism, are in many ways virtually identical to the Gcaleka umsindleko, a beer drink held to mark the safe return of a migrant worker (McAllister 1981).

13. Similar ritual uses of beer are recorded from other parts of Africa. The Nuer, for example, held a ceremony called 'the bathing of the cow in beer', in which beer was poured over the peg to which the cow was tethered (Evans-Pritchard 1956, cited by de Haas 1986, 11).
14. Beer, while fermenting, 'boils', and should be abstained from, along with meat and sexual intercourse, on the day prior to a ritual killing. Beer causes desire, said Berglund's informants - "it is the same with desire for women...both have desire and heat" (1976, 226).
15. This is apparently a Zulu and not a Christian image.
16. Amadikazi are unattached, 'free' women, often widowed or separated from their husbands.
17. I am grateful to Dr J.B. Peries of Rhodes University for informing me of this reference. Turning grain into beer would have been more satisfactory than burning it or letting it rot, given the love of beer and the association of beer with the ancestors.
18. In addition to the uneven distribution of livestock, the numbers are subject to considerable fluctuation. Between 1984 and 1986, for example, disease killed off nearly all the sheep and most of the goats in Folokhwe. I do not have exact figures, but informants told me that only about three or four homesteads still had sheep, compared with the 40 homesteads which had sheep in 1976/77.
19. Details of the composition of homesteads in Folokhwe sub-ward may be found in McAllister (1979, 11-15).
20. The number of homestead heads who are the only representatives of their clans is fairly small (7,5%). In a Mpondomise ward Hammond-Tooke found that the figure was 36%, while in Pondoland

it was higher - 43% (Kuckertz 1984, 28-29).

21. There are a variety of ways in which this diagram might be drawn. One alternative might be as follows:



22. The social implications of brewing seem to be constant in many African societies. For example, among the Uduk of the Sudan "drinking together expresses communal goodwill, promotes friendship and a euphoric sense of well being" (James 1972, 25). Here, as in Willowvale, brewing is a 'social investment'. Providing hospitality to others puts them under an obligation to do likewise at some time in the future. In this way, social links are built up and strengthened (ibid., 25-26).
23. Bigalke (1982), mentions a case of a young man's sister brewing for him and his peers. In Willowvale, beer for young men and girls of corresponding age is referred to as itimiti ('a tea meeting'). It is part of the usual weekend intlombe dance but takes place in a separate hut, entry to which is by way of a small cash fee.
24. Educated and knowledgeable Xhosa speakers say that this should be spelt ukungcamisa, and that ukuncamisa means 'to kiss'. However, the latter is the causitive form of ukuncama, 'to abandon' (Kropf

1915, 246). Among Mpondo the ritual consumption of beer during an 'ancestral feast' by kinsmen and their wives in the cattlebyre, together with the libation of beer to the ancestors, is also known as ukuncamisa, which Kuckertz translates as "to cause somebody to abandon something" (1983/4, 5).

25. 'Sacrifice' is, for various reasons, inappropriate (see Kuckertz 1984, 332).
26. Ukuzila involves the killing of an ox in a ritual manner, and is quite distinct from the ritual that terminates the mourning period (see Ch 6; also Kuckertz 1984, 330).
27. Cook (1931, 127-28) identifies three kinds of beer drinks among the Bomvana - 'informal parties', 'work parties' and 'ceremonial drinks' (the latter corresponding to imigidi). Most of the beer drinks that I am concerned with would fall into the category of 'informal parties', though this term is misleading.

## CHAPTER THREE

## THE A TO Z OF BREWING AND DRINKING

Brewing (ukusila)

Once he has decided to hold a beer drink and set a date for the event, a homestead head and his wife (the latter as chief brewer) set about preparing for that day. They may need to purchase maize, ask neighbours and friends to help with the work, and borrow some of the necessary utensils. A widow or female homestead head who wants to brew informs one of her husband's male kin or her father, if she lives near her natal home. This man takes nominal charge of the event, is kept informed of developments by the woman and, in the case of beer for sale, is responsible for informing the isibonda and obtaining the latter's consent for the event. Because many men are away as migrant workers, beer drinks are frequently initiated by women.

The ingredients for brewing are simple, consisting of maize and water, but the process itself is highly technical, requiring experience, skill and good judgement. Some of the maize (between one quarter and one third) must be turned into malt (imithombo,<sup>1</sup> inkoduso), before the brewing proper can proceed. This is done by steeping it in water for three days and then putting it out in the sun, in closed hessian bags, for a similar period. During this time it germinates, after which it is removed from the bags and sun-dried. It can be kept in the dried state for months, or coarsely ground and used almost immediately for brewing. The equipment needed to brew beer includes grinding stones, cast-iron cooking pots, plastic barrels (wooden ones are now rare, clay pots unknown), woven grass beer-strainers, and an assortment of buckets, dishes, tin-cans, grass mats, hessian bags, and so on. A supply of fuel (wood and manure) is needed, and also some food and drink for the brewers.

To brew good quality beer of the kind that people like and comment favourably on, one needs to use good quality maize, plenty of imithombo (skimping on the imithombo is easily noticed), maintain a

relatively high standard of hygiene, and have lots of time available. The cash outlay is relatively small.<sup>2</sup> In 1981 a bag of shop-bought maize cost R18-50. From this it was possible to make 400 litres of beer and about 60 litres of ivanya ('beer' from the second straining - see below). Labour is also needed. A woman and her teenage daughter are able to brew a small quantity of beer (say 40 litres) relatively easily, but for a medium-sized beer drink one needs 200 to 400 litres of beer. At one of the umsindleko beer drinks that I attended during fieldwork there was over 1200 litres of beer to dispose of, enough even for a good-sized umgidi.

Usually it is the young women and teenage girls in the immediate neighbourhood, some of whom may also be kin, who are called upon for assistance with the brewing. For example, those who helped MamSiya, Nothimba's wife, when she brewed for Nothimba's umsindleko, were her adult, unmarried daughter, her HBW and HBSW from an adjoining homestead, together with four teenage girls and four women from nearby homesteads, none of whom were close kin to Nothimba. Not all of these worked for the entire brewing period, or at the same time. The utensils that MamSiya needed - barrels, pots, and so on - were borrowed from an almost entirely different set of neighbouring homesteads from those which supplied labour. The helpers came from seven homesteads (some supplying both a woman and a girl), and the utensils were borrowed from eight homesteads, only one of which also supplied a helper.

Sometimes the brewer sends for help or utensils to a distant, closely related homestead, but this is the exception rather than the rule. In other words, brewing is a co-operative process that involves a number of neighbouring homesteads (fourteen in MamSiya's case) in a common task over the five to eight days that it takes to prepare the beer (the exact time period depends on factors like the amount of beer brewed, individual preference and the weather). As such, the production of beer is one example of the kind of cooperation between neighbours that is essential for the wellbeing of each homestead. This has important implications for the nature of beer distribution and consumption, as will be seen below. It is partly because brewing

is a labour intensive business that beer drinks are commoner during the winter months after the harvest than during the ploughing and cultivating period (November to March) when labour is needed in the fields and gardens and the opportunity cost of brewing is high.

In addition to the labour intensive nature of brewing, people from other homesteads, or from other parts of the sub-ward, call at the homestead while brewing is in progress, either out of curiosity, or on their way to and from the shop, or while passing by for some other reason, and often lend a hand for an hour or so, or just sit and chat to the brewers. Brewing is a very sociable occasion. There is lots of conversation and banter between people; sometimes the brewers break into song or relieve the monotony of grinding with an impromptu dance.<sup>3</sup> While straining the beer women frequently help themselves to a dishful, and pass this around to others. Boys and young men come to the homestead, attracted by the presence of both girls and beer, and there are invariably lots of noisy children around, not to mention pigs, chickens and dogs. Brewing, then, is not just a matter of co-operation between homesteads, all of which may be represented at the beer drink, but also a very sociable, community event. The end product, too, is viewed as something to be shared with others.

Assuming that the imithombo has been prepared and ground, the brewing (for an amount of about 300 litres) proceeds as follows: On the first day the maize is placed in pots and barrels and covered with water, so that it becomes soft, preparatory to grinding. It is left in the water for two days. On the second day the other utensils required for brewing are assembled, firewood and manure gathered, and water drawn. Such activities are repeated as and when required in the process of brewing. On the third day the (now soft) maize is ground. This is hard work, and in Shixini the word for 'grinding' (ukusila) serves as a gloss for 'brewing'. The maize is placed on a large flat or slightly concave stone (ilitye) and ground with a smaller, smoother round stone (imbokodo). For a large beer drink this may take the entire day, with five or six sets of grinding stones operating at once. The ground maize is pushed or allowed to fall onto a hessian bag or grass mat (isithebe) under and in front of the stone.

Occasionally the workers replenish their dishes from the pots or take a rest, their places being taken for a short while by a passer-by or visitor. While grinding, their hands get caked with maize, which they wash off in a small basin next to the grindstones. This water is carefully collected together and later added to the pots. When all the maize has been ground it is returned to the pots and barrels and covered with fresh water. The old water is thrown out, because it is dirty and sour.

On the fourth day the ground maize (intlama) is taken out of the containers, dishful by dishful as required, and ground a second time. The imithombo, too, may be ground on this day if it has not been done previously. As on the previous day, many people come to the homestead to chat and give encouragement to the workers, and to help when one of the workers has a rest. Marhewu, or beer from another homestead where beer has been prepared, is available for the workers, who share it with whoever happens to be present. While the second grinding is in progress, the floor at the back of the hut is swept and covered with a layer of dry, crumbled manure, about a centimetre or two thick. The barrels are then placed on this layer. When the second grinding has been completed, each barrel is filled to about one third of its capacity with the intlama, now in the form of a coarse paste. At this stage the intlama has already started to ferment and has a sour smell about it. Meanwhile, water is heated outside in large pots, and added to the intlama. Most of the water added after the first grinding is absorbed by the ground grain overnight, but that which is left is added to the pots of hot water, along with the water used by the workers to wash their hands, giving it the creamy colour of weak beer.

When the water is hot enough it is brought inside and added to the barrels. Then imithombo is added, the mixture is given a good stir with a hoe handle, and left overnight. For smaller beer drinks the mixture is allowed to stand for a while and then cooked, but when the amount is large the cooking has to wait until the following day.

The cooking, on the fifth day, is done outside in large cast-iron pots, using both wood and dry manure as fuel. The pots are filled

with water and the rougher part of the mixture from the top of the barrels is added. The pots are brought to the boil before the rest of the intlama, the finer portion from the bottom of the pots, is added. Once the pots come to the boil again they are removed from the fire and the mixture is taken out and cooled. Knowing when to remove the pot from the fire requires good judgement, based on the drop in the level of the mixture in the pot (due to evaporation) and on the consistency of the mixture. Water may have to be added if it becomes too thick. After being boiled the mixture is called isidudu ('wort', 'thin porridge'), and it is porridge-like in consistency and aroma. Some of the isidudu is cooled by placing it in other, smaller pots, but the bulk of it is cooled in the following manner: The hut floor is swept clean and a small wall, about five or six inches high, is built from fresh cow-dung, to form a semi-circle from one point of the hut wall to another point on the same side, perhaps some two metres away from the first, thus 'damming' a part of the hut floor.<sup>4</sup> The isidudu is then poured onto the floor, where it spreads out and cools, but is contained by the manure wall.

By the next morning the isidudu is completely cool and is returned to the barrels, together with more water. The rest of the imithombo is added (some people do not add any imithombo until this stage) and the mixture is well stirred. The little dung wall is broken down and the floor is cleaned. One small cask is not stirred and the imithombo added to it simply remains on top of the thick mixture. This is the cask for the beer that will be consumed on the day after the beer drink, called isidudu beer. The imithombo may be withheld from the isidudu beer altogether and added only on the day of the beer drink. On this (the sixth) day the igwele ('yeast' or 'leavan') beer is strained and consumed by members of the homestead and neighbours (see below). This is a small cask or potful, made along with the rest of the beer, but brought to maturity in advance of the rest (it is the first pot cooked and cooled, and the imithombo is added as soon as it is cooled). Some of the igwele is added to the main portion of beer, to assist with fermentation, and some may be added to the isidudu beer, along with the imithombo. The remainder is drunk. Some women prepare igwele purely for drinking, and do not add any of it to the

other beer. Igwele is also called umlumiso, from ukulumisa, 'to cause to bite'. When added to the other beer, it is done so in order "to make the other beer ferment" (buza kulumis' oba butywala bubile).<sup>5</sup> The main portion of the beer remains in the pots and barrels while fermentation takes place. As the beer ferments the level of liquid rises and large frothy bubbles form and break on the surface. It has to be carefully watched to ensure that it does not spill over the sides.

The next day (day seven) the beer is strained. This may take the whole morning, four or five women straining at the same time. Ideally, young men (abafana) help with the straining, but in practice this seldom occurs.<sup>6</sup> With the long cylindrical strainer (intluzo) in one hand, a woman scoops up a dish of beer from the barrel with the other, and pours it into the strainer, held over a pot. She shakes the strainer while the liquid pours through it into the pot, and then twists it vigorously to get as much liquid as possible out of the sediment. The sediment (intsipho) is then emptied onto a hessian bag lying on the floor, or into another pot, if there is one available. The intsipho constitutes roughly one quarter of the volume of the unstrained casks. It is kept for the making of ivanya and then fed to pigs and poultry. Ivanya is made some time later by pouring cold water onto the intsipho and leaving it overnight before straining again. The result is a rather insipid tasting 'beer' which is served towards the end of the beer drink.

While straining the women sometimes discover that the mixture is lumpy, due to the imithombo not having been stirred in properly. In such a case, they roll up their sleeves and reach into the barrels to break up the lumps by hand. After straining, the beer is re-strained, to remove as much of the intsipho as possible. This takes much less time than the first straining. While straining, the workers frequently help themselves to a dish of beer, and pass this around among themselves and the others (older women, visitors) in the hut. When the straining is complete one beaker is drawn for the homestead head and other men to taste the beer. A beaker may be drawn for women, too, at this stage. It is called umhlalaphantsi ('sitting

down'). Women also receive a beaker called umcephe ('a spoon'), sometimes in place of umhlalaphantsi, sometimes in addition to it. Neighbouring women are called to be present for this beaker, so that they can tell the brewers how it tastes. In some cases, a quantity of beer called intluzelo is given out on this day (see below). When the straining has been done and the umhlalaphantsi beaker consumed, the pots are washed, the hut tidied, and spilt beer mopped up with absorbent dry manure. At smaller beer drinks the straining is done in the early morning and the beer drink itself is held from mid-morning onwards. When there is a lot of beer, however, the beer drink proper only starts the next day. The strained beer is kept in iron pots to keep it cool and prevent it from going sour, and is poured back into the plastic barrels before the beer drink commences.

After the brewing the main hut is prepared for the beer drink. Everything except the beer is taken out and placed in one of the other huts, unless the quantity brewed is very small and not many people are expected to attend. The hut is swept and the mud floor may be given a fresh application of wet cow-dung. Thatching grass (*Cymbopogon Validus*) is cut and spread out over the floor, in addition to sleeping mats (amakhuko) for the people to sit on. Neighbours may also assist with these tasks.<sup>7</sup>

### Preliminary beer distribution

#### (i) Umlumiso

Most beer drinks, as this term has been defined, take place over a period of three days, though this may be expanded or contracted according to the amount of beer brewed. On the day or night before the beer drink 'proper' close neighbours and nearby kin are called to the homestead to partake of the igwele or umlumiso beer. This group of neighbours corresponds to the homesteads of the sub-ward section or, in the case of larger sections, to the sub-section. The same group is called to the homestead whenever there is a bottle of brandy to be consumed (e.g. on Christmas day, or when a migrant worker returns) or when there is a sheep or pig to be eaten (e.g. if slaughtered for visitors). Other members of the sub-ward are not turned away, should

they be present. However, it is recognised that umlumiso is relatively private. This is indicated also by Bigalke, who recorded a case where men from one section of a ward arrived at a homestead in another section, where igwele (i.e. umlumiso) was being drunk. They were not given beer but sent away and told to return the next day for the beer drink proper (Bigalke 1969, 104; 1982). Umlumiso beer is also sometimes called umvo, the simplest translation of which is 'a taste', but which is derived from ukuva, "to hear, perceive, understand, feel, smell, see, observe, taste, etc." Some of these meanings are implicit in umvo, given to neighbours and close kin not merely so that they should taste the beer, but also so that they should know about the beer drink, see how much beer has been brewed, perceive the nature of the event, and so on. That this is so is evident in the formality with which neighbours (who often include close kin) are informed of the event and with which the beer is consumed.<sup>8</sup> Once they have arrived the homestead head or his representative explains why they have been asked to come and proceeds to give out the beer - usually one beaker for men and one for women. One of the neighbouring men then gives a short reply - e.g. "So it is, Helesi (homestead head), it is clear to us now. Let me say, this is a well established custom (umgca mdala - lit: 'the boundary is old')".

Despite a degree of formality, however, umlumiso is consumed in a fairly relaxed atmosphere. Women and girls carry on with the preparation of the beer, babies and young children play around inside the hut. Boys and young men may be present, and are sometimes given a sip from the men's beaker, especially if they have been helping with the work of preparing the beer. Strictly speaking, they do not have a right to any beer at this time. On one occasion when umlumiso was being consumed a young man at the back of the hut said: "Hey, you old men, why must the beaker stop there and go back (to the seniors)?". One of the old men responded with "What's this then? Are we friends? Don't you know (that) this beaker (is for men)?".

When a large quantity of beer is prepared the distribution of umlumiso may become more elaborate, and attracts people from outside of the host section, as the following case illustrates:

In August 1977 the people of Komkhulu section brewed beer for an inkazathi (See Ch. 5), in order to raise money for the local school. On the day before the beer drink a large pot of beer (just over 60 litres) was given out as umlumiso. There were fifteen women and twenty men present, including representatives of all Folokhwe sections, and from a neighbouring sub-ward. Since this was a somewhat unusual occasion, there was much uncertainty among Komkhulu men about how to allocate the umlumiso. After some discussion they decided to give out a beaker to mark time until other men arrived - ibhekile yokulindela, 'a beaker for waiting'. When another Komkhulu man arrived and was informed of this, he said that there should be no such beaker when umlumiso was drunk. When the beaker was empty, a spokesman for Komkhulu explained to those assembled that the beer was for an inkazathi to raise money for the school and that they were giving out the umlumiso now. A spokesman for the other sections expressed his thanks for this explanation, and four beakers were distributed to men, each group of about five men being given a beaker. Later, three beakers were given to women and the last of the men's beakers, called iqwele ('the last drop') was issued to the senior men of Komkhulu section.

(ii) Intluzelo

Intluzelo is a quantity of beer set aside with which to reward those who assisted with the work of brewing and straining - the girls and young women, who share it with boys and young men. These people are given a number of beakers on the day before the beer drink, or early on the day of the beer drink itself. The umhlalaphantsi beaker for senior women, including the chief brewer, is given out at more or less the same time, and if senior men happen to be present, they too may be given a beaker of intluzelo.

Sometimes there is an allocation of intluzelo beakers to men and women to take the place of umlumiso beer, and which is distinct from the intluzelo given in reward for assistance with the brewing. It is

given out in the same way as umlumiso, the difference lying in the name only. A substitution like this occurs if no umlumiso has been prepared, or if all the umlumiso is added to the other barrels. The beakers for neighbours on the day before the event are then drawn from the pot set aside as intluzelo, or from the main portion of the beer, and simply called intluzelo. If a large amount of beer is brewed it may be possible, if the homestead head and his wife feel inclined to do so, to give out umlumiso two days before the day of the beer drink, and to follow this up with intluzelo on the day before, as the case below illustrates:

Two days before Nothimba's umsindleko, close neighbours (including Ndlelibanzi's isibonda) were called to the homestead for umlumiso beer. With the usual formalities, one beaker was given to men, and one to women. On the next day, many people called at the homestead, including boys, girls and young men, wondering if there was any chance of getting some intluzelo. By mid-morning the straining was complete and a number of boys, men and women were in the hut. The boys were given a dish of beer and told to leave, and a beaker was drawn and placed in front of Nothimba, the homestead head. This beaker was called umviwo ('an inspection' or 'examination'). It was for the men to taste, so that they could see what the beer was like. Nothimba took the first sip, and passed it to Bonakele, a neighbour, without saying anything. Bonakele drank and exclaimed: 'Hey, you brewers, always brew like this (i.e. perfectly)! Always brew like this brewers!' (He basili nipeke qho! Nipeke qho basili!). All nine of the women present were offered sips from this beaker by Bonakele and Nothimba.

In the next hour or so a number of other people arrived and the hut became full. They were all neighbours from Ndlelibanzi and Folokhwe sub-wards (Nothimba lives on the border between the two) and included some close kin - his FBS, BW, BS and the wives of a number of their agnates who were either away at work or dead. There were 7 men, 10

women, 3 young men (abafana) and 7 boys in the hut. Nothimba's FBS dished up five beakers of intluzelo beer, two for men, one for women and two for boys. The latter were told to go and drink outside, and after they had left Nothimba explained to all that this was intluzelo beer, and that it was being given out because he was having umsindleko the next day.

The umhlalaphantsi beaker was given out early the next day, and was consumed mainly by Nothimba's wife and two other senior women from adjoining homesteads. A potful of intluzelo was carried over to Notimba's elder brother's homestead next door, where it was given to the girls and young women who had laboured. Boys and young men called there in the course of the day, and were given a share.

As indicated below, intluzelo beer may also be part of the formal distribution on the day of the beer drink proper.

This process of brewing and preparing for the beer drink reveals a number of things and introduces a number of themes which are more fully developed at the beer drink proper. First, it is clear that a beer drink cannot be an affair associated with an individual person or homestead, but is always a communal matter, involving extensive cooperation between a group of neighbouring homesteads and the interest and ad hoc assistance of other members of the section and sub-ward. Part and parcel of this involvement is a degree of sociability and good fellowship and, among brewers, a degree of 'communitas' (Turner 1969). Secondly, certain boundaries and hierarchies are evident - such as that between male and female, men and boys, neighbours and others. However, these are not as marked as at other times. Boys and girls are given beer, and no formal distinction is made between either men or women on the basis of kinship or territory.

#### The beer drink proper

What follows is a largely abstract account of beer drinks as

institutions, removed from the processes of everyday life of which each beer drink is part, though how these processes affect beer drinking will be indicated where possible. The main stages in the procedure followed at beer drinks are outlined in Table 4 (below), in chronological order. For convenience of analysis this chronology will not be followed strictly in the text.

Some time before people arrive at the homestead, the homestead head and his wife have to take stock of how much beer they have and divide it into appropriate portions. Close kinsmen or neighbours may help in this respect, giving advice and helping the head in making what are rather important decisions. The head must decide, firstly, how much to put aside for the main drinking, the intselo. If there is enough beer separate portions of intselo are designated for men and women. Let us assume that after giving out umlumiso and intluzelo, two large barrels of beer remain. One of these, containing approximately 200 litres, might be designated as the men's intselo. There are three different sizes of tin cans or beakers used at beer drinks. The largest, iqhwina, holds just under 10 litres; the medium-sized inxithi contains 7 litres, and the smallest, utshevulane, contains 5 litres. The word ibhekile ('beaker') applies only to a tin can with beer in it. An empty can is always an iphanga (pl. amaphanga), never a 'beaker'.

Shixini people think of barrels in terms of large-sized beakers, and of pots in terms of medium-sized beakers. A full cask or barrel is called an ingcwele, and it contains 20 amaqhwina (large sized beakers) of beer. The conventional meaning of -ngcwele is 'pure', 'undefiled', 'clear' or 'holy'. To Shixini people an ingcwele has a kind of wholeness and symmetry about it. They know exactly how many beakers it contains, how much maize, water and imithombo is required to make one, and exactly how much beer each section and sub-ward is entitled to from it. It is a reference point or a standard against which judgements about beer allocations are made when there is more or less than an ingcwele to allocate.

Having decided on the amount of beer for the men's intselo, an amount

TABLE 4  
Outline of the main stages of a typical beer drink

1. Brewing (ukusila)
2. Preliminary Beer Distribution
  - Umlumiso ('yeast')\*
  - Intluzelo ('beer for straining')\*
3. The Beer Drink Proper
  - Preliminary beakers\*
  - Iminono ('gifts')\*
  - Explaining the event
  - Arranging the hut
  - Amasiko ('customs')
    - Iimvuko ('awakening')\*
    - Ibhekile kasibonda ('the sibonda's beaker')\*
    - Intluzelo\*<sup>+</sup>
    - Isikhonkwane ('a peg')\*<sup>++</sup>
  - Umcakulo ('the first dip')\*
  - The Main Drink (intselo)
    - Ukugabu ('to allocate by numbers')\*<sup>xx</sup>
    - Ukulawula ('to allocate by social groups')\*<sup>xx</sup>
    - Ukurhabulisa ('offering sips')
    - Ukubeleka ('to carry')
    - Women's umlawulo\*
    - Iqwele ('the last drop')\*
  - Ivanya ('water')\*
  - Imifihlo ('hidden beer')\*
4. Post-Beer Drink Distribution
  - Imifihlo\*
  - Isidudu ('porridge')\*

\* = Beer allocations.

+ = Distributed at umsindleko as substitute for iimvuko.

++ = Distributed at imbarha and inkazathi only.

xx = One or the other is distributed, not both.

must also be set aside for women. If there is enough beer, they are given a separate portion, perhaps a medium-sized potfull, containing eight amanxithi (medium sized beakers), a total of 56 litres. If there is not enough for this, then the one intselo will have to do for both men and women. The homestead head must also put aside a pot of beer for what are called 'customs' (see below). This might be a smaller pot, containing, say, 6 amanxithi (42 litres). He now has roughly 102 litres left (assuming the women are to get a separate intselo). Of these he keeps a small pot (four amanxithi or 28 litres) aside as imifihlo ('hidden' beer. See also Bigalke 1969, 11). This is placed in a separate hut and kept in case of emergencies such as the arrival of an important guest, and so that he will have something for immediate neighbours once the beer is finished and the rest of the people have gone home. At a beer drink of this size, a homestead head would also need to put aside a number of beakers, perhaps eight amanxithi (56 litres), to present as gifts to individuals (iminono, see below). He now has 16 litres (two amanxithi) left. These, he knows, will come in handy for keeping the early arrivers happy until the proceedings start in earnest. In addition to these pots and casks (barrels), the number and nature of which are subject to variation according to the amount of beer and the nature of the beer drink, there is usually a pot of ivanya, as well as the isidudu beer, for the day after the event.

In summary, the beer is subjected to a strict ordering process, being divided and structured according to the way in which it is likely to be consumed at the beer drink. The divisions imposed on the beer correspond, as we shall see, with the social divisions relevant at the beer drink itself. Dividing the beer correctly is the responsibility of the individual homestead head, but he is responsible to the members of his section and sub-ward for this. As we shall see below, a selfish or irresponsible division will land him in trouble.

It is difficult to describe the atmosphere of a beer drink, not only because of the limitations of the written word, but also because the mood varies according to the type of beer drink, the stage of the proceedings, and other, less easily identifiable factors.<sup>9</sup> Most of

the action takes place indoors, in a hut poorly lit and ventilated only by the doorway and, sometimes, a small squarish window. The hut is packed with men wearing hats, tattered overcoats, over-alls, and blankets, sitting shoulder to shoulder, smoking pipes, with their sticks and tobacco bags on the floor beside them. The air is filled with the acrid smell of home grown tobacco, overpowering the rather mellower aromas of fermented beer, woodsmoke, and cow-dung. The men converse noisily, laugh, smoke, spit on the floor and argue. They shout out greetings to new arrivals, talk about current events, admire each others pipes and sticks, tease each other, and beg tobacco from each other. People come and go, women bringing in pots and empty cans, the homestead head readying the beer. New arrivals come in, call out a greeting and squint through the smoke to find a place to sit.

Before beakers of beer are given out they are placed in front of the doorway where everybody can see them, and the hut becomes quiet. The injoli or 'master of ceremonies' (see above p.141) stands next to the beer and speaks. Since the hut is round, virtually everybody sits facing the space in front of the doorway, and attention focusses very sharply and intensely on what the injoli is about to say. There is a strong feeling of anticipation. Once the beer has been given out the buzz of conversation starts up with renewed vigour, everyone seemingly talking at once, passing the beaker to each other, calling friends from across the room to come and drink, taking long draughts of beer and exclaiming about its quality, sending messages to women outside to come in and drink, and generally having a good time.

From time to time in the course of the drinking someone calls for silence, and stands to announce something or other - a meeting of the men of the sub-ward, a date on which livestock are to be counted, a goat that has been lost, a bag of beans for sale, an ox wanted to purchase. Beer allocations might be followed by long, sometimes heated discussions about whether a particular group has been given its rightful share or not. Controversies arise also about other issues, sometimes apparently trivial, and a debate may span hours and involve dozens of speakers, punctuated with fresh allocations of beer and

periods of apparent chaos, four or five men on their feet gesticulating, with everyone shouting at once and nobody hearing what anyone else is trying to say. Many debates are relatively orderly though, with people listening intently to the speakers if they find the matter interesting, and telling them to sit down and be quiet if they don't. After speakers have exhausted a topic, or the dispute has been resolved, the buzz of conversation starts up again with renewed vigour, men discussing the issue and its outcome among themselves.

The injoli and the host are kept very busy, making announcements about the beer, filling beakers, stirring the casks, distributing beer, collecting and rinsing out empty cans, and so on. They consult each other and men of the host's section about the proceedings, trying to ensure that no mistakes are made, while the visitors look on expectantly, looking forward to their beer allocation, but ready to stand up and complain if they feel badly done by.

The mood of any beer drink can change from moment to moment. The noisiest, most boisterous and most dispute-riddled beer drink attended during fieldwork, an umqibelo in Chibi section of Folokhwe, changed dramatically about two thirds of the way through when a neighbour, Dhyubeni, arrived and announced that two people had been killed by lightning in a nearby ward. The dead were kin of his, and he was looking for advice on whether to go to the affected homestead or not. Suddenly the mood became solemn, the speeches orderly and uninterrupted, the listeners attentive, whereas before Dhyubeni's arrival a passer-by would have been certain that most of the men were quite drunk and the situation about to go out of control. At umsindleko the mood ranges from one of seriousness and solemnity, when the returned migrant is addressed and admonished by the elders of the community, to the more usual lightheartedness and enjoyment, once these addresses are over.

In general, the atmosphere at a beer drink is one of good-fellowship. Normally, people are relatively happy and relaxed, pleased to be in the company of others. I have heard men burst into short snatches of song, or give forth a short praise poem. There is always a lot of

banter and leg-pulling, and the incessant conversation is, by and large, good natured. Despite the noise, men sometimes doze off for a few minutes, heads against the wall, and it is not uncommon to see one of the elders at the door fast asleep. This relaxed atmosphere is suspended every now and then while people let off steam about some topic or other. Seldom do arguments that arise at a beer drink lead to enduring bad feeling. People go to a beer drink to enjoy themselves, and practising one's skill in debate is part of that enjoyment. Drunkenness is rare, and is virtually always a result not of the beer consumed, but of what has been consumed earlier, on the way to the beer drink. Behaviour may appear raucous at times, but it is strictly controlled, and men who threaten to get out of hand are made to go home.

In what follows, a generalized account of the proceedings followed at a 'typical' beer drink is presented. In this respect there are three closely interrelated aspects of the proceedings that will be emphasized. These are, firstly, the spatial arrangements - the way in which the space in and around a homestead is used to organize and structure the proceedings. Secondly, there is the allocation, distribution or issuing of beer (these terms are used interchangeably) which is intimately related to the spatial arrangements. Thirdly there is the verbal aspect of the proceedings. Here, what is said, how it is said, to whom it is said, and by whom it is said will be indicated. This aspect of beer drinks is examined in more detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

### Spatial arrangements

Despite first impressions, beer drinks are extremely orderly, highly structured events. The two most elaborate elements of this structure are the ordering of spatial relationships, affecting both groups and individuals and, closely linked to this, the allocation of beer. Much time and trouble are taken to try and ensure that people are given their 'correct' place (indawo), and the 'correct' amount of beer. The main principles governing the places and the beer allocated to groups are territory, age and sex, while those governing allocation to

individuals include age, kinship and political status. Both of these sets of principles may be modified or added to according to (a) current events and circumstances within the host homestead and/or section, and (b) the particular type of beer drink being held.

After the consumption of the preliminary beakers and the iminono (see below), decisions about beer distribution and seating arrangements are made, not by the host homestead, but by the section and/or by the subward as a whole, depending on the stage of the procedure reached. It is the section that is regarded as the 'brewer' (umsili), not the individual homestead that brewed, and in speech it is personified and spoken of as such - e.g. Komkhulu ngumsili, 'Komkhulu (section) is the brewer', or Komkhulu uyacela, 'Komkhulu is asking (for permission to leave)'. It is from the point of view of umsili, then, that the spatial organization of beer drinking needs to be viewed. However, the space that is used is the space of an individual homestead. The implications of this will be discussed below.

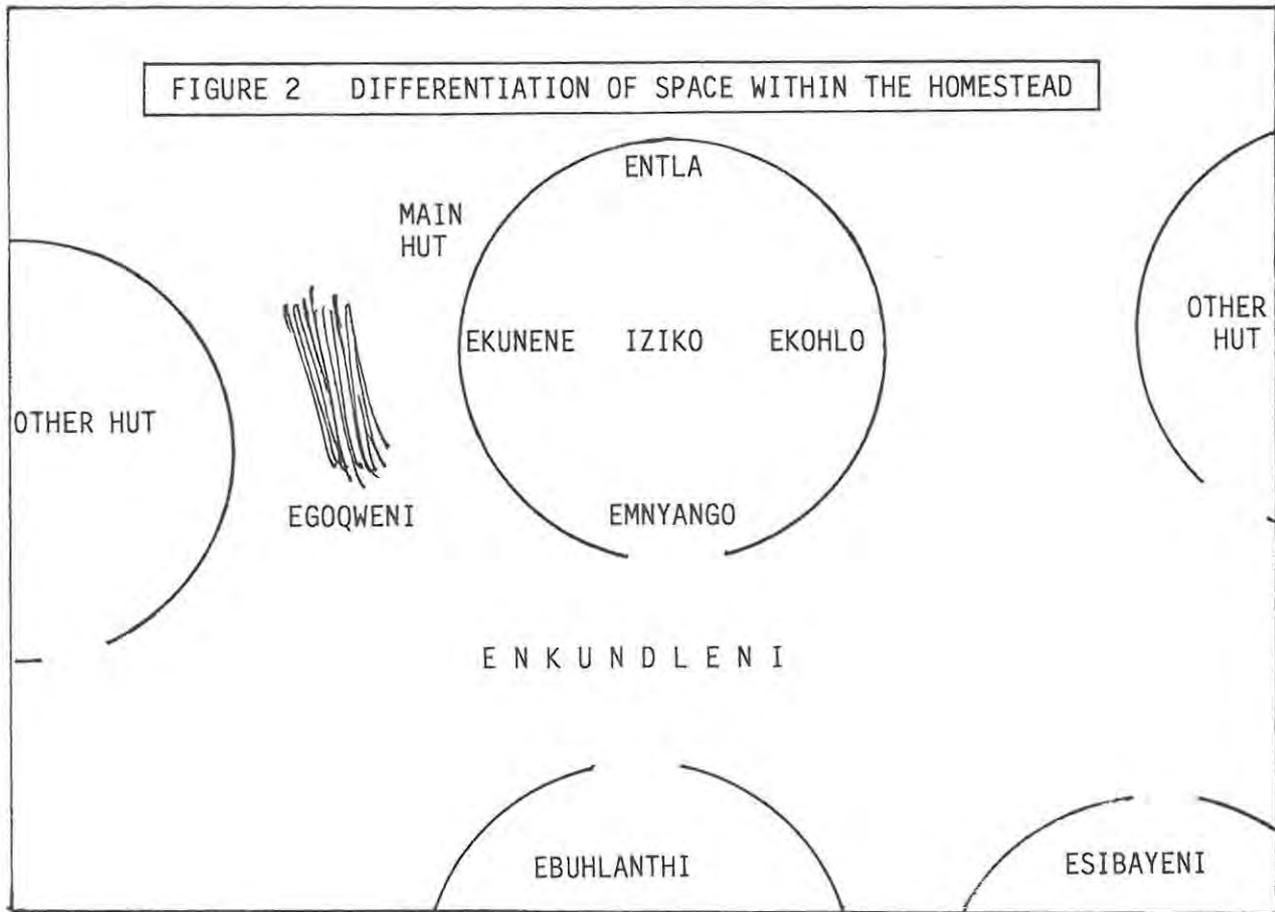
Durkheim and Simmel, as Thornton (1980, 14) points out, recognized the fact that humans "divided and differentiated" space in an essentially social manner, and that differentiated space "represented the differentiation and evaluation of social groups." Spatial relations, in other words, represent the relations existing between people. Logically, however, "before space can represent anything there must be imposed upon it a structure of differentiation, or topology, which allows other relations to be expressed in its terms. This topologization...is a conceptual and cultural function" (loc. cit.). In this respect it is necessary to look at how Shixini people conceive of and use the space within and around a homestead (umzi), because it is this space that is utilized for beer drinks. In particular, we need to consider "the symbolic differentiation of space (topologization)" within a homestead and its immediate surrounds (ibid., 19).

A Shixini homestead consists of one or more huts (izindlu, sg. indlu), one or more stock enclosures or byres (ubuhlanti for cattle, isibaya for sheep and goats) and a courtyard (inkundla) which consists of the

space between the huts and the byres or, more strictly, between the door of the main hut (indlu enkulu) and the gate of the cattle-byre, which face each other. Other significant points of reference are the outside cooking fire and the woodpile, situated next to (not in) the inkundla and close to the huts. The main hut is divided, spatially, in the following way: The front part of the hut, near and on both sides of the doorway is referred to as emnyango ('at the door'). Opposite is the rear of the hut (entla), from the perspective of which the two sides are identified. The right hand side (looking from the back towards the door) is known as icala lasekunene, the left hand side as icala lasekhohlo.<sup>10</sup> The hearth, in the middle of the floor, is iziko (see Figure 2).

The different parts of the hut are ranked and associated with status differences. The right is associated with men, the left with women. In everyday life men sit, eat and sleep on the right hand side, women on the left. The word for 'right' shares a common stem with words like ubunene ('truth'), inene ('the truth') and inene ('gentleman', or a respected or highly ranked person). So the right hand side, as Hertz (1960) pointed out in his classic essay on the subject, is also morally 'right', and seen as superior to the left. The word for left, ikohlo, has negative connotations, and is related to ukukohla, 'to puzzle, to place in a difficulty, to confuse, disconcert, obstruct...' (Kropf 1915, 189). The front of the hut, emnyango, is superior to the other parts. In both everyday life and at beer drinks, older people sit near the front, the eldest next to the door, while younger people sit towards the back. Finally, the inside of the hut, the inner circle around the hearth, is junior to the outer circle - the area next to the wall.<sup>11</sup> Children, for example, sit in front of the adults, near the centre of the hut. The highest ranked place within the hut, then, is against the wall on the right hand side next to the door. Although the area near the hearth and the back (entla) of the hut are associated with juniority, they are also the areas associated with the ancestors. It is at the back of the hut that meat and beer are kept overnight in the course of important rituals such as ukuguqula or ukupha, and where the shades are thought to 'smell' these. It is in the hearth that a fire is made prior to the ritual

dance (intlombe) which many ritual killings commence with, and on which certain offerings to the shades are made.



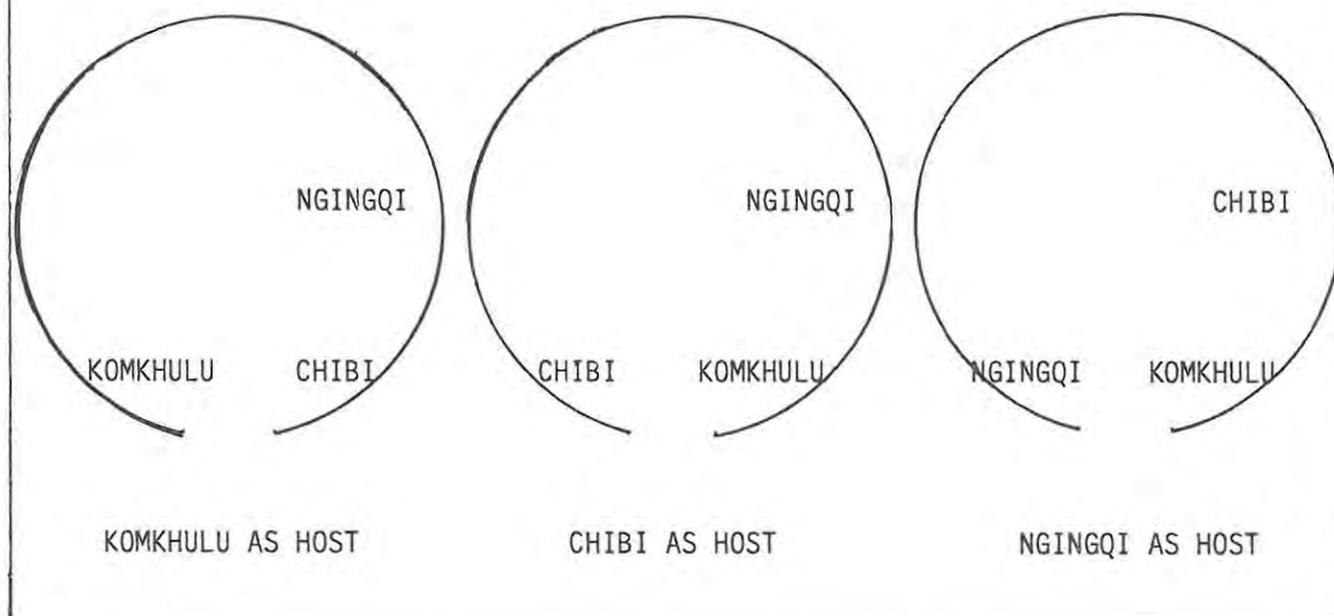
Ideally, a beer drink is held inside the homestead's main hut, and not outside. Women may sit inside, however, only at relatively small beer drinks. In most other cases women, and men from more distant areas, have to sit in a hierarchical arrangement outside the hut, which is occupied by men of the host sub-ward and nearby sub-wards. If the homestead has only one hut, however, and the beer drink is fairly large, there is little alternative but for everyone to sit outside. As indicated below, this involves a temporary re-organization of spatial values, and makes it difficult to dramatize the distinctions between groups and individuals, due to the removal of the physical distinction between inside and outside and of the boundaries and the symmetry provided by the hut. For this reason, men feel uneasy about sitting outside, and every attempt is made to avoid such a situation.

The other important spatial referents, as far as the organization of seating is concerned, are the homestead's other huts, the inkundla, and the area adjacent to the inkundla, huts and byres. At beer drinks, any seating place outside the hut is of lower rank than any place within the hut. Other huts of the homestead may be regarded as 'outside' in this respect, since they are used only if the weather does not permit people to sit outdoors. Among Xhosa speakers the inkundla and the cattle byre are associated with the shades, as is well known, and both of these are kept free of people at beer drinks, if the men of the host group are seated inside the hut. As far as the seniority of outside seating places is concerned, the principle is that the higher ranked groups are placed closest to the inkundla and the byre, the lowest ranked furthest away from these. Cook (1931) says that Bomvana beer drinks were sometimes held inside the byre, but this is not the case in Shixini. Certainly, a substitute ritual like ukungxengxeza (see p.85) takes place within the byre, but for reasons already given, this is not a 'beer drink'. If the wind is blowing hard, or if it is drizzling, men (not women) may sit up against the fence of the byre for shelter, but they do not go inside it.

Inside the hut the 'brewers' (the host sub-ward section) occupy the most senior seating place, on the right hand side next to the door, from where they direct the proceedings. Other sections of the sub-ward are allocated places according to their status, a convention determined by their relationship with the host section, contemporary and historical. In Folokhwe sub-ward, which has three sections, the convention is as illustrated in Figure 3, below.

Note that Komkhulu ranks highest after the hosts in both Chibi and Ngingqi, while Ngingqi ranks lowest in both Komkhulu and Chibi. This is because Komkhulu is associated with the sub-headmanship. In Shixini, a sub-headman is, ideally, a member of the royal Tshawe clan. The homestead of any political authority is referred to as Komkhulu, meaning 'at the great place', and the section of the sub-ward within which the isibonda lives is often called Mkhulu or Komkhulu (the latter being the locative form).

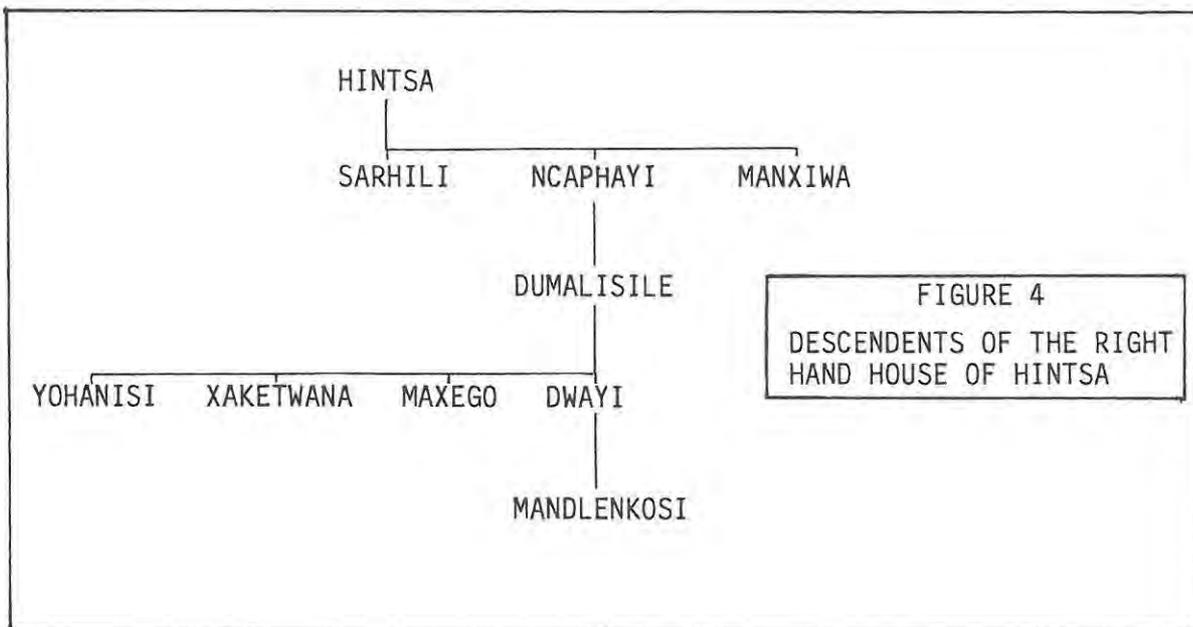
FIGURE 3  
ALLOCATION OF SEATING PLACES TO SECTIONS WITHIN FOLOKHWE SUB-WARD



The founding of a political unit such as a sub-ward, ward or chiefdom is associated with the appointment of a sub-headman, headman, or chief. In the case of a sub-ward, when a sub-headman took up his position as representative of the headman of the ward he was accompanied by an ox, known as the lawula ox - 'the ox of authority' (Peires 1976, 41, 65). Jingqi tribal authority, consisting of the wards Shixini and Ntlahlane, was founded when Hintsa, the Gcaleka paramount (1789-1835) sent his senior son in the right hand house, Ncaphayi, to rule over this area, which became a sub-chiefdom. Ncaphayi was accompanied by an ox called Jingqi, from which the area took its name. At large festive occasions in other wards Shixini is allocated (ukulawula) beer and meat as Jingqi. Jingqi is Shixini's inkabi (lit. 'ox') or 'beer name' (Cook 1931, 23).

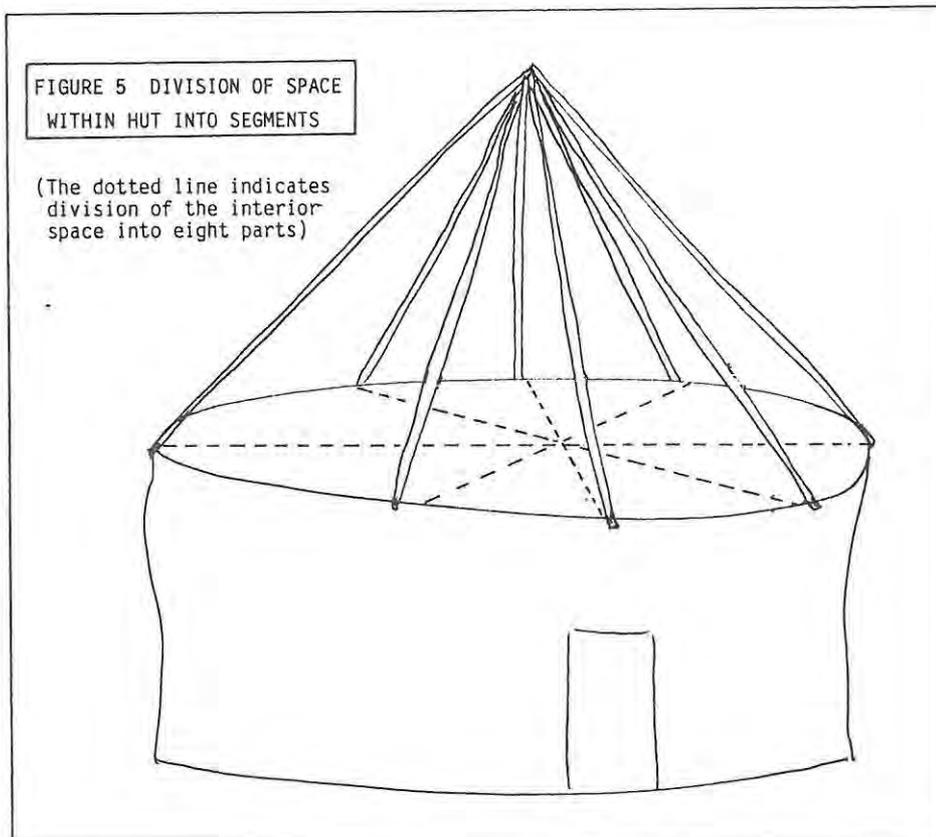
Folokhwe, too, is the name of an ox, the ox that accompanied the first sub-headman, Maxego, grandson of Ncaphayi (see Figure 4). The area in

which Maxhego settled, and in which his successors (his younger brothers Xaketwana and Yohanisi) lived, and where Yohanisi's sons still live, is known as the Komkhulu section of Folokhwe. Until some 40 years ago, there was only one other section, called Chibi, after a small dam (ichibi). Ngingqi came into existence when Komkhulu became too large and a group of homesteads in a low lying area (an ingingqi is a 'hollow' or a dish shaped depression) split off to form their own section, so that they would have their own "dish" (isitya) at beer drinks and rituals. The members of Komkhulu and Chibi, therefore, are seen as 'proper citizens' (abemi), ranking higher than Ngingqi in status. Ngingqi "is a person who has only recently arrived". This is dramatized in the allocation of seating places and beer, as is the historical connection between Ngingqi and Komkhulu. As we shall see below, there are also other historical processes which have contributed to the 'cultural logic' of beer drinks, in that the meanings attached to the spatial organization is, at least in part, historically derived (cf. Thornton 1980, 17).



Within the hut, the amount of space occupied by a section is determined by another topological feature - the division of the floorspace into segments. This occurs in the following manner: The conical frame that supports the thatch is made from wooden poles or rafters. There are eight main poles, joined at the apex of the cone,

and the other, smaller poles are attached to these.<sup>12</sup> Thinner, pliable branches are then attached at right angles to the poles, to help support the thatch. A hut without its smaller poles and its thatch would look something like Figure 5 below:



It is clear that the floorspace of the hut can easily be divided into segments, with reference to the roof frame, and these segments are used at beer drinks to determine roughly how much space the various groups are entitled to. The host section has a right to more or less all of the right hand side, while the two visiting sections each occupy a quarter of the left hand side. Since the beer pots, barrels, and beakers are kept at the back, this means that the section at the back has less space than the one next to the door. When people go to their places they can sometimes be seen to glance up at the thatch before sitting down, and men refer to the roof poles (amaqadi) when discussing the amount of space each section is entitled to. Sometimes such discussion turns into argument, although at most beer drinks the

sections are prepared to occupy less space than they have a right to so that neighbouring sub-wards can be called to sit in the hut.

At Thwalingubo's 'ntwana nje in Chibi section, Molusweni, a Ngingqi elder, stood to complain about the amount of space available for his section. He said that when places were allocated Ngingqi was usually shown its place along with the other sections. He heartily approved of "this old Xhosa custom" (sisiXhosa esidala). What this meant, he argued, was that Ngingqi should not go beyond a certain pole, to which he pointed while speaking. Now, however, it seemed that Ngingqi's place was being determined by a different pole. He wanted to know why this was so, and when it had been decided on: "I want to know my rafter (iqadi), so that when I am allocated beer, I should know my place".

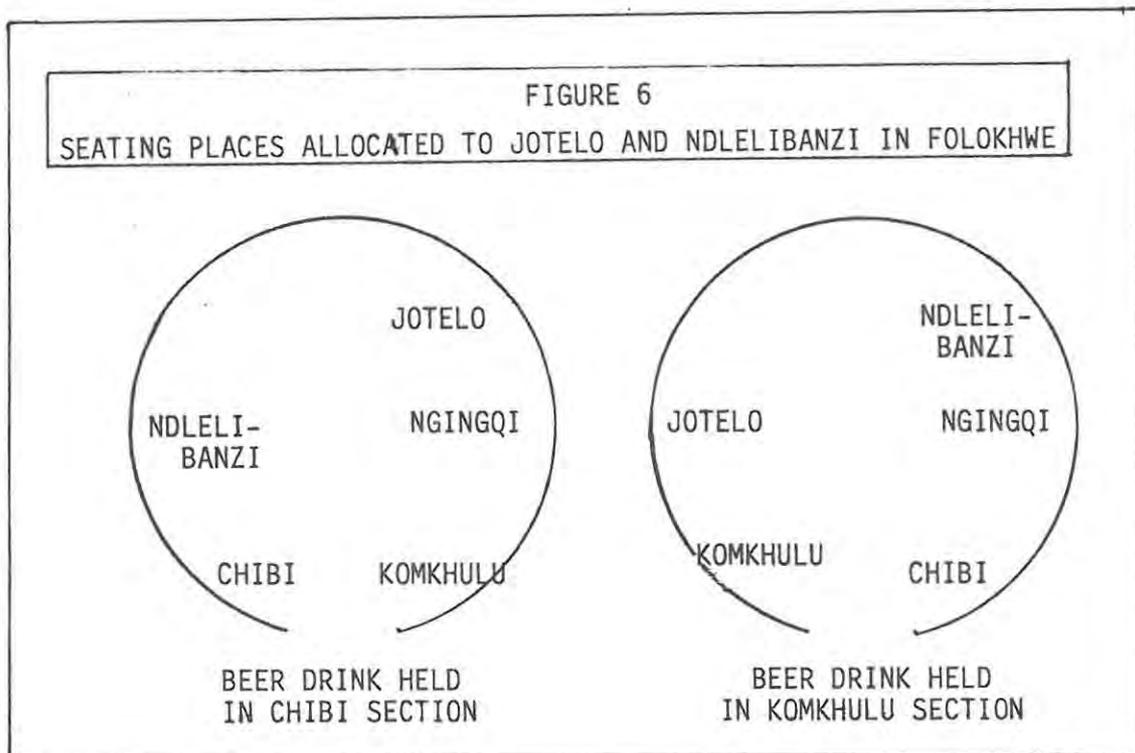
Occasionally, the relative status of right and left is inverted, with the host section sitting on the left, and visiting sections on the right. This occurred at beer drinks at Ziwele's home, and the reason given was that Ziwele was ill, and slept on the left hand side of the hut, behind the door, ostensibly to avoid draughts (In Shixini, doors usually open inwards, swinging from left to right). However, there may have been another reason: Ziwele had a record of poor health and was said to be 'thwasile' - i.e.: his illness was ascribed to the shades calling him to become a diviner. Diviners, as Berglund and others have pointed out, frequently reverse normal practices, including using the side of the hut usually reserved for the other sex (Berglund 1976, 371).

Apart from the local sub-ward sections, all other sub-wards (called iinkabi - 'oxen' - in the context of beer drinks) must be allocated a place at which to receive their beer. As one man put it "they must be shown their chairs". This allocation is done with much care, the injoli ('apportioner') of the host section consulting the other members of the section at length, before announcing the positions allocated. This is especially so at large beer drinks where there are normally three or four other sub-wards represented. The places

allocated to other sub-wards reflects their proximity to and/or relationship with the host sub-ward or the host section. At a beer drink in Chibi section of Folokhwe, for example, the highest ranking place after those of the Folokhwe sections goes to Ndlelibanzi sub-ward, followed by Jotelo sub-ward. In Komkhulu (and Ngingqi) sections, however, Jotelo gets a higher ranked place than Ndlelibanzi. The resulting seating patterns are depicted in Figure 6.<sup>13</sup>

The reason for this is that many Chibi people have close kinship and economic ties with Ndlelibanzi, but not with Jotelo. Ngingqi and Komkhulu, on the other hand, do not have especially close ties with either one of them. Jotelo, however, is directly adjacent to Ngingqi, while Ndlelibanzi is separated from Ngingqi and Komkhulu by Chibi.

If there is still space in the hut after Jotelo and Ndlelibanzi are given their places, three other sub-wards, Fumbatha, Nompha and Mngwevu are allocated places, in that order. None of the Folokhwe sections gives a place inside the hut to Velelo, a sub-ward from Ntlahtlane, an adjoining ward. The close ties between Velelo and some Komkhulu people are recognized in other ways (see below).<sup>14</sup>



At Ntanyongo's umsindleko Jotelo (see Map 3, p.8) was the first sub-ward to be called in after the Folokhwe sections were settled, and placed next to Komkhulu, the host section. Ndlelibanzi was then called in and placed next to Ngingqi, towards the back of the hut. Canca, the injoli, then asked Sonkebese, a Komkhulu elder, what he should do next. Sonkebese suggested that Mngwevu sub-ward should be called in. There was only one man from Mngwevu, and he was invited to sit with Komkhulu, thus eliminating Mngwevu as a sub-ward at the beer drink. Fumbatha was then called in and put next to Jotelo, at the back. Nompha was then called in and asked to join Komkhulu, because there were only three men from Nompha. Modi (Chibi section) stood to say that there was only one inkabi left outside, Mtshayelo, and that this should be brought in also. Mtshayelo (represented by two men) was thus called in and also put with Komkhulu. Canca then announced that all the iinkabi were inside the hut.

At Nontwaba's beer for harvest everybody was sitting outside while the hut was being emptied of its contents and prepared for the beer drink. This had not been done beforehand because Canca, deputising for Nontwaba who was away at work, had hoped to hold the beer drink outside. When he put this to the men shortly after they arrived, however, they overruled him, and said that they wanted to sit inside. They were clearly uncomfortable about the prospect of sitting outside. Not only was it a windy day, but they said that it was not 'proper' to have a beer drink outside. After a long delay, during which the preliminaries were drunk, men were asked to enter the hut. Canca immediately 'arranged' the hut, pointing out the places for Folokhwe's sections. Ndlebezenja, Canca's elder brother, then stood to say that they should discuss the matter of which iinkabi to call inside. Some objected that the hut was already full, but after some discussion they decided to call Jotelo and Ndlelibanzi, placing the former next to Komkhulu and the latter at the back next to Ngingqi. Jotelo came in but

Ndlelibanzi decided to remain outside because the hut was full. Further discussion then followed on whether to call in one of the other sub-wards. The majority felt that they should not, because the hut was crowded. The injoli was asked to go out and announce this decision to those outside, and he did so.

In many cases an inkabi (sub-ward) called into the hut has hardly expressed its thanks for this and sat down, when it asks for permission to go back outside, saying that the hut is too full. The hosts in fact expect this to happen, and I have heard people say: 'Let us call so and so into the hut so that they will see how full it is and go out' or words to that effect. Clearly, it is the gesture that is important. The invitation to come inside, and its acceptance, is a dramatization of what would happen if the hut was not so full, and thus of the relationship between the two areas. It is a public statement to the effect that the inkabi called in has a closer relationship with the host sub-ward than the other inkabi. This is well illustrated in the following case:

At Thwalingubo's ntwana nje, a large beer drink attended by a lot of people, Ndlelibanzi was the first to be asked into the hut, and placed next to Chibi, the host section. A group of abayeni ('sons-in-law') were also invited to sit with Chibi, but they expressed their thanks and declined, saying that they would rather sit outside because the hut was full. Jotelo was then invited in, and it accepted. After Jotelo men had sat down, the nature of the beer drink was explained to all.

Njembeyiya, spokesman for Jotelo, then stood to express his thanks for this explanation, and to ask permission for Jotelo to go and sit outside. His clipped, rhythmic speech with the refrain 'Nkos! (Chief!) in parenthesis, included the following:

Don't let this disturb you, people who are our neighbours

('Nkos!)

We are people who become jealous of each other's (seating) places ('Nkos!)

Someone may become jealous even though he has a place of his own ('Nkos!)

(Saying) 'It is a good thing that they (Jotelo) go out, because they are thieves! ('Nkos!) (Laughter and comments from the others)

5 (Saying) It is right that Jotelo should go out ('Nkos!)

So that there will be some space for the women to come in (for sips) ('Nkos!)

It is a lovely day outside ('Nkos!)

Jotelo would like to drink outside ('Nkos!)

We have names ('Nkos!)

10 That we respond to very well ('Nkos!)

But really, dogs respond better than we humans ('Nkos!) (Laughter)

We are going out ('Nkos!)

Dogs are far superior to people ('Nkos!)

Take the cleaning of teeth for example ('Nkos!)

15 You never see a dog rinsing its mouth ('Nkos!)

Yet its teeth are white because it uses its tongue... ('Nkos!)

(Laughter, noise, comments)

Gamalakhe, Chibi's injoli, responded:

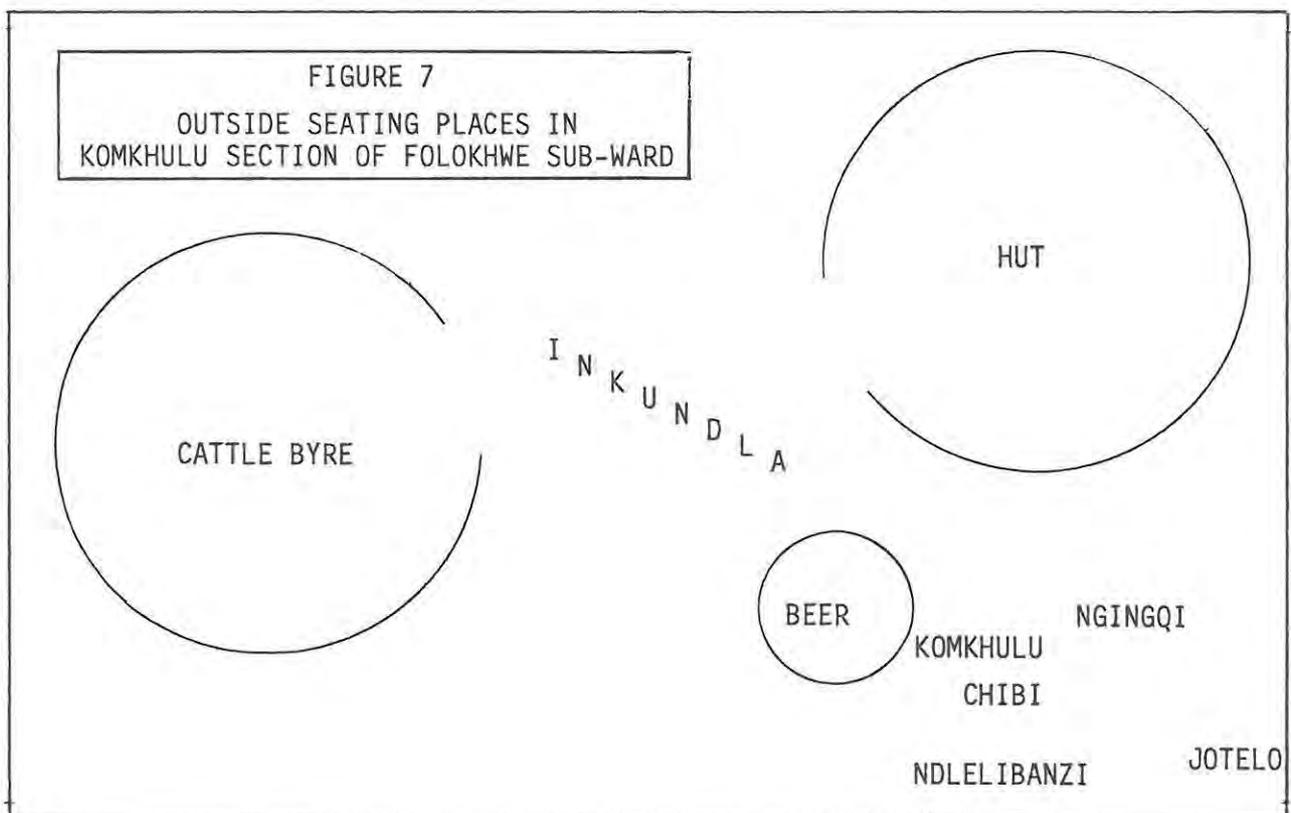
"Allow me to say that you speak very well. Secondly, if you think that you will be comfortable outside, the Folokhwe ibandla says 'thank you, you are free to go'. Thats it. If you feel like sitting outside, thats all right."

Apart from demonstrating the formality with which people address each other, this case illustrates that people are very conscious of the places allocated to them at beer drinks (1. 2-6), as they are of the amount of beer they receive. It indicates also that calling groups into the hut is sometimes merely a formality or a convention, and that asking to go out is as much part of the convention as being called in. At all stages of these proceedings the injoli makes formal

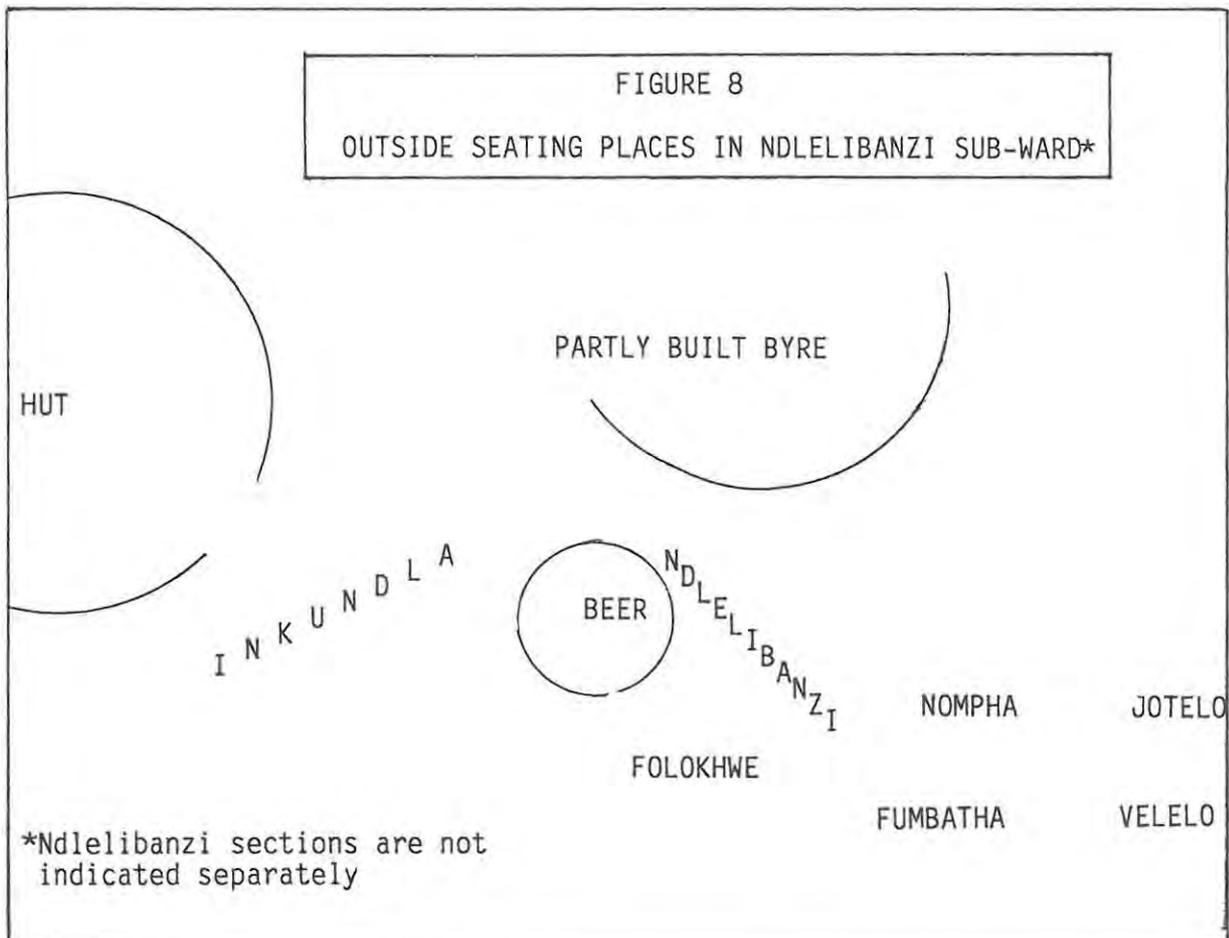
announcements, concerning which iinkabi have been asked to come into the hut, requests by an inkabi to stay outside, or to leave the hut and return outside, and so on.

If the beer drink is held outside the order in which other sub-wards are seated becomes more difficult to discern, but it follows that outlined above. In such cases the host sections sit closest to the beer, inkundla and cattle-byre, and the other sub-wards are distributed in relation to this. The byre is very important in this regard, and when Nothimba's wife brewed for his umsindleko, Nothimba constructed a sort of symbolic byre at his homestead. His livestock were kept at his elder brother's place, nearby, and he had no byre of his own. So he built half of the fence of an isibaya, "so that men would have a place to sit", as he put it. Women sit furthest from the byre and inkundla, often near the igoqo (woodpile) (See below, p. 169 ff.).

At a beer drink in Komkhulu section where people sat outside, the distribution of groups was as depicted in Figure 7



At Notimba's umsindleko in Ndlelibanzi, the positions allocated were as illustrated below:



In principle, a sub-ward represented by only one man is fully entitled to its rightful place and beer. In practice, two other principles allow the hosts to get around this, especially if the quantity brewed is not great. One of them is that it is permissible to change the 'normal' procedure as long as a request is made to this effect beforehand and the other groups agree. The other principle is that the hosts may choose to honour an individual (or small group) by inviting him to sit with them, as illustrated above. The result is that single representatives of more distant sub-wards are almost invariably absorbed into the host section or one of the other sections. This is only possible, however, if the right procedure is followed, as the following case illustrates:

At an imbarha at Gulakulinywa's homestead there was one man from Jotelo present. He had come over to Folokhwe to borrow a fencing implement from Ndlebezenja, of Komkhulu section. When the ivanya was given out someone suggested that the man from Jotelo be put with Komkhulu, as their visitor. He objected to this, however, saying that this should have been announced at the beginning of the beer drink. Since Jotelo and Folokhwe give each other ivanya, he was therefore given Jotelo's beaker.

I have not dealt here with the influence of age, kinship and political status on seating arrangements, with the arrangement of individuals within each group, or with the way in which women are seated. These aspects are more fruitfully discussed in conjunction with the allocation of beer, below. It is already clear, however, that what happens at a beer drink is that a social group - the sub-ward section, as the 'brewer' - manipulates the physical space in and around an individual homestead, using cultural values conventionally associated with that space, to create a symbolic map of the social universe - an order of meaning - within which beer drinking occurs and towards which it is oriented. Society, culture and individual are drawn together into a single framework - that provided by the homestead and its environs.

#### Preliminary beakers and iminono ('gifts')

On arrival at a beer drink, local people often sit more or less in the position that they know will be allocated to them, unless there are women in the hut, in which case all men sit on the right, women on the left. There are usually one or two beakers of beer given out to those who arrive early. Such beakers may be unnamed, given out "just to drink" or "to while away time with" (ukujong' ixesha ngayo), or they may be called names such as 'a beaker for waiting' (ibhekile yokulindela) or 'a taste' (umvo). The host may at this stage explain to those assembled that there is a lot of, or very little, beer, and mention the reason for brewing. Thus the

preliminary beakers may also be called ibhekile yokwazisa ('beakers for informing'). At Gulakulinywa's 'beer for harvest', for example, it was said that the beaker was "a beaker for informing you: this beaker is to explain (the size of) that cask". Less frequently, such a beaker is called ibhekile yomnyango ('beaker of the door').

As people arrive they call out a greeting in the manner known as ukukhahlela. This is a stylized form of announcing one's arrival in which a praise name (isikhahlelo) is called out in an exclamatory manner, prefaced with a short, sharp 'Ah!'. Men arriving at a beer drink in Komkhulu may use the isibonda's praise name 'Ah! Notshukuva!', or that of the homestead head - e.g. 'Ah! Mtshotsh'awuphumi!'. They may use the praise name of the ward's chief and headman - Ah! Mandlenkosi! - or his regent - Ah! Jongikhwezi!, though this occurs more frequently in the sub-wards near the great place than in those, like Folokhwe, at a distance from it. The greeting may incorporate reference to the others already present, especially if the host's clan name is used as the isikhahlelo - e.g. 'AmaBamba neenkosi!' ('Bamba clansmen and others'). This form of ukukhahlela is also used when people arrive at ritual killings, and may include a pronoun indicating the distinction between kin group and others characteristic of such events - e.g. 'AmaKwayi neenkosi zabo!' ('Kwayi clansmen and their guests'). Other forms of greeting used by men as they arrive at a beer drink include 'eb'khosini!' (lit: 'At the chieftainship' or 'place of authority') and 'maFolokhwe' ('Folokhwe people', when the beer drink is in Folokhwe). Someone who enters the hut without uttering an appropriate greeting is criticised by the others, who may want to know why he does not khahlela.

Iminono ('gifts') are beakers of beer given away to certain categories of kin and to what might be called 'beer friends'. The distribution of these beakers often starts at more or less the same time as the preliminary beakers, and may continue, intermittently, until near the end of the beer drink. Usually, however, the pot set aside for iminono is empty by the time men turn their attention to the main portion of beer (the intselo).

Ukunona means 'to be respected' and umnono (pl. iminono) can be literally translated as 'neatness' or 'carefulness'. These beakers are referred to as "things to take care of (ukuwonga) people with". Iminono beer is also known as umahluko ('difference' or 'distinction'), from ukuhluka, 'to differ' or 'be separate from'. As indicated by the etymology, those who are given this beer are being singled out for special treatment, as people who have a close link with the giver.

The main receivers of iminono are affines, especially abayeni (sons-in-law), including SWH, BSWH, FBSSWH and wife's agnates (WF, WFB, etc).<sup>15</sup> Of 121 iminono beakers noted during fieldwork, 52 (43%) went to affines. Other categories of kin who received iminono were matrilineal kin (mainly MZS) (18%) and other consanguines such as ZS, FZS and FZD (6%) (see Table 5). Classificatory kin were included in all the above categories. Shixini people regard the husband of a neighbouring clansman's daughter, say, as an umyeni, and at beer drinks treat such a person as they would a DH or BDH. Relatively few beakers of iminono went to patrilineal kin (4%) and to clansmen (6%).<sup>16</sup> Given the overlap between section membership and agnation (see Ch 2) this is not surprising. Agnates are not given iminono because "we eat iimvuko with them" (iimvuko beer is distributed on a section basis - see below). Fifteen percent of iminono went to unrelated friends,<sup>17</sup> and 7% to high status people such as the sub-headmen from other sub-wards, men of the Tshawe clan, and people regarded as wealthy and influential. Friends included men who had undergone circumcision with the host, and some who worked with him in town. Of the 121 iminono, only 21 (17%) went to members of the same section. The majority went to people from other sections within the sub-ward (35%) and to people from other sub-wards (48%).

In many cases, the exchange of iminono is a relationship which is inherited, two homestead heads giving each other iminono because their fathers' did so before them. Mbambaza, a wealthy Folokhwe man, was able to name eight people in this category, with whom he exchanged iminono. Both the homestead head and his wife give out iminono, the former to men, the latter to women. Nineteen of the 121 iminono

analysed above were given out by women.

TABLE 5  
Distribution of Iminono

<u>(A) By Kinship Category</u>	
	<u>%</u>
Affines	43
Matrilateral Kin	18
Other Consanguines	6
Patrilineal Kin	4
Clansmen (no genealogical link)	6
Unrelated Friends	15
Unrelated High Status People	<u>7</u>
	<u>100</u>
<u>(B) By Territorial Affiliation of Receivers</u>	
	<u>%</u>
Same Sub-ward Section	17
Other Sections of the Sub-ward	35
Other Sub-wards of the Ward	<u>48</u>
	<u>100</u>

When discussing iminono, some Shixini people made a distinction between beakers given to close kin such as abayeni and those given out, as they say, for no particular reason, to "whoever you feel like giving beer to". Strictly speaking, they said, the latter were iminono, but the former were not, because an umnono beaker was given out voluntarily, whereas one was obliged to give beer to abayeni. The one was a gift, the other a custom (isiko). Others regarded the term iminono as appropriate for both abayeni and friends. Furthermore, as the figures above indicate, there are few iminono that are given out "simply because one feels like it". The receivers of iminono are given beer in recognition of their status, whether this is one of sub-headman or close friend, as part of an ongoing exchange. Virtually all informants said that "one gives iminono to the person whom one expects to receive beer from when he has an occasion".

That iminono are based on reciprocity rather than individual whim is indicated also by the fact that men are able to name those that they used to give iminono to in the past, but no longer do so, because of a failure to reciprocate, often attributed to the fact that "they have no means to brew". Furthermore, sometimes an umnono beaker is given to, say, a younger brother, in the name of his absent elder, being told that "this is the beaker for your elder brother". This can be taken a step further. If the homestead head's wife wishes to give a beaker of umnono to the wife of X, in recognition of the relationship between X and her husband, and X's wife is not present, she may give it to the wife of X's younger brother or other close agnate.

Deciding who to give umnono to and who to leave out is a tricky matter. Invariably, the amount of beer set aside for this purpose is inadequate to allow the head to give to all that he would like to. One way round this is to give beakers to the really important guests (e.g. wife's father) and to group the less important together, two or three to a beaker. In this way, one might give out 12-15 beakers of iminono, to thirty or so people. If the amount of beer for iminono is inadequate the host is expected to say so publicly, and to apologise for this. At Walatha's ntwana nje, Ntanyongo (Walatha's younger brother) put it this way:

There is beer here my people (amawethu). What can not be seen are those beakers known as umahluko, which one usually gives to people. I do not see them...Even those who are usually accorded respect (imbeko) by this homestead will have to bear with this.

If the host fails to do this he runs the risk of an umyeni or some other person with a right to an umnono beaker standing up to complain about the fact that he has not received it. On one such occasion the host responded that the complainant was not the only one who had not received umnono, and mentioned a number of others who would have received iminono had there been more beer available.

The importance of iminono is illustrated also by the fanfare and

formality with which it is distributed. Having consulted kin and members of the section, the host directs an assistant to draw a number of beakers (perhaps four or five) and to place them in front of the door. He then calls for silence and tells the assistant where to place each beaker, calling out the name of the receiver, and often the nature of the relationship, in so doing. Mgilibane spoke as follows when giving out iminono at his umsindleko:

"Take this beaker, to Limangele and Helesi (pause), for Helesi, and Tandabantu - the three of them. Take another beaker, and put it here, for Canca, together with Ndaba, Bhadela (an alternative name for Ndaba), and my brother in law, Skeyile - the three of them. Take another beaker, and put it here next to father (Nomtsoyi, Mgilibane's wife's father's brother). Are they finished now? Is there still one left? Take another beaker, and put it there next to Pat. Yaaah! That's all right now. So, chiefs, this is what I have found, there is nothing else (to give out). I thought that you should receive these spoonsfull. Chiefs, the people that I did not get to should not complain. I had hoped to give them too. (Interjection: 'It is impossible to attend to everybody')".

Iminono is frequently referred to as 'feathers' with which to 'fly', as indicated in the following - spoken by Dwetya, FB to Thwalingubo, at the latter's ntwana nje, when a kinsman from Velelo arrived rather late in the proceedings:

"The son of Wafunqula has just arrived, along with that woman. They have only just come. There are no more feathers my children; there are no more feathers left in this home with which we might fly to you (ezingabhabhazela kuni). Be at peace, my children, and do not say that this is not a home today. It will be a home next time you come, if you arrive in good time. Please forgive me my children. Strictly speaking there should be something (for you), if this is indeed a home..."

In the event, the late arrivals were given an umnono beaker, demonstrating that Thwalingubo's umzi was indeed 'a home' (ikhaya). A similar reference was made when a specialist circumciser (ingcibi) attended a beer drink in Folokhwe after having completed his work at an initiation ceremony nearby. Dlathu gave out the beaker saying that "the woman of this home says that she has not yet seen you chewing the corn of the home (kweli zimba lasekha' 'pha). She would like you to chew (drink)...".

As with other allocations of beer, the distribution of seating positions and the distribution of beer are linked. It is standard practice for certain categories of kin of the homestead head to be invited to sit with the host section. Most prominent among them is abayeni (lit: 'bridegrooms' or 'sons-in-law'). Other affines such as wife's brothers, father, father's brothers, and other members of the wife's lineage are also afforded this honour. Classificatory as well as real affines may be placed with the host section. For example, it is common for a homestead head to regard as his abayeni the husbands of daughters of a man of his own clan, but with whom he can trace no further connection. This means that at a beer drink held in, say, a homestead of the Bamba clan, all the men married to the head's daughters, real and classificatory, will be regarded as abayeni. Other categories of kin, too, are honoured in this way, with the exception of agnates. A mother's brother, a father's sister's son, or a clansman, are all likely to be asked to sit with the host section, especially if they are from outside of the sub-ward. A clansman who lives nearby, in the same sub-ward, is never asked to sit with the host section, and abayeni or abatshana, say, from the same section, may or may not be given this honour. For example, at Nontwaba's 'beer for harvest' a man from Velelo was asked to sit with the hosts, due to the fact that his mother and Nontwaba's mother were sisters. Local men, however, related to Nontwaba in the same way, were not asked to do so.

If it is not possible to place all the abayeni and other close non-agnatic kin with the host section, some may be seated with the hosts

while others are given an umnono beaker. It is regarded as important that they be recognized in some way, and that they receive more beer than others. At Thwalingubo's ntwana nje Dwetya (Thwalingubo's FB) called out loudly, "Here comes my daughter's husband, let us make a place for him here." At Ntanyongo's umsindleko an umyeni who was placed with the hosts sat down near the hearth. This was regarded as improper, and he was asked to move back to a more senior (and more comfortable) position against the wall.

### Explaining the event

After the distribution of the preliminary beakers and iminono beer, which are the responsibility, largely, of the individual host or homestead head, the proceedings start in earnest. This is marked, firstly, by the handing over of the beer and, in effect, control of the event, by the individual host to his sub-ward section, as represented by the section's injoli. Often this handing over is prompted by comments from those present to the effect that the injoli should 'come forward' so that the proceedings can start, and that the various sections of the sub-ward are present. The proceedings cannot start if one of the sections is not represented, or if the sub-ward as a whole is poorly represented, unless the hosts are aware of what is delaying the others and know that they will arrive late.

Either immediately before or immediately after the injoli has taken charge, the host, or someone speaking on his behalf, is formally required 'to explain' (ukuchaza, ukucacisa) or 'make known' (ukwazisa) the nature of the occasion. He tells those assembled in the hut what kind of beer drink it is or what it was that prompted him to brew. One or more of the other groups in the hut then respond to this explanation, saying that they are grateful for it, and that they should now proceed with the event. The initial explanation also includes a reference to the amount of beer available for general distribution, and whether this is for both men and women, or whether women have their own portion. Frequently, the amount of beer available is understated, especially when the amount is actually small; e.g. "There is this beaker of beer here", when a full pot has

been brewed. Frequently also, the beer is personified in this explanation; e.g. "There in that full cask is the man (i.e. beer for men)...the woman is in the pot, (which contains) four beakers." Examples of these explanations may be found in Ch. 4.

At this stage too, the host (or his representative) must indicate whether or not the various groups present can expect to be given the amount of beer that they are entitled to and, if not, point out that there is a shortage of beer and ask permission to withhold certain beakers, or to give out beakers of a smaller size than is customary. Such a request (isicelo) is never refused, as long as it is made at the correct time. Others reply simply that they understand, and that the injoli should go ahead (see Ch 4).

#### The injoli and the 'arranging of the hut'

Ukujola means to 'divide' or 'apportion', and the injoli is the person who allocates or apportions both seating places and beer, on behalf of the hosts.<sup>18</sup> In Folokhwe sub-ward, each of the three sections has its own injoli, as well as one or two assistant or 'junior' iinjoli. Of the three Folokhwe iinjoli, one is recognized as senior, and it is he who 'jolas' at large events in the sub-ward, such as imigidi. At beer drinks the section injoli is responsible for a large number of things, and is kept very busy, as will become evident below. He supervises the drawing of all the beakers for distribution after the beer has been handed over to him. He announces or explains each beaker that is given out, in order to ensure that the nature and destination of each beaker is understood. He is responsible for placing the beakers in front of the groups or individuals that they are destined for, and for conveying the thanks (or the complaints) of the visiting groups to the assembly as a whole. He sees to it that the beaker for the sibonda (see below) is put one side. He is responsible, generally, for ensuring that the beer drink proceeds smoothly and in an orderly fashion, and he helps to ensure that people abide by the 'rules for interaction' (Saville-Troike 1982, 147), such as those governing turn-taking and not interrupting speakers. If someone wants to speak, they ought to ask the injoli to call for silence. If they have a question

or a request, they channel it through him. At iimbarha beer drinks, he collects the money for the beer sold, sees to it that the beakers which are given out free of charge are made available, announces when all the beer has been sold, and so on. He is, in effect, in charge of the beer drink, though he consults frequently and at length with other members of his section, including the individual host.

It is this group of men who control the event and are responsible for following the correct procedure. They are addressed (by the injoli, the homestead head, and others) as 'mpi yakuthi ('our people') or 'mpi yakulo Komkhulu ('people of Komkhulu' or whatever the name of the section). They are also commonly addressed as abantu basekhaya ('people of the home') and amawethu ('our people'). Other terms used to refer to them include iinkabi zalapha ('big men (lit: oxen) of the area'), izidwangube ('great councillors') iindlezana ('most generous ones') and iingwevu ('greybeards'). Most of these terms are also used when referring to the sub-ward as a whole - e.g. impi yakuthi yakuloFolokhwe or yakwaFolokhwe ('our people of Folokhwe'), or izidwangube zomhlaba ('great councillors of the area'). They are also commonly addressed as 'our people' and 'people of the home'. For example, Stokwana, in speaking of his fellow Komkhulu section seniors, said that "there are these generous ones, the people of the home, the people of the beer" (kubekho nokw'iindlezana, abantu basekhaya, bokwaba...).<sup>19</sup>

In performing his duties the injoli is helped by his assistant, the homestead head, and one or two of the young men sitting near the beer. His helpers draw the beakers and place them in front of the door, from where they distribute them in the manner directed and announced by the injoli. They go and collect the cans when empty, go out in search of additional amaphanga (empty cans) if necessary, carry the women's pot of beer out to them, and so on. Because they are up and about, and continually moving in and out of the hut, they carry messages between men inside and women outside, particularly when women are called into the hut for sips by individual men.

After the nature of the event has been explained and the amount of

beer available indicated, the injoli is asked 'to arrange the hut' (ukulungis' indlu). It is in this regard that the topological features of the hut outlined above become relevant. In arranging the hut the injoli works in consultation, firstly, with the other members of his section, and then in consultation with the sub-ward as a whole. First, he announces that he is going to arrange the hut, and may ask everybody who is from outside of Folokhwe to leave it. He then allocates the places to Folokhwe sections. Then the question of which of the neighbouring sub-wards (iinkabi) to call in, and where they should be placed, is discussed. Once one or two of the iinkabi have been called in there is further discussion among Folokhwe men as a whole. Contrasting opinions are often expressed at this stage, some saying that the hut is full, others that they should try and find a place for another inkabi.

From this point onward things proceed cautiously. The homestead head is allowed to give out preliminary beakers by himself, and to call these whatever he chooses to. Similarly with iminono - these are his responsibility, involving his relationship with other individuals. He may choose (up to a point) to whom to give an umnono and to whom not to give one. He may (and usually does) consult his kin and close neighbours before giving out this beer, but he is not obliged to. After this, however, the beer drink becomes an affair involving groups, and the host section as a collectivity makes decisions about allocations to other groups.

Once the head has 'released' or handed over the beer, it cannot be tampered with by anybody except the injoli, acting on behalf of the section. Even if an important guest arrives he cannot be given umnono from the intselo (the main portion), and will have to go without unless there is something 'hidden'. The intselo belongs to the section, not to the homestead which brewed it. A homestead head who disregards this is likely to be publically rebuked, and possibly fined.

It is the host section that is responsible for the 'correct' allocation of seats and beer, and for ensuring that all present know

what is happening all the time. Every aspect of the procedure, every beaker that is given out, every seating position allocated, must be publicly announced and explained.

Within the host section it is usually possible to identify a small group of key men who are the effective decision makers about how and when to proceed at a beer drink. These include the injoli, the homestead head or a man acting for the head, and one or two close neighbours, who are often also close agnates such as a brother or father's brother. It is this group which discusses and decides about matters such as when to start the proceedings, how much beer to issue, how to allocate seating places, and so on.

#### Amasiko ('customs')

The first distribution of beer after the 'arranging of the hut' and the host's explanation of the nature of the beer drink, is called amasiko beer, and consists of a number of named beakers, at least some of which must be given out at every beer drink. The significance of amasiko can be gleaned, firstly, from the meaning of this term and from the alternative terms applied to this beer. Amasiko means 'customs', but the literal meaning of the singular, isiko, is a 'cut', from ukusika, 'to cut, cut off, attack, kill...' (Kropf 1915, 388). Figuratively ukusika means 'to cut one out, to supplant, out-do one' (ibid.). There are three other terms which may be used as synonyms for amasiko beer:

1. Amalungelo - 'rights, privileges, claims, advantages'
2. Iimfanelo - 'property' or, in the singular, 'suitableness, propriety, desert, duty'
3. Iziqhelo - 'habits, expectations'

Amasiko beer is given to groups or individuals, as will be seen below, who are 'distinct' or 'separate' or 'a cut above' the others, who are singled out for preferential treatment, and given what is regarded as their right or their due. The beer that they receive is something that they have a right to by virtue of their social position and/or their relationship with the givers.

(i) iimvuko ('awakening')

The amasiko consists of a number of distinct distributions. The first and most important of these is called the iimvuko beer, allocated to the men and women of the host section only (though there are exceptions to this). The amount of iimvuko varies from section to section. In Folokhwe, Ngingqi section gives out two iimvuko beakers, one each for men and women. Komkhulu gives out three, two for men and one for women, and the men's beakers are divided between Mtyibilizini and Mbukhubha, Komkhulu's two sub-sections or imimango. Ngingqi has no sub-sections. Chibi section gives out four iimvuko, three to men and one to women. The men's beakers are divided according to Chibi's sub-sections - Bamba, Ntshilibe and Ntlane. Women do not subdivide their iimvuko in any of the sections.

In giving out iimvuko the injoli may announce, firstly, that iimvuko is present and that it will be distributed shortly. He then supervises the drawing of the required number of beakers, having consulted the host and other members of his section about this. The beakers are carried to the front of the hut and placed in front of the doorway, one behind the other on an imaginary line bisecting the hut into right and left. The injoli then announces that the iimvuko have arrived. Starting with the first beaker, nearest the doorway, he instructs his assistant where to place it, working his way down to the last beaker, which is the women's. The order in which the beakers are given out and the order in which they stand in front of the door thus mirrors the statuses of the receivers. This principle applies to all issues of beer, and all beakers are given out from the doorway, never directly from the pots at the back to the receivers. Once all the iimvuko beakers have been placed the injoli whistles for quiet again, and formally announces that the beakers have been distributed - e.g. "This one, it is for the brewers, Mtyibilizini. This one, it goes here, to Mbukhuba. This beaker here is for women - take it outside".

Iimvuko are described as iimfanelo zelali - 'the sections privileges', or as 'the things for living together as neighbours' (izinto zokuhlala ngokwelali). They are for 'the people I live with' (abantu endihleli

nabo) and are said to indicate 'the way we look after (lit: 'feed') each other' (yindlela yokutyisana). "We do not drink beer with people from far away, it is living together that counts. Iimvuko is the symbol of our living together (yinto yokuhlala kwenu)". The word itself means 'awakening', from ukuvuka, 'to wake up', and some people emphasize this derivation. Iimvuko is distributed "because we arrive early in the morning - we of the ilali (section) take out the iimvuko beakers". It is drunk "before you are lumped together with other people (nizabanenkampani nabantu). It is for the abasili (brewers), for the ibandla (senior men of the section)". "It is for waking up, because they wake up from their homes and come here to this home. (We say) I am waking you up with this beaker". "It is for people of the home - all the people of this ilali (section) are people of the home (yonke le lali ngabantu basekhay' abo)". One man commented that the people who lived together in an area ought to start off with their own beakers to "rid themselves of jealousy" (bakhuph' umona).

Once, when Chris de Wet accompanied me to Shixini, he and I and my assistant were recording a praise poem in our hut, and were late in arriving in the hut next door (in the same homestead) where a beer drink had started. The iimvuko had already been distributed, and Dlathu, acting for the homestead head, Mzilikazi, who was at work, publically chastized us for arriving late, clearly feeling that we ought to have been present for iimvuko. He referred to us as 'the people I live with' (madoda ndihlelei nabo) who should have been present. He had been waiting for us for a long time, but we were busy working (lit. "writing") in another hut, he said. So they had gone ahead, and the iimvuko was already finished. It was a requirement of an isiko, he said, that if one wanted it, one had to be there for it, one had "to work in the hut of the beer drink. "There should be no working on one side, there should be working here (makangayokubhal' ecaleni, makabhal'apha)." It was here, in the main hut, he said, where the pot of beer was cooked - "the hearth is here" - and not in the other hut.

So as far as that part of the amasiko called iimvuko is concerned, it is the host section, the group of neighbours living in the same area or ilali, who are singled out, identified as a corporate, exclusive group, as opposed to other similar units. They share a beaker because they live together and assist each other in daily life. The beaker helps to ensure the continuing harmony and unity of this group; it 'takes out jealousy', by both symbolizing the interdependence and mutual assistance characteristic of the ilali, and through the commensality of sharing beer.

The setting in which iimvuko is distributed and consumed emphasises this. It occurs right at the beginning of the formal procedure, once all the sections and sub-wards have been allocated their places and are waiting in anticipation, watching the injoli and the hosts closely to ensure that the correct procedure is followed. At no other stage of the beer drink is attention focussed so sharply on what is happening as at this stage. And what happens is that the beer is given only to the members of the host section, men and women, before even men from other sections and sub-wards have had anything. The unity of the section is publicly and powerfully displayed. As with all beakers, the iimvuko is not consumed entirely by the section to which they are allocated. Members of the section call men from other sections and sub-wards to drink from these beakers, although, as one man put it, "there can be no case against us if we do not". This sharing merely serves to emphasize the fact that the other groups received nothing and are dependent on the host section for a sip of beer.

The division of iimvuko within the sections which have sub-sections appears to be a symbolic statement to the effect that the section as a corporate group nevertheless recognizes the identity of sub-groups within it. When asked about this sub-division of iimvuko, men tended to play it down - "Mtyibilizini is just the name of that hill over there, we are one group, we are all Mkhulu, though when we give each other beer we distinguish between Mtyibilizini and Mbukhubha". Another said that this division was made "simply because we are many (in Komkhulu), so we divided ourselves". It is only with regard to

iimvuko that the sub-sections are recognized. All other beer distribution is done on the basis of section or sub-ward. If Komkhulu receives two beakers in some other distribution, these are not divided on the basis of sub-section, but (if it is sub-divided at all) on the basis of a certain number of men per group. The sub-sections do not form separate groups as far as seating is concerned either. Nevertheless, the recognition of distinct sub-sections through the division of iimvuko can be used to make important statements about the nature of the relationships within the section, the relationship between the host section and other sections, and so on. This is illustrated in the following case:

According to Folokhwe people, Chibi section of the sub-ward was, until three generations ago, divided into two sub-sections on a lineage basis. The members of the Bamba sub-section lived mainly in the north-western part of the Chibi section, while members of the Ntlane sub-section lived mainly in the south-east. Other people of neither the Bamba or Ntlane clan were affiliated to one or other of these sections. One day Poni, the son of a Bamba, discovered that his genitor had been a man of the Ntshilibe clan, and he decided to switch. His sons followed suit, and a new lineage was born. Today, this Ntshilibe agnatic cluster is numerically and politically very strong in Folokhwe. At first, the amaNtshilibe were part of the Bamba sub-section but as it grew it became large enough to form its own sub-section. A generation or so ago (so the story goes) at a beer drink in a Ntshilibe homestead, the amaNtshilibe saw to it that three beakers of iimvuko were given out instead of the usual two - one each for the Bamba and Ntlane sub-sections, and one for themselves. In this way the new sub-section was established. In all likelihood this was discussed beforehand and agreed upon with members of the other two sub-sections and with other Folokhwe sections.

Early in the 1970s the Ntshilibe and Ntlane sub-sections stopped giving each other iimvuko beer due to conflict

between some of the members of the two groups. It seems that there was a fight between two men, a Ntlane and a Ntshilibe, and that the latter was injured. On his way to Willowvale town to consult a doctor he met with an accident and was killed. The amaNtshilibe suspected witchcraft, and suspicion centred on the wife of one of the senior amaNtlane, but no action was taken against her. During this time of ill-feeling, it was only in homesteads of the Bamba section that three iimvuko beakers were given out. In 1977 the dispute between the amaNtlane and amaNtshilibe was at least partly resolved, and the two groups started to give each other iimvuko again.

More recently, the amaNtshilibe have forged close affinal and economic ties with the Mkhulu section of Ndlelibanzi sub-ward, which adjoins the Chibi area. These two sections now exchange iimvuko, even though they belong to different sub-wards. I was told that the two groups had first met to discuss this, and had decided 'to give each other iimvuko' (ukuvukisana) 'because of their close neighbourly relations' (ngokumelana). The women of these areas followed suit, and although there is not a separate beaker for the other section in their case, the Ntshilibe women share their imvuko beaker with the Mkhuku women, and vice versa.

What this case illustrates quite clearly is that a knowledge of the social process is required for a proper understanding of beer drinks, and that the latter provide commentaries on and dramatizations of both historical and contemporary realities. It also illustrates that the sections and sub-sections are similar to the 'hospitality groups' (izithebe) among the Mpondomise (Hammond-Tooke 1963) and the Mthwa (Mpondo) 'mat-associations'. An isithebe is a woven-grass mat or platter on which food is placed and served. Shixini people do not often use the term isithebe, preferring the more ambiguous ilali. When asked they said it was an appropriate term to refer to sub-wards or sections at ritual killings, and that isitya ('dish') was appropriate for beer drinks, though the latter is also not frequently

used. The mat associations, too, grow and divide over time. What is puzzling, however, is their apparent irrelevance in the context of beer drinking, where they do not function as a basis for the allocation of beer or seats, despite the fact that "the seating order is the spatial expression of the social order" (Kuckertz 1984, 346).

(ii) ibhekile kasibonda ('the sibonda's beaker')

This part of the amasiko is a medium-sized beaker, the issue of which is obligatory at all beer drinks at which the sibonda or his officially delegated representative is present. It is put aside near the beginning of the beer drink and given to the sibonda as soon as he arrives. If he does not arrive it may be given out as umnono, or put with the 'hidden beer' (imifihlo). Once Ziwele gave it to the sibonda's younger brother, even though the latter was not in the position of acting sibonda at the time. Other men commented privately that this was not necessary, and that they would not do this in their own homesteads. When the sibonda gets his beaker, he invariably calls others to drink from it, or sends it across to other izibonda who may be present. He consumes relatively little of the beer himself. If the sibonda arrives at a beer drink well after the proceedings have started he may have to do without his beaker, as the following incident illustrates:

At Nomfuxuse's isichenene the sibonda arrived once the proceedings were well under way. Helesi stood to announce that there was no ibhekile kasibonda, because he had arrived "when the beer was already completely used up" (ebubhokoxile). Since he had not arrived with the other people, Helesi continued, they had assumed that he was busy attending to some problem. He said that he hoped the sibonda would not be upset by the absence of his beaker, and that he would pardon them for not producing it. The sibonda responded, saying that there was no problem because "beer does not wait for one" (utywala abulindi mtu). Even beer kept for a particular person, he said, should be given to someone else if that person did not arrive.

The effect of the exchange of formalities in this instance was to confirm the sibonda's right to a special beaker. Even a sibonda who does not drink beer is given a beaker in recognition of his status. As Jija put it, "the sibonda attends to our affairs, represents us at the chief's great place, and reports our opinions to him. If there is a meeting there, he reports back to us on what was said. When one brews beer, it must be remembered that the sibonda is the one who runs about for us". This beaker is also called umpath' isibonda, "'holder' or 'controller' of the sibonda". In other words, it is a symbolic means of ensuring good relationship between the host section and the sibonda, a statement about the nature of that relationship, and of each party's acceptance of this.

In addition to receiving a special beaker, the ward sub-headman is always asked to sit with the host section. The status of izibonda from other areas is also recognized, and they are invited to sit with one or other of the local sections, inside the hut. The same applies to members of the royal Tshawe clan, whether they are izibonda or not, "because the amaTshawe are chiefs". Influential men from other areas, such as a chief's councillor, are treated similarly if they happen to be present.

At an imbarha beer drink in Chibi, the Folokhwe sibonda sat with Chibi, and the sibonda from Velelo with Komkhulu. There were two amaTshawe present, both from Nompha. One was asked to sit with Chibi, the other with Ngingqi. Other Nompha men sat separately. Of the four high-status people present, then, two sat with Chibi and one each with Komkhulu and Ngingqi.

There were three izibonda present at Nontwaba's 'beer for harvest', in Komkhulu. All three sat with Komkhulu until the 'arranging of the hut'. At this point Ndlebezenja (of Komkhulu) stood and addressed Chibi men, saying that it was customary "that when the chiefs are crowded together in one place, a request is made to that group (for them to be spread around)". One of the 'chiefs', he suggested, should

with Chibi. It was not good for them to sit together, "beating each other with their shadows" (zibethana ngezithunzi - i.e. pitting their statuses against each other). Ndlelibanzi's sibonda was thus asked to sit with Chibi, while the other two remained with Komkhulu. This led to a sham argument among some of the Komkhulu men. One said that the Ndlelibanzi sibonda was the greater chief, and that he should stay with Komkhulu. Others pointed out that he was the sibonda who knew the Chibi people best. The other sibonda (from Velelo) knew the Komkhulu people best, they said.

Clearly, they were making a point about relationships, not only between individuals, but also between groups. Chibi and Ndlelibanzi people have a close relationship with each other, and the Ndlelibanzi sibonda is affinally related to the dominant agnatic group in Chibi, the amaNtshilibe. Komkhulu and Velelo, too, have close ties with each other, and the Velelo sibonda is of the same clan as the dominant Komkhulu clan, the amaCirha. The placing of these two izibonda with the respective sections thus served to recognize their status as political leaders, dramatize the relationship between sections, and that between kinship groups.

Sometimes authentic, minor disputes arise over the placing of high status people like izibonda and amaTshawe, as illustrated in the following incident:

At an isichenene in Ndlelibanzi a man of the Tshawe clan from Nompha arrived late, and headed for the place allocated to the men from Nompha. Ndlanyane, the Ndlelibanzi senior next to the door, stopped him, saying that they were going to make a place for him. He then asked the Folokhwe group if they could make room for Tshawe on their side of the hut (Folokhwe's place ranked higher than that given to Nompha). Thekwane of Folokhwe objected sharply to this, saying that they were at the place allocated to them, and should not be asked to move. Ndlanyane replied that he had not asked

Folokhwe to move, but whether they could make a space for Tshawe. Perhaps one or two of the more junior Folokhwe men might move back a little, he suggested. Ntanyongo, also from Folokhwe, in an attempt to prevent any ill-feeling, said that it was a reasonable request, and that there should not be an argument about it. As he was speaking one of the less senior Folokhwe men got up and went out of the hut, thereby making a place available for Tshawe.

Although this sort of incident seems to be rather different from the allocation of a specific beaker to the local sibonda, the principle underlying it is similar. Ndlanyane, aware of the beer-relationship between Ndlelibanzi and Nompha, knew or foresaw that Tshawe would not get much to drink (officially) if he sat with his own group. By putting him with Folokhwe, Ndlanyane was trying to ensure that his status as Tshawe would be recognized, by placing him with a group that received a reasonable allocation of beer. In practice, however, the amount of beer actually consumed by Tshawe may not have been affected at all.

(iii) intluzelo

At larger beer drinks a number of beakers of intluzelo beer should be issued as part of the amasiko, in addition to iimvuko. In most cases, however, the host asks permission to withhold one or other of these distributions. For reasons that I can only speculate on, intluzelo tends to be issued at umsindleko beer drinks, and iimvuko withheld, while at all other larger beer drinks the reverse occurs - intluzelo is withheld and iimvuko given out. Intluzelo as part of the amasiko is quite distinct from the intluzelo given to those who helped with the brewing and that given to neighbours on the day before the beer drink. As part of the amasiko, it is given to the sections of the sub-ward, in contrast to iimvuko, which is issued only within the host section. For example, at Notimba's umsindleko eight beakers of intluzelo were issued, two to each of the three Ndlelibanzi sections and two to Ndlelibanzi women. At a similar event in Jotelo, only two beakers were issued, one for Jotelo men, and one for the women. At Ndlebezenja's umsindleko there were four intluzelo beakers. On this

occasion each of the sub-sections of the host section, Komkhulu, was given a beaker, one beaker went to Ngingqi section, and one to Komkhulu women. Ndlebezenja announced these beakers to the assembly in the following manner:

"This one! It goes here, to Mbukhuba; this Stibili!"<sup>20</sup>

This one! Put it here with Mtyibilizini! Intluzelo!

This one! It is for Nokokoba (Ngingqi)!

The one for women, here it is!"

Komkhulu and Ngingqi, I was informed, gave each other intluzelo because of the historical link between them, but neither exchanged intluzelo with Chibi. In this case, then, intluzelo was given out in much the same way as iimvuko would have been.

(iv) isikhonkwane

The nature of the 'customary' beakers changes according to the kind of beer drink being held. One example of this has already been mentioned - the substitution of intluzelo for iimvuko at umsindleko beer drinks. At beer drinks associated with a work party there are specific amasiko which must be given to the workers. Again, this varies according to the nature of the work and the amount of beer brewed. At beer for an umgqibelo ploughing group there are specific beakers which must be given to the men whose spans of oxen did the work. At 'beer for hoeing' the amasiko include the sibonda's beaker, a beaker called emvikweni ('on the verge between fields'), and beakers called inkobe ('boiled maize'). These are discussed more fully in the section on work party beer (Chapter 5).

At imbarha, the amasiko include iimvuko, the sibonda's beaker, and a beaker called isikhonkwane (a 'peg' or 'nail'). The latter is one large beaker (an iqhwina) which is drawn and put aside until the rest of the beer has all been sold, and then given to the men of the subward as a whole. It is not exclusively for the section within which the imbarha is held, though they may be the first to drink from it, before passing it on to others. This beaker is frequently referred to as umkhondo, or ibhekile yomkhondo ('the beaker of the spoor'). Most Shixini people are readily able to explain the symbolism: "It is the

beaker for the spoor. If something is stolen from your home, you call together the men of the ilali (sub-ward) to help you look for what has been stolen. This beaker is a reward for those who find (lost) things, so that they have something to drink." "It is the beaker for fire. If anything happens at this homestead I will shout, and people will come to put out the fire". In the sense that a peg or a nail is used for securing things, this beaker secures the assistance of the community. However, other interpretations are also possible - when I asked why this beaker was called a 'peg', adding that "a peg is something that is hammered into the ground", I was told that this was because the allocation of this beaker "is something that has been hammered out by law". Men frequently referred to the obligatory nature of this beaker, saying that if they failed to produce it at imbarha they would be tried and fined by the ward's ibandla. This is indicated also in the following remarks made to the gathering at Ndlebezenja's homestead by a spokesman for the homestead head, when the isikhonkwane was handed out:

"Excuse me, here is a word, people of Folokhwe, as conveyed by the son of Mangono here at this home. He says that this beaker is the isikhonkwane, the beaker of the spoor. The isikhonkwane is something that we are very careful about; it is the beaker of the spoor. This is it here, being given out here at Mangono's home. I stop there." A man commented in response that "it is for the ilali, you must see to that...".

(v) umcakulo ('the first dip')

While the amasiko beer is given out and drunk the other sections and sub-wards have to wait patiently, depending on iminono and on being called by others for a drink. Sometimes one of their number tactfully suggests that it would be nice if they, too, were allocated beer. For example, Gavan (Chibi section) once put it like this at a beer drink in Ngingqi. He addressed the injoli, saying:

"Hey Bhadela; no there is no problem, there is nothing wrong Bhadela; it is a good thing that a person should

brew; and that he should open his eyes, because these people here are hungry now. What has caused the hunger? It is the home (i.e. 'home' people being served first). One gets jealous of these beakers which are given to (home) people, while there is nothing that is given to oneself. That is the point. The home causes hunger; yes."

The distribution of umcakulo marks a transition from one phase of the beer drink to another - from the distribution of amasiko to the distribution of the main beer (the intselo). Umcakulo is itself a boundary of sorts, in that it consists of the top, frothy part of the intselo cask, though it is regarded as part of the amasiko. It can be translated as 'surface beer', from ukucakula, 'to dip from the surface of the water' (Kropf 1915, 54). Umcakulo is issued when the men have a full cask of beer and the women have a separate portion, though sometimes some reason is found to withhold it. In Folokhwe sub-ward, three beakers of umcakulo are usually drawn, one for each of the sections. Women are not given umcakulo, but are called in to sip from the men's beakers.

#### The main drink

(i) ukugabu ('to allocate by numbers')

The way in which the main portion of the beer is allocated depends on how much has been brewed in relation to the number of people present. At most beer drinks the beer is allocated on the basis of section and sub-ward membership. This kind of division is called ukulawula, and the beer so given out is umlawulo. At small beer drinks, however, beer may be allocated according to what is known as ukugabu or ukugabula, and the beer is then called ugabu. Kropf (1915, 112) says that ukugabu means "to part in two", while ukugabula is "to clear a way and make an opening...cut through the lines of an army..." It means, in the context of beer drinks, to 'cut' the assembly into groups of roughly equal size, irrespective of section and sub-ward membership, and to give the beer out to these groups. The verb ukusika ('to cut') is also used in this connection. For example, it may be announced that "we are not going to lawula, chiefs, we are

simply going to divide (lit: cut) it" (asizokulawula iinkosi, sizokusika nje). Another way of expressing the same principle is to tell the people that "there are no sides" (akukho macala), or that "there are no spaces" (akukho mabala), meaning that there will be no allocation of seating places and that the beer will not be given out according to section and sub-ward. In such cases there is usually only an abbreviated distribution of amasiko, and no 'arranging' of the hut as described earlier. Instead, the allocation of beer occurs by numbers - each group of a certain number of men being given a beaker. The groups that receive beer are thus not territorial or political. Some of the groups receiving beer by ukugabu may be territorially discrete, simply because men tend to sit with people from their home areas. The point, however, is that their territorial affiliation is not formally recognized. Distribution by ukugabu severely curtails the extent to which the allocation of beakers of beer can be used to symbolize statuses and relationships, and is confined to relatively small affairs.

(ii) ukulawula ('to allocate by social groups')

Ukulawula is by far the most preferred and most common form of allocating beer. Umlawulo beer is beer 'with places' (bunobala) in the sense that its distribution follows the allocation of space to various groups. When beer has 'places', said Nqakaba, "this means that a beaker goes to its place, so that each person should eat in the name of his area". The same term, ukulawula, is used to refer to the allocation of both places and beer, and one of its meanings is 'to arrange', or 'to give order to'. In this sense umlawulo is rather different from beer that is 'cut', which results in everybody being "treated alike" (ngokufanayo). Ukulawula allows for ordering, discrimination, definition of boundaries, and differentiation; for the making of symbolic statements about the relationships between groups. It gives the host section scope to manipulate and control the allocation of beer. Ukulawula also means 'to govern' or 'to rule over'. In the context of beer distribution, it allows the hosts to control and define the situation in their terms, and to recognize the positions and the rights of others: "When there is drinking it is done by rights, area by area (kuselwa ngamalungelo, ilali ngelali).

The (seating) places are as they are so that we drink by rights." Ukulawula allows people to confirm and recognise their relationship with each other: "If you have beer and you do not lawula it, you are destroying the nation, because when you go to other places you will quarrel, complaining, forgetting that you did not give to them..."<sup>21</sup>

The principles underlying the distribution of umlawulo are as follows:

1. The amount of beer given to sections and sub-wards is directly related to the places they are allocated when the hut is 'arranged'. Those with higher ranked seating places receive more beer than those in low ranked positions.
2. The host section receives far more beer than other sections of the sub-ward, the host sub-ward more than visiting sub-wards. The host sections receive beer well before visiting sub-wards.
3. Men receive more beer than women, and well before the woman receive theirs.
4. Strict reciprocity prevails between groups, and the amount of beer allocated to a group is determined (in theory) by the amount received from it at previous beer drinks. In practice the nature of the relationship, as defined in terms of the size of the beaker, is frequently negotiated and renegotiated at beer drinks (see Ch. 4).
5. Older people receive more beer than younger people.

Umlawulo may be given out in two or three 'rounds'. In the first round, the host section allocates two or three beakers to itself and one to each of its fellow sub-ward sections. Half an hour or so later, the sub-wards with which the host sub-ward has the closest ties are given one beaker of umlawulo. After another delay of 30 to 60 minutes, more umlawulo is given to the host sections, and some to the more distant sub-wards which have not yet received any. Often, the more distant sub-wards receive a smaller beaker than the closer ones, perhaps an inxithi rather than an iqhwina. If it is not possible (due to a lack of beakers) to lawula more than one sub-ward at a time, the one that is closest to the givers, in terms of both geographical proximity and relationships, gets its umlawulo first. Thus if Ndlelibanzi has to choose between Nompha and Folokhwe, it gives to Folokhwe first. Normally, however, these two are given their umlawulo

at the same time. If Folokhwe has to choose between Jotelo and Ndlelibanzi, it gives to Jotelo first, unless the beer drink is in Chibi section, in which case Jotelo will have to wait (see p.126).

The following are examples:

At an isichenene in Ndlelibanzi, four umlawulo beakers were issued at 11.05 a.m., one for each of the three Ndlelibanzi sections, and one for Folokhwe sub-ward. Having put the beakers down in the appropriate places, the injoli spoke as follows: "Yaaa! I have been to the cask now, and I am short of empty cans. This beaker goes to the brewer, this one is for Petse, this one is for Mkhulu.<sup>22</sup> That one there goes to Folokhwe. Eeh, I have no more empty cans, otherwise you would be eating too, Nompha. That's it." At 11.10 another two were given out, one for the host section and one for Nompha sub-ward.

At Nontwaba's beer for harvest, the first round of umlawulo, at 2 p.m., consisted of five large beakers, three for the host section (Komkhulu) and one for each of the other two sections. After drawing the beakers and placing them next to the door, the injoli announced them as follows: "Eee, I have dished up this beer according to its areas (ngeendawo)...These are for this side (Komkhulu), seeing that there are so many of you there; there should be another one, but there is a shortage of empty cans. This one is for Chibi, this one for Ngingqi." At 2.45 another three large beakers were issued, to Jotelo, Ndlelibanzi and Velelo, and a medium sized beaker to Nompha.

At an umsindleko in Jotelo, four umlawulo beakers were issued, three for the host section, and one for the other Jotelo section. An hour later, Folokhwe, Fumbatha, Ndlelibanzi and Gojelo sub-wards were given a beaker each. In the final issue of umlawulo, three beakers were issued to the host section and one to Mgwevu sub-ward (see Map 3).

At Rhumese's isichenene in Ndlelibanzi, a Nompha man stood to speak to a small group of other Nompha men who had just arrived. It was about the fact that at Mgwevu sub-ward Nompha was lawula-ed after Fumbatha, a change that had started recently. He said that he was reporting this to them now, because they had not been there when it happened and he had said that he could not discuss the matter without other Nompha people being present. This was a matter they needed to meet about at home. There were people who had a complaint against this group which had allowed Nompha to be subordinated to Fumbatha (or let Fumbatha be elevated over them). He did not want a reply from them, he said, he was merely reporting to them, that they should know about this complaint, and meet later to thrash it out (lit: 'chew it over' - ukuhlafuna).

Sub-wards which have a particularly close relationship with the host section are sometimes given an extra beaker of umlawulo, called izibuko ('a ford'), "because they have come here from over there, across the river". Velelo is given this beaker in Komkhulu section of Folokhwe, Jotelo receives it from Chibi and Ngingqi. When such a beaker is reciprocated, it is given to the whole of Folokhwe (i.e. at beer drinks in Velelo and Jotelo).

When the host section receives more than one round of umlawulo, the first round (all two or three beakers of it) is given to the senior men, and the less senior (those aged under 45 years or so) as well as the abafana (young men) are excluded. The less senior (or second grade) receive a beaker in the next round, and this beaker may include the abafana, or the abafana may receive a separate umlawulo beaker later. If there are two or three beakers in an allocation of umlawulo to a single group, the injoli indicates where each beaker should begin (or 'enter') and end (or 'go out'), pointing to the man who should start, and the one with whom the beaker turns around and goes back to the start. In other words, there is a division (on principles similar to those used in ukugabu) within the section receiving umlawulo. As mentioned earlier, however, the official sub-sections are not used as

a basis for this division. "We of Komkhulu (section) are united (for umlawulo) and we give beer to Ngingqi, as well as to Chibi, that ilali up above there". This same informant spoke of Komkhulu as "our ridge" (ummango wetho) in the context of umlawulo, although a minute earlier, when talking about iimvuko, he identified Mtyibilizini sub-section as consisting of the homesteads of one ridge, Mbukubha as being those on another ridge.

Visiting sub-wards are keenly aware of how much umlawulo they are entitled to, given the amount of beer available. If for some reason the brewers are not able to provide the right amount, calculated in terms of number and size of beakers, they must explain this to the visitors, express their regret, and ask permission to give a lesser amount - e.g.

"Sssshh! Here is an apology (nalu xolo). That pot is insufficient when all of us in this area meet together. According to what is said (inteto) we should be using amaqhwin. However, we are going to use amanxithi, because of the shortage of beer."

If this is not done, the visitors will complain about their allocation, a long argument may follow, and the hosts may have to give up some of their own allocation or risk being treated in like fashion when the roles are reversed. Actual incidents of such disputes are dealt with in Ch. 4.

A visiting group's umlawulo is given to it only at the place allocated to it when the hut is arranged. If the group moves to another spot, for example to try and get some shelter from wind or rain, its beer is placed on the spot originally allocated to it, even if there is no-one sitting there. Someone has then to get up and fetch it.

#### Ukurhabulisa ('offering sips')

In the midst of all this structure there is, as one might expect, some 'anti-structure', and evidence of 'communitas' (Turner 1968). Divided

by the formal rules (imithetho) of beer drinking, in another sense all present are united. One manifestation of this is the way in which the beakers of beer are actually consumed, as opposed to the way in which they are formally allocated. No sooner has an allocation been announced, the beakers distributed and the injoli stood down, when the beer drink 'dissolves', as it were, into apparent disorder, and the assembly in the hut is transformed from an attentive, structured group into a noisy, moving, chaotic mass. People take up the conversations and banter that they had left off before the injoli had asked for quiet, start loudly discussing how the beakers should or should not circulate, resume calling out greetings and comments to friends across the room and to new arrivals, call each other over to drink, and shout messages to women outside to come and have a sip. People start moving in and out of the hut, and backwards and forwards within it; men go out to meet with friends or to urinate, and women enter in twos and threes, drink from the beakers offered them and leave. The host, the injoli and their helpers hurry about, searching for empty beakers and getting ready for the next allocation.

No beaker of beer is consumed entirely by the group (or the individual) to which it is allocated, making one wonder why so much fuss is made about seating places, beer allocations, beaker sizes, 'rights', and so on. Certainly, care is taken to ensure that each member of the group drinks from the beaker allocated to it, in his turn, and that the beaker stays more or less within the control of the group. However, each member of the group is permitted, when the beaker is passed to him for his turn to drink, to call someone else from another group to drink from it, before he does. And the person invited may, if he or she chooses to, bring someone else along for a drink (see Hunter 1936, 360). Obviously, if each member of the group does this, the group's beaker is consumed mainly by others, and this is exactly what frequently occurs. Giving someone a drink from a beaker is called ukurhabulisa (lit: 'to cause to sip'),<sup>23</sup> a term used in a variety of contexts and not limited to beer drinking. To drink the first sip from a beaker is ukungcamla. When a beaker of beer is allocated to a group or an individual, someone (usually a young man from the back of the hut) is asked to ngcamla (have the first drink

from the beaker). As the Mpondo put it, this is to 'remove the poison' (ukukhupha ububi) from the beer (Kuckertz 1984, 348) and is linked to the custom of a chief's retainer always tasting his food in case it is poisoned. Ukungcamla is not ukurhabulisa. After this however, the beaker starts circulating, within the group to which it is allocated, and as each man receives the beaker, he may call others to drink. The air rings with shouts like:

Nothusile! Nothusile! Urhatyulisw' apha! (Nothusili! Nothusile! You are offered a sip here)

Yiz'apha Nogamile! Rhabul' 'apha! (Come here Nogamile! Have a drink!)

Modi, yeka la nqawa! (Modi, put down that pipe! (and come and drink))

He, Govuza! Sukuma! (Hey, Govuza! Stand up! (and have a sip))

Bodli, uyabizwa! (Bodli, you are being called!)

Urhatyuliswa mfondini, yiz'aph! (You are being called to drink fellow, come here!)

The receivers sometimes reply with comments in thanks or acknowledgement, like 'Heke!' (Right!), 'Awu!' (Wow!), or 'Nangomso, ndirhabulise!' (Thank you, do so again in future!)

At any beer drink it is expected that those with beer, or who are given the most beer, will offer sips to those without, or with very little. Giving beer to others in this way has a number of symbolic meanings - it is another of the multivocal symbols that seem to abound at beer drinks. Ukurhabulisa symbolises at least the following:

- a) Commensality, friendship and harmony. "We give each other sips to make each other happy at beer drinks, since we are people who live together in one place, who drink together happily, and who help each other. That is why one gives sips to others."
- b) Continuity of relationship and reciprocation. In speaking of ukurhabulisa people often said 'I give sips to those who give to me' or words to that effect. In practice, those who rhabulisa each other are frequently kin, close neighbours or good friends (see below).

c) The high value of giving, and the high status of givers. In some cases giving and receiving beer is linked to an enduring relationship of superiority and inferiority, such as that between men and women, elders and juniors, and sub-headman and residents. The differing amounts of beer allocated to these people may be interpreted as a means to act out the status differences between them. Obvious as it may seem, this point must not be overemphasized. There are times when men and women, for example, receive similar amounts of beer and call each other for a drink with similar frequency - e.g. during the drinking of igwele beer on the day before the beer drink.

There is no point in having beer, however, if it cannot be given away to others, and receiving a turn to drink from a beaker allocated to one's group is at the same time the receipt of an opportunity to rhabulisa someone. Once when Ntanyongo was asked if he had drunk from the beaker allocated to Folokhwe sub-ward, his reply was: 'No, I have not yet had a chance to rhabulisa anyone". The value of being able to give is illustrated also in cases where men abuse the right to call others to drink. One day in Jotelo, a Folokhwe man called three other people without other Folokhwe men noticing. When the others realised what was going on they commented adversely about this, and the offender was asked if he was "trying to put people in his pockets" (trying covertly to curry favour) by giving beer to so many, and without other Folokhwe men seeing what he was doing.

It is because of the value and status attached to giving and to reciprocity that the injoli is sometimes rewarded for his work with a beaker with which to rhabulisa people, that even an injoli who does not drink beer is given such a beaker, and that iminono ('gifts') are given to people who do not drink. Similarly, a person who does not drink can be called to drink in the knowledge that he or she can bring along someone who does drink beer, and in turn become the giver. A woman who does not drink is called for a sip, said Dlathu, "because she brews beer for people at her homestead".

The principles underlying the practice of calling others to drink are derived from those on which beer and seats are allocated. Early on in

the beer drink men from the host section give sips to those from other sections and wards, who have not yet been allocated beer. Later, men from the host sub-ward give sips to those from other sub-wards, who do not receive very much beer. The women do likewise. Men in general rhabulisa women, and seniors rhabulisa juniors (among both men and women). These are general tendencies only, however. There is nothing to stop a junior from giving a drink to a senior, a woman to a man, or a visitor from afar to a member of the host sub-ward or section. Because of the way in which the beer is divided, however, this does not happen frequently. A woman who is given umnono is able to rhabulisa men, and at work party beer, such as umgqibelo, the young men who worked are able to rhabulisa their seniors.

When a junior offers a sip to a senior, he or she cannot shout out in the manner illustrated above, but must respectfully take the beaker over to the senior, wait for it there, and then carry the beaker back again. Alternatively the beaker may be sent over to the person being offered a sip with a third party. This latter method is also used when high status people give each other sips, thus avoiding both calling the one over to the other (signalling the higher status of the giver) and the giver taking the beaker to the receiver (signalling the higher status of the latter). A very senior woman might call her son over to drink, but not a senior man, unless she can get around this somehow, as Noseveni once did when she said: "Hey, (so and so), this is the woman's beaker so I cannot bring it to you, please come and have a sip here".

When women enter the hut on being called for a sip, their demeanour is extremely restrained and reserved. They wrap their shawls tightly around their arms and shoulders, and enter the hut silently, eyes downcast, faces expressionless. They do not approach the giver too closely, but kneel elegantly on their haunches in the centre of the hut near the door (usually the only spot where there is any free space) and stretch over to receive the beaker. They respond to comments from the men but do not initiate conversation. This kind of stylized behaviour, generally known as ukuhlonipha ('to respect') is more strictly observed among younger women, less so among the very

senior.

Within the framework of these general tendencies, the individuals most likely to be called for a sip are as follows:

- a) Kin such as affines and matrilaterals. Men call their wives and mothers and their agnates' wives and mothers, as well as affines and matrilateral kin, especially those from other sub-wards. Women call their husbands and husband's agnates and clansmen.<sup>24</sup>
- b) People who are highly respected or who occupy high status positions, such as izibonda, and the wives and mothers of izibonda.
- c) Visitors to homesteads within the sub-ward, and who may be spending some weeks or months at those homesteads.
- d) People who arrive late at the beer drink and who have not yet had anything to drink.

People are keenly aware of who is offering and begin offered sips, and frequently offer comments in praise or criticism in this respect. It is considered 'bad form' to call one person for a sip more than once or twice, especially if it is someone from a group that has been allocated a beaker. When Canca called a Tshawe who had just been called for a sip by someone else, Bavumile criticised him, saying: "Why do you call someone who has his own beaker, when there are people without beakers?". It is also regarded as improper to call women for sips to the exclusion of men, or to call people from only a particular section or ward. At an umgqibelo in Komkhulu section of Folokhwe, Hlathi (Chibi section) wanted to know why Komkhulu men were continually calling men from Ngingqi for sips, and not those from Chibi. On the other hand, a man who called a number of women whose husbands were at work was praised for doing so. It was said that if he had not done this those women would have got very little to drink. In practice, who calls who for a sip also varies according to who happens to be present, the kind of beer drink, and other circumstances. At beer for a work party it is primarily workers who call non-workers (being able to do this is regarded as part of the reward for working). This is also one of the few occasions when women may be allocated more beer than men, and thus rhabulisa men with it.

At umgqibelo, it is the (male) members of the ploughing group that have the most beer, and who rhabulisa others (see Ch. 5).

The following are some examples of how the informal distribution of a beaker occurs. They are taken from a beer drink held at Nontoyakhe's home in Ngingqi section of Folokhwe, to reward the men who had ploughed her garden some weeks earlier. Her father, Toto (Ntlane clan), who lives nearby, assisted with the organisation. Clan and section affiliation are indicated in parentheses.

1. One beaker was allocated to Ngingqi and placed in front of Toto. He called Stokwana (Mvulane, Komkhulu) to ngcamla (have the first taste) for him, and Stokwana called Ncasa (Bamba, Chibi) for a sip. From Toto the beaker went to Molusweni (Kwayi, Ngingqi) who called Modi (Ntshilibe, Chibi) and Mkeni (Bamba, Chibi). The beaker then went to Ntlekiso (Kwayi, Ngingqi) who called Gamalakhe (Ntshilibe, Chibi) and Lelani (Bamba, Chibi). The next Ngingqi man called Hlathi (Ntshilibe, Chibi). Then Dyakalashé (Cirha, Komkhulu) called Mkeni and Bonakele (Bamba and Qinebe, both Chibi). Now all this makes sense only if one knows that Chibi was going to be allocated very little beer, and that the two large agnatic groups in Chibi are of the Bamba and Ntshilibe clans. In this case 5 Ngingqi men, 1 Komkhulu and 8 Chibi men drank from the beaker.

2. An umnono beaker was given to Sonkebese (Tshezi, Komkhulu) by Toto (Ntlane, Ngingqi) and it moved as follows - Sonkebese to Molusweni (Kwayi, Ngingqi) to ngcamla, then to Toto, then to Qamela (Ndaba, Komkhulu), who called Dlathu's sister and Nomfuxuse (both Cirha women from Komkhulu), then to Tandabantu (Cirha, Komkhulu). This makes sense only if one knows that the amaTshezi are closely related to the amaCirha, that there were no other Tshezi men present, and that it was an umnono beaker - the honour being accorded Sonkebese was kept within his own ilali, not spread to others.

3. A beaker was given to Tandabantu (Cirha, Komkhulu section), a young man, who had been in charge of the ploughing. He called Ziwele's son (Cirha, Komkhulu) to taste (ukungcamla) and then sent the beaker to Gamalakhe (Ntshilibe, Chibi), saying that "you, too, are one who takes charge of ploughing teams (an umqhubi)" Gamalakhe gave a sip to Lelani (Bamba, Chibi). Tandabantu then called two wives of Ntshilibe men from Chibi in recognition of the fact that his wife was a Ntshilibe from the same area. Dyakalashé (Cirha, Ngingqi) then asked for a sip and was given one. The beaker was then passed to Dlathu (Cirha, Komkhulu) and Qamela (Ndaba, Komkhulu). It was then sent across to Mkeni (Bamba, Chibi) and Snotwana (Ntshilibe, Chibi). With this beaker then, Tandabantu was able to acknowledge both his affinal and agnatic links, give something to his seniors in both Komkhulu and Chibi, and establish a parallel between himself and Gamalakhe, his senior, who is a highly regarded and influential man.

When someone is called for a sip he or she may, as mentioned above, invite someone else to accompany him/her and to share the drink offered. This is ukubeleka - lit: 'to carry', as a mother carries a child on her back. In practice, men do not beleka as much as women, who seldom have a drink without taking a friend (or two) with them. A woman who does not drink may beleka a friend, telling her to beleka someone too. The three of them go into the hut and kneel, sometimes in single file, in front of the giver. The one who was called receives the beaker, passes it to the one behind her, who drinks and passes it to the third. The beaker is then passed back to the man in reverse order.

As with ukurhabulisa, who 'carries' who depends largely on who happens to be present, and on circumstances like who one walked to the event with, who happens to be sitting nearby when one is called, and so on. Since women go to beer drinks with their neighbours, and sit with others from their section and/or sub-ward, it is these people who are 'beleka-ed' most often. However, an attempt is made also to beleka

friends, affines and other kin, people who are unlikely to be called for a sip, and late arrivals who may not yet have had anything to drink.

### Women's umlawulo

After umlawulo has been given to all the visiting sub-wards, the injoli announces this to the men in the hut. At the same time, he tells them that he is about to take the women's share out to them, and with the help of an assistant, carries the women's umlawulo outside. On his return he reports to the men again, saying: "Bathi bayakuza" ('The women say they are grateful') or something similar. A similar procedure is followed when the injoli takes beer to the men of visiting sub-wards sitting outside. In these circumstances the women as a group are sometimes referred to as an inkabi, isipani ('span', an alternative for inkabi),<sup>25</sup> impi ('group') or umkhosi ('army') - e.g. la mkhos' uphandle ('that regiment outside').

The status of women in rural Xhosa society, patriarchal and (ideologically, at least) male dominated as it is, is very clearly encapsulated in the manner in which women participate in beer drinks. They receive very little beer, a strategy designed to make them dependent on being called by men for sips from the men's beakers. Their subordinate status is also illustrated in their seating position. Generally speaking, women sit well away from the hut, the inkundla and the cattlebyre, unless the weather is bad, in which case they are allowed to sit in the lee of the cattle byre fence. If it is raining heavily, they may occupy one of the other huts. If the homestead has only one hut, they must suffer the rain or go back home.

Frequently, women sit next to the igoqo, a large, neat pile of firewood usually stacked between huts or near the main hut. The locative egoqweni can thus mean 'with the women'. The igoqo is a symbol of the wife's industriousness, and wood from it is only used in emergencies or unusual circumstances.

Early on the day of the beer drink women may sit in the hut with the

men who arrive early, remaining, perhaps, for the preliminary beakers. As more men arrive and the hut becomes fuller, the women are told to leave, often with a curt: "Bafazi, phandle!" ('Women, outside!'). There are exceptions to this. When a family is released from mourning, women sit inside. The same applies when a widow is released from mourning, and women play an important role at this event (see Ch. 6). Both of these, however, are small affairs, and do not attract large numbers of people. It is thus not difficult to accommodate them in the hut. I have also seen women remain in the hut at an umsindleko for a boy, and leave immediately after the men had admonished the boy, when the boy, too, leaves the men's hut.

Outside, women sit in groups modelled on the spatial distribution of the men, those of the host ward nearer the igoqo, the hut and cattle-byre, those from distant areas further away. However, the women's groups are not as distinctly separate from each other as the men's are, and there is less concern with the 'proper order' of things. From a distance, the women often look as if they form a single group. Within this group, the boundaries of the various sub-ward groups are not clear cut. They also have different names for the sub-ward sections. In Folokhwe, women use 'Dam' instead of Chibi, 'Jiti' for Ngingqi, and 'Sithi' for Komkhulu. Much less fuss is made about who sits where. At some beer drinks it is possible to distinguish different groups of women according to the areas they come from, but at others it is not. Women do not have a formal allocation of seating places like the men do (the 'arranging of the hut'), and insofar as they do form separate groups it seems to be due to the fact that groups from the different areas tend to arrive together as groups, and thus to sit together.

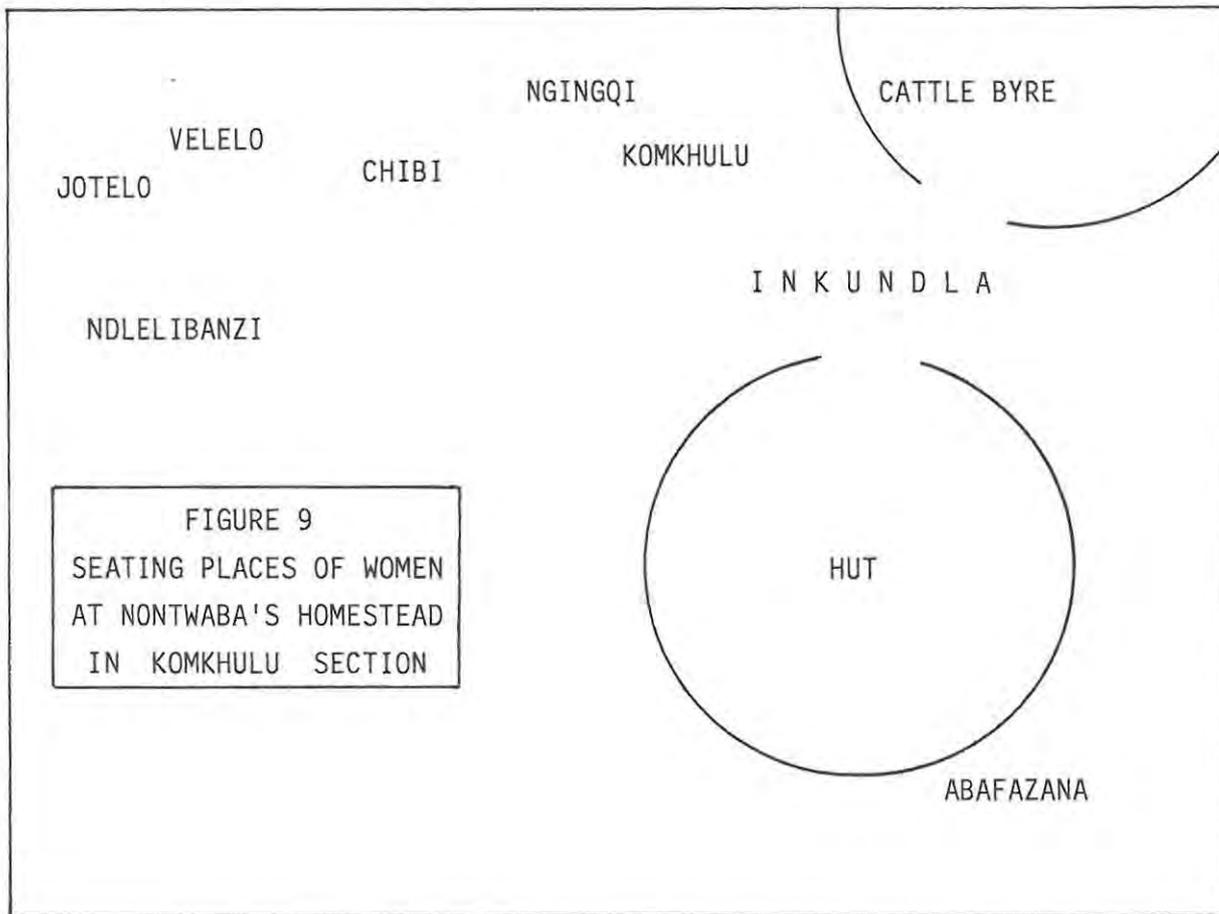
Here too there is an element of anti-structure and *communitas* within the overall structure of the beer drink. In male-dominated, patrilineal and patrilocal societies women are ambiguous, 'betwixt and between', and potentially disorderly. They are from 'outside' the local community (in both kinship and territorial terms) but it is through them that the existence of the local community is ensured. They are the daughters of one lineage and place, but the wives and mothers of another. Furthermore, in Shixini their power lies not only

in their reproductive capacity, but in two other vitally important spheres. For migrant workers, it is through their wives that the object of their labours - their homestead and other rural assets - are looked after while they are at work, and their social identity maintained. Secondly, because they are from outside sections and sub-wards, it is through women that political links, often with important economic consequences, are brought into being and maintained. In this sense they represent the wider community, and a unity that overrides territorial and kinship divisions (Turner 1969, 100-104).

Junior married women (abafazana) form a separate group and usually sit well away from the other women. Like young men (abafana) they are allowed to attend beer drinks only in the section in which they live, so the question of further divisions within this group does not arise. This distinct separation of abafazana from other women does not occur at smaller beer drinks, when women from other areas are not present. At Stokwana's isichenene there were fifteen women present, all from Folokhwe sub-ward. The senior women sat in a rough semi-circle, facing the others, who were roughly divided into sections, with abafazana sitting together but as part of the group facing the seniors. At Nontwaba's beer for harvest the women sat as in Figure 9.

The women's umlawulo is taken out to them thirty or forty minutes (or more) after the first allocation of umlawulo to men. It is usually about one quarter of the amount that men get. The women's injoli then divides their share, without fuss or formal announcements, according to sub-wards, not sections, unless other sub-wards are not present. At Stokwana's isichenene women were allocated one medium sized beaker, which was decanted into three others, one each for Komkhulu, Chibi and Ngingqi. Women are often given the old, rusty beakers for this purpose, while the men have the better, newer ones. At a 'ntwana nje in Ndlelibanzi, women received two beakers of umlawulo. One went to Ndlelibanzi and half each to Folokwe and Nompha. This was unusual, because women normally divide their beer in a much more egalitarian fashion than men, taking care to give each group the same as the others. This egalitarianism as symbolized by the division of beer, and also by the merging of young and older women at some beer drinks,

is further evidence of a 'communitas' that is not found among men.



That women are, symbolically at least, a threat to structure, is indicated also by the way in which men rationalize the way in which women are treated at beer drinks. Stokwana claimed that women were irresponsible, and that they had to sit outside because

"they do not keep quiet and stop talking (when required to). In the hut, one person speaks at a time; so we say 'Women! Be quiet!' (Bafazindini! Yimani!). But women do not use their ears. We cannot drink with women at a beer drink because of the noise they make. They do not care what is being said in the home by the person who has brewed. (We say) 'Stop, women! Be quiet!' But these people cannot be controlled, they are troublesome (abalawuleki aba bantu,

bayakathaza)...A woman has no respect (akanantlonipho)...

In men's view, the women get only a small quantity of beer, later than the men, because it is customary for women to cook for men, wait for them to eat, and have what is left: "Amongst we black people a woman cooks for me, and I eat, leaving something for her". Of course men realise that in calling women for sips, the distribution of beer is evened out somewhat. "They are not hungry because we continually call them to drink here". "We call them to sip from our beer; men like to do that".

Women themselves say that they sit outside "because it is crowded inside the hut" or "because it is the custom; our mothers did so before us...". They do not get much beer "because we are given sips by the men" and are aware of the fact that this is deliberate strategy to make women dependent on men for some beer - "It is because they like to call us for sips that men decided to give us less beer." Some referred to the belief that witches are usually women - "men say that we must not eat first because we kill (bewitch) them". Both men and women justify these arrangements by reference to men's physical superiority - "It is the men who dig the graves when people die, so they must be served first"; "If the enemy comes the men are the first to jump up and fight; women do not fight."

In some situations, however, the role that women play is recognized in the division of beer. At work parties composed of men and women, the latter receive almost as much beer as the men. When the work party consists only of women, it is women who control the beer and allocate to men (see Ch 5). At umsindleko, the role of the wife in helping ensure the success of her husband's spell at work is recognized, and women get a larger share of the beer than usual (McAllister 1981). In Pondoland too, women depended on invitations to drink, but when beer was brewed for a mother some ten days after she had given birth, most of the beer was drunk by women (Hunter 1936, 155, 359).

The ideal of female subordination and inferiority is illustrated also by the exaggeratedly deferent manner in which they go into the hut to

receive beer when called for sips (see above). Furthermore, should a woman called for a sip pass the beaker to two or three other women, with the result that there is not much beer left in it by the time it gets back to the man who called her, it is the male caller who will be in trouble with the other men - no case can be brought against the women who drank the beer (a case of a man being charged for such an offence is detailed in Ch 4). Likewise, should there be a dispute or a fight between a wife and her husband's inkazana (girlfriend) at a beer drink, it is the husband who gets charged, not the women.

Women do have 'rights' at beer drinks, and can complain to the injoli if they feel that they have not been allocated a reasonable amount of beer. They also have 'rights' to beer in relation to each other, as territorial groups, like the men do, but the reciprocal beer-exchange relations between women are independent from those of the men, and may follow a different pattern.

#### Iqwele ('the last drop')

The allocation of umlawulo is a high point in the proceedings, a time when people's attention is focussed closely on what is happening, and when the formal structure of a beer drink becomes most apparent. After the umlawulo beer has been drunk, there is a lull. Men leave the hut for some fresh air, to urinate, or to meet with someone to discuss a matter of mutual concern. Outside, they sit at random in small groups, seek out the people they want to talk to, meet with their wives, and so on. After an hour or so, the injoli might indicate that the proceedings are about to start up again, and people drift back into the hut.

Some time after the last round of umlawulo men begin to get restless, and ask the hosts "to clean out the pots", or make other comments that indicate that they want the proceedings to be brought to a conclusion. The host section may discuss the matter, and ask the injoli to give out the last of the intselo, the iqwele beer. The action of issuing this beer is known as ukuqwela (literally 'to empty the pot'). The injoli makes an announcement to this effect, saying that the beer is

finished, and places the iqwele beakers in front of the doorway. He then addresses the elders next to the door - "All right then, I have emptied the pots now, here are the beakers" or "I have turned the pots upside down (ndizigubudile), here are two beakers." He also indicates how these beakers must be distributed, and apologises for any shortcomings. For example, at a beer drink in Komkhulu the injoli spoke as follows:

"Allow me to say, I have come to you with this beer; here it is in front of you, all that is left. I have emptied the pots here (sendiqwelile apha). However, I am short of a beaker for Ndlelibanzi, otherwise I would be giving it out now. These two beakers are for you, the brewers. This one is for Chibi, this one for you, Ngingqi, and this one is Jotelo's. Ndlelibanzi, be alert (ugade). When we finish I will serve you."

At large beer drinks there may be as many as eight beakers of iqwele, at smaller occasions only one or two. Its distribution varies accordingly. If there are sufficient beakers it is distributed to all the sections of the sub-ward, and even to other sub-wards, as the above example indicates. If there are only one or two beakers, it is given only to the host section. Sometimes one of the iqwele beakers is given to the injoli, with which he calls people for sips. Often, there is a partially full beaker left over after the iqwele has been drawn. Such a beaker is called an isigananda (onomatopoeic), and it need not be formally announced or distributed, but is simply given to one of the elders of the host section.

Iqwele is always given to the older men, who circulate the beaker among themselves and call others over for sips. Within each section and sub-ward inside the hut, older men sit nearest the door, younger men towards the back. Young men (abafana) who have recently started attending beer drinks sit right at the back next to the beer, on the right as well as the left if there is a shortage of space for them on the right, irrespective of the section that they belong to. Abafana do not attend beer drinks outside of their own sub-wards, so there are

none from outside sub-wards present. In each section there are three or four men recognized as 'old men' (amaxhego, amakhehle). The most senior of these, calculated in terms of the number of years since circumcision (izilimela - i.e. years of manhood) sits next to the door, followed by the next senior, and so on down to the amadoda (senior men) aged from 40 to 60 years), who are less concerned with exactly who sits where. The right to sit next to the door is a jealously guarded privilege, and is linked to the fact that the status of elders is recognized by the distribution of iqwele to them.

At an umsindleko beer drink in Chibi section, Gavan (Ntlane clan), a Chibi elder, was seated third from the door, after Mahlathini (Ntlane) and Dwetya (Bamba clan). Gavan went out of the hut for a time, and while he was out Mkeni (Bamba) arrived and sat in Gavan's vacant place. When Gavan returned he said nothing, but went and sat in a position sixth from the door, next to Keneti (Bamba) and Ndabanduna (Ntshilibe). After a while he stood and asked for quiet, wanting to speak. He then complained that it was not right for him to be sitting where he was, sixth from the door, since he was senior to Keneti, Mkeni and Ndabanduna. "How" he asked, "am I going to get my iqwele if I am so far from the door?" He was supported by Mahlathini, Gamalakhe (Ntshilibe), the injoli, and Modi (Ntshilibe). Someone asked Gavan why he had not simply spoken to Mkeni and told him to move down, but he replied that this was not how things are done (it would have been undignified); an old man ought not to have to demand his place, he said, he should be called to it by those already seated near the door. Dwetya then rose, agreed with Gavan that "we sit according to the spear (of circumcision)" and apologised for not having called him to come and occupy his rightful place. Ndabanduna, who had recently been granted the right to sit at the door with the elders, then tried to argue that he was representing Pemba, head of his agnatic group, who would have been in the first place next to the door if he had been present. Ndabanduna said that as the senior Ntshilibe

present, he should sit in Pemba's place. The others, however, disagreed, and told him so. Gamalakhe, Ncasa (Mahlathini's son) and Honono (Gamakakhe's brother), all senior men but at the 'young' end of the scale emphasized that what counted was 'the spear', and disagreed with Ndabanduna. Eventually Mkeni moved out of Gavan's place, grinning mischievously and saying that he was quite aware that he was not entitled to sit there. Nomtsoyi (Ntshilibe) commented that the reason Mkeni had done this was because Gavan tried to elevate his friends to senior positions when he had beer drinks at his home.

The iqwele beaker moves in a very precise order. It starts with the elder next to the door, who asks a junior (perhaps the injoli or one of his helpers) to taste (ukungcamla) the beer. The elder then drinks himself. While he has the beaker he may, as with other beakers, invite someone to have a sip. He then passes the beaker to his left, to the next most senior person, who drinks, invites someone to sip, and passes it to his left, until the last recognized elder is reached. If there are only two or three elders present, the beaker also goes to the most senior of the senior men present, who act as elders when the latter are not there. Each recipient of the beaker calls one or two others to drink from it, before passing it on. The beaker then passes back up the line till it reaches the man next to the door again, perhaps with a comment like 'iyabuya' ('it is back'). As it reaches each man in the row, he takes careful stock of how much is left in the beaker, assessing whether there is enough left for him to call someone else again, or whether he should just drink and pass it on. Ideally, there should be about a cupfull or two of beer left in the beaker when it reaches the door. The man at the door then indicates to the one on his left how much remains, says iphelile ('it's finished') and drains the beaker. As with any other beaker, it is good manners to tell the others when it has 'fallen' (iwile - i.e. that it is empty).

In the eyes of the less senior, some of the older men tend to abuse their right to iqwele, by not calling people to drink from it, and not allowing the beaker to circulate. On a number of occasions during

fieldwork this led to minor disputes, with elders being reprimanded for selfishly keeping the iqwele to themselves. The injoli, who indicates where this beaker starts, sometimes reminded the elders to let the beaker circulate, as did other senior men present. Some of the norms governing iqwele are illustrated in the following case:

At Mgilimbane's umsindleko (in Ngingqi section) the announcement of the iqwele and the comments and responses of others, proceeded as follows:

Dyakal Ashe (injoli): Eee, pardon a minute! Here is something which has been discovered (ebhaqekileyo), old men, in that thing there, that pot that I was talking about earlier. It has been emptied now; it (the beaker) looks like an iqhwina to me.

Dlathu: There you are, great men.

Mbambaza (Mgilimbane's mother's brother and Ngingqi elder): Oooh! No, the iqwele is something that one does not need to make speeches about. This is the iqwele here. The way it should be handled is well known. There is no one here who needs to be taught beer custom (intetho yotywala). I stop at that point.

Canca: If that is the iqwele beaker put it there in front of Ntlane, finished! (Ntlane was the old man next to the door, Toto)

a.n.o.: It is Ntlane who will talk about iqwele in this homstead.

Mbambaza: Iqwele is handled like this - it goes to this side and to that side (gesturing).

a.n.o.: I agree Ngqunu, it is something distinctive (libe linye), it is not just any old beaker.

a.n.o.: Exactly, it must not be demeaned at all (ngengayithobanga ngokuyithoba)

Toto: This iqwele must be recognized for what it is, and if it is going to start with me, it must be made clear.

a.n.o.: We understand Ntlane, things must be done in a way that is understood.

a.n.o.: The beer of old people!

### Concluding beakers

#### (i) Ivanya ('water')

Ivanya is 'beer' made from the second straining, using the sediment from the proper beer. It is also called umfaxo, from ukufaxa, 'to wring out'. It is referred to as 'water', 'Xhosa wine', 'cooldrink' and so on by informants. It is not utywala or umqombothi. People do not care for it very much, because it is insipid and watery when compared with beer. Often, many leave before it is given out. Sometimes men go off to other events, and come back for the ivanya later.<sup>26</sup> Its distribution forms the final part of the formal proceedings, and is issued in much the same way as the intselo, but more equitably, the hosts receiving the same amount as other groups. It is announced by the injoli - e.g. "Here is a point my people of Folokhwe. We are going over to the ivanya now, we are going to it. Take it out, Nobhanga!" As with other beakers, ivanya is first placed in front of the doorway, and the injoli addresses the men again before distributing the beakers. Whereas most beakers allocated to the hosts start and end with the older men, ivanya starts with the young men at the back, and an older man tastes (ukungcamla) the beaker before passing it down to the younger men. Women, too, receive ivanya, often after the men's ivanya is finished and most of the men have left.

There is one beaker, allocated to the senior men of the host section at the same time as ivanya, called ivanya enendevu ('bearded ivanya') or ivanya yamadoda ('men's ivanya'). Usually the seniors have to ask the host or the injoli whether this beaker will be forthcoming, or let it be known in some roundabout manner that they would like to have it. It is a beaker of the proper beer, and is taken from those set aside as imifihlo ('hidden beer'). It is meant for the older men of the host section, like the iqwele, and the way in which it is announced by the injoli often indicates this - e.g. "Here is the bearded beaker; the old men have been complaining (about it) a lot". If this beaker is not given out, it must be announced well beforehand, and a request (isicelo) made to withhold it. The elders control this beaker very carefully, passing it around among themselves and calling others to sip from it, but making sure that it returns to them every time. As

with the iqwele, a dozen or more people drink from the beaker before it returns to the elder next to the door. At about this time, at large beer drinks, the women who ground the imithombo (malt) may be given a beaker of the proper beer.

Ivanya marks the end of the beer drink, and the completion of the injoli's task. In fact, the injoli may delegate the allocation of ivanya to an assistant injoli, while he takes a well deserved rest. This must be announced to the assembly for it to be acceptable to the others. Any further beakers given out are the responsibility of the host, and are taken from the imifihlo, like the bearded ivanya. One such beaker is called ibhekile yokubulela ('beaker for thanking') or ibhekile yamazwi ('beaker for words'). Before the men from other sections and sub-wards leave, they formally thank the homestead head for brewing, and speak about the nature of the event, i.e. about the reason for brewing. The 'beaker for words' is given out in acknowledgement of these speeches. Another beaker that may be given out is called ingxotha ('chasing away'). It is to 'drive away' those who are still there, "so that those who are still left should go home and sleep".<sup>27</sup>

(ii) imifihlo ('hidden beer')

With a bit of forethought, the homestead head will have preserved a beaker or two of beer from the original amount set aside as imifihlo, to give out to close kin and neighbours on the evening after the beer drink has ended. For example, Nomfuxuse's isichenehe ended at 12.30 p.m., and at 6 p.m. that evening neighbours were called to her homestead for imifihlo. Ten women and two men were present, and two beakers of beer were given out, with about the same formality as the umlumiso on the day before the beer drink. So the event ends with a small group of neighbours gathered together for a little beer, in the same way as it started. At small beer drinks there is no imifihlo, and at some (such as beer for releasing a widow from mourning) it is not part of the convention.

(ii) isidudu ('porridge')

On the day after many beer drinks, neighbours are again called to the

homestead to partake of the isidudu - that small potfull of beer kept one side during the brewing, the fermentation of which is delayed in order to bring it to maturity on this day. People from other sections of the sub-ward also come along for isidudu, but it is meant primarily for neighbours. Dayidayi put it like this - "Isidudu has no customs/rules, it is just a beaker to drink the next morning, for people of the home."

A fair number of people came to Mzilikazi's homestead on the day after his wife had held a harvest beer drink. There were eight men there, from both Komkhulu and Ngingqi, and fourteen women, including some from Ndlelibanzi sub-ward. The reason there were so many was that there were a number of other beer drinks about to be held, and umlumiso beer was ready at Ntanyongo's homestead, next door, to which all proceeded afterwards. The atmosphere was relaxed and informal. Some women were helping Nothusile shell beans, another was making a mouthpiece for her pipe. There was only one beaker of isidudu, and it was allocated to men after a short announcement from Dlathu. Women were issued a half beaker of ivanya left over from the previous day.

#### Speech

Although underemphasised in this chapter, there is obviously a large number of speech events associated with beer drinking, and a variety of speech categories and acts. These include the following:

Explanations of the nature of the event to ensure that those present will know the reason for brewing and the amount of beer available.

Responses to this explanation, including the expression of praise, approval, sympathy, support, or other appropriate sentiment. These responses often include talk about the nature and functions of beer drinking.

Announcements of various kinds - that beer allocation is about to take place, the hut arranged, the women's beer taken out, etc.

Requests for permission to proceed, to withhold certain beakers or allocations, etc. The reasons for making the request are usually stated. Visitors may request more beer or permission to leave. Requests may be followed by some discussion or simply acceded to.

Apologies for failure to conform to some expectation or convention, for failure to give iminono to all who have a right to it, etc.

Allocations (usually highly stylized) of seating places and beer.

Discussion about matters such as who should be called into the hut, how many beakers to distribute, and so on. This may involve consultation and/or decision making within and between groups, and be followed by speech acts such as invitations (e.g. to sit inside) and acceptance or refusal of such.

Debates about matters like beer allocation and the proceedings, sometimes involving criticism, discussion of alternatives, negotiation and resolution.

Compalints expressed by individuals or groups about allocations, procedure, etc.

Audience participation in the form of refrain, interjection, comment, evaluation of what is done or said, etc.

The offering of sips to each other (ukurhabulisa) and acceptance of such, including secondary offers (ukubeleka). Goods may be offered for sale, and offers to purchase may be made.

Thanking the host(s) for holding the event, in conjunction with commentary on the beer drink and requests for permission to leave.

Admonitions addressed to the subject of the ritual, in cases where status change is involved.

Informal conversation including joking, teasing, greetings, exchange of news, etc.

Examples of most of these will be provided in the chapters that follow.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Imithombo is the Zulu word for sprouted grain (Doke and Vilakazi 1948, 800), but it is commonly used in Shixini.
2. Kuckertz states that to hold a 'beerparty' in Mthwa the host "has to reach deep into his resources" and that a workparty followed by a beerparty "consumes a considerable quantity of the household's food supply" (1984, 201). This is not true of Shixini.
3. Hunter (1936, 103) reported that among the Mpondo young married women were expected to do most of the grinding, during which time they sang, gossiped and danced.
4. Among the Thembu this cow-dung wall is called umyalo (Broster 1976, 82). I did not establish the word used for it in Shixini.
5. Neither igwele nor umlumiso is used to refer to the yeast bought from the shop and used for baking bread. The term for this is iyisiti, from the English.
6. Bigalke states that abafana do strain beer among the Ndlambe (1982), but I only once saw a young man do so in Shixini.
7. The brewing process is similar throughout southern Africa, though there are variations in details. See Soga (1931, 399-401), Broster (1976, 81-82), Krige (1936, 58), Bryant (1949, 274-277) and Gelfand (1962, 45).
8. Soga writes of beer called umtsho given to the heads of neighbouring homesteads, who are in this way "treated as members of the host's family. They are in effect having a private meal before the feast becomes a public affair" (1931, 402). Kropf translates umtsho as the portion given to a chief or headman (1915, 427). It can also be translated as 'something fresh'. Shixini people sometimes use this term to refer to one of the

preliminary beakers.

9. In this respect Xhosa differ from people like the Uduk, where "a beer party has much the same atmosphere whether it follows a hard day's work in the fields, whether it marks the healing of a child's sickness, or whether it has been raining all day and no work took place at all!" (James 1972, 24).
10. Among the Mpondo this order is reversed, the right hand side of the hut being the right hand side on entering (i.e. facing into the hut) (Kuckertz 1984, 342).
11. This too is reversed among the Mpondo, where the inner circle has high status and is reserved for agnatic kin, the outer circle lower status (Kuckertz 1984, 188-189). The symbolism of East and West, important to the Pondo, is not relevant at Shixini beer drinks, perhaps because not all huts face the same direction.
12. Small huts have only four main poles (rafters) but this does not effect the topology. More rarely, a hut with six main rafters is found.
13. Davies (1927) and Cook (1931, 18) say that inkabi was used to denote the name of a chief or headman and his followers, and applied also to the area (umhlaba) over which the chief/headman ruled, though the latter might sometimes have a different name. In many cases, however, the two names co-incided. Among both Bomvana and Gcaleka local areas derive their names from the first chiefs living there (Cook 1931, 24). A commoner homestead head could have his own inkabi if he so desired, and his homestead would then be known by that name, which was frequently the name of his lead ox (ibid., 24). Often the inkabi was the same as the clan name, among both chiefs and commoners. In asking for an inkabi or 'beer name' a man invited the chief to a beer drink at his umzi and said "I ask for a dish (isitya)" because "I am increased" (i.e. his family had grown). At future beer drinks he would be given beer (ukulawula) in the name of his inkabi or

isitya. Ukulawula also means to govern over an area or group of subjects, so the connection between these three terms is clear.

14. For a description of the spatial arrangements at Mpondo beer drinks see Kuckertz (1984, 188-189). At these, usually relatively small, events, everyone sits inside a hut, arranged according to sex, agnatic kinship, and age (seniority), in two circles.
15. Affines presented with iminono at the beer drinks for which I have data include SWH, WB, BWB, BSWH, WFB, SWFB, FBDH, WZH, SWF, ZBH, FZH, WMZDH, FZDHB, FFBSSWF and SWM. Other matrilineal kin given iminono were MZD, MZ, MMZD and MFMZS.
16. Junod (1927, I, 341) found that the head of a homestead "puts aside a pot (of beer) for his father in law, his uterine nephew and his friend who invited him on a previous occasion."
17. In some ways umnono is a formalisation of the common practise of giving a visitor something to drink and/or eat. Once a friend of Canca's arrived at my hut, where Canca was chatting to us. Since he had come a long way Canca felt obliged to go out and buy half a bottle of brandy for him. When he returned to the hut he announced that this was something he had 'found' for his friend.
18. Among the Mpondo the master of ceremonies is called umkhokeli or umlawuli. It is he, not the host, who explains the nature of the event (Kuckertz 1984, 347).
19. Among other Cape Nguni some of these terms are reserved, it appears, for agnatically related kin and their ancestors (Hammond-Tooke 1985, Kuckertz 1983/4).
20. I neglected to inquire into the meaning of Stibili, but from the context it is probably an alternative for Mbukhuba.
21. Soga refers to the beer served to guests as umlawuli (1931, 402).

See also Hammond-Tooke 1962, 57).

22. The three sub-sections of Ndlelibanzi sub-ward are Mkhulu, Petse and Mgwevu.
23. Among Mpondo it is called ukushelela ('to slip away and return'). At Mthwa beer drinks it is announced that ukushelela may begin before people start passing the beaker across group boundaries (Kuckertz 1984, 349).
24. Hunter (1936, 360) recorded that a homestead head was expected to call his wife, and that an idikazi (unattached woman) was called by her lover or admirers.
25. Again, this is significant. A span is a group that works together in harmony, as a team.
26. Among the Bassari, beer from a second straining is not drunk but offered to the spirits. A third straining produces a very weak beer which may be drunk as it is or made into a jelly-like substance (Nolan 1971, 2).
27. Bigalke (1969) mentions a beaker called umpath'induku ('picking up sticks'), given to close neighbours and friends who have remained at the homestead after the others have gone. Shixini men have heard of such a beaker and say, as its name suggests, that it is given so that those still there will pick up their sticks and go, but I have never seen it issued.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## BEER DRINKS AS DRAMATIC CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

In the preceding chapter a relatively abstract model of an ideal-typical beer drink was presented, in largely descriptive terms. It is necessary to reflect on and try to make sense of that description before proceeding to look at certain aspects of beer drinks, and at certain types of beer drinks, in more detail. A useful way of doing this is to regard beer drinks as a genre of cultural drama, performance or 'celebration', along the lines suggested by anthropologists such as Douglas (1966), Turner (1967, 1968), Cohen (1969), Singer (1972), Geertz (1973) and Ortner (1973), and developed further more recently by MacAloon (1982, 1984, 1984a), Turner (1982, 1984), Kapferer (1984), Myerhoff (1984) and others.

The idea of a 'cultural performance' has its roots largely in Turner's concept of the 'social drama', which was an event or series of events, including ritual performances, in which a society's structural principles and social arrangements, as well as historical processes and conflicts, were exposed for observation (Turner 1957, 1974, Ch 1; MacAloon 1984).<sup>1</sup> Ritual, in particular, "a limited sequence of symbolic action, defined in space and time, which is formally set aside from the ordinary flow of purposeful social action" (Cohen 1969, 105), can be seen as a dramatic event, within which a people's society and culture are 'encapsulated' (Singer, 1972, 71; MacAloon 1984, 4). The action takes place within a 'frame', "a marked off time or place" (Douglas 1966, 63) which separates inside and outside, specifies the contents of what is inside, and allows one to concentrate attention on selected themes and experiences which are drawn from outside. Within the frame attention is attracted, focussed and ordered, through the use of dramatic and symbolic devices.

In a study of Bamana rural theatre performance Brink (1978) shows how the 'frame' cuts off the performance from reality, and at the same time cues interpretation of the behaviour that occurs in the performance. The frame is thus meta-communicative. At beer drinks

the frame is established by the sequence of activities culminating with the arranging of the hut, and including the preliminary beakers, iminono, and the explanation of the beer drink. These lead to expectations about the procedure to follow and provide a 'prologue' for the drama itself (ibid.).

Brink identifies three elements in the overall communicative strategy of Bamana theatre. These are as follows:

(1) The theme or story line. At beer drinks this is established by the explanation to the participants and by the response of the assembly to this explanation (see, for example, p 317 ff). The 'tone' of the event is at least partly determined by the kind of beer drink being held, and established by the initial speeches.

(2) Structure - the order in which the events occur. As shown in the previous chapter, the structure of beer drinks may be quite elaborate, allowing for communication of a wide range of issues and principles. This will be commented on further, below.

(3) Style, the conventions "associated with characterizations and staging, such as the manner in which costume, sound, movement, time and space are coded in the drama..." (ibid., 383). At beer drinks, the various named beakers and the conventional allocation procedures, outlined in Chapter 3, are relevant here.

These three 'expressive components' of performance authenticate and facilitate interpretation of the action that occurs within the frame - they are persuasive, fostering emotional involvement and lending authority to the ideas and values symbolically expressed in the drama.

In cultural dramas, the symbolic structure created within the frame is modelled on society, which it condenses, objectifies and accentuates (MacAloon 1984, Kapferer 1984). Thus the analysis of such events must be holistic, in which performance is related to social life in general, or at least to those elements which are the object of dramatisation (Cohen 1969). A cultural performance is an occasion on

which people dramatize key elements of their socio-cultural experience, reflect upon these, symbolically consider alternative modes of existence, and reaffirm and regenerate the socio-cultural system (Turner 1982, 1984). A performance (examples are potlatch, the Balinese cockfight, and the Mass) is a 'metasocial commentary' on society (Geertz 1973, 448) in which the principles and values, hierarchies and divisions, structures and conflicts of everyday social life, are formally, dramatically and symbolically displayed and acted upon.

If we apply this idea to the data on beer drinks in Shixini, bearing in mind the economic, political and kinship realities of social life as outlined in Chapter 2, much of what happens at beer drinks seems to make sense. What happens, it seems, is that a symbolic structure is created, using beer, the homestead and the space around it, and time, to construct an elaborate metaphor for social life and practice, social principles and processes, and historical events. Beer, in particular, is used as a 'root metaphor', allowing people to "conceptualise the interrelationships among phenomena by analogy to the interrelations among the parts of the root metaphor" (Ortner 1973, 1341).

Initially, these symbols are used to dramatise significant social categories such as male and female, old and young, senior and junior, and living and dead. They are used to objectify territorial groups - primarily sub-wards and sub-ward sections, certain kinship categories (e.g. abayeni - 'sons in law'), and certain political and clan statuses (sub-headmen and the royal Tshawe clan). Space, beer and time are used to draw a map of the social field in which members of the host sub-ward interact. As is evident in the previous chapter, a beer drink is a highly ordered event, and the order is one derived from the wider society. The elaborate manipulation and ordering of space, on the basis of criteria like rank, kinship, sex and territory; of the beer into corresponding pots, barrels and beakers; and of time, and the linking of this order to the order of social groups and categories, is an attempt by the members of the local community "to manifest, in symbolic form, what it conceives to be essential in life,

at once the distillation and typification of its corporate experience" (Turner 1982, 16). In Shixini this attempt is at least partly conscious.

In the process, beer drinks convey a message of "order, continuity and predictability" (Myerhoff 1984, 151), which is characteristic of all kinds of collective ritual, sacred as well as secular (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, 5). The obvious repetition and redundancy in the symbolism is linked to this. The message that is conveyed is that there are things in life which are unquestionable, and in this sense beer drinks play a 'system-maintaining' function. This may, as Cohen (1969) and Bloch (1974) suggest, imply loss of meaning, but it may also, as illustrated below, be a statement which constructs meaning, especially where insecurity and unpredictability are features of reality.

However, it is not just a static structure that is being dramatised at beer drinks but also, and more importantly, actual relationships between the various elements within that structure. Beer, space and time are manipulated to say something about the political and economic relationships between individuals, kin groups or sections of kin groups, and between sub-wards, sections and sub-sections - the very relationships on which homesteads depend for their everyday economic and social survival. It is mainly in this respect that the formal structure of the beer drink is relevant. Beer drinks are not so much an attempt to dramatise 'culture', or the ideological basis of 'society' (there are other ways of doing this, such as ritual killings), but a dramatization of practice - sometimes quite specific, as we shall see, sometimes in fairly broad, general terms. As social dramas, beer drinks and their symbols have a temporal, 'processual' character, and play a role in the social process, in "the general course of social action" (Turner 1968, 31). Insofar as structure enters the picture, it is the structures that are relevant to practice that are dramatized. It is for this reason, it is suggested, that agnation and clanship take a back seat at beer drinks. Instead, it is neighbourhood and territorial groups such as sub-ward sections which are emphasized, because of their relevance to practical day to day

life. Similarly, it is the sibonda (and other politically influential men) rather than the heads of kin groups, who are recognized at beer drinks, because in everyday life these are the people who have a significant influence on economic realities.

Experience or practice, however, is a fairly haphazard, disorderly business, and it is the function of ritual to create order out of it and, having done so, to communicate this order to people. Turner (1982, 13) suggests that performance is "the proper finale of an experience". It is in the expression of experience that the experience is complete and in which it finds its full meaning. Thus "the anthropology of performance is an essential part of the anthropology of experience" (ibid.) One way in which symbols do this is by objectifying relationships - making tangible and visible that which is invisible and abstract (Turner 1967, Ch 1; Myerhoff 1984). We cannot see relationships, only the individuals involved. We cannot see groups such as sub-wards, only their members. We need symbols or metaphors, such as the elaborate naming system that Shixini people use for beakers of beer, to assist our conceptualisation of such things. Abstract concepts like rank, seniority, co-operation, sharing, and so on, are made tangible and real through symbolism (Cohen 1969, 220). It is through symbols such as iimvuko, iminono and isikhonkwane, that people are reminded of the existence of important social norms and values, are able to comprehend them, and to relate them to their daily lives (ibid.). It is through performance that "what is normally sealed up, inaccessible to everyday observation and reasoning...is drawn forth" (Turner 1982, 13).

Manipulation of the beer drinking symbols, such as in the allocation of iimvuko, allows certain groups to be separated from others and the boundaries between groups as well as their internal composition, to be highlighted. Beakers such as isikhonkwane (a 'peg') make statements about the nature of relationships within groups, about daily co-operation and interdependence, and sometimes about the feuds and conflicts which inhibit such co-operation. The beaker for the sibonda 'says' something about the relationship between him and those under his authority. People depend on him in various ways, and this is

acknowledged by the beaker, which indicates the importance of maintaining a good relationship with him. Thus the beaker is also called 'controller of the sibonda' (umpath' isibonda).

In conjunction with the spatial order and the timing of beer allocations, the beakers allow for discrimination between social categories and statements about the nature of such categories. Umlawulo beer orders the relationship between sections of the ward and between different sub-wards. It defines the boundaries between different groups and allows for discrimination according to the nature of the relationship between the hosts and visiting groups, in terms of the quantity and the timing of the beer allocated to them. This is why the 'boundaries' of the beer - the first and last sips from each beaker, the first and last beaker from each cask or pot, and the different casks and pots, are handled so carefully. They symbolize social boundaries and social order, and must not be confused (Douglas 1966). It is possible to draw a similar conclusion about Bassari beer drinking customs (Nolan, 1971).

As cultural dramas beer drinks are, as suggested earlier, relevant to the question of Xhosa conservatism and resistance to full incorporation into the southern African political economy. What are being dramatized are the structures, forms of organization, relationships and values that Shixini people use and rely on for political and economic survival. In this sense beer drinks, like other rituals, are 'traditionalizing' instruments, and the formal properties of beer drinks - order, repetition, dramatization, stylization, and their 'set apart' character, helps to make them effective as such (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, 7-8). However, what they inculcate is not mere 'traditionalism'. Conservatism incorporating reference to the past is fostered as a strategic resource through which to ensure community survival. Such conservatism is extolled, inculcated and preserved in the symbolic structure of beer drinks, and an attempt thus made to maintain what is a relatively successful adaptation to the situation people find themselves in. Some beer drinks, as shown in Chapter 6, address this problem quite explicitly, but it is this consideration that lies implicit in all of these events.

At the same time, there is sufficient flexibility to allow for the incorporation of new values, themes and relationships in the beer drink. The ritual frame is not a static, never-changing one, but one that must be able to respond to new situations, to incorporate these and make sense of them within the overall context of an ideology based on the ancestor religion, notions of community, and the value of building the homestead. Beer drinks thus constitute the creative use of indigenous institutional frames for adaptive purposes. Similar processes have been documented in other places - e.g. Hunt's (1977) analysis of ceremonials involving interaction between Indians and Mestizos in Mexico. Hunt sees ceremonialism as a coping device, used in the face of threat and uncertainty, partly because it has the ability to order, to create "predictable frames for social intercourse" (1977, 134), with the result that social intercourse becomes predictable. In this case, beer drinks symbolise, recreate, dramatise and perpetuate the social conditions which allow Shixini people to maintain a small degree of independence in a hostile world.

Cohen (1984) and Gibson and Weinberg (1980) show how drinking behaviour in Whalsay and Switzerland, respectively, can be seen as part of the strategy to guard against loss of autonomy and self sufficiency, at a symbolic level, asserting a concept of 'community' that in practice no longer exists but which remains ideologically important. In the case of Shixini, beer drinks are directly related to the politico-economic strategies that people use to pursue the goal of minimal incorporation. They are thus of practical, instrumental importance. Beer drinks do more than symbolically construct and allow people to experience 'community' (Cohen 1985, Turner 1982), they act as a positive force in the perpetuation of that community, which exists and has a practical dimension outside of the beer drink.

### Reflexivity

A cultural drama such as a beer drink achieves its aim not only by communicating, in a specialized way, the basic tenets on which social life is built - sharing, reciprocity, good neighbourliness, etc. - but also by its reflective character. Cultural dramas are characterized by 'reflexivity', "the act of becoming an audience to oneself", or

"that capacity of human beings to distance themselves from their own subjective experiences, to stand apart from and to comment on them" (MacAloon 1984, 11). Most ritual has a 'self-referential' quality and an ability to defamiliarise the familiar, to hold it up to view, so that it can be examined (Galaty 1983, 364).

One of the ways in which this is achieved is by presenting competing or alternative definitions or models of reality: "A ritual leads to reflexivity when the context of performance sustains different modes of ordering reality and accents upon these realities" (Kapferer 1984, 203). Each of these alternatives may accent a particular aspect of reality, which has to be considered, reflected upon, and affirmed, though perhaps subordinated to other aspects of reality. It is by working through and confronting these alternatives that people "publically define themselves to themselves, and over against their friends and allies in other communities" (Schieffelin 1980, 504).

There are a number of ways in which beer drinks present alternative or contrasting aspects of reality for reflection and comparison. One of these is implicit in the progression through the various stages, each of which places the accent upon something in particular, which may be seen as contrasting with or adding to that which is accented in preceding or succeeding stages. Brewing and the distribution of beakers (umlumiso, intluzelo) before the beer drink starts present a picture of a close knit group of interdependent co-operating neighbours, in which the significant actors are not differentiated greatly in terms of rank, age or sex, but include men and women, young and old. This relatively undifferentiated structure is progressively whittled away in the course of the beer drink itself, as boundaries become drawn between social categories, during and after the consumption of the preliminary beakers of the beer drink itself.

As the formal proceedings progress the beer drink passes through a number of stages, each of which makes definite but often contrasting statements about the boundaries between groups, degrees of exclusiveness, and hierarchy. The iimvuko beakers emphasize the distinction between host section on the one hand, and all other

sections and sub-wards, on the other. It also points to the subdivisions within the sections based on either geographical or kinship principles, which may be of relevance in defining the nature of relationships between sub-sections. At this stage the *we-group* is the section, men and women, as opposed to the men and women of all other groups. This is very similar to the message of umlumiso, except that the unity of the local group is now proclaimed publicly. This is presented as one way of modelling Shixini society, and it is a model that is enlarged upon and reflected upon, but not seriously challenged, right through the beer drink, even though other ways of drawing significant boundaries are explored and other aspects of society emphasized.

In the next stage (the first part of the umlawulo beer) the *we-group* boundary is re-defined to include other sections of the sub-ward, as opposed to other sub-wards. By being included in the beer distribution the men of other sections are admitted to 'insider' status, but all women, including those of the host section, are excluded. The social reality that is constructed here is 'men of the sub-ward' against the rest. The next stage of umlawulo broadens the range of relationships recognized, and re-incorporates women. Nearby wards with which the host section has relationships are included in the distribution. At this stage too there may be a separate beaker of umlawulo for young men, who, up to this point, have been regarded as part of the group of senior men of the sub-ward.

The last part of the umlawulo, the iqwele, reverses this process of expanding the boundary of the social field, and re-emphasizes the significance of the sub-ward and the section. If there is plenty of iqwele, other sub-wards are given some in the first allocation, but excluded thereafter. If there are only one or two beakers, it is given only to the host sub-ward. Ivanya follows a similar pattern. If possible, it is given to all, but the beaker given out at the same time or immediately afterwards, the important 'bearded ivanya', goes to the host section, again proclaiming its exclusiveness and unity vis a vis other groups, the division between men and women (it's alternative name is 'men's ivanya') and the senior/junior divide (it

is for elders and seniors only). The definition of community changes again in the contrast between the beaker or two (if any) given to those from other areas to bid them farewell, and the gathering of neighbouring men and women later in the day for imifihlo, or for isidudu the next day. In this way the beer drink ends more or less as it started, with the relatively informal and exclusive consumption of beer by a group of undifferentiated neighbours.

The progression of the event through these various phases indicates that its political meaning is continually changing, that meaning varies from time to time, and from individual to individual. Other contrasts or alternatives which are presented include the iminono beer, which is associated with relationships between individuals or small groups of kin rather than between territorial groups, and the beer given out in the idiom of hierarchy (beakers for the sibonda and members of the Tshawe clan) rather than in the idiom of territory. In these various kinds of distribution the beer drink is constantly being transformed, the message altered, and meaning re-constructed. People participate in different ways at different times, construct their participation accordingly, and in terms of their position in relation to the hosts. This variability within the same event has usually been neglected in studies of ritual (Kapferer 1984, 180).

There is yet another kind of alternative that is presented at beer drinks. Those considered above are all aspects of structure, which receive different emphases in different stages of the event. All are relevant to the formal structure of the beer drink and the formal allocation of beer. As noted earlier, however, beer drinks also have 'anti-structural' elements. These are alternatives of a different kind. They suggest that order and structure themselves are irrelevant and unnecessary, and that there is another way of living, and another definition of community, one without formal structure, based on 'communitas' (Turner 1969, Ch 4). Evidence of this is found in the process of informal sharing and calling each other for sips (ukurhabulisa), and by the way in which women participate in beer drinks.

As indicated in the previous chapter, it is through ukurhabulisa, which follows every round of beer allocation, that the highly ordered nature of beer drinks dissolves, in a sense, into apparent disorder and formlessness, anti-structure and its attendant *communitas*. As Turner and Douglas have shown, anti-structure (ambiguity, formlessness) is potentially dangerous in that it threatens a people's concept of order and structure, but is also potentially good, in that it symbolises growth and beginning, and constitutes the raw material out of which structure is fashioned, and in terms of which it is defined. This potential is both unleashed and harnessed in ritual, which presents pictures of both order and chaos. As MacAloon expresses it, it is this "embeddedness of ordering, disordering and reordering in the same performance process that makes ritual so apt a vehicle for the making and unmaking of social dramas" (1984, 3. Emphasis mine).

There are two ways in which these manifestations of anti-structure are used in ritual beer drinks. First, they are the devices which separate the different renderings of structure - they are the *betwixt* and between phases of the beer drink - which facilitate movement from one formal stage to the next. Second, they provide, in themselves, alternative ways of viewing the world, commentaries on the nature of society, part of the metalanguage of beer drinks which serve the ends of reflexivity and renewal. In contrast to the formal distribution, the informal sharing symbolises egalitarianism, comradeship, unity, lack of distinctions and boundaries, and absence of hierarchy. The boundaries constructed in the preceding formal phase of the event are broken down - those between men and women, young and old, near and far, insiders and outsiders. Instead, a message of overall unity is conveyed, an "essential and generic human bond" recognized (Turner 1968, 83) and portrayed as necessary for social life. These in-between phases of the beer drink are associated with what Simmel called 'sociability', containing the festive or 'ludic' (play) elements of the performance, as opposed to 'sociation', consisting of the serious, solemn, structured elements (MacAloon 1982, 269).

These manifestations of anti-structure are an essential element in the

reflective process because they convey a truth of a different kind to that proclaimed by the formal structure - they tell of the raw material out of which society is made, and it is essential that people catch a glimpse of this for them to reflect upon and grasp the meaning of the formal aspects of structure. "In ritual, society 'takes cognizance of itself' and communicates its major classifications and categories both through ordering them and through disordering them - by overdetermining and by rendering indeterminate customary processes of signification" (Babcock 1978, 298). For reflexivity to occur 'deconstruction' is necessary (Grimes 1982, 273). The danger in this is "the possibility that we will encounter ourselves making up our conceptions of the world, society, our very selves" (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, 18). This is the paradox that underlies cultural performances. They are designed to dramatize socio-cultural reality, and for this reason there is the danger of seeing this reality for what it is - man made (ibid. 19).

However, the possibility of living in terms of the alternative presented by anti-structure and *communitas* remains a fiction, a moment in the course of reflection, because without structure of the kind on which Shixini people depend for their livelihood, the community would cease to exist. At the same time it is the spirit of *communitas* that animates the social, territorial and economic organization in which people are embedded. Thus the ludic elements of the beer drinks are as important as the other elements; they are necessary for the regeneration of this organization. In another sense, ukurhabulisa, while on the one hand a manifestation of anti-structure, can at the same time be a way of making contact with friends and allies, used as a strategy for engaging people in conversation and building up political capital, of spreading and reinforcing social networks, either within the boundaries of the formal structure, or across such boundaries (see Moeran 1984).<sup>2</sup>

The question of reflexivity is, of course, also the question of 'meaning', of how people make sense of what they do and believe. In ritual, people reflect on the world they live in, through the use of symbols, which act as vehicles for meaning. Symbols carry messages,

and that which is communicated is their meaning. In doing so ritual allows experience to be modified and permits knowledge of what otherwise remains unknown (Douglas 1966, 64). It allows people to create order out of disorderly experience - it thus controls and in a sense creates experience. By pulling a variety of experiences, abstract notions and beliefs together into a single frame, and reducing them to what is basic, ritual allows us not only to construct meaning, to understand, but to organize our understandings. So we reshape our experience by reorganizing reality. In establishing a particular view of reality, ritual also establishes a corresponding view of self, of the relation between individual and reality (Myerhoff 1982, 129).

Ritual helps to bring the world 'into view' (Geertz 1983, 183), to make it comprehensible, and this affects future action. In making experience meaningful and comprehensible, in providing order and affirming ultimate truths, ritual provides a 'model of' reality lived and, at the same time, it induces certain sentiments and attitudes towards this reality ('moods and motivations' in Geertz's terms) which have a bearing on future experience. Thus rituals also provide a 'model for' (Geertz 1973).

Expressed slightly differently, rituals have perlocutionary consequences (Austin 1962). They persuade people, and cultural dramas are 'dramas of persuasion' (Myerhoff 1977). They convince people to accept a particular definition of reality, and to act on this. Sometimes this involves 'mystification' - hiding or masking exploitation and inequality, as is the case with the position of women at beer drinks, and also with young men. However, this varies from beer drink to beer drink (see Ch 5). So a cultural drama orders and shapes people's lives; it creates ways of thinking and acting on the world (Moore and Myerhoff 1977, 5). Like other 'key' symbols, beer has a 'strategic' value, providing "clear cut models of action appropriate to correct and successful living" (Ortner 1973, 1341).

In summary, then, to say that a symbolic structure is 'culturally meaningful' to the participants and audience in a ritual performance

implies that the structure allows them to conceptualise and interpret and make sense of the world around them, and to act on it. It means that there is a correspondence between the symbolic form of the performance and the society in which the performers live. It means that the symbols used (in this case space, time and beer) produce a map or a metaphor of things like political hierarchies, territorial organization, kinship relations and other social principles relevant to the conduct of everyday life. It is because ritual dramas are concerned with the search for meaning that they involve reflexivity, a society's encounter with itself, involving the use of symbols as "markers of the whole range of identities of those who compose it" (MacAloon 1982, 260).

The way in which symbols act within the drama is evident from the above, but something needs to be said also about their intrinsic properties. As formulated by Turner some twenty years ago, the properties of ritual symbols such as beer include condensation and 'polarization of meaning'. The property of condensation allows beer to represent many things in a single form, things which are associated with each other by being so represented. Beer is a multivalent, multivocal or polysemic symbol, having many meanings, all of which it carries from situation to situation, even if in any one situation only a portion of the meaning is emphasized and made 'situationally visible' (Turner 1982, 22). Beer stands for sociability, relationship, unity, communion, and solidarity. It also stands for the homestead, economic assets in general, and economic interdependence. On the religious level it represents the ancestors and the worshipping group, and communion between living and dead. In its distribution at beer drinks it represents order, exclusivity and differentiation, as well as relationship between groups and individuals so differentiated and made exclusive. Beer is ambiguous, and this ambiguity contributes towards its potency (Cohen 1969). It can represent both unity and diversity, order and disorder, society and individuality. As a key symbol it is thus able to establish links between diverse aspects of life (Ortner 1973, 1343).

Dominant or key symbols have two poles - the ideological (normative)

and the sensory (orectic). At the ideological pole beer symbolises the moral, social and public orders; while at the sensory level it stands for psychological and physiological processes - it is associated with food and eating, and thus with life; with intoxication, sex, and fertility, and with feelings of sociability and security. The drama of ritual action "causes an exchange between these poles in which the biological referents are ennobled and the normative referents charged with emotional significance" (Turner 1968, 55). It is in bringing these two poles together, associating the one with the other, that the symbol is made powerful and effective. Crudely speaking, beer links ideas about order, structure and hierarchy with the good feelings associated with commensality, mild intoxication and a full stomach.

#### The role of speech in beer drink performances

The question of how symbols work must obviously include the speaking that features so predominantly at beer drinks. In the rest of this chapter, and also in subsequent chapters, the role of various kinds of speech events in the overall beer drink performance is considered. In the previous chapter the great emphasis on verbal explanation and discussion at beer drinks was touched on, and it was mentioned that beer drinks were frequently marked by long and vigorous debates. The question of how these are related to the drama, to reflexivity, and to the construction of meaning, needs to be considered. Two issues are addressed in this regard - firstly, the extent to which reflexivity is a conscious procedure or exercise, and, secondly, the extent to which the meaning of the symbolic structure is variable.

Where dramatic performances refer to or portray alternatives, the possibility exists of "competing definitions of reality" which have to be reconciled with each other through a process of negotiation, within the framework of the ritual (Shaw 1985, 298). In other words, meaning construction may involve a degree of choice. At beer drinks people frequently argue, sometimes at great length, about things like the procedure followed, the beer distribution, and so on. The significance of these debates has to be assessed. Are they merely

restatements of the message conveyed by the symbolic structure of the beer drink? Or do they involve negotiation based on competing definitions of reality? To what extent, in other words, are the symbols manipulable? Underlying this is another question, concerning the way in which beer drinks deal with the conflicts and stresses of everyday life. Many social dramas allow conflicts to emerge and function to facilitate their resolution (Moeran 1984), and beer drinks might do likewise.

### Explanations and requests

It is an important rule, an umtetho, that the participants at a beer drink should know exactly what is happening at all stages of the event. To this end, as indicated in the previous chapter, things must be spoken out, and care taken to avoid misunderstandings. Explanations and announcements are made at all stages of the beer drink, and the participants themselves often comment about the need to speak and explain. A look at this feature of beer drinks will add to our understanding of them as ritual dramas in two ways. Firstly, as another dimension of the relationship between individuals and groups, it is relevant to reflexivity and the construction of meaning, as part of the overall function of the drama. Secondly, it introduces an aspect of the drama not yet discussed, that of the relationship between living and dead.

That explaining things clearly and consistently is regarded as important is indicated by a certain amount of 'speaking about speaking' that occurs at beer drinks. The following examples illustrate this:

At an imbarha at Ndlebezenja's homestead there was some discussion about one of the beer allocations. After the matter had been settled Modi commented: "It is correct that you speak in this manner; it is pleasant that you speak about something before doing it, and not just do it without speaking...". Another man said that beer distribution must be understood by all, "otherwise we will cause each other to

complain (ukukhalisana), if we cause disorder (ingxaki-ngxaki)."

At Mbuntshuntshu's umsindleko there was a complaint about someone who did not produce intluzelo beer when he brewed at his home. As Gamalakhe saw it, the problem was that this man failed "to work with the mouth (ukusebenza ngomlomo)". There would be no difficulty, he suggested, if only things were properly explained - "It is speaking that counts! The important thing (inkunzi) is the mouth!".

Order and explanation are explicitly linked. From the participant's point of view, as long as things are spoken about and explained the beer drink will proceed in an orderly fashion, because everyone will know what is happening and not get 'confused' (ukubhideka). As Sonkebese put it, without speaking at beer drinks "there would be chaos in Xhosa life" (esiXhoseni kungakho umonakalo). An adequate explanation is obviously necessary for the construction of an unambiguous frame. At Ntanyongo's umsindleko, the sub-headman from Fumbatha praised Ntanyongo for explaining well: "If you have not said it with the mouth you cause disagreements amongst people". At an umsindleko in Jotelo one of the speakers said: "The thing about a beer party is that we should speak nicely and understand each other well (ukuvisisana)."

Informants explained that if people do not know the reason for brewing they will be unable to talk about the event, and to thank and praise the brewer. They must be allowed to do so because "they are the witnesses (amangqina) to what you have done, and the people below (abantu baphantsi - ancestors) are also witnesses". Evidently, when one brews for the living one is at the same time brewing for the ancestors, and the latter must be informed of the reason for holding the event. Qamela explained that when he brewed, people came to the homestead, and it was also his late father's homestead. After explaining the beer, people gave forth words of thanks, because what he had done was also for "the people of the home who are not present, to drink" (kuselwe nangabantu abangekhoyo, aba abasekha' 'pha). This

aspect of beer drinks is taken up later, but it must be borne in mind here too, because it implies a link between orderly relations between the living, on the one hand, and orderly relations between the living and the dead.

The first explanation at a beer drink usually concerns the nature of the event, in which the reason for brewing is explained. At the same time, the hosts seek the agreement of the assembly to proceed with the event. The explanation occurs simultaneously with the handing over of the beer to the injoli, after the host has given out preliminary and iminono beakers. Other sections have to agree that the hosts can proceed, and do so only if they are informed of the nature of the occasion.

At Honono's ntwana nje in Chibi section of Folokhwe, one of his agnates, Ndabanduna, stood to say that he had handed over the beer to Chibi section on Honono's behalf: "Here is what I want to say, chiefs, I am handing the beer over to you, my people (of Chibi) (ndiyabukhuphela kuni mawethu) so that we can consult with our colleagues who drink with us (sibhekisele kozweni bethu abasela nathi). Sit down and enjoy yourselves. Lets pay attention now and decide what to do with this beer, because it is time to get on with it now...". He then referred to Sonkebese (of Komkhulu section) as follows: "Eeh, Baskiti (Sonkebese), lend me your ear for a minute! Eeh, people of Komkhulu and of Ngingqi, the Chibi people say that the beer is released now, by the person who brewed it. We would like some reaction from you now (sijongise kuni ke ngoku)". Sonkebese replied to the effect that he understood, but that when beer was 'released' it should be known what the beer was for - "we do not know what kind of beer it is", he said. Ndabanduna had omitted to explain why Honono had brewed. Bodli, a neighbour, and another of Honono's agnates, rectified this, saying that it was a ntwana nje brewed because this was a new homestead. Mzilikazi (Komkhulu section) then said that they were happy for the beer to be released, and that the

injoli should proceed.

As this case indicates, the hosts take care to assess the mood of the other sections and to give them an opportunity to speak if there is something that they do not understand. Apart from formal announcements and responses such as these, others communicate their opinions with pointed comments such as "we are hungry, let's get on with it", or "carry on, we are grateful".

The explanation for the beer drink must be clear and adequate, and if the one giving the explanation is not clear, he may be criticised by other members of his section. On one such occasion Dlathu explained an umsindleko held by Ntanyongo (Dlathu's FBS) in roundabout terms, saying that Ntanyongo was 'cooking for himself' (uyaziphekela). Canca, of the same section, and an agnate to both Dlathu and Ntanyongo, criticised Dlathu, and asked what was meant by this. Only in the discussion that followed, conducted openly in front of all, did it become clear that it was an umsindleko.<sup>3</sup> As indicated here, the homestead head may ask someone to speak on his behalf on these occasions. Often this is an agnate, and the arrangement may transcend generations. After this incident, Ntanyongo stood and spoke as follows:

It seems as if Dlathu has finished speaking. This is the situation, my people. I wanted it to be Dlathu who speaks because this homestead has been spoken for (represented) by Sijula, his father, for a long time. I do not want to change that. Even when my elder brother Mhlabuhlangene was alive, it was always Sijula who spoke. I stop there.

Beer that was not explained, said Jija, was not beer, but marhewu. People came to a beer drink knowing that 'a particular kind of beer' was being 'eaten' (kutyiwa int' ethile), and the exact nature of the event had to be explained to them - "there cannot be eating in a home without an explanation to people; it is the discourse of men (umbuzo wamadoda). They will inquire about what is being eaten, because everything edible has its name...". Such explanation, he

said, "brings us together (isibamba)". Gamalakhe, while 'arranging the hut' at a beer drink, commented that "if there are things which are not understood at a beer drink, the world will say that this ilali (sub-ward section) has died". At an umsindleko in Jotelo a speaker said that "it is proper to speak before you give out beer, so that people do not think that you are treating them like dogs. If I do not give a word, it is as if I am giving food to dogs". Clearly, an adequate explanation is essential for the construction of meaning, and it provides a degree of unity among the participants, a common social consciousness in terms of which they can take part in and evaluate the events to follow. Once the nature of the beer drink has been explained spokesmen for the various sections present respond, praising the host for brewing, commenting on the nature of the event and the importance of holding it, and thereby confirming that they understand the explanation. (Examples of such speeches are recorded in Chs 5 and 6).

This pattern of explanation and response is followed through all stages of the beer drink, though the nature of the response varies according to what is being announced and the extent to which the others agree with it. Members of the section hosting the beer drink ought not to comment, but may simply confirm the explanations given with a 'Litsho!' ('The word is spoken') or 'Nalo ke!' ('That's it!'), indicating that the matter is being referred to the other sections for comment. Of course, this rule is not always followed, and men are sometimes criticised by members of their section when speaking out of turn and not waiting for the visitors to respond.

The initial explanation is also a veiled request to the other sections of the sub-ward for permission to proceed, and for confirmation that they are represented. Much emphasis is placed on ensuring that the other sections are present, and informants frequently commented on the sanctions that awaited a section that did not abide by this rule - "They will charge you"; "it is the law"; "you will be punished (if one does not wait)". If, however, a reasonable amount of time has passed and members of another section have not arrived, an appeal is made to an alternative principle - "beer does not wait for people".

In most cases, however, the other sections are present and they give the go-ahead to proceed, though they are not always agreed on this. At Mgilimbane's umsindleko a spokesman for Mgilimbane (his mother's brother, Mbambaza) said that "he is handing over the timing to you; it is up to you (the assembly) whether there should be drinking now, or whether there should be a delay..." Some said that they should wait a while, but they were outnumbered by those who wanted to proceed, who called out comments like "We are dying! (of thirst)", "We are hungry now!" and said that they should "go ahead according to the customs of beer drinking" (kuqhutyw' into emasiko asetywaleni).

Other sub-wards have no say in whether to proceed or not, though they too may respond to the initial explanation, usually rather more politely than local sections. At Thwalingubo's ntwana nje, a spokesman for Jotelo sub-ward, which had been called into the hut prior to the explanation of the beer, responded as follows:

"Chiefs, we too like to hear (what is said), which is why we came inside. No matter how crowded it is inside the hut, one ought to go in and hear what the homestead's occasion is. Otherwise we would all go about telling lies, saying that a certain thing had been brewed over at so and so's...Now we understand, because we have heard."

Those sub-wards sitting outside because they cannot be accommodated in the hut are also given an explanation, usually by the injoli, who goes outside to repeat the explanation that had been given in the hut.

The initial explanation of the beer may be repeated a number of times in the course of the beer drink as groups of latecomers arrive. The following are some examples:

At Mzilikazi's inkobe:

"There are men who have just arrived. Chiefs, beer has been brewed here. Eeuh, anyone who has not received a beaker (of umnono) from me should not complain, because he has arrived when there is not much beer left. Now, chiefs, the person I

am honouring is the old woman who is my mother (lo mntu ndimphileyo, ndiphe ixegwazana lakuthi elungumama). I have brewed this beer for her..."

At Mgilimbane's umsindelko:

"Eeee, people are arriving thick and fast (bafika ngofika). Secondly, please inform each other - I am not going to stand up all the time - inform each other of the purpose of this beer. Here men, it is Mgilimbane; he is doing umsindleko for himself, because he has returned from work...The men are there in that small cask; the women are there in that big pot, six amanxithi. The men have their beer and the women have theirs..."

In such cases a word of thanks is always given by a hastily appointed spokesman for the latecomers. Similar though shorter explanations occur within a section or sub-ward to people who arrive late, or who happened to be outside when a particular announcement was made or a beaker issued - e.g. "We have been lawula-ed here, with this inxithi". When Canca arrived late at Stokwana's isichenene, held to 'prepare the way' for an imbarha (see Ch 5), Dlathu explained to him what had happened, in a low voice: "No, Mcirha, Nasonti (Stokwana) has said that this is beer for sweeping today. Yes, beer for sweeping, so that when a person strains (the beer) for that bhabhazela (imbarha) that he is going to have, there should be an isichenene like this. He has excused himself because he has no beaker, no beaker to start with". Often, such communication occurs between people who have both heard the original announcement, and thus seems to be purely phatic. For example, when a beaker of beer, say ivanya, is given to a group, the one to first take up the beaker turns to the man next to him and says "Here is the ivanya, given to us", or something similar. If it has been explained that a beaker is to start at a certain point and end at another, the man who starts the drinking turns to those near him and repeats this, saying: "Here is our beaker, it is said that it will start here and move up. Let's get on with it".

Within the host section there is invariably a great deal of discussion

about the allocation of seats and beer, the way to proceed, and the right thing to do. Sometimes this discussion is whispered and private, sometimes quite public, though focussed inwards to exclude the members of other sections, speakers even turning their backs on the others in order to make a point to the hosts. This discussion involves the injoli, who must make the relevant announcements, his assistant, the homestead head (usokhaya) or his representative, and other prominent members of the section, some of whom may be close kin or neighbours to the homestead head.<sup>4</sup> They then inform the other members of the section, publicly, about the decision taken, before making the announcement to the group as a whole. For example, one of the first things that must be decided is how many beakers of iimvuko to draw. Once those most closely involved have discussed this, one of them, perhaps the injoli, announces to the other members of the section that the iimvuko are present and are about to be drawn. Another announcement follows when the beakers are handed out. Other members of the section indicate their approval (if they do approve) with comments such as 'Hayi, kumnandi' (No, that's fine), 'Kuyavakala' (It is understood), 'Lihle' (It (the word spoken) is good), and so on.

Similarly, if a visiting section or sub-ward wishes to make a point, or to voice a complaint, they may discuss among themselves first, before a spokesman stands and makes public what they wish to say. There is also frequent discussion within such groups about the beer allocated to them, how it should be circulated, how much is left in the beaker, etc. Within the host section, the injoli may announce how the beakers allocated to it ought to circulate - e.g. "Kolindawo, this beaker starts at the back and moves downwards (le bhekile ingena ngasentla iyehla)"; "this one starts with you Thobisanxa, this one starts with you Ngenisile, and ends at the upper part of the hut (entla)".

Frequently, the initial explanation of the reason for brewing includes a request (isicelo), in which the speaker points out that the beer is in short supply, usually with much overstatement, and asks for permission (ukucela) to withhold certain beakers that would be given

out if there was sufficient beer. The other sections are able to judge whether this is a reasonable request or not (from the total amount of beer available in relation to the number of people), and to give their agreement. However, if made at the right time such a request is never refused irrespective of the amount of beer available. The others say that they know times are hard, that maize is scarce, and that "the one who knows (the amount of beer) is the brewer".

At an imbarha at Ndlebezenja's homestead his younger brother, Canca, asked that only one beaker of iimvuko be given out in place of three of intluzelo (this is a common request at such beer drinks). He said that this was a small bhabhazela, and that there was not enough beer for these beakers. Canca had discussed this with his section (Komkhulu) beforehand, and a Komkhulu man now replied, saying that a request was something that occurred due to circumstances, and that "the person who knows is the brewer". Others agreed, saying that such a request was usual, and that it could not be refused because the beer had been brewed to alleviate a problem (by raising money). After a number of comments like this were made, indicating widespread agreement, Gavan (Chibi section) stood to say that the three Folokhwe sections, which he described as "we, the people who eat together" had now agreed on the matter. He concluded that it would not be right for people to be looking about for beer as if they had not been informed. Molusweni (Ngingqi section) then stood and said something similar, adding that the beakers they were discussing were never given out at imbarha anyway. Two or three others also spoke, repeating that imbarha was brewed to try and 'solve a problem'. As Dwetya put it, the brewer was in effect saying, "No, I am overwhelmed with difficulty, it is a heavy burden, it is overcoming me (Cha, ndiyaphuka, ngumthwalo, uyandisinda)".

Clearly, what is important is that requests such as these be verbalized, discussed and agreed upon, publicly and formally. The

request should be made at the appropriate time, and in the appropriate manner - well before the beaker being asked for is due to be given out. No one minds the absence of the beakers, but they do mind if the accepted form is not followed. As Dwetya put it on an occasion when it was announced that there would be no ivanya - "We have drunk it, as long as you have announced it". To make the request is to acknowledge people's right to what is being held back, and to recognize their role in the management of the event. This is what matters, rather than the beer itself. As a speech act, such a request is thus both overt and covert, an act of requesting as well as of acknowledgement of rights.

Furthermore requests are linked to the conscious need to define the context of the event clearly, to construct an adequate 'frame', and to put those present in the picture, so that they will know why they are drinking beer in that particular homestead. Together with the explanations, they help to focus attention and facilitate reflection, thus contributing towards the establishment of the order of the beer drink and to the construction of its meaning. That some men, at least, overtly recognise this, is indicated in the comments that they make in connection with the importance of explaining the beer, as indicated above. Linked as it is to formally obtaining agreement to proceed, the explanations also dramatize the unity and interdependence of the group, and is in this sense an acting out of the principle of cooperation and neighbourliness that governs everyday practice. The insistence that all the sections are represented, that they know what is happening, and that they agree with the way things are proceeding, gives a certain unity of purpose, bringing people together in a common task, preventing disharmony and disorder, and to some extent countering inequalities in seating positions and beer allocations among men.

The relationship between speaking, on the one hand, and the achievement of consensus of meaning, order, and unity, on the other, is illustrated also in the interaction between speakers and audience and the rules governing speaking. People make it clear how they feel about what is being said, whether they want a would-be speaker to talk or not, whether a particular subject should be pursued or abandoned,

and so on. Speaking involves the group, actively, rather than just the individual. Speaker and audience together construct meaning, in a two way process. From the moment he stands up to speak a man enters into an interaction with the listeners. The latter indicate their willingness to listen to him with phrases such as 'Ngena!' ('Enter!'), 'Galele!' (lit: 'Pour it out!'), 'Qhuba!' ('Carry on!') or 'Qhubela phambili!' ('Go ahead!'). If there is too much noise they ask for quiet with, 'Quiet, there is someone wanting to speak!' or 'There is something being said here!' (Nants' intw' ithethwa!), or 'Sssshhhh! Leave him, let him give forth!' ('Myek' agalele!'). A speaker who is interrupted may be assisted by others, who appeal to the group to hear him out, or they may confirm that he should stop so that someone else can speak, calling on him to 'Stop! Stop!' (Yima! Yima!), or to 'Wait a minute!' ('Khawume!'). If the subject is closed he will be told this, with 'Siyayivala!' ('We are closing it!') or 'Ivaliwe!' ('The matter is closed!').

Comments made in the course of a speech indicate agreement with or confirmation of what is being said - 'Ngumthetho lowo!' ('That is the rule!'); 'Unyanisile!' ('Quite so!'); 'SisiXhosa eso!' ('That is Xhosa custom!'). On one occasion a speaker said that he wondered if he was making a mistake in speaking as he was (a feigned modesty characteristic of beer drink oratory). Others commented: "He is not mistaken"; "He is not making a mistake". If there is a disagreement with the speaker the audience may comment adversely - 'Hayi man!' ('No man!'), or 'Hayi, suka!' ('No, get away!'), or they may force him to stop with a mass of interjections, whistles and offers from other would-be speakers. Generally, however, a man must be allowed to have his say without interruption. Only if he is unduly repetitive, off the point, or out of turn, may he be shouted down.

Audience participation is formalised, up to a point, in the practice of ukuvumisa. Formal, non-contentious speeches, such as those explaining the purpose of the beer drink, or those delivered by visitors when they thank the host for holding the event, are punctuated, at the end of each phrase or sentence, with a short refrain from a member of the audience (usually a young man), who

performs this duty in a manner of apparent indifference but sometimes with great skill. The refrain may be a simple 'Heke!' ('All right'), 'Nkos!' ('Chief!') or 'Mmmh mmh!' at the end of each phrase, it may be a clan name or praise name - 'Ncibana!' (a praise of the Cirha clan), or it may be a short phrase, such as 'Utsho ke!' ('He says so!'), 'Yatsho inkosi!' (Thus speaks the chief!) or 'Tyhini bawo!' ('Gosh father!'). Sometimes the phrase used to ukuvumisa (lit: 'to cause to agree') varies from line to line through the speech. The one who performs this function may also call for quiet in the course of the speech, fill in with additional phrases if the speaker pauses for too long, and call for further speakers as a previous speaker sits down. The effect of all this is to formalise and give rhythm to the speeches, which are delivered in a manner similar in certain respects to that of a praise poem (Opland 1983, Ch 2).

The speaker in the following example is Dlathu, Cirha clan, addressing Richard (Mthembu clan - my field assistant at the time) on an occasion when beer was brewed for us in Mzilikazi's home. The ukuvumisa was by Nkuntse, a young man who lives nearby, of the Bamba clan.

Here is a point Mthembu

Eee, don't get tired, even though we are chatting noisily  
(Ncibana!)

It is necessary to talk since we are eating food (Mh!)  
Food is eaten so that we should make a noise here in this  
home of yours (Mh!)

You are at home here (Tyhini!) (Gosh!)

You will never be lost (Watsh' ubawo!) (Father says so!)

Whether it is dark or however it is (Tyhini bethu!) (Gosh  
fellows!)

Be assured of this because I say so Mthembu

There is this beer here (Siyeva Mcirha!) (We hear Cirha!)

Which has been brewed because of your presence (Eh!)

However now, the customs of beer drinking, I myself live in  
this house (Tyhini!) (Gosh!)

Yes (He!) (Right!)

I am proceeding with them (Khawumamele ke!) (Listen now!)

Mthembu do not be confused (Nazo nje!) (There they are!)  
 Whether you are hungry or not (Camagu!) (Be appeased!)  
 You should sleep well in this homestead of Tshemese (Naz'  
iindlela!) (That's the way!)

Men say that ukuvumisa "is just a custom to show that we are not quarreling", and that it takes place when everyone is feeling happy (ekonwabeni) at the beer drink. It is also regarded as a way of encouraging a speaker - "He suddenly finds himself saying all kinds of things". Ukuvumisa does not take place in situations where the talk is more serious or contentious, such as at meetings of the sub-ward ibandla, when cases are discussed, or when men engage in serious debates at beer drinks. "A person is vumisa-ed when he is not discussing a case (uba akathethi tyala), a case is not vumisa-ed". It is done "when you want nice speaking in someone's umzi...so that person should be joyful (ajabule) and give his beer out nicely and not hide it and give it to women. Yes, we speak pleasantly at beer drinks, we do not vumisa in the inkundla, because cases are discussed there". Similarly, at ritual killings, where people are concerned with the very serious business of ensuring successful communication with the shades, ukuvumisa is usually limited to phrases such as 'Camagu!' ('Be appeased!') and the use of a clan praise name (e.g. 'Ncibana!').

Various comments are made when a man finishes his speech, both by the one who does ukuvumisa and others. Such comments may be quite neutral, or they may indicate approval of what has been said. The speaker frequently ends with a closing formula, such as 'Ndimile' (I have stopped) or 'Ndimile kule ndawo' (I stop at that point). Often, the man providing the ukuvumisa then comments: "He says he has put it! He says he has thrown it to you!", or "He has stepped down! Let he who wants to rise, rise!". Others may greet the end of the speech with comments such as 'Litsho!' (Lit: It (the word) says so!), 'Uthi umile' (He says he has stopped), or something more idiomatic, such as 'He says he has fallen' 'The spade is broken' or 'The paraffin is finished here'. Positive comments such as 'That man has spoken well' and 'Wow! There speaks my age mate!' are also made.

The rules for interaction too are linked to the question of order, and to the aim of achieving harmony and agreement between the various groups represented. An announcement by a host section must be referred to the others for their notice. Once this is done a reaction is awaited, other members of the host group not being allowed to say anything beyond a confirmatory comment, until a spokesman for the remaining sections has had a chance to respond. One who disregards this rule is shouted down by his fellows and told to be quiet. Similarly, a member of a visiting sub-ward must not speak on matters that do not concern him, and must wait patiently for his beer allocation no matter how long the hosts take to decide how to proceed. At a beer drink in Jotelo Bodli (Folokhwe sub-ward) became impatient, and while Jotelo were giving out beakers to themselves, commented "we too want to drink man!". Other Folokhwe men immediately turned on him and berated him for his bad manners and breach of etiquette.

In this sense the rules for interaction act as yet another symbol, parallel to and reinforcing the others, with which to define boundaries and the composition of groups, and to re-define these as the beer drink moves through its various stages. The rules thus also help to objectify groups and relationships, and to define significant social categories. It is senior men and elders who speak, not young men and women. It is those of the host section who speak most, who give the explanations and the excuses, who talk about the beer allocation, and so on. Members of visiting groups speak least. They complain if they feel badly done by, they praise the host for holding the event, and they ask for permission to leave, but they do not enter into the main discussions and debates. Yet other rules of speaking, as we have seen, such as the necessity to explain and to receive the go-ahead from others, proclaim a certain unity, and involve the group as a whole in the beer drink process.

#### Discussions and debates

As is already evident, beer drinking is accompanied by much talking about the beer and its consumption. But this is not the only thing that people talk about at beer drinks, which in fact provide an

opportunity to discuss and debate a wide range of issues. Beer drinks provide a forum for the discussion of community affairs, an opportunity to canvass opinion, and to formulate 'public policy' (towards things like cattle dipping and inoculations, repair of the school buildings, etc). They provide an opportunity for the sibonda to pass on information of importance to the people of the sub-ward, and for him to announce meetings of the sub-ward ibandla.<sup>5</sup> They also provide an opportunity for ordinary people to announce things like the loss of a head of livestock, and to request others to look out for it, to offer animals and other products for sale, or to indicate that they wish to buy something like a good ox or a horse. Such announcements are received fairly stoically. No would-be buyers and sellers respond in public. If there are to be transactions, these occur privately, outside, or perhaps after the beer drink has ended. People also meet privately outside the hut to arrange participation in a ploughing company, or to discuss matters that do not involve the assembly as a whole.

Among the people who gather together at beer drinks there is a great deal of informal, friendly conversation, in which virtually any kind of topic of local interest may be discussed. These include things like the latest cattle inoculation measures, stock thieving and the markings used on livestock to prevent this, conditions on the mines and other places of urban employment, the difficulty of obtaining labour contracts, how to save money at work, the jailing of someone from a nearby area, the price of tobacco and goats, the state of the crops, and a hundred other topics. Sometimes such discussions fan out from their point of origin until all the men in the hut are involved, especially if it is a particularly interesting matter or if the speakers discussing it are particularly able and amusing. A large part of the pleasure of beer drinking is listening to eloquent and entertaining speakers, and when men with a reputation for wit and eloquence arrive at a beer drink attention often focuses on them:

At Nomfuxuse's isichenene the proceedings were nearly over when Qeqe Ndawu, an elderly man from Mgwevu sub-ward, arrived. Qeqe is renowned for his knowledge of history and

his ability as a raconteur. He dominates the conversation wherever he happens to be, and this was to prove no exception. Soon all eyes were on him as he started to tell of his adventures as a nightwatchman in East London, from where he had recently returned. He related how he had managed to accumulate money at work, and playfully chastized his age-mates for staying at home "becoming dejected, sitting around doing nothing". He boasted about what a good foreman he was, how much he earned, and about the government pension which he now received. His peers, he said, walked around in rags, worrying their wives. All they did was sit next to the cattle byre every day until the sun set.

Qeqe's monologue was interrupted every now and then with laughter and egging on from his audience, trying to provoke him into elaborating and into recounting further adventures by indicating their appreciation of the tales he told, asking leading questions, and by calling out his praise name (isikhahlelo), "Ah! Pumalimile!", whenever he paused for breath. Qeqe obliged with anecdotes about the people he worked with, and about people who had been initiated under him, the trouble he had had with the witches who tried to attack the initiates, and how he had successfully driven them off with medicines. Finally, he returned to one of his favourite themes - his role as 'chief magistrate' in the young men's organization (intlombe yabafana) when he was younger. He told of what a great dancer and speaker he had been in those days, and how they had travelled to intlombe meetings all over the district and into neighbouring districts. Qeqe kept the attention of the men in the hut for a good hour, and no one left before the ivanya was served, as men often do.

This kind of informal discourse is distinguishable from the more formal announcements, signalled by the injoli calling for silence and saying that there is someone who wants to say something. In such cases the speaker then rises and tells the men what is on his mind,

sometimes inviting response, sometimes simply making an announcement. These are usually more serious matters.

At an umgqibelo beer drink in Chibi section of Folokhwe, there was a great deal of boisterous argument and rowdy behaviour until Dhyubeni, who lived in Chibi, arrived and announced that some kin of his who lived at Velelo had been killed by lightning, and others taken to hospital. He had come to raise the matter with the people at the beer drink, he said, because it needed to be discussed, and he needed some advice. He wanted to know what he should do, as kinsman to the homestead affected. Toto, an old man, said that it would be necessary to use medicines to doctor the homestead struck by lightning, but further than that he was unsure. Dhyubeni wanted to know whether he should go to Velelo or not, while the rites to guard against lightning and to cleanse the homestead from its contact with it, were being performed. Some said that he should go, but others said that if he did so he would have to stay there with his kin until the day on which they were 'released' and allowed to go about freely again. This is what he wanted to know, he said, whether he should go now or only on the day on which the homestead was 'opened' again (a beer drink was to be held for this purpose).

A number of speakers then commended Dhyubeni for bringing this issue to the beer drink, saying that in doing so he was teaching them all - especially those who did not know about such things - "You are enriching all of us young people" (uyasityebisela nathi thina bancinci). By raising this matter 'amongst people' they said, he was teaching them isiXhosa (the Xhosa way). This was repeated by a number of people, with particular emphasis on the importance of raising such issues 'amongst people' (ebantwini), and the credit due to Dhyubeni for doing so.

Discussions of this kind are fairly common at beer drinks, though it

is not necessary to provide further examples here. Some of the issues that cropped up during fieldwork were as follows: the correct procedure to follow during the ukuncamisa ritual (see Ch 2), the trouble being experienced with groups of boys from rival areas fighting with each other, whether it was all right for the members of a particular clan to leave the beer drink early to proceed to another homestead (to which they had been called for a ritual killing), and the co-ordination of repairs to the dipping tank.

Beer drinks without disputes or arguments about some matter or other are rare, and not very much enjoyed. People go to a beer drink not only to be sociable and to drink beer, but to be entertained and to entertain, by public speaking. Many of the debates at beer drinks are conducted in a good natured, tongue-in-cheek manner, the participants clearly enjoying the opportunity to practise their rhetorical skills, making points and accepting defeat with grace and good humour. Others are much more serious and intense, and may develop into heated arguments. It is not always easy, however, to tell the one type from the other. Either may go on for an hour or more, and involve a dozen or more speakers. In both types the injoli and others not involved in the debate may have their work cut out trying to keep it orderly, to prevent people from speaking out of turn and shouting each other down, and to give all who wish to a chance to speak. The result is frequently very noisy - people shouting at people shouting..., a number of speakers on their feet at once, gesticulating wildly and trying in vain to make themselves heard.

It happens, very occasionally, that men lose control of themselves and that a fight threatens. Three such occasions were recorded during fieldwork. In one case a man threatened to attack his oratorically more skilled opponent with his stick and was expelled from the beer drink as a result. Shixini people say that boys settle things with sticks, men with words, and that someone who gets aggressive or abusive at a beer drink is sent home, because "he makes us anxious" (uyasixhalisa). As once expressed after a dispute about beer; "You see, Rasi, here is the point I commend: that of accepting defeat. It is not by physical power (izigalo, lit: brawny arms), but by argument

(kukuthethwa)". In another case, a senior man who arrived drunk at the beer drink and caused a commotion, was made to sit by himself in the left hand back section of the hut, the place reserved for juniors, where the others could keep an eye on him. This seemed to solve the problem, and he sat quietly for the rest of the time. In a third case, reported some weeks after the event, two senior women came to blows, well after most other people had gone home. The fight was broken up by men.

Most of the debates concern the allocation of beer or seats, and the circulation of the beakers once allocated. As indicated above, the participants in such debates are structurally determined. An argument about iimvuko involves only those affected - i.e. members of the host section. People belonging to other sections and wards do not participate, though they listen with interest and amusement. Something like the failure of a homestead head to give out isikhonkwane at imbarha involves the sub-ward, but not members of other sub-wards. A complaint about umlawulo involves the group giving and receiving it - i.e. two sub-wards, and any argument about it is confined to them.

As is evident in Ch 3, there is much potential for making mistakes with the complicated distribution of beer and seats, and with the way in which a beaker is circulated. The following are some of the topics which were the subject of argument and dispute at the beer drinks attended during fieldwork:

- the amount of umlawulo given to visiting sub-wards
- the right of young men of the host section to an allocation of umlawulo
- the order in which the various groups should receive umlawulo
- whether the beer should be allocated according to ukulawula or ukugabu (numbers)
- failure to provide part of the amasiko, such as intluzelo or isikhonkwane
- whether the ivanya beaker should start with old or young men
- the time at which to hold beer drinks during the ploughing season

- whether the beer drink should be held inside or outside the hut
- the point at which a beaker allocated to a group should start
- monopolization of the beaker by some of the men within a group
- failure to explain the nature of a beaker being circulated
- whether it was permissible to ask for more beer or not
- not being given an opportunity to speak without being interrupted
- the admission of young men to beer drinks
- the seating places allocated to individuals

The following cases illustrate some of these concerns:

1. At an umsindleko beer drink in the Elwandle section of Jotelo sub-ward, there were five Folokhwe men present. They were given one inxithi as umlawulo, and considered this to be inadequate. They consulted among themselves before Dlathu got up to complain, asking if this was all that Folokhwe would be getting. An Elwandle man replied, and the Elwandle group then discussed the issue softly among themselves. The reply was then communicated publicly to Folokhwe. The Elwandle group held that this was an umsindleko beer drink, and that no agreement had ever been reached between the two sub-wards concerning the amount of umlawulo to give each other at umsindleko - "we simply feed each other with something that has never been confirmed". Before responding, Dlathu referred the response to the other Folokhwe men, and they discussed it. Bodli indicated that he did not care one way or the other, saying that the matter was 'rubbish', but the others disagreed sharply with him, clearly regarding this as a highly irresponsible attitude. They indicated to him that they were not acting for themselves, in order to get more beer, but for Folokhwe as a sub-ward, and that this was a serious matter.

Dlathu then responded to Elwandle, arguing that the nature of the beer drink was of secondary importance. What counted was that a certain amount of beer was available for the men's umlawulo, with the women having been given a separate

pot. In such circumstances, Folokhwe was entitled to an iqhwina, irrespective of the kind of beer drink. A lot of discussion followed, with other Folokhwe and Elwandle men voicing their opinions. One Elwandle man pointed out that men of both Komkhulu and Chibi sections of Folokhwe were present, and that Folokhwe was thus well represented. Elwandle then decided to change Folokhwe's allocation to an iqhwina. This was first explained to the other Jotelo section, and then to Folokhwe. Dlathu turned to his companions with a satisfied 'Litsho manene' ('There you have it gentlemen'), and that was the end of the matter. A great buzz of conversation enveloped the hut as all those who had been sitting quietly up to this point discussed the issue and its outcome, until the next allocation of beer was announced.

2. At Ndlebezenja's imbarha there was an argument about the isikhonkwane beaker. Some men had not heard it being announced and thought that it was being consumed without any announcement. Others complained that it was being monopolised by Folokhwe (the host section) though it was meant for the sub-ward as a whole:

Gavan: (Chibi section): "You say the isikhonkwane has been given out here at Mangono's?"

Thekwane (Komkhulu): "This is it here."

Gavan: "Where exactly is the isikhonkwane, seeing that you are telling the ilali (Folokhwe) about it?"

Stokwana (Komkhulu): "You inform your people (amawenu) while the beaker is being eaten. Do you understand Ntlane (Thekwane), you are telling them while it is already being eaten."

Canca (Komkhulu) claimed that the beaker had been announced, and that this had been acknowledged by others. Only then was it passed to a Komkhulu elder, to start the drinking. Another said that what was confusing him was that he thought that the isikhonkwane beaker was for Folokhwe, but it seemed to be staying with Komkhulu.

Thekwane then spoke again, trying to ensure that a serious argument did not develop: "No, chiefs, here is a point. Give me ears, chiefs, stop, stop, do not get annoyed at a beer drink; you will not help us at all if you get annoyed like this, while speaking about the laws of beer drinking (Comment: Apart from sinking us) Exactly, you are going to sink us, exactly! Here is the point chiefs. The ears did not listen because there was speaking (noise). That is why it is said that when a person asks for silence you should listen, because he is going to help those of you in the hut. That is the truth. Now we are cross-examining each other here, even though the issue has been dealt with, because we did not attend with our ears, because we were talking when someone stopped us. It is all right now, the matter is finished."

3. At Ntanyongo's umsindleko Stokwana stood to complain about the movement of the ivanya beaker. He had not had a sip from the second ivanya beaker allocated to his section (Komkhulu). He said that the first ivanya beaker had been announced, and he explained how it had circulated. He had not been informed about this second beaker, and had not had a sip from it. Canca then explained to Stokwana that it was not really a beaker, but just a little beer that had been left over from the bottom of the barrel, and not part of the formal allocation. The beaker was handed to Stokwana anyway, and he drank from it.

4. In the course of 1976 there were complaints from Komkhulu men, at a number of successive beer drinks, about the fact that the old men of the section monopolised the beakers allocated to Komkhulu, leaving very little beer for the other men. At Nontwaba's 'beer for harvest' Dlathu, an influential senior, was moved to comment that "we do not get anything here at beer drinks, we only come to discuss matters of importance and to serve the old men". Younger men at the back teased the old men about this, saying that

they had used all the beer, but later started to complain, to the extent that Ndlebezenja, a senior, took a beaker and passed it to them to try and pacify them a little.

A few days later, at an umgqibelo beer drink at Thekwane's homestead, the same problem cropped up. When the ivanya was announced, it was said that it would start at the back, with the young men. Instead, the beaker somehow found its way to the elders next to the door, who drank from it, and started to call in others from outside for sips. Some Komkhulu men objected to this, and an argument followed. Ndlebezenja grabbed the beaker from one of the elders and passed it to the young men. The injoli, however, defended the elder in question, saying that he was Komkhulu's old man: "What are you going to do with this old man? Are you going to give him to Chibi? To Ngingqi? They have their own old men. This is our old man; he belongs here at Komkhulu."

At the next beer drink, an umgqibelo in Chibi section, the iqwele beaker issued to Chibi was passed to the Komkhulu men to sip from, and Chibi announced that they would not be giving sips to the old men of Komkhulu and Ngingqi sections, because they drank too much.

5. At an imbarha at Gulakulinywa's homestead Bodli laid a complaint against some men of Ngingqi section (including Molusweni and Ntlekiso), accusing them of misusing the umlawulo beaker allocated to Folokhwe at a beer drink in Jotelo two days earlier. The Ngingqi group was sitting slightly apart from other Folokhwe men, and the umlawulo beaker had been placed in front of them. Bodli said that they did not inform the rest that they had been lawula-ed, and that when the beaker was passed over to them it was nearly empty. Dlathu had thus sent it back, saying that "we do not know this beaker".

Molusweni was asked to explain what had happened. He said

that he had not seen the other Folokhwe men until after the beaker had been issued. He then went over to inform them of the beaker, and that Ngingqi would drink from it first. Ntlekiso called a Ngingqi woman for a drink, and she brought a number of other women with her. Before they knew it the beaker was almost empty. Molusweni said that he had told the Ngingqi men that they would have to answer for this. He sent the beaker over to Dlathu but it was returned. Ntlekiso was also asked to give an account, and he confirmed what Molusweni had said, but put the blame on the women. Discussion then turned to why Folokhwe men were not all sitting together, and to why Bodli had said that he had not been informed of the beaker. He now admitted that he had been informed. Ntlekiso admitted that he was responsible for misusing the beaker, and asked for pardon.

The other men then decided that Bodli, Molusweni and Ntlekiso should leave the hut while the case was discussed. It was decided that both Molusweni and Ntlekiso were responsible and that they be fined an inxithi of beer. Bodli had not given a truthful account and it was suggested that he, too, be fined. However, after some discussion it was decided that since these men were 'first offenders' they should have their sentences suspended. As Thekwane put it: "They have no records, they must be warned. There should be no friction among Folokhwe people. This is the first time they have offended us". The Ngingqi women, too, were to be called together and admonished. The three men were called back into the hut, and stood facing the others, caps in hand. Gavan, a Chibi elder, addressed them, saying, "here are the findings of the ibandla". He admonished Bodli for not giving an accurate report of what had happened, and told him to be careful of this in the future. Bodli sat down. Gavan then addressed the other two, reminding them that they had all grown up together in the area, and that they should act in concert with other people of Folokhwe. He told them that the ibandla had decided to be lenient, and to suspend

their sentences, urged them to mend their ways, and told them to be very careful with the umlawulo beaker. Other senior members of the gathering also spoke to the offenders, reminding them of the need to ensure that Folokhwe be respected at beer drinks, and asking them to exercise control over the younger Ngingqi men.<sup>6</sup>

6. It is not only matters involving beer and beer drinking that are debated. Sometimes arguments rage about matters quite unrelated to the beer drink; the procedures followed at a previous circumcision ritual; the raising of money for sheep dip or for repairs to the dipping tank, etc. In the following case a long and noisy debate raged over an apparently trivial issue - the definition of iduna:

At Mamgwevu's isichenene, Modi, a man who loved nothing better than to stir up a good argument, stopped on his way out of the hut and asked me if I was an iduna (a male, but often used in the sense of 'a real man'). I replied in the affirmative. "How do you know?", he asked. "Because I am sitting here drinking beer", I replied. "No", he said, walking out, "you know that you are an iduna if you have a good brain". Others then started discussing his statement, some saying that an iduna was a man, and had nothing to do with intellect, only biology. Some said that an iduna was the head of the homestead, and that the other men in a homestead were not amaduna. So the discussion went on, and soon everybody was talking at once. Gavan claimed that Dyakal Ashe, some years his junior, would not give him a chance to speak, and kept interrupting. Eventually Gavan was able to say something, and merely asked what it was they were arguing about. He was told. People were keen for him to give his opinion on the matter because he was an amusing and eloquent speaker, and they expected a definitive statement from him. However, he disappointed them. An iduna, he said, was 'a man at his home' (induna yindoda ekhaya). Dyakal Ashe asked if such a man was still an iduna

if he squandered money (lakutya imali) and neglected his home. Gavan replied that an iduna was one who worked well and returned home with money. Dlathu said that they were splitting hairs (uyayicola - lit: picking up little things). Dyakalaska said that the only requirement to qualify as an iduna was to be circumcised. A person who was born a male, who had testicles and a penis, he said, was an iduna. Dhyubeni responded that there were people who did not want to know the truth, who had no regard for the concept of an iduna (balinyemb' iduna). Others repeated that only the first born son in a homestead was an iduna, and referred to the laws of succession to the chieftainship, saying that younger sons did not succeed. There could be only one iduna in a homestead, they said, not more.

What emerges from these examples of the discussions and debates that occur at beer drinks? How are they related to the view of beer drinks as dramatic performances? As far as the non-contentious discussions are concerned - about things like cattle inoculations and the local school - beer drinks involve the community acting as community. Such discussions are not just dramatizations of the community, they are the community in action, talking about things that concern it, and defining itself in the process. These discussions function to disseminate information, to allow decisions to be made, and to inculcate or re-inforce norms and values (e.g. the importance of going out to work, as in Qeqe's entertaining monologue). They are also a manifestation of the sociability that is part of all beer drinks.

In cases such as the death of Dhyubeni's kin, and in the apparently silly controversy about the definition of iduna, the beer drink functions as a forum for the discussion and resolution of problems of a 'cultural' nature on a group basis, for the establishment of procedures and norms, or for calling these into question. In this respect beer drinks are the equivalent, at a more senior level, of the meetings of the youth (intlombe yabafana and umtshotsho), where much debating and hearing of 'cases' takes place - aptly described by the Mayers as 'socialisation by peers' (Mayer and Mayer 1970). In talking

about death by lightning and the concept of iduna people are constructing meaning and establishing models for the interpretation of future experience. At the same time, beer drinks provide men with a forum at which to exercise and display their oratorical skills, on which political standing in the community partly depends.

The arguments and debates, on the other hand, confirm certain points made earlier on, concerning the right to know what is happening and the importance of keeping all the participants informed. The responsibility for following the correct procedure lies with the host section, which makes its decisions by consensus, but which will be taken to task if it makes mistakes, or if people's expectations (their 'rights') are not fulfilled. In pointing out procedural mistakes and arguing about things like beer allocation, the participants at a beer drink are actively involved in establishing the symbolic order, and thus in the interpretation of that order - i.e. in the construction of its meaning. In so far as there may be different perceptions of that order, competing definitions of what ought to be, leading to debates about matters like beer allocations and seats, order is established through a process of negotiation and compromise. This enhances reflexivity, in that it involves discussion of conflicting viewpoints and alternative ways of doing things.

In the end a result emerges which is (usually) to everybody's satisfaction. As a speaker put it in the course of one of the debates recorded during fieldwork, "Let us give each other law, let us give each other good spirit, so that no envy enters our hearts" (masinikan' umthetho, sinikan' umphefumlo, ongena mona ngentliziyo). As this indicates, there is an overriding concern to ensure that there is harmony and a degree of unity among those present, and especially within the section and the sub-ward. In certain cases, as illustrated above, men who threaten harmony by breaking the rules governing sharing and reciprocity, or who transgress the etiquette of speaking and circulating beer, have action taken against them. They threaten the establishment of a mutually agreed upon order and are therefore sanctioned.

The disputes also point to the value of speaking out, of expressing one's complaints, objections or ill feelings. The link between beer drinking and reconciliation between quarreling or disputing parties is widespread in Africa. Drinking from the same vessel among the Lovedu was symbolic of reconciliation (Krige 1936, 59) and among the Tsonga a 'beer offering' (actually grain representing beer) to effect reconciliation between quarreling kin was called 'the beer of noise', "on account of the noise made by those who quarreled" (Junod 1927, II, 399-340). At Zulu beer drinks and at ritual killings the speaking out of ill feeling might be simply a complaint about the quantity and quality of beer, but it was held to be important - "there must be harmony before there can be a sharing of food" (Berglund 1976, 321). Berglund also notes that there was a close association "between the ritual of purification from anger and the common participation in beer (and sometimes meat)" (ibid., 325). The implication is that the disputes and arguments at beer drinks are a symbolic speaking out of anger. Beer drinks are also, as noted earlier, associated with the symbolism of spitting, which is closely linked, all over Bantu-speaking Africa, with the expulsion of ill-feeling.

Beer drinks, then, are associated with harmony in the community, with the speaking out of anger and resentment, and with reconciliation between people. However, people do not bring their private quarrels or disputes to beer drinks. The disputes that occur are symbolic; they are about beer and the handling of beer, about reciprocity and sharing in the context of beer. Beer drinks thus provide an outlet, perhaps, for anger (Hunter 1936, 309), and for symbolic reconciliation, and thus act as a prophylactic against quarrels within the community. Harmony achieved within the context of beer drinking is a dramatization of communal everyday harmony, and helps, perhaps, to achieve the latter result.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. As originally formulated by Turner 'social dramas' were linked to conflict situations, which had four phases - breach of the peace, escalation of the crisis, redressive action, and reintegration or schism (Turner 1968, 37). It was at the second and third stages that the true state of society was revealed, and where society was at its most self-conscious. Both of these stages had liminal characteristics and were marked by the performance of ritual.
2. Ukurhabulisa, though a manifestation of *communitas*, may also be regarded, paradoxically, as an index of power differences between giver and receiver. While this may apply to rhabulisa between men and women, it is less valid when rhabulisa occurs among men, where it is based on reciprocity, which means that the high status of the giver is regularly being reversed.
3. Asked what he meant by 'cooking for himself', Dlathu replied that 'to cook' meant "to slaughter by means of beer. 'Cooking' means to cook for a certain purpose, it is to slaughter for oneself (uyazihlinzeka)". The conversation, loud enough for all to hear, then proceeded as follows:
 

Canca: "Say it then Cirha, it is his umsindleko. In cooking for himself he is having umsindleko..."

Ntanyongo: "That is what it is Mawente (Canca)"

Canca: "That's it, but it did not emerge in that way. He (Dlathu) speaks of 'cooking for oneself' and does not elaborate"

Ntanyongo: "This is umsindleko"

Canca: "That's it Cirha, that's what I want. I want it to be understood that this is umsindleko for a particular person"
4. At 'beer for harvest' brewed by Nothusile, wife of Mzilikazi (Cirha clan), who was at work, the main officiants were Canca, Dlathu, Qamela, Stokwana and Vile, all members of the Komkhulu

section, none of them close kin to Mzilikazi, though Canca and Dlathu are of the same clan (but are not agnates of Mzilikazi). When Dlathu quietly asked Canca (the injoli) about a particular beer allocation, the latter turned to ask Qamela's opinion before discussing it further with Dlathu. Before the other groups were given their seating places there was an intense argument between Vile, Canca and Dlathu about who should sit where. Decisions made within this small group were announced to other Komkhulu men and ratified before being made public.

5. Beer drinks may also provide the sibonda with a chance to gauge opinion on matters that may later become the subject of discussion at meetings of the sub-ward ibandla. However, I have no direct evidence of this.
6. A fuller account of this case may be found in McAllister (1979, Appendix P).

## CHAPTER FIVE

## BEER DRINKS AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

As indicated in Chapter 3, there are a variety of ways in which the structure of beer drinks and the procedures followed might be affected by the particular context in which they occur, the distribution of seats and beer by particular circumstances, such as who happens to be present. For example, the beakers called iminono cannot be viewed simply as reflecting close social relationship and the network of links between people. This is clear when we consider that iminono exchange must always be initiated and established, and that it can break down, as indicated earlier. In giving an umnono beaker a man might be expressing a life-long bond, say with someone initiated into adulthood at the same as he. Such a beaker is often announced with: "Here is the beaker for the son of so and so, since the man of this homestead and he were together in the forest...(i.e. in the seclusion hut)". Other relatively enduring iminono relationships may reflect historical facts. For example, one homestead head of the Ntshilibe clan in the Chibi section of Folokhwe is not a member of the large Ntshilibe agnatic group resident there, but the son of an outsider who settled in Chibi two generations ago. The new settler established close relations with one part of the local Ntshilibe group, the homesteads belonging to the right hand house of the founder, Poni (see p. 147). Today, it is in these homesteads, and not in other Ntshilibe homesteads, that the son of the 'stranger' Ntshilibe is given umnono.

The continuation of iminono exchange depends also on continuing friendship between those involved. In a number of cases, the gift of an umnono beaker seems to be motivated by material or political self interest. A gift to the forest guard may ensure that one is leniently treated if caught illegally chopping poles in the forest. People who have the 'ear' of the chief, or who are wealthy and therefore possible sources of loans in times of crisis, are also frequently given iminono.

The allocation of seats, too, may reflect social processes. For

example, when Dlathu (Komkhulu section) was chief guardian (ikhankatha) at an initiation lodge in the Ngingqi area, he sat with Ngingqi men at every beer drink held in Ngingqi during the seclusion period. During this time another Ngingqi boy, who had just been released from prison, was circumcised and joined the others in the hut. On the same day there was a beer drink in Komkhulu, at which the ingcibi (specialist circumcisor) and his assistant, who were from another ward, were present. Both were seated with Ngingqi men. Similarly, a beer drink in the Elwandle section of Jotelo coincided with the performance of an ukubuyisa ritual (see p. 84) at one of its homesteads, of the Kwayi clan. Since ukubuyisa is held in the afternoon, local amaKwayi were present at the beer drink. Other amaKwayi who had been called to attend the ukubuyisa including those from Folokhwe (which had its own place in the hut), were put with their Elwandle agnates/clansmen, in the place allotted to Elwandle.

Clearly it is necessary, following Turner (1957, 1968, 1975, 1982) to see beer drinks as part of a 'social field' which includes politics, territorial arrangements, individual and group interests, historical processes, conflict, other rituals, and so on. Symbols must be treated dynamically, and related to social change. Symbols often have pragmatic functions, and their meanings can change according to situation and context, making it difficult to speak of a logical and coherent 'symbolic system'. In addition, Turner saw symbols as operators in the social process, which had an affect on social life, producing social transformations, resolving conflict, playing a role in effecting status change, and helping members of society to abide by norms and values (Ortner 1984, Turner 1968, 55). The properties of ritual symbols are related to this. This approach owed much to Van Gennep, whose achievement was "to demonstrate conclusively that ritual cannot be understood except as a complete sequence of events embedded in social life" (La Fontaine 1977, 422).

In the rest of this chapter the nature of the relationship between beer drink performances and social practice (the reality of everyday living) is developed a little further, by taking three detailed examples of the ways in which practice is related to the beer drink

drama. In the first example, beer for sale (imbarha or ibhabhazela) is considered. In this case the beer drink is social practice. A homestead brews beer for sale because it needs money urgently. The structure and organization of the beer drink, through which the consumption of the beer is regulated, is also the way in which people's cash contributions to the homestead is organised. However, as shown below, there is more to it than this. Beer for sale is also a dramatization of the principle of neighbourly co-operation, while at the same time being a practical manifestation of such. Beer for sale for public funds (inkazathi) is also discussed in this section of the chapter.

In the second example, beer brewed in connection with work parties, the beer drink follows and is modelled on the practical work done. The connection between action and dramatic form is thus immediate and obvious. Various kinds of work parties and work party beer are considered, and the other elements of such beer drinks - such as the relationship between men and women, and between living and dead, are illustrated.

In the third example an issue rather than a type of beer drink is considered. This issue is the relationship between young men and their seniors. It is of wide practical significance (as illustrated, for example, in the section on work parties) and it surfaces in symbolic form at many beer drinks, where it is grappled with, sometimes successfully (from the point of view of the seniors) and sometimes not. This section also includes a summary of the development of the umsindleko beer drink, which is one of the means of coping with the old/young conflict, but which is rooted also in a variety of practical as well as cultural phenomena.

### Beer for sale

Imbarha is a beer drink held in order to raise money, usually for some specific purpose, by selling the beer, beaker by beaker, to those who attend. Although in some respects like other beer drinks, imbarha is primarily an economic strategy and is thus an example of the strategic

use of beer which, as shown in Chapter 2, has been a feature of the use of beer among the southern Nguni for over a hundred years. Today it is one of the few ways in which an individual can accumulate cash at short notice. It is thus also a limited means of redistributing money within the community (see also Alverson 1978, 59). The amount of money involved is rather small. In 1981, for example, a bag of maize from the local shop cost R18.50. From this, 400 litres of beer could be made, or 57 amanxithi (medium sized beakers). If 50 of these were sold at 70 cents each the gross return was R35 (R16.50 net, but possibly more than this depending on the amount of home grown maize used).

According to older people (around 70-75 years) the price of an inxithi 'long ago' used to be three- or six-pence. By 1976 it had risen to 40 cents, and imbarha had come to be known as ibhabhazela (from ukubhabhazela - 'to fly' or 'to take off') as a result. By 1986 the price had risen to R1 an inxithi, to keep pace with the increased price of maize (around R30 per bag). Among older people opinions vary about whether the incidence of imbarha has increased or decreased over the years. Whatever the case, it has not developed to the point that it has in other Xhosa-speaking areas, such as Tshabo, near East London, where Bigalke (1969, 111) reported that "commercial beer drinks (iimbarha) are open for business throughout the week".<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of constraints on holding imbarha in Shixini, which may have retarded further commercialization. One of these is that the sanction of the sibonda is required before one can brew for sale. This was also the case in Tshabo. According to the Folokhwe sibonda this is so that the brewer "will not be accused of starting a business" and also in case there is any trouble at the beer drink. Imbarha is viewed as the kind of event at which trouble (fighting, etc) might arise, because of its commercial nature. Other beer drinks are, by contrast, regarded as generally trouble free, where "people do not fight because they know it is just a beer drink."

Secondly, it is socially unacceptable to brew imbarha 'too often' (i.e. more than about once a year). It is seen as a strategy to be

used in an emergency, "when you have a problem", and money is needed urgently. In principle, one ought not to brew imbarha twice in succession - there should be some other kind of beer drink in between. Also, if one has not brewed for some time and wishes to brew imbarha, this ought to be preceded with a small isichenene. These principles are, by and large, adhered to.

In 1982 Stokwana held an isichenene as a prelude to brewing for imbarha. It was a small affair, attended by 19 men and 15 women, and a small pot of beer (eight amanxithi) was distributed. All three of Folokhwe's sections were represented, though nine of the men were from Komkhulu, the host section. The entire proceedings lasted for only an hour and a half.

In announcing the purpose of the beer drink Stokwana said that it was "to prepare the way for a bhabhazela" (Ukutshayelet' ibhabhazela). Literally, this means 'to sweep out for a bhabhazela'. Stokwana also expressed it as being "the dusting out of the hut" (umvuthululo wendlu). When asked why he had decided to brew this isichenene, Stokwana said: "If you have not brewed for a long time, you start with isichenene. Bhabhazela beer is not beer of the home. it can even be eaten out there in the veld. Isichenene is the same as the beer one brews for the home (i.e. the same as beer brewed in connection with ancestor rituals). Beer of the home, it is said, is beer given to the person who bore me, who is not present. That is beer of the home, true beer (utywala bekhaya, utywala benene). Bhabhazela...is not something that sustains the home (ayisinto igcin' ikhaya). It is just brewed to get money".

'Sweeping out' or 'dusting' the home, said Stokwana, was to prepare the way for the imbarha. "I am cleaning out bad luck, so that the bhabhazela should be bought by people...I am anxious that the people should not get drunk and fight in this home...I want the old man of this home to help people

not to get too drunk.<sup>2</sup> He should assist in spirit, in his absence (lincedisá ngomoya ngokulingekhoyo)."

In addition to these constraints on the commercialization of brewing in Shixini, no imbarha beer drink is purely commercial, in that certain obligations to the community have to be fulfilled in the course of the event. Although most of the beer is sold, a number of beakers must be given out free. These include a beaker for the sub-headman, and the one called isikhonkwane ('a peg' - see p. 153). In addition, iimvuko or intluzelo is usually given out, although the host may 'ask for' (ukucela) some of these beakers (see p. 208 ff.). Some people say that iimvuko is no longer given out, so that there will be more to sell. "We destroyed the iimvuko because this person was brewing for his problems, he was not brewing for pleasure (ebesilel' ingxaki, akasilelanga konwaba)." However, among others the distribution of imvuko or intluzelo remains important, as the following case illustrates:

At an imbarha in the Ngingqi section of Folokhwe the homestead head informed the men of her section that she was short of one of the intluzelo beakers. There should have been three - one each for Ngingqi men and women, and one for Komkhulu section. It seemed that the Komkhulu men would have to go without, and they complained about this. Ngingqi men discussed this heatedly among themselves, and came to the conclusion that the brewer should be punished by not allowing her to partake of the intluzelo beer at any other beer drinks in Folokhwe. One of the men went out and communicated this decision to the women.

Folokhwe men made it clear that they held Ngingqi section as a whole responsible for the fact that they were not being allocated intluzelo, and the Ngingqi men replied that they accepted responsibility for this. They decided to leave the hut and meet separately in order to decide what to do. They went out and sat down a little distance from the hut, and discussed the issue for about ten minutes. They decided

that they would give their own intluzelo beaker to Komkhulu in order to keep relations amicable, and returning to the hut, reported to Komkhulu that they had decided to 'starve themselves'.

In addition to these beakers, the umlumiso beer, the day before imbarha, and the ivanya, are given out as at other beer drinks, and not sold. Also, neighbours are called for a beaker or two of imifihlo, after the beer drink itself has ended. In these respects imbarha is similar to any other beer drink. Furthermore, the selling of the beer takes place in what might be called a 'socially responsible' manner. Firstly, selling does not start until all the sub-ward sections are represented. Selling then commences, when a close friend or neighbour 'opens the cask' (ukuvul'ingcwele) by purchasing two or more beakers. Others then buy from this cask, beaker by beaker, the sale being regulated by the section injoli. The second cask, which is called ummiso (lit: 'an ordinance') is handled rather differently. Ukumisa means to 'set' or 'fix' (Kropf 1915, 227), and in this case what is 'fixed' or controlled is the amount that people are permitted to buy. The principle followed is that all the sections and sub-wards present must be given an opportunity to purchase from the ummiso cask, and that no one group should buy disproportionately more than the rest. As an informant put it: "Ummiso is beer for watching all the areas (izizwe)...You, as the brewer, must watch the people, so that each particular area gets something, and does not leave complaining that it has not drunk." This rule does not apply to the first cask.

Finally, as at other beer drinks, no beaker is consumed entirely by the person who paid for it, or by the men of his group. People from other groups, and women, are called for sips, and there is an expectation of sharing. Imbarha (and inkazathi - see below) also provides people with an opportunity to buy beakers for each other, as a gesture of friendship or kinship, or in reciprocation for some or other service. The following case illustrates something of the manner in which such beakers are handed out, acknowledged, and circulated:

At Ndlebezenja's imbarha, Vile presented a beaker to Dlathu and others who had worked on his hut, dismantling the roof and part of the wall. This was announced by Vile, saying that Dlathu was the leader (ivolosi - from the Afrikaans vooros, 'lead ox') of the workers, thus he should control the beaker. Dlathu replied with: "You have heard men, it is said that that is the beaker that we went to break down that wall for" (Litsho, madoda, kuthiwa la bhekile besiya kudiliza ela donga ngayo. Yiyo le). Modi gave a short reply and said that the beaker should be lawula-ed (i.e. regulated, controlled) and that they should also give sips to each other. Canca suggested that it be controlled by one person, who would call others. Since the beaker ought to start with the oldest there was then some discussion about which of the old men were present at the time. Dlathu said that the beaker should start with so and so, adding that he was thankful for being put in charge of the beaker - "I am very grateful that I should be the person who controls you and who gives you mouthfuls" (Ndinombulelo omkhulu ke niphathwe ndim umntu aniphe nje amathamo). After the beaker had been passed around it was returned to Dlathu, who announced that he had seen to it that all those who had helped with the hut had received beer.

If imbarha is to be regarded as a dramatic performance, like other beer drinks, and its relationship to practice explored, it is evident that this can be done in at least three ways. Firstly, imbarha is both performance and practice, in that the success of the event, as measured by the money raised, depends directly on the participation of others in the drama. Secondly, there are the more general aspects which emerge from other beer drinks, such as the practical importance of neighbours - defined as members of the section by iimvuko, and as members of the sub-ward by isikhonkwane ("the beaker of the spoor") - which is acted out by the distribution of beakers which are not sold, and also by the way in which the sale of the beer is regulated. Thirdly, the practice of buying beakers for others makes a direct link between the structure of the beer drink and the relationships which

matter in everyday life.

Among the Mpondo beer for sale was referred to as izimawusi (from smous, Afrikaans for 'itinerant trader'). Such beer was sold at itimiti, an event modelled on the 'tea meetings' of 'school' Mpondo (Hunter 1936, 361). Hunter describes an itimiti which lasted for two days and two nights, which was clearly an event at which people were dramatising the society they lived in - 'talking to themselves about themselves'. The beer drink was controlled by a 'chairman', supported by a 'magistrate' and 'police'. Songs were sung which dealt with topics like migrant labour, the relationship between men and women, and marriage. The magistrate held a mock trial, imposing fines for 'misdemeanours', and a feigned illness was 'cured' by a 'diviner' (ibid., 351-364).

Inkazathi is similar to imbarha, except that it is organized on a communal basis, to raise money for public funds. Such beer drinks are held relatively infrequently, and only one was recorded during fieldwork. It was held in order to raise money for Komkhulu's contribution to the maintenance of the local school. Each section holds inkazathi in order to raise money for the sub-ward funds, which are administered by the sub-headman and used for school maintenance and other purposes. The maize is contributed by each homestead within the section, and the women of the section co-operate in brewing the beer. The men of the section take charge on the day of the beer drink, organize the sale of the beer, and collect the money. They meet beforehand to elect the necessary officials - 'leaders' (abaphathi) to take overall control and to co-ordinate the activities of others, 'watchmen' to help them and to keep an eye on the beer while it is being strained, 'treasurers' (onoziciko) who collect the money, and 'barmen' (obalumani) who draw and distribute the beakers as they are bought.

The inkazathi attended during fieldwork was a large affair, for which six barrels of beer had been brewed (1300 litres). Of this 60 litres were given out as umlumiso on the day before, and a similar amount on the day of the beer drink itself (including isikhonkwane and

intluzelo). This left 1180 litres, which grossed approximately R60-00. The outstanding feature of this beer drink was the large number of arguments within the host section about how to conduct the proceedings, possibly because of the size and the rarity of the event. For example, a heated argument took place about how to collect the money for beakers purchased, leading to the temporary suspension of the barmen, whose places were taken by two of the 'leaders'. There was also argument about the number of beakers given out free of charge, and the 'treasurer' threatened to resign. There was so much bickering that many of the non-Folokhwe men left the hut to drink their beer in peace outside.

Ironically then, although inkazathi can be seen as the community in action, in this case this very process also threatened the unity of the local section, due to the disagreements and arguments that took place.<sup>3</sup>

#### Work party beer

As indicated in Chapter 2, beer is brewed for only certain kinds of work parties. Usually these are work parties that involve men, with or without oxen, performing tasks such as cutting roof poles, fencing gardens, ploughing, and so on. Work parties that involve fairly large numbers of women (around 15 or more), for tasks such as cutting thatching grass, harvesting, hoeing, and suchlike, or a mixture of men and women, are also accompanied by beer drinking.

One of the most common of work party beer drinks is umgqibelo beer, brewed for an umgqibelo ploughing group (McAllister 1979, Appendix J). Such a group consists of two or more ploughing companies (see Ch 2), usually (but not always) consisting mainly of men from the same section of the sub-ward. An umgqibelo group comes together at the request of a homestead head, who may or may not be a member of one of the companies involved, to perform the task of ploughing and planting the homestead's field or garden in one day of intensive work. This enables the head to take advantage of favourable weather and soil conditions, and to get his land planted at a time that will help to

ensure a good harvest.

Between some companies (usually only two) there is an agreement to form umgqibelo on a reciprocal basis on behalf of any member of the companies involved. In such cases beer is not brewed. Should the umgqibelo require a third company, however, or be called by someone not a member of the companies, or involve companies which do not have such an agreement, beer must be brewed for the umgqibelo by the person making the request. In some cases the beer drink takes place immediately after the completion of the task; in others it takes place some weeks later. The quantity brewed varies from a medium sized pot to a full cask, but is not often greater than this. Beer is also brewed if a homestead asks a single company, of which it is not a member, to plough for it. This is not, however, umgqibelo.

If brewed for the day on which the ploughing is done, a proportion of the beer may be taken to the people doing the work in the field (mainly young men and boys), and the remainder distributed afterwards. If the brewing is done later, they are given marhewu and other food in the field, and have to wait a while for their beer. Whether held on the day or later, the beer drink that follows the completion of the work is like other beer drinks in many respects. There are certain amasiko ('customs') that are distributed, including the sibonda's beaker and iimvuko, by the homestead head, in collaboration with the men of his section. Sometimes he may also give out a few iminono beakers. The bulk of the beer, however, including the ivanya, is handed over to the senior men (usonkabi) of the umgqibelo group (i.e. the owners of the oxen) and it is these men who control the distribution. The major decision that they have to make is how much to give to the people who did the physical labour - the young men and boys, and how much to keep for themselves and the other men. It is not always as clear cut as this, because often one or two senior men are included in the group that laboured. For allocation purposes, they are grouped with the other seniors, and not with the labourers. The beer is seen as being given to the senior men of the umgqibelo by those who laboured (their 'sons'), to distribute as they see fit. At an umgqibelo in Chibi section, for example, the leader of one of the

companies started off the proceedings by saying: "Here is the point, people of the umgqibelo group. Your sons are back (from the fields) and they have given you this beer. You are the people who are going to distribute this beer; even the people outside (i.e. non-Folokhwe men), it is you who will decide when to call them in."

Usually the young men are given about half of the beer left over after amasiko. As one of the seniors explained, "this is beer for the children; this is their samp". The young men receive their beer in a separate hut, and redistribute it among their peers - "it is for all the young men of the ilali, not just for those who worked". They also give a separate beaker to the boys who helped them, who drink this portion in the same hut as the young men, together with other boys of the immediate neighbourhood. At other work party beer drinks at which both young men and boys participate, the latter do not usually get a separate beaker, but drink from the same beaker as the young men.

The umgqibelo beer drink proceeds in the main hut, and is attended by anybody who normally attends beer drinks and who cares to come along. Although men sit in the places usually allocated to their sections and sub-wards, the basic distinction at this and other work party beer drinks is that between those responsible for the work (including the members of the companies, who supply the oxen, ploughs, etc), and the rest - non-workers, who are termed abasarhi, from ukusarha, 'to go about seeking beer or brandy...' (Kropf 1915, 381). Abasarhi are also sometimes called 'porcupines' (iincanda).<sup>4</sup>

At umgqibelo, the senior men of the ploughing companies involved, irrespective of their territorial affiliation, decide how much beer to give to the abasarhi and to women, whether the distribution should be by numbers or by areas, and so on. Since umgqibelo is often made up of companies most of whose members belong to the same section it is this section which, in effect, controls the allocation, and which occupies the senior seating position inside the hut. Members of the host section who are not members of the companies involved in the umgqibelo are usually relatively few in number, and may sit with the others. In theory, however, they should occupy the next most senior

position. In such cases, the basic seating pattern may remain unchanged, except for those members of the umgqibelo companies from other sections or sub-wards, who sit with the other members of their companies. However, if the umgqibelo companies are from other sections, they sit where the host section normally sits, and control the beer distribution from there. The same applies to sub-wards. Thus if two Ndlelibanzi companies come together for an umgqibelo on behalf of a Folokhwe homestead, it is Ndlelibanzi which controls the beer allocation and sits in the senior place in that homestead.

Other work party beer drinks are similar, the distribution being controlled by the senior members of the group that did the work, or who are responsible for the work. This may mean, as with umgqibelo, that the controlling group cuts across section lines. It may also cut across divisions of sex and age, as some of the cases given below indicate. When a work party consists solely of women, it is they who control the beer, reversing the normal practice, as the following example indicates:

In June 1986 Gamalakhe (Ntshilibe, Chibi section) was in the process of building a new hut, and his wife was responsible for providing the grass (idobo - *Cymopogon Validus*) for thatching. To this end, she asked her neighbour and friend, Notatile, (the wife of Gunyuvu, Mganu clan) to organize a work party of women in order to meet on a certain day to cut the grass required. Twenty women, all from Chibi section, agreed to participate on the date agreed upon. On the day the women met at the appointed place to cut the grass. In the course of the morning seven beakers of beer (which had been brewed by Gamalakhe's wife) were sent down to the workers. The first two beakers were called emvikweni, for the early arrivals (see p. 246) and the second two, a little while later, were designated as umnyenyetho - defined by Kropf (1915, 306) as beer "given to workmen", after ukunyenyetha, "to give a small quantity of beer to one's workers, shortly after they begin working" (ibid).

When the women returned, having completed the work, they went into the hut in order to decide how to divide the beer, which was regarded as theirs. As Gamalakhe put it "silawula ngabo" (we (men) are controlled by them). Having decided what to do, they called the female abasarhi inside from where they had been sitting next to the woodpile (igoqo), but the men remained outside next to the cattle byre, there being no space for them in the hut. The sibonda's beaker was given out and used by men and women, and men were allocated two beakers of usingantselo ('this is not a beer drink') which, like the sibonda's beaker, was part of the amasiko beer. Later, men were allocated a further two beakers, but the bulk of the beer was kept in the hut and given out to women, on the basis of numbers (ukugabu). After every allocation of beer men were called in for sips, amid teasing and laughing from others at this reversal of the usual practice. Only where a younger woman wished to give a sip to a considerably older man was the beaker taken out to the latter by the former. Later in the evening, when it became cold and some of the women had left, men were permitted to sit inside the hut.

There are a variety of different types of work parties that may be called for tasks such as cutting thatching grass, hoeing, harvesting, and so on. A basic distinction is between those which anyone from a given area may join and those composed of people who are individually asked to work. The latter is usually referred to as an isicelo ('a request'). As in the example above, a homestead head or his wife requests (ukucela) someone else, usually a close neighbour and friend, to organize a work group for a particular purpose. The person to whom the request is made then goes about to his/her neighbours and friends, inviting each individually to join the work party. As the main organizer of the work party, this person is also placed in charge of the beer, which is brewed for the workers by the person making the request. Some informants refer to an isicelo as an ilima, others say that an ilima work group is one that performs tasks associated with agriculture (ukulima), a usage that concurs with Kropf's definition of

the term (1915, 216), and yet others say that an ilima is a sort of general purpose word referring to any kind of work group (which is very much how Hunter (1936, 88-92) uses the term).<sup>5</sup>

Work parties which involve generalised appeals for assistance rather than requests to individuals are of two kinds. The smaller of the two is called a 'congress' (ikongresi, lit: 'a gathering') or umtabata, which Kropf (1915, 401) defines as "a number of people who club together to work in a garden". This size group is also called igxabaxu. The larger type is called an indwandwa (lit: 'something valuable or scarce' (ibid., 90)), and the workers who take part in such a group are referred to as amandwandwa. The size of these groups (about 15 people for an ikongresi, 20 or more for an indwandwa) is related to two other variables - the number of sub-ward sections from which help is requested, and the amount of beer brewed.

A 'congress' is drawn from the people of only one section, while an indwandwa is drawn from two or three sections of the sub-ward. For the former, about 10 amanxithi of beer are brewed (70 litres), for the latter, at least 18-20 amanxithi (126-140 litres). This is also the minimum quantity required for an isicelo, members of which may or may not be limited to a single section. Sometimes some of the homesteads in another section may be asked to join a 'congress'. In the case of Ngingqi and Komkhulu sections of Folokhwe, for example, people say that these two sections 'work together', and a Ngingqi man may ask part of Komkhulu as well as Ngingqi people to join his 'congress'. Another reason for this is that Ngingqi is relatively small.

When men and women work together, both are regarded as 'owners' of the beer, and although the decisions about distribution are made by the men, they have to be careful to ensure that the women are happy with the way it is done. At an indwandwa the beer for the workers is divided into two, one part for men and the other for women, and each of these gives to the abasarhi of their own sex. This is not the case at a 'congress', although the women still have a say regarding the amount of beer given to abasarhi women. The following case is presented in some detail to illustrate these and other characteristics

of a 'congress' beer drink:

In January 1986 Ngangethole (Ngingqi section) called a 'congress' in order to have his field hoed. There had been a good bit of rain, and the growth of weeds was choking the maize plants, which were starting to turn from green to yellow as a result. He brewed 14 amanxithi of beer and put out the word to Ngingqi people, as well as to some Komkhulu households, that workers were required on a particular day. On the appointed day, fifteen people turned up to help Ngangethole and his wife - six women, all from Ngingqi, and nine men, three from Komkhulu and six from Ngingqi.

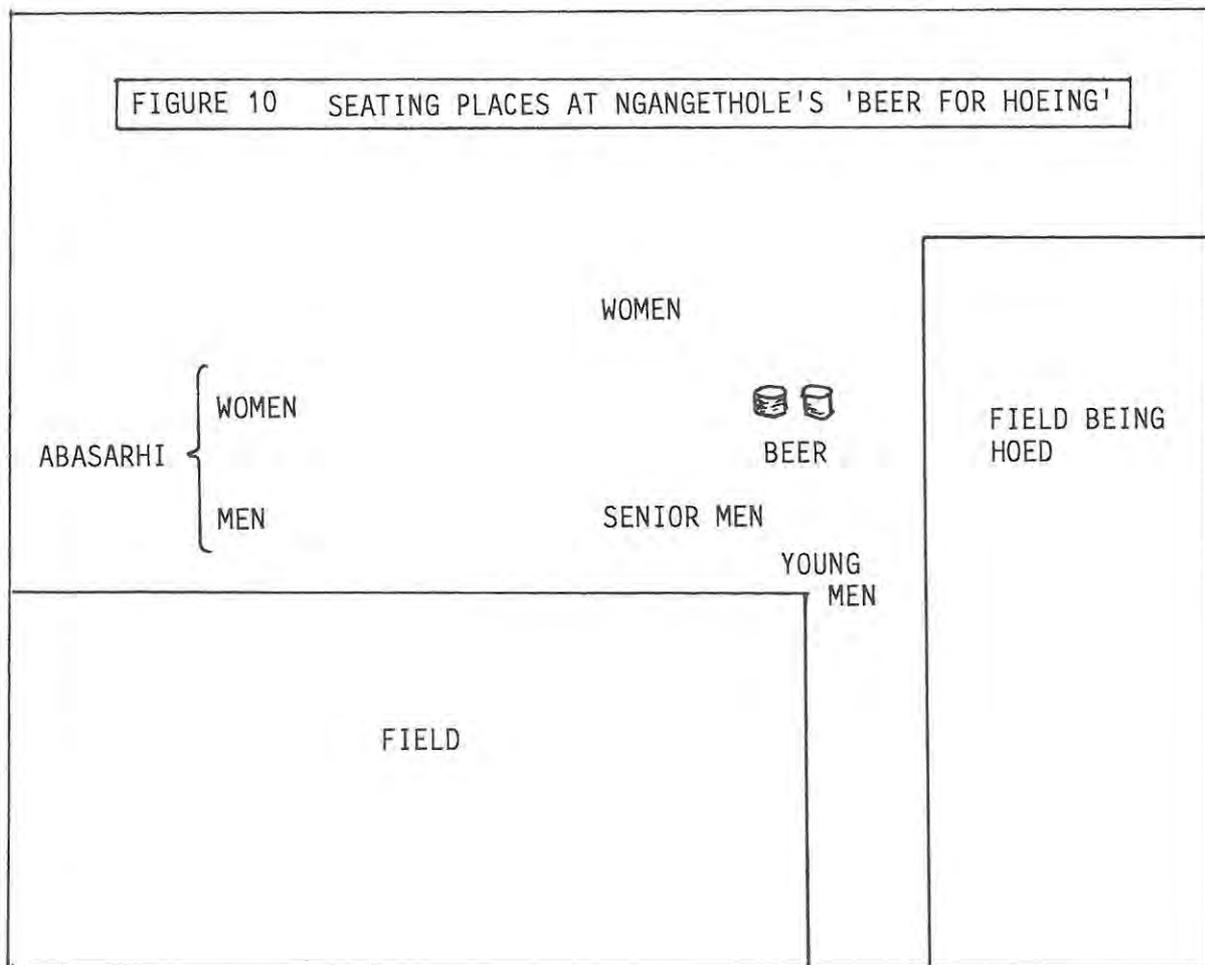
At 7 a.m. one beaker was taken from Ngangethole's homestead to the field for those who had arrived early. After clearing the first isiqithi (strip or patch) the workers retired to the grass verge (umviko) between Ngangethole's field and the next to drink this beaker, which is called the emvikweni (lit: 'on the verge') beaker. This beaker is meant to serve as an incentive for people to arrive early, though those who arrived while it was being consumed were also given sips.

In the course of the morning a further four beakers were taken down to the workers, who were finding it tough going because of the dampness of the soil. Towards midday, men and women of Komkhulu and Chibi sections started to arrive at the homestead, in the hope of getting some beer. There were no abasarhi from Ngingqi, as it would have been unacceptable for a Ngingqi person not to join the work party as requested but to arrive for beer nevertheless.

At the homestead, one beaker for the abasarhi and the sibonda's beaker were given out. These beakers, plus the emvikweni beaker, and two called inkobe (lit: 'boiled maize') given to the workers at the end of the day, were said by Ngangethole to be the amasiko ('customs'),

distributed by him, as homestead head. Once these two beakers for abasarhi were empty the latter went down to the field, having been told that the rest of the beer would be allocated there.

Three of the more senior men, including Ngangethole's father's brother, the sibonda at the time, remained behind. At 1.45 p.m. two plastic containers containing five amanxithi were taken down to the field. The workers laid down their hoes and sat down on the verge, and the abasarhi came over from where they had been waiting. The spatial arrangement of the various groups seemed to emphasize the division between workers and non-workers, though there were divisions within these groups based on sex and age, as depicted in Figure 10 below:



Because the workers had included young men, they too were allowed to be present, but formed a separate group. An argument developed among the workers concerning a certain woman, Noncede, who was sitting between the men's and women's groups. Qamela (the most senior male worker) told her to go and sit with the women, but she refused, and answered him indignantly. Other men started belittling her, saying "Is this Noncede a man?", "We will give you an overall to wear", "Are you still answering back?", "Bring an overall - we are going to give you a pair of trousers", and so on. A number of men told her to move, but she responded that Qamela had no right to tell her to move, because he had arrived late. She pointed to a young man sitting in a similar position, near the women, and told Qamela to be quiet. Eventually one of the senior Ngingqi women called Noncede over to the women's group and suggested that she sit down there.

A young man rinsed out the beakers and placed them next to the beer. Dyakal Ashe (Ngingqi section) and Qamela (Komkhulu section), the two senior male workers, discussed the question of distribution, and Dyakal Ashe stood to speak to the abasarhi, addressing himself to the senior Komkhulu man present:

Dyakal Ashe: "Oh, Nojikile! Here is a word, that I want to put to all of you. The reason we are here is because we have been working, with these ten beakers. We have used five of them already. Now there are these here, and they too are five. Here they are, we are going to use them. Allow me to stop at that point."

Nojikile: "Oh, we are grateful for your words; that is the custom (ngumthetho lowo)."

Dyakal Ashe: "Eeee, the important point is this. As porcupines, you would get your own porcupine beaker

(ibhekile yakho yobuncanda), an iqhwina, if this was a full cask. That is not available now because this is a small affair. We will give you only an inxithi."

Nojikile: "No, fellow, it is understandable (kuyavakala); this is something seen to by the workers."

One beaker was then given to the 'porcupines', one to senior male workers, and one to female workers. The latter were eating a dishful of inkobe provided by Ngangethole, and did not touch their beaker. After some time, and having discussed it among themselves, the senior women said to Dyakalashé and Qamela that they were not happy about the beaker for the abasarhi. They had noticed, they said, that it was being used by the men only, and wanted to know if it had been announced if it was for both men and women, as it should have been. Qamela replied that it was not necessary to make such an announcement, as it was not usually done. The women, however, insisted that this was a mistake. Now, they pointed out, the abasarhi women had no beer, and the result of this would be that when those women next controlled work party beer, they would not share it with the Ngingqi women. Dyakalashé offered to apologise to the abasarhi for this, but the Ngingqi women asked him to give half their beaker to the other women instead. This was done.

When these beakers had been consumed, with the abasarhi frequently being called for sips by the workers, another two beakers were distributed, one each to male and female workers. This time the men's beaker started with the young men, from where it moved back to the seniors. Again, abasarhi were frequently called for sips. When the beer was finished, Ngangethole persuaded the workers to complete one more isiqithi, and the abasarhi drifted off home. When they had completed the work the workers went up to Ngangethole's homestead, where they were given the two beakers of inkobe -

one for men and one for women.

This case illustrates a number of points relevant to a consideration of beer drinks as social dramas or 'performances'. The beer drink took place at two points - homestead and field - a spatial dichotomy that served to dramatise the dependence of the homestead and its inhabitants on the labour power of others, recognized at both points in the allocation and control of beer.

Furthermore, the beer drink took place in accordance mainly with the fact that a job of work had been done, and that the relevant categories of people were the workers and the non-workers, rather than territorial, sex and age divisions. Although the latter were still in evidence, they were played down in comparison with other types of beer drinks. Young men who did not normally attend beer drinks were permitted to participate, and received beer to drink as part of the men's group. Women received a relatively large proportion of the beer, though still less than the men, whom they outnumbered. The normally strictly subordinate and inferior status of women was thus at least partially suspended, as illustrated also by the fact that Noncede dared to argue back when told to move, Dyakalashi's admission that he had made a mistake with the announcement regarding the beaker for abasarhi, and the changing of the allocation at the women's request.

As a dramatic performance, then, the beer drinking cannot be seen as separate from the work that preceded it, in terms of time, space and the structure of beer allocation. What about the abasarhi? The inclusion of abasarhi in the beer distribution is by no means inconsistent with the main theme of the beer drink, which concerns the relationship between homestead head and workers, if looked at in terms of the overall and general interdependence between homesteads in Shixini. Abasarhi are given beer because they too might be called upon as workers in the future, because they too, as homestead heads or wives of homestead heads, will brew for work parties, to which Ngangethole's workers might go as abasarhi, and so on. As the sibonda put it at a similar occasion at another homestead, when disagreeing

with a man who suggested that the workers be thanked for the beer given to abasarhi: "When a man works does he work for himself? Does he not work so that others can eat?". On this score, it is worth noting that the beer given to workers is not a payment. If it was, why should they give it to others? In any case, it would be a quite inadequate payment. During the beer drink described above the workers were asked why they bothered to spend a hard day in the fields for so little beer, which they would have to share with others. They replied that they had not come to get beer as payment, but that they had come to help in the expectation that Ngangethole would help them if called upon to do so in future. However, since they had come, it was fitting that they should 'eat well'. As Goody (1982, 73) says of the LoDagaa, "you do not pay for the labour of free men. You offer them beer...and expect help in return, but also are expected to reciprocate on a similar occasion." However, their reward lies in the control that they exercise over the beer, rather than in its consumption by them. This control gives them a certain status, as givers, but it is temporary, lasting only as long as the beer does. One is reminded here of the temporary, 'momentary' gain in status that a Balinese receives when his cock defeats another (Geertz 1973, 443).

The agricultural work done by work parties, or by individual ploughing companies, (not umgqibelo) has a sequel some six months later when the beer drink to give thanks for the harvest, is brewed. At this beer drink those responsible for ploughing the homestead's garden and/or field are given special recognition. The senior male members of the company that did the ploughing sit with the host section, irrespective of their territorial affiliation (in many cases they are members of the host section anyway), and are given a number of beakers in recognition of their contribution. The young men who worked, too, might be given a share, which they drink in a separate hut. If no beer was brewed earlier for the people who helped with the harvest, they too are given a special allocation of beer when beer for harvest is brewed. A good proportion of the beer may be disposed of in this way, the rest being given out to sections and sub-wards in the normal manner.

However, the spatial principles and the overall symbolic structure of beer for harvest do not emphasise the workers as a group to the extent that work party beer does. The dominant spatial principles at beer for harvest are not based on the division between workers and non-workers, but on the usual principles of territory, age and sex. Inside the hut men sit according to their sections (except for the non-section members of the host's ploughing company). In some cases the members of the ploughing company sit together only for the beakers given especially to them, and then those who are members of other sections return to their proper places.

Hammond-Tooke recorded a similar practice among the Bhaca. There, as in Shixini, tasks such as ploughing and reaping were performed by a number of neighbouring households, and at the end of the season beer called ijiki leenkabi ('the beer of the oxen') was made by the women of these households. A feast was held "to which all are free to come, although the members of the combine are accorded a more important (seating?) place and assist the owner of the umti (homestead) in giving out beer" (1962, 144).

Although not strictly speaking a work party beer drink, as indicated above, 'beer for harvest' is in some ways connected with agricultural work done and it is therefore appropriate to discuss it here. Many Shixini homesteads brew beer for such a beer drink during the period July to November, after the harvest has been brought in and before the beginning of the new agricultural cycle. The purpose of these beer drinks is to give thanks to the ancestors for the harvest received and to ensure that the following harvest will be as good or better. This beer drink is often called utywala bomvuno ('harvest beer'). If the homestead has only a garden and no field, a somewhat smaller affair may be held, called simply isichenene, at which it is explained that the beer has been brewed in order to give thanks for the harvest. In yet other cases, where the homestead has oxen which worked in the fields, independently of others or (as is more usual) as part of a ploughing company, this event is called utywala beenkabi ('beer for the oxen').

A similar event takes place among Mpondo called ukuselela iinkabi ('to drink to the oxen'). It is held for the owner of the oxen (from another homestead) who ploughed and reaped, and he is publicly praised for his assistance at the beer drink (Kuckertz 1984, 201-202). In Shixini the emphasis is on the oxen rather than on the owners. Kabilawo said: "You are praising your oxen if you had a good harvest. They have made it possible for you to eat well; you received maize. We say we are soothing the weals, as we often beat it as it was ploughing...praising the beast for its work has been the custom since we were born. You praise your beloved ox (uyibongoz' inkab' akh' oyithandayo)." Stokwana referred to this beer drink as isabokhwe ('a shambok'): "The oxen were beated and it was painful. Now we should praise it because it has worked." When Ntanyongo brewed for his oxen, Canca said to the people that "this beer is for the ox called Komdele (the lead ox)...he is praising this ox for having ploughed and planted, and for taking the maize from the fields."

In view of the close association between cattle and the ancestors among Cape Nguni, and the fact that ancestors are sometimes referred to as 'cattle' in invocations to them (McAllister 1979, 121-122), it is likely that 'oxen' here serves partly as a euphemism for the ancestors. In 'praising the oxen' (ukubongoza iinkabi) or 'praising the field and the hooves of my father's oxen' (ukubonga idiza namangina eenkabi zikayise) Shixini people are also thanking the ancestors. Some say that if it is not done, "there will be no harvest next year", although others say that "nothing bad" would happen.

Nontwaba's wife decided to brew beer for harvest in November 1976 while her husband was at work. The other members of the Tshezi agnatic cluster (Nontwana's brothers) were also away, so the beer drink was run by a neighbour and matrilineal kinsman, Canca, of the Cirha clan, who is also the head of the ploughing company that Nontwaba belongs to. The event took place at Nontwaba's homestead in the Komkhuku section of Folokhwe sub-ward. Nontwaba had received at least eight bags of maize from his garden in June, and Canca said that the brewing was done "so that there should be ten

bags next year."

Canca explained the purpose of the event to the men shortly after they had arrived and seated themselves next to the cattle byre:

"Here is the reason why I have asked for your attention, my people. Here at home brewing has taken place, beer for harvest. It is brewed by Nontwaba, in praise of the oxen which carried and ploughed and so forth. So, these are the beakers for the harvest, these three. I stop there."

These three beakers were given to the people who did the ploughing - other members of Nontwaba's ploughing company, nearly all of whom were Komkhulu men, and to the women who did the reaping, in recognition of their efforts on behalf of the homestead. The men received two of the beakers, the women one.

An argument developed about where the beer drink should be held. Canca wanted to hold it outside, since there was only one hut, but other Komkhulu men overruled him, saying that it should take place inside. After some time the men entered the hut, which had now been made ready, and a further explanation was given by Ndlebezenja, Canca's older brother:

"Chiefs, we have arrived at the place that we were quarrelling about (the hut), there is no problem after all. There is the beer, the beer for harvest. That cask, my brother, you say it is for women? (Canca confirmed that it was). This full cask is the women's, this one is ours and this one is the women's. This one is exclusively for us (men); he says then chiefs, he is giving it out to you Follokhwe people. I stop there now."

Ndabanduna then spoke on behalf of Chibi and Ngingqi:

"Let me say, chiefs, son of Mangono (Ndlebezenja), it is a good thing for you to explain it here with your own mouth. You have announced it, as you are explaining it now. This man says I am complaining about him, even though I am he. Chibi and Ngingqi here are grateful for that speech. You are right, you are the brewer. (Referring to Ngingqi) People of Ngingqi, this is what it is about. This is the home of Sobashe (Nontwaba's paternal grandfather). All right, I am going to get started now. I do not want it to be said that the oxen were drinking just anything. No, I am drinking here at Sobashe's place. We are thankful for that now. Son of Sobashe, you have done something like this, because you promised those oxen in your company that you would brew for them. That is a fine thing; the whole of Folokhwe here says so. We too say 'Camagu!' to that speech of yours, and we are grateful. Chiefs, there is nothing else to be said unless it comes from Komkhulu, Chibi or Ngingqi. You have explained it and we can see it man, the women's (cask) and the men's, we see it. Could there be any other man who might answer like this?"

Sometimes the religious element at 'beer for harvest' is more explicit than in the above case. When Ziwela brewed for his garden, Toto spoke, and said that Ziwela had brewed "to praise the garden, so that tomorrow he will pluck a maize cob from this garden which is being praised. We say so too, we are praising. It is not us who are thankful, it is those who are not here!". Other speakers at this event were also explicit, referring to the fact that Ziwela had said that he had brewed "for the children who ploughed", but that he was in fact doing it for the Cirha ancestors, and that he was invoking (ukunqula) them (see McAllister 1981, 12).

Nomfuxuse held an isichenene in July 1982, using some of the maize that she harvested from her garden to brew in order to give thanks for the harvest. This is what was explained to the people who attended, but Nomfuxuse said to us privately afterwards that one "thinks for oneself" before brewing, and

that this beer had been brewed to 'invoke the ancestors' of the home (ukunqulela abantu abadala) so that the following harvest would be even better. This beer, she said, would make her children strong and build up the homestead, by ensuring a good crop next year. Another woman said that such a beer drink was held to praise (ukubonga) the garden and to call (ukubiza) maize for the following year.

As far as the relation between beer drinks and social practice is concerned, the important point about beer for harvest in Shixini is that it symbolises the actual networks of cooperation and mutual help on which the homestead depends for a successful harvest, gives recognition to the individuals involved, and provides beer for the community at large, which thus receives 'food' by virtue of the host homestead (especially when the homestead itself laboured and provided the oxen) and the other people who worked. It is important to note also that the status of abasarhi or iincanda does not apply at beer for harvest. Those who attend do so as people of the ilali, not as abasarhi. They have a right to be there, as at any other beer drink, and a right to beer.

The following case illustrates some of these points:

Nontoyakhe is an inkazana (a woman who has never married) who lives in Ngingqi section of Folokhwe with her two married sons, their wives and children, and two unmarried daughters. Her sons are usually away at work and her father, Toto, who lives nearby, plays an important role in the affairs of her homestead. In 1983 her garden was ploughed by a Komkhulu ploughing company led by Tandabantu (Cirha clan) a young man who had recently inherited the homestead and cattle of his father, Ndlebezenja, who had been the leader of this ploughing company. The oxen used were those of Tandabantu, Stokwana and Gulakulinywa. The beer for the company was brewed some weeks after the work

had been completed. Since neither Toto nor his daughter were members of this company, beer had to be brewed for it. As Mzilikazi put it, "it is 'soup' for the people who ploughed". The proceedings started only once Tandabantu arrived and seated himself at the back on the right hand side, the appropriate place for a young man who had recently started attending beer drinks. Toto stood and addressed him, saying that this was an isichenene and that the beer had been brewed for those who had ploughed. Preliminary and amasiko beakers were drawn and handed out. After the amasiko had been consumed, Molusweni (Kwayi clan, Ngingqi) stood to say that he had been instructed by Toto to draw a beaker for Tandabantu. The beaker was placed in front of Tandabantu, and circulated. Molusweni also said that the beer had been brewed for those who had ploughed the garden, and indicated the amount (a potfull) that was to be handed over to the workers. The beer was then formally handed over to Tandabantu.

Tandabantu gave a short reply and started circulating the beaker drawn on Toto's instruction. He then consulted Stokwana, Gulakulinywa and Molusweni (the Ngingqi injoli) about how to divide the beer. Stokwana and Qamela (Ndaba clan, the Komkhulu injoli) also joined in this discussion. As the usonkabi (the owners of the oxen) they had to decide how to allocate the beer to others. Those from Chibi section who were present had no say in the matter at all, and waited patiently for a decision to be made. Stokwana then announced that they were to go ahead with the distribution. The beakers were drawn and placed in front of the door, and Qamela announced how they were to be distributed. Later a separate beaker was drawn for abafana.

It should be noted also in accordance with our view of the processual significance of ritual symbols, that beer brewed in recognition of work done may reflect and confirm changes in the structure of inter-household co-operation. This is illustrated in the following case:

Ziwele (Cirha clan) brewed beer for 'the children who ploughed' because water had seeped into his grain pit and rendered the maize unfit for anything but beer. Ndlebezenja (a Cirha clansman of Ziwele's) was placed in charge of the event, as the head of the ploughing company that did the work in Ziwele's garden. Ziwele made this quite clear in his speeches, referring a number of times to his dependence on the goodwill of the amaCirha clan, and referring to Ndlebezenja as the 'prime minister' (inkulumbuso) of the beer drink. Ndlebezenja replied that the ploughing group was grateful for the honour (imbeko) of being given charge of the beer. In fact, there are more non-Cirha men in Ziwele's company than Cirha, and perhaps Ziwele was merely trying to stress the common clanship between himself and Ndlebezenja. In his initial address at the beer drink, Ziwele referred to the fact that he had previously ploughed with X his next door neighbour, of the Y clan. In very veiled terms he indicated that X had not reciprocated as expected, staying at work for long periods while Ziwele looked after his home and family. It had seemed to the other members of Y clan that X had absconded, and they gave up hope, but Ziwele continued to act as a good neighbour. Eventually, he said, he had decided to turn to the amaCirha for help. Now, as he put it, "I do not lack Cirha clansmen" (Ndingadingi maCirha mna).

Co-operative work groups are a clear manifestation of the economic interdependence of Shixini homesteads. They occur throughout the year, in summer mainly in conjunction with agricultural activity, in winter with tasks like hut-building, fencing, and so on. In Shixini, there is an expectation of reciprocity (as the above cases indicate),<sup>6</sup> unlike among the Mpondo of Mthwa where, according to Kuckertz (1984, 226) "workers provide help without any expectation of reciprocity" and the homestead for which they worked "has not committed itself formally to reciprocate an obligation." Mthwa people hold no general assumption of co-operativeness (ibid., 250) and work parties are merely 'task related action sets' which have very limited integrative

significance for the society as a whole but are rather "an essential aspect of the individualistic existence of the various homesteads" (ibid., 227).

Kuckertz emphasises the "economic homestead individualism", 'exceptional' among Cape Nguni, that characterises Mthwa society (ibid., 249). However, this claim, together with the finding that homesteads lack a common economic interest, seems rather strange in view of the fact that agricultural activity is dependent on the co-operation of people in work parties, that most homesteads have to borrow oxen from others in order to plough and reap, and that there are some small relatively enduring groups of up to six homesteads each who give each other reciprocal labour assistance (ibid., 228). Kuckertz states that co-operation is generated by economic necessity rather than by "any philosophy of co-operativeness and togetherness based on kinship or other forms of social arrangement" (ibid., 199) and that people would prefer, in fact, not to use work parties.

I would argue that in Shixini it is partly economic necessity that generates a philosophy of co-operativeness. The two are not mutually exclusive, but there would be no reason to co-operate if all homesteads were economically independent.

In Mthwa, work parties come together by personal invitation, people agreeing to help on the basis of friendship and because they are asked to help. A basic principle of life is that "a person who is in need and asks for assistance should be helped" (ibid., 225). Unless he asks for help (ukucela uncedo) he cannot expect assistance, but whatever is 'rightfully' asked for ought to be granted. Obviously people cannot provide help unless they are informed that it is required, but the obligation to provide it seems to imply a communal ethic of mutual assistance. In Mthwa, as in Shixini, people who are not specifically invited attend work parties that they hear about indirectly.

### Young men at beer drinks

One of the seemingly perennial sources of tension and conflict in Shixini, and one of the social 'contradictions' that Shixini people have to deal with, is the relationship between young men (abafana) and their seniors (their fathers and men of their fathers' generation). By 'seniors', a term used interchangeably with 'elders' in this chapter, I mean men in the age group 45-65 years. It is men of this group who are the effective leaders in the community and not the old men (amaxhego), who seldom get involved in debates, though they are sometimes called on to make ex cathedra statements about ritual or custom.

In ideal, normative terms, this relationship can be summarised as follows: Young men respect and obey their elders, work for them when required to do so, and while living in their parents' umzi, hand over the bulk of their migrant labour earnings to their fathers. They are dependent on their fathers for various things - a home to live in, a wife, a site on which to build an independent homestead, and ancestral favour. Ideally, the son's choice of wife is approved by his father, who conducts the bridewealth negotiations and contributes at least a major portion of the ikhazi (bridewealth cattle).

In practice, of course, the situation is rather different, and it is often a case of fathers being dependent on their sons. It is the latter who go out to work as migrants and remit or bring back the money essential to the survival of the father's umzi and its inhabitants. When at home, the young men of the homestead are its most important labour resource, doing the bulk of the heavy work, though this is largely confined to the agricultural season. Fathers are careful, therefore, not to antagonise their sons. When a son marries and establishes his own homestead, or if he decides to remain in town for good and become, from the point of view of those at home, an absconder (itshipha), the viability of the father's homestead is threatened. By the time they reach about 45 - 50 years of age, most men stop migrating. If they have not by this stage built up sufficient rural resources in the form of arable land and livestock

(something only relatively few are able to do), they rely on the migrant earnings of their sons, at least until they qualify for an old age pension (see Spiegel 1980).

This contradiction between theory and practice is dramatized at beer drinks in a number of ways, which are by no means mutually consistent with each other.

Firstly, the tension between the generations is expressed in the question of admittance to beer drinks. Ideally, young men start to attend beer drinks when permitted to do so by their seniors. Informants say that in the past, the senior men of a section would go to the young men's dance (intlombe yabafana) and announce there that certain of the more senior young men of their section were being admitted to beer drinks. This was at the same time admission to full manhood (ubudoda) and the young men in question now held the status of indoda (senior man). This practice no longer occurs, but men still maintain that abafana must be formally given permission to start attending beer drinks, in an attempt to retain at least symbolic control over their sons. Since there are no structures and no institutionalized process to facilitate this, problems arise. Young men start attending beer drinks without the formal consent of their seniors. The older men have little option but to tolerate this, but every now and then it becomes a point of contention and heated discussion at a beer drink.

Secondly, and in a similar vein, the tension between seniors and juniors is sometimes expressed in the way in which the beer is distributed at beer drinks, the young being dissatisfied with the meagre amount of beer formally allocated to them, the seniors jealously guarding their right to the major portion of the beer. The following case is reproduced in some detail, because it illustrates these tensions and their manner of expression, as well as a number of some more general themes.

At Honono's ntwana nje beer drink (held in September 1978), Ncedile, a young man of the host section (Chibi), stood to

ask if he was entitled to a 'dish' (isitya - i.e. a formal allocation of beer). Speaking on behalf of the young men as a group, he said he wanted to know "if I have a dish or not - I am but an ikhaba (youth)". Modi (Chibi section) replied, saying that the young men did indeed have a dish, since the beer was being given out by ukugabu, and the abafana would be included in one of the groups to which beakers were to be allocated according to numbers. The beer was being 'cut', he said (busikwa), and the beer for abafana would be 'cut' from the men's pot. Modi was supported by the sibonda (Ncedile's FB) who said that beer which was cut had no spaces (amabala) with names (i.e. was not given out according to territorial groups). The young men constituted the equivalent of such a group, an inkabi (see Ch 3), which received its own beaker only when there was a full cask (ingcwele). Canca (Komkhulu section) suggested that a mistake had been made in explaining the beer, and that they should have said that there would be no beaker for abafana. He suggested that they should perhaps express their regret to the abafana for this omission.

A number of other speakers also joined in this discussion, which went on for a long time. Gavan (Chibi) suggested that the abafana should have been given a large beaker of their own, as umlawulo. Others disagreed with him, saying that when there was only a pot of beer, abafana received no umlawulo. They were simply part of the group (isipani) as a whole, and were 'cut' with the others. It did not have to be explained that they would not get a separate beaker and that they were being put with the other men, for the purpose of allocation by numbers. Sonkebese (Komkhulu) said that they were "troubling each other by means of eloquence (ngobuchule)", since it was really a small matter. Distribution by ukugabu included all men, seniors and abafana. A beaker specially for abafana was given out only when an ingcwele (full cask) was given out by areas (ukulawula). Gamalakhe (Chibi) agreed that it was according

to 'human custom' (isintu) that abafana were not lawula-ed when there was only one pot. Finally, Modi said that the person handing out the beer ought to have announced that abafana and seniors were being put together, and that abafana did not have their own space (ibala).

The discussion then turned to whether the abafana should be asked for forgiveness for this omission, and whether the injoli should have done as Modi suggested. Some said that the injoli should have said something by way of explanation-"what is important is the word". Since young men were a group ('umfana yinkabi') they were entitled to an explanation. The sibonda pointed out that it was wrong 'not to satisfy an inkabi with its dish' (akulunganga umntu eny' inkabi angayikolisi ngesitya sayo). The umfana group was not complaining because it was being 'cut', he said, it was complaining about its status as inkabi (ubunkabi). Bodli (and others) disagreed, saying that he had "never heard a whistle (i.e. an explanation) for a pot-full" (ungxawu zange ndiv' ikhwelo tu! Naphakade!). Why then should they be discussing this matter today, he asked. Another commented that "something that is out of the ordinary must be scrutinized, so that it becomes known".

Eventually, Modi addressed Ncedile and asked for pardon for not making it clear that abafana would 'eat' with their seniors. Sensing that he had gained some sort of victory for the abafana, Ncedile then wanted to know just how much beer abafana were entitled to. Modi pointed out, rather irritably, that if the total amount of beer was a full cask, the abafana received an iqhwina (large beaker); if it was a very large cask-full (an igxiba) the abafana got an ihobo (a very large beaker used at imigidi), and so on. Gamalakhe reiterated that if it was only a pot-full, abafana did not get a separate allocation, but 'eats with the others' (utya kowabo). If there were two beakers lawula-ed to a group, he continued, one started with the seniors next to

the door and ended with seniors while the other started with seniors and ended with abafana.

Finally, the conversation turned to the question of the entry of abafana to beer drinks, and how they should go about this in the future. The sibonda pointed out that recently a young man had been introduced (fakwa) into beer drinks by an individual member of the section involved, unbeknown to the other members of the section. This was not the right way to do things, he said. The entry of abafana into beer drinks should be sanctioned by the section as a whole.

Together with a number of other incidents involving arguments over the status of abafana at beer drinks, the monopolising of the beer by elders and seniors, and the procedure for admitting abafana to beer drinks, this case illustrates that the everyday tensions between abafana and seniors are carried over to beer drinks, where they take a form determined by the structure of beer drinking. In other words, what is being dramatized is the ideal-typical nature of the relationship between juniors and seniors, and the 'rights' of juniors, such as those being championed by Ncedile, above, are rights granted on the elders' terms. The formalisation of beer drinking procedure means that if the juniors are to take part, they must do so on the elder's terms (Bloch 1975). If one looks at the overall structure of beer drinks, the phases through which they proceed, and the allocation of beer and space, the primary message that comes across, as far as the senior/junior relationship is concerned, is one of dependence of the juniors on seniors.

As detailed earlier (Ch. 3) young men are given the most inferior seating place and get hardly any beer (in the formal allocations), though this is not the case at work-party beer drinks. They are expected to assist the injoli and the homestead head in the work of filling, carrying and fetching beakers, and in doing other tasks such as going in search of additional beakers if need be, and so on. Bigalke (1969, 43) witnessed young men expelled from beer drinks or

denied beer for complaining about these duties. It is usually a young man who is called from the back to ngcamla (take the first sip from a beaker) for the elders. Traditionally, ukungcamla was to ensure that a chief or high status person about to eat or drink was not about to be poisoned, so the message is clear - juniors are dispensable. It is usually a young man who provides the refrain (ukuvumisa) when the elders make formal speeches at beer drinks. Ukuvumisa means 'to express consent', implying here that the young are in agreement with what the elders say. Generally, young men are not allowed to speak at beer drinks unless called upon to do so. They are certainly not free to express opinions that would be contrary to their seniors unless invited to take part in a discussion.

The practice of giving much beer to seniors and little to juniors means that the abafana are frequently called over for a sip from the beakers allocated to the seniors, symbolising the dependence of the former on the latter, and the high status of 'fathers' as opposed to 'sons'. There are even rules about the way in which a junior should approach an elder. When called over for a sip a young man should not approach too close to the person calling him, but he should not stop so far away that the elder has difficulty in passing the beaker to him. I have seen juniors being coached on exactly where to stop to receive the beaker. At the ntwana nje discussed in the above case a young man entering the hut after spending some time outside started to make his way from the entrance directly to his malume (mother's brother) sitting against the wall, near the middle of the hut, in order to greet him. To do so he had to step through other elders sitting near the door, and this was considered to be a breach of etiquette. His malume stopped him, and told him to go from the door straight to the back of the hut, from where he could approach in an approved manner.

The recognition of abafana as a distinct group may be seen as a recognition of their distinctive status, but this status is a low one. They are given a specific beaker of beer as a group provided that a certain amount of beer is available. However, this serves to illustrate their juniority, since it is much less than that allocated

to the men. Similarly, the fact that there is one beaker (of ivanya) that starts with juniors rather than elders (p. 178) emphasizes the fact that most beakers start with elders. Certainly, care is taken to ensure that abafana do get something to drink, and that their rights are recognized. On one occasion when there were complaints about elders monopolising the beakers, thereby depriving abafana of beer, seniors took the beaker away from the old men and passed it around among the abafana. The formal aspects of beer drinks, then, seem to emphasize the juniority of young men and to impose on them a structure which institutionalises their junior status.

As illustrated in the previous section, this is to some extent redressed in the case of beer for work parties involving abafana. However, it is also possible to argue that in the arguments and discussions about beer and seating, between young men and their seniors, the conflicts and tensions of everyday life are being expressed and acted out in symbolic form, and sometimes resolved. Both the seniors and juniors were satisfied with the outcome of the discussion described in the above case. Conflict between old and young is one of the realities of everyday social practice, and beer drinks, it seems, dramatise this, allow these tensions to be brought out into the open, argued about, and resolved, by portraying them in terms of the idiom of beer and beer drinking.

However, the resolution is on terms laid down by the elders, and (for the time being) accepted by juniors. The gap between the practical, everyday role of juniors and the portrayal of this in beer drinks, remains. The same applies, as indicated in Chapter 3, to the relationship between men and women. Some of the older men, recognising this gap between drama and practice, go out of their way to ensure that their sons get plenty to drink, and this may lead to dissatisfaction among other seniors, who feel that they are being deprived of beer in favour of the young.

Returning from a beer drink one day, Vile and Dlathu were conversing about this problem. According to them, each of the older men next to the door would call his son for a sip, and sometimes the son, on

receiving the beaker, would call his mother from outside. The mother might beleka (p. 167) another woman, not realising that she herself was being beleka-ed, and soon there would be little beer left. The older men did not call other senior men for sips, nor did they call women from outside. Women and seniors, then, "remain hungry". I asked Dlathu why this sort of thing happened. He replied (with heavy sarcasm): "It is kindness. They do not dislike these other men, they are overcome with kindness towards their children. You even hear them asking - 'Oh! When will the beaker reach my child?'" Vile commented: "The children get drunk, the men stay hungry. It is like that all over the place."

Dlathu and Vile went on to say that sometimes the 'children' became noisy and uncontrollable. Then the elders became worried and asked the senior men to drive the abafana away from the beer drink. "How can hungry people drive them out?", asked Vile. There had been an incident recently, they said, when some young men bought a lot of beer at an imbarha, consumed it at a neighbouring homestead, and returned to demand more. They were abusive and threatened the seniors with knives. A meeting was called the next day and it was resolved that abafana should not go to beer drinks without having been promoted to that status. "That is what manhood is - a man must be promoted and told 'you, son of so and so, you have been promoted from the ranks of abafana'".

### Umsindleko

To conclude this chapter, I would like to suggest that such discrepancies between the nature of the dramatic performance and the real world cannot be sustained in the medium to long term. To this end, the case of the umsindleko beer drink and its historical evolution is considered.<sup>7</sup>

Among the Cape Nguni in general, from at least the 1930s onwards, the return of a migrant worker to his home and community has been marked by a ritual killing. Among the Pondo this was called ukubulela ("to give thanks") (Hunter 1936, 251). Among the Bhaca a beast was

slaughtered as umbuliso ("a special thanksgiving") when a young man returned from his first spell at work (Hammond-Tooke 1962, 240). Return from subsequent work spells was marked by the killing of a goat. In Keiskammahoek this ritual was known as ukubulela abadala ("to give thanks to the ancestors") (Wilson et al. 1952, 197). Similar killings among these groups, called by similar names, were associated with escape from danger and with safe return from war or a journey.

In Willowvale too, the return of a migrant worker was marked by a killing, referred to simply as umhlinzeko (from ukuhlinza, "to slaughter"). People say that this killing was held "because when you return home there should be the smell of meat, it should be clear to all that you have returned". In the past, this custom was regarded as an invocation to the shades and as a thanksgiving for safe return and success at work, although there is considerable variation among informants regarding the procedure involved. Some say that the killing took place inside the cattle byre, that the "spear of the home" was used, that it was necessary for the goat or ox to cry out, and that the returned migrant ritually tasted a special portion of the meat. These features indicate a ritual killing in the full sense of the word, but it is clear from the statements of informants that it was a small, domestic affair. Agnates and other close kin who lived nearby would attend, as would close neighbours, but it was not a public, community occasion. In this sense it was similar to lesser rituals which are still performed today such as ukubingelela (for a newborn child and its mother).

Others say that it did not matter what kind of animal was killed, that the animal was killed outside the cattle byre simply by having its throat cut and that there was no ritual tasting. It is possible that variations in the ritual were associated with different households or clans, but it is also possible that informants were referring to different time-periods. To the extent that umhlinzeko still occurs it is not of a religious character at all. A man simply kills a sheep, goat or pig for himself or for his son, usually next to the cattle byre, without any ceremony and without calling kinsmen to be present.

The meat is consumed largely by the family concerned, though portions may be sent to neighbours and nearby kin. In accounting for the change from the killing to the beer drink it is also necessary to try to account for why the killing, when it still occurs, has lost its religious character.

Nowadays, very few umhlinzeko killings occur, and the custom has to a large extent been replaced with a beer drink called umsindleko. The two terms - umsindleko and umhlinzeko - are used interchangeably to refer to either a beer drink or a killing, a practice facilitated by what is possibly the original meaning of umsindleko "food which a woman prepares and keeps for her absent or travelling husband" in anticipation of his return (Kropf 1915, 391). Before tackling the question of why the killing was replaced by a beer drink it is necessary to provide an outline of the latter.

Umsindleko is one of a series of ritual and symbolic activities associated with migrant labour, which have been described elsewhere (McAllister 1979, 1980). It is a relatively large affair in contrast to its predecessor, and may be attended by up to 200 people, who come from neighbouring wards as well as the local sub-wards. It is held to mark the return of a migrant worker, not every time he comes home, but after every four or five (or more) spells at work. It involves, firstly, a public recognition of the migrant's efforts on behalf of his homestead. He is formally praised for his success at work and urged by the men of the community to continue in this vein. Secondly, umsindleko is seen by the participants as a thanksgiving to the ancestors of the returnee for having protected him, making his stay at work successful and ensuring his safe return. It is due to the shades that the migrant suffered no misfortune, and umsindleko is thought to ensure their continued blessings and protection, so that future trips to work will be successful.

In this respect umsindleko is similar to other beer drinks. What is important to note here is that it is through the attendance of people at the beer drink, and especially through the words spoken by them in the formal speeches that are made (by kin and non-kin alike), that the

attention of the shades is drawn to the homestead and their presence and blessings secured (McAllister 1981). In the umhlinzeko killing, it was through the invocation to the shades by the migrant's father or senior lineage member that communication with the shades occurred.

The third aspect of umsindleko to which I want to draw attention concerns the speeches made and the relationship between speakers and migrant. The speakers address the migrant on behalf of the community, and their speeches are an attempt to ensure that the migrant interprets his spell at work 'correctly' - i.e. in the terms laid down by the speakers. The speakers stress the importance of working for the rural home and the importance of returning home (return in itself being seen as a moral good). They say that the money earned at work should be spent on things that 'build' the home and not wasted on prostitutes, fine clothes and radios. They emphasize rural values and the importance of being part of a community while decrying urban values and individualistic behaviour. In the case of young men particularly, the speakers refer to the social dependence of the migrant on his seniors, as if to counter the economic independence that migratory earnings give to the young. The speeches are made mainly by elders and senior men, who in effect provide an ideological framework within which to interpret the migratory experience, by publicly proclaiming the norms and values of the community regarding the expected behaviour of the labour migrant and by placing this within a broader perspective - that of the relationship between labour migration and rural social life. So the speeches represent the authority of the elders, the community and the ancestors, and constitute an attempt at social control. Umsindleko 'says' that the migrant's efforts at work have meaning and legitimacy only in so far as it benefits his rural home and community and that he depends on the community for success at work and for successful building of his rural homestead.

Although the umsindleko beer drink is spoken of as an old, well established custom, it is of fairly recent origin. My attention was drawn to this after recording a speech by Dwetya, a man of about 75 years, at one of the umsindleko beer drinks that I attended. In this

speech Dwetya referred to the fact that in the past a returned migrant was welcomed with a killing, but that this had changed because people said that the returnee had brought a 'snake' with him from work (McAllister 1985, 124-5). In effect, what happened was that people stopped slaughtering for a returned migrant because they believed that migrants were able to purchase the witch familiar umamlambo at work, for the purpose of killing their father and inheriting the latter's position and property. The umamlambo snake, it was claimed, lived on blood and demanded frequent killings. It took on various appearances - a herbal medicine, a beautiful girl (with which the 'owner' had sexual relations) and so on. It controlled its owner, who was able to resist its demands for blood only at the risk of insanity.<sup>8</sup>

Since a father could not know if his son had indeed 'bought a snake' or not, he refrained from doing umhlinzeko for him, and returned migrants, anxious to avoid suspicion, stopped asking for this killing to be performed. Older men, too, are said to be able to become witches in this way, and to have stopped slaughtering for themselves on their return home, but this belief is usually associated with young, unmarried men.

So much for the widely held folk explanation of the change from umhlinzeko to umsindleko. What are we to make of it? Clearly, any sociological 'explanation' of the change from the killing to the beer drink must include reference to all or most of the dramatic features of both these rituals. This leads away from simple but plausible explanations such as a decrease in stock holdings coupled with increased maize yields during the period when large-scale labour migrancy was becoming institutionalized. Such an explanation indicates that the ritual change may have been economically induced, and that we might expect some 'spiritual' rationalization for the change, although a beer drink is regarded as just as effective a means of communicating with the shades as a killing. However, it does not tell us why the change was conceived of in terms of witch beliefs, why a small, fairly private ritual was replaced by a large, public one, or why the participants in the latter address formal speeches which often have the characteristics of admonitions to the returned migrant, a

feature, according to informants, that did not occur in conjunction with the killing. These are crucial questions, and need to be answered in accounting for the ritual change.

No doubt the change was conceptualized in terms of witch beliefs because such beliefs constitute attempts to cope with ambivalence and strain in social life, and which enable people to place conflicts that they could not otherwise express within a recognized idiom. In this sense witch beliefs both reflect social structure and are attempts to explain social reality and social change (Mayer 1954; Hammond-Tooke 1970, 1974). In the case of umhlinzeko/umsindleko, it seems that the belief in umamlambo was used to justify and make intellectual sense of the switch from a killing to a beer drink, and that the switch occurred as a result of certain ambiguities and strains in social life resulting from the changing conditions that people found themselves in. I am suggesting that umhlinzeko became inappropriate as a vehicle for reincorporating returned migrants and for making statements about the relationship between migrant labour and rural society. Umsindleko took its place because, as a beer drink, it was more appropriate for these purposes.

What were these "changing conditions"? They involved, firstly, changes in homestead (umzi) size and composition, which were linked in turn to changes in social practice, especially in the social organization of production and features associated with this, of which labour migration was but one.

Since 1900 or before, the size and composition of Cape Nguni homesteads have changed fairly radically. Formerly, homesteads were larger (10 to 40 huts each) and consisted of an extended family - man and wives, unmarried sons and daughters, married sons and their wives and children, and often other kin (Wilson 1969, 111). Each homestead had enough stock and had access to enough land and labour to make it a relatively self-sufficient productive unit and to enable it to reproduce itself. The available resources were under the control of the paterfamilias, and his sons were dependent on him for their subsistence and for wives, since he controlled the cattle holdings.

Sons remained at the father's homestead until he died or until they were already senior men. Hunter says that "old (Pondo) men lament the days when 'grey-headed men lived in the umzi of their father, obeying him in all things, as if they were children'" (1936, 25). While obviously an idealization of the past there is little doubt that Pondo homesteads had declined in size by the 1930s (ibid., 15; Beinart 1982: 94 ff.), and this trend occurred amongst all Xhosa-speakers (see Hammond-Tooke 1962, 35-36; Wilson et al. 1952, 52-59; Wilson 1981).

Due to a number of related factors, homesteads became smaller and closer together than they were in the past (Wilson 1971, 63). Land shortage and increased population pressure as a result of the appropriation of Xhosa land contributed to this trend. Since a man with his own homestead would have had a greater claim to a field than one living in his father's home (see Ch 2), it was to the advantage of the family for sons to establish independent homesteads soon after marriage. It is possible that homesteads also became smaller because there was no longer any need to concentrate for defensive purposes - a function fulfilled by the traditionally large umzi (Hunter 1936, 59). This was a result of the decline of chiefly power (chiefs organized raids and warfare) and of the incorporation of formerly independent chiefdoms into the colonial system, with its magistrates and police force. Hammond-Tooke (1962, 38-39; 1975, 83) suggests that the reduction in chiefly power and the introduction of the concept of individual property along with increased independence as a result of migratory labour opportunities, allowed for greater individualism. He also quotes Canon Mullins to indicate that the change in homestead size and distribution was already marked as early as 1883 (1975, 82-83) but the process continued until at least the 1960s, as the figures for homestead composition from various parts of the Transkei over the period 1934-63 indicate (ibid., 111).

The institution of labour migration provided sons with an alternative source of cattle (through wages) and as they became less economically dependent on their fathers, allowed them to establish independent homesteads earlier in life, which had certain advantages for them and their wives. In this respect it is of significance that the umamlambo

belief has also affected the ritual of ukwazisa umzi ('to make known the homestead') performed after the establishment of a new homestead. In the past this was a small ritual at which a goat was slaughtered, attended by agnates and close neighbours. Nowadays men say that in slaughtering for one's homestead it might be believed that one is slaughtering for a 'snake', obtained for the purpose of getting rich, and a beer drink appears to be slowly replacing the killing previously made for this purpose (see Ch 6).

It is also possible, however, that the tendency for young people to move into their own homesteads earlier than before is exaggerated by a change in the age of marriage. Wilson et al. (1952, 89) state that the age of marriage for males had increased from 24 years in the pre-1890s to 30 years in the period 1940-50. Obviously, the older the son is when he marries, the less time he will spend in his father's homestead as a married man. Homesteads also became smaller due to a decline in polygyny, which was probably related to land shortage and increased population, and also to factors like a decline in cattle holdings, education, and migrant labour.

Coinciding with the above factors was a change in the organization of rural production. The smaller homestead became associated with only one field, in which it grew maize rather than sorghum (previously both these crops were raised). Beinart (1982, 99-100) argues that this suited the smaller homestead. Maize plants, unlike sorghum, allow for the cultivation of subsidiary crops at the same time, and maize cultivation is less labour intensive. Cultivation "was oriented towards intensive inputs of labour at widely spaced intervals" (ibid., 100). Except for weeding and harvesting, day-to-day labour in the fields was not required. The success of the system depended on the availability of ploughs and oxen, which in turn were purchased with migrant earnings.

The switch to maize resulted in a period of greater output (ibid., Hunter 1936, 357) but this was soon neutralized by rapidly increasing population and other factors. What is important as far as the present argument is concerned is that the success of the new system depended

on these occasional "intensive inputs of labour", and on migrant labour, as this became progressively more important, though it aggravated the rural labour shortage. Individual homesteads pooled their resources in order to perform the required tasks and work parties and co-operative ploughing groups, as described above, became very important. Both the general decline in umzi size and the reduction in cattle holdings meant that each individual umzi depended on the labour power and oxen of others.

The increasing importance of labour migration had two important implications. Firstly, the cash earned at work was important to the agriculture of the home area, because it allowed people to buy ploughs, fertilizer, and other inputs. Purchase of oxen provided the homestead with bargaining power in its co-operative relationships with other homesteads and also contributed to the welfare of the community as a whole. Secondly, as homestead heads became increasingly involved as migrants, dependence on neighbours grew. The head's absence meant that someone had to be delegated to act in his place (if he had no grown sons), to make decisions on his behalf and look after the affairs of the homestead. This task usually fell to a neighbouring agnate, but any good neighbour would do, (see McAllister 1979, 44-46).

The general dependence on occasional intensive co-operative inputs and the importance of labour migration in both contributing to rural agriculture and increasing dependence on neighbours may explain the emphasis in Shixini on good neighbourliness, the increasing importance of this principle in social organization, and the specific ritual change from umhlinzeko to umsindleko. It can be seen that the above process involved a paradox. The growth of individualism and increased economic independence, accompanied by increased labour migration and the change in rural production, led to a greater dependence on other homesteads and neighbours, on the community as a whole.

Whether neighbours were/are in fact kin or not is immaterial, for the change that took place was both structural and ideological. The ideology associated with a closely knit economically independent extended family based in one homestead gave way to one of greater

individualism, of smaller autonomous homesteads which were dependent on one another. Adjoining homesteads, now closer together than when homesteads were larger, provided the basis of socio-economic interaction. Those congregated within a particular geographical area became important as such, as neighbours, as independent homesteads which were involved with each other in the productive process, rather than as kinsmen. It was evident among the Pondo that "the more imizi (homesteads) subdivide the more kinship bonds tend to be replaced by ties binding neighbours" (Hunter 1936, 60; see also Meillassoux 1972, 1973). This is why Shixini people say that ploughing, for example, has nothing to do with kinship, although in practice ploughing companies are composed largely of agnatic kin. Neighbourliness did not arise as a new social principle, but it became more important as the kinship system weakened with the decline in umzi size and other related factors.

It is suggested then that the ritual change from umhlinzeko to umsindleko coincided with, reflected and provided normative or ideological support for the process outlined above. The nature of the drama changed, in accordance with changes in practice. From a ritual which correlated return from work with the unity and independence of the agnatic cluster or extended family, emerged one where the importance of the local group and of the community as a whole is recognized. This is a rather different finding from that of Kuckertz (1984, 211) who states that in Mthwa migrant labour serves to confirm the particularistic nature of the homestead economy. In Shixini migrant labour confirms the interdependence of homesteads and the social nature of the homestead economy.

To return to the theme of this section, we must consider the decline of the umhlinzeko killing also in terms of the father/son relationship, which was subjected to strain and underwent certain changes with the son's increased independence and access to wage-earnings.

Previously, a man obtained lobolo cattle from his father and/or senior kin such as father's brothers and mother's brother, and the

relationship between elder and junior was closely tied to this. It was also possible to obtain lobolo through raids and ukubusa (labour service for chiefs or wealthy men) (Wilson 1981). The growth of a money economy first replaced raiding and ukubusa as a means of obtaining cattle, and later it replaced the other two (primary) sources of lobolo - father and senior kin (ibid., 140-41). This process probably occurred much earlier among the Xhosa proper, whose cattle holdings never fully recovered from the cattle killing in 1857 and among whom labour migration became institutionalized at an early stage, than it did elsewhere in the Eastern Cape and Transkei. In Pondoland in 1931-32 only 17 per cent of men in 115 marriages examined by Hunter had provided all their own marriage cattle, but this was at a time when "almost every homestead owned cattle and was largely self-supporting in food" (loc. cit.). Later, in Pondoland as elsewhere, sons became relatively independent of their seniors as far as finding lobolo was concerned.

To be sure, the son's growing independence was tempered by the fact that cattle bought by him were regarded as belonging to the father (as is still the case in parts of Willowvale today), and he still depended on his father and senior agnates in the marriage process and in ritual. But his bargaining power was improved. From a position of total dependence on the father, the son became someone upon whom the father depended for the cash inputs needed to enable his homestead to survive. This weakened the father's authority and the political and economic power of seniors in general. Access to wealth that could be had without their agency was a threat which, it is suggested, was manifested in the belief that sons could become witches at work. Sons could buy a snake with their earnings as labour migrants. The belief that umamlambo sometimes takes the form of a beautiful girl with whom the son has sexual relations also makes sense, in view of the threat to the seniors' role as provider of bridewealth.

It is suggested that the umhlinzeko killing was stopped partly as a result of the change in the father/son relationship, that its cessation was symbolic of an attempt by fathers as a group to retain control over their sons, and to guard against the possibility of

suspected witchcraft. But the father's homestead remained dependent on the son's earnings in order to retain its place in the organization of production. The umhlinzeko killing emphasized the bond between father and son and the son's status within the local agnatic group. Father slaughtered for son, emphasizing the son's dependence on the father and on agnates. By brewing umsindleko beer, on the other hand, the father avoids the possibility of 'feeding' the 'snake' but still acknowledges the son's role in contributing to the homestead and, through this, to the community.

Brewing beer for the community as a whole indicates that the father is still the head of the homestead, and that his homestead, through the efforts of the son, is being 'built up' and is a good one to cooperate with. The power of the son is thereby channelled and made relevant to a wider principle, that of neighbourhood, rather than that of the jural relationship between father and son. Umhlinzeko involved the direct father/son relationship, umsindleko the relationship between homestead head and other homesteads, through the son's efforts. The son as independent wage-earner was essentially ambiguous and disorderly - a threat to structure. By relating his role as migrant more strongly to the emerging principle of community or neighbourhood (in umsindleko) a clearer definition of the son's role in structure developed, and his potential disorderliness controlled (Douglas 1966). The ambiguous social position of juniors and their threat to seniors was reflected in the belief that they had access to a form of mystical power that rivalled the power of the shades available to elders. Resolution of the ambiguity, of the conflict between senior and junior, and of the threat of the uncontrolled power of witchcraft was achieved through substituting beer for the killing of a beast or goat, the authority of the elders of the neighbourhood for that of the individual father.

As Douglas argues, ritual harnesses disorder and turns it into a force for good, but this could not be achieved by the killing. The very blood being offered to the shades in the umhlinzeko killing was serving to feed the snake, which symbolized the potential disorderliness of the migrant. Blood itself thus became an ambiguous

symbol, standing for both the umamlambo snake and the disorderly forces of witchcraft, and for the orderliness of society, represented by the shades and their earthly representatives, the elders of the kin group. Substitution of beer for blood solved this problem. This is also the likely reason why, when killings for returned migrants do occur today, which is seldom, they do not involve an invocation to the shades. They are not religious. Symbols lose and gain meaning over time (Turner 1982a, 21-23); ritual must be seen as part of a process of adaptation.

To put it more simply, the umhlinzeko killing, with its emphasis on agnation, became inappropriate in the context of migrant labour and the co-operation of neighbours, and it stated a principle that was being challenged and contradicted by the very subject of the ritual. The switch to umsindleko accommodated both these contradictions. It re-aligned the father/son relationship in terms of the nature of the relationship between homesteads, and it related migrant labour to the changed organization of production.

The role of migrant labour in fostering conflict between elder and junior has been widely documented. Hunter quotes a Mpondo informant as saying "Formerly an umzi was under the thumb of the father, now it is under the thumb of the son..." (1936, 60). Harries has shown how in late nineteenth-century Mozambique, migrant labour offered juniors "new strategies for throwing off the dominance of the chiefs and numzane (powerful homestead heads)" (1982, 150). Here, elders made vigorous attempts to retain their control over bridewealth and to maintain their position of dominance over juniors, but they were ultimately unsuccessful. Juniors lost respect for their seniors, refused to perform labour tasks for them, and opposed them politically (op. cit., 154-55).

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Ten years later, however, imbarha had disappeared completely from Tshabo (Bigalke 1982).
2. Stokwana was not referring to a specific ancestor by using the term 'old man of the home' (ixhego lasekhaya) but personifying the ancestral group.
3. Whether the lessons learnt prevented similar conflicts the next time inkazathi was brewed, I do not know. In the one other case of inkazathi that came to my attention in the field, some members of Chibi section (which had held the event) were accused of giving inferior quality maize as their contribution, as a result of which they were fined by the section's ibandla ('court').
4. I was unable to discover the significance of this term.
5. Ilima is also the term used by people in Mthwa, where the only other kind of work party is isitshongo, a large, publicly announced and rarely held event (Kuckertz 1984, 220).
6. Many people deny, when asked, that there is any obligation to reciprocate, saying that help should be given freely, and not in expectation of any return. From the evidence presented here, however, this is an ideal which may or may not be practiced.
7. The remainder of this chapter is a summary of McAllister (1985).
8. For further details on umamlambo and other Cape Nguni witch familiars see Hammond-Tooke (1970, 1975) and McAllister (1985).

## CHAPTER SIX

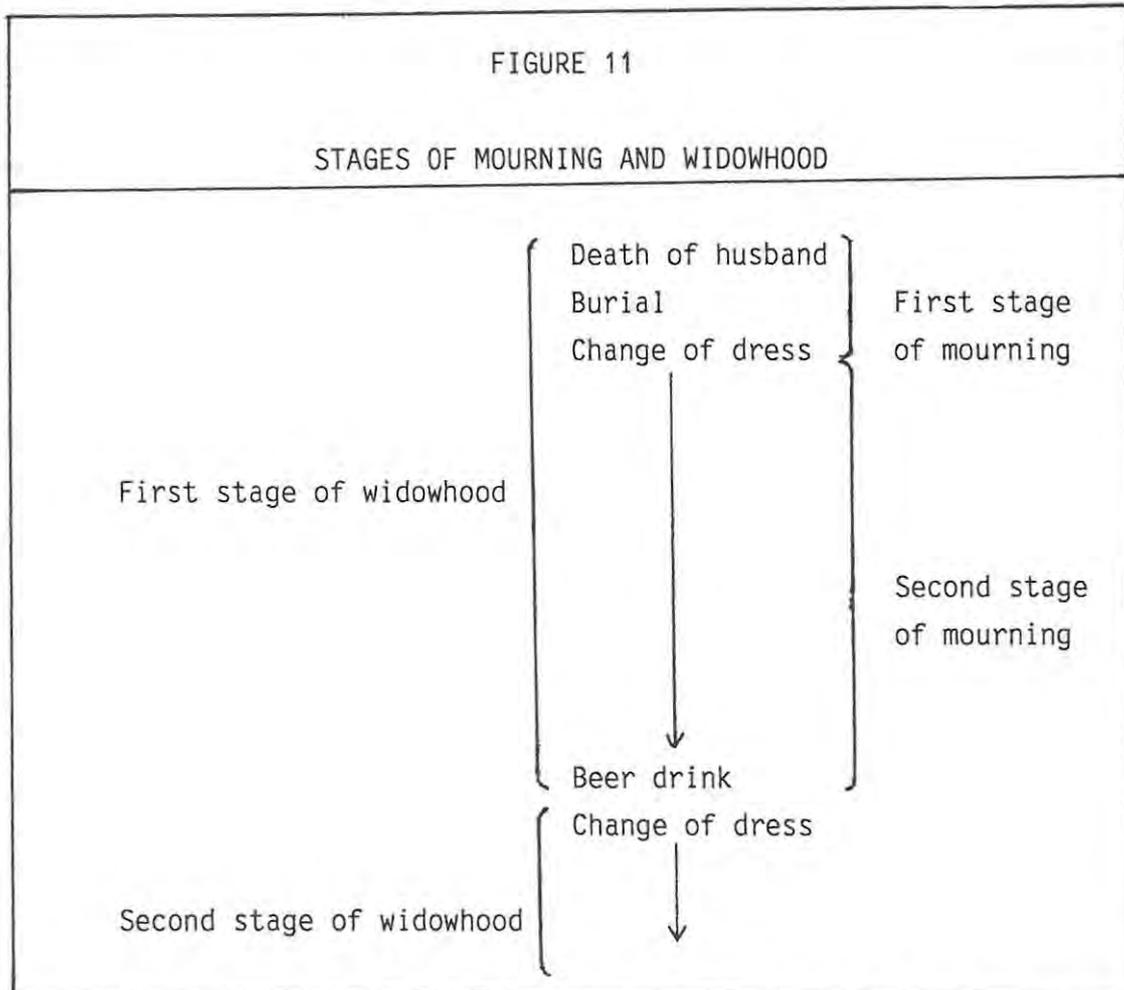
## BEER DRINKS AND STATUS CHANGE

A number of the beer drinks recorded in Willowvale were held in association with status change or situations of transition, such as the return of a migrant worker, the establishment of a new homestead, the promotion of a woman to senior status, and the end of the mourning period after the death of a homestead head or senior person. This chapter is concerned with these, particularly with the beer drink held to 'release' (ukukhulula) a widow (umhlolokazi) from mourning the death of her husband, and with the one held to mark the establishment of a new homestead and the status of (male) homestead head. The beer drink marking the promotion of a woman from the status of junior to senior wife will also be examined. At all three of these events the subject of the ritual is addressed by senior members of the community with what is often very skilful oratory, and it is this aspect of these beer drinks that I will be most concerned with here. However, to make proper sense of the oratory it is necessary to bear in mind the nature of beer drinks in general, the role of the speaking that is an integral part of every beer drink, and the particular nature of the transition being undergone. For example, in the case of releasing the widow, it is necessary to look at the mourning procedure and what it is that the widow is being 'released' from, and also at the situation or status that she is entering. In other words the oratory must be viewed as part of a broader social and cultural context.

Releasing the widow

Mourning and widowhood may be viewed as a number of interlinked stages, through which a widow is obliged to pass, whether she actually feels grief or not. It is the stylised expression of mourning that is important. There are two stages of mourning, which constitute the first stage of widowhood. The first stage of mourning is from the husband's death until special mourning clothes are put on a few days later, after the burial. The second stage of mourning then begins, and lasts until the beer drink at which the widow is 'released' and at

which she again changes her style of dress. This marks entry into the second stage of widowhood. This relationship between mourning and widowhood is depicted in Figure 11 below:



On hearing of her husband's death a woman immediately goes into the first stage of mourning. The most obvious signs of this are the cessation of all social and other normal daily activity on her part, her confinement to her hut, and the adjustment made to her head-dress, which is worn low over her eyes. During the first few days she sits quietly on the women's side of the hut, eyes downcast, often weeping, with hardly a word or a gesture to those around her. When she speaks she does so in a barely audible voice, and without looking up. She is not left alone but constantly kept company by her husband's sisters or other female lineage members, husband's brother's wives, and perhaps a close neighbour. These people also perform the tasks necessary to keep the household running - cooking, collecting firewood and water, and suchlike - which the widow is not allowed to perform at this

stage. She may leave the hut only to answer the calls of nature.

During this confinement, the widow sews herself a new set of clothes, called impahla yokuzila (mourning dress), assisted by those who keep her company. These take about two days to complete, and they are donned a day or two after the burial, without ceremony or formality - "she knows well that she is putting them on because her husband has died". These clothes are not ochred but are left white, among traditionalists. Missionized people in other parts of Shixini use black, shop-bought clothes. The old clothes are discarded, being given away or swapped for another set with another widow. Clothes so acquired are washed and re-ochred in preparation for her 'releasing', when the white clothes are discarded. During these first few days the hut too is 're-dressed'. After the burial everything is taken outside and the walls and floor are resmeared (the former with a light coloured clay, the latter with fresh cow-dung).<sup>1</sup> This resmearing too, is a customary sign of mourning. As one woman put it, "that is the custom; it (the hut) is mourning" (lisiko eli, iyazila). Finally, members of the immediate family of the deceased (including the widow) have their heads shaved, usually shortly after the burial.

Donning the white clothes signals entry into the second stage of mourning, during which the restrictions on the widow are less severe. She is now no longer confined to the hut, but may go out to collect firewood and water, and go about her daily business in and about the homestead. She may not stray too far from the homestead, however, attend beer drinks or other public occasions, join a work party, and so on. She must refrain from sexual intercourse until her mourning period has ended. Her manner remains restrained and meek and her headdress is still worn in the lowered position. There are still people at her homestead, visitors coming and going for weeks after the burial.

Obviously, mourning involves entry into a transitional state. In Van Gennep's (1909) terms, the first stage of mourning is a rite of separation, in which the widow is separated from the rest of society, her previous status symbolically cast off, and the status of

transitional or liminal being assumed. Her seclusion, her personal demeanour, and her social inactivity symbolically proclaim her to be a non-person. From this a new social identity must be created. This begins with the putting on of the white clothes and the easing of the restrictions of the first stage. This point need not be laboured. It is clear that the wife has 'died', and that the widow is in the process of being 'born'. The symbolism of shaving, discarding clothes, the colour white (closely associated with liminality among Xhosa speakers) and seclusion, is present in other Xhosa rites of passage such as birth, initiation, and marriage. Her lowered headdress and humble behaviour is a close parallel of the behaviour of a bride at the wedding ceremony and in the weeks that follow, when she is newly resident in her in-laws homestead. Kuckertz (1983/1984, 117) points out that the widow "adopts strict rules of respect (intlunipho) for her in-laws expected of a newly married woman."

What does need to be stressed here is the involvement of others in this process, especially (but not exclusively) her husband's close kin, who are concerned to ensure that the transition occurs smoothly. As far as the community is concerned, the widow is potentially dangerous. Death threatens the community, because of the state of pollution in which her intimate association with the dead man places her. The restrictions of the mourning period allow the community to avoid the contamination of death and to neutralize its threat, by safely transforming the wife into another kind of social persona. This implies that the period of mourning, too, must be ended, for only then is the process satisfactorily completed. So death is a communal affair, as is the need for the widow to successfully complete her period of mourning and be absorbed back into the community once again. Thus the formal release of the widow from the second phase of mourning involves the community, and is not a private affair, as shown below.

Approximately four weeks after the husband's burial, beer is brewed at the homestead 'to release the family' (ukukhulula usapho) or 'to take out the family' (ukukhupha usapho) from mourning. Like the widow, other members of the family must mourn the death of the husband. These include the dead man's children, brothers and sisters, and other

close agnates . These people shave their heads as a sign of mourning, and are not allowed to attend public or social occasions until they have formally been 'released'. Ukukhulula usapho is a small beer drink, attended by adult kin of the deceased, and also by neighbours and members of the local community. The widow, who may assist with the brewing, does not normally attend this beer drink, though there are exceptions to this. Children and younger people not qualified to attend beer drinks are not present, though they too are released from mourning at the same time. This occasion is a fairly low key affair. A small amount of beer is brewed (perhaps 20 or 30 litres) and there are seldom more than about twenty people present.

The beer is consumed with little ceremony: a close kinsman of the deceased (e.g. a full brother) acts as the host, and he explains to those assembled that the beer has been brewed to release the family from mourning or, to put it in the local idiom, 'to allow them to go amongst people (ebantwini)'. The symbolic and moral significance of this expression - ebantwini - which is applied also to the widow's releasing, will become apparent below. Spokesmen from other parts of the sub-ward stand to thank the host and to say that they well understand (ukuva) what he has said. These speeches are very short and to the point. There is no attempt at eloquent speech or oratory, and there are no iziyalo (admonitions, instructions) addressed to the family. The beer is not distributed according to territorial groups but is allocated according to numbers (i.e. one beaker for every four or five men and a small potfull for women). This beer drink takes place in the morning, which is regarded as the correct time for it, and it lasts for no more than an hour or two. None of the beer may be kept aside for the next day, as is the custom with other kinds of beer drinks.

In contrast, the beer drink held to release the widow from mourning (ukukhulula umhlokokazi) is a somewhat more elaborate affair. Ukukhulula usapho does not affect the status of the widow, and she stays officially in mourning until about three or four months after her husband's death, when this second beer drink is held to mark her re-entry into normal life and into the second stage of widowhood.

This is a larger occasion: more people attend, more beer is brewed, and formal admonitions (iziyalo) are addressed to the widow. This occasion marks the end of the second phase of the mourning period and the final stage in her transition from married woman to 'independent woman' or widow.

On the day before the beer drink at which she is to be "released" the widow rises early and goes down to the nearest stream or river to wash, accompanied, perhaps, by her young children or by a husband's sister. She washes her whole body and then puts her white clothes back on. Informants say that this is important - "she must be clean before she puts on her new clothes" (i.e. the newly ochred clothes that she dons on the morning of the beer drink). It seems likely that the washing is, as in other transition rituals, a 'washing off' of the liminal state and a symbolic purification, as preparation for entry into a new state. Later in the morning, if she has not already done so well beforehand, she washes, ochres and dries a set of clothes to be worn the following day. These are not necessarily new clothes, but perhaps a spare set (perhaps her 'best') that had been in her possession since before her husband's death, or perhaps a set obtained in exchange from another widow. She spends the rest of the day completing the preparations for the next day's beer drink, straining the beer, and so on. At the beer drink she will be symbolically 'washed' by the beer.

Early on the day of the beer drink, the widow is taken into her hut by her husband's female kin, accompanied by neighbouring women. Women from further afield sit outside, and men who are present stay in the hut in which the beer has been placed. No man may enter the hut where the women are. In the women's hut, the widow goes to the women's side of the hut (the right hand side on entering) and takes off her mourning clothes. These are given away to a friend or relative, usually someone who is herself a widow (to give these clothes to a woman with a husband would foreshadow his death, say women, and the gift would not be accepted). She then smears her whole body with red ochre, and puts on the newly ochred clothes and a new headdress. Red symbolizes birth and social identity, as it does in other rites of

passage such as marriage, birth, and male initiation. The new headdress is worn well off the eyes in the style of a married woman, but her manner is still restrained, her eyes still downcast. Informants say that on the day of her releasing a widow is "like a bride" (ufana nomtshakazi), indicating that she is on the threshold of a transition. She is then admonished by the other women present. Not being able to attend these proceedings, I have no record of exactly what is said to the widow in these admonitions, but informants (men and women) say that they are similar to those given later when both men and women are present, and which are discussed in detail below. During the proceedings in the women's hut, a beaker of beer is brought over from the other hut, and passed around. Some informants say that the widow is the first to taste of this beaker, and that this tasting is similar to ritual tastings on other occasions, but others deny this, saying that the beaker is consumed in no particular order and that there is no ritual tasting (ukushwama): "It is just given to them so that they will do their work well".

In the meantime, people assemble in the other hut and await the entry of the widow and those with her. While waiting, a beaker or two of beer may be passed around, but the main distribution of beer takes place only later, once the widow has arrived and the admonitions delivered.<sup>2</sup>

(i) Nowinile's releasing

Walata Mhlakaza (Cirha clan) died in East London on 15 July 1976. Three days later he was buried in the courtyard of his homestead in Komkhulu section of Folokhwe sub-ward. The burial was an elaborate one. Walata had lived and worked in East London for some time, returning home for holidays. In East London he had joined a burial society, and his body was brought home by the members of the society. They provided Walata with a Christian-style burial, though he himself had not joined any church, accompanied by elaborate singing, praying and preaching. The beer drink to release Nowinile, his widow, from mourning, was held 4 months later (on 22 November 1976). The main officiant at the beer drink was Ndlebezenja Mangono, Walata's FFBS

and lineage head. By 10.30 a.m. 35 men and women had gathered in the hut where the beer drink was to take place. Nowinile arrived from the hut where she had changed into her newly ochred clothes and splendid new headdress, along with the women who had been with her there, and sat amongst the other women in the hut.

Preliminary comments and discussion among the men revolved around two issues - whether all sections of the sub-ward were present, and whether the time was right to start the proceedings. Ndlebezenja initiated this discussion in the following manner:

1 Ndlebezenja: This is the point, my people. We have come  
here to fetch this wife of Zwelibangile's. Now then, it  
seems as if the time is approaching. I do not know about  
Folokhwe's ibandla. Eeeeh, Chibi people are here, and there  
5 are people from Ngingqi; yes, I mean to say, gentlemen, it  
seems to me that it should go ahead, the time has moved on.  
That's what I have to say, gentlemen.

Others agreed that the time had arrived, and emphasized that this was an occasion that had to be performed at a particular time (i.e. in the morning). Since all three of Folokhwe's sections were represented there was no point in delaying any longer. Two beakers of beer were dished out; one was allocated to men and the other to women. Ndlebezenja announced this, saying that "these are the beakers we are going to start with...lets drink then and get on with it". Once these two beakers were empty Ndlebezenja stood to formally announce the purpose of the gathering and to say that Mbambaza, the son of Sunduza (Gqunu clan), would be the one to provide the main admonition.

Ndlebezenja: Gentlemen and ladies (clears throat). Here  
is the point then gentlemen, the thing that has caused us to  
10 be here; we are going to receive that wife of  
Zwelibangile's, Nowinile, so that she should know that she  
should go amongst people. Yes, when we leave here we will  
be taking her with us. Now then, the person who is going  
to give forth words is this one of Sunduza's, gentlemen;

15 eeeeh, the reason I called for attention is because he is going to give forth words. That's it then Gqunu.

Mbambaza was chosen to provide the main admonitory speech because he is a highly respected man who is regarded as one who 'speaks the truth'. He was also a matrilateral kinsman to Ndlebezenja and an affine to Nowinile. He spoke to Nowinile as follows:

1 Mbambaza: All right, my sister-in-law, it is said that I should produce a few small words here for you; it is the usual thing to present words to a person who has been bereaved and is being received by other people. This is  
5 referred to as admonishing, even though admonishing means nothing to people nowadays. A person (nowadays) simply ignores the admonitions and does what she likes.

Here it is then sister-in-law, today these Gcaleka here say they have come to fetch you, seeing that you have been  
10 living like this, living abnormally. The time has come now for you to go amongst people again. When a person is to go amongst people she is given words of admonition, so that she should not do (bad) things, having been warned; so that it should not be said that that person was never admonished but  
15 simply went out to beer drinks, and that she behaves as she does because of that.

Now then sister-in-law we are here so that you should be taken out, because of the departure (death) of the great man of this home, your husband. I have every hope, sister-in-  
20 law, that you will conduct yourself correctly, nicely, as your husband did. Your husband (Walata's body) arrived here with strangers from across the Kei, people with whom he had lived and worked. There was no one who did not hear when there was speaking (at Walata's burial) about this great man  
25 whom they had more knowledge of than we did. We too, however, knew him to be a person who was not evil. He was not a person who liked to quarrel with others; the only

thing that Walata opposed was something that was bad. I think that even your own ears were filled when the visitors  
30 from across the Kei were talking. Although Walata was not born among these, they were saying how good his character was. They asked that we (too) should talk about his life, about the way he lived here. We agreed with what they said, because the fellow (who spoke) said that Walata had a fine  
35 disposition while alive. It does not help to say 'I am rich in many things' if one's heart is impoverished; (if) the heart is not rich, but impoverished, overgrown with weeds. Many livestock are of no use because a person cannot take them with him when he goes. The thing that you must guard  
40 against sister-in-law, is this - avoid the madness of beer drinks, (avoid) a person who drinks and then becomes aggressive, until finally it appears that you (too) are a troublesome person who wants to speak in a disreputable way. It will be said: 'We saw Walata's wife fighting. Oh! How  
45 soon she fights with people! Since when does she fight with others!' Whereas it was not your will - it was that you were influenced by those who stir up trouble, wanting you to tear holes in the admonitions you were given, and to discard them.

50 There is only one way to look after yourself - through respect. It is to oppose any person who comes to you full of evil and wanting to turn your mind. Then it will seem that you are a person who has not been admonished. Today then, to go out and attend beer drinks does not mean that  
55 you will not come back home, because you (women) tend to say 'as for me, I ate my husband'. A person even accuses herself and says 'I ate my husband, I gave him poison to eat. I have no husband, there is no one who is going to drive me by the small of my back if I do not want to go home  
60 yet.' There is that tendency then with you (women). As a person, the way to conduct yourself is to say: 'There is the sun (it is late), I must go now and kindle a fire in the hut for the children of the deceased'. The way to conduct

yourself is (to ensure) that the people who were the people  
65 of this homestead in the past should be such even today.

You see, daughter of Kedeni, it is like this, when it seems  
that this homestead is not seen (does not finish the  
sentence) - let me say that it will not seem to be a  
homestead without its head if the wife is upright. It will  
70 become apparent if you divorce yourself from people; you  
will see the paths that lead here disappearing. They will  
disappear. One will pass behind the homestead, one will  
lead below the garden. There will be no path leading here.  
This will stigmatise you as a person who is no good amongst  
75 people, and it will be clear that so and so (Walata) is not  
here. This is what is not wanted, sister-in-law. Avoid it  
child of the Ngqosini clan, that behaviour that makes it  
clear that a certain person is not here. That will not make  
you a good person. You (will) have a homestead that is no  
80 longer visited by many people whereas it used to be a  
homestead for people, this one of Mhlakaza's. It was loved  
when Walata was not present, when you were here in the hut  
doing things for people that used to be done by Walata. Do  
not stop doing such things, for if you do the paths that  
85 lead to this home will become scarce. Because paths are  
created by people. If the person inside the hut does not  
work for people you will notice by the disappearance of the  
path. It will be said: 'So you think it is still as it was  
in the past, yhooh! You think it is still as it was when so  
90 and so was still here, eh!? No, get away, there is nothing  
left!' On the other hand if you remain as you are, as your  
husband used to be, no paths are going to disappear.  
Secondly, you will be well spoken for by people. It will be  
said: 'We know her, that Nowinile, she has never done  
95 anything disgraceful, it is so and so who has done something  
bad' - due to your knowledge of how to conduct yourself.

Today you are being allowed to go to beer drinks. It is not  
being said that you should wander about with people; it is

not being said that you should go and sleep at beer drinks,  
 100 and that there should be no smoke-spiral at this homestead  
 of Mhlakaza's. There are many orphaned children here, who  
 have been left behind by Walata and who need to be raised,  
 some who are still small, and some who are not yet  
 completely brought up. That is what you have on your  
 105 shoulders. The one plan then is to know how to conduct  
 yourself in order to have strength, and to look after the  
 things of this home properly. I have stopped now men.

Ziwele, an old man of Komkhulu section, then spoke, saying that  
 Mbambaza had 'finished all the words' and that there was nothing to  
 add. Bodli (Chibi section) also spoke, repeating some of Mbambaza's  
 sentiments, and ending by saying 'I know you, you cast your mind  
 downwards (i.e. are humble). Let it face downwards even now so that  
 it does not give you trouble'. Later, after the beer distribution,  
 one of the neighbouring women addressed Nowinile as follows:

1 MamNgqosini, it is finished. I come to you, I without  
 taste, because I am already senile. The men have spoken the  
 women's words. I mean you know your own mind, and we too  
 know your mind. Help us Nowinile, look after us. Do not  
 5 worry about a person who says - who curses you and says you  
 are a certain kind of thing, you are such and such a thing;  
 no, do what you have been doing for a long time here at  
 home. Look after your family here at Walata's home. You  
 have your husband's sisters now Nowinile, since your husband  
 10 is not here. Look after them; look after us too  
 Malanjani.<sup>3</sup> When we speak the truth (about you) do not let  
 your heart become troubled. Look after this homestead.  
 These children are orphans. It is you alone who is being  
 watched, all over, all, all, all, all, all over, it is you  
 15 who is being looked at, all over, all over, even way over  
 there they are watching you Nowinile. Please look after  
 this family; the men have already finished (speaking). I  
 will not say much myself, because the men's words have  
 penetrated greatly. And me, I am not going to turn you into

20 - that's it - one who is always complaining - I just want to address you, as a custom. I am just doing the custom, I do not want you to be a grump. I stop at that point Nowinile, daughter of the river.<sup>3</sup>

Nozamile, a woman of Chibi section also said a few words to Nowinile, but no other woman spoke after her.

(ii) Nosajini's releasing

Nosajini's husband, Yohanisi Dumalisile (Tshawe clan) was Folokhwe's sub-headman, until his death in late 1975. For one reason or another Nosajini's releasing was delayed until 26 November 1976. This delay, as we will see below, was regarded rather inauspiciously. At the time of her releasing, her two sons were away at work, and no other member of Yohanisi's lineage lived in or near Folokhwe. The caretaker (usipatheleni) at this homestead was Mbambaza who, like his father before him, had been chief councillor to Yohanisi. Therefore, it was Mbambaza who officiated at the beer drink. He also delivered the main speech of admonition.

Nosajini's daughter-in-law had lost a new-born baby some weeks previously, and she was released from the mourning of her child at the same time. The event started unusually early, at 8 a.m., when there were 42 men and women present in the hut. Soon after 8 a.m. Mbambaza sent someone to call Nosajini from the other hut. Once she and her companions had arrived and seated themselves, Mbambaza spoke as follows:

Mbambaza

- 1 Referring to you Nosajini, the surprising thing is this, this (admonishing) is something sad (painful); it is sad because it is sometimes said that when a person is being admonished - (interruption from others in the hut) No men,  
5 no no no! - when a person is admonished it should not seem that the person who is speaking is talking nonsense. I

myself do not talk nonsense. Allow me to say what I can, because of this beer here; we are frequently here against the wall of a hut, on behalf of beer brewed for a person  
10 who is no longer with us, often-often-often, on behalf of the beer for a man who is no longer present, often-often; day after day we stand against the wall of a hut...(inaudible)...speaking about being like this. We come to the wall of the hut, we speak about the beer brewed for a man who is  
15 not here, often! What is surprising is that no man goes to the wall of a hut to speak about a woman who is said to be absent (dead) and is being brewed for, a woman who has died, to enable her husband to move about. I am standing so that I should start with this word, so that I can speak to the  
20 point! In fact I will repeat it; we come to the wall of a hut, we come for a man who has died and been brewed for, often; no woman has ever been brewed for. Let me leave that there.

You see then Nosajini, we are here now, we are here to take  
25 you out so that you should go about amongst people; you have been here (secluded) for a long time, and now something else has happened.<sup>4</sup> It is not good for a person to stay (in mourning) for a long time, because God will again knock and enter, and again do what he did before, while the person is  
30 still waiting. This will destroy a person's mind. You see Nosajini, the thing that preserves (lit: herds, husbands) one is to think for oneself, what preserves one is thinking for oneself; you start by thinking, regardless of what happens. As soon as you think for yourself, anyone who does  
35 anything to you will be shamed. If you do not first think for yourself, having been admonished, bad things will come your way, if it is seen that you do not think for yourself, that you do not respect yourself, as someone who has been spoken to with words, by means of this very event. If you  
40 have thought for yourself you have looked after yourself, because even if a person has been admonished by a thousand mouths, much of that does not enter his mind, and he does

what he was warned against, that is exactly what he does.

45 You see then, here is something that makes a fool out of  
people, this one that we have come here for, that one  
(pointing at the beer pots), do you see that one? It is no  
lie when it is said that that one is a devil (lit: 'a  
slanderer'). That man there at the back of the hut (the  
beer) removes the admonitions. The admonitions do not work  
50 for a person who drinks beer. It is said now, "Oh, what can  
be done, when someone carries on like this?" When a person  
has passed Phungela's stone, he has overlooked the warnings  
(admonitions) that he was given; it is said that he has  
passed Phungela's stone (i.e. gone beyond the point of no  
55 return) when he has passed by the admonitions of his  
father.<sup>5</sup> The perversity of people; there are people who  
are like that, who set out to destroy admonitions, to make a  
person disregard the admonitions, who will trouble you when  
they are drunk. Then you are seen talking, talking,  
60 talking, he is provoking you, so that it be said that you  
have ignored your admonitions.

A person like you Nosajini, it is not necessary that we talk  
(to you) at length. You see I am thinking for you now, as I  
am standing here. If you cannot think for yourself and you  
65 cannot think carefully you will find out for yourself. You  
are a mature woman now, you already have daughters-in-law,  
so you need to be able to think for yourself. You are a  
solitary tree, you are a tree that stands for itself. Do  
not associate yourself with things said by people. You will  
70 be provoked in order to disregard these admonitions.  
Because there are annoying people who tend to negate (the  
admonitions). It is continually being written and rubbed  
out, it is written and rubbed out. They are like Satan.  
God puts a person here and Satan takes him and puts him  
75 there. There are people here who are like that. Think for  
yourself.

Here then gentlemen and also you women, this beer has been made to enable this woman to go about, and for this young wife of Gidimisana (Nosajini's son). The reason why Gidimisana's wife has not smeared is that she is not this woman's husband's sister; so they have not both smeared. She too is being released today, she is, and she will smear tomorrow. She is released today but they have not both smeared because her husband is not departed. She still has a husband. The words from my mouth are finished now. Perhaps some other man wants to say something.

Gqwetha of Komkhulu, an old man of the Ntlane clan, spoke briefly, repeating some of the sentiments expressed by Mbambaza. There were no other speakers after him. Four beakers of beer were served, two for men and two for women. A beaker was also given to a number of young men who were waiting outside the hut, in recognition of the fact that the graves had been dug by them.

### (iii) Analysis

There are a number of differences between beer for releasing a widow and other Gcaleka beer drinks. One of the most noticeable of these is the concern that this beer drink should not start late and that it should be over by mid-day. As Bhayisikile said at Nowinile's releasing, "...there is beer that should not extend beyond its time, particularly this beer that you are discussing" (...bukhona utywala ekufuneka uba ixesha labo lingadluli, ngakumbi ngakumbi obunje ngobu nithetha ngabo). Later, after the admonitions, some people who had arrived late were given an explanation of what the occasion was all about and told "You have arrived long after we have started. We are informing (you) then, according to the custom, that this is beer for the morning" (Nifika sesiqhubile, kakhulu. Sixela ke ngokwesiko ke 'uba utywala boba kusasa.)

Another difference is that the beer is not distributed as is usual, according to territorial groups (ukulawula). Instead, each beaker is allocated to a certain number of people, irrespective of the ward,

sub-ward or sub-ward section that they live in. This is ukugabu (Ch 3), and may occur at other beer drinks if the amount of beer available is small. For example, beer for an umgqibelo ploughing group will be distributed according to ukugabu if the amount is small, but if a large amount has been brewed it will be lawula-ed. But at beer for releasing a widow there is never ukulawula, no matter what the quantity of beer is. As Ndlebezenja put it at Nowinile's "...it is not umlawulo gentlemen. It is simply to be dished out; it is not umlawulo - so and so's beaker and so and so's beaker, a beaker for women, oh no - it will be dished up this side (men's side) - finished - it is dished up that side (women's side) - finished. Thats it." (...ayinamlawulo zinkosi. Ithungwa nje, ayinamlawulo - ibhekile kabani ibhekile kabani, ibhekile yomfazi hayikona, kuza'thungwa kwelicala - ziphele - kuthungwe ngaphaya - ziphele. Yiloo nto.) Bhayisikile commented in reply that "the law of this beer is like that" (umtheth' obu tywala unje).

It is also noticeable that the division of beer between men and women is more or less equal, in contrast to most other beer drinks, This, in conjunction with the fact that the women sit inside the hut with the men, and that like the men they may (and are expected to) admonish the widow, indicates that this is an occasion on which women participate on a more or less equal footing to men. The women sit with the men, said one informant, "because they have come to release the widow". At most other beer drinks women sit outside the hut (even rain and wind do not normally produce exceptions to this rule) and they do not enter into the discussions and debates that are so common among the men at beer drinks. Releasing the widow is, after all, largely a women's affair. It is a woman who is the subject of the ritual, who is to go 'amongst people' (ebantwini), who is being reintegrated into the ranks of the community - men and women. It is the widow's female affines (and others) who help her change her clothes and who are the first to admonish her, in the hut where the changing of clothes takes place. Their participation in the affair is as important as that of the men.

Beer for releasing a widow also differs from others types of beer drinks in that there are no amasiko beakers such as iimvuko or

intluzelo, and no beaker for the sibonda, which is mandatory at other beer drinks. Also, there are no gifts of beer to individuals (iminono) and no imifihlo (beer put aside for later consumption). All the beer must be finished on the day of the beer drink including the ivanya (second grade beer). There is therefore also no isidudu beer (beer drunk on the day after the beer drink). Informants say that the reasons for these omissions, and for there being ukugabu instead of ukulawula, is that beer for releasing a widow is an occasion associated with death and thus with something 'bad'. Dlathu Sijula said: "It is not the kind of beer to be given out by ukulawula, it is a different kind of beer (utywala bombi)". He added that it was 'beer for a funeral' (utywala besifihlo) and compared it with the ukuzila (mourning) beast, killed (ideally) a year after the burial, which should be killed and eaten in one day (other ritual killings are spread over three days).

In this respect it is worth noting that symbolic reversals are common in rituals associated with death. But these reversals are appropriate also in the sense that the object of the ritual is a reversal. Although the status of the woman is changing, she is reverting back to the status of a social being, and back to the status of umfazi (wife), albeit without a husband.

As a beer drink, ukukhulula umhlolokazi has a specific aim - to effect and make public the woman's status as widow and to incorporate her into society as such. It marks the end of her period as 'widow in mourning' and the beginning of her new status as independent woman and head of a homestead. Brewing beer ensures the public nature of the event, since people will attend in order to drink it. This is clear in what is said by those present. At Nowinile's releasing Ndlebezenja announced that the beer was to be distributed, saying "here is what has been cooked gentlemen; we have cooked so that you should be here on this day..." (yiyo leyo ke zinkosi into, ebesiyiphekile; siphekil' uba ze nibe lapha ngolu suku...). The attendance of people ensures that the widow's release from mourning and the conferring of her new status are publicly recognized. That this is regarded as important is clear, for example, in the concern expressed

that all sections of the community should be present at the event before the proceedings start. (p.288 l.4-5) This, however, is an element that is present from the beginning, from the moment that the woman hears of her husband's death. Death is not something that she must bear alone, but an event made tolerable by the continual presence and support of others. The restrictions of the mourning period are defined largely in social terms - the widow is not allowed to attend beer drinks, to join work parties, to socialize. Just as active widowhood has a strong social dimension involving separation from people, so does the removal of those restrictions, going 'amongst people' again. She dons her new clothes in the company of other women; it is the community that attends the beer drink, that has come to 'take', 'fetch' or 'receive' her (ukuthatha), so that she should 'go amongst people' again. As Ndlebezenja expressed it, 'when we leave here we will be taking her with us' (p.288 l.12).

The admonitions addressed to the woman outline the behaviour expected of her in her new role and the responsibilities associated with it. These norms are expressed in general rather than specific terms: she should 'think carefully' (ukugqala), 'think for herself', be an 'upright' person (p.291 l.69), be respectful (p.290 l.51) and have 'self-respect' (p.294 l.38). She is told to conduct herself well (p.292 l.105-6) and to be humble. The speakers acknowledge that the admonitions that they give are not likely, in themselves, to have any effect on the woman's behaviour. Perhaps this is why they speak largely in general terms. As the speakers point out, if the widow does not yet know how to think for herself and to behave properly she will never know. Mbambaza points out that as a mature woman Nosajini hardly needs to be admonished (p.295 l.62), and that even being admonished by 'a thousand mouths' will not change a person's character (p.294 l.41-2). They imply, it seems, that they are speaking for the sake of custom, delivering iziyalo because it is customary to do so on this particular occasion (p.293 l.21).

However, if even 'a thousand mouths' will not change the way in which the widow is likely to behave, what is the point of all this talk? Is it simply a means of publicly expressing and reinforcing the norms

relating to the behaviour of widows? Is it merely an opportunity to get together over a pot of beer, or for orators to demonstrate their skill and enhance their standing in the community? The answer to such questions is 'yes', but there is more to it than this. I have claimed that the beer drink effects the transition - i.e. that it is the mechanism through which the status change is realised. This claim needs to be considered more closely for the role of the oratory to emerge. This raises the question of why a beer drink is the appropriate vehicle for releasing the widow, and of how it performs this particular task. Turner (1967, 1969) and La Fontaine (1977) have drawn attention to the need to ask such questions of rites of passage.

To answer these questions it is useful to consider the beer drink as a 'cultural performance' or 'social drama', along the lines suggested in Chapter 4, and as a 'performative' or 'illocutionary act' (Austin 1962) which does something in the process of being enacted. As outlined in Chapter 4, a cultural performance is an event in which attention is attracted, focussed and ordered, through the use of symbolic devices. It is a 'frame' within which to handle a particular issue - in this case the changing status of a widow. As a drama the beer drink held for this purpose has an effect - it changes the widow's status, it does not simply 'mark', 'reflect' or 'symbolize' the change. It does something, it is a performative (Moore 1977, Gardner 1983).

Like any cultural performance this beer drink involves a conventional procedure, including the uttering of words of an appropriate kind by an appropriate (formally appointed) person. Ndlebezenja said as much when he introduced Mbambaza as "the person who is going to give forth words", (p.288 l.14) at Nowinile's releasing. It is a procedure which takes place according to agreed upon rules and conventions, and which serves to effect and constitute a transition between two states, which are also conventionally defined. By 'effecting and constituting' the transition I mean that the procedure in itself is both the means and the result of the transformation between the two conventionally defined states. How can something be both the means of achieving X, and X itself? Surely something else, Y, follows from the doing of X?

Such an idea is difficult to grasp, perhaps due to the pervasiveness in Western society of a lineal concept of time. If we had something akin to the Greek Kairos (a unique moment in time in which other moments in time are present and fused) as opposed to Chronos (temporal time), the issue might be more easily set out (Tillich, 1958).<sup>6</sup>

A social drama dramatizes or enacts something, and in the dramatization it is something. In this particular case, but not in all social dramas, the drama enacts what it is - the releasing of the widow. In this sense, what the beer drink 'does' is to release the widow. This is clear enough in Mbambaza's oratory. He says that people have come together to 'take' or 'receive' the widow into their midst, and this is what they do. In the performance of the beer drink she is released from the restrictions of mourning and reincorporated into society. But this beer drink goes further that this - it is also the end product, the outcome, the result, of her having been released in the sense that it constitutes the state of affairs into which she is being released. It is more than just a symbol and a means.

Some qualification is obviously needed here. In constituting the end state the beer drink is selective, and it is finite - it is a partial experience of being a released widow, and it is not the only experience of such. A social drama does not dramatize the whole of society, but selects and emphasizes certain themes (Douglas 1966, 64). What is being dramatized in the beer drink and spoken of in the oratory are certain key elements of the widow's new status, such as her incorporation into the company of senior women, which is enacted and constituted by her being present 'amongst people' and by her participation in the beer drink. She is not just being told that she may 'go amongst people' in future; she is doing so at the time.

As a ritual drama the beer drink reveals to the widow, and to the other participants, basic truths about the status of released widows and female homestead heads, about attending public events such as beer drinks and how to behave at such events, her relationship with other women of the community, the value of commensality and sharing, the importance of providing beer for people, the relationship between

individual homestead and community, the importance of 'building' the homestead, and so on. The ritual reveals these truths by acting them out, and through the oratory, sometimes in exaggerated form - e.g. the subdued behaviour of the widow is an overstatement of how a woman ought to conduct herself at beer drinks.

In this way the beer drink objectifies a number of values and ideals. It makes concrete what is otherwise abstract, and in so doing provides the widow and the community with a powerful demonstration of the meaning of being a released widow. Again, meaning is derived not just through a process of symbolic communication, but also through experiencing or confronting the implications of her transition in the body of the beer drink.

Perhaps all this could be achieved without oratory. What the speakers say seems to act as a back up mechanism, an articulation of the experience being undergone. In this sense the oratory reinforces and helps to make explicit what is 'made visible' (Turner 1967, Ch 1) by the non-verbal symbolism. One of the oratorical devices that Mbambaza uses in this regard is contrast, through which he creates images of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, moral and immoral persons and acts, socially acceptable and unacceptable homesteads.<sup>7</sup> How to behave at a beer drink is contrasted with its opposite - getting home in good time as opposed to spending the night away; the well-behaved widow is contrasted with the one who causes tongues to wag (p.291 l.88-93); one who follows the admonitions is compared with one who ignores them, in the image of something being 'written and rubbed out, written and rubbed out' (p.295 l.72-73). One who minds her own business is compared with one who is always 'talking, talking, talking' (i.e. slandering others) (p.295 l.59). To make such contrasts effective Mbambaza uses frequent repetition, and devices such as reported speech.

The strategy of contrast is facilitated by the fact that beer itself is morally ambiguous, potentially both good and bad. On the one hand it is associated with the ancestors, sociability and the building of the homestead; on the other with the effects of drunkenness, which

are disorderly and destructive.

Beer can be a force for good or for evil, depending on how it is used. It has the potential for either, and it must be controlled. This ambiguity surfaces in the contrasts that Mbambaza makes - the widow must do things (i.e. brew beer) for people, but she must not get carried away at beer drinks. Beer is personified as 'a devil' and as 'that man at the back of the hut' (p.295 l.47-8), in making the contrast between a woman who cares for her home and children, and one who stays late at beer drinks (so that she can meet with her lover).

However, Mbambaza's oratory does more than just support the message conveyed by the beer drink itself, in that he is able to expand on the latter and thereby broaden the meaning of the event. For example, the image of the footpaths leading to a homestead (p.291 l.84-93) is used to emphasize the need for the widow to work for and look after her homestead and to use it to help others in the course of everyday life. Wealth (such as livestock) is of use only insofar as it enables one to assist others (p.290 l.38-9). Such a homestead will continually have people walking to and from it, not only when it brews beer. If one does not 'do things for people', on the other hand, the paths will disappear, or lead past the homestead. As the idiom that Mbambaza coins has it, 'paths are created by people'.

The oratory is of importance also because it enables reflection. Public dramas are occasions for 'plural reflexivity', as indicated in Chapter 4, times when members of society are provided with a chance to reflect on themselves and their society. Mbambaza's oratory makes the reflective nature of the beer drink quite explicit.

In both speeches he is concerned, firstly, with establishing the status of what he is about to say and to define the context of his speech. Thus he says that giving admonitions is the 'usual thing' in such situations (p.289 l.3) and that attendance (sitting 'against the wall of the hut') and speaking at events such as these, which are linked to death, is frequent (p.294 l.8). In both of his speeches he indicates that admonishing the widow is an important custom, even

though they do not necessarily influence the widow's subsequent behaviour. As admonisher he is not talking 'nonsense' (p.294 l.7), and admonitions are necessary in case wrong behaviour on the part of the widow is later attributed to the fact that she was not properly 'released' and admonished (p.289 l.13-16). An interesting aspect of his opening words at Nosajini's releasing is his reflection on the fact that this event is never held in connection with the death of a woman, to enable the husband to go amongst people (p.294 l.16-19). Here he is clearly talking about the event, and about what he is going to say, and why he is saying it.

In this regard Mbambaza shows a fine awareness of the fact that this specific ritual context constitutes what Hymes calls a 'speech situation', which calls for a 'speech event' (the admonitions) of a particular kind, a kind appropriate to the situation (Hymes 1972). The content of his speech, therefore, is related to the context in which he is speaking, and he attempts to make the audience aware of this. In this respect Mbambaza performs a number of speech acts (warning, instructing, praising, informing, etc.), and uses a number of terms that are appropriate to the context. These include terms such as 'fetching' or 'receiving' the widow (ukuthatha), 'releasing' her (ukukhulula) allowing her 'to go amongst people' (ukuya phakathi kwabantu), 'thinking for oneself' (ukuzicingela), and 'conducting oneself well' (ukuziphatha). Of course, the context is part of the total communication process (Baumann 1975), itself a form of communication.

In these opening paragraphs then, Mbambaza, speaking softly and slowly in both cases, with long pauses between phrases and sentences, is clearing the ground for what is to come. He is trying to ensure that what he is about to say will be understood in terms of the context, by defining that context and labelling it as a customary one. This is quite deliberate on his part, as is indicated by his use of repetition and his acknowledgement that he is using repetition as a device to define the context (p.294 l.20-21). In this way, he feels, he will be able to speak confidently, with precision and to the point - ngokuthe ngqo! He is carefully and deliberately providing the frame

for what he is about to say.

The reflective nature of the beer drink is thus suggested by Mbambaza's style of speaking, including his use of pauses, and of repetition, manifested in the use of the intransitive qho ('often' or 'persistently') and by instances of initial and final linking, sometimes in conjunction with qho, to produce an impression of reflective meditation; e.g.

Kuba obu tywala obu sasoloko sema ngelongwe lendlu  
Simela, utywala bomntu ongekhooyo, qho-qho-qho  
Simela, utywala bendoda engekhooyo, qho-qho  
Kuba ngasa, sinyuke nelongwe lendlu

Another example from the opening lines of the same speech runs as follows -

Kuwe Nosajini, kwizimanga ezimangalisayo, elona  
Eyona nto ibuhlungu  
Ibuhlungu ke le nto  
Ubuhlungu bayo le nto

It is Mbambaza's recognition of the reflective nature of the occasion that makes him acknowledge that the words must be said and that they are not 'nonsense' (p.293 1.6) irrespective of whether they influence the person being admonished or not.

This brings us to the question of the effect of the words on the listeners and on the widow being released. Mbambaza skillfully identifies the individual widow and her releasing with more general cultural norms, values and ideals. These are affirmed in the process, and appropriate feelings and sentiments ('moods and motivations') on the part of the participants evoked. In this way the meaning of the event is established. In so doing he provides models for the construction of the meaning of past events, but also models for guiding and interpreting the future, for reality yet to be experienced (Geertz 1966). In this particular case there is a convergence of past and present, in that ideals such as providing for people and about proper behaviour at a beer drink are not only verbalized and

symbolized, but acted out in what is a beer drink. Bringing these together - the thinking and the doing - provide a template for the future.

Mbambaza is at pains to point out Nowinile's responsibilities to her homestead and children. The strategy he uses here is to refer to her late husband's character, urging Nowinile to emulate him (p.291 1.83-4). He points out that a homestead which is controlled by a woman of good character will not appear to be one that has lost its male head (p.291 1.68-9). The widow is regarded as being responsible for the good name of the homestead and for its maintenance, and she is responsible for its inhabitants - in Nowinile's case these are her minor children. Nowinile is also enjoined to ensure that her homestead remains a social entity, part of the community, as it was before Walata's death.

The other matter that is discussed in more specific terms is proper behaviour at beer drinks. In both case the widow is warned to be careful at beer drinks and to avoid people who, under the influence of too much beer, might lead her astray. Beer is 'a devil' and drunkenness makes one ignore the admonitions. Nosajini is told that the one thing that might push her beyond the point of no return (idiomatically expressed as Phungela's stone) is beer (p.295 1.51-55). Beer might remove her defences against 'wicked' people, who might like to encourage her to disregard the norms of widowhood (p.295 1.57). Beer loosens the tongue, provokes gossip, and leads to disharmony in the community (p.290 1.39-46). The widow should ensure that she does not neglect her homestead by spending too much time at beer drinks, and she should not stay the night (p.292 1.99). This is a veiled warning against over-involvement with lovers, spending the night with a lover, and neglecting homestead and children as a result. Perhaps this is why the beer is personified by Mbambaza as 'that man'. As widows no longer in mourning Nowinile and Nosajini are free to have lovers or to renew relationships with former lovers (as long as these are not made public), relationships which are suspended for the period of mourning.

In attempting to construct a particular model of how a widow should behave the beer drink is also an attempt to order or manage the change. The repetition in Mbambaza's oratory might be seen in this light, since repetition and order are linked (Moore and Myerhoff 1977). Mbambaza tells Nosajini to 'think for herself' nine times, and to heed the admonitions, eleven times. Controlling the future behaviour of the widow is seen also in the images of the hearth fire and the smoke spiral (p.292 l.100), and in that of watching the sun (p.290 l.61-62). Similarly, control is implied in specifying the kind of behaviour that will characterize someone who has not listened to the admonitions, someone whose heart is 'impoverished' and 'full of weeds' (p.290 l.36-7) and who allows 'holes' to be torn in the warnings she receives (p.290 l.48). Such a person is one who goes around saying that she has 'eaten' her husband and that she will not be controlled by anyone (p.290 l.57), doing the things she has been warned against. Relevant here also is the fact that Mbambaza mentions the sanctions for such behaviour - gossip (p.290 l.44-6) and ostracism (the disappearance of the paths - an image he repeats in various forms eight times. Good behaviour, on the other hand, will bring favourable comment from people (p.290 l.94-6).

What is important here is the fact that although the status of the widow has changed, she is still a woman resident in her husband's homestead. From the point of view of her husband's agnates the basis on which she was first accepted into the home has not changed. She remains wife (umfazi) and 'mother of the home' (umama wekhaya) within it. The homestead will always be known as her husband's, not as hers, and the alliance between the two kin groups, created by the marriage, remains in force. For this reason, the widow is often exhorted, in the iziyalo, to obey her husband's brothers, respect them, consult them in all matters, and so on. In many cases it is the husband's brothers who are the speakers of these iziyalo, and they make explicit their desire to exercise control over the widow. Ukuyala can also be translated as "to demand obedience" (Kuckertz 1984, 92).

In the case of Nowinile and Nosajini this would have been inappropriate. There were no members of Nosajini's husband's lineage

living in the area (except for her sons, in the same homestead), and Nosajini was known as a very humble, respectful person, who liked attending beer drinks but who always conducted herself well. In Nowinile's case, she was a strong, independent-minded woman, and to advise her to submit to the control of her husband's agnates would have been fruitless and inappropriate. Instead, Mbambaza cast his admonition in the idiom of the way in which Walata had been known to conduct himself, urging Nowinile to follow suit, and implying that this was the way Walata (and his kin) wanted it. Some years after these events I asked Mbambaza about the characters of the two women and about how he composed his speeches at such times. He made it clear that although he had no criticisms of Nowinile, he had admired her husband, and had thus decided to use him as a model for the admonition. In both cases he took individual personalities into account. As he put it: "I speak about someone whom I live with here in the ilali, whose character (isimilo) I know, whose lifestyle (intlalo) I know, and whose manner of behaving towards others (imbeko) I know".

Why, one might ask in conclusion, is there so much emphasis on controlling the widow, on ensuring that she conforms to socially accepted norms regarding what it means to be a 'good' member of the community and to care for one's homestead? I believe the answer lies in the nature of economic survival in Shixini, based as it is on the interdependence of homesteads and mutual co-operation (see Ch 2). Each homestead is dependent, for its social and economic well-being, on being part of a network of relationships, on which it relies and to which it contributes in a range of ways. Every homestead that dies out, and every non-conformist, threatens the security of the others. Ultimately, the iziyalo addressed to the widow must be seen in this light.

#### Promoting the wife

Ideally, a woman remains a 'junior wife' (umfazana) until she has borne three children, or been married for about nine or ten years. During this period she may not go to social events in areas outside of

her own sub-ward section (unless, of course, she is called to be present at a ritual killing or suchlike by a member of her agnatic group). She does attend beer drinks in the section in which she lives, and she brews beer in her own homestead when instructed to do so by her husband. At beer drinks within her own section she sits to one side with other abafazana, occasionally being called for a sip by the senior women. When the time comes for her to be promoted (ukuqhutywa) to senior status she brews beer (with her husband's approval) for a beer drink to mark her transition to the position of 'senior married woman' (umfazi or umfaz' omdala). In practice, many women are never formally promoted in this manner, but simply start to attend beer drinks in other areas, having obtained their husband's permission to do so. A senior woman has more freedom than a junior. She may go to beer drinks and other events outside her section and sub-ward, and she is not compelled to return home early, like a junior wife is. This means that she has more freedom to enjoy herself, more opportunity of meeting a lover (if she has one), and so on.

In the one case of this type of beer drink recorded during fieldwork Nompondo (Cirha clan), the wife of Pumalele (Qhinebe clan),<sup>8</sup> had been attending beer drinks in other areas and sitting with senior women for some time, without having been officially promoted. For reasons which are not altogether clear, her husband decided that they should brew beer in order to formally mark her status as that of married woman as distinct from umfazana. A number of circumstances may have been related to this decision. Firstly, Nompondo had not been well for some time and various attempts to find a cure had been unsuccessful. Secondly, there had been trouble between her and her husband, who frequently arrived home drunk, and who had proved to be a poor provider. Members of the Ntlane sub-section in Chibi, to which this homestead belonged, had on occasion been appealed to by Nompondo to intervene with her husband, and they had done so. Thirdly, no beer had been brewed at the homestead for some time, and it seems likely that this contributed to Pumalele's decision to brew for his wife's promotion.

Because the homestead consisted of only one hut, the beer drink was

held outside, attended by approximately 25 men and 35 women. After some preliminary discussion the amasiko beakers were given out in the usual way (see Ch 3), and Mahlathini, the head of the local amaNtlane agnatic cluster, spoke to the men on Pumalele's behalf:

Mahlathini: Attention! Here is a word my chiefs. Here is what is said by this member of the Qhinebe clan called Pumalele; he says that this beer is to allow you to recognize his wife at beer drinks, seeing that she has not  
 5 yet been promoted; even though you have seen her there, she has been there unofficially, because she was never promoted. This beer that he has placed here now is to enable you to recognize her presence at beer drinks, so that you should see her at beer drinks every day. This beer made by him is  
 10 to enable her to move around so that she can go to a beer drink wherever she likes. Do not wonder what this woman is doing at beer drinks, and say that 'we do not know her as a woman who attends beer drinks.' That's it, that's what he is saying, that this thing is for all of you, the one (cask)  
 15 put here. There is also some for women, four amanxithi; that's all chiefs.

Other senior men from both Chibi and Komkhulu responded to Mahlathini, and said that Nompondo should be called over from where the women were sitting so that she could be 'given words'. Had the beer drink been held inside a hut, she would have been called into the hut for this purpose. As one man put it, in conducting these proceedings outside "we are making a hut here now". The following were some of the responses to Mahlathini's announcement:

Dwetya (Bamba clan, Chibi section): No, great one, it is quite clear what Gqugqugqu's<sup>9</sup> (Pumelele's) intention is concerning his wife, wanting to drink with her at beer drinks; let her come closer so that we can give forth  
 5 words; beer of this nature requires words to be said to the woman.

Gavan (Ntlane, Chibi section. Interjections by Dwetya): As it has been said she should be called even though she is there outside (Correct!) Yes, let her come here, and we will instruct her (That's it!) What has been said is quite correct (We are making a hut here now). Yes. It is over to you Mbhele (Ndlebezenja).

Ndlebezenja (Cirha clan, Komkhulu): Yes, let her be called.

a.n.o. She must come with the others, not by herself.

Dwetya: Send someone to call her.

Pumalele: Hey, brother-in-law, please call the amaNtlane (women) here!

Mahlathini: His wife, who should come with the others!

Nompondo then came over, accompanied by the other women of the Ntlane sub-section. They sat down near the men, facing the latter. Nompondo was then spoken to as follows:

Mahlathini: Now then, here is a word, wife of Pumalele; now that you are part of the group of women of your area; today, you have done this, with your husband; they are introducing you to beer drinks. However, seeing that you  
5 are being introduced to beer drinks today, (remember that) your husband is a drunkard, as we all know, but you are not; respect this homestead. Yes, zikaGqugqugqu zikaDuka ama-Hlathi (praises of the Qhinebe clan), don't have drunken quarrels here at this homestead, so that we have to be  
10 called to settle cases here, due to your overindulgence. Respect each other from today onwards; because you have long been running away, you who does not drink (heavily), running away from this man. Do not cause a commotion at home here from now on; behave well; drink and return home  
15 to see to your things. You may speak your words men, I have done with mine.

Dwetya: Men, he has given forth. He has given forth fellows. Here it is then Cirha, daughter of Situlo. A homestead is a big responsibility Cirha; you must realize that you should conduct yourself well. When you are with  
 5 your husband at beer drinks, and he is chatting away to people; I am not going to talk as if I am drunk; don't abandon him (for another man), go home to that hut, to this homestead of yours: worry about the time to go home, and don't say, seeing him spending the night at a beer drink, 'I  
 10 too will sleep here', and destroy this homestead. Go home even if your husband is sleeping and leave him there. Conduct yourself well Cirha.

(Addressing the men) Fellow, these words of mine have already been said by Mahlathini. I am not going to say  
 15 anything else; he has robbed me, this fellow. I stop there men. Let another man stand up if he wants to do so. Mmhh.

Others also spoke, repeating much of what Dwetya and Mahlathini had said. Sonkebese added that Nompondo should be respectful towards the other women on the Ntlane sub-section, and take care to share beer carefully with them. When the men were finished speaking the women got up and rejoined the others, and the men's injoli was told to proceed with the arranging of the hut and distribution of beer. According to informants, iziyalo are also given to the woman being promoted by the senior women of her section, but on this particular occasion there were no such speeches.

The themes evident in the men's speeches are similar to those found in the iziyalo addressed to a widow being released from the mourning of her husband. Nompondo is being formally incorporated into the community of senior women, particularly into the group with whom she travels to and sits with at beer drinks - the women of the Ntlane sub-section of Chibi section of the sub-ward. But her incorporation also has a wider dimension, in that the community as a whole, men and women, now recognize her new status. This is clearly stated in the oratory (p.310 1.7-13).

However, note that the men did not use the term 'go amongst people' in these speeches. Unlike the widow, a woman being promoted has not been cut off from society, has not been 'liminal' for a period, but has been occupying a normal social status - that of 'junior wife'. The transition to the status of 'senior' wife is the formal recognition of a process in which a woman slowly gains increased status and freedom in her marital home. A junior wife has little say in the running of a homestead, but the longer she lives there the more influence she has and the more she expects to be consulted by her husband. Allowing her to attend beer drinks in other areas symbolises her generally improved status and greater freedom within the homestead.

Much of the symbolism is, nonetheless, similar to that of 'releasing the widow'. As in the case of releasing the widow, Nompondo is told, in rather general terms, how to behave at beer drinks, and how to balance the pleasure of sociability and beer drinking against the duties that she has in the home. Here, the moral ambiguity of beer is again evident, and its potential for disorder (break up of the marriage and destruction of the homestead) is emphasized (p.311 1.8-16). Nompondo's promotion itself is cast in the idiom of beer drinking, the pleasures of which are contrasted with her responsibilities as a senior woman, towards her fellow women, her husband, and her homestead.

It is evident also that her promotion is a social, community affair. This is indicated not only by the content of the speeches but also by the context of her promotion (a public beer drink) and the idiom within which her promotion is cast (beer drinking and responsibilities towards people). The community, as represented especially by the Ntlane sub-section, has a degree of authority over her and responsibility for her. This emerges from the references to the fact that she had made appeals to them, and that they had assisted her by visiting the homestead to try and resolve the quarrels between her husband and herself (p.311 1.8-14). Pumalele is criticized by the speakers for being a troublemaker and drunkard (p.311 1.6), and Nompondo is advised on how to handle his drunkenness. At the same time, however, they tell her to accept and tolerate her husband's

misbehaviour (p.312 1.5-11).

These factors, considered in conjunction with the circumstances in which the decision to brew was made, indicate that this beer drink was as much a ritual of reconciliation as one of status change. In brewing together for the community Nompondo and her husband indicate that they are reconciled with one another and with the Ntlane sub-section, through whose agency her promotion is achieved. Beer drinks indicate, at a more general level, good relationships (or at least the intention of such) between the individual homestead and the wider community, and between its living members and the shades. Not having brewed for some time, this beer drink symbolized (and effected) reconciliation between the homestead and the community, and through this, between the homestead head and his shades. This is indicated by Mahlathini's calling out of the Qhinebe clan praises, but also in a more general way, in the sense that beer drinks are believed to be pleasing to the shades, and to ensure their blessings (see Ch 7).

Finally, as with releasing the widow, it is clear that this beer drink does not merely express or effect the transition, but also constitutes it. As a cultural drama it is both a means and an end, a way of doing something and the result of what is done. Thus its 'illocutionary force', or its 'performative efficacy' is multifaceted. It does a number of things, as indicated above. What remains to be made more explicit is the relationship between the performance and the realities of everyday life. As a model of practical activities experienced (intervention of the members of the Ntlane sub-section between Nompondo and her husband; membership of a group of women who go to beer drinks together, help each other in the fields, etc.) the beer drink gives meaning to these experiences by displaying them in dramatic form. At the same time, it provides a blueprint for the future. It 'says' that it is the Ntlane sub-section with which Nompondo should work together, attend beer drinks and to whom she should appeal for help in future.

### Making known the homestead

The establishment of a new, independent homestead (umzi) is a very important step for people in Xhosa speaking communities, as it is in many other societies. For both the new homestead head and his wife it involves an important change in status, and as such it is ritualized. For the wife it means independence from her mother-in-law, her own home to run, and a fuller claim to her husband's migrant earnings. For the husband it means independence from his father or elder brother, and an important step towards full, independent manhood. Establishing a homestead means creating a new social entity and changing one's social standing in the community. It involves economic changes, in that it confers the right to a garden, a field (if available) and to grazing. It also involves a measure of religious independence, in that the head can now initiate and hold rituals at his own home.

In Shixini, the importance of establishing, maintaining and working for one's homestead is stressed in a variety of ritual situations, including the admonitions by seniors to newly circumcised youths, to migrant workers in the rites associated with migrant labour (McAllister 1980, 1981) and, as indicated in the previous section, at beer drinks such as those for releasing the widow from mourning and promoting a woman to senior status. The change in status that building an independent umzi entails is marked, among Xhosa speakers, by the ritual killing of a goat known as ukuvula umzi (lit: 'opening the homestead') (Bigalke 1969, 106) or, in Shixini, ukwazisa umzi ('making known the homestead'). This ritual also involves the brewing of beer and invocations to the shades in which they are informed of their descendant's new status (McAllister 1979, 37, 62-63).

In practice, this is not the only option open to Shixini people. They may kill and brew for ukwazisa umzi, or they may conduct this ritual without brewing, and brew at a later stage. Or they may decide not to kill a goat at all, and to hold a beer drink instead. Such a beer drink is not a promise of a killing to come, as described earlier (Ch 2) but a full substitute for ukwazisa umzi, though it is not

called by this name. It is complete in itself, and is a rather different kind of event from the killing.

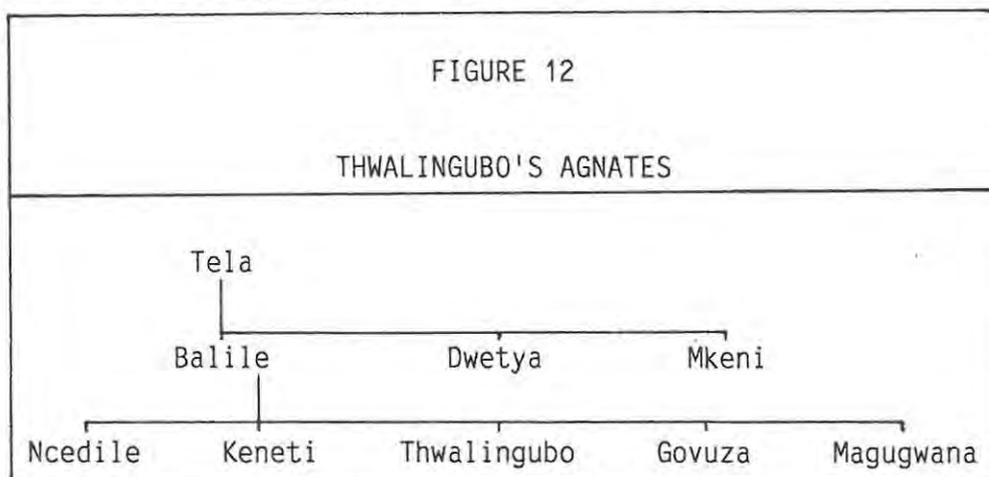
Beer drinks held to mark the establishment of a new homestead, whether a goat was killed previously or not, are usually called simply ntwana nje (lit: 'just a small thing'). In theory, names such as ntwana nje, ntselo nje ('just a drink') and isichenene ('a small drop') are interchangeable, in that all three refer to beer brewed for no particular purpose other than to have a beer drink in one's home. In practice, the isichenene beer drinks held during fieldwork were held for a variety of reasons (see Ch 2) and the name ntselo nje was never formally applied to any of the events attended and seemed to be used in an abstract sort of way. All three of the beer drinks that were dubbed 'ntwana nje', however, were held because the homestead was new, this being the first beer drink that it was holding. In what follows, one of these is examined in some detail, and the other two referred to where appropriate.

(i) Thwalingubo's ntwana nje

Thwalingubo, a young man of the Bamba clan living in the Chibi section of Folokhwe, decided to brew beer for a ntwana nje because he had recently established his own homestead, on a site next door to his father's umzi, now occupied by his elder brother, Keneti. When asked why he had decided to brew, Thwalingubo put it this way:

"I decided to have this beer drink because everybody knew that I was living at my elder brother's place, Balile's homestead, of Tela (Balile was Thwalingubo's father, Tela his paternal grandfather. See Figure 12). People were looking at me, thinking that I had no wife and no homestead. Some heard that I had a wife, some saw her. My father and Keneti decided that I should have my own homestead and this is the site that I got. Any person coming from Jotelo or Velelo or wherever did not know where my umzi was. It was only the neighbours who knew that this was a homestead of the son of Balile's. In March this year I collected all the

people of the location (Chibi) and slaughtered a goat to announce to all (living and dead) that I was here now. The goat was used by Chibi people only. After that, other people were passing by on the path and not coming into this homestead. This beer was brewed so that everybody, even passers-by, should come into this homestead. This is the custom (ngumthetho lo), everybody does this."



At the beer drink, Thwalingubo's father's brother, Dwetya, explained to the men why Thwalingubo had decided to brew:

Here's a point! ('Nkos!)

(Comments: 'Listen chiefs!' 'Be quiet!' Don't make a noise here in the office men, you are expected to give attention!)

Here's a point!

Chiefs of the Bomvana

Of the pawing buffalo

5 Of those who squat in East London ('Nkos!)

Which are well known ('Nkos!)

Go about and relate

The Chiefs which I see ('Nkos!)

Who should be drinking together

10 According to custom ('Nkos!)

So, this here is my child ('Nkos!)

He was taken out here by his father ('Nkos!)

To build a home, that homestead of his

- Of his mother and father, behind the homestead (of his father)  
('Nkos!)
- 15 Balile said 'Thwalingubo, come here' ('Nkos!)
- Balile being alive!
- He said 'Govuza, come here' ('Nkos!)
- Balile being alive!
- I mean to say then, my child is saying
- 20 That ever since he established this home
- No one has entered this hut of his ('Nkos!)
- So that his fathers should know that he lives here (Nkos!)
- Balile too should answer him ('Nkos!)
- He was taken by God, in his own way ('Nkos!)
- 25 His grandfathers too do not know that he has taken this site  
('Nkos!)
- I mean to say then my chiefs
- This child of mine says that this is why he has called you  
('Nkos!)
- To this home
- His plea is simply 'I want to be known by my people
- 30 That I live here
- I have left my elder brother's place' ('Nkos!)
- He is cooking for that reason
- He is saying 'here is a cask' ('Nkos!)
- Do you see it!?
- 35 It is for men only ('Nkos!)
- Here is a second cask! For the mothers! ('Nkos!)
- There are four amaqhwina! ('Nkos!)
- In this cask ('Nkos!)
- For his mothers ('Nkos!)
- 40 So that there be spitting in the homestead of Fule!
- This is what is said by this child ('Nkos!)
- That he should be known, by his fathers and grandfathers
- All the people of Fu-u-u-le! ('Nkos!)
- That he is living here now (He says he is independent!)
- 45 They should fill him with health (They should do so!)
- Because he has left his elder brother (They say so...!)
- Because Balile applied for this site (They say that!)

I stop now, I am going to sit down (He says he is sitting down)

Having called for attention (l. 1-2) Dwetya starts off his speech with a number of praises (izibongo) in the manner of an imbongi (praise poet) (l. 3-10). These are not the praises of any particular clan, but composed by Dwetya on the spur of the moment, to preface his explanation of the nature of the beer drink. He implies that those who are present ('chiefs' is commonly used to refer to the men gathered at the beer drink) come from far and wide (exaggerated as an area bounded by the Bashe river in the north-east (the boundary of Bomvanaland) and East London in the south-west). He wants all of these, who have come together to drink (l. 9-10) to hear what he has to say.

He continues in a style reminiscent of ukubonga (praising), using short, clipped sentences, most of which receive the refrain 'nkos!' ('chief') from a member of the audience, which serves to give his oratory rhythm. However, his delivery is not as fast or as loud as in the first ten lines, and the meaning of what he says is not as obscure. Dwetya relates the circumstances leading up to Thwalingubo's establishment of his own homestead, indicating his dependence on Balile, his father, in this respect. Thwalingubo's younger brother, Govuza, is also referred to. Since this time, he says, Thwalingubo has not held any public events at his home, to enable it to become known by people (l. 20-21) and in this way, to let it be known to his ancestors that this is where he lives (l. 23, 25, 29-31). It is through the attendance of people, and their participation in the beer drink, as expressed in the image of them spitting on the floor (l.40) that the shades will become aware of where he is (l. 42) and give him health (l. 45). Through brewing, people are brought into the homestead, and in this way, he hopes he will become known to and blessed by 'all the people (descendants) of Fule' (l. 43). (Fule is a remote 'lineage' ancestor - Tela's FFF). Dwetya also indicates the amount of beer available (l. 33-39), in a highly stylized way. This speech can be divided into five distinct stages - poetry (l. 1-10), which may also be construed as a welcome and an introduction; history (l. 11-18); the purpose of the event (l. 19-33); indication of the

amount of beer available (l. 33-30); and repetition of the second and third sections, with which he concludes.

Thwalingubo himself then spoke, deferring immediately to the authority of Dwetya, and then going on to repeat a number of the themes introduced by the latter:

- This is my father's younger brother ('Nkos!)  
 Who is speaking ('Nkos!)  
 In speaking here, he is the head of the home ('Nkos!)  
 Of all the homes; the homesteads of his elder brother ('Nkos!)  
 5 It is he who instructs us to brew here  
 He is the person who teaches us everything ('Nkos!)  
 The reason for this (event) chiefs, is that I suddenly realised  
 That I often see people passing here behind the hut  
 Going to drink beer over there, going to drink all over the place  
 ('Nkos!)
- 10 No one has ever been here, in this homestead  
 Some do not even know whose homestead this is ('Nkos!)  
 But today even a stranger passing by will know  
 That he has passed a homestead of the Bamba clan ('Nkos!)  
 The reason, chiefs, for making that beer over there ('Nkos!)
- 15 I made it because I have not brewed since I came here ('Nkos!)  
 I should say that it is not for anything in particular ('Nkos!)  
 (Comments: Ntwana nje! Yaaahh!)  
 It is just something for my being here in this place  
 I have not yet brewed - I am still going to brew for the things I  
 think of  
 In my own time ('Nkos!) (Ntwana nje!)
- 20 Today I have not brewed for anyone in particular, but for any  
 passer-by ('Nkos!)  
 That he should come in ('Nkos!)  
 Go out and urinate ('Nkos!)  
 Fill his pipe, smoke, spit ('Nkos!)  
 And not say there is no spitting in this hut ('Nkos!) (Ah!)
- 25 I mean to say chiefs, as my junior father says ('Nkos!)  
 He speaks the truth, it is that cask! ('Nkos!)

- And it is that cask on one side ('Nkos!)  
 That pot that mothers cook with ('Nkos!)  
 Yes, it is separate, it is four amaqhwina ('Nkos!)  
 30 The men's full cask is on one side for all to see ('Nkos!)  
 That's it then chiefs ('Nkos!)  
 (Ah!) (He says he has put it!) (Ah!)

After acknowledging the authority of Dwetya over himself and the other members of the Bamba lineage in the Chibi area (l. 1-6), Thwalingubo tells the assembly why he decided to brew this beer - to enable his homestead to be known to the community (l. 7-17), because he had never done so before, as a result of which people did not come to his homestead (l. 10-11). He also indicates that this is a necessary preliminary to holding important ancestor rituals (l. 18). In making his homestead known to the community and the shades, he is preparing the way for these events.

Ndlebezenja, a matrilineal kinsman to Thwalingubo and spokesman for Komkhulu section then spoke. He praised Dwetya for initiating the event and said that Dwetya would find it easy to teach Balile's children, because they had already been well instructed by their father, who had been responsible for their circumcision and initiation into manhood. He then recalled that he and Balile had been friends, going to beer drinks together:

- .....  
 I am going to make a small point Bamba ('Nkos!)  
 I lived here with the old man Balile  
 We attended beer drinks together ('Nkos!)  
 With Nombayiso ('Nkos!)  
 5 Men who would have said that this beer brewed by Thwalingubo  
 ('Nkos!)  
 Is beer being given to all the dead people ('Nkos!)  
 Because this beer being brewed by Thwalingubo  
 Today, it is Ntwana nje! ('Nkos!)  
 One brews ntwana nje ('Nkos!)  
 10 So that people should enter the home ('Nkos!)

To spit, to avoid misfortune ('Nkos!)  
 To bring back good fortune ('Nkos!)  
 You see, I used to go about with old people  
 Nombayiso and Balile, people of experience who spoke the truth  
 ('Nkos!)  
 15 Because nowadays we go about telling lies (Ah!)  
 .....

Ndlebezenja concluded by urging Thwalingubo and Govuza to heed their elder brother, Keneti, who would consult Dwetya in all matters regarding the agnatic cluster.

Dwetya responded to Ndlebezenja's speech as follows:

.....  
 Everything you say is true ('Nkos!)  
 All these children were circumcised by Balile ('Nkos!)  
 Not one of them was circumcised by me ('Nkos!)  
 You are not lying in saying so Ndlebezenja ('Nkos!)  
 5 Child of my father's sister ('Nkos!)  
 You speak the truth  
 What you are saying is not wrong, Ndlebezenja  
 It is the Xhosa way  
 To any person who uses his ears ('Nkos!)  
 10 I was left behind ('Nkos!)  
 Balile was taken by God ('Nkos!)  
 I stayed, instructing them in this way ('Nkos!)  
 .....

Dwetya went on to say that Ndlebezenja was entitled to call Thwalingubo's home his own, since his mother had been of the Bamba clan. This too, he said, was isiXhosa (Xhosa custom or way of life).

What emerges from these speeches is that this ntwana nje was brewed for the dual purpose of introducing the homestead to the shades and making it known to the community. It is clear also that it is through the fulfillment of the second aim that the first is achieved. The effect of ntwana nje, assuming that it achieves these aims, include

securing the blessings of the shades and good fortune for the homestead and its inhabitants, and the homesteads incorporation into the community. Having drunk their fill, people leave the homestead "knowing" who lives there, and knowing that it is a homestead that provides for others. The third major theme is the attempt to ensure that Thwalingubo, and his younger brother Govuza (who had an independent homestead nearby) accept the authority of Dwetya, and of Keneti, their elder brother, living representatives of Balile and the other shades. It was due to Balile that Thwalingubo was circumcised into manhood, obtained a wife and a homestead, and the homestead is not his alone, but belongs to the kin group, living and dead.

In considering these matters in terms of the theoretical orientation of this dissertation, two other aspects of this particular beer drink need to be described. One is the extraordinary amount of controversy and argument that marked it, and the other, sometimes related to the first, was the making explicit of what, at other beer drinks, remained largely implicit and understood.

Thwalingubo's ntwana nje was well organized, run by people regarded as knowledgeable and experienced in these matters (Dwetya, Ndlebezenja, Gamalakhe (the Chibi injoli) and others). No mistakes were made in the proceedings, despite the fact that there were a large number of people present, and a lot of beer. However, there was a great deal of discussion and argument, often over trivial points or issues that did not merit debate at other beer drinks. For example, there was a long argument about whether iminono should be given out before or after amasiko. Modi, a Chibi senior, raised this issue in the following manner: "We have got rights here but usokhaya (the host) proceeded with something else (iminono). I want to know if amalungelo (amasiko) have been dished out or not". Ndabanduna (Chibi) answered him, saying that there were not enough beakers at present, but that he also thought that amalungelo should be dished out now. Modi spoke again, saying that he had heard that there were not enough beakers, that ukunona had been taking place, and that they should now be given their amalungelo. Honono (Chibi) said that one could not stop a person who was doing ukunona and tell him that he should

produce amalungelo, but Modi insisted that amalungelo should come first. Honono said that they should wait until iminono were finished, that one could not produce amalungelo at the same time as doing iminono; in any case the beakers were being used for iminono. Gavan (Chibi) rose to say that Dwetya had asked them to come into the hut to eat their amasiko, and that he did not know what had gone wrong now since they had heard nothing to the contrary. Thwalingubo himself then entered the discussion. He said that although they had announced earlier that the amasiko were present, nobody said that they should come first. He had been giving iminono to those to whom he thought he should give; nobody reminded him that amasiko should come forward. Modi retorted: "I am reminding you now." Honono then agreed that the amasiko should be brought out. There was no doubt in everybody's mind that the amasiko would be forthcoming, and at the time the controversy seemed unnecessary or exaggerated. At other beer drinks the iminono were always the first beakers given out and preceded the amasiko, and no similar controversies were recorded, even though it sometimes happened that iminono beakers were still being given out long after the amasiko beer had been consumed.

In giving out the various beakers of iminono, Dwetya explained each of the relationships involved in some detail. For example, a beaker for an affine was announced with the words "This beaker is for (so and so), you must receive this beaker here, because you are at your wife's home; there is nowhere else where you will receive such a beaker". One of the iminono was given to my assistant and myself, and Modi shouted out from across the hut, asking if we would ever reciprocate, or whether Thwalingubo was "throwing away beer". Mzilikazi (at whose homestead we lived) stood to say that he would be the one who reciprocated. We had been given iminono beakers at many other beer drinks without such questions being asked.

Towards the end of the beer drink a visitor from another sub-ward stood to say that he was leaving, and mentioned that he was not an umyeni ('son-in-law') to Thwalingubo, as some people thought, but that his mother was Thwalingubo's mother's sister. Dwetya then expanded on this, saying that this man had married a woman of the Ntlane clan, and

that this had further strengthened the link. Ndlebezenja also contributed, confirming what Dwetya had said, and pointing out that he too was married to a Ntlane woman and thus an umyeni to the amaNtlane. He mentioned that marriage forged relationships between people, but that the implications of this only became fully apparent in the following generation.

There was also discussion about whether people had been allocated their correct places, where exactly (in relation to the wooden rafters - see p.124) each section was entitled to sit, and about where abayeni should sit. Before the beer was explained there was discussion about the nature and range of the injoli's duties and about whether the men sitting outside should be called in or not. When some of the groups did come inside, there was further discussion about why this should have been done. In the course of all this discussion there was frequent reference to Xhosa custom, the nature and rules (imithetho) of beer drinking, and the right way to handle beer.

While it is fairly normal for some issues of this kind to be discussed and commented on at beer drinks, the number that were raised, their apparent triviality (in some cases), and the intensity of the discussions, leads to the conclusion that they were raised because this was a beer drink for a new homestead.

Some of the debates that occurred linked up, in terms of subject matter, with what Dwetya and Ndlebezenja had said in their speeches (see above). For example, a controversy arose in connection with ivanya, with older men asking if there was no 'beaker for words' (see p. 179). As with the discussion about whether iminono should precede amasiko or not, they were opposed by younger men, who claimed that it was not right for them to ask for more beer, and that Thwalingubo had provided enough beer for everyone to drink their fill. Skilled in debate, the seniors said that they were not asking for more beer, merely inquiring whether such a beaker was present, and accused the younger men of saying that it was not right for their elders to be given beer. Gavan put it like this - "According to Xhosa (custom) one does not ask for anything, it is the homestead head who gives it out

on his own accord. (To Thwalingubo) All the speakers talked about you. You were circumcised by your father, and you have never had to ask for anything from anyone. You have your own home now, you must call people to your home; that is the rule. Your father used to drink beer even before you were born, so do not be stingy."

Others referred to Thwalingubo's ancestry, the association between the Bamba lineage and the Chibi area (the amaBamba were original settlers (izakhi) there) and made it clear to Thwalingubo that in calling them to be present at a beer drink he had certain obligations towards them as well as to the dead.

(ii) Honono's ntwana nje

There was also a great deal of argument at one of the other beer drinks of this kind attended, at Honono's homestead. Here, the debates were about the way in which the beer ought to be distributed, whether young men were entitled to a separate beaker or not, and whether the young men were entitled to an apology for the fact that it had not been announced that they would not be getting a separate beaker. This discussion, sparked off by one of the younger men, went on for over an hour, touching on issues such as the nature of ukulawula as opposed to ukugabu, the significance of an ingcwele (full cask) as opposed to a pot of beer, the procedure for admitting young men to beer drinks and the responsibilities of the sub-ward sections in this regard, and other, similar topics (see p.261 ff.). In the course of the debate a number of speakers reflected on the nature of what was being said. Bodli, for example, said that he had never heard of such a thing as an explanation to young men if there was only one pot of beer, and wondered why they were discussing these matters at all. Sonkebese said that these were small issues which could not really be resolved, and that all they were doing were "troubling each other by means of eloquence (ngobuchule)".

In both these cases, the long debates and elaborate discussions, sometimes about rather trivial issues, can be accounted for in terms of the idea of beer drinks as dramatic performances in which men talk

to themselves about themselves, dramatize their social arrangements, and infuse everyday life with meaning. There is another element here, however, arising out of the questions such as why ntwana nje for a new homestead, in particular, should be characterized by such discourse, why it should be beer and its distribution that forms the major topic of conversation, and why it should be that the kinds of topics discussed and argued about at ntwana nje differ from those raised at other beer drinks. It would appear that in talking to themselves about themselves at ntwana nje men, particularly the seniors, attempt to inculcate certain principles and values in the new homestead head. Through exaggeration of the formalities of the beer drink, contrived complaints, exaggerated and in other circumstances highly redundant discussions about things like iminono, the procedure followed for amalungelo, the difference between a cask and a pot, and so on, seniors try, consciously or unconsciously (or both) to provide lessons, about what it means to be a homestead head, how to conduct oneself in relation to other homesteads, and how to handle beer.

As in the case of beer for releasing the widow and for promoting a wife, ntwana nje is an attempt, on the part of the community as represented by the senior men, to control the manner in which the establishment of a new homestead should be construed. This is done using the structure and symbols of beer drinking, by dramatizing the nature of the relationship between the host and his homestead and the other members of the community. The homestead's independence is recognised through the idiom of beer brewing, and the nature of its relationship with others is specified in the same terms, thus controlling its independence and the potential threat of individualism. The oratory in conjunction with the other symbols asserts that there is a correct order that must be conformed to, and that it is an agreed upon, social order. The homestead's independence is recognised through the beer drink which, for its success, depends on consensus among members of the community. The efficacy of the symbols of beer drinking is controlled by the community, which thus controls the meaning of the event (Turner 1975). The symbolic submission of the individual homestead to the communal will is necessary for it to be recognised as independent - a social entity in

its own right. As in the other changes in status marked by brewing beer, incorporation into the community is both effected and constituted through the beer drink. In the cases of status change among women, the emphasis is on how they ought to behave at beer drinks, in order to be respected, to build their homesteads, and so on. In the case of ntwana nje, what is emphasised is the holding of beer drinks and how to run them. Underlying this is the dependence of the homestead on others, in practical, day to day affairs, as discussed earlier. This message is reinforced by the particular objectives of ntwana nje.

Not all of the above interpretation applies to the third ntwana nje recorded in the field, which took place under rather different circumstances, leading to a beer drink with rather different characteristics, in some ways, from those held by Honono and Thwalingubo. This case serves to confirm some of the interpretation of the other two, but also to demonstrate that beer drinks are conducted in a manner that is highly sensitive to the individual circumstances of the homestead involved - drawing yet another link between the dramatic form and social practice.

(iii) Rhwatiti's ntwana nje

Nontwaba (Tshezi clan) organized a ntwana nje beer drink for his younger brother, Rhwatiti, who was away at work. The fact that Rhwatiti was absent is one reason accounting for the difference between this beer drink and those held by Thwalingubo and Honono, but there were also others. The homestead had been established for a number of years, but had lain unoccupied for about a year because Rhwatiti was away and his wife was living elsewhere. Furthermore, Rhwatiti and his wife were already relatively senior people. Some of their children were teenagers, and their eldest son was about 18 years of age. The beer drink was prompted by the return of Rhwatiti's wife to the homestead, and was as much an occasion to mark its reoccupation as its establishment. Rhwatiti had never held ukwazisa umzi, and this was the first beer drink ever held in his homestead, so it is probably best regarded as such rather than as being held to mark the

establishment of a new homestead.

The tenor of the speeches at the beer drink was conciliatory and appeasing. The speakers praised Rhwatiti's wife and Nontwaba for holding the event, and gave the impression of welcoming back into their midst someone who had been absent, someone whom they were concerned about and whom they wished well. It was as if this was a member of the community, and a homestead, that they had thought they might lose, and they were taking an opportunity to make sure that things would go well and that the homestead would not disappear. Of the various speakers, Thekwane was the most explicit and revealing. He spoke as follows, with one of the others providing a refrain of 'mmmh mmmh' at appropriate intervals:

- There is this thing called ntwana nje  
 It is something rare chiefs  
 It is rare because before someone does it he must think in his  
 heart  
 'Since I live here at this home  
 5 I should sometimes make ntwana nje'  
 Yes, he soothes his home  
 Chiefs, a home is not soothed by large occasions  
 It is soothed by means of ntwana nje  
 So that there will be no starvation in the home  
 10 When one brews ntwana nje, one is preventing famine  
 Eeee, so that anyone who enters the home may eat his fill  
 Even if it is a stranger who arrives  
 There should be something to eat in the home  
 You are securing blessings for that purpose
- 15 Well, we are thankful Tshezi  
 That you should have this occasion  
 Having realised that you should prepare a small drink  
 So that there should be spitting  
 Right here in the hut  
 20 To drive out rats  
 So that they are not inside

Being suffocated by the spittle from pipes  
 Let it be clear then, Thsezi  
 That we are grateful for what you have done  
 25 You have done something beautiful  
 Chiefs, we are no longer grateful only for large occasions  
 Because this ntwana nje, it soothes, it is second to those large  
       occasions (i.e. is similar to them)  
 It is second to them, because it soothes the home  
 It removes the dew from the home  
 30 So that life at home becomes good  
 Let it be like that Tshezi, we too say thank you  
 Yes, let it be good here at home, so that we drink here a lot

Others also made it quite explicit what they reckoned the effect of ntwana nje to be. Mzilikazi said that in doing ntwana nje Nontwaba was working for the security and uprightness (inyaniso) of the home, and Tshakmane said that the beer drink would make the home fertile (lit: 'bring in lambs' and 'create lambs'). Rhwatiti himself, when spoken to some years after the beer drink, said that it had been held because this was the way one called the ancestors (okuthi kukubiza izinyanya njalo) to come closer (okuthi zisondele) to the homestead. Ntwana nje soothes the home, he said, "because you are telling the ancestors, so that they should know where you are. Perhaps you have been staying somewhere else, or at the homestead of your elder brother, before going out to establish your own home. As the ancestors come you are destroying evil (uchitha ububi), yes, so that good luck (intlahlala) enters, your luck, so that you receive good harvests (lit: 'receive food'), so that cattle should be healthy, and goats..."

Notes to Chapter 6

1. Formerly, according to Alberti (1968, 94) the hut was burnt down on the death of its head.
2. Among the Mpondo of Mthwa studied by Kuckertz (1983/1984) the widow remains in mourning for a full year, and the restrictions are removed in three stages - the first four or five days after the funeral, the second about three months later, and the third at the end of the year's mourning. The latter marks both the widow's release and the return of the shade of the deceased to his home. Among other Nguni the return of the shade (ukubuyisa, ukuguqula) is a distinct ceremony which sometimes takes place only many years after death. In the Mpondo case, the whole clan-section takes part in this ceremony, including those not locally resident; there is a washing with 'medicine of the home', the ritual corporateness of the clan-section is acted out, and the unity of the living kin with the deceased is re-established with the 'return home' of the deceased (ibid., 119). Kuckertz refers to the event as 'ceremonial beer drinking'.
3. Nowinile is of the Ngqosini clan, the founding ancestors of which are said to have been 'river people' (abantu bomlambo). Thus she is called Malanjani ('mother of the river') and intombi yasemlanjeni ('daughter of the river').
4. This was a reference, not to the death of Nosajini's grandchild, but to the fact that one of her sons had taken ill at work and had returned to seek the help of a healer in another part of the district.
5. 'Phungela's stone' is a fairly well known figure of speech. It refers to a (presumably imaginary) fellow by the name of Phungela who lived near the Kei river and helped people to cross it. It was safe to cross when a stone in the water was exposed, dangerous when the stone was submerged. The proverb 'ukutsiba ilitye likaPhungela' means to have reached the point of no

return, to have become incorrigible and beyond help. "A person who goes beyond Phungela's stone is one who is mad, one who enters danger" (Mesatywa 1971, 153. My translation)

6. I am grateful to M.G. Whisson for suggesting this point.
7. The strategy of dramatising change through verbal contrast is found also in other Xhosa transition rituals, such as initiation into adulthood, and in rituals in other parts of the world. For example, at Romanian weddings strigaturi verses contrast the pre-marital, carefree state of the bride with the hardships of marriage, such as submission to her mother-in-law (Kligman 1984, 172).
8. These two names are pseudonyms.
9. Gqugqugqu is a praise name of the Qhinebe clan.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## A CONCLUSION IN THREE PARTS

Part one - beer drinks and the ancestors

Writers on the ancestor religion among Nguni and other African peoples have stressed the point that the 'congregation' that worships together is a group of kin, usually with a lineage or part thereof at its core. Hammond-Tooke (1981, 24) fairly represents the general view in stating that "the essential thing about ancestor religion is that it concerns not only the individual dead, but an association between a social group and the dead members of that group." This social group is a kin group or, in patrilineal societies like the Cape Nguni, an agnatic lineage. Dead members of the lineage are worshipped by the living members, with the genealogical senior acting as 'priest' (ibid., 25).

So the ancestor religion 'reflects' or 'expresses' the social structure, and "belongs to a type of society which uses kinship as its chief organisational principle" (Kuckertz 1981, 5). Furthermore, "there would be no religious action unless the congregation of kinsmen had gathered" (loc. cit.). This means that the ancestor religion is essentially particularistic, each kin group worshipping its own group of ancestors.

More recently, two further points of major significance have been made in connection with Cape Nguni religion - the one indicating that the ancestor religion is not quite as particularistic as previously thought, the other that it is more so. Firstly, Hammond-Tooke (1984, 1985) has concluded that it is clans rather than lineages that are the important descent groups among the Cape Nguni. Even though the clan never gets together as a group, but is dispersed all over the Transkei/Ciskei area and beyond, exogamy rules are defined in terms of clan membership, and it is clan ancestors as a group who are invoked in ritual, not lineage ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

Lineage genealogies exist as mental constructs, but the lineage as a

group does not have any 'on the ground' reality. Lineages "are not local units, they do not own land or stock in common, members appearing on the genealogy do not come together... and they do not appear to ever conceive of themselves to be a group in any sociological sense" (Hammond-Tooke 1985, 48). Instead, it is the 'agnatic cluster' (imilowo) or 'minimal descent group', a "cluster of agnatically related homesteads who live in a particular area" (ibid., 49) that is important. This group, the descendants of a common father or grandfather, varies in size from two to twenty homesteads, and is of some practical importance in everyday life. Its members settle disputes among themselves, are involved in bridewealth negotiations on each other's behalf, and worship together. On the evidence presented in Chapters 2 and 5 above, there is also considerable economic co-operation between members of this group.

Within the general area of the agnatic cluster live other people, with whom members of the cluster share a clan name, as well as members of many other clans. Among the people who are of the same clan as the agnatic cluster are some with whom the latter can trace a genealogical link. This group of kin is referred to as the 'localised clan section' or amawethu ('those of us') (Kuckertz 1983/4, 119). Hammond-Tooke suggests that the clan is represented by the localised clan section. The latter is the practical manifestation of an ideal construct. Within the clan section one man is recognised as genealogically senior, and he acts as priest (intlabi) on important ritual occasions. Hammond-Tooke suggests that the ritualization of this office "is an attempt to forge an 'ecclesiastical' link between the effective local cult group and the (unavailable) ideal ritual leaders of the dispersed clan and thus between local and clan ancestral spirits" (1985, 52).

Secondly, Kuckertz (1983/4) has stressed the essentially individualistic nature of ancestor religion in the Mthwa chiefdom of Western Pondoland. Working within the same general assumptions as Hammond-Tooke, Kuckertz identifies two types of 'ancestral feast' among Mthwa. The first involves 'ceremonial beer drinking' to effect reconciliation between people. What distinguishes this kind of feast from ordinary 'beer parties' is the intent of the brewer and the

manner in which the beer is drunk. The second type of ancestor feast is a particular ritual (idini),<sup>2</sup> involving the killing of a goat or ox and the brewing of beer for a particular ancestor whose demand for 'food' is being manifested in an affliction (e.g. illness, dreams) sent to a particular descendent.

Kuckertz concentrates on the second type, the aim of which is to restore health or 'life' (impilo) to the afflicted, since the central preoccupation of Mthwa cosmology is interpreting misfortune and warding it off (*ibid.*, 118). In this ritual, there is an invocation (unqulo) to the clan ancestors but the core of the ritual involves communion between the afflicted individual and the individual communicating ancestor (whose identity is established by divination prior to the ritual, and who may be agnatic or cognatic). The term ancestor 'cult' is reserved for this core element of the event. In both types of ancestral feast Kuckertz distinguishes between the private (ritual) aspect, where participation is limited to agnates and their wives, and the public (ceremonial) aspect, in which unrelated neighbours may participate.

Kuckertz regards the communication between individual supplicant and ancestor as the central and most important aspect of ancestor religion in Mthwa, and seems to reduce the ancestor religion to this central element, claiming that "it is on the wellbeing of the individual member of the homestead that ancestor religion focusses. In other words, Mthwa ancestor religion fragments Mthwa society" (1984, xix; see also 1983/4, 336).

This orientation needs to be understood in terms of the highly individualistic nature of Mthwa society, which may be linked, I suggest, to Western influence and the general process of social change over the last hundred years or so. There has been strong missionary influence in Mthwa, to the extent that 88% of people in Caguba, the village where Kuckertz worked, are Christians. Reliance on labour migration is heavy, as in other parts of Transkei, and the people live in a village-like residential pattern due to the introduction of an agricultural 'betterment' scheme in the late 1950s. The effect of

these factors on the nature of social life in Mthwa is likely to have been fairly severe. The impact of 'betterment' schemes, for example, have been widely documented, recently summarised by McAllister (1986) and subjected to detailed study by de Wet (1985). These schemes involve, inter alia, residential relocation and the disruption of the older settlement pattern, which leads to the breakdown of close neighbourly relations between homesteads and to greater individualism.

Although he considers the influence of Christianity on conceptions of the supreme being, for example, Kuckertz does not pay sufficient attention to these factors in trying to understand the nature of the ancestor religion in Mthwa. Instead, he describes the chiefdom as "one of the remoter areas" where he could expect "a more traditional way of life, still bound to the habits and customs of the past" (1984, vii). This gives the impression that his findings might be regarded as 'typical' of Cape Nguni religion, although he acknowledges that the individualistic nature of Mthwa society is exceptional.

Neither Hammond-Tooke nor Kuckertz appear to have taken into account the fact that kin other than agnates and their wives participate fully in Cape Nguni rituals. These include clansmen with no genealogical link with the celebrating clan-section (which would strengthen Hammond-Tooke's argument) and a group glossed as abatshana - men and women whose mothers or parents' mothers were or are members of the celebrating section or clan (Bigalke 1969, 117-118; McAllister 1979, 64-68; de Wet 1985, 342). Sometimes these extra-lineage kin far outnumber agnates at ritual (Bigalke 1969, 118). In Shixini, those who participate in ritual as fully as agnates include abatshana (ZS, ZD, FZS, FZD, DS and DD), mother's brother (umalume) and sister, and also abazala ('cousins', including MBS, MBD, MBSS, MBSD, MZS, and MZD). Clansmen as well as classificatory abatshana and abazala who live nearby also take part.

These people are called to be present at ancestor rituals such as ukubuyisa, ukupha uyise and intambo (see Ch 2) and the more important ones (such as umalume, sister's sons and father's sister's sons) are expected to sleep at the celebrating homestead for the three or four

nights that the ritual lasts. Like agnates they wear special ritual clothes (white blanket, blue isidanga necklace, the amayila necklace made from sea shells, and inquma monkeyskin headband). Male members of the group meet with the clan section for the ibhunga ('meeting') at which the purpose of the event is explained, and take part in the ritual dance in the hut where a sacred fire has been made, accompanied by the women's ombela (singing and clapping). They take part in the procession from the hut to the cattle byre, and in the ukushwama (ritual tasting of the intsonyama meat and beer) in the cattle byre. Other people who may be present (non-kin, neighbours) do not partake in these activities, though they are present. Their participation is limited to the feast which follows the ritual proper.

On Kuckertz's evidence that the individual 'communicating' ancestor may be cognatic (such as father's sister) or affinal (such as mother), Hammond-Tooke states that we need to accept that "the relationship between the (agnatic) cluster members and their dead is frankly a bilateral one, reflecting wider kinship interests rather than solely agnatic ones" (1985, 51). The evidence cited above indicates that the worshipping group itself is not agnatic, but something wider. It includes classificatory agnates (members of the clan), matrilineal kin, and non-agnatic cognates. In the rest of this section I will review the evidence that some of the beer drinks described in this dissertation are 'ancestor rituals', and that if this is so the worshipping group at these events is not a kinship group at all.

The close connection between beer and the ancestors and the widespread use of beer in rituals have been surveyed in Chapter 2. The ancestors are thought to be present whenever people are gathered to drink beer or to feast on meat and beer. They are like the living in their love of company and food. Also, they take a keen interest in the homesteads of their dependents, and are present there whenever a ritual or beer drink is held. In his study of Ndlambe religion Bigalke comments that the shades are thought to gather together "whenever there are many people at the homes of their descendants, not only when there is a sacrifice but also when a beer drink is held, for all the ancestors like conviviality..." (1969, 76).

Shixini people say that every homestead should brew beer at regular intervals and that if this is not done (without good reason) misfortunes may result (McAllister 1981, 14). Ndlambe hold the same view and Bigalke cites a number of cases in which the failure of a homestead to brew is linked to misfortunes suffered by it, or where beer is brewed to effect a desirable occurrence by influencing the ancestors (1969, 111). Neglecting to brew indicates neglect of the ancestors and they may respond by appearing in dreams to request beer or by sending misfortune (ibid., 77, 146. See also McAllister 1981, 12-14). Conversely, carrying out the obligation to brew regularly is to ensure continued blessings and good fortune, and is essential for the 'building of the homestead' (ukwakha umzi). As Gamalakhe put it, "if you brew beer you will see improvements in health here at home, things that were troubling you (will improve)...you see things clearly, and receive everything you want."

As shown in previous chapters beer drinks soothe (ukuphulula) and 'bless' (ukusikelela) and 'put things right' (ukulungisela) at home (pp. 329-330). In the case of 'beer for harvest', we have seen that this is not merely a thanksgiving to the shades but an invocation (unqulo) to them to provide good harvests in the future (p. 255). In the case of umsindleko the thanksgiving is for safe return from and good fortune at work, and a plea that this should be repeated in future (McAllister 1981). Here, the migrant is symbolically washed with beer, which is spoken of as ubulawu ('medicine of the home', which is closely associated with the shades and used in ritual contexts to effect communication with them).

The association between beer and the shades is evident also in the use of manure at beer drinks. The casks are always placed at the back (entla) of the hut, a spot closely associated with the shades, on a layer of fine manure from the cattle byre. When beer at Jejane's home bubbled over and down the side of the cask onto the manure, Dlathu exclaimed "Do you see that now, that is good. The old woman being brewed for is having her beer now."<sup>3</sup> Bigalke's informants said that the spilling of beer onto the manure was a sign of ancestral favour, and that it led to good luck. Manure was used because of its absorbent

qualities, but also to please the shades (Bigalke 1969, 112). It must be manure from the homestead's own byre, or from the byre of an agnate. After the beer drink it is collected together and returned to the byre.

Even imbarha is said to have a religious element, since the object is to get money to use for the good of the homestead, and because there are speeches at imbarha also, and it is the speaking that draws the attention of the shades (see McAllister 1981, 13-14). The same might be said of work party beer, though in both cases the religious element is not as clear or as direct as in the case of most other beer drinks.

Most beer drinks (like ntwana nje, beer for harvest and umsindleko, are brewed for the ancestors as a group and do not involve reference or invocation to an individual ancestor. One exception to this is inkobe, a beer drink which may have taken the place of a ritual killing (see p. 89).

In 1978 Mzilikazi brewed inkobe for his mother. It was conducted just like other beer drinks with the exception that before the arrival of the people Mzilikazi, his father's elder brother's son, his daughter and Dlathu, a neighbouring clansman, ritually tasted the beer in the hut where the beer drink was to be held. They sat around the hearth and Mzilikazi explained to them that he was brewing for his mother. He then said "let us shwama" (ritually taste the beer), and each of them drank from the beaker, after Mzilikazi had first done so.

At the beer drink Mzilikazi explained to all why he had brewed: "Here, I have brewed this beer. I have brewed for the old woman of this home, the one who bore me. Yes, it is inkobe for this old woman. Yes, that is it chiefs, that is what I have done here." A number of speakers thanked and praised Mzilikazi for this, saying that a person who did not do these things ended up consulting a diviner (as a result

of misfortune). Mzilikazi would be protected when he went to work, they said, because his mother would be 'walking with him'. Without looking after his mother, the homestead would not prosper. The 'old woman' would provide good harvests, she would provide children.

Inkobe is exceptional among beer drinks because of the private element, and it would be possible to argue that this element is the ritual proper through which communication with the ancestor takes place, with the beer drinking by the larger group constituting the 'feast'. In the case of other beer drinks without this private element, however, it is the beer drink as such that is the effective communicating element. What makes it effective is the presence and participation of the people of the community. The ancestors' liking of beer and their liking of commensality are linked. Berglund's Zulu informants told him that one who drinks alone is like a thief - "Beer must always be drunk together in that the shades and the people are together" (1976, 213).

What brings the shades to the homestead is the presence of people. Thus 'spitting' (ukutshica), conversing informally and sociably (ukungxola) and speaking formally (ukuthetha) are very important elements of beer drinking, symbolising the presence of people and of the shades. They also indicate harmony and absence of anger within the group. Spitting is said to effect the removal of misfortunes (p. 329) and is at the same time a symbol of reconciliation and harmony. The community that is gathered together at a beer drink is a community of both living and dead, gathered together to partake of beer. When men are together in peace and harmony drinking beer, the shades of that homestead will be there also (see Berglund 1976, 209, 228). This is one of the reasons why there is so much emphasis placed on correct and controlled behaviour at beer drinks, and why misbehaviour or threats of violence are quickly attended to. Visitors to the home bring good fortune (ithamsanqa) and bear away and disperse misfortune when they leave (Bigalke 1969, 104). There must be harmony within the home and within the group gathered in the home for this to be achieved. If there is bad feeling and disharmony in the home, misfortune may follow

(see p. 228; Wilson 1968).

The brewing of beer for people implies that the home is a social entity and part of a community, as Mbambaza indicated so clearly in his speeches to Nowinile and Nosajini (Chapter 6). Brewing for people ensures that they will 'recognize' and 'know' (ukwazi) the homestead and its descendents. This is pleasing to the shades, and they too will 'know' the homestead as a result, and not be 'confused' (ukukhohlwa), "because they see that the homestead is still a homestead, because there is the smell of beer...". The purpose of brewing is twofold - to bring people into the homestead, and through this to please and influence the ancestors.

This is perhaps best illustrated in the case of ntwana nje for a new homestead (Chapter 6). The beer drink makes the homestead and its inhabitants known to the community and to the ancestors at the same time. As Dwetya said, Thwalingubo brewed so that he should be known by his people (amawethu), living and dead alike (p. 318). Once it is known to the living it can become part of a network of social and economic relationships which has major implications for the economic wellbeing of the homestead (as shown in Chapters 2 and 5). In this way the homestead will be 'built', which is what the ancestors want. Once the homestead is known to the ancestors, it will receive mystical protection and favours from them. They will help to ensure that the homestead has 'life' (impilo). Providing beer for people, an act of hospitality, is to provide beer for the shades, an act of worship.

However, it is not just beer and the people's presence that attracts the attention of the shades, but also the speaking (ukuthetha) that takes place. Firstly, the explanation of the beer by the homestead head or his spokesman is an explanation to both the living and the dead. Gamalakhe said: "The reason for explaining the beer is to soothe my blood (ukuphulul' igazi), so that the people down under (abantu aphantsi) should not complain and say, 'that child rejects us' (uyavimba: lit. 'is stingy', 'closed up')." The explanation allows people to respond, and this too is important. Gamalakhe continued: "One brews to fill the home with people, who will speak nice words, or

even speak badly. Even if a person does not speak well, it is going to soothe one, because you want everyone to speak as they like here at home." Without an explanation the people would not know the reason for brewing and would not be able to speak. It is important for them to do so, said Kabilawo, because "they have come to worship for you (bazokunqulela), they have come to help the people of your home (izihlwele zakowenu)."

It is the act of speaking that is important. At Ntanyongo's umsindleko Sonkebese (Tshezi clan) stood after a number of people had already spoken and introduced his speech as follows: "Words have been spoken, and now the ibandla too has spoken. There is nothing else I am going to say. I am merely going to give a word which has no flavour (ilizwi elijavujavu, lit: 'an insipid word') because if you are a human being, when you do something (brew beer) you know that you do it so that there will be speaking. Here it is then, son of Mhlakaza..." The beakers given out towards the end of the beer drink, the 'beakers for words' are a recognition of the importance of speaking. At Mzilikazi's inkobe for his mother, Dlathu said that he was giving out these beakers "due to the fact that you have spoken" (njengo'ba nithethile).

Apart from the formal explanation and response from those present, the informal conversation, the arguments and debates, and the general sociability of the event, are important to the ancestors. A beer drink should be an event at which people 'make a noise' (ukungxola). In announcing the purpose of an isichenene beer drink brewed by Nothusile, Dlathu said: "Food (beer) is eaten so that noise should be made in this home of yours" (kungxolwe kweli khaya lenu). 'Making a noise' includes the arguments and debates (one of the meanings of ukungxola is 'to quarrel') because these are indicative of the ridding of anger and the process of reconciliation and the establishment of harmony, essential for the success of the beer drink. It is thus linked to the presence of the shades. The same term is used if beer, while fermenting, bubbles over the side of the cask and runs onto the floor or if some brandy falls to the floor while being dispensed - "it is the making of noise, it is said that it is the people of below" (kungxola, kuthiwa ngabantu abaphantsi).

Speaking (ukuthetha) and the making of noise (ukungxola), as well as the beer drink as a whole, are referred to as ukunqula ('to invoke', 'pray', or 'worship'). Speaking at beer drinks is also referred to as ukucamagusha ('to appease', 'to propitiate') and as 'medicine' (iyeza) with which to soothe (ukuphulula) the home and its people (McAllister 1981, 13-14). At certain beer drinks (such as umsindleko), the oratory is also referred to as ukubonga ('to praise') and as ukubongoza ('to praise', 'coax', 'flatter', 'plead with', 'entreat').

Anyone familiar with Nguni religion will recognise these words as ones used also in a variety of ancestor rituals. At ritual killings the ancestors are invoked (ukunqula) and a supplication or entreaty (isibongozo) made to them (Hammond-Tooke 1985, 55). Among the Zulu the ritual calling of ancestors is termed ukuthetha, and if a ritual does not succeed the senior agnate may ngxola (speak to the ancestors 'angrily' or 'with deep feeling') (Hammond-Tooke 1981, 26). It is the calling to the ancestors that serves to bless (ukusikelela) the ritual. Intercessions to the shades are also known as izibongo (Kuckertz 1984, 122; Opland 1983, Ch 5) and ukubonga in Zulu means 'to worship'. The aim of ritual is frequently to 'appease' (ukucamagusha) the shades (Pauw 1975, 172-173).

What are the implications of this for our understanding of the ancestor religion among Cape Nguni? Can we still speak of an exclusive congregation of kin, and of an identification of ancestral group with kin group? Is the ancestor religion particularistic, dividing society into small, exclusive worshipping groups? At beer drinks, those who do the drinking, debating, spitting and socialising may include kin, but do not consist exclusively of kin. Instead, the people present are there primarily as neighbours, members of the same section and subward within which the beer drink is being held. Furthermore, it is these people as a group who are referred to as amawethu ('our people'), abantu bekhaya ('people of the home') and abantu bakowabo ('their people'), terms which also refer to the ancestors and which are reserved for the agnatic group according to other writers on Cape Nguni religion, where the implication of such terms is the unity of the group of living kin with their dead, and communion between them.

One of the implications of the ritual significance of beer drinks is that the actors in ritual are, in this case, not defined in terms of kinship structure but in terms of territorial organization. In ideal terms the worshipping group (even in Shixini) is a kin group centered on the clan. This is realised in practice only at the level of the clan section, and only on occasions of major ritual importance. Homesteads may go for twenty or thirty years without performing one of these major rituals. Hammond-Tooke makes a distinction between "the sphere of practical, everyday religion and...the more formal ritual sphere" (1968, 139). Beer drinks belong to the sphere of practical, everyday religion, though they are nevertheless rituals, as we have seen. They are the most frequent, everyday manifestation of dependence on the ancestors, and it is because they manifest dependence that the term 'worship' is applicable to them (Hammond-Tooke 1968, 139). They are not as fully developed (in a religious sense) as other rituals insofar as symbols of communication and communion with the shades is concerned, and they are aimed at general blessings and benefits, whereas ritual killings usually have specific aims, but they are rituals nevertheless.

Since ritual practice and social practice are frequently closely linked, it is not surprising that a situation where everyday survival depends on being part of a neighbourhood network of co-operating homesteads should be reflected in ritual. Kinship is not the "chief organisational principle" (Kuckertz 1981, 5) in any Cape Nguni groups, as far as is known (Hammond-Tooke 1984). Kuckertz says that the "central issue of Mthwa cosmology" is "life as it is lived...life as it depends on the co-operation between man and man" and that this is clearly demonstrated by the ancestor religion and ancestor ritual (1984, 118). He shows that life as lived in Mthwa (including, paradoxically, co-operation between homesteads) has as its central reference point the individual homestead and its well-being. Mthwa individualism is reflected in the particular rituals which form the main focus of the ancestor religion and are the only manifestation of the ancestor cult. In Shixini things are different. Certainly, homesteads are individual units, but life is lived in a neighbourhood rather than an individualised context. This is reflected in beer drinks.

Could the ritual character of beer drinks in Shixini be something new, as is suggested by the case of umsindleko and also ntwana nje for a new homestead (which has replaced the killing of a goat for ukwazis' umzi - see Ch 2). Two distinct processes might have been at work - the substitution of beer drinks for older ritual forms, and the development of new kinds of rituals in the form of beer drinks. As indicated in Chapter 2, fluctuations in the frequency of beer brewing and the uses of beer among Nguni go back a long way, and are not a recent development. No doubt new rituals developed and old ones fell away from time to time, as is likely to happen in any society when circumstances change and adjustments have to be made.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the ritual use of beer is well established, and documented in historical works as well as in early ethnographies. In fact, Kuckertz has suggested that beer rituals may have been much more important in the past than they are at present (1983/4). He also notes that the term amatywala means 'kinds of beer', 'ancestors', and 'rituals of devotion' (ibid., 13-14).

#### Part two - beer drinks and the social order

It is also possible to make some more general remarks about the role of beer drinks in Shixini, and to draw some tentative conclusions concerning their part in the maintenance of social order. This requires a look at the relationship between beer drinks, social practice and culture (including the notion of 'social structure').

We have seen that beer drinks cannot be understood outside of the ongoing interactions of everyday life. The symbols that are displayed at a beer drink refer to some social reality or process at which the event is part. These symbols objectify and 'make visible' this reality. As dramatic performances what beer drinks dramatise is social practice. This may be something quite specific - an agricultural or some other economic undertaking, the work spell and return of a migrant labourer, the establishment of a new homestead, the promotion of a woman to senior status, and so on. We might call these 'social episodes' or 'social enterprises'.

At these beer drinks, and also at those at which there appears to be no particular reason for brewing, there is another, more general reality, of which the social episodes that motivate many beer drinks are manifestations, and (partly) in terms of which the proceedings are structured. I am referring here to what might be called 'social organization' - including the reality of co-operation among neighbours, the political division of the ward into sub-wards and the sub-wards into sections, the division of labour and other aspects of the relationship between men and women, and so on. Beakers of beer such as iminono gifts reveal actual links of kinship and friendship, iimvuko the existing nature of relationships between sub-ward sections, and umlumiso and isidudu the composition of the neighbourhood group that works closely together. The reality of social organization is one abstracted from the process of everyday social life.

Beer drinks dramatise reality through the creation of a frame and a dramatic structure within which symbols are mustered and manipulated through the application of the rules (imithetho) of beer drinking. The rules are, within certain limits, flexible and negotiable. Through these symbols and rules, social experience is given form and structure. Both the immediate circumstances leading up to the brewing of beer and the more general realities such as the interdependence of homesteads are important here. The obligation to brew and to share it with others in a prescribed manner is directly related to this. As Mbambaza put it, someone who does not conform in this respect would be 'ruined' (uzokudliwa) - "If something befalls you here and you appeal to the ilali, it will be said 'Oh no, you are alone amongst people, you eat by yourself. Solve your own problems.'"

The objectification of the principles of social organization and the more immediate everyday social realities that people are involved in provides people with a model of this reality, and allows them to experience it fully, and to apprehend it intellectually. In this way beer drinks allow people to make life meaningful. Something like the boundaries between groups or the relationships between social categories can only be made real and observable through the

conventions which mark or recognize them. And in making them real, beer drinks also invest and reinvest them with value (Thornton, 1980, 21). In this sense, the symbols of beer drinking, if viewed processually, 'reveal' the world outside the beer drink rather than 'hide' it, as Bloch (1977) or Cohen (1969) would suggest. At the same time, they provide a blueprint for action - a model 'for' reality yet to be experienced (Geertz 1973). Thus they exercise an influence on reality and do not only 'express' it. This is particularly true of those beer drinks marking and effecting change in status. In objectifying roles and relationships at such events, behavioural models are created, and society provided with a degree of order and continuity. Beer drinks are agents for socialization and resocialization.

The sensitivity of beer drink symbolism to social reality is illustrated in their ability to adapt to changed circumstances and in the development of new kinds of beer drinks, which provide society with the moral and symbolic resources to cope with change. This is clear in the case of the development of the umsindleko beer drink. As Turner has shown the properties of symbols are important here - "multivocality, complexity of association, ambiguity, open-endedness... are connected with their dynamic quality" (1975, 155). Symbols gain and lose meaning over time, in both the long term, responding to things like changes in the mode of production, and the short term, responding to the particular circumstances in which they are used. They are part of social dynamics and cannot be isolated from social life, which is constantly changing (Turner 1982, 22).

In Geertz's terms, symbols 'shape' themselves to reality, and reality to themselves, and these two aspects are linked - the particular shape that a symbol takes in ritual is both backward and forward looking, enabling reflection on the past and providing a guideline for the future in the process. Thus the widow who is being released from mourning, for example, seated with her fellows at the beer drink held for that purpose, is both a model of the social nature of mourning and the support she received from these women, and of the social nature of her releasing into their collective midst. The control by workers over

the beer given to them in reward for their labours enables them to construe their participation in the work party in a meaningful way and to demonstrate (to themselves and the others present) the way to organize and interpret homestead interdependence in the future.

Certainly, there is a pattern that reoccurs from beer drink to beer drink, a 'symbolic system' of sorts, made up of time, space and beer, and of the groups and individuals taking part. In one sense beer drinks are all the same, and the meaning of some of the symbolic elements (such as the beaker for the sibonda) remains relatively constant. In another sense, as we have seen, every beer drink is unique, proceeding according to a number of general principles, which can be applied to produce different meanings in response to particular needs. Thus the principle of differential allocation of beer to men and women, for example, varies in application according to the nature of the individual beer drink and the circumstances under which it is held.

These principles or motifs of beer drinking involve beliefs and values - cultural norms about things like respect for elders and members of the Tshawe clan, the superiority of men over women, and the importance of 'building the homestead'. They include values such as sharing and neighbourly co-operation, and moral principles such as those attached to the concept of ubuntu ('humanity' or 'humaneness'). They revolve around ideas concerning territory, affinity and the relation between living and ancestors, and so on. These are ideas or ideals that people carry around in their heads, and which are put into practice from time to time in social life. It is in ritual drama that these aspects of culture and social structure are revealed. At umsindleko the values of going out to work and of building the homestead are publicly and dramatically displayed. At work party beer drinks the importance of co-operation and the principles of territorial solidarity are made known. At ntwana nje for a new homestead the control of seniors over juniors and the subordination of the individual to the community is acted out.

As 'cultural performances' then, beer drinks bring together, in the

same time and place, in the same set of symbols, social practice and culture, and relate them to each other. Every beer drink occurs within its own set of circumstances, but it relates these circumstances to the 'system' of ideas, beliefs and values of society, through selective application of the beer drinking rules. In the process, the links between institutional spheres - economics, the homestead, the ancestor religion, and so on - become apparent. It is this fusion of culture and practice that makes action meaningful, allows for the creation of 'models', and helps to account for social order in Shixini. Every time people go to a beer drink: (1) Central values, beliefs, norms and moral principles of society are made explicit; (2) social organizational principles (e.g. kinship and territory) are dramatized and related to one another, and (3) social action is related to (1) and (2) - culture and society. Symbols both reveal social processes and communicate values and ideals in so doing.

Practice presupposes institutions, organization, and values, but it also creates them. When acting, people select from and situationally modify elements from their culture. Making action meaningful in ritual situations then involves making explicit the cultural elements in terms of which action occurred. Since such action is always unique, the relationship between it and culture is always particular. The fusion between the two occurs according to the situational modification of cultural norms, and culture is thus displayed accordingly. As the case of umsindleko shows, changes in practice can lead to changes in worldview and social structure (the way in which people conceptualise their society). Situational changes, and changed interests and constraints, lead to the development of new strategies, and thus to cultural changes. So culture is something that is continually being created and recreated through social interaction and the dramatisation of action, it is not something that is imposed on people.

To summarise, every beer drink occurs in the context of:

(1) Its own practical social circumstances, which may include a particular social episode/enterprise, such as a work party or a social transition.

(2) A social organization based on the principles of kinship and territory, including a hierarchy based on principles of sex, age and political status. The enterprise is thus a particular manifestation of a wider organizational process.

(3) A 'cultural system' of an abstract kind, with reference to which action takes place and which it modifies in the process.

The fusion between culture and practise that takes place at beer drinks is paralleled by another kind of fusion, that between the individual homestead and the community. Brewing is itself a practical act, a social enterprise, which is endowed with cultural meaning, which is represented by the rules and symbols under which brewing and drinking occur.

As far as the individual homestead head is concerned, brewing is a strategic decision of political and economic significance. The homestead depends on the goodwill and co-operation of others for its continued survival, social and economic. Brewing is a means of maintaining relationship, and an acting out of an important moral (cultural) principle at the same time (see above). This is one of the many senses in which a beer drink is a 'performative'- it does something, it is a political and moral act, which has a variety of consequences - social, religious, etc. It is not just dramatising or expressing something, it is doing something.

However, there are certain conditions of a conventional kind that must be conformed to for the performative to be effective (Austin, 1962; Moore 1977). The rules of beer drinking (including the rules of speaking) must be followed, and this involves the community (the section and sub-ward within which the brewing occurs). Just as brewing is a political act, so is the attendance and participation of the community in the beer drink. Furthermore, political arrangements are constructed as part of the drama itself, in allocations such as iimvuko. Through attending the beer drink members of the community actively make the individual host homestead part of the community. It is in their communal interest to do so, given the interdependence of homesteads.

As illustrated particularly by ntwana nje for a new homestead, it is by brewing beer for people that the homestead is 'made known' (made part of the community) and 'built up'. There are a number of ways in which this is done. The brewing process, first of all, involves co-operation between homesteads, turning the beer drink into a communal rather than a private affair. At the beer drink the homestead's private space is occupied and 'enculturated' (invested with value) by the people who attend (Turner 1982, 19). Soon after the start of the beer drink, the homestead head is obliged to hand over the control of the beer and proceedings to his section and sub-ward. It is through the participation of people that the religious aims of brewing, which may be more or less prominent, are achieved.

Through dramatisation, deconstruction and *communitas*, society and the individual homestead become one. Society is objectified in the homestead, and the homestead has dramatic objective reality only by virtue of its socialisation. The community becomes 'privatised' (*ibid.*, 19) and the homestead socialised. It has become a social entity, it has lost its individual identity. Obviously this involves a degree of what Turner called '*communitas*', and we have noted various specific manifestations of *communitas* in the different facets of beer drinking procedure (Chs 3 and 4). I am suggesting now that the beer drink as a whole might profitably be viewed as a liminal situation in which *communitas* exists and a sense of community reinforced. And, as Turner points out, "*communitas* in ritual can only be invoked easily when there are many occasions outside the ritual on which *communitas* has been achieved" (1968, 56).

As implied in the discussion of seating arrangements, beer drinks also allow for communication across sub-wards and wards, and for the provision of a wider Xhosa unity within and probably beyond the district as a whole. For example, Fumbatha sub-ward attends beer drinks in Folokhwe, to its south, and also in Mandluntsha, to its north. Mandluntsha does not travel to Folokhwe for beer drinks, so men from Fumbatha act as a sort of bridge and channel of communication between Mandluntsha and Folokhwe, facilitating a higher degree of interaction between people of the same ward than would otherwise be

possible (see also Nolan 1971, Frake 1964). In this respect it is interesting to note that the main links between sub-wards in Shixini are affinal ones, and that these links are stressed at beer drinks (Ch 3).

It is interesting to compare these conclusions with those of Kuckertz's on the role of beer drinking in the maintenance of social order in Mthwa. Beer drinking, says Kuckertz, "is the enactment of the world as an ordered universe" within an individual homestead, which "as an ideal spatial organisation, is a symbolic representation of the world and its order, in which the living and the dead, kinsmen and non-kinsmen, share " (1984, 338-339). Within the homestead "the basic concepts of Mthwa society are repeatedly recreated; they become an enacted reality in the process of the homestead's constitution..." (ibid., xvii).

At first glance this conclusion seems similar to those of this study. However, there is an important difference. In Mthwa, the link between the world and the homestead is a symbolic one, creating order at the level of construct. This involves a 'mystification' of the real nature of social life in Mthwa which revolves around the individual homestead and individual self-interest. While not explicitly stated, such mystification is implied in Kuckertz's discussion of aspects of social life such as work parties and the ancestor religion (see above pp. 259). Kuckertz is quite explicit that social reality in Mthwa is an individualistic reality, each homestead being concerned only with its own well-being. This is not the case in Shixini, as we have seen. Instead, social life is a social, communal reality, within which individual homesteads are integrated at every level into a larger social entity. This is then (accurately) portrayed in beer drinks.

This is not to say that the picture provided by beer drinks in Shixini is a totally honest one, if what we mean by 'reality' are the relations of production. The real contribution of women to the domestic economy, and the role played by young men, are mystified in the sense that they are hidden within the existing structure of power relations. It is these power relations which are acted out and

reinforced at beer drinks at the level of structural and cultural reality. There is inequality and hierarchy in Shixini society, and these are dramatised and legitimized in ritual. In this sense, beer drinks do 'hide' reality (or, more accurately, this part of reality). However, given these existing hierarchies and power relations, these are accurately portrayed in ritual. So one could argue that the reality of inequality is dramatized in beer drinks. Within this structural framework, which, to anthropologists like Asad (1983) and Bloch (1977) contains an element of 'mystification', the immediate reality of work parties, migrant work, a released widow, or the gratitude of a homestead head to his ancestors, is acted out.

### Part three - the ethnography of communication at beer drinks

From the data presented in this dissertation it is evident that as a 'speech situation' beer drinks are extremely complex, including a large number of speech events of different kinds, in which a variety of different speech genres - from informal conversation to formal and highly stylized oratory - are used. The speech events found at beer drinks vary in character and detail according to a number of factors - the type of beer drink, the context of which it forms part, the stage of the proceedings reached, the personalities involved, and so on. For reasons of both space and relevance I have not ventured into the linguistic features of the different genres and speech events. The 'textural' features have been largely ignored in favour of text (content) and context (Dundes 1980), and the speaking has been used primarily as a window through which to gain insights into the nature of beer drinking. Even relatively short announcements, as we have seen, are full of meaning.

Take for example the announcement of the isikhonkwane beaker at Ndlebezenja's imbarha (p. 154). The words used included the following: "Excuse me... people of Folokhwe, as conveyed by the son of Mangono here at this home. He says that this beaker is the isikhonkwane, the beaker of the spoor. The isikhonkwane is something that we are very careful about...This is it here, being given out here at Mangono's home...." A number of important questions emerge from an announcement

like this - Why are the words spoken by this particular person? Why are they addressed to the people of Folokhwe? Why is Ndlebezenja referred to as the son of Mangono? Why is there emphasis on Mangono's home? Why is the beaker called isikhonkwane and 'the beaker of the spoor'? Why does it have to be handled carefully? I hope to have demonstrated in the preceding chapters that paying attention to natural speech and asking these sorts of questions is a fruitful research strategy.

Some observations have been made on the way in which speaking at beer drinks is organized, patterned, and regulated; on the discourse stages that occur at beer drinks, and on certain sociolinguistic features of these stages. The rules governing speaking are complex, and no attempt has been made to present a comprehensive and systematic account of these. This must await a separate study. It should be clear, however, that the communicatively competent person in Shixini needs to be not only linguistically competent, but to know when, how, and for how long to speak, to select the appropriate genre, to be aware of the conventions or rules operating at the time, and so on. He needs to be able to express the appropriate sentiments in an appropriate manner, in order to realise his particular 'communicative intent' (Murphy 1978, 130). He needs to be sensitive to the context of the beer drink and to the people involved, and to adapt his speech accordingly.

That communicative competence is largely a matter of social and cultural competence is indicated by the overlap between speaking and the other aspects of beer drinking symbolism. The rules of beer drinking include and are almost synonymous with the rules of speaking. This is linked, as we have seen, to the great emphasis on speaking out and making everything clear at beer drinks. The link is evident also when we examine the Xhosa phrases for these terms. The 'rules of beer drinking' may be referred to as amasiko otywala (lit. 'beer customs'), imithetho yotywala (the 'rules' or 'laws' of beer) or iintetho zotywala (lit. the 'speeches', 'proclamations' or 'declarations' of beer). Both imithetho and iintetho are derived from ukuthetha ('to speak', or 'to speak authoritatively'). Both may be applied to the rules or conventions of beer drinking in general,

including the conventions governing the allocation of beer and seats, reciprocity, and speech. Significantly, although there is potentially a separate term for 'rules of speaking', such as imithetho yokuthetha, a term like this is hardly ever heard at beer drinks. What this apparent failure to distinguish between saying and doing indicates is that they are, in a sense, indistinguishable.

Chapters 4 - 6 indicate that the role of speech in the process of framing and dramatisation is vitally important. Firstly, the explanation establishes the context of the beer drink and provides the 'key' or tone for what follows (Hymes 1972, 62). This speech and the formal responses to it, as well as subsequent speaking about the event, the beer, and other matters, helps to make the meaning of the symbols and the event as a whole explicit. Furthermore, it is partly through speech that cultural norms and values are evoked and related to the particular circumstances of brewing and to the drama as a whole. Through speech the symbolic structure of the beer drink is endowed with cultural significance and related to social practice in an appropriate and dynamic manner. This is necessary for the event to have 'performative efficacy', especially where status change is involved (see Ch. 6). Thus speech is much more than verbal art, but one of the primary mechanisms through which the intention of brewing is realised. In this respect words have power (Peek 1981), a power that is linked to man's creative ability. It is with words that man defines himself, and with which he creates order out of chaos (Tambiah 1968, 1973).

The main object of the more formal oratory (the explanation, the responses to this, the expression of thanks by various sections and sub-wards, and so on), is to provide a formal understanding of the event. These speeches have persuasive social force (Rosaldo 1973), largely through relating the particular event to general cultural values and norms, and through attempting to establish the proper relationship between the individual and the community. In something like ntwana nje for a new homestead, for example, the individual homestead head is identified with an ideal-typical homestead head, which depends for its wellbeing on being part of the community. An

effective, sociolinguistically competent speaker needs to be able to achieve this, through a process of what Kenneth Burke called 'identification'. As expressed by Rosaldo(1973), this means that "a speaker will identify the objects, persons or events of his descriptions with examples, categories or concepts whose typical fates and motives have the sorts of moral implications which are relevant to his interest and intent". This may also require that the speaker identify himself with a particular role or social category, through which he is able to evoke norms which allow him to establish the legitimacy of what he is saying. The speeches by Dwetya and Ndlebezenja addressed to Thwalingubo (pp.317-322) include good examples of this. Identification requires a degree of formalisation, but this does not mean, as Bloch (1975) argues, loss of meaning and propositional content. As Werbner (1977) points out, it is a characteristic of oratory to combine formality with creativity.

The different kinds of identification that may operate in beer drink oratory are illustrated in the following speech, delivered by Shoti of the Ntlane clan from Jotelo sub-ward. He is addressing Mgilimbane, son of Giladile of the Qhinebe clan, on the occasion of his umsindleko, held because he had recently returned from work, where he had managed to save a good deal of money. The ukuvumisa is shown in parentheses.

- All right then, pardon chiefs  
 All right here is a point  
     (Quiet! There is someone speaking here!)
- The one who is speaking comes from over there at Jotelo  
 It is I of the Ntlane clan (Right!)
- 5 That young man of Giladile's is also of the Ntlane clan (Gosh!)  
 Because his father was born to the Ntlane clan (Gosh!)  
 All right, that's fine (Truly!)  
 It is good that a person does something to be seen by others  
     (Truly!)
- The reason we are here is because you have done something, so that  
     we should see it
- 10 This young man knows his achievement, seeing that he is doing

- something familiar to you all (Truly!)
- It is not going to be dug out by any of us
- We can see that he is well established (Truly!)
- We can see that he is stable, with our own eyes (Truly!)
- We do not want to know what cannot be seen
- 15 We want a youth to make it clear
- It is already clear now, we have seen him, he should not stop  
(i.e. his good work) (Truly!)
- He should excell and not say he has done nothing for a particular  
period (Truly!)
- We grew up with Giladile as boys, ploughing down there with two  
oxen (Truly!)
- He would harvest more maize than people who would use six oxen  
(Truly!) (Laughter)
- 20 Down there, with only two oxen man!
- When the sod fell on its face he would stop his oxen, even if he  
was alone, and turn it so that it lay on its side (Truly!)
- (Laughter)
- His plough was a wooden one, but he ploughed till the sun was high  
Its handles were made of wood, not of steel
- His maize was plentiful, and he would require big oxen to harvest
- 25 He did not use those (first) two oxen (Truly!)
- They were overcome by the size of the load, yet the ploughing was  
done by just the two of them (Truly!)
- That is whay I say to this young man
- A person starts slowly (Wow!)
- And does something, by himself
- 30 And now when that thing has to be brought home, it requires people  
(Truly!)
- It will be like that with him, seeing that he is alone
- He will do something big and when it comes home he will require  
the community (Truly!)
- That thing requires the community, because it will be greater than  
him now, even though he did it alone
- Just like those two oxen which ploughed together down below there,  
and the maize required many oxen (Truly!)
- 35 I stop there

In this address Shoti first identifies himself as a spokesman for Jotelo ward and establishes a kinship connection with Mgilibane (the latter's father was born of a Ntlane woman, making him a classificatory 'mtshana to Shoti). He praises Mgilibane for holding umsindleko, thereby publicising his success at work and his return to (and acceptance of his membership of) the community. He makes it clear that it is the public recognition of Mgilibane's work effort that is important (l. 7 - 9). He does not want to know how much Mgilibane saved or what he invested his savings in, saying that it is evident that Mgilibane is well established or 'stable' (uzinzile) (l. 10 - 16). At other umsindleko beer drinks it is a convention that the migrant is asked what it is that he has returned home with, a question that is never answered but which serves to dramatise the importance of working and of spending money wisely (see McAllister 1981).

Shoti then refers to Mgilibane's father and uses an extended metaphor to make the point that individual efforts may start off in a small way but have big results. Two oxen might plough, but in the hands of a skilful and diligent worker, such as Giladile was, the harvest will be very big, requiring six oxen to bring it in from the fields. Without those six oxen the harvest will be of no use. Likewise, Mgilibane's work effort must be recognized and made meaningful by the community for it to have results. His work could lead to his homestead developing greatly, but this would be meaningless without the acceptance and sanction of the community. What the metaphor of the two oxen does is to objectify Mgilibane's work experience in the form of the beer drink, and to enable reflection on it. In addition, it invokes the sanction of Mgilibane's dead father for the message being conveyed, and it interprets migrant labour in terms of the rural economy. Shoti's speech can thus be seen as a persuasive act, an attempt to fuse individual and community and to dramatise the interdependence of homesteads. The particular is related to the general, practice to culture. It is likely that this is not a fully conscious process. People who take part in ceremonial, in small scale as well as western society, are not necessarily conscious of the 'grammar' of the event. It is up to the analyst to discover the conventions (La Fontaine 1986). Shoti and others may be conscious of

the need to say the 'correct' things at events like this, but the question of why they are correct must be teased out by the observer.

There are at least three important points to be made about the political significance of beer drink oratory. Firstly, beer drinks (as well as other speech situations) allow individuals to display their verbal skills, thereby functioning as a platform on which socio-political status can be acted out and confirmed. Men who speak well are admired for their 'eloquent speech' (ubuciko bokuthetha), and an eloquent speaker (iciko ngokuthetha) may be praised at a beer drink with a comment such as Atsh' amagam' ezweni! Akh' elinye! (lit. 'So say the words of the world! There is no other word!'). Someone who lacks communicative competence does not command respect in the community, and is unlikely to play a role in influencing community decisions (see Frake 1964, Moeran 1984).

It is easy to dismiss what a man says if he fails to say it in the right form. For example, at an isichenene in Ndlelibanzi a speaker was told that "we are not discussing a court case here", because of his style of speech. Nothusile was once told that she was "not at a beer drink" when she adopted a beer drink style in an informal situation. For those who do speak well, it is important to be present at beer drinks. People who do not attend and who wish to be involved in community life run the risk of not keeping abreast of what is happening in the area. For many, it is not the drinking that counts, but being there, interacting with people, making one's opinion known, and trying to influence the outcome of debates.

Secondly, speaking at beer drinks, in conjunction with the other symbols, reveals the boundaries between territorial and other social groups based on age, sex and political status (in the case of amaTshawe, for example). Speaking also makes explicit links and divisions based on kinship and affinity. As a beer drink progresses through its various stages speech defines the boundaries between groups, allowing for the definition of boundaries between and within them and, in a kalaidascope-like manner, alternately breaking down, redrawing, expanding and contracting these boundaries. It is perhaps

for this reason that the announcements made concerning the various beer allocations are so highly stylized. Within and between the different stages, speech allows people to reflect on what is happening, through talk about the beer, seating places, etc. They are, in effect, continually questioning and verifying meaning. Discussions such as those about seating places (p. 128), the debate about where an elder should sit (p. 175), the heavy redundancy in the talk about iqwele (p. 177) and many similar incidents recorded above, should be seen in this light.

Clearly, speech not only points to social and territorial divisions but also helps to create an overall unity. This is the third way in which speaking at beer drinks is politically significant. It is through speech that the individual homestead is linked with the wider community and that the divisions within the community are overcome. As shown earlier (p. 201ff.) the 'speaking of speaking' that occurs at beer drinks emphasises this unity. People see speech as being a vital element in establishing and maintaining communal harmony.

Speech establishes the reality of community and the interdependence of households at the religious, economic and political levels. The terms of address used are revealing here (see p. 141). Speaking of the people present as 'my people', or as the 'people of the home' helps create a sense of unity within sections, sub-wards, and clusters of sub-wards. Speaking of the men present as 'fathers', and of the women as 'mothers' turns the gathering into a kind of extended family (see p. 318). The frequent reference to kinship links should also be seen in this light. Establishing kinship can overcome other divisions based on territory, age and sex. Speaking is a communal activity, as are other forms of oral literature (Kunene 1976). Speaking is participation in the community, and such participation may be seen as part of the illocutionary force of the act of speaking. The people who attend each other's beer drinks may be regarded as a 'speech community' (Saville-Troike 1982, 17-22), and attendance may be viewed as an act of communal solidarity (La Fontaine 1986). The debates and discussions often involve community affairs, which are thrashed out in the individual homestead. As among the Bassari, "beer provides the

occasions for and the mechanism whereby much of the business of the society gets done" (Nolan, 1971, 7).

The fact that many of the issues discussed are never settled points to the role of beer drinks as events at which the community gets the opportunity to act as community, and, in some cases (such as the debates concerning the admission of young men to beer drinks) to continually air ideals and norms which may be under threat. It is not in their interests to settle such matters, since the continued discussion of them plays a more important role than reaching a decision on them would. A similar conclusion may be reached concerning the debates over relatively trivial things such as the order in which the beer should be allocated. These sort of matters are always resolved, symbolising the unity of the section or sub-ward, and harmony within it which must be achieved and displayed for the beer drink to be a success.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Evidence from Willowvale indicates that individual ancestors are in fact invoked in ritual, but this need not be discussed here.
2. Both Kuckertz and Hammond-Tooke appear to use the term idini to mean piacular ritual, performed "when illness or misfortune is divined as having been caused by ancestral wrath" (Hammond-Tooke 1981, 26). In Willowvale the term idini has wider application and includes, for example, important mortuary rituals such as ukubuyisa.
3. Jejane had brewed and slaughtered a goat for a female ancestor.
4. For example, in 1914 Councillor Mamba referred in the UTTGC to "new kinds of beer drinks" that had developed in the Transkei (UTTGC 1914).

## APPENDIX 1

GLOSSARY OF XHOSA TERMS AND PHRASES

This glossary is divided into two parts. Certain Xhosa terms which occur regularly in the text are listed in Part A. These do not necessarily relate to beer drinking. In Part B the beer drinking terms are listed. In accordance with normal practice, the terms are alphabeticised according to their stems, the prefix being given after the stem. Plurals are shown where appropriate.

Part A

bandla, i-	senior men or court (moot) of the section or sub-ward; see also <u>inkundla</u>
baya, isi-	byre for small stock
bonda, isi-	sub-headman of the sub-ward
buyisa, uku-	a mortuary ritual performed to effect the 'bringing back' of the shade of a deceased homestead head; see also <u>ukuguqula</u>
celo, isi-	a request for something
doda, in-	an adult or senior man
duna, i-	a male; a 'real' man
fana, um-	a young man
fazi, um-	a woman; a senior married woman
fazana, um-	a junior married woman
gqibelo, um-	ploughing group consisting of one or more ploughing 'companies'
guqula, uku-	see <u>ukubuyisa</u>
hlanti, ubu-	cattle byre
khahlelo, isi-	praise name
khaya, i-	home
kundla, in-	courtyard, space between main hut and cattlebyre; also court (see <u>ibandla</u> )
lali, i-	'location' or area such as ward, sub-ward or section.
lawu, ubu-	'medicine of the home'
lobola, uku-	to give bridewealth
lobolo, i-	bridewealth
lima, i-	a co-operative work group
mango, um-	ridge, neighbourhood unit
mangumba, u-	alcoholic drink brewed from commercial ingredients
mamlambo, u-	a witch familiar that changes shape and appearance
ncamisa, uku-	ritual conducted at a boy's home prior to his circumcision
ndwandwa, i-	work party drawn from two or more sections of the sub-ward
nqula, uku-	to invoke the ancestors, to worship
nqulo, u-	an invocation
ntsonyama, i-	sacred portion of meat cut from the right shoulder of an ox
pha, uku-	'to give' - a ritual killing, usually for a dead father or grandfather
rhewu, i- (ama-)	thin fermented maize meal

shwama, uku-	to ritually taste
siko, i- (ama-)	custom, habit
susa, isi-	ancestor ritual involving a killing
thetho, um-	a rule, custom, law
tlombe, in-	a dance
tshana, um- (aba-)	son or daughter of a female agnate
tshotsho, um-	dance attended by uncircumcised boys and girls of similar age
veni, um-	son-in-law
Xhosa, isi-	the Xhosa language, way of life, customs, etc
zi, um-	homestead
zila, uku-	to mourn; second mortuary ritual

### Part B

bala, i- (ama-)	seating place allocated to a group at a beer drink
beleka, uku-	to ask a friend to accompany one when one is called for a drink by someone else; see <u>ukurhabula</u>
bhabhazela, i-	see <u>imbarha</u>
bhekile, i-	a tin can of recognised size full of beer

ibhekile kasibonda- beaker of beer given to the sibonda  
ibhekile yokubulela- 'thankyou beaker', given out at the end of a beer drink to express thanks to those who participated and spoke  
ibhekile yamazwi- given out in appreciation of the the words spoken by others  
ibhekile yokulindela- beaker given out to early arrivals while the others are being awaited  
ibhekile yomnyango- 'beaker of the door'- see ibhekile yokulindela  
ibhekile yomkhondo - see isikhonkwane  
ibhekile yokwazi- 'beaker of informing' early arrivers of the reason for brewing

cakula, uku-	to draw the first beaker from the main cask
cakulo, um-	the first beaker from the main cask
cephe, um-	see <u>umhlahlaphantsi</u>
chenene, isi-	a small beer drink, a small amount of beer
dudu, isi-	'porridge'; beer drunk on the day after the beer drink; cooked maize and water mixture prior to fermentation
fanelo, im- (iim-)	see <u>amasiko</u>
fatyi, i-	cask or barrel
faxo, um-	see <u>ivanya</u>
fihlo, imi-	'hidden beer', drunk by neighbours once the beer drink has ended
gabu, uku-	to divide the men present at a beer drink into groups of equal numbers and to allocate beer accordingly, irrespective of territorial affiliation
gabu, u-	beer given out according to <u>ukugabu</u>
gananda, isi-	a tin can partially full of beer
gidi, um-	large festive occasion
qibelo, um-	beer drink held for a ploughing group of the same

	name
gubudile, uku-	to turn the beer pot upside down (empty it completely)
gwele, i-	yeast; beer consumed by neighbours before the beer drink starts
hlalaphantsi, um-	'sitting down'; beaker of beer given to women after they have completed the straining of the beer; also called <u>umcephe</u> , 'a spoon'.
hlinzeko, um-	lit: 'a slaughtering'; see <u>umsindleko</u>
hluza, uku-	to strain beer
hobo, i-	a very large beaker of beer sometimes used at feasts
jola, uku-	to divide, apportion
joli, in-	master of ceremonies, apportioner of beer
khondo, um-	lit: 'a spoor'; see <u>isikhonkwane</u>
khonkwane, isi-	lit: 'a peg'; beaker given to men of the sub-ward at <u>imbarha</u> ; also known as <u>umkhondo</u> or <u>ibhekile yomkhondo</u>
kobe, in-	'boiled maize'; a beer drink or ritual killing for a maternal ancestor; beaker given to workers after a work party
koduso, in-	dried, sprouted maize used as malt when brewing; also called <u>imithombo</u>
khulula, uku-	to free or release (e.g a widow from mourning at the beer drink known as <u>ukukhulula umhlolokazi</u> - 'releasing the widow')
lawula, uku-	to allocate beer according to territorial groups
lawulo, um-	beer allocated by <u>ukulawula</u>
lungelo, i- (ama-)	right(s); see <u>amasiko</u>
lungisa, uku-	to put right, as in <u>ukulungis' indlu</u> - 'to arrange the hut' (i.e. allocate seating places at a beer drink)
lumisa, uku-	to ferment
lumiso, um-	beer brought to maturity and added to the rest of the brew to speed up fermentation; beer consumed before the beer drink by neighbours, see <u>igwele</u>
mahluko, u-	'difference'; see <u>umnono</u>
mbarha, i-	beer drink at which most of the beer is sold
miso, um-	'ordinance'; second cask of beer at <u>imbarha</u>
ncanda, i- (ii-)	porcupine; see <u>abasarhi</u>
ngcwele, i-	full cask or barrel of beer (about 200 litres)
ngxotha, i-	'chasing away'; beaker allocated at the end of a beer drink
nkabi, i-	ox; beer name; territorial group or other kind of social group (young men, women) allocated beer as a group; also known as <u>isitya</u> , <u>isithebe</u> or <u>isipani</u>
nkazathi, i-	communal beer drink held to raise money for public funds
nona, uku-	to give a gift of a beaker of beer to an individual or small group
nono, um- (imi-)	beaker given by <u>ukunona</u> ; also known as <u>umahluko</u>
ntlama, i-	maize and water mixture prior to cooking and fermentation

ntselo, i-	a drink, a beer drink, the main portion of beer at a beer drink
ntsipho, i-	maize sediment left after straining the beer
ntwana, i-	a small thing, a small beer drink, a beer drink held for no specific purpose; also known as <u>isichenene</u> or <u>intselo</u>
ntluzo, i-	a beer strainer
ntluzelo, i-	'beer for straining'
nxithi, i- (ama-)	a seven litre beaker of beer
nyenyetha, uku-	to give beer to workers
nyenyetho, um-	beaker of beer given to a work group
phanga, i-	empty tin can used for serving beer
pheka, uku-	to cook, to brew beer
qhelo, isi- (izi-)	'habits'; see <u>amasiko</u>
qhwina, i- (ama-)	a ten litre beaker of beer
qhuba, uku-	to drive forward, thus <u>ukuqhutywa umfazi</u> - beer drink held to promote a woman to senior status
qombothi, um-	home brewed maize beer
qwela, uku-	to have the last sip from a beaker, tot from a bottle, or beaker from a barrel
qwele, i-	that made available by <u>ukuqwela</u>
rhabula, uku-	to have a drink
rhabulisa, uku-	to offer the beaker to someone else to drink
sabhokhwe, i-	lit: a rawhide whip; see <u>utywala beenkabi</u>
sarha, uku-	to go about seeking beer
sarhi, aba-	non-workers at a work party beer drink
sika, uku-	to cut; to divide into groups of roughly equal size; see <u>ukugabu</u>
siko, i- (ama-)	custom(s); beakers of beer given out before the main drink, including <u>iimvuko</u> , <u>isikhonkwane</u> , <u>intluzelo</u> , etc.
silala, uku-	to grind maize; to brew beer
sili, um-	a brewer
sitya, i-	'a dish'; see <u>inkabi</u>
sindleko, um-	beer drink held for a returned migrant worker; also known as <u>umhlinzeko</u>
singantselo, u-	'this is not a beer drink'; a beaker given to <u>abasarhi</u> at a work party beer drink
sipani, i-	'span'; see <u>inkabi</u>
thetha, uku-	to speak, to speak authoritatively
thetho, um-	rule, law, custom (e.g. beer custom, beer drink rule)
tetho, in-	speech, declaration, proclamation, custom, rule governing beer drinking or beer drink procedure
thebe, isi-	woven grass mat; hospitality group (see <u>inkabi</u> )
thombo, imi-	malt (see <u>inkoduso</u> )
tshayelela, uku-	to brew for a small beer drink prior to holding <u>imbarha</u>
tshebulane, u-	a small (five litre) beaker of beer
tywala, u-	alcoholic drink; home brewed maize beer

utywala bokuvuna - harvest beer

utywala beenkabi - beer for the oxen; also called isabokhwe

utywala bokuhlakula - beer for a hoeing party

utywala benxiwa - beer for a building site

vanya, i-	beer from the second straining
	<u>ivanya yamadoda</u> - men's <u>ivanya</u>
	<u>ivanya enendevu</u> - bearded <u>vanya</u>
viko, um-	uncultivated verge between fields; <u>emvikweni</u> - a beaker given to early starters in a hoeing party
viwo, um-	'an inspection'; beaker given to men once the women have finished straining the beer
vo, um-	'a taste': beaker given to neighbours before the beer drink starts
vuka, uku-	to wake up; to give beer to men and women of the section
vuko, im- (iim-)	beer given to people of the host section; part of the <u>amasiko</u>
vula, uku-	to open; <u>ukuvul' ingwcele</u> - 'to open the cask', i.e. to buy the first beaker at <u>imbarha</u>
vumisa, uku-	'to agree'; to provide the refrain for a formal speech
wa, uku-	to fall, to be empty; thus <u>iwile</u> - it (the beaker) is empty/finished
xelela, uku-	to tell; to inform people of the reason for brewing
yala, uku-	to admonish
yalo, isi- (izi-)	admonition (s)
zibukho, i-	a ford; beaker given to men from an adjoining sub-ward

APPENDIX 2NOTES ON THE XHOSA TRANSCRIPTIONS AND TRANSLATIONS;  
XHOSA ORIGINALS OF SPEECHES IN THE TEXT

In the text of this dissertation are a large number of translations from Xhosa speech, most of it tape recorded at beer drinks. The original Xhosa transcriptions of the longer discourses are presented below, so as to make them available to the Xhosa-speaking reader. Such readers will notice that much of the transcription is not in 'standard' Xhosa, but rather reflects the way in which people actually speak, including what might be regarded as local dialectal variations of standard Xhosa, grammatical 'errors' and so on.

Where there is close analysis of the oratory in the text, line numbers have been included so as to facilitate reference to what was said. Much beer drink oratory is spoken in short, clipped rhythmic sentences often with a refrain (ukuvumisa) from a member of the audience at the end of each sentence or phrase. This has usually been included in the transcriptions and translations. In other cases there is no ukuvumisa and the transcription (and translation) thus looks much more like prose than poetry.

It has not been thought necessary to provide the Xhosa originals of the shorter extracts. Instead, the Xhosa terms and phrases have been included in parentheses in the translation itself, where necessary, due to the significance of what is being said or due to the possibility of alternative translations. Short extracts from speeches which were vumisa-ed do not include the refrain, since they are presented for their content rather than for their artistic merit.

English words in parentheses are my clarification of what is said and not words spoken by the people being quoted. Such clarificatory comments are, I hope, clearly distinguishable from the refrain, where the latter is given, and from comments made by members of the audience, which are also in parentheses. The technology at my disposal does not, unfortunately, provide for the printing of square brackets.

I also cite translations of verbatim comments and explanations given to me by informants in response to my questions. These are not explicitly identified as such in the text, though as a rule I use a phrase like "According to X..." or "Informants say that..." when using such data. Extracts from naturally occurring speech are generally prefaced with phrases like "At Y's beer drink in Ndlelibanzi X spoke as follows..." or "In explaining the nature of the event at Nontwaba's it was announced that...". In other words it should be clear from the context and the phraseology whether the speech being quoted was given in an interview situation or a natural situation.

XHOSA ORIGINALSNjembeyiya (p. 128-129)

Ningakhathazi bantu abamelene nathi ('Nkos!)  
 Singabantu abamonelana ngeendawo ('Nkos!)  
 Kanti omnye semona nje nangendawo kanti sendinebala mna ('Nkos!)  
 Kukholisile ze baphume kuba lisela xa ndijongileyo...('Nkos!)  
 Kukholisile baphume uJotelo lo ('Nkos!)  
 Ukuze kukwazi 'ngena amakhosikazi la ('Nkos!)  
 Kuzole kuthe nkcwe phandle apha ('Nkos!)  
 uJotelo uyacela uba noko makaselele phandle apha ('Nkos!)  
 Sathiyw' amagama! ('Nkos!)  
 Asiwava kakhulu ('Nkos!)  
 Kunjalo nje side sogqithwe ke ngokuva zizinj' ezi ('Nkos!)  
 Siya phandle thina ('Nkos!)  
 Into eyogqith' umntu kakhulu yinja ('Nkos!)  
 Ifana lo nto nangokusula amazinyo la ('Nkos!)  
 Amazinyo wenja zang' uyibon' ixukuxa ('Nkos!)  
 Kodwa amhlophe, ixukuxa ngolwimi...('Nkos!)

Gamalakhe (p. 129)

Mandithi ke eli gama ulithethayo lihle kakhulu. Okwesibini nawe ubon' ukuba noko ubuhleli kakuhle phandle hayi, lo mbandla ongumaFolokhwe, uthi hayi, enkosi, uyakhulula. Eeee, yiloo nto. Xa uzibonela uba noko umel' uba uchophe pha phandle ulayithi.

Mgilimbane (p. 137)

Thatha le bhekile le, kudibane ulimangele noHelesi (pause), noHelese noba nguThandabantu, bobathathu. Uthath' eny' ibhekile, uyibek' apha, kuCanca, adibane noNdaba, uBhadela, azokudibana no- no- nosibali lo uSkeyile, babe bobathathu. Uthath' eny' ibhekile, uyibek' apha kubawo. Azi- azikapheli? Isekhona enye? Uthath' eny' ibhekil' uyibeke pha' kuPat. Yaaahhh! Kusalungile. Ke zinkosi yintw' endiyibhaqayo leya a'kho nto ikhoyo, into kunayo ndicing' uba manifumane nje imicephe ngemicephe. Ondingakhange ndifike kuye zinkosi angakhalazi bendicing' uyak'fika kuye. (Interjection: Zange bagqitywe...)

Dwetya (p. 137)

Nanku oka Wafunqula bayangena ngoku. Akusekho ntsiba bantwana bam. Ezi khoyo ke ngoku kweli khaya lenu ezingabhabhazela kuni. Zenixole bantwana bam ningatsh' ukuthi ayilo khaya eli namhlanje. Iyakuba likhaya ngomso xa nifike lisalungile, zenixole bantwana bam. Siyanibona ngokwekhaya eli, ewe. Kufanelekile uba kubekho izinto xa bekusekho ikhaya...

Gavan (p. 154-155)

Heyi, Bhadela! Hayi, a'khont' imbi, a'khont' imbi Bhadela, yinto elungiley' uba umnt' asile, awavul' amehlo, kuba ngok' aph' aba ntu sesilambile. Yintoni l' ilambisileyo? Likhaya. Unomona ngezi bhekile zinikw' abantu kant' a'kho ntw' irhetsha kuwe. Yiloo nto ke. Ikhaya liyalambisa, ewe....

Dlathu (p. 212)

Nantsi le nto, mThembu  
 Eeee, zeningadinwa noba siyancokola siyangxola (Ncibana!)

Simel' uba sincokole uba kaloku sitya ukutya (Mh!)  
 Ukutya kutyiwel' uba kungxolwe kweli khaya lenu (Mh!)  
 Aph' ekh' apha silaph' ekh' apha (Tyhini!)  
 Soze nilahleke (Watsho bawo!)  
 Noba kumnyama noba sekunjani na (Tyhini bethu!)  
 Unobangel' uba nditsho ke mThembu  
 Apha kukho obu tywala (Siyava mCirha!)  
 Benziwe ngokubakho kwenu (Eh!)  
 Into nay' uba ke iintetho, mna mntu uhleli kweli khaya (Tyhini!)  
 Ewe (He!)  
 Ndiyazihambisa (Khawumamele k'!)  
 mThembu zeningadubeki (Nazo nje!)  
 Nob' anihluthanga noba nihluthi na (Camagu!)  
 Zenilale kamnandi kulo mzi kaTshemese (Naz' iindlela!)

Gavan and others (p. 221-222)

Gavan Uthi isikhonkwane siphumile apha kwaMangono?

Thekwane Siso esi.

Gavan Uxelel' ilali yakho isikhonkwane uyixelela isikhonkwane xa sindawuni?

Stokwana Ibhekile, uxelela amawenu se'uyityile, uyaqonda ke Ntlane, uxelel' amawenu se' uyityile.

Thekwane Hayi zinkosi, nantsi le nto. Iindlebe zinkosi, yimani, yimani, san' ukucaphuka etywaleni, akunakusinceda nganto xa unokuthi kuthethwa umthetho wasetywaleni, ucaphuke wena, a'kho nto uya kusinceda kuyo kuloo nto, hayi (Comment: Ngaphandle koko uyakusitshona). Qha! Uyakusitshona qha! Nantsi ndawo zinkosi, ziindlebe aziphulaphulanga kuba kaloku kuyathethwa. Ngoba kaloku le nto kuthiwa xa umntu emisa kufuneka nimmamele, ngokuba uza kunceda, nina nvlapha endlini. Inyanisile loo nto. Ngoku nje ke siyaxambulisa apha kanti yinto esi- igqityiwe le, asiyimamelanga ngeendlebe ezi kuba siyathetha, umntu emisile. Kulungisile ke le nto iphelile.

Canca (p. 254)

Nal' uxolo endiya kulo mpi yakuthi. Ke, ekha'pha kusilwe, utywla bokuvuna. Busilwe ke nguNontwaba, ebonga ke iinkabi ezithuthileyo nokulima ngokunjalo. Ke, ziibhekile zokuvuna ezi zontathu. Ndimile ke ngoku.

Ndlebezenja (p. 254)

Zinkosi ke sifikile kulaa ndawo besiyikrokrela noko ke a'kho nkathazo kuloo nto. Nabuya utywala, utywala bokuvuna. Obuya mfowethu uthi bobamakhosikhazi? Le ngcwele yeyamakhosikhazi, le yeyethu le yeyamakhosikhazi. Sisodwa kule, uthi ke zinkosi ubukhuphela kuni maFolokhwe. Ndimile ke ngoku.

Ndabanduna (p. 254-255)

Mandithi zinkosi, mfo ka Mangono, into emnandi kukuyichaza apha emlonyeni wakho. Uyixele njengokuba uyichaza ngoku. Ithi le ndoda ndiyayikrokrela noko indim la ndoda. Apha iChibi neNgingqi mababulele la ntetho, unyanisile ke wena ungumsili. Mpi yaseNgingqini ke kutshiwo ngolu hlobo. Apha ekha'pha kukwaSobashe. Ke, ndiza kungena ke ngoku. Andifuni ukuba kuthiwe iinkabi bezisela la nto ethile. Hayi, ndiyayisela apha kwaSobashe. Siyabulela ke ngoku. Mfo kaSobashe wena wenze into efana nale, ezo nkabi uthe wena xa kubonakala, ukuba zize

negqiza lakho wazisilela. Imnandi ke loo nto, apha ke ngokunje nguFolokhwe wonke lo utshoyo. Nathi sithi camagu kuloo ntetho yonye yenu nathi siyabulela. Zinkosi ke a'kho nto iyakube iphinde ithethwe ke ngaphezu koko ngaphandle kokuba iphume Komkhulu, naseChibini naseNgingqini qha. Uyichazile siyibonile man, nale yabafazi nale yamadoda siyibonile. Ngaba indoda ke enye iyakube iphendule ngolu hlobo?

Ndlebezenja. (p.288)

Ngoba yiyo le indawo, eee, mpi yakuthi. Apha sizowuthatha unkosikazi, kaZwelibangile, ke kaloku ke, ixesha, lona, ngathi lisondele. Andazi ke embandleni wakulo Folokhwe, eehh, kube ke ikhona impi yaseChibini, ikhona impi yaseNgingqini, ewe, nditheth' intw 'ethi ke zinkosi, bendibon' 'uba mna makuqhutyelwe phambili ixesha selide lahamba. Yiloo nto zinkosi zam. Ewe.

Ndlebezenja. (p.288-289)

Gentlemen and ladies (clears throat). Nantsi ndawo ke (z)inkosi, into ebange sibe lapha, sizowuthatha laa nkosikazi, kaZwelibangile, uNowinile, mayikwazi uba ihambe nabantu, ewe, kwanje ngoba siphum' apha nje, sihambe nayo, ngoko ke umntu ozawukhuph' amazwi ngulo kaSunduza zinkosi, e-e-eh, umntu ozakukuph' amazwi ke bendinimisela yena. Yiloo nto ke mGqunu.

Mbambaza. (p.289-292)

Hayi ke, s'bali litsho, lithi, makhe ndibeth' amazwana abe mancinci, apha kuwe, int' eqhelekileyo ke ukubekwa kwamazwi kumntu owanakalelweyo ezokuthathwa ngabanye abantu. Uku'tshwa ke, kukuyalwa, nangona ke, uyalo, alusathethi nto ebantwini, us'ke athi umntu nala miyalo ebeyalelwe ngayo, ayitsibe ke omnye ke lo mida.

Nantsi ke le nto s'bali ke namhlanje ke apha, la maGcaleka athi azoku'thatha, njengokub' ubuhleli ke ngale ndlela ubohleli ngayo, uhleli kakubi. Kwada kwaba kunokufik' ngo'nje ixesha lo'ba uye phakathi kwabantu. Umntu ke nxa aya phakathi kwabantu unikw' amazwi eziyalo. Uze angawenzi yena: ebeyalilwe kungatsh' ukuthiwa, zang' ayalwe laa mntu wasuka waya etywaleni yiyo le nto anje.

Naku ke sibali apha silapha nje, kuzokuthathwa, wena, ngenxa ke, yokwandulela kwalo mfokazi wasekha' 'pha, indod' akho ke. Ndiyacinga kakuhle, sbali, okokuba, ufaanel' 'uba uze uziphathe ngqo! Kakuhle, nje ngendoda yakho. Indoda yakho yeza nabantu ngapha phesheya kweNciba abangaziwayo. A'babehleli nayo, besebenza nayo. A'kho namnye umntu ongazange, eve, xa kuthethwayo ngalo mfokazi banolwazi olungaphezu kwethu. Ngok' uWalatha azalelwe kuthi nathi apha siyazi thina okokuba waye ngengomntu o- onento ezimbi, engengomntu uthand' ufun' ukuxabana namntu, into ebeyichasile yinto embi uWalatha nje qha! Ndiyacing' uba nawe ngokwakho, zazaliseka iindlebe zakho xa kwakutheth' abantu basemzini phesheya kweNciba. Angakhang' abe uWalatha wazalelwa kubo, bexela isimilo sikaWalatha u'ba sihle kwaso. Kwaye becela 'oko'ba nalapha makhe sithethe ngobomi bakhe bokuhlala kwakhe apha.

Yadibana intetho kuba lo mfo, wathi kanti ehleli nje uWalata utyebe ngentliziyo, kuba, kuk'into engancedi nto athi umntu ndityebile zinto

ezininzi kanti intliziyo yakhe ibhityile. Ayityebanga intliziyo yona ibhityile inokhula. Ayimsebenzelanganto nalo mfuyo yakhe ininji, kuba soz' ahambe nayo mhla andulelayo. Nantsiya ke into oya kuzigada kuyo ke sbali wam. Kukuphepha iziphoxo zasetywaleni akusela umntu andlokovele kuwe, ude ubonakala nawe ngo'nje ulidlongodlongo ufune ukuthetha ongendawo. Kuth'we simbone sesilwa umka Walata, ooh, kwanini! Selesilwa nabantu kwa-nini? Ibingeyo ntando yakho leyo, into kunayo ke zizigwexi neziphoxo ezi- zifuna ukuqhaqha eza ziyalo ubuyalwe ngazo 'ub'uzilahle!

Ukuzigcina ke yindlela enye, yimbeko le. Yokuchasana nento yokuthi umntu eze kuwe, ngobubi, efuna ukujika ingqondo yakho. Ubonakale ngoku ngathi ngumnt' owawungayalwanga. Namhlanje ke ukusuk' ukubhek' etywaleni, akutshiwongo ke okokuba, awuso'be wabuya, kuba ninayo le nto kuba eyam indoda ndayitya ade azityhole nokuzityhola umntu athi eyam indoda ndayitya ndayidlisa ingonondo. Andinandoda mna a'kho mntu uza kundiqhuba ngesinqe mna ndingekafuni kugoduka. Ikho' ke loo nto apha kuni. Indlela yokuziphatha komntu kukubona 'uba naliy' ilanga abantwana bomfi kufuneka ngo' nje ndibabasele endlini. Indlela yokuziphatha komntu, aba bantu babengabantu balo mzi kakade, kufuneka babe ngabo nanamhlanje.

Uyabona ke, ntombi kaKedeni kunje, uthi umzi lo, xa kubonakal' into 'ba, awubonakal', mandithi awubonakal' umzi omkelwe ngumntu wawo xa umfazi wakhe ethe nto! Uza wubonakala 'uba wena, akunanto nabantu uyakuqala ngo'bona ukucima kwendlela eziza apha. Zicime, enye ibethe entla komzi, enye ibethe ezantsi kwegadi. Zingabikho ngoku indlela eziza apha. Iyakunuka ke loo nto 'uba ungumnt' ongalunganga phakathi kwabantu okanye kuyabonakal' 'uba ubani akakho! Into engafunekiyo s'bali kukuthi kuyabonakala. Liphephe mntana wasemaNgqosinini elo gama, kuyabonakal' 'uba ubani akakho. Ayikwenzi mntu kakuhle loo nto. Ubone umzi se ungasaziwa ngabantu abaninzi kanti yayingumzi wabantu lo kaMhlakaza, uthandwa uWalata engekho, kukho wen' endlini usenza izinto, ebezisenziwa nguWalata ebantwini. Uz' ungaziyeki, aph' uziyeke khona ziya wunqaba ngoku nje indlela zokuza ekha' 'pha. Kuba iindlela zidalwa ngabantu. Uba lo mntu uphakathi endlini, aka- akanamsebenzi nabantu, uya kubona ngokucima kwendlela athi umntu "hayi uyana nangoko, yoo! Uyana nangoko kwakusekh' ubani eh! Hayi, suk' akusekho' nto phaya." Kanti ke uba ngaba ume ngolu hlobo indoda yakho ibime ngalo a'kho ndlela ziza kucima apha. Okwesibini uyakuthethe'lwa ngabantu kuthiwe "siyamazi uNowinile zange ayenze into emdaka. Ngubani lo owenze into emdaka," - kukwazi kwakho ukuziphatha.

Etywaleni ke namhlanje uyavulelwa, akutsh'ongo uba ma uhambe nabantu, akutsh'ongo into 'kuba uze ulalise ezindyaleni, kungaqhumi kulo mzi kaMhlakaza. Zininzi iimbedlengana zabantwana ekha' 'pha, azishiyileyo uWalata ezifun' ukondliwa, ezingekondliwa, nezingekondleki. Nantso ke into phezu kwamagxa wakho. Iplan ke inye kukukwaz' ukuziphatha, u'z' ubenamandla, nelungelo lokugcin' iint' ezisekha' 'pha. Ndimile madoda ngoku.

#### Neighbouring Woman (p.292)

sendigugile. Amadoda athethe la mazwi amabhinqa. I mean ke noko nawe uyazazi nengqondo, yakho nathi siyakwazi ingqondo yakho. Usinced' Nowinile usigcine. Ungakhathali ngumnt' othi, akuthukay' othi, wena

uluhlob' oluthile, uluhlob' oluthile, hayi, ujonge le nt' ubukad' uyijongile kakade aph' ekhaya. Gcin' usapho aph' ekhayeni kaWalata, unamadodakazi ngoku Nowinile njengokuba umyeni wakho engekho. Uwagcine, 'sigcine nathi Malanjeni. Ungathi uba sithethe nawe, loo nto intliziyo yakh' ikhubanxeke. Ugcine lo mzi. Zimbakamb' ezi. Kujongwe kuwe wedwa tshu! Konke, konke, konke, konke, konke, konke - kujongwe kuwe konke, konke, 'de kuwuma (kude kuye kuma), kujongwe kuwe Nowinile. Uz' uncede ugcin' olu sapho, amadoda agqibile. Andizuba sathetha kakhulu mna, ngoba ama-amazw' amadod' apha angene, kakhulu. Nam ke andiz'ukwenza kube - yiloo nto, ubenkenenkene, ndifuna nje ndibeke nje...okw'esiko, ndenza nje okw' esikw' andifun' ubenkenenkene. Ndimile kuloo ndaw' ndiyithethayo, Nowinile, ntombazana yasemlanjeni.

Mbambaza (p.293-296)

Kuwe Nosajini, kwizimanga ezimangalisayo, elona, eyona nto ibuhlungu, ibuhlungu ke le nto (pause), ubuhlungu bayo le nto, kuzoye kuye kuthiwa xa kuyalwa umntu (noise, interruptions from others) - Hayi madoda, hayi-hayi-hayi - kaloku kuzoye kuye kuthiwa xa kuyalwa mntu; angathi umntu xa ethethayo uyagelesha. Mna ke umthetho wam andigeleshi, mandiyithethe into endinokuthethayo, kuba obu tywala obu sasoloko sema ngelongwe lendlu; simela, utywala bomntu ongekho, qho-qho-qho. Simela, utywala bendoda ongekho, qho-qho; kuba ngasa, sinyuke nelongwe lendlu...(inaudible) sithethela utywala obunje ngobu. Sanyuka nelongwe lendlu, sithetha, ngotywala, bendoda ongekho nje qho! Into esisimanga, akukho ndoda inyuka nelongwe lendlu ithetha, ngomfazi ekuthiwa akakho, usilile umfazi otshabileyo ke kwenzelwa 'uba makuhanjwe kuphel' indoda. Ndimile 'uba mandiqale ngelo gama, ngokuthe n-ngqo! Kunjalo nje. Ndide ndiliphindaphinde; sanyuka nelongwe lendlu sinyukela indoda efileyo ekusilelwa yona qho; kungazange kwasilelwa mfazi. Ndilahle k' apho.

Uyabona ke Nosajini silapha ngoku, sizokukuthatha uhambe phakathi kwabantu, kudal' uhlel' apha kude kwahla nenye into. Le nto ke ifune uk'ba umntu lo ma'ngahlali xesha elide, ngob' uThixo uzawuphind' ankqonkqoz' angene, aphind' enze leya ebeyenzile, esahleli umntu. Umntu ke ngoku nje aphelelwe yingqondo. Uyabona Nosajini, eyona nto imalusayo, kukuzicingela; eyona nto imalusayo umntu kukuzicingela, eno'ba kuza kuba yintoni na, uqale ucinge. Net 'uba uzicingele. Kwakuba ntloni ukwenziwa into ngumntu kuwe. Oba uthe akwuzicingela kuqala, wawuyaliwe, z'akuza iinto ezimbi kuwe kuba kubonwa wena kuba akuzicingeli awuzibekangandaweni, yamntu owayethethelwe amazwi. Ngaso esi sihlo sinje ngesi oba ke uthe, wazicingela wazalusa, ngoba noba ngade umntu ayalwe ngemilomo eliwaka. Ikhona intw' esk' ingangeni apha engqondweni emntwini enze le ebeyalelwe yona, 'uba uze ungayenzi le nto. Enza yona kanye.

Uyabona ke kukho into ephox' abantu yona le size kuya leya (pointing at the beer). Uyabona leya? Akuxokwa xa kuthiwa ngumtyholi lowa. Iyayi- iyazikhupha iziyalo ke la ndoda leya ipha entla. Athi esa kusela utywala umntu iziyalo, zingasebenzi! Kuthiwe ngoku oh, kwakusi thwani umntu xa eqhuba ngolu hlobo, xa egqithe ilitye likaPhungela, umntu kukugqitha eza ziyalo wayeyalwe ngazo, kuthiwe ke ugqith' ilitye likaPhungela ke, ngokuba ugqith' iziyalo oluya lukabawo. Is'khwenxe somntu, bakhon' abantu abanje abathi baqhaqhe iziyalo zomntu, okuba

azitsibe, esuk' umntu, azo kukudlova, asakusel' utywala. Ubonakal' uthetha, ubonakal' uthetha, ubonakal' uthetha, ukuxhokonxel' into kokuba makuthiwe awuzange waziva iziyalo.

Umnt' onje ngawe nje noSajini akufuneki kuthethw' into yokuba kakhulu; uyabona ndikucingela ngoku ndimi kule ndawo. Ukuba akukwazang' uku'cingela akukwazi kugqala. Uya kuzibonela ngokwakho, sewuyimazi ngoku 'uba sewunoomolokazana, kufuneka uzicingele. Umgumntshanyane wena ungumthi uzimeleyo nje. Ungahambi neentetho ezithethwa ngabantu. Bakuroronye, into 'ba ezi ziyalo ezi utsibe ngapha kwazo. Kuba zikhon' izikhwenxe zabantu ezicimayo. Kubhalwa nje ziyacima. Zifana NoSatana; uThixo ubek' umntu aph' uSatan' athath' ambek' apha. Bakhon' abantu abanjalo apha ngolo hlobo. Uzicingele.

Apha ke zinkosi, njengoko nani makhosikazi, kwenziwe obu tywala bobohamba kwalo mfazi kunye nalo mfazana yena kaGidimisana. Int' ebange 'uba angaqabi lo mfazana kaGidimisana, akangomkandoda waloo mfazi 'uba bangaqaba kunye. Ukhululwe naye namhlanje, yena, uya kuqaba ngomso. Ukhululwe kodwa namhlanje, kodwa abanakuqaba bobabini kuba, ayingomka ndoda akhe. Usenendoda ke lo mfazi. A-aphelile kum madoda emqaleni, i-ingakhi'...ibethe eny' indoda.

Mahlathini (p. 310)

Ikhwelo! Nali zinkosi zam. Utsho lo wasemaQhinebeni onguPumalele, uthi ke, obu tywala, bob' okuba, nimbone ke namhlanje 'mkakh' etywaleni, nje ngoba akazange aqhutywe noba niyambona benimbona nje kuba zang' aqhutywe, obu tywala abubek' apha bob' ok'ba nimbone ke ngonje etywaleni, yonk' imihla, ob' tywala abenzileyo, bob' ohamba kwakhe 'kuba makay' etywaleni nakwabanina ningamfun' 'uba lo mfazi uz' ofuna nto' na etywaleni, singamaz' engumfazi wasetywaleni. Yiloo nto, esithi ke, ee, le nto, iphelele kuni, le ay' bek' apha. Ikhona ebafazini, amanxithi mane, ibghekile k' inkosi.

Dwetya (p. 310)

Hay' Makhulu kuyavakala, kuba ke, xa esitsho ke uGqugqugu ngomkakhe unfun' uba anxile nay' etywaleni, makh' asondele, sizombek' amagama, utywala obu nje bufun' amagama emfazini.

Gavan and others (p. 310-311)

Yiyo lo nto utshoyo ebezawubiza noba upha phandle (Heke!). Eee, angene, sizo' cacisela (Nantso ke!). Lihle eli gama lithethiweyo (Senz' indlw' akho ngoku). Ya. 'Bhekiswa kuwe Mbhele (i.e. Ndlebezenja). Ndlebezenja: Ewe makabizwe. Dwetya: Thum' umntu ayombiza.

a.n.o.: Uza kuza nabanye, akanakuza yedwa. Pumalele: Hey s'bali, Khawubiz' ke umam- amaNtlane apha. Mahlathini: Umkakhe, eze nabanye!

Mahlathini (p. 311)

Hayi, nali ke, mka Bonakele, ngok' uhamba nabafazi bakuni, namhlanje ke, wenze le nto, nomyeni wakho, bakungenis' etywaleni. Kodwa ke, nje ngo'b' kuxa ke akungenis' etywaleni namhlanje, indod' akho linxila, siyayazi thina, nawe unganxili, uhloniphe lo mzi. Ewe, zikaGqugqugu zikaDuka namaHlathi; ninganxilelan' apha ke kulo mzi, kuyobizwa thina ngapha, k'ba sizok'theth' amatyal' apha wenu, wok'nxila kwenu. Nihloniphane ke namhlanje, k'ba ke wena ububaleka kakade, wena

ungaseli, ubaleke ubaleka le ndoda. Namhlanje ke ningenzi unyovu-nyov' ekhay' apha, naw' uziphathe kakukhe usel' ubuy' uzolung' izinto zakho. Ningawathetha awenu amagama madod' ndigqibile ngoku.

Dwetya (p. 312)

Madoda ugalele. Ugalele bafondini. Naku ke mCirha, mnta' kaSijula. Umz' unzima mCirha, ukwaz' uziphath' uz' uphathe kakuhle, ungathi le ndod' akho usabanay' etywaleni incokola nabantu la ndoda - andizokuya mna kula mazw' amachul' okunxila - nabant' uba incinci, ungay'khathaleli, uhamb' ugoduke ubheke phay' endlini, kulo mzi wakho uzikhathaze ngelanga lokugoduka, ungathi kanti wabon' elal' etywalen' uth' nam ndizawulala, niwubulale lo mzi, goduka wena nob' ilel' indoda, yishiye. Uziphathe kakuhle mCirha. Mfondini la mazwi wam segqityiwe nguMahlathin' ando' ba (andisayi kuba) sathetha 'nto, und'gebengile lo mfo, ndimile madoda ma'iphakam' eny' indoda uba iyaphakama. Mmmhh.

Dwetya (p. 317-318)

Nantsi nto! ('Nkos!)

(Mamelani zinkosi! Mamelani! San' ukungxola aph' eofisini, kusa mis'we madoda!)

Nantsi nto!

Zinkosi zikaBomvana

ZikaGrumb' inyathi

Zigob' aph' eMonti ('Nkos!)

Ezinegama ('Nkos!)

Hamb' ubalisa

Endizibonayo ('Nkos!)

Ezi fanel' uba zisela kunye

Kakade ngesiko ('Nkos!)

Ke, ngumntan' am lo ('Nkos!)

Wakhutshwa nguyise apha ('Nkos!)

Ubakh' ikhaya la mzi wakowabo

Kanina noyise, entla komzi ('Nkos!)

Wathi uBalile "Thwalingubo yim' apha!" ('Nkos!)

uBalile ehleli!

Wathi "Govuza yim' apha!" ('Nkos!)

uBalile ehleli!

Nditheth' ukuthi ke, uthi umtan' am

Oko wema kweli khaya

Zange kungenwe kule- kule ndlu yakhe ('Nkos!)

Aziwe, ngooyise apho ahleli khona ('Nkos!)

uBalile nay' amphendule ('Nkos!)

Wathathwa nguThixo, ngeendlela zakhe ('Nkos!)

Nooyisemkhulu abamazi ukwel' inxiwa ('Nkos!)

Nditheth' ukuthi ke zinkosi zam

Uthi, lo mfana, yiyole nto anibizele yona ('Nkos!)

Kweli khaya

Ubongoza uthi qha, mandaziwe ngamawethu

Uba ndihleli apha

Ndiphumile kwamkhuluwa ('Nkos!)

Usaphekela loo nto

Uthi ke "nantsi fatyi!" ('Nkos!)

'Yayibona? ('Nkos!)

Yeyamadoda odwa ('Nkos!)  
 Nantsi fatyi yesibini! ('Nkos!)  
 Amaqhwin' amabi- mane!  
 Kula fatyi! ('Nkos!)  
 Yonina bakhe ('Nkos!)  
 Kuba kutshwice kulo mzi kaFule!  
 Kutsho lo mtana ('Nkos!)  
 Uthi makaziwe, ngoyise, noninakhulu  
 Yonke into yakwaFule! ('Nkos!)  
 Uhleli apha ke ngoku (Uthi umile!)  
 Bafak' impilo kuye! (Batsho njalo!)  
 Kuba uphumile kwamkhuluwa! (Batsho...)  
 Kuba ndisithi, eli nxiwa lacelwa nguBalile (Bathetha lo nto)  
 Ndime ke ngoku, ndiza kuhlala phantsi (Uthi uhleli phantsi!)

Thwalingubo (p. 320-321)

Ngutat'omncinci ke lo ('Nkos!)  
 Uthethayo ('Nkos!)  
 Njengamaxa ethetha nguye umnikazi weli khaya ('Nkos!)  
 Xa ewonke, ikhaya, i-imizi yomkhuluw' akhe ('Nkos!)  
 Nguye ke osilisa  
 Ngaye ngoku, apha oyena mntu osifundisa nayiphi na nto ('Nkos!)  
 Ithi ke lo nto, ewe zinkosi, ndiye ndakhumbula nje ngabom  
 Okokuba ndiyababona abantu baman' ukugqith' aph' emva kwendlu  
 besenjenje besithini  
 Beya kusela ngapha beya kusela kweliphin' icala ('Nkos!)  
 Akuzange kube kho mntu, ungenayo kulo mzi  
 Omnye akawazi noba la mzi ngokabani ume phaya ('Nkos!)  
 Namhlanje, nendwendwe ebeligqitha, lakuthi  
 Beligqitha kumzi ongowasemaBambeni ('Nkos!)  
 Ithi ke lo nto, zinkosi obu tywala benziwe phaya ('Nkos!)  
 Ndenzela into kokuba nje ngo'ba ndim' apha, zange ndisile ('Nkos!)  
 Ndingatsho 'kokuba bobentw' ethile ('Nkos!) (Ntwana nje! Yaaaah!)  
 Yinto nje kuba ndime kule ndawo  
 Andikasili - ndiseza' be ndisile izinto endizicingayo  
 Ngexesha lam ('Nkos!)  
 Namhlanje andisilelanga bani ndisilele nogqithayo ('Nkos!)  
 Nothini angene ('Nkos!)  
 Aphume ayokuchama ('Nkos!)  
 Afakele atshaye atshice ('Nkos!)  
 Angathi akutshicwa kule ndlu ('Nkos!) (Ah!)  
 Ndithetha kuthi ke zinkosi njengamaxa ebesitsho utat'omncinci  
 ('Nkos!)  
 Unyanisile, yilaa fatyi! ('Nkos!)  
 Yilaa fatyi isecaleni! ('Nkos!)  
 Yembiza leya iphek' omama ('Nkos!)  
 Ewe, izimele, amaqhwina ayo mane ('Nkos!)  
 Yingcwele le yamadoda liseçaleni ibonwa nangubani ('Nkos!)  
 Yiloo nto ke zinkosi ('Nkos!) (Ah!) (Utsho ubekile!) (Ah!)

Ndlebezenja (321-322)

Ndiza kutheth' into encinci ke mBamba ('Nkos!)  
 Ndandihlala nexheg' apha, ndandinoBalile apha mna  
 Sihamb' obu tywala kunye ('Nkos!)  
 NoNombayiso ('Nkos!)

Amadoda ke lawo awayesithi, uba ngab' usil' obu tywala busilwe ngu-  
 ngu- nguThwalingubo ('Nkos!)

Uphe bonk' aba-a-a-antu ababhuhayo! ('Nkos!)

Ngoba ke obu tywala busilwe nguThwalingubo

Namhlanje, nguntwana nje! ('Nkos!)

Ndisile ntwana nje! ('Nkos!)

Khona 'kuze kungen'a ekhaya! ('Nkos!)

Kutshicwe! Kushiyw' amashwa! ('Nkos!)

Kubuy' amathamsanqa! ('Nkos!) (Ah!)

Niyabona ke mna ndahamba nabant' abadala

Nombayiso noBalile, abantu abanamava betheth' iinto zokwenyani ('Nkos!)

Ngoba ngoku sifumane sesimane sihambe sixoka (Ah!)

Dwetya (p. 322)

Le nto uyithethayo yonke yinyaniso ('Nkos!)

A'bantwana bonke baluswa nguBalile ('Nkos!)

A'kho namnye endamalusayo kwa bantwana ('Nkos!)

Awuxoki xa utshoyo Ndlebezenja ('Nkos!)

Mtakadadebawo ('Nkos!)

Unyanisile

Le nto uyithethayo Ndlebezenja

Ayiphosisi, itheth' isiXhosa

Kumntu ova ngendlebe ezi zakhe ('Nkos!)

Ndahlala ke mna ('Nkos!)

uBalile wathathwa nguThixo ('Nkos!)

Ndahlala ndibanika ngolu hlobo ('Nkos!)

Thekwane (p. 329-330)

Kukho le nto, kantwana nje

Loo nto inqabile zinkosi

Ngoba le nto inqabe ngayo umntu phambi koba makayenze uqal'  
 acinge ngentliziyo yakhe

'Uba xa ndihleli kweli khaya

Ndimel' ukukhe ndenze untwana nje

Eee, uphulul' ikhaya lakhe

Ikhaya zinkosi, aliphululwa ngamicimb' imikhulu

Liphululwa nangontwana nje

Kungabikho ndlal' emzini

Xa 'wenz' untwana nje, ulungisel' uba kungabikho ndlaleni

Eee, kuhluthwe ngumntu' othe wangen' ekhayeni

Nongumhambi afike kukh'w'into etyiwayo ekhayeni

Usikelel' loo nto ke

Hayi, siyabulela Tshezi

Okokuba mawube lo mcimbi

Onokuthi wa'ubona ubon' into kokuba makhe ndenz' isichenene

Khe kuzo 'utshicwa

Aph' endlin' apha

Kuphum' impuku

Ibingaphakathi

Ngokutsarwa ngamath' eenqawe

Ethi ke lo nto, hayi Tshezi

Siyayibulela lo nto uyenzileyo

Wenz' int' entle

Zinkosi kwaphela onokuba kuthiwe kwakuthi xa kukho umcimbi  
 omkhulu sibulele yona

Kanti wonke lo ntwana nje uphulula, uyisekeni yemicimbi emikhulu  
 Uyisekeni yawo, kuba uphulul' ikhaya  
 Uvuthulul' umbeth' ekhayeni  
 Kuhlaleke kakuhl' ekhayeni  
 Bekunga kunganjalo ke, Tshezi, sithi nathi enkosi!  
 Ewe kube kakuhl' ekhayeni apha, sisele kakhulu

Shoti (p.356)

Hayi ke, uxolo zinkosi  
 Hayi ke yiyol' indawo  
 (Vityi! Nank' umnt' ethetha!)

Lo uthethayo ke, ngowangapheshey' apha kwaJotel' apha  
 Ndim emaNtlaneni (Heke!)

La mfana kaGiladile ngowasemaNtlaneni (Tyhini!)

Kuba ke, uyise uzalw' emaNtlaneni (Tyhini!)

Heke, yamnandi ke lo nto ('Nyanis!')

Imnandi into 'kuthi umntu ayenz' into ibonwe ngabantu ('Nyanis!')

Kuba ngoku silapha, wenz' into 'uba siyibone ('Nyanis!')

Intsebenzo (Ya!) lo mfana, uyayazi yena esenza le nto niyenzayo  
 nje ('Nyanis!')

Ayizigrunjwa mntu apho kuthi  
 Nathi siyambona uzinzile ('Nyanis!')

Siyambon' ub' uzinzile simjonge ngamehlo la wethu ('Nyanis!')

Int' engaphaya asiyifuni  
 Sifun' ivele, into nomfana  
 Se'velile simbonile thina, angayeki ('Nyanis!')

Makaqamambe angathi uhleli ixesha elithile ('Nyanis!')

uGiladile besikhulela kuye singamakhwenkwe silim' esapha, ngeenkab'  
 ezimbini ('Nyanis')

Eza nombona, egqith' abant' abant' abaneenkom' ezintandathu  
 ('Nyanis!') (Laughter)

Aph' esapha, iinkabi zimbini man!  
 Isoy' ibiyokuwa ngobuso uyazimis' iinkabi, nob' uyedwa, ayivuse  
 la soyi ilal' ngecala layo ('Nyanis!') (Laughter)

Ikhuba eli ingelomthi, liqin'ilanga  
 Imiphin'ingeyomthi, ingeyo ntsimbi  
 Umbona wakhe yegqithile, afun' iinkab' ezinkulu zombona  
 Angafun ezi nkabi zimbini ('Nyanis!')

Zisindwe zona ngokunje nguwo kanti bezilima zimbini ('Nyanis!')

Leli ndithi ke, lo mfana  
 Umntu uhamba kancinci (Yho!)

Ayenz' into, emnye  
 Kuyakuthi ngonje la nto, xa ibifunek' uba iz' ekhaya, ifun'  
 abantu ('Nyanis!')

Nakuye koze kube njalo athi nje ngob' emnye nje  
 Azenz' int' enkulu, ithi xa ize khay' kufun' aph' ilali ('Nyanis!')

Ifuna ilali la nto, ingamlingani ngonje yena yedwa  
 Ngoku beyenz' eyedwa nje ngezaa nkabi zimbini bezilima zimbin'  
 esapha

Umbon' afun' apha' iinkab' ezininzi ('Nyanis!')

Ndimile ke.

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