IMAGERY IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN

PRAISE POETRY IN ZULU

BY

ELVIS MPHEPHETHI MASANGO

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DEDICATION

In honour of my mothers,
Matilda Baliwe Tandiwe Ndzonga
And Vombozi Anna Masango
And my brother,
Andrew Ndzonga
Whose love and encouragement
Have been a source of inspiration ...
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KINI NONKE NGITHI "UKWANDA KWALIWA NGUMTHAKATHI"
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and Scope of Study

This is a survey of the use of imagery in both traditional and modern Zulu praise poetry. For the purposes of this corpus, emphasis will be placed on izibongo (praise poems) of the Zulu kings, chiefs, prominent figures, and also minor characters. The following are the main figures of speech which are worth mentioning in this study: metaphor, personification, symbolism, metonymy, simile, and hyperbole. The definitions of the aforementioned images by various critics will be given in this chapter. The study does not involve a stylistic analysis of izibongo as a whole; its primary focus is to assess the utilization of certain animals, objects and natural phenomena, as the basis of metaphors.

In this study, I will confine myself to two texts. These are IZIBONGO ZULU PRAISE-POEMS, by T. Cope and MUSHO! ZULU POPULAR PRAISES, edited by L. Gunner and M. Gwala. The former contains mostly traditional praise poems of kings, chiefs, headmen, and two prominent women: Mnkabayi kaJama and Nandi kaMbengi; the latter consists of izibongo of political figures and of anyone who was deemed praise-worthy. In recent years political leaders have become very prominent. Gunner and Gwala (1991: 11) acknowledge this when they state that, "the freed leaders will be honoured like kings ... and one of the country's most gifted izimbongi (praisers) wants to make sure the released men hear the story of the people's suffering". Often, at political gatherings, where leaders of the different parties are present, praises are recited which are fit for kings. Take the case of the inauguration of Dr Nelson Mandela, where one witnessed the presence of two izimbongi, who were reciting the praises of Mandela. Images of fierce battles and heroism dominate traditional praises, while images of nostalgia and the verbal war characterise modern praises. Most of the images used however, imitate those used in the praises of traditional kings.
There are also the izibongo of the ancestors. Such praises are related to clan praises. These are rich in images, for imagery is the essence of poetry:

**URadebe! uMthimkhulu! uBhungane!**

**uMashwabada**

Owashwabadela inkomo nezimpondo!

**UMafuza afulele njengefu lemvula!** * (Mzolo, 1977: 190)

(Radebe! Mthimkhulu! Bhungane!
Mashwabada
Swallower of a cow and its horns!
The stripper and thatcher just like a cloud of rain!)

For the purpose of this study however, only the praises of kings, chiefs, political leaders, prominent figures, and other people in traditional and modern poetry in Zulu will be examined. As mentioned earlier, the figures of speech employed in traditional praises are characterised by images of battle prowess, especially during the Shakan era. In contrast, in modern praise poetry, there is a shift from the idea of physical war. The modern praises do recount deeds performed in the heat of battle, but only as a sentimental memory of things in the past. To a large extent the imbongi incorporates the praises of the praised one's predecessors. Albert Luthuli's izibongo are a case in point:

**U-u-uDlungwane kaNdaba**

Odlung' emanxulumeni

kwaze kwasa amanxuluma ebikelana

(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 81.)

(Fe-e-erocious One, of Ndaba
Who raged among the crowded kraals
until dawn and the news spread through the large villages.)
Thus Luthuli and Shaka share similar praises; Shaka is:

*UDlungwane kaNdaba!*

*UDlungwane womBelebele,*

*Odlung’ emanxulumeni,*

*Kwaze kwas’ amanxulum’ esibikelana* (Nyembezi, 1958: 19.)

(Ferocious one of Ndaba,
Ferocious one of the Mbelebele brigade,
Who raged among the crowded kraals,
until dawn the huts were being turned upside-down.)

King Shaka and Chief Luthuli are both known for their heroic actions, hence they share the same praises. The absorption of part of Shaka’s *izibongo* in Luthuli’s praises shows that Luthuli like Shaka, was striving to unify various nations. Like King Shaka, he died before he could complete this mission.

This corpus has been broken down into five chapters so that one can look more fully at images. Chapter one focuses on the aims and scope of the study. The definitions of the images are given and other related concepts are discussed. Chapter two is concerned with the metaphor, while chapter three focuses on the simile. Chapter four discusses personification, symbolism, and hyperbole, which are dealt with concurrently. Chapter five compares the use of imagery in traditional and modern praise poetry in Zulu and features a general conclusion which states the significance of the study, restates the main idea, unifies the discussion and impresses the main points discussed in the preceding chapters.

The following terms are used often: *izibongo* (praises, praise poetry); *(uku)bonga* ((to) praise); *imbongi*, or the plural *izimbongi* (praise poet(s)).
1.2  **Inter-Relatedness of the Concepts: Ukubonga, Izibongo and Imbongi**

1.2.1  **Ukubonga**

*Ukubonga* means to give thanks to anybody who has done something good or recognizable as genuine and valid. For the purpose of this study *ukubonga* means to utter praises in honour of persons such as kings, chiefs, warriors or heroines for their gallant deeds. For Koopman, in Mkhize (1989: 16), the meaning of the infinite verb *ukubonga* can range from extolling or lauding in verse to a simple thank you. In furthering this idea Opland (1975: 187) states that: "*all spontaneous burst into poetry during any social function with many people present, events such as weddings, beer drinking, parties, or dances is defined as ukubonga*." So, *ukubonga* is a verb that defines the process of an action during which an individual expresses his or her gratitude. *Ukubongela* on the other hand may refer to two ideas; that of praising on behalf of or singing the praises of kings. The applied suffixal morpheme -el has been suffixed to the infinite verb *ukubonga*. Thus *ukubongela* tells us that someone has been appointed to convey certain news to the people. In line with this study, that someone may refer to the *imbongi*, who mediates between the ruler and his subjects. Therefore, the verb *bonga* has the following meanings:

a) Thank;

b) Admire, speak in high tone of; use emotional language;

c) Give clan name or kinship term.

In this thesis, the focus is on the second meaning (b).

1.2.2  **Izibongo**

*Izibongo* can be the plural of the singular noun *isibongo*, that is, a surname. It is used as *izibongo* when referring to phrases and sentences where imaginative or emotional language is employed to describe something. Thus *izibongo* are praises. When the concept *izibongo* is used in the singular form, it has an ethnological
significance in tracing kinship, relationship and genealogy (Vilakazi, 1937: 15). In this respect, a clan name is the personal name of its founder, and personal names are essentially praise-names. For instance, Mbatha (Wear) and Masango (Gates) are the names of the founders of these clans. In his dissertation, Mkhize (1989: 19) states that, "izibongo are based on a system of names of various sorts, which are expanded to form praise-verses". However, izibongo are not only for kings or even meant only for human beings. Animals and non-living things do have their own izibongo.

Bryant, in Cope (1968: 26), states that for every man a number of izibongo are coined by his companions. These are short sentences commemorative of notable actions and events in his life. Izibongo are naturally inclined to credit a person, but they may as well be in criticism of a person. Such criticism, directed to the king, may be euphemistic or humorous so as to prevent people from turning against the king.

Gunner and Gwala (1991: 1) postulate izibongo as a plural noun which can be translated as praises, praise names or praise poems. Izibongo are related to song and chant, particularly izigiyi which we translate as songs which go with war dances. When a young man dances (giya) at a wedding party or during beer drinking, his peer group shouts out his praises. These have been bestowed upon him by virtue of his behaviour. He may even have given himself these praises. Such praises are referred to as izihasho. Ukuhasha refers to 'praising' people who are not that popular in a particular community. Izihasho are composed by anyone who has been inspired by the behaviour of the praised one. Let us consider the following excerpt:

UShalushalu isimaku sikaMesisi:
USihhawuhhawu sabafazi:
USihhawuhhawu sawomathoni baseShowe.
Umathanga amnand' ensimini
Kuze kwaba mnandi nenguklu yakhona;
UMkhomazi ogcwula ngomoya! (Mabuya, 1990: 18.)
Almost all izigiyo are accompanied by the rapid clapping of hands. It is always the performer who leads during the process of chanting. Izigiyo exhibit boldness and daring attitude, and sometimes speak of women (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 227). The following example acknowledges this:

USinqawunqawu
Umfaz' ohlut' indo-oda (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 227.)

(The Quick-Tempered One
The Woman who gets the better of a man.)

Izithopho is another concept used for praising. Izithopho is the concept of endearment, utilised when someone or something is referred to by its pet name or praise name. For instance the Cele people are said to be "AbakwaNkomisengwilele" while the Khumalo people are said to be "AbakwaMashobane". According to Mabuya (1990: 18), izithopho might be more inclined to be used for animals. They are the praises of animals and other things which are human-related. For instance, herd boys are always aware of the behaviour of cattle. When the bull bellows or is involved in a battle with another bull, the herd boy may be inspired by its aggressiveness. Consequently, he would praise it by its izithopho as:

UJamlud' obomvu njengentolwane;
UBhojabhoj' umntaka Msengana
Inkunz' ebomv' iyazon' izithole:
Umahlaba zihlangene...
Gcwala wethu! (Mabuya, 1990: 18 - 19.)
1.2.3 **Imbongi**

Oland, in Mkhize (1989: 17), describes the *imbongi* as:

*One who serves an official function and is expected to perform at all ceremonies he attends, he knows this is expected of him, and he has the ability and confidence to do it.*

The *imbongi* is therefore the conveyer of ideas through the praise-poems of kings and other people. He is dedicated to the king and moreover is committed to his task. He knows that he is subject to criticism, hence he strives for perfection wherever he performs. Mkhize (1989: 17) sees the *imbongi* as a historian, who summarises the curriculum vitae of the king from his birth, during his reign, and to the end of his reign.

To know the curriculum vitae of the king entails a close acquaintance of the king by the *imbongi*. Since the *izibongo* of the king may contain criticism, no one is, or was, deemed worthy to unveil the goodness nor the badness of the king except the official praiser. He is considered a specialist, since he is in possession of certain skills to convey messages about the king. Cope (1968: 28) acknowledges this when he says:

*The special position of the praiser enables him to criticize with impunity certain aspects of the king’s personality or actions, either by overt criticism or covertly by the omission of praise.*
In his dissertation, Wainwright (1979: 6) sees the *imbongi* as an official praiser who has been appointed and who acts with the tacit approval of the chief and the commoners.

1.3 *Izibongo* as Poetry

Cope's *IZIBONGO-ZULU PRAISE POETRY* (1968) adequately illustrates the intricate poetic nature of izibongo. A study of the imagery of izibongo, both traditional and modern, will illustrate the specific, intricate aspects of this poetry.

1.4 Various Concepts of Imagery

Cox and Dyson, in Sukumane's article (1984: 139), define imagery as anything descriptive and evocative in poetry; anything which helps to visualise or realize a scene or situation. Thus an image is seen as a fundamental part of the study of poetry. Imagery is a means of communication that appeals by reference to objects and actions. An image combines at least two elements, namely object and concept. So, the *imbongi* would present ‘A’ as an elephant to illustrate the concept ‘fearless king’. The latter is associated with the elephant because of certain attributes shared with an elephant. These attributes could be bravery or fearlessness. Therefore, imagery is seen as a representation of something concrete by means of which the writer wishes to tell the reader about something else. Concrete, in this sense, means that it is supposed to be perceived by one or more of the senses.

According to Sukumane (1984: 139), images are evocative, helping the reader to realize an object, scene, situation, or action that appeals to one or more of the senses:

a) **Visual imagery** - helping to ‘visualise’ for example colours or objects.

b) **Auditory imagery** - helping to ‘hear’ for example, sound.

c) **Tactile imagery** - helping to ‘feel’ for example, roughness.
d) **Olfactory imagery** - helping to ‘smell’ for example, fragrance.

e) **Gustatory imagery** - helping to ‘taste’ for example, acid.

f) **Kinesthetic imagery** - helping to ‘sense’ movement for example, swift.

Consider the following example, where one of the senses is brought into action:

Dingane is referred to as:

> *Indiha ebabayo enjengesibhaha,*
> *Sona sibaba kuMahashanga* (Nyembezi, 1958: 49.)

(A plant that is bitter as isibhaha,
Its bitterness is upon Mahashanga.)

In this praise, the *imbongi* has used an appropriate gustatory image.

Images are usually studied according to the type of comparison, be it implicit or explicit:

a) **Symbol:** Conventional symbols are objects known to stand for fixed concepts, for example, "the dove" is the symbol of peace. Of all images, symbol constitutes the most implicit and private comparison. Description of the object is usually detailed and stands for a relatively elaborate concept.

b) **Metaphor:** A metaphor is an implicit or direct equation between subject and metaphor.
c) **Personification:** An image in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is endowed with life, or with human attributes or feelings.

d) **Simile:** It is an explicit comparison between two things indicated by the words "like" or "as", for example, Oh! my love is like a red, red rose.

e) **Metonymy:** An image by which one substitutes the cause for the effect, or the effect for the cause, such as, "He reads Groenewald", that is, Groenewald's works.

f) **Synecdoche:** An image in which a striking part of the object is used to signify the whole, or sometimes vice versa: "This roof (house) protects you".

Synecdoche will however not be dealt with in this study, since no vivid examples of it was found. Apart from imagery (which restricts one to the semantic level), literary language is also made up of figures of speech, such as sarcasm, irony, understatement, apostrophe, antithesis, epithet and hyperbole. This study concentrates mainly on imagery and hyperbole which are the most common phenomena in Zulu praise poetry.

### 1.4.1 **Metaphor**

Baldick (1992: 134) defines a metaphor as:

*The most important and widespread figure of speech, in which one thing, idea, or action is referred to by a word or expression normally denoting another thing, idea, action, so as to suggest some common quality shared by the two.*
In metaphors, this resemblance is assumed as an imaginary identity rather than directly stated as a comparison. For instance, referring to a man as "that dog", or saying, "he is a dog", is metaphorical. Whereas "he is like a dog", is a simile. The word metaphor could therefore mean carrying over or transfer. In this image the word "like" or "as" used in a simile is omitted, and by an implied comparison, a new meaning or picture is transferred directly to the word, as shown above.

When defining a metaphor, Muller (1984: 197) states that:

_A metaphor is also a comparison, but one that is more condensed, more implicit, and which therefore works with greater force._

For instance, instead of saying: father is as dangerous as the snake; we simply say: he is a snake. Van Rooyen, Ntuli, and Msimang (1984: 179) acknowledge this by saying:

_Like simile, metaphor is based on comparison between a tenor and a vehicle. The difference is that in a metaphor the comparison is not explicit and direct, but implicit and indirect, it does not liken the two elements but equates them, it identifies the tenor with the vehicle._

Untermeyer, in Ntuli (1984: 160-1), places metaphor above simile when he says:

_A metaphor is usually more effective than a simile, because it makes an instant comparison and imaginative fusion of two objects without the use of explanatory preposition._

Illustrating the difference between a metaphor and a simile one could say in a simile C is like D whereas in a metaphor D is C, or substituted by C. This is acknowledged by Shipley (1972: 197) when he says:
Metaphor is the substitution of one thing for another or the identification of two things from different ranges of thought.

1.4.2 Simile

Van Rooyen, Ntuli and Msimang (1984: 179) say:

*Simile draws an explicit or direct comparison between two elements that belong to usually dissimilar categories. The two elements consist of a tenor and a vehicle, the vehicle is used to qualify the tenor. The vehicle serves to emphasize, clarify and enhance the tenor.*

This explicit comparison is usually expressed by "like" or "as". In Zulu, it is expressed by: Okwa-, njenga- or nganga-, etc.

*Collins Etymological Dictionary (1951: 521) define simile as a figure in which one thing is compared with another on account of some prominent feature which belongs to both and which the writer wishes to emphasize. For example, one might say, "he went like the wind", to express great speed.*

1.4.3 Symbol

Baldick (1992: 218), in defining symbol, states that:

*In literary usage ... a symbol is a special evocative kind of image, that is, a word or phrase referring to a concrete object, scene, or action which also has some further significance associated with it.*

Although some symbols may start as metaphors, they differ from metaphors in that their application is left open as suggestion. The poet does not make it explicit that an object symbolizes something else. It is the reader who feels that the object
suggests something outside itself and needs interpretation because of the striking manner in which it is used.

Cohen (1973: 53-4) postulates that the original meaning of the word symbol is a throwing together, a violent fusion, or the act of association. Indeed, a symbol is a stylistic process of binding two elements together. The symbol itself usually begins with some concrete form, a physical condition, an object (animate or inanimate), or an event. In the context of a literary work, the concrete element suggests an abstract concept or meaning. Thus, through a careful study of the tangible manifestation, one is led to an understanding of the idea or meaning fused to it.

Shipley (1970: 322) sees symbolism as the representation of a reality on one level of reference by a corresponding reality on another. It is not so much the difference of the levels of reference that distinguishes the symbol from a metaphor, but rather the more intricate subtle, and extended ideas invoked by the vehicle. So that one feels that one cannot stop it at the literal level. Something invites one, as it were, to see further significance in what it presented.

Nowottny in Ntuli (1984: 175-6) makes a distinction between metaphor and symbolism by sketching the ways in which they work:

*With metaphor, the poet talks about X as though it were Y; he uses Y-terminology to refer to X. With symbolism, he presents an object, X, and without his necessarily mentioning of further object, his way of presenting X makes us think that it is not only X, but also is or sounds for something more than itself - some Y or other, or a member of Y's; X acts as a symbol for Y, or for Y's.*
1.4.4 **Personification**

When defining personification, Cohen (1973: 53) says:

*Personification means giving human characteristics or shape to an inanimate object, to an emotion or instinct, to a moral quality or spiritual concepts, to an event like death, or to an invisible essence like soul.*

The coupling of inanimate or abstract forces or concepts with human behaviour evokes images that generally would not be expected. This definition implies that, the object can be addressed as if it is a human being; this is called apostrophe. In this manner, the poet lifts the line of demarcation between human beings and animals so as to help the reader to simply identify with the mentioned object. Sometimes, the object can even be utilised or made to comment on human nature. For this reason, personification does not only animate the inanimate, but also endows human characteristics to other non-human animates, like animals.

1.4.5 **Hyperbole**

Hyperbole is a so-called figure of speech rather than an image. Cohen (1973: 186) defines hyperbole as exaggeration or over-statement of an idea, attitude, emotion, or detail in literary work. For example, it is a hyperbole to say: "Ten thousands saw I at a glance". Baldick (1992: 103) regards hyperbole as an exaggeration for the sake of emphasis in a figure of speech not meant literally.

1.4.6 **Metonymy**

Marckwardt, Cassidy, and McMillan (1995: 802) define metonymy as a figure of speech that consists in the naming of a thing by one of its attributes, as "the crown prefers" for "the king prefers".
Images are figures that serve as the prime techniques of embellishment: not only do they embellish language use, but they also present the subject in the best possible light.

1.5 Other Studies on Imagery in Praise Poetry in Zulu

There are only a few studies on imagery in izibongo. For instance, in his dissertation Kunene (1962) discusses imagery in Zulu praise poetry under three broad periods: Pre-Shakan (1750 - 1800), dominated by small harmless animals as images; Shakan (1800 - 1850), with more mention made of large aggressive animals, and Post-Shakan (1850 - 1900), dwelt on lyrical type of poetry and harmless animals as images.

In his article Msimang (1981) confines himself to the praises of kings, chiefs, and members of the royal family. It is here that Kunene is confuted for disclosing that in the Shakan period izimbongi utilised large ferocious animals as images. However, this is not the case, since each image was used by its congruousness to the context. Thus, in this period, small harmless animals are also used as images. The braveness and heroic nature of King Shaka must have moved the imbongi deeply, for he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Inyon' edl' ezinye}, \\
\text{Yath' isadl' ezinye yadl' ezinye;}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ith' isadl' ezinye yadl' ezinye ... (Cope, 1968: 107)}
\end{align*}
\]

(Bird that eats others, 
As it was still eating others it destroyed some more; 
Still eating some it destroyed others ...)

In her thesis, Gunner (1984) acknowledges the aforementioned when she mentions that praise poetry is exceedingly rich in imagery, particularly in metaphors. Both bards and non-specialist composers have access to a store of images which they redeploy in new compositions. Therefore, almost the images used are efficaciously
describing the praised one. It is this imagery which vividly enriches the art of praise poetry in Zulu.

In the chapters that follow the use of images will be explored in traditional and modern Zulu praise poetry. Although a distinction is made between traditional and modern praise poetry, the aim is, by exploring both, to show how the latter 'simply' continues, to a large extent, in the tradition of the conventions of Zulu praise poetry. The primary aim then is to reveal the nature of metaphors, similes, personification, symbolism, metonymy, and hyperboles in the Zulu praise poetry of prominent figures.
CHAPTER TWO

2. METAPHOR

Imagery in Zulu praise poetry serves to individualise the one praised using striking language. The metaphor is, by far the most common form of imagery employed in Zulu praise poetry. The use of metaphors in izibongo sheds light on the character and deeds of the praised. In izibongo, the metaphors used are mainly those based on nouns, although verb metaphors do occur. The latter are referred to as verbal based and the former as nominal based metaphors (Mkhize, 1989: 27). A close look at the aforementioned different kinds of metaphors shows that one could also identify other kinds of metaphors based on a combination of both nouns and verbs. These can be referred to as extended metaphors.

2.1 Metaphor in Traditional Praises

Before Shaka’s reign, the area now known as Kwazulu/Natal was characterised by a measure of tranquility. The imbongi of this era was mainly taken up with the physical character of the praised and images were chosen accordingly. The imbongi often utilized images of harmless and small animals or insects such as the butterfly, swallow and ancestral snake.

With the emergence of King Shaka, there was a change in the use of images. People praised were now compared to acrimonious, big animals like elephants, buffaloes, leopards, venomous snakes, and destructive natural phenomenon such as thunder, fire and storms. This was a time of wars, during which bravery was mainly linked to military achievements.

When hunting, men were however, not only faced with animals they were hunting, but also with ferocious animals like lions, leopards, black mambas and crocodiles. By displaying bravery against these animals, one would be highly respected, hence
his praises would have images of such animals. Subsequently, metaphors of this era revolve around nature.

2.1.1 Metaphors Based on Nature

Here, the focus will be on things that are not made by man. These things include plants and animals. Looking at the latter, the categories of animals are: reptiles, mammals, antelope, birds, amphibians, and invertebrates. However, for the purpose of this corpus, only the most important examples will be given.

2.1.1.1 Animals

Nature was of referential value in the description of human behaviour and actions. Before Shaka’s period, those praised would be equated with gentle animals such as: swallows, birds, duikers, tortoises and butterflies. Although huge animals were sometimes used, often with a non-aggressive tone. With the emergence of Shaka as the king of the Zulu nation, there was a shift in the use of animal images. Those praised were now identified with verocious, huge animals as well. For the purpose of this study the examples of these animals will be given: namely elephants, leopards, lions, venomous snakes, buffaloes, duikers, ant-bears, hornbills, reedbuck, louries.

Dingiswayo is described as:

*Impunz' evuke nomkhont' emawunzi* (Cope, 1968: 123.)

(The duiker that got up with a spear in its back.)

*Impunzi*, the duiker, is not a big animal. It is liked by hunters, who want to kill it for its vension and its beautiful skin. So, Dingiswayo is likened to *impunzi*, because he was hunted by his father, Jobe, who wanted to kill him. Dingiswayo, alias Godongwane, escaped death by the skin of his teeth, with a spear embedded in his
The duiker is a very fast runner. Similarly, Jobe did not find it easy to catch Dingiswayo. According to Kunene (1962: 85), the reason for this attempted killing was that Dingiswayo and his brother Tana, had conspired against their father, Jobe. He appeared as an impediment to their assuming the governorship of their country. Hence they decided to get rid of him. Jobe was tipped off and decided to eradicate both of them. Unfortunately, Tana was killed, and only Dingiswayo managed to escape.

Zulu is referred to as:

Isamban' esimb' umgodi singawulali (Cope, 1968: 179.)

(Ant-bear that digs a burrow in which it does not lie.)

Isambane, the ant-bear, is the kind of mammal that inhabits swampy savannas and humid forests. Its characteristic features are a long, tapering snout and strong curved claws on the forefeet. With the latter it not only defends itself effectively, but also digs holes in the dwellings of ants, capturing the inhabitants by means of its long sticky tongue. Afterwards, it leaves the hole unoccupied. Therefore, saying "esimb'umgodi singawulali" implies that Zulu was a man with splendid enthusiasm who always fought against tremendous odds, and yet he had to say no to the rewards given for the bravery he had demonstrated.

Ndlela kaSompisi is said to be:

Insingiz' edond' ukusuka ... (Cope, 1968: 187)

(Hornbill that is reluctant to set out ...)

There is a belief amongst the Zulus that when insingizi, the hornbill, croaks, there will be an ear-splitting thundering followed by stormy rain. So, Ndlela is associated with this unwanted bird, because he too was not accepted amongst the Zulus, as he
was regarded as a foreigner. Focusing on the phrase "edond' ukusuka", one can see that Ndlela was not prepared to leave. It came as a surprise to the Zulus that he was appointed as a general in the Zulu army. When King Shaka was criticised for promoting a foreigner, he made his famous reply to the effect that he would promote a man of promise regardless of the way he came, employing a pun on Ndlela's name, which means "a way" (Cope, 1968: 184).

Ndlela is further described as:

*Inhlang' eyeq' iphindela* (Cope, 1968: 187.)

(Reedbuck that escapes again and again.)

*Inhlanga*, is an antelope that frequents reedy places. To say "eyeq' iphindela" implies that Ndlela was in a continuous line of promotions. During the reign of Dingane, Ndlela reached the summit of advancement by becoming commander in chief and chief counsellor.

Mbuyazi is praised as:

*Nyok' end' edlule ngonyaka,*

*Yaze yadlula ngomuny' unyaka* (Cope, 1968: 193.)

(Long snake that took a year to pass by,
And eventually passed in another year.)

Mbuyazi alias Henry Francis Fynn is likened to *inyoka*, a snake, that the Zulus used to believe lived in the deep pools of the rivers and came out at night to travel from one river to another (Cope, 1968: 193). This may refer to the travels that Mbuyazi undertook between Port Natal and Britain.
King Shaka is seen as:

*Indlov’ ethe imuka babeyilandel’ abakwaLanga,*

*Ibuyis’ inhloko yadl’ amadoda* (Cope, 1968: 103.)

(Elephant that when it left, the people of Langa followed,
It turned back its head and destroyed men.)

In Cope (1968: 102) we learn that Somaphunga and Sikhunyana were rivals for the Ndwandwe chieftainship after the death of Zwide. Sikhunyana succeeded in establishing himself as chief and Somaphunga followed the elephant, Shaka and submitted himself to him. An aggressive tone is expressed in these praises, by the use of imagery derived from this aggressive animal, as well as from the verb *yadla,* meaning to conquer. Shaka was aggressive in the sense that he killed Sikhunyana, making it an effective comparison.

King Shaka’s qualities are illustrated by the use of images of bloodthirsty animals. The following example confirms this:

*UyiSilo! UyiNgwe! UyiNgonyama!*

*UyiNdlondlo! UyiNdlovu!* (Cope, 1968: 109)

(You are a wild animal! A leopard! A lion!
You are a horned viper! An Elephant!)

Note should be taken that while other kings or chiefs are compared to an ordinary mamba, King Shaka is associated with a horned viper. This shows that Shaka was a venomous, malicious and treacherous person.
Phakathwayo is said to be:

*Indlovu kaPhambana yangoba ezinye,*
*Indlovu ebuye ngombok' eNtwashini,*
*Ikhayime yaziqed' izizwe ...* (Cope, 1968: 149)

(Elephant of Phambana that conquered the others;
Elephant that returned with its trunk from Ntwashini,
It bellows and finished off the tribes ...)

In this extract, the *imbongi* refers to Phakathwayo's military campaigns, during which he conquered almost all the tribes. Phakathwayo is *indlovu*, an elephant, because he was one of the most feared rulers in the Nguniland. The verb *yaziqeda* means it finished off; and the implication is that Phakathwayo completely subdued his rivals to such an extent that they never rose against him again.

King Cetshwayo kaMpande is referred to as:

*Inyathi' empondo zimakhenkenene,*
*Babethi kayiyikuwuwel' uMhlathuze,*
*Bethi bayivimbele ngamaphand' emikhonto* (Cope, 1968: 215.)

(Buffalo whose horns are widespread,
They thought it would not cross the Mhlathuze,
Thinking they were preventing it by heaps of spears.)

Imagery is used to suit its context. *Inyathi*, the buffalo, is related to the ox, which, from time immemorial, has been a domestic animal in other countries like India and Malaya. For this reason Cetshwayo is associated with *inyathi*, because he was entitled to the throne as the Zulu king, since he was the eldest son of Mpande. The buffalo is credited with great intelligence, and a wounded buffalo is almost a synonym for cunningness and ferocity. Moreover, it is among the most dangerous big game
animals and is treated with respect by hunters. Mbuyazi acted contrary to the expected norms and values and foolishly refused to recognize and respect the rights of Cetshwayo as the rightful heir to the throne. Just like inyathi, Cetshwayo was brave and daring. In his article, Msimang (1981: 70-71) states: "But the qualification of the buffalo by reference to its widespread horns make him more menacing. No wonder his rivals feel that they need a pile of spears to prevent him. The prevention proved fruitless, and Cetshwayo triumphed over Mbuyazwe at the battle of Ndondakusuka". The use of the word zimakhenkenene, is tantamount to the fact that the Zulu armies, after reorganisation by Shaka, fought in the form of a buffalo's horns with the wings moving out to surround the enemy.

Cetshwayo is further seen as:

\[
\text{Igwalagwala likaMenzi elisuk' eNtumeni,}
\]
\[
Kwaye kwabhej' iNdulinde kwabhej' uThukela \ldots \text{(Cope, 1968: 217)}
\]

(Red-winged lourie of Menzi that set out from Ntumeni,
And the Ndulinde hills went red and the Thukela reddened \ldots )

\text{Igwalagwala}, the lourie, is a bird covered with red feathers. Its plumes are donned by kings as well as members of royal family and notable people. For this reason, igwalagwala is regarded as the symbol of royalty and courage. King Cetshwayo is associated with the lourie, because he was of a royal family and at the same time a warrior. This image portrays Cetshwayo as an individual with unique qualities who brought about changes at Ndulinde and the Thukela River, hence the phrase: "kwabhej' iNdulinde kwabhej' uThukela". According to Msimang (1981: 69), in this context, the imbongi implies that, as Cetshwayo's uSuthu engaged in war against Mbuyazi's iziGqoza, at Ndulinde and down to the Thukela. Subsequently, the whole area became red with blood from the casualties of the Mbuyazi faction.

After studying the aforementioned animals, it can be deduced that, most are employed in favour of the praised one. The animals used are appropriate to the context of the
one praised. For instance, Dingiswayo is *impunzi*, a very fast runner and most hunted animal. Dingiswayo was hunted too, after conspiring with his brother, Tana to get rid of their father, Jobe. Zulu is said to be *isambane*, an animal that digs a hole, and leaves it unoccupied. This is true with Zulu who will not accept any reward for his heroic act. Moreover, Ndlela is: "*Inhlang’ eyeq’ iphindela*", a praise referring to his rewards, given for a good course and remarkable statemanship.

Kings and chiefs of the Shakan era are frequently identified with animals that have strength, power, and are very aggressive. Some of these animals are: lions, elephants, leopards, horned vipers, etc. Bravery in the battle-field was a highly valued attribute and all these animals indicate the great power of the praised one. For instance, King Shaka is referred to as: "*UyiSilo! UyiNgwe! UyiNgonyama!* ..." In this praise, the *imbongi* simply acknowledges the status quo of the praised one as the king. "*Indlovu kaPhambana yanqoba ezinye ...*", is a praise acknowledging Phakathwayo as a hero. He showed bravery in the battle-field defending his subjects. King Cetshwayo also received well-deserved praise for his gallantry, in defending his position as a rightful heir to the throne; he is: "*Inyathi empondo zimakhenkenene*".

Although the above mentioned animals have been used to illustrate positive features, they could also be used for negative features. For instance, Shaka is said to be *ingwe*, a leopard. It is one of the most beautiful of cats, and at the same time, it is the most lethal. This is also true of King Shaka, who would attack other nations with stealth and skill. Furthermore, big animals like lions, elephants and buffaloes are dangerous; once they are disturbed they should be approached with great care. Similarly, a king or ruler, when approached disrespectfully could command that a person be killed. For this reason, it was best to approach the king through the *imbongi*.

### 2.1.1.2 Plants

Various plants have been used by praisers where they were found to be relevant in praising the praised ones. The kinds of plants that have been used in this study are:
ubhoqo (lily); umthente (thorny grass); ugagane (thorn tree); igawu (young pumpkin); isihlahla (tree); ihlathi (forest); umhlanga (reed); and ikhaba (maize plant).

King Jama kaNdaba is looked at as:

UBhoqo wamil’ amakhandakhanjana,
Abayi benkani bangawusiphula (Cope, 1968: 75.)

(The lily that grew several little heads,
And they that went with determination did not pull it up.)

Ubhoqo, the lily, refers to various plants with showy flowers. In this extract, its significance is obscure. It does not really relate to the character of Jama, who was of fiery temperament, fierce in the fray and skilful in the use of the spear. Perhaps, one could say, this praise refers to Jama’s difficulties to uproot his enemies.

King Shaka is referred to as:

UMthent’ ohlab’ usamila kaMjokwane ... (Cope, 1968: 113)

(Grass that pricks while still growing, son of Mjokwane ...)

Shaka is associated with umthente, thorny grass, that grows along the river. This association originates from the fact that, at a tender age, he experienced bitter incidents, like being banished to the Mthethwa clan. This praise is derived from a Zulu proverb meaning: “One shows one’s talents when one is still young”. This is true of Shaka, because as young as he was, he could kill a mad man of the Mthethwa clan. To emphasize his youth, the imbongi further says of him:

Igawu bazawuliluma,
Bazawuliphimisa,
Young pumpkin, they are going to bite it,
They are going to spit it out,
And think of softer pumpkins.

*lgawu* is a pumpkin which is not yet full-grown and ready to be gathered and eaten. Shaka is associated with it because of his youthfulness. Furthermore, this association may refer to his inexperience on the battle-field. Among his rivals, were Zwide and Phakathwayo who would always refer to Shaka as an immature boy. It was a twist of fate when these powerful and most feared rulers were duly punished by the young Shaka, hence the phrase: "... bazawuliluma, bazawuliphimisa ..."

Dingiswayo kaJobe is compared with:

*Ugagan’ oluvalel’ abantwan’ eziswini* (Cope, 1968: 125.)

(Thorn-tree which shuts up children in stomachs.)

Dingiswayo is compared with *ugagane*, thorn tree, referring perhaps to the situation during which his brother, Mawewe, could not approach him, fearing the 'thorns' which might pierce his flesh. Ultimately, Mawewe is killed. The phrase "oluvalel’ abantwan’ eziswini" therefore implies that the Mthethwas were under the protective hand of Dingiswayo.

Phakathwayo is referred to as:

*Isihlali’ esikuLugede phezulu,*
*Ungaba yindlovu ungasisindasinda,*
*Sona siye singabanjwa muyandu* (Cope, 1968: 145.)

(Tree that is on the top of the Lugede mountain,
If you were an elephant you could rub it a little,
As for it, it never bears a grudge.)

The tree image here is the depiction of the social position of Phakathwayo. This tree is on the pinnacle of the Lugede mountain, suggesting how respected and prosperous Phakathwayo was in Nguniland. To say "... singabantwa muyandu" implies that Phakathwayo afforded shelter, concealment, and abundant opportunities to other rulers, even though they were initially his enemies.

Zibhebhu is disclosed as:

*UMhlang' oshay' izinkomo,*
*Oshay' izinkomo zikaSikomolo;*
*UMhlang' oshay' izinkomo zikaMaphitha* (Cope, 1968: 207.)

(Reed that captured cattle,
That captured the cattle of Sikomolo;
Reed that captured the cattle of Maphitha.)

*Umhlanga,* a reed, is a tall and aquatic grass with a creeping underground stem; it grows along lakes and streams. Zibhedu is said to be *umhlanga,* referring perhaps to the notion that he was part of the ancestral line the Zulu kings. According to Cope (1968: 206) *umhlanga* is associated in the Zulu mind with the origin of "Mvelilingqangi" the Zulu Adam, who came out of a reed-bed. The verb *shaya* in this extract means beat, and the implication could be that, Zibhebhu after overcoming his enemies, would confiscate their cattle.

King Cetshwayo is seen as:

*Uhlathi limnyama,*
*Limnyama konke nemizi yalo* (Cope, 1968: 219.)

(Forest which is black,
Black throughout, even its kraals.)
Ihlathi, a forest, provides habitat for various kinds of animals. The relative -mnyama, black, suggests that this forest, is most feared. This comparison portrays Cetshwayo as a dangerous and fearful ruler. King Cetshwayo is further portrayed as:

\[Ikhab' elimile lodwa eNhlungwana,\]
\[Amany' emil' isixelelegu\] (Cope, 1968: 223.)

(Maise-plant that grew alone at the Nhlungwana river,
While others grew in a conspiratorial cluster.)

This extract is an allusion to the history of King Cetshwayo. At first, Cetshwayo was favoured by his father, Mpande, as the rightful heir to his kingship. Later however, after he had been disfavoured by his father, he was left alone. It is for this reason that Cetshwayo is said to be "ikhab' elimile lodwa".

As was the case with animal images it can be observed that almost all the images used are based on positive instances usually the praised one appears to save the situation for the benefit of society as a whole. Dingiswayo's praises acknowledge this: "ugagan' oluvalel' abantwan' eziswini ...." In other instances the praiser seems to be acknowledging the social position of the praised person, for instance, Phakathwayo is, "Isihlahl' esikuLugede phezulu ...."

2.1.2 Domestic Animals

2.1.2.1 Cattle

Cattle imagery in Zulu praise poetry is abundant. Cattle were like gold and diamonds to the Zulu people; their economic and social value was and still is enormous. One can notice personification in many praises featuring cattle. In his thesis Vilakazi (1946: 111) states: "Men are represented as animals and animals themselves are personified". Let us consider the following praises of various leaders and see how this significant beast is utilised as metaphor:
King Shaka is referred to as:

\[ \text{Inkom' ekhal' eMthonjaneni,} \]
\[ \text{Izizwe zonke ziyizwil' ukulila,} \]
\[ \text{Izwiwe uDunjwa waseluYengweni,} \]
\[ \text{Yezwiwa uMangcengeza wakwaKhali} \text{ (Cope, 1968: 91.)} \]

(The beast that lowed at Mthonjaneni,
And all the tribes heard its wailing,
It was heard by Dunjwa of the Yengweni kraal,
It was heard by Mangcengeza of Khali.)

When Shaka emerged as king, the Zulu was still a small tribe, dependent on other chiefs for protection. Leaders like Dunjwa of the Mthethwa clan and Mangcengeza of the Mbatha clan did not take Shaka seriously. Eventually the Zulus became a powerful and dreadful nation, fired with fierce pride and confidence. \textit{Inkomo}, a cow, is associated with Shaka; to say "izizwe zonke ziyizwil' ukulila" suggests that all nations heard about him.

Shaka is further portrayed as:

\[ \text{Inkonyan' ekhwela phezu kwendlu kwaNtombazi,} \]
\[ \text{Bathi iyahlola,} \]
\[ \text{Kant' ibona bezaz' ukuhlola} \text{ (Cope, 1968: 103.)} \]

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

Shaka is compared to \textit{inkonyane}, calf, because he was still young when he conquered Zwide, the most powerful ruler in Nguniland. People were surprised to see a defenceless young Shaka, defeating a well armed hero. This reminds one of the story of Goliath and David. When fighting, cattle use their horns but in the calves, horns
have not yet developed. Therefore, it is of significance that a calf should resort to kicking, which is very dangerous. The verb *ekhwela* means climbed, and implies that Shaka conquered the enemy.

Dingiswayo is looked at as:

\[
\text{UMadlekezele inkomo yanganene,} \\
\text{Izokuthengana nayiph' enenekazi?} \\
\text{Izokuthengana noMbangambi woVuma eMashobeni (Cope, 1968: 123.)}
\]

(Strongly built beast of the royal line,  
With which royal person will he barter?  
He will barter with Mbangambi son of Vuma at the Mashobeni.)

Dingiswayo is being referred to by the name of his brother, Madlekezele. The implication of this is obscure. *Inkomo*, a beast, represents Dingiswayo, because he was a tower of strength, who, when the Mthethwas needed him, could avail himself. To say *izokuthengana nayiph' enenekazi?* implies that, because of Dingiswayo’s strength, there was no one who could stop him claiming his birthright to the throne.

Mzilikazi is referred to as:

\[
\text{Unkomo zavul' inqaba ngezimpondo,} \\
\text{Ngoba zavul' Ingome zahamba (Cope, 1968: 133.)}
\]

(He whose cattle opened the fortress with their horns,  
For they penetrated the Ngome forest and departed.)

According to Cope (1968: 132), this extract refers to the quarrel between Shaka and Mzilikazi over cattle. However, there is a double meaning in the original "zavul' inqaba". The cattle that "started trouble" were driven through the dense forest and opened the fortress on a hilltop in the Ngome forest. A traitor led Shaka’s regiments
in at the back, and Mzilikazi fled from Zululand. Unkomo is the personification derived from nominal base inkomo.

Mzilikazi is further described as:

\[ UNkone evele ngobus' emdibini, \]
\[ Yal' ukudl' umlenze kwaBulawayo (Cope, 1968: 133.) \]

(White-spotted beast that was seen by his face in a crowd.
That refused to eat the leg at Bulawayo.)

Unkone is the personification of the word inkone, which is the word describing a white-spotted beast. The phrase "Yal' ukudl' umlenze ..." suggests that Mzilikazi refused to accept the post of headman at Shaka's Bulawayo kraal. If he had accepted it, he would have been entitled to have a leg of all beasts slaughtered there (Cope, 1968: 132).

Mnkabayi kaJama is seen as:

\[ Inkom' ekhal' eSangoyana, \]
\[ Yakhal' umlomo wayo wabhobo' izulu, \]
\[ Iye yezwiwa nguGwabalanda ... (Cope, 1968: 173) \]

(Beast that lows on Sangonyana,
It lowed and its voice pierced the sky,
It was heard by Gwabalanda ...)

Mnkabayi is compared to inkomo, a beast, because he was one of the most prominent figures in the history of the Zulu nation. The phrase "Yakhal' umlomo wayo wabhobo' izulu ...", draws attention to the fact that whenever Mnkabayi spoke, everyone present would listen attentively. This discloses how influential Mnkabayi was in the Zulu nation. She was the crown-princess, who looked after the Zulu kingdom whilst Senzangakhona was still a minor.
Somtsewu is referred to as:

\[ \text{UNkomo zidlelana nezika Faku kaNgqungqushe,} \]
\[ \text{Ngasema Mpondweni;} \]
\[ \text{Zadlelana nezika Gambushe,} \]
\[ \text{Zadlelana nezika Madonela kwabamhlophe (Cope, 1968: 197.)} \]

(He whose cattle grazed together with those of Faku son of Ngqungqushe,
In the country of the Pondos;
They grazed together also with those of Gambushe,
And with those of Madonela amongst the whites.)

Unkonw is the personification derived from the nominal base inkomo, beast, and the verb zidlelana, means that grazed with. The implication is that Somtsewu’s cattle were grazing together with those of Faku, Gambushe, and Madonela which suggests a spirit of togetherness and brotherhood.

From the foregoing discussions of inkomo as metaphor, one could notice that cattle imagery is mostly used in honour of the most prominent figures. As was the case with examples in previous pages, there is also personification of cattle.

Cattle in Nguni society were known to be vital for human existence in many ways. The possession of cattle was the fulfilment of a spiritual duty for the head of any family. Cattle were regarded as weapons in the hands of such a head, with which he could wield authority over his people and assert dignity within the clan. Cattle were also regarded as weapons to ward off all bad luck, and to bring about calmness between people and the spirits of the departed ones. Cattle were therefore not only of material value. It is this high esteem for ritual animals that causes them to enter into the fabric of Zulu poetry. (Vilakazi, 1946: 110 - 111)
2.1.2.2 Miscellaneous Domestic Animals and Other Creatures

In this section, the focus will be on other domestic animals that have been utilized in describing praised ones. These domestic animals are: cocks, dogs and horses. By considering the following examples one can see how the animals have been used.

Dingiswayo is referred to as:

*Ingqongqo ebhul' ukwena* ... (Cope, 1968: 127)

(Cock that beat about in the undergrowth ...)

Here, Dingiswayo is associated with *ingqongqo*, a cock. The phrase *ebhul' ukwena*... means that beats about, referring perhaps to the incident during which he ran away from his father Jobe who wanted to kill him.

Mbuyazi is described as:

*Owamith' amazinyan' abamaningi,*
*Anda nemilambolambo,*
*Abuy' abayizinja amkhonkotha* ... (Cope, 1968: 193)

(He who became pregnant with many children, They multiplied as river after river was crossed, And then they became dogs and barked at him ...)

*Amazinyane* means the young of smaller animals, such as pigs. In this context, they represent people; and the verb *owamitha* means he fell pregnant a metaphorical allusion to the large number of refugees from Zululand, who found sanctuary at Port Natal (Cope, 1968: 192). To say *"abuy' abayizinja amkhonkotha*" could mean that, instead of thanking Mbuyazi for shelter he had provided, the refugees turned against him.
Maphitha is referred to as:

_Imvukazi emaxhu mabili_ ... (Cope, 1968: 203)

(Ewe that has two young ones ...)

The suffix _-kazi_ may either indicate the augmentative or the feminine. But in this context, _-kazi_ indicates feminine because of the two _amaxhu_, young ones. Maphitha is associated with this _imvukazi_, perhaps referring to his character of unpredictability.

Zibhebhu is looked at as:

_Ihash' elimhloph' elingand' amakhala_ (Cope, 1968: 207.)

(White horse that checks the vanguards.)

_Ihashi_, a horse, was an animal which was not well known in Nguniland. It was only seen for the first time with the arrival of Godongwane alias Dingiswayo. He rode on an animal hitherto unpopular amongst the Zulus. Here, _ihashi_ represents Zibhebhu, because he was so popular for his white horse on which he used to ride into battle (Cope, 1968: 206).

Zulu is referred to as:

_ Impukan' ezibindibindi_ ... (Cope, 1968: 179)

(Fly of great courage ...)

Here _impukane_, a fly, is an example of insect imagery. As a hero, one could not expect Zulu to be compared to such a small insect. One would have expected perhaps a hyena or hawk to be chosen since they are so vicious. Nevertheless, _impukane_ may look so small, but it can be a nuisance.
Considering the use of the aforementioned domestic animals, one sees that they are mostly used in describing peculiar features of figures. The creatures that form the greater part of the imagery are harmless, small animals like sheep, cocks and flies. Furthermore, most of the people compared to these animals were not of the most prominent figures.

2.1.3 Metaphors Based on Natural Processes and Phenomena

The focus here is based on any rare facts or strange happenings that can be observed in the natural world. Such occurrences include lightning, thunder and the sky.

King Shaka is seen as:

\[
\text{Izulu elimagwabagwaba likaMageba,} \\
\text{Elidume phezulu kuNomangci,} \\
\text{Ladum' emva komuzi eKuqhobekeni laqanda,} \\
\text{Lazithath' izihlangu zaMaphela naMankayiya ... (Cope, 1968: 101)}
\]

(The sky that rumbled, the sky of Mageba, 
That thundered above Nomangci mountain, 
It thundered behind the kraal at Kuqhobekeni and struck, 
It took the shields of the Maphela and the Mankayiya ...)

Shaka is associated with izulu, the sky, because he was the epitome of a most highly respected king; he was considered a god. The verb elidume, means that which thundered, a synonym for overpower. The above extract is an allusion to the time when Shaka was avenging the killing of Dingiswayo by Zwide.

Although Zwide managed to escape, his people were massacred, and he was entirely impoverished wherever he was.
Dingiswayo is portrayed as:

*Intaba ebingehli nkomo,*
*Ebiyeh! imihlambi yamashongololo* (Cope, 1968: 127.)

(The mountain from which no beast descended,  
Which was descended by herds of millipedes.)

Dingiswayo is associated with *intaba,* a mountain that could be seen easily, even if it was far away. With Dingiswayo, it could easily be seen that he was a hero. Thus the mountain is an appropriate image to describe Dingiswayo's greatness and popularity. Regarding the *ishongololo,* millipede, image, Msimang (1981: 57) says: *"This word is of Latin origin and means a million legs. The legs may not be exactly a million but they are too many which makes the millepede extraordinary..."*

Dingiswayo could easily sequestrate a number of cattle from the tribe he had vanquished. This discloses that there were no obstacles during his exploits.

Zulu is eulogized as:

*Umhlaba dabuka ngimbe ngingene!* (Cope, 1968: 181)

(Earth split open that I may dig and come in!)

Zulu loved going to war almost to the point of fanaticism. When he faced his enemies they would wish that the earth could just open and they could go in. Therefore, *umhlaba,* the earth, was the only hiding place from such a ferocious warrior.

With reference to the aforementioned, the *imbongi* has drawn his metaphor from the sky, especially when addressing the king. The reason is that the sky is very high, so no one could reach it. Thus, the sky is an appropriate image to disclose a king's status. As God is above everything on earth and in heaven, the king too, is above all his subjects on earth, so access to king is often difficult. Therefore the king on earth
is a representative of God. Some people have a great deal of cunningness. To
describe this, the imbongi used pools as an image. In describing the bravery of
praised ones, mountains and earth have been utilised.

2.1.4 Other Metaphors

This section will take a look at those metaphors which were not dealt with in previous
discussions, for example hoes, spears, axes, mirrors, medicine, sticks and logs. The
following examples will suffice:

King Shaka is said to be:

_Ntonga yethusi kaMjokwane;
Eshay' amanzi kwevel' udaka wavela_ (Cope, 1968: 111.)

(Brass walking-stick, son of Mjokwane;
That which struck the water, and mud appeared, and he appeared.)

_Intonga_ is a synonym for _induku_, meaning stick. It is shaped for special use, walking
or fighting. Shaka is associated with _intonga_, probably a fighting stick. To say
"eshay' amanzi kwavel' udaka" could mean that wherever he was, he would cause
commotion.

Macingwane is also looked at as:

_Induk' ekwaz' ukushaya umkhwe wakhe,_
_Washay' uBhudaza kaMncumbatha ..._ (Cope, 1968: 131)

(Stick that knows how to beat his father-in-law,
He beat Bhudaza son of Mncumbatha ...)
Macingwane is likened to *induku*, a stick. He systematically fought his own blood, including his next of kin, so as to protect himself from being killed by them.

King Shaka is referred to as:

*Izembe likaSenzangakhona,*

*Elith' ukugawula lakhu hazela* (Cope, 1968: 117.)

(Axe of Senzangakhona,
Which when it was chopping worked very energetically.)

Shaka is compared to *izembe*, an axe, a tool used for chopping wood. The phrase *elith' ukugawula lakhu hazela*, illustrates how King Shaka continuously and energetically warred against forces.

Dingiswayo is referred to as:

*UMkhonto usimuka noNdiyane* ... (Cope, 1968: 123)

(Spear that departs with Ndiyane ...)

"Dingiswayo had plotted his father's assassination, but the plot leaked and the father decided to strike first" (Msimang, 1981: 57). Fortunately, Dingiswayo, alias Godongwane, escaped death by the skin of his teeth, with the spear still embedded in his back. The *imbongi* further says of Dingiswayo:

*UGodo alushi ngokubase lwana* (Cope, 1968: 125.)

(Log that does not burn when the fire is stoked.)

This extract is another reference to Dingiswayo's wonderous escape. He is *ugodo*, a very tough log, because he was so tough that he could not be burnt.
Phakathwayo is described as:

*Umuth’ oseyikeni,*

*Ngifumanis’ uphandwa ngamahashanga* (Cope, 1968: 149.)

(Medicine that is in a basket,
I came upon it being rifled by cannibals.)

Phakathwayo is compared to *umuthi,* medicine. A substance that is both beneficial and lethal. Phakathwayo successfully safeguarded his right to chieftainship against his brother, Nomo, who was later killed. This paved the way for Phakathwayo to improve the way of life amongst the Qwabe clan.

King Cetshwayo is seen as:

*Isibuko sikaMaphitha benoNzibe,*

*Ebebezibuka ngaso beya kwaNkosinkulu* (Cope, 1968: 225.)

(Mirror of Maphitha and Nzibe,
Who looked at themselves in it as they went to Nkosinkulu.)

The above mentioned extract is an allusion to the civil war between Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi. Cetshwayo was completely deserted by his brothers, who were all on Mbuyazi’s side. Realising this, Cetshwayo went to Maphitha for assistance, but Maphitha declined to do what he was asked, on the grounds that he did not want to interfere in domestic affairs. His sons, who sympathized with Cetshwayo, convinced their father to heed Cetshwayo’s plea, since he was the rightful heir to the throne. For this reason, Maphitha agreed to help Cetshwayo against Mbuyazi’s iziGqoza, hence the praise: "*Isibuko sikaMaphitha ...”*

One notes that the *imbongi* derives most of his metaphors from lethal objects, such as axes; spears and sticks. These objects are used in the praises of distinguished figures. *The imbongi* also utilises less dangerous objects like mirrors, logs, and
medicine. These images illustrate a peculiar aspect of the subjects' characters or actions.

2.2 Metaphor in Modern Praise Poetry

Modern praises are chiefly for political figures. But praises of other well-known people also occur. In this part of the study, the praises of King Zwelithini, Zionist prophet Shembe, Chief Luthuli, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, Harry Gwala and Govan Mbeki will be studied.

2.2.1 Metaphors Based on Nature

2.2.1.1 Animals

As is true of the previous section, most poetical metaphors are drawn from animals. In this section the praised one is identified with both harmless and ferocious animals. The praised person is often identified with venomous snakes, cubs, lizards, moles, buffaloes, ant-bears, butterflies, swallows, wasps, elephants, birds, stinging nettles, iguanas and ferrets. For the purpose of this study, a few examples will be furnished.

King Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu is praised as:

\[
Nani \text{ maNdebele seniyoguga nidellile} \\
enike nabona izinyane leSilo sikaNdaba ... \quad (\text{Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 54})
\]

(And you, Ndebeles, will have had a rewarding experience
For having seen the young cub of the leopard of Ndaba ...)

Zwelithini is associated with izinyane, a cub, because when he was enthroned as the monarch of the Zulu nation, he was still young and inexperienced. It is not just any cub he is compared to, but a leopard's cub, suggesting that he is the rightful heir. The leopard symbolises royalty, and it is for this reason that its skin is donned by kings, chiefs, and other members of the royal family. To say "nani maNdebele
seniyoguga nidelile", implies the rumours of a plot to kill him, he went to the Ndebele nation where his sister Nonhlanhla had got married to a member of the Ndebele tribe.

Zwelithini is further seen as:

\begin{quote}
INtul' ebande ngodonga kwaBhekuzulu.
IMvukuzane evukuz' ubusuku uyabonwa uMame wasemaNdebeleni (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 56.)
\end{quote}

(The lizard that hid behind the wall at Bhekuzulu.
The mole which tunnelled underground at night,
And was seen by the Ndebele woman.)

In his dissertation Mkhize (1989: 40) states that:

\begin{quote}
The poet says he is a lizard (intulo) who has been in close association with KwaBhekuzulu College for sons of chiefs when he was a student.
\end{quote}

He is further referred to as imvukuzane, a mole, a reference perhaps to the time when he secretly ran away from Bhekuzulu College after he had been alerted that there was a plot against him. Hence the phrase evukuz' ubusuku.

Zwelithini is also seen as:

\begin{quote}
INyathi kaNdaba enempondo zimakopelela ebhansele nguManyasa ezalwa nguMadwala ... (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 58)
\end{quote}

(Buffalo of Ndaba with the long inward-curving horns who rewarded Manyasa born of Madwala ...)

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King Zwelithini is likened to *inyathi*, a buffalo, a very strong and sometimes dangerous animal. Although King Zwelithini is physically strong, the kind of horns that this *inyathi* has makes us doubt Zwelithini's power. The horns are long, but inward-curving and the implication is that, though he is the king, he no longer has the complete power his predecessors used to have.

Shembe, the Zionist Prophet is referred to as:

*Isambane esimb' umgodi kasabesawulala,*  
*kwasale kwalal' abantwana,*  
*kanti sona sishone 'besethamba amagguma ne'ntaba zabo*  
(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 68.)

(Ant-eater which digs a hole, never for itself to lie in.  
Its young stayed behind and slept there,  
whereas it set out for the hillocks and mountains where its children live.)

*Isambane*, an ant-eater, is an animal which feeds on ants. It has a long, sticky tongue, with which it licks up the ants. So, Shembe is compared with *isambane*, because when using his tongue (mouth) in preaching the WORD of God, he manages to attract others to the church of Nazarene. It is a painstaking job, and a reward was to be offered, but he was indifferent in claiming a reward for his service. Hence the phrase *esimb' umgodi kasabesawulala*. For his good deeds he will have to seek his reward in heaven rather than seeking an earthly reward. He shares this praise with Zulu.

He is also referred to as:

*INkonjan' edukel' emafini ekhaya kwaNhliziyo...*  
*IMnyov' iyaveva kwezikaNyathikazi* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 74.)

(Swallow that wandered among the clouds where its heart led it...  
The wasps quiver among the ranks of Nyathikazi.)
Shembe is compared with *inkonjane*, a swallow. It is a bird that can fly very fast, which is also noted for its regular migration. Thus, to say *edukel' emafini* may refer to the speed with which Shembe was spreading his sermons in the places he was visiting. The second metaphor is *imnyovu*, wasps; the wasps could represent other churches, and the verb *iyaveva* which means trembling, implies that other churches were threatened by the sermons carried out by Shembe.

He is further described as:

*Indlovu edl’ ofakazi bayo ngoba idle ekade beyilandela.*

... *Impisi engenamkhunga.*

... *Indlondlo enesihawu kwabakayise* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 76.)

(Elephant which devoured its witnesses because it destroyed those who had lately followed it.

... Streakless Hyena.

... Horned Viper compassionate to his father’s people.)

The prophet Shembe is associated with *indlovu*, an elephant, because he was so courageous in spreading his sermons and he fought against tremendous odds. The verb *edla* means it devoured or ate and the implication is that Shembe’s courage inspired confidence in others; even those who tried to oppose him with questions were often drawn into his church. Shembe is further likened to *impisi*, hyena, an animal that sometimes feeds on decaying matter and which is a superb nocturnal hunter. So, Shembe is like this animal, since his ministry was also directed to those regarded as nonentities. Moreover, he had no specific time for his sermons and would even carry on with his teaching at night. He is also said to be *indlondlo*, a large, dark coloured mamba, perhaps referring to his experience as a minister. The phrase *enesihawu kwabakayise* personifies the viper and endowes it with human emotions. The implication is that, even with such experience, Shembe could not win over his relatives. This also happened to Jesus Christ, who was not accepted by his own household.
Chief Luthuli is looked at as:

*Isigwe esithi singagweb' indoda yaze yafa* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 82.)

(Red Bird which can gore a man to his death.)

*Isigwe* is the Red Bishop, which has a very strong beak. Luthuli is likened to such a bird, because he never stopped fighting verbally for the liberation of Black people.

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi is referred to as:

*IMbabazane kaMahaqa ehaq' amadoda kwaze kwasa engabulel' ubuthongo* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 88.)

(Stinging Nettle Tangier that entangled men, and kept them sleepless the whole night long.)

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi is capable of causing discomfort. His association with *imbabazane*, stinging nettle, reveals how truly dangerous he is. The verb *ehaqa* means encircle, and the implication is that men could not enjoy mental rest; Buthelezi persisted till he had solved a difficult problem.

Buthelezi is further referred to as:

*UNkonjane kaMaduka,*
*edukele ngaseKoloni,*
*ith' isibuya yayisifak' iziqu*
*izifakwa ngabamhlophe* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 90.)

(The Straying Swallow, who strayed over somewhere in the Cape, till he came back donned with the gown of honour awarded by the whites.)
The above extract is an allusion to Buthelezi's move from Natal to the Cape, where he was a student at the University of Fort Hare. *Unkonjane* is the personification of the nominal base *inkonjane*, a swallow. The bird metaphor is associated with Buthelezi because he emmigrated from Natal to the Cape to further his studies at the University College of Fort Hare. According to Gunner and Gwala (1991: 90), Fort Hare in the Cape was the only University College for Africans, Asians, and Coloureds at that time.

He is also spoken of as:

*Yingabe isilwane sini?*

*Yingabe inyathi?*

*Yingabe ubhejane?*

*Yingabe imamba?* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 94)

(What kind of wild animal is this?
Maybe it is a buffalo?
Maybe it is a rhinoceros?
Maybe it is a mamba?)

There is an element of doubt in the aforementioned extract because his own people could not comprehend him. They were not sure whether he was of royal lineage. According to Gunner and Gwala (1991: 94), people only realized through his deeds that he was a chief even in the academic world. Hence the abovementioned praises form part of the celebration for him after he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Zululand at Ngoye.

Harry Gwala is eulogized as:

*Ngoba wathint’ imamba*

*izophenduk’ indlondlo* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 98.)
(Because, wound a mamba
he grows into a horned viper.)

Harry Gwala is likened to imamba, an image referring perhaps to his fiery temper. The verb wathinta means to provoke; such provocation would lead Gwala to vicious anger, turning him into indlondlo, a horned viper.

Gwala is further referred to as:

Xam' kavinjelwa emaxhaphozini ... (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 102)

(Unstoppable iguana in the marshy grounds ...)

Uxamu, an iguana, is a large climbing lizard, harmless unless provoked. Gwala is compared with such an animal, referring to his very calm character. To say "... kavinjelwa emaxhaphozini ..." implies that when Gwala is irritated, he will not hesitate to shield himself from danger.

Govan Mbeki is looked at as:

UQaqa ngithintwe, lizobanukela! (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 104)

(Ferret they’ve assailed me, it’s going to stink them off!)

Uqaqa is derived from nominal base iqaqa. A ferret is an animal which lets off a smell when it has been provoked. This is tantamount with Mbeki who would not tolerate anyone interferring with his identity.

Zizwezonke Mthethwa is seen as:

USiphindlaphinda siyizindlondlo
siyizimamba, singamabululu (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 164.)
(Oh He is The Attacking Movement of hooded vipers, 
that of mambas; also that of puff-adders.)

Zizwezonke Mthethwa is associated with different kinds of venomous snakes. A reference perhaps to his dangerous and changing character. The word *ibululu*, puff-adder, creates a picture of slow movement, because a puff-adder is a slow moving snake. It is dangerous when hungry but harmless when satisfied. This can lead one to the conclusion that Zizwezonke is slow and cautious.

Halakashana Ntuli is seen as:

*IMbub’ edla igcogcoma kaSoshangane* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 174.)

(Lion that eats on the move, son of Soshangane.)

*Imbube* is a synonym for *ibhubesi*, lion. Halakashana is associated with it because he was so powerful and aggressive. The phrase *edla igcogcoma* means he devoured while toading; the implication is that Halakashana easily overcame his enemies and took his time while doing so.

Mashekelela Dindi is referred to as:

*INgwenya ehlel’ emsingeni* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 200.)

(Crocodile that went down to the swirling waters.)

Mashekelela was very cautious about his well-being. This cautiousness is likened to that of *ingwenya*, crocodile, which does not roam far from the river bank in fear of peril.

The preceding discussion revealed that most of the animals used as metaphors are similar to those used in traditional poetry, particularly in the *izibongo* of the present reigning Zulu monarch, the *izibongo* of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, and the *izibongo* of
both Harry Gwala and Chief Luthuli. They furnish an image of achievement and power which people can admire. We also have izibongo of unknown figures, such as Zizwezonke, Mashekelela and Halakashana, who have no special status or authority. The animal metaphors used in their izibongo have their own significance vitally connected with their identity.

2.2.1.2 Plants

For the purpose of this corpus the following plants will be considered: umthunduluki (wild plum tree), umthente (thorny grass), isihlahla somdlebe (euphorbia tree), isihlahla (tree), ugamthili (gum tree), isihlala sikapelepele (chilli plant). In the following extracts, we will see how the praised ones are compared with these plants.

King Zwelithini is referred to as:

\[ U_m\text{thunduluki} \text{ ovuthwe ngeNala} \]
\[ ngowakwaThayiza (\text{Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 56.}) \]

(The wild plum tree ripened in time of plenty that belong to Thayiza.)

\[ U_m\text{thunduluki} \text{ is the wild plum tree that is well-known for its edible fruit. The verb ovu} \text{the means that ripened; and the implication could be that Zwelithini's subjects were in his favour. It is for this reason that he was alerted that his position was on the brink of being seized. Zwelithini shares this praise with King Cetshwayo, who is:} \]

\[ U_m\text{thunduluka ovuthw' eNdulinde,} \]
\[ IziGqoza ziyawulabalabela ... (\text{Cope, 1968: 217}) \]

(Plum tree that matured on the Ndulinde hills, And the Zigqoza faction followed its progress intently ...)
The above extract is an allusion to the military upheaval between Mbuyazi's iziGqoza and Cetshwayo's uSuthu during which Cetshwayo was on top of Ndulinde hill, watching his followers fighting Mbuyazi's iziGqoza.

King Zwelithini is further depicted as:

*Umthente kaJama ohlab' usamila.*
*usekelwe indlunkulu ngeyakwaDlashiye* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991:58.)

(The thorny grass of Jama that pricks whilst still young, was supported by the royal house of Dlashiye.)

To say "*umthente uhlab' usamila*" is a Zulu proverb meaning, "one shows one's talents when one is still young". So, Zwelithini is compared with *umthente*, thorny grass, because although he experienced difficulties in his kingship, the young Zwelithini set to work in a very mature way to protect his status. This was of course possible with the support he received from the royal house.

Isaiah Shembe is seen as:

*Ishlahla esihle somdlebe esingahlalwa i'nyoni,*
*Siye sahlalwa 'zinyoni zeZulu* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 70.)

(Beautiful Euphorbia Tree on which no birds perch, and then the birds of the Zulu perched on it.)

*Ishlahla somdlebe*, the deathly euphoria tree, is a very strange tree, known amongst the Zulus for the goat-like sound it makes. There is a belief that the sound is made to snatch goats. The Zionist Prophet Shembe is associated with *ishlahla somdlebe*. Perhaps the implication is that he had the skill to win people over by letting them listen to his sermons.
Harry Gwala is referred to as:

*Sihlahla sigaxeke ehlanzeni*
*Kanti ngakusasa sizoqwal' intaba yophondo loMkhambathi*
*Sihlume okhalwene phezu kukaDenge ...* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 100)

(Tree trapped in the slopes of the valley
Whereas the next day it would go up the mountain pass of Mkhambathi
It sprouted on the slopes of Denge ...)

Harry Gwala is likened to *isihlahla*, a tree (overgrown with bushes), a reference perhaps to the idea that he has been ‘bushed’, that is, he acts strangely as a result of being isolated from the people. Hence the phrase "*sigaxeke ehlanzeni*". The verb *qwala* means to climb, and the implication is that Harry Gwala was continuously confronted with challenges, which he faced with confidence. The phrase *sihlume okhalwane* implies that Gwala afforded shelter, concealment and abundant opportunities to the Denge people.

Mashekelele Dindi is looked at as:

*NguGamthili umuthi wabeLungu* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 202.)

(I am the Gum tree, tree of the White people.)

*Ugamthili*, the gum-tree, is a very straight, tall tree. Mashekelele is compared to such a tree, suggesting that Mashekelele was physically tall and slender.

Busangokwakhe Xulu is referred to as:

*NguZihlahla zikapelepele ziyababa!* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 216)

(I am the Chilli Plants, they are bitter!)
"Isihlahla sikapelepele" is the chilli tree, which is a very short, small tree; it looks like an ordinary shrub. The chilli it bears is green or red in colour. The red one is very attractive, but when one takes a bite of it, its attractiveness is promptly diminished because of its bitterness. Busangokwakhe is likened to "Isihlahla sikapelepele" because of his sly ways of getting what he needs or wants, or of escaping his enemies.

The plants that have been chosen by the imbongi are appropriate images to portray the qualities of the praised ones. The umthunduluki image occurs in the praise poems of both King Zwelithini and King Cetshwayo; furthermore, the youthfulness of both King Zwelithini and King Shaka is praised as umthente. In other plant images, the imbongi has chosen a metaphor that has not been used before, namely that of "Isihlahla somdlebe" which is associated with Shembe. Shembe's sermons conspired to create a unique situation. In describing the character of Busangokwakhe, the imbongi has used "Isihlahla sikapelepele", a metaphor that evokes a gustatory image. So, the imbongi sees to it that the praised one is "tested" before being accepted.

2.2.2 Domestic Animals

2.2.2.1 Cattle

The animals which will be looked at here are cattle, which include cows, calves, bulls and oxen. Considering the following extracts from the praises of different figures, one can see how these animals have been used. In King Zwelithini's izibongo we have the following example:

\(\text{INkonyane encane kaNdaba edid' im' bala}\) (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 54.)

(The young calf of Ndaba, with multi-colours.)

The inkonyane praise introduces the calf image which is a reference to Zwelithini. The suggestion is that Zwelithini was still a young man when anointed as the new king of the Zulu nation. In his article (1981: 70) Msimang states that: "This calf image implies youth and fragility".

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Zwelithini is further referred to as:

*UQasa-likawasa, iNkomo esengwa iviyo* ... (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 56)

(The strong man of Wasa, Cow milked by a band of men ...)

In Zulu culture, no cow can be milked by a mob of people. King Zwelithini is associated with an unusual cow. This image presents Zwelithini as an individual with unique qualities. According to Mkhize (1989: 45), King Zwelithini has travelled extensively, meeting people like Voster and Kekana and visiting black townships such as Mamelodi. The phrase *esengwa iviyo* implies that people like John Voster, the then Prime Minister of South Africa, and others he was meeting, probed Zwelithini’s thoughts or feelings to find out why he acted as he did. Therefore, Zwelithini is presented as a monarch, subject to the authority of Whites.

He is also referred to as:

*Inkunzi ekhwele phezu kwenzintaba zaseMbabane amaBombo ejikijel’ eyitheni* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 62.)

(The Bull that climbed to the top of the hills of Mbabane Looking towards his enemies.)

In this extract, the *imbongi* uses a private and personal allusion. *Inkunzi ekhwele*, the bull that climbed, is a reference to the time when King Zwelithini left the Nongoma area and went on an excursion to Swaziland to look for someone to marry.

Isaiah Shembe is looked at as:

*IThole lakithi kwaNontandabathakathi eliyichith’ imval’ okuvaliwe ngoba ’londele ubomi* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 68.)
Our Calf of the Place of the Lover of Wizards
who threw down the closed door
because he longed for happiness.)

Isaiah Shembe is associated with *ithole*, a calf. This is because, as his religion was still new, no one really took it seriously. Despite his hard work, his eventual success surprised many. According to Gunner and Gwala (1991: 22), this image demonstrates the emotions of love and compassion within the new religion.

He is further portrayed as:

*Inkunzi yakithi abayigwaze ngaphansi kweMkomozane,*
*izeya ngokusheshela kwezikaMandelane* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 72.)

(Our Bull which they stabbed below the Mkomozane,
it came dragging itself along to the cattle of Mandlane.)

In the above extract, one realises that there were people who put up considerable resistance to Shembe’s evangelizing. This is illustrated by the bull-imaging praise name which is linked with physical conflict.

Chief Luthuli is seen as:

*Inkonyane kaNdaba ejama phansi kwezinkunzi*
*ezimbili ebomvu nemnyama ...* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 82)

(Calf of Ndaba that stares threateningly down at the two bulls, the red and the black ...)

The *inkonyane* praise introduces the calf image which is used in reference to Chief Luthuli. The metaphor suggests that Luthuli, as old as he was, had a very gay and youthful spirit and could easily settle disputes between the two “bulls” who threatened to disrupt world peace. The word *ejama* means to face boldly, making the feeling
of antagonism in the above extract noticeable. These two bulls represent Blacks and Whites.

He is further eulogized as:

*Ngizw' esiswini sikaMama Mngadi,*
bathi, "*Lapha inkunzi 'singxameni,*
kungxamene inkunzi lemhlophe nemnyama*".
*Babuz' ukuthi emnyama ibikuphi.*
*Bathi, "Emnyama esingaphezulu,*
*Kwathi emhlophe, ebomvu - ibingaphansi kwamanzi*".
*Babuza bathi, "We MamaMngadi,*
*lenkonz' emhlophe ibim' emanzini*
bathi, "emnyama ingaphezu kwamanzi na?"
*Bathi, "Ingani amaNgisi lana aqhamuka phez' kweSandlwana wawabon' uCetshwayo*" (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 86.)

(I heard of it when I was in the womb of MamaMngadi,
they said, "Here is a bull fighting with another,
a white and a black bull are fighting with each other.
They asked where the black one was.
They said, "It is the black which is on top
and the white, the red - is underneath, in the water".
They asked out, "Hey MamaMngadi,
this white bull is standing in water
and how did the black bull fight from above the water?"
They answered back, "In fact it is those English who were sighted at Sandlwana and were witnessed by Cetshwayo".)

The above excerpt is an allusion to the battle of Blood River (eNcome) and the Battle of iSandlwane. The former battle involved the Zulus and the Boers while the latter, involved the Zulus and the Britons. In the former battle the Zulus were defeated.
whereas in the latter the Zulus were victorious. So, the aforementioned extracts refer to past antagonistic relationships between Blacks and Whites.

To sum up, it is noteworthy that in all the examples given above, the *imbongi* employs the metaphors of the calf, the bull and the cow to describe the fierceness and the strength of the praised one. Zwelithini's *izibongo* also shows male beauty and sexual power.

2.2.2.2 **Miscellaneous Domestic Animals**

In addition to the cattle metaphors utilized above, one can also look at another category of domestic animals which includes the dog and the hen. Consider the following examples:

Mehlo-engane Mthethwa is looked at as:

*UZinja ziyamqhuza zinuhela kofenisi* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 176.)

(The Dogs throw him out and hurl him at the fence.)

The significance of this praise is obscure. *Uzinja* is derived from nominal base *izinja*, dogs. In this extract, these dogs are chasing Mehlo-engane away, perhaps referring to the idea that Mehlo-engane was mischievous. The praise may refer to a hard physical conflict or to trouble of some kind. Perhaps, *izinja* represents the assailants of Mehlo-engane.

Obed Muntongafiyo Mzimela is referred to as:

*UBhova owehlule amadoda* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 190.)

(The Boxer-hound that defeated men.)
Ubhova is a very strong and aggressive kind of dog. Obed is associated with such a dog, implying that he usually takes the first step in an attack or quarrel.

Mkholi Mthethwa is referred to as:

1Sikhukhukazi esinamatshweletshwele,  
esinye siyafukamela esinye siyachamusela (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 220.)

(Hen who has brood upon brood,  
one of her progeny sits on her eggs, another is just hatching them.)

Isikhukhukazi, a hen, is very protective and careful with regard to the raising of her chicks. Mkholi is likened to the hen, because he was a responsible young man, who as a student, would look after his parents’ livestock.

In a few words, one could say that the use of other domestic animals as comparisons is appropriate here. In explaining Obed Mzimela’s aggressiveness, the imbongi has effectively used ubhova, the dog, an animal always ready to start an attack. Furthermore, the isikhukhukazi praise introduces the hen image, a metaphor describing a person who protects or guards.

2.2.3 Metaphors Based on Natural Processes and Phenomena

Celestial metaphors, specifically those of the sky and the sun have been utilised in the izibongo of those of high status. Furthermore, natural features such as rivers, streams, pools, caves and mountains have been utilised in the izibongo of royalty, prominent, and ordinary figures. Only a few examples in each category will be discussed:
King Zwelithini is referred to as:

\[
\text{I}Zul' \text{ elibhule umlilo ngama-azwi} \\
\text{abanye Ndaba bebewubhula ngamahlala ubaswe yinxokonxoko} \\
geyakwaMagengqe \text{ (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 60.)}
\]

(Sky which put out a fire with words
While others beat it out with branches
Kindled by the commotion at KwaMagengqe)

The izulu image in the above extract is a depiction of Zwelithini's position. The verb elibhule means "that extinguished", and the implication is that King Zwelithini solved a mystery during a strike at KwaMagengqe. The word umlilo, fire, could represent the problematic issue between the employers and the employees.

He is further described as:

\[
\text{UMfula kaNdaba ongenise kabi,} \\
\text{uMageba wangenisa wanyukela.} \text{ (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 62.)}
\]

(River of Ndaba which rose in flood badly,
Mageba, it rose in flood above the other rivers.)

According to Mkhize (1989: 43), the above extract is an allusion to the history of the reigning Zulu king. His Majesty had to respond to the call of nature (he urinated). This was at the time when King Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu and his imbongi were visiting Transkei.

He is also:

\[
'Ntaba'zimbili zakhelene kodwa nintula ngisho \\
ukuxhawulana \text{ (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 64.)}
\]
(Two mountains next to each other but they cannot shake hands.)

This extract is an allusion to members of the royal family who, although living very close to each other, refused to even shake hands. These two mountains may represent Zwelithini and Mcwayizeni, who had not been on good terms. This cold feeling dates back to the feud between Cetshwayo and Zibhebhu (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 64).

Expanding on this information, Gunner (1984: 258) states that, the identity of the individuals alluded to, was, according to the imbongi, known only to himself. However, the use of the familiar mountain metaphor and the semantically antithetical structure of the lines makes it acceptable and interesting. The subjects know that the imbongi is criticising the enmity between two eminent people who live close to each other, and that is enough for them.

The Zionist Prophet Shembe is portrayed as:

\[
UMthomb' osela abalungileyo \ldots (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 66)\]

(Spring that refreshes the righteous \ldots)

\textit{Umthombo} is a small stream of water coming from the earth. Shembe is associated with this water, because he was the founder of the Church of the Nazarites. The verb \textit{osela} means that drank, and implies that some people listen to his teaching. Thus, \textit{umthombo} also represents the teachings he preached to the people.

He is further referred to as:

\[
UMlilo ovuthe phezulu kwentaba eNdulinde, \\
kwabe usacima, usho ubuhanguhangu, \\
ukhwezelwe wuShandu wabaseNdulinde \ (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 68.)
\]
(Fire which blazed at the top of Ndulinde Mountain, it blazed on with fierce flame it was stoked up by Shandu of Ndulinde.)

The extract is an allusion to Shembe’s determination and perseverance in spreading the Word of God. He is associated with umlilo, fire, showing his fervour that could not be extinguished.

He is also looked at as:

**ULanga phuma sikothe kanti nabalothayo liyabashisa liyabahangula** (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 76.)

(Sun come out let us bask in you. Yet those who bask in it, it sometimes burns and scorches.)

**Ulanga** is derived from the nominal base *ilanga*, sun. In this extract, the image vividly denotes the power of the prophet. According to Gunner (1984: 357), the praise above suggests a force that can be both beneficial and destructive, a power both to warm and to burn.

Mkhandumba kaMnyamana:

**UMlilo ovuth’ i’ntaba zonkana obubaswe nguDumukumuku ezalwa uFaku** (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 120.)

(Fire that set ablaze all the mountains which was kindled by Dumukumuku born of Faku.)
Mkhandumba is also associated with umlilo, fire. The word ovutha means "that blazes", and the implication is that Mkhandumba suddenly attacked his enemies. The verb obubaswe means that has been kindled, and implies that Mkhandumba was provoked to attack.

Zizwezonke Mthethwa is said to be:

*Umhume olal’ izingwe nezingonyama* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 164.)

(Cave in which leopards and lions sleep.)

Zizwezonke is compared to umhume, perhaps showing how he protected royal people.

Nyonyovu Mdletshe:

*Usiziba simnyama sinzonzo sinzonzobele,*

*USiminzisa umuntu ethi uyageza waze wangen* *nesicoco* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 200.)

(Pool that is black, it is deep, very deep,
That drowned a man who went to bathe and he went deep down to his head-ring.)

The deep parts in a pool are very dangerous. Thus, Nyonyovu, who is likened to such a deep pool, is very dangerous and unpredictable.

Metaphors featuring the sky and the sun are mostly employed in the izibongo of kings or chiefs. They vividly disclose their power and their close relationship with God. The imbongi has also derived metaphors from natural phenomena, like rivers, streams, pools, fires, mountains and caves. In most instances, these metaphors have been chosen to show how dangerous the praised one is, because fires, rivers, pools and streams, are destructive if not handled carefully. Some metaphors are selected
to reveal the greatness or helpfulness of the praised, as is the case with the cave image and the mountain image.

2.2.4 Other Metaphors

Here one can look at things like *igula* (gourd), *isihlangu* (shield), *umkhonto* (spear), *isikeyi* (yoke-puller) and *iqanda* (egg).

King Zwelithini is eulogized as:

\[
\text{Ndaba avulalele lomuntu omemezayo} \\
\text{sengathi uyakhala uyalila uthi-i,} \\
\text{"Igula likaJama lichithekile"} \\
\text{Lichithwa yingqwel' endala,} \\
\text{Yakithi kaMalandela} \ldots \text{ (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 54)}
\]

(Ndaba, listen to the person shouting.
It is as if he is weeping mourning, he says,
"The gourd of Jama is spilt"
It is spilt by a very old bully.
The son of Malandela \ldots)

*Igula* is the fruit of a plant whose hard, dried shell is used for cups, bottles and bowls. However, if this gourd falls down from a high place, it can easily break into pieces. The above extract is therefore an allusion to history. Zwelithini being associated with such a plant, implies that his position as legitimate king of the Zulu nation was at stake. For this reason, the *imbongi* seems to be warning the king against the regent who was claiming kingship. The mentioning of Jama shows that Zwelithini is a direct descendant of the royal family. Thus, the *imbongi* praises and comments on rivalry within the royal family.
Zwelithini is further referred to as:

*USihlangu simagqabha sinamanxebe sigudl' iVuna*

(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 58.)

(The shield spattered with blood and scarred, it skirts the iVuna river.)

This is a mock heroic allusion to an occasion when a senior member of the royal family took the king's shield instead of his own during a celebration. (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 58)

Isaiah Shembe is seen as:

*USiba-gojela ngapha kwentaba ...* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 66)

(Feather that bobbed down on the other side of the mountain ...)

*UGaq' elibomvu ngasekuphathweni ...* (Ibid: 70)

(Spear that is red even on the handle ...)

Shembe shares these praises with Shaka. The aforementioned extracts are allusions to Shembe's prowess as a preacher, which was widely recognized. Although experiencing some problems, he was so inspired that he won great numbers of followers.

Harry Gwala is depicted as:

*UMkhonto weSizwe ushis' ubomvu*

*Mgwazi weqath' elifanele ...* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 102)
Umkhonto weSizwe, Spear of the Nation, was the military wing of the African National Congress. Harry Gwala is associated with it, because he was a member of it. The verb ushisa means "that burns"; the implication is that Gwala was involved in the fighting for the total emancipation of Blacks. The phrase mgwazi weqath' elifanele implies that he knew exactly what he was fighting for.

Govan Mbeki is referred to as:

*S'key' donsa, igeja lingen' esoyini* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 106.)

(Yoke-Puller, the plough cuts deep into the sod.)

Isikeyi, yoke-puller represents an ox, which is slow but very strong. Mbeki being likened to such a beast, implies that although he is old, he is still an active force in politics. The verb donsa means pull, and the suggestion is that Mbeki must endure many pains for a good cause. In this extract therefore, the imbongi shows his praise and approval.

Ndulungu kaMnyamana is referred to as:

*USigubhu sangqengqa* ... (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 122)

(Gourd that passed from one hand to another ...)

According to Gunner and Gwala (1991: 122), this metaphor implies the idea of communal sharing. The literal meaning refers to the gourd left at the river's edge or water-hole to be used communally by the locals to scoop out water. So, Ndulungu is compared with isigubhu, gourd, because he assisted in the helping of those in need.
Jeremiah kaMtekelezi is said to be:

_UQanda lomningi kaliphum' ebhokisini_ (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 126.)

(Egg of the many-headed snake does not hatch from the box.)

_Uqanda_ is derived from nominal base _iqanda_, egg, an image referring perhaps to a belief Jeremiah held that someone had unsuccessfully tried to bewitch him. For this reason, the poem says that the thing of great danger never emerged from the box. (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 127)

Sigodo kaSihubela

_USihlangu simagqaba, simagqaba nje, yimikhonto yamadoda_ (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 142.)

(The Shield with stab marks, it has stab marks, and they are from the assegais of men.)

Sigogo is compared to a shield, implying that he was able to protect himself from his assailants.

In the extracts above, the _imbongi_ chooses metaphors from traditional _izibongo_ to commend the aforementioned figures for their good work. This tells us that, for these people, accomplishing their purpose was not an easy task. Their praises do not laud them for heroic achievements in the battlefield, but for their outstanding achievement in politics. For instance, King Zwelithini is: "_USihlangu simagqabha sinamanxeba_", and Sigodo kaSihubela shares this praise; he is: "_USihlangu simagqabha ... yimikhonto yamadoda_." This association is effective since although the shield is a thing of beauty, and protects a person from danger, it is at the same time linked with war. Furthermore, the Zionist Prophet Shembe is: "_Ugaq' elibomvu ngasekupatheni_", and Harry Gwala is: "_Umkhonto weSizwe uhis' ubomvu ..._"
Therefore, in the above figures, bravery is vividly depicted when the bard uses spears, shields and yokes as images.

2.3 Conclusion

It is an indisputable fact that the metaphor, as an image, is extensively utilized in both traditional and modern Zulu praise poetry. From the various metaphors discussed above, one can deduce that the *imbongi* is a committed servant of the king and his subjects. He knows what is going on in both the public and private life of the praised one. If this was not the case, the skill he shows in handling allusions would be impossible.

Various metaphors are discussed: They are mostly derived from animals, plants and natural phenomena or processes. The majority of them are visual. The aggressive tone is mostly expressed by the use of the imagery derived from aggressive animals like *indlovu* (elephant), *ingwe* (leopard), *ingonyama* (lion) and the black mamba. Although such animals are reserved for royal and chiefly personalities, they are sometimes employed in the *izibongo* of other prominent and minor figures, especially in modern praise poetry. In his dissertation (1973: 89), Ntuli says: "It is quite common for a son to have praises of his parents or grand-parents when sharing certain behaviour". With the modern praise poetry, the difference is that the image usage involves some modern concepts of life such as religion and politics. The reason for the preference of the aforementioned animals is that they are dreadful and fearful. In the same way, the king is a fearful sight. Furthermore, verbs denoting aggressive actions are also used in Zulu praise poetry. For example, to devour, conquer, confiscate, destroy and drive away.

With regard to cattle imagery, it is noted that it is prominently utilized. For instance, in *IZIBONGO ZULU PRAISE-POEMS* one finds approximately 96 cattle images while in *MUSHO! ZULU POPULAR PRAISES*, approximately 44 cattle images occur. About 140 cattle images in all. This number shows that in the past as well as in the present, cattle are of paramount importance to human life. Often, with the cattle
metaphors in modern poetry, especially in the bull metaphors, verbs denoting aggressive actions are used; for example gwaza (stab), and ngxama (fight).

The calf metaphor is the most common in Zulu praise poetry. It has the general connotations of worth and beauty as is often used in a royal or chiefly praise name. It appears in a praise where energy and strength are also emphasized, for example, King Shaka is:

\[ \text{INKONYAN' EKHWELA PHEZU KWENDLU KWANOMBAZI \ldots} \]  
(Cope, 1968: 103)

Chief Luthuli is:

\[ \text{INKONYANE KANDBA EJAMA PHANSI KWEZINKUNZI EZIMBILI \ldots} \]  
(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 82)

(Calf of Ndaba that stares threateningly down at the two bulls ...)

Celestial metaphors, especially those of ilanga (sun) and izulu (sky) are often utilized in the izibongo of kings and chiefs, and those of high status. The reason being that, the king or chief is seen as someone who has been raised up by God to save his people. They emphasise the close relationship between God and the kings.
CHAPTER THREE

3. **SIMILE**

In isiZulu, a simile is normally introduced by *njenga*, *fanagha*, *okwa*, and other similar formatives. Here, superlatives will be included. In the following discussion, an attempt will be made to illustrate the use of simile with reference to animals, plants and natural phenomenon, as well as simile in general terms. The discussion will commence with traditional praises and modern praises will follow.

3.1 **Simile in Traditional Praise Poetry**

3.1.1 **Similes Based on Nature**

Hunting was part and parcel of life and most favoured by the Zulu people. It is for this reason that animal images feature prominently in Zulu praise poetry. The categories of animals that have been used here are as follows: wild animals and domestic cattle, birds, reptiles, antelopes, vertebrates and other domestic animals. The *imbongi* did not only attach human emotions to wild animals that were most hunted, but human emotions were also attached to animals dangerous to man. Only the most important examples will be provided.

3.1.1.1 **Animals**

The animals discussed here are the leopard, lion, elephant, snakes and birds. The following examples show how these animals have been used in similes:

King Shaka kaSenzangakhona is described as:

*Bathi 'Hele nangunangu',*  
*Kant' uthul' emahlathini njengezingwe nezingonyama* (Cope, 1968: 99.)
(They said "Hawk, here he is, there he is",
Whereas he was silent in the forest like the leopards and lions.)

Shaka is likened to ingwe, a leopard, and ingonyama, a lion, because both of these animals are symbols of royalty and kingship, and are used as emblems for a courageous, strong man. Furthermore, they combine power, speed, "intelligence", (not to be related to or compared with human faculties), patience, camouflage, and considerable skill, which are all assets of a true leader. Indeed, King Shaka resembles such ferocious animals. The poem contains references to the incident during which Shaka conquered both Mangcengeza of the Mbatha clan and Phungashe of the Buthelezi clan. However, according to Cope (1968: 98), they themselves escaped, Mangcengeza to the South and Phungashe to the North, where he was murdered by Zwide.

King Shaka is further looked at as:

UMasukwana-kuse onjengengonyama,
Idl’ izinkomo zamadoda … (Cope, 1968: 105)

(Masukwana-kuse who is like a lion, Devour the cattle of men …)

A lion is an animal of the open bush and savannah. Usually lions hunt in pairs, or groups and in this process co-operative effort is used. They may approach a herd of animals in full view and then the herd is panicked into an ambush by more lions who have been stealthily circling the herd from behind as it focused its attention on the visible lions (Caras, 1975: 17). Shaka is compared with ingonyama, lion, because of his new methods of fighting. They included moving out to surround the enemy and good organization and training in order to emerge victorious in battle. According to Msimang (1981: 59), "-dla izinkomo zamadoda" implies the capturing of enemies’ cattle by Shaka.
Ndlela kaSompisi is seen as:

_Insingiz' edond' ukusuka,_  
**UMagaju njengengwe ...** (Cope, 1968: 187)

(Hornbill that is reluctant to set out,  
Long-tailed leaper like a leopard ...)

The leopard, _ingwe_, is one of the most beautiful of cats and at the same time it is the most lethal. Thus, Ndlela is compared to this animal, because he was most favoured by King Shaka. At the same time, he was the most hated amongst the Zulus. This hatred was due to the fact that Ndlela was regarded as a foreigner.

Zibhebhu kaMaphitha is looked at as:

_USinqe sangambube yakwaSekane,_  
**Emakhal' angen' udaka** (Cope, 1968: 203.)

(He whose rump is like a lion of the Sekane,  
Whose nostrils go into the mud.)

In this simile (as part of an extended metaphor), Zibhebhu is being eulogized for his martial ability, tireless determination, fearless action, and direct methods of warfare (Cope, 1968: 200). It is for these reasons that he is compared to _imbube_, a synonym for _ibhubesi_, lion.

King Cetshwayo kaMpande is described as:

_Ubenzipho zimhlophe njengengonyama_ (Cope, 1968: 221.)

(He who had gleaming white claws like a lion.)
In his article (1981: 59) Msimang states that: "The paws of a lion are its important weapon, and must always be used to obtain food. It was Cetshwayo's fate to wage endless wars in order to survive". Thus, if Cetshwayo was reluctant to wage war against Mbuyazi, he would not have been in the position to claim his birth-right. Therefore, it was a question of the survival of the fittest.

King Shaka is depicted as:

Weza noKhwelemthini njengezinyoni ... (Cope, 1968: 103)

(He overcame Khwelemthini like the birds ...)

The verb weza is a synonym for wadla. The difference between the two verbs is that, the former is mild whereas the latter is aggressive. They both imply conquering, and Shaka could seize his rivals and incorporate them into his army with ease. Shaka’s rivals are associated with izinyoni, birds, which are helpless when caught in a snare.

Zwide kaLanga is eulogized as:

Ezinyokeni lapha ufana nayiphi na?
Ufana neyandezulu (Cope, 1968: 129.)

(Amongst the snakes which one does he resemble?
He is like the large green one which represents the ancestors.)

Although Zwide was amongst the most feared and strongest rulers in Zululand, he was defeated by the young Shaka. When confronted by Shaka, he was neither aggressive nor powerful. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why he is associated with iyandezulu, an ancestral snake.
Dingiswayo kaJobe is described as:

_Ungangevuka lempunzi_ ... (Cope, 1968: 127)

(He is like a young duiker ram ...)

_Imvuka lempunzi_, a young duiker, was most often caught during hunting. So, Dingiswayo is likened to it because he was extensively hunted by the military machine of his father, Jobe. Although he was caught unawares, he managed to escape with the blade of a spear still embedded in his back.

King Shaka is seen as:

_Isidlangudlangu esinjengendlebe yendlovu_ ... (Cope, 1968: 109)

(He is as rough as the ear of an elephant ...)

Everyone knows that Shaka was aggressive and a hero at the same time. The renascence of the heroic spirit is revived through the regular use of symbolic animals like _indlovu_, the elephant.

Mbuyazi, alias Henry Francis Fynn is described as:

_Mhlan' unameva njengemamba_ ... (Cope, 1968: 193)

(Back with thorns like a mamba ...)

Mbuyazi is said to be _umhlan' unameva_, back with thorns, referring perhaps to the idea that he was so close and had many followers of the Zulu people. They respected him as if he was King Shaka.
Examples of plants utilised in praise poetry are: *isihlahla*, *idangabane*, *umnyamathi* and *amabele*. The *imbongi* would liken a king or anyone praised to some of these plants. Let us consider the following extracts and see how these plants have been used to describe the praised ones.

King Shaka is described as:

\[
\text{Ongangesihlahl' esisokhatweni kuMaqhwakazi,}
\]
\[
\text{Esasihlal' amaNdwandwe namaNxumalo (Cope, 1968: 107.)}
\]

(He who is as big as the tree on the ridge of Maqhwakazi.
On which lived the Ndwandwes and the Nxumalos.)

In this extract, King Shaka is likened to a solitary tree on the ridge, which has become a shelter for the Ndwandwes and the Nxumalos. The *imbongi* here portrays Shaka as the only king who could safeguard and provide shelter to those who were in need. Thus, Shaka was a symbol of strength and protection.

King Shaka is further seen as:

\[
\text{Ongangencumbe yamabel' engadiwa}
\]
\[
\text{Ongangembiza yamashongololo. (Cope, 1968: 109)}
\]

(He who is like a gruel made of inedible millet
He who is like the pot of millipedes.)

According to Msimang (1981: 57-8) the above extract has a plant image as its base but includes an animal image. One wonders why Shaka would be likened to "incumbe", baby food, and what the millipedes have to do with it? The millipede is marvelled at for its many legs. The millipede is as extraordinary as Shaka was. To
compare Shaka to inedible millet, may suggest that Shaka was so great and powerful that even chiefs who were regarded as the most powerful and feared dared not face the King Shaka.

Dingiswayo is described as:

*Umafavuke njengedangabane* ... (Cope, 1968: 123)

(He who died and rose again like the dangabane plant ...)

Cope (1968: 122) defines "idangabane" as a plant which withers and recovers again. Dingiswayo, alias Godongwane, is likened to this plant because many people believed that he was already dead, and his "resurrection" and arrival caused great bewilderment in the country.

Zwide is eulogized as:

*Emithini lapha ufana namuphi na?*
*Ufana nomnyamathi* ... (Cope, 1968: 129)

(Amongst the trees which one does he resemble?
He is like the hardy essenwood tree ...)

Zwide is associated with *umnyamathi*, a huge, hard tree, because he was one of the most powerful Ndwandwe chiefs. He devoured Dingiswayo in the battle for supremacy. His greatness was however totally devastated by the young Shaka, who forced him to flee northwards towards the Transvaal. To say "emithini lapha ufana namuphi na?", implies that a man is never the same for long. He is continually changing.
King Dingane is looked at as:

*Indiha lebabayo enjengesibhaha,*
*Sona simababa kuMahashanga* (Nyembezi, 1982: 49.)

(The bitter herb that is like the sibhaha bark,
Which is bitter to the Boers.)

Dingane is referred to as *indiha*, a bitter herb. The metaphor is extended to a simile, in that he is being likened to *isibhaha*, a substance having a sharp, harsh and unpleasant taste. This is an allusion to Dingane’s massacre of many of innocent Boers during a pseudo-banquet. According to Msimang (1981: 58) this plant image is the warning directed at Piet Retief’s Boers, who thought they could take Dingane into their confidence. They discovered later that he was, in fact, a treacherous hypocrite.

To sum up, it is noteworthy that each of the examples given above feature well-known themes such as strength and courage, as in the examples of Shaka and Zwide, resilience as in the example of Dingiswayo, and aggression as in the example of Dingane.

### 3.1.2 Domestic Animals

The domestic animals discussed here are cattle and goats. One can consider the following example, and see how these animals have been used in similes.

#### 3.1.2.1 Cattle

Phakathwayo kaKhondlo is disclosed as:

*Isizwe samaQwabe ngabathakathi,*
*Bathabeth' umntwan' engakakhuyi.*

---

74
Banqangenkom’ evimb’ amashingosi (Cope, 1968: 149.)

(The Qwabe clan consists of evil-doers,
They took the prince before he had grown up,
And made him travel across because of a lawsuit,
They are like a beast that keeps back ruffians.)

The above extract is an allusion to the time during which Phakathwayo was installed as the Qwabe chief. According to Kunene (1962: 118), he protected his right to rule against his brother, Nomo, who claimed that seniority in age implied seniority in rank. By anointing Phakathwayo as their chief, the Qwabe clan are associated with inkomo, beast, that keeps back ruffians. The latter could refer to those people who were against Phakathwayo’s anointment, but who could do nothing other than accepting him as their chief.

Ndlela kaSompisi is addressed as:

UMahlatshwebuhleni njengethole ... (Cope, 1968: 187)

(He who is always wounded in the face like a calf ...)

The calf metaphor here is a reference to beauty, and it is used when a member of royalty or a chief is addressed. Ndlela is likened to ithole, a calf, which, in the mind of the Zulus, would mean he was a member of the royal family. He was however, condemned because it was believed that he was a foreigner, hence he is umahlatshwebuhleni.

King Cetshwayo kaMpande is praised as:

Abafazi bakwaNgxangaza bazakulala esibayeni njengamathole,
Amathol’ azakulalaphi na? (Cope. 1968: 215)
(The women of Ngxangaza will sleep in the cattle-field like calves,
But where will the calves sleep?)

The above extract is an allusion to the civil war between Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi. The women of Mbuyazi are compared to amathole, calves. This comparison may also imply success on the part of Cetshwayo. It was a belief that women were not killed in battle or after the battle. Especially the young ones were always rather captured by the side that won, for the purpose of bearing children. This comparison was made in Cetshwayo's favour because calves are always cared for. Hence, this might imply that these women were protected after the battle. One might further feel that the word ithole symbolises the beginning of new and promising life for Cetshwayo and the opposite for Mbuyazi.

Cetshwayo is further seen as:

\[ \text{Magwaz' eguqile onjengethole \ldots} \quad \text{(Cope, 1968: 223)} \]

(He who stabs on bended knee like a sucking calf \ldots)

In this extract, Cetshwayo is likened to a sucking calf. His imbongi alludes to Cetshwayo's kneeling on Mbuyazi's shield when his warriors were fighting against the latter. It may also puzzle one why Cetshwayo's imbongi employed the ithole, calf image and not that of a bigger animal. It is because royalty is usually referred to as ithole, or inkonyane. Furthermore, the posture of this calf tells the story of a calf feeding from its mother. It is always happy and excited because of the delicious milk that it will get. Cetshwayo's bard might have used this comparison because Cetshwayo had great hopes of conquering Mbuyazi, and he did so successfully.
3.1.2.2 Other Domestic Animals

Gcwabe kaKhabazele kaMavovo is eulogized as:

\[ Wazishingishingi \text{ zifana nempongo yembuzi, } \]
\[ Ezinyawo simahlele \] (Cope, 1968: 155.)

(He hurried to leave like a he-goat,
Whose feet were burning to depart.)

*Impongo*, a he-goat, is strong, brave and active when it comes to mountain climbing. Perhaps it is for this reason that Macingwane, the Chunu chief’s exodus from the Nkandla district is associated with this goat. He feared an attack from Shaka but he did not wait for it to eventuate (Cope, 1968: 155). It is not clear why this extract from Gcwabe’s *izibongo* refers to Macingwane’s exodus.

The *imbongi* always strives to choose appropriate images for his particular royal bearer, images which uncover the exact qualities of a ruler. In the above extracts the *imbongi* has used a number of similes featuring large, aggressive animals to describe the ferociousness of the praised one. When a lion simile is utilized for an ordinary figure, however, the noun *imbube* has been used instead of the usual noun associated with royalty, *ingonyama*. The people conquered by Shaka have effectively been associated with *izinyoni*, implying that they could not fight back. It was hard to discern the truth about Zwide’s bravery, hence the *imbongi* has identified him with the harmless ancestral snake, *iyandezulu*. The duiker image is suitable in describing how Dingiswayo escaped from being killed, since it is fast. The *inkomo* simile used in Phakathwayo’s praise describes him as a shield or weapon that wards off bad elements. The calf imagery in both praises of Cetshwayo and Ndlela has been used to emphasize vitality because both reached the pinnacle of success in the battlefields. The use of the goat image in *izibongo* is not common. This simile might be utilized to refer to some unique qualities which Gcwabe had.
Similes Based on Natural Processes or Phenomena

Here one can look at phenomena such as *izulu* (weather), *intaba* (mountain), *ilanga* (sun), *izwe* (country), *umlilo* (fire), *umfula* (river), *istiziba* (pool), *indlela* (road), and *ulwandle* (sea).

Ndaba kaMageba is described as:

*Obeyalala wangaemifula,*
*Obeyavuka wangaezintaba* (Cope, 1968: 73.)

(Who when he lay down was the size of rivers,
Who when he got up was the size of mountains.)

In reality, no one can be the same length as the river when asleep, nor the height of a mountain when awake. Ndaba is however said to be so in his *izibongo*. Ndaba is associated with *umfula*, a river, because he was a very tall man. Furthermore, he is compared with *intaba*, a mountain, further endorsing that Ndaba was giant of a man. Msimang (1981: 55) states:

*But the imagery goes further than physique. It was customary for the Ngunis of that time to invade their enemies at dawn while their enemies are still sleeping and consequently defenceless*. 

Therefore, this image accurately describes the might of the sleeping king. When he is asleep, he is as great as the rivers, and when he awakens he is as great as the mountains.

Shaka kaSenzangakhona is described as:

*Ongangezwe lakhe omkhulu kakhulu*
*Ongangezintaba* ... (Cope, 1968: 107)
Although there were chiefs who were more popular, Shaka’s greatness was unmeasurable and uncomparable. Thus, to say he was as big as his country could mean that he was ubiquitous, that he had authority over people in all places. According to Kunene (1962: 122), Shaka made himself one of the greatest rulers in Africa, comparable in military skill to Atila or to Alexander the Great. Shaka was infinitely superior, and his superiority is further described as:

*Ophehlwe weva wanjomlilo* … (Cope, 1968: 99)

(Who when he was rubbed flared up like a fire …)

It is a fact that Shaka during his youth suffered years of continuous mortification. This produced astonishing results. It generated the tempestuous waves of hatred that threatened to engulf all rulers. He wanted all the persons who hurt him to get hurt in return. Through his military skills, he managed to fulfill his ambition and so the "fire" raged so fiercely that no one could put it out. It continued to spread season after season, and consequently, he became the fiercest ruler in Southern Africa. It is for these reasons that he is compared to *umililo*, fire.

He is also looked at as:

*Ungubulele njengobwandle,*

*Lona kuse kuse lugubelana* … (Cope 1968: 107)

(He is curved like the ocean,
Which until dawn is rolling waves …)
In the above extract, the imbongi has compared King Shaka with ulwandle, sea, disclosing him as a person of extraordinary powers. Indeed he was. He could go forward in an easy undulating manner when attacking his enemies. In his article (1981: 55) Msimang says: "Usually the wars were waged in winter when there were less hazards, like swollen rivers, storms". Nevertheless, these were no impediment to Shaka’s excursions.

Dingiswayo kaJobe is referred to as:

*Mandiwo othengwayne onjengelanga* (Cope, 1968: 127.)

(Mandiwo who is bartered and who is like the sun.)

Stuart in Cope (1968: 126) suggests that Mandiwo is a praise-name referring to Dingiswayo, derived from the passive verb ‘andiwa’, to be widely spread, and an alternative translation is "he who is widely accepted and who is like the sun". There is a play on the word *ilanga*, sun, for Langa was the father of Dingiswayo’s great rival, Zwide. Dingiswayo resembles *ilanga*, because of his distinguished unusual mental keenness or alertness that was characterized by a glowing splendor. So, Dingiswayo was highly needed by the Mthethwas as a torch bearer who would provide warmth and light.

Zwide kaLanga is described as:

*Ezindleleni ufana nayiphi na?*

_Ufana nevundlayo ...* (Cope, 1968: 129)

(Amongst the roads which one does he resemble?
He is like the one which cuts straight across ...)
At any crossroads where decisions are called for, we may also be able to discern the many selves within one self. In actuality man is not predictable, he is forever changing (O'Connor, 1971: 16). Thus, Zwide being associated with crossroads implies that he seldom remains the same even for a short period. We think that if a man is called Zwide, he is always Zwide. Nothing of the kind. Now he is Zwide, later he is Dingiswayo. His qualities were that of cunningness and shrewdness.

Gcwabe kaKhabazele kaMavovo is referred to as:

*UMaqangabhedi onjengezul' uma liphenduka* ... (Cope, 1968: 155)

(Witty jester who is like the weather when it changes ...)

The sky can be clear, free from clouds for a short while and all of a sudden it changes, and becomes completely covered with dark clouds; Gcwabe is associated with such weather. This refers perhaps to his state of life or fortune. His wit has made even troubles seem beguiling. Thus, he was tactful in dealing with other chiefs so as to out-wit them in political affairs and get the greatest advantage in a situation.

Zulu kaNogandaya wakwaZungu is looked at as:

*UGqamu njengelangabi* ... (Cope, 1968: 179)

(Explorer like a flame of fire ...)

Zulu's attack was so fierce to the extent that his enemies were destroyed. It is for this reason that he is likened to *ilangabi*, flame, an image that further tells us more about Zulu. He was a man of action who would not hesitate when we talk in terms of war, hence the use of deideophonic noun *ugqamu* from an ideophone *gqamu*. 
Mbuyazi alias Henry Francis Fynn is described as:

"UMqaqambana ongazulu lidumayo ..." (Cope, 1968: 193)

(Deep-voiced speaker like rumbling thunder ...)

The above extract is an allusion to Mbuyazi, who spoke freely and without restraint to the Zulu nation as well as to King Shaka. This loud utterance is likened to a rumbling thunder, implying the power he had of winning devotion or allegiance or of compelling acceptance and belief.

King Cetshwayo kaMpande is looked at as:

"Igqamugqamu likaShaka, Elingamlilo oshayo ..." (Cope, 1968: 223)

(The furious one of Shaka, That is like a burning fire ...)

When Cetshwayo took over as the king of the Zulus, the glories and triumphs of the Shakan era was still fired with the spirit of nationalism, ready to satisfy people’s need for something that would bring glory to the country and raise its prestige once again (Kunene, 1962: 166 - 167).

King Cetshwayo is further depicted as:

"UGuqabadele! INhlambamasoka! Onjengeziziba zomfula ..." (Cope, 1968: 227)

(He who kneels and they are satisfied! Hero of the young men! He who is like the deep pools of a river ...)
Every place where a river is situated, the different points in it are not the same depth. Hence there are deep and shallow parts. The deep parts are very dangerous. Cetshwayo is being compared to such deep pools; when provoked, he would loose his "self" and act according to the given situation. The implication of this image is that Cetshwayo was very dangerous.

Often the *imbongi* would admire a man for his achievements and noble qualities by likening the bearer with suitable similes. In the above examples, the *imbongi* had used most of natural processes or phenomena such as *umfula*, *umlilo*, *ulwandle*, *isiziba*, *ilanga*, etc., to disclose the destructiveness as well as the mightiest nature of the praised.

### 3.1.4 Other Similes

Here we will be looking at similes, dealing with diverse subjects, and I will only provide the most important examples. The following examples will suffice:

Senzangakhona kaJama is described as:

\[
\begin{align*}
UBhid' elimathetha ngezinyembezi, \\
Linjeng' elikaPhik' eBulawini. \\
Inyath' ehamb' isengam' amazibuko, \\
UnjengoMzingeli kwamaMfekana \text{(Cope, 1968: 75.)}
\end{align*}
\]

(Variegation like a multi-coloured animal, \\
Like that of Phiko at Bulawini. \\
Buffalo that goes overlooking the fords, \\
He is like Mzingeli of the Mfekana people.)
Ubhidi is derived from ibhidi, a word referring to a multi-coloured hunting dog. Senzangakhona is likened to such a dog which was similar to that of Phiko. Senzangakhona was famous for his personal beauty and for his dress and decoration. This could be one of the reasons why a multi-coloured dog has been associated with him. Furthermore, he was always travelling, evidently on hunting expeditions "like Mzingeli" (Cope, 1968: 75).

Shaka kaSenzangakhona is looked at as:

\[
\text{UMahlom' ehlathini onjengohlanya,} \\
\text{Uhlany' olusemehlwen' amadoda (Cope, 1968: 89.)}
\]

(He who armed in the forest, who is like a madman, 
The madman who is in full view of the men.)

In the above extract, Shaka's braveness is associated with uhlanya, madman, implying that when engaged in a battle, he would be carried away by intense anger. There is a play on the madman of the Mthethwa clan who was terrorizing people in that district.

Dingiswayo kaJobe is referred to as:

\[
\text{Ingqambi eyahl' emakhos' amanye,} \\
\text{EbinjengoSongodo esahl' uMalusi (Cope, 1968: 125.)}
\]

(Innovator who overcame the other chiefs, 
Just as Songolo overcame Malusi.)

According to Cope (1968: 125) Malusi was the brother-in-law of Dingiswayo who was murdered by Zwide. This deed embittered Dingiswayo to the extent that he attempted to avenge the murder of his brother-in-law, Mlusi. Unfortunately, Dingiswayo was defeated and killed. Songodo is another name for Zwide.
Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu is said to be:

_Inkos' enamanxeb' omkhonto,
Sembatha umkhonto njengobhedu ... _ (Cope, 1968: 135)

(Chief who has the wounds of a spear,
Who is clothed with arms like heart-fat ...)

This praise could be a reference to the time during which Langalibalele refused to comply with an order of the Natal Government to register fire-arms. The latter is a better translation than _umkhonto_, spear, in this context. Langalibalele fled over the Drakensberg, but he was later arrested and sentenced to lifelong exile (Cope, 1968: 121).

Phakathwayo is described as:

_Umhloph' ondlebe zikhany' ilanga;
ZinjengezikaBhubha emakhasini_ (Cope, 1968: 145.)

(White one whose ears shine in the sun;
They are like those of Bhubha amongst the husks.)

There is romanticism in this extract, in that physical appearance of the praised is eulogized. For instance, Phakathwayo’s ears are likened to those of Bhubha.

Nandi kaMbengi is seen as:

_UBoni wamabhuzenge uSontanti,
USontanti onjengowakoGwazana ... _ (Cope, 1968: 175)

(She who sees confusion, Sontanti,
Sontanti who is like the daughter of Gwazana ...)

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Nandi is referred to as uSontanti, drifter; the imbongi makes special use of the masculine morpheme -so-, perhaps a reference to her unfeminine behaviour of wandering around. This nomadic way of living is compared to that of Gwazana.

She is further described as:

*Mfazi ontongande zingazandoda ...* (Cope, 1968: 175)

(Woman whose long staves are like that of a man ...)

*Intonga* is a synonym of *induku*, stick. Here it could refer to an arm. Thus Nandi's arms were as strong as that of a man. In his dissertation (1962: 97) Kunene states that: "Nandi was a masculine woman and ever enraging her husband, that he was compelled to exercise some salutory authority and reprimand her for the imporpiety of her behaviour."

Zulu kaNogandaya is eulogized as:

*UZul' onjengokaNtima emYimaneni,*
*UMabil’ onjengowakoJobe ...* (Cope, 1968: 179)

(Zulu who is like Ntima of the Yimaneni kraal,
Double defender who is like the son of Jobe ...)

Zulu was one of the most recognized heroes in Shaka's army. He loved combat to the degree of fanaticism. His braveness is associated to that of Ntima, a hero of the Mthethwa tribe.

Sotobe kaM pangalala is looked at as:

*U Mp hiwa ng anxanye,*
*Akuphiwa kuyabuyiselana,*
*Kunjengenyama yokuqomisana* (Cope, 1968: 183.)
(He who is given one-sided gifts,
Normally there is no giving, there is mutual exchange,
Like the meat that is exchanged between neighbours.)

To say "Kunjengenyama yokuqomisana" is the same as to say "imikhombe iyenanana"; the Zulu saying means that one should help one another, thus promoting the concept of reciprocation.

A glance at the above examples, especially in the izibongo of Shaka, Dingiswayo, Langalibalele, and Zulu, shows that, the mentioned are exalted to national and heroic status by the imboni. Whereas, Senzangakhona, Phakathwayo, Nandi, and Sotobe are characterized by personal and physical appearance.

3.2 Simile in Modern Praise Poetry
3.2.1 Similes based on nature
3.2.1.1 Animals

In metaphor I distinguished between the wild and domestic animals. Here, the former and the latter will be looked at simultaneously as there are few examples of domestic animals under simile. It is customary with izimboni to compare a king or prominent figure to fearful animals such as elephant, leopard, and so on. However, as it can be seen, izimboni do not only confine themselves to wild and fearful animals. This will be shown later.

King Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu is alluded to as:

Nani magnundwane ahlala ezikhotheni kwaNongoma
gijimani nge'ndlela zonkana niyobikela abangake-e-ZW-A!
Nithi, "Lukhulu luyeza luyanyelela
Silufanisa nenodovu emnyama yasoBhalule ...

(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 54-6)
(And you rats who live in the long grass at Nongoma run along all the paths, and tell all who have not HE-A-RD! Say, "That which is great, is coming stealthily We liken it to the black elephant of Bhalule ")

The above extract is an allusion to the history of the reigning Zulu king. Here the imbongi appears to be sending invitations to the people, informing them of the anointment of Zwelithini. Indlovu, elephant, may allude to King Shaka, who nearly lost his position as the king of the Zulus to Sigujana, while he was still in exile. So, Zwelithini’s position is associated with this incident, because while he was at college, a senior member of the royal family, who was the regent, claimed the position of kingship.

The Zionist Prophet Shembe is referred to as:

**UMomel’ othini njengentethe
ngob’ obomele isizwe sobomi** (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 68.)

(Drier on the twig like a grasshopper because he thirsted for the happiness of the nation.)

The above extract emphasize Shembe’s task as a founder of a new church. He provided a space for love and compassion within the new religion. Like Jesus, Shembe had to suffer for the happiness of the nation. In both cases there is a cross.

Shembe is further disclosed as:

**USokhabuzela onjeng’ amashoba e’nkomo zeZulu**

(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 68.)

( Brisk-mover like the tails of the cattle of heaven.)
The agility of Shembe was quite amazing; it is likened to the swaying of cattle's tails. With his agile mind Shembe was able to gain many converts in no time at all.

Harry Gwala is described as:

Manyondoloza njengekati lingawufuni ufishi
Laph' abasebenzi bepek' osidudla
Bona badl' olanuhuthu (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 98.)

(Stalker like the cat as he shuns fish
Whereby the workers cook cornish chicken
Yet they are fed on skinny broilers.)

To say "manyondoloza njengekati lingawufini ufishi" suggests the wrathful release of latent spite or persistent malice. So, the wrathful Gwala turned on his enemies in complete silence.

Magemegeme is seen as:

UMahlal' othini njengenyoni (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 148.)

(Percher on a twig just like a bird.)

According to Gunner and Gwala (1991: 148), Magemegeme was of the iNqabayembube regiment, nominally formed by King Solomon. He is the percher on a twig like a bird, referring perhaps to the fearful flight of the people he was fighting.

Mngoye kaDingiswayo is referred to as:

UMngoye-ke
UMbebe; onjengengwe (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 160.)
Ingwe, a leopard is a symbol of beauty and strength. Mngoye is associated with it, perhaps referring to the fact that he was handsome or brave.

### 3.2.1.2 Plants

In describing the praised ones, the imbongi has used the following kinds of plant similes: *ithanga* (pumpkin), *ibhece* (melon), and *imfe* (sweet cane). The following examples will suffice.

Isaiah Shembe is described as:

**UMqhibuka njengethanga**

*Oqhibuka ngaphakathi kwamasango asEkuphakameni* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 72.)

(Sudden Blossomer like the pumpkin plant
Which flowers within the gates of Ekuphakameni.)

**UMqhibuka** is a personification derived from the verb *qhibuka* which means "get broken up as soil pushed from beneath". Usually a new plant would emerge during this process. This is tantamount to Shembe’s newly established church, Nazareth. Many people were puzzled as it was a mysterious church.

Tshanibezwe kaMnyamana is referred to as:

**UMgingqika njengebhece** (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 118.)

(Roller like a melon.)
The word *umginqiki* is a personification from the verb *ginqika* which means "to roll". Thus, *uMginqiki* is the praise name referring to Tshanibezwe, meaning freedom. Tshanibezwe’s freedom is associated with *ibhece*, a melon. The verb used, gives the idea of restlessness.

Maningi kaMngoye is looked at as:

*U*ntamo unamalunga, injengemfe (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 162.)

(Neck that is jointed, like sweet cane.)

In this extract the *imbongi* finds his inspiration in the physical appearance of the praised one. Maningi’s neck, *intamo*, is compared with *imfe*, sweet cane, maybe because it is long.

3.2.2 **Similes Based on Natural Processes or Phenomena**

Here things like lightning, fire, sun and rivers will be looked at. Only significant examples will be furnished.

Isaiah Shembe is described as:

U*Zandla zinemisebe njengelanga* ... (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 66)

(Hands that radiate like the sun ...)

To say "*izandla zinemisebe ..." is an overstatement. Shembe must have had overwhelming power, not only for spreading his sermons, but for healing people who were suffering from various kinds of diseases. He could lay his hands on their heads and the evil spirits would disappear. This enormous power is likened to the power
of ilanga, sun. Although we are approximately 150 million kilometres away from the sun, we still benefit from its warmth and light (Thackray, 1980: 10). Therefore, sun rays are an appropriate association to Shembe’s incredible and powers.

Shembe is further looked at as:

**Unogoboza enjeng’ oThukela ongenakuvinjela**

(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 70.)

(Violent Flooder like the Thukela River, who cannot be restrained.)

Shembe is referred to as *unogoboza*, one who flows. The *imbongi* makes special use of the feminine morpheme -no-; perhaps a reference to the idea that Shembe, as the originator of the Nazareth church, is seen as a woman who has given birth to many children. The implication is that he has converted many people to the Nazareth church. This is associated with the flowing of the Thukela River and suggests a smooth, uninterrupted spreading of Shembe’s teachings.

Govan Mbeki is said to be:

*Xam’ Sa, Kheshenu, Mashanela njengonyazi ...*

(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 104)

(Swift speed of the iguana, Sweeper like lightning ...)

To say "*mashanela njengonyazi*", means "having or moving with the speed and suddenness of lighting". Mbeki would talk with irresistible force and cause a wave of protest that would sweep the opposition out of office. He would gain immediate and unquestioning support, approval and acceptance from the majority of people.

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Manqaba Mbonambi is referred to as:

*Uqamu njengelangabi* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 154.)

(Sudden Flasher like the raging flame.)

*Uqamu* is a deideophonic verb, meaning "of sudden flaring up". Manqaba is *uQamu*, because he would take action in a quick-tempered way, as if he was *ilangabi*, a flame.

Elias Mjadu is seen as:

*Umhleze' ebukwa njengelanga* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 196.)

(The One constantly gazed at like the sun.)

Elias's handsomeness is associated with *ilanga*, the sun. What has this to do with national welfare? According to Kunene (1962: 63), a man's beauty is not in his facial appearance but his admirable attempt to master life and himself.

### 3.2.3 Other Similes

In this section, the focus will be on things of various kinds, that were not dealt with in the preceding section. This includes objects and humans. Consider the following extracts.

Govan Mbeki is referred to as:

*Umbeki omsulwa njengoseleni* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 108.)

(Keen-Watcher untarnished as the shilling piece.)

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"UMbeki" is a pun on Mbeki's name meaning keen watcher. The usheleni image alludes to vitality, as in "ukuphila njengoshelemi". So, Mbeki's behaviour even under pressure has been quite so consistent.

Tshanibezwe kaMnyamana is referred to as:

UMacash' egcekeni obenjengenayidi (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 118.)

(Shifty-Hider in the yard like a needle.)

The above extract could actually mean that Tshanibezwe is slender resembling a needle, inayidi. Furthermore, this may refer to his attributes of cunning and shrewdness.

Ndulungu kaMnyamana is said to be:

USigubhu sangoqengqa sanjengesikaGuma kaMagidi (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 122.)

(Gourd that passed from one hand to another like that of Guma son of Magidi.)

To say "usigubhu sangoqengqa" implies the idea of communal sharing. The literal meaning is from the gourd left at the river edge or water-hole to be used in common by the locals to scoop out water. A literal translation would be "the floating gourd gravitates to the water's edge" (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 122). This simile is included in a metaphor "usigubhu sanjengesika". The implication is that the good work Ndulungu was doing was similar to that done by Guma son of Magidi.
Mxoveni kaZofa kaSomfula is referred to as:

**UMadilay' eduze**

*Onjengebhayisikili* (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 130.)

(Tight circler  
Just like a bicycle.)

The above extract could mean that Mxoveni is not a man of his words, he is completely untrustworthy. Whenever he took decisions, he seemed uncertain. Thus, he would not afford assurance of the worth, soundness, or certainty of something.

Manqaba Mbonambi is looked at as:

**UMagwaz' ethetha njengonina** (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 154.)

(Stabber as he scolds like his mother.)

Whenever a woman is engaged in a form of a fight, she scolds while she is fighting. Manqaba is said to fight in the same manner.

Nodlalisa Mzimela is said to be:

**Umfana uyahloma uyahlasela unjengoShaka ...**  
(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 184)

(The boy storms, he attacks like Shaka ...)

This praise is characterised by a sense of nostalgia in the sense that Nodlalisa's prowess is compared to that of King Shaka.
3.3 Conclusion

The bulk of the examples in the aforementioned extracts are communicated through visual imagery. The latter helps the reader to notice a scene or situation; a person sees more things than he or she hears. We also have one or two similes which are perceived by a gustatory imagery that helps us to "taste", for example, "indiha lebabayo enjengesibhaha". In this discussion of simile it is noted that the imbongi derives his similes from a wide range of objects such as celestial elements and other natural phenomena, plants, humans, and animals. The latter includes both domestic as well as wild animals.

It is noteworthy that most of the similes employed in both traditional and modern izibongo create an allusion to greatness, heroism, strength, and achievement. Some of similes in modern izibongo exploit the effective power of traditional izibongo and offer in some cases a sharp picture on present affairs. Similes that have been employed to describe physical attributes are in the minority. Such similes are more utilised in the izibongo of minor attributes, particularly in modern izibongo. Similes that are utilized to unveil the character of the praised tend to be more vivid.
CHAPTER FOUR

4. PERSONIFICATION, HYPERBOLE, SYMBOLISM AND METONYMY

Personification, hyperbole, symbolism and metonymy will be discussed in this chapter. The reason being that there are fewer examples of these.

4.1 Personification in Traditional Praise Poetry

Personification is related to metaphor in that it implicitly compares; personification though attributes human qualities to non-human phenomena. Through the use of personification one notices that what is not human, such as animals and other objects, are bestowed with human faculties, such as speech, sight, hearing, and so on. In his book *The Poetry of B.W. Vilakazi*, Ntuli (1984: 170 - 174) identifies various kinds of personification. He sub-categorises personification in terms of apostrophe, human features, human actions, and human emotions. In this study the pattern of Msimang (1981: 60 - 61) will be followed, namely: personification of animals and personification of inanimate objects. With regard to the former, animals are bestowed with human actions and emotions; while the latter concentrates on the transference of human attributes from the person being praised to the object. So, the bearer is therefore seen as a personified object. Consider the following examples and see how this has been done in traditional praise poetry.

4.1.1 Personification of Animals

Jama is described as:

*Omvukazi zinonya zal' ukwelana,*
*Inga zintandathu zingagubhuza* (Cope, 1968: 75.)

(He whose sheep were angry and refused to cross,
Whereas six of them could splash through.)
To say izimvu zinonya suggests the transference of human emotions to the animal world. The word unya means "cruelty", perhaps referring to the idea that Senzangakhona was not on good terms with other chiefs, such as Macingwane and Phungashe, who consistently posed a threat to his position. Therefore, the izimvu could represent these powerful chiefs.

Shaka is eulogized as:

_Bamweze ngelezimvubu nezingwenya._
_Izimvubu nezingwenya zayikhex' imilomo_ (Cope: 1968: 93.)

(They made him cross at the one ford with hippos and crocodiles, The hippos and crocodiles gaped with mouths wide-open.)

_Izimvubu_, hippopotami, are fast swimmers and quite dangerous in the water, and _izingwenya_, crocodiles, are exclusively eaters of flesh. They sometimes attack human beings, who try to cross their place of dwelling. However, in this extract, it is these animals who actually run away, giving way to the army. They gaped when they saw the multitudes of soldiers crossing a river for the first time. According to Msimang (1981: 61), the _imbongi_ could say "izingwenya nezimvubu zabaleka", but this is too mild an image to use. In order to lend the necessary impact to this mass crossing of the river, he maintains that these animals did not attack the people, simply because they were too shocked to do anything. They simply gaped in amazement. This is tantamount to say "Abantu babulala inyoka", a saying meaning that there are so many people that even the snakes have fled from the veld so as to avoid the trampling. The praise is also shared by Zibhebhu, Zihlandlo, and Mpande.

Shaka is further referred to as:

_Izinkomo zasoPhisweni zaphuma zayithel' indumo,_
zaphuma zamlandela (Cope, 1968: 103.)
(The cattle of the Phiso came out, they made loud thunder,
They came out and followed him.)

This is a reference to incidents during which Shaka would overpower his opponents and confiscate their cattle. The imbongi feels that it would show disrespect to say that Shaka seized, as it is equivalent to stealing. Rather, he suggests that it is izinkomo, cattle, who decided to follow king Shaka, because they realised that under Shaka there is protection and safety. The verb -thela in this context means "talked", thus the bard maintains that the cattle, instead of bellowing, talk, pleading for acceptance. If the verb -khala had been used instead of -thela, one would get the notion of them being forced to follow.

Mzilikazi is looked at as:

*UNKomo zawul' inqaba ngezimpondo,*
*Ngoba zivul' iNgome zahamba* (Cope, 1968: 133.)

(He whose cattle opened the fortress with their horns,
For they penetrated the Ngome forest and departed.)

This is an allusion to the history of Mzilikazi and Shaka. Both were involved in a dispute over cattle. According to Cope (1968: 132) there is a double meaning in the praise, "zawul' inqaba", for it was the cattle that "started the trouble". In this instance, the cattle have done something normally done by human beings. The imbongi could have employed the suitable word zafohla, meaning "force a way in or through", but he realized that the it would have less impact.
Somtsewu is said to be:

"UKhozi lwakithi lumazipho,
Ebelubal' amadoda;
Ngoba lubal' uCetshwayo kaMpande,
Lwamthatha ngamazipho
Lwamphonsa phesheya eNgilandi;
Lwamudla lwamyekelela,
Lwabuya lwamkhafula (Cope, 1968: 199.)

(Our own eagle with the sharp talons,
That accounted for certain men;
For it accounted for Cetshwayo son of Mpande,
It took him in its claws
And threw him across the sea to England;
It destroyed him, then gave him a respite,
And eventually spat him out.)

Somtsewu, alias Sir Theophilus Shepstone, is metaphorically eulogized as *ukhozi*, an eagle. In this extract one notices the extension of the metaphor to personification, in the sense that the bestowal of human actions upon an eagle has taken place. This eagle is able to count men, and take them from one point to another. The implication is that Somtsewu's deeds were instrumental in destroying the kingship of Cetshwayo. According to Cope (1968: 198), the above extract refers to the defeat of King Cetshwayo in the Zulu War, his visit to Queen Victoria, and his unsuccessful restoration. It was unsuccessful because Zibhebhu, his royal rival, was set up as an independent chief, and this led to civil war. This rejection of Cetshwayo was as if Shepstone had spat him out in favour of Zibhebhu.
4.1.2  Personification of Inanimate Objects

Ndaba kaMageba is described as:

Ozingel' amahlath' az' avungama,
Az' athi 'Nhiya! nhi?'
(Cope, 1968: 73)

(He who hunted the forests until they murmured,
Until eventually they cried 'Enough! Isn't it?')

Before Shaka's reign, bravery occurred in the realm of hunting. The honour of having displayed great bravery in the hunt was one of the most important merits in the praises of chiefs. This is acknowledged in the aforementioned extract of the praise poem of Ndaba, the grandfather of Senzangakhona. Amahlathi, forests, seem to be grumbling about the intensity of the hunting. They have been attributed with human eyes, able to see what is taking place around them.

Shaka is referred to as:

Nkwenkwez' ende kaMjokwane;
Imi ngomsila,
Iye yabambela phezul' ezulwini,
Kwaphum' amakhwez' amabili phezul' ezulwini,
Amakhwez' aphum' abikelana ... (Cope, 1968: 111)

(High star of Mjokwane;
Standing on its tail,
It eventually reached right up to the sky,
And then there came out two morning stars up in the sky,
The two morning stars came out and confronted one another ...)

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This is the depiction of Shaka’s rise to power, which was observed by the two morning stars, *amakhwezi*. They could not believe their eyes when seeing the young Shaka glowing with enormous powers. These two morning stars could represent Phakathwayo and Zwide, who were the most powerful and feared rulers in Nguniland. Dingiswayo also shares these praises.

Dingiswayo is said to be:

*Ingqongqo ebhul’ ukwena,*
*Ukhalo lukaZaza lusamangele,*
*Ngoba lungaboni maqoqo nakwaNdlovu* (Cope, 1968: 127.)

(Cock that beat about in the undergrowth,
The ridge of Zaza is still wondering
Because it does not see a gathering even at Ndlovu’s.)

To say "*ukhalo lusamangele*" implies that the ridge was still frightened after the army of Dingiswayo passed the grassy hill of Zaza. Later the ridge could no longer see a gathering of the clan as it used to; perhaps because the people had been rooted out.

Shaka is described as:

*Obhobos’ isikhal’ emaMpondweni,*
*Isikhala nanamuhla lokhu sisakamisile* (Cope, 1968: 109.)

(He who bored an opening amongst the Pondos,
Even today the opening is still wide open.)

In his article Msimang (1981: 61) states that:

*To say that isikhala sisakamisile implies that it has not yet recovered from the shock of Shaka’s invasion to Pondoland. Unfortunately this figure of speech has lost its impact owing to*
its use in everyday language and also the fact that whatever is open is said to be khamisile even if there are no emotions involved.

4.2 Personification in Modern Praise Poetry

4.2.1 Personification of Animals

King Zwelithini is eulogized as:

_Nani magundwane ahlala ezikhotheni kwallongoma_
_gijimani nge'endlela zonkana niyobikela abangake-e-ZW-A!_
_Nithi, "Lukhulu luyeza luyanyelela ..." (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 55)

(And as for you, you rats skulking in the long grass at Nongoma run along all the paths, announce to all who have not HE-A-RD! Say, "A great thing is coming, that is gliding along ...")

_Amagundwane_, rats, represent the heralds of the king. The _imbongi_ seems to be instructing them to go all over, perhaps delivering invitations to various people for the enthronement of the king. The above extract emphasizes the role of the herald, with a praise often heard in royal _izibongo_. The verbs "_gijimani nge'zindlela zonkana_", "_luyeza_", "coming" and "_luyanyelela_", "coming secretly", both refer to something very amazing (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 19).

Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi is referred to as:

_Izinyoni ziyowashaya amahlombe zithi, "Zinkulu kwaPhindangene" (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 88.)_

(The birds will clap their hands saying, "There is something stirring at Phindangene".)
In this praise, izinyoni, birds, are depicted as having hands capable of clapping. The image is further enriched by the idea that the birds in question are capable of talking. This is perhaps a reference to Buthelezi’s dismissal of tribal police who officiated at customary ceremonies after he took office. These policemen thought they could do whatever they pleased at Buthelezi’s residence (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 89).

Mathole, son of Tshanibeze, is looked at as:

\[
\text{Inyoka enosizi yabakoNdlela} \quad (\text{Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 124}.)
\]

(Grieving Snake of the Ndlela stock.)

In the extract, inyoka, snake, is distressed; perhaps, it heard bad news. This may be a reference to the idea that Mathole felt sorrow over the loss of something.

4.2.2 Personification of Inanimate Objects

In the praise of Isaiah Shembe one finds the following:

\[
\text{Kwabonakala uNiniva esejamele phansi komqokolo ngebawothi} \quad (\text{Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 72}.)
\]

(You could see Niniva defiant in his great robes, ready to strike with his bolt-studded stick.)

UNiniva is the personification of Ninevah, the capital of the great empire of Assyria. Ninevah is portrayed as having a fierce, threatening look. This is because the inhabitants of Ninevah were wicked and regarded as doomed because of their involvement in sins. In this extract, the wicked people are those who were rebellious against Shembe’s sermons.
Harry Gwala is looked at as:

Sihlahla sigaxeke ehlanzeni
Kanti ngakusasa sizoqwal' intaba yophondo loMkhambathi
Sihlume okhalweni phezu kukaDenge,
Siqhwebe uStephen Dlamini eNtshangwe (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 100.)

(Tree frond-trapped in the slopes of the valley
Whereas the next day it would go up the mountain passes of Mkhambathi
It greened on the slopes of Denge,
It beckoned at Stephen Dlamini at Ntshangwe.)

The verb -qwala means "to strike on the head or on a hard surface with a hard instrument". It could also mean to ascend a very high mountain. In this praise isihlahla, tree, is seen moving up the high mountain of Mkhambathi. It is the same tree that is also seen beckoning Stephen Dlamini, the President of SACTU. Ascending the high mountain refers to the difficulties and pains Gwala experienced while challenging white supremacy. Gwala could not accomplish such a difficult task alone, hence the appeal to other leaders, such as Stephen Dlamini for assistance.

Govan Mbeki is looked at as:

UMjikijeli owajikijel' induku ebandla
Yavuka yama yayi "Peasants' Revolt" (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 106.)

(Flinger-afar who hurled a kierie amongst men
The stick rose and stood up, and became The "Peasants' Revolt".)

Ukujikijela induku ebandla is a Zulu proverb meaning "to contribute something either in the form of ideas or food". Mbeki contributed towards the eradication of white supremacy in South Africa. Induku, a stick, stood up, as if it had some kind of legs, and it turned into a "Peasants' Revolt". The latter is the title of a book he wrote. The theme of the book is his prediction that the Bantustan programme was the
weakest link in the chain of apartheid ideology, and subsequently it would be first to crumble, exposing the fallacy and futility of apartheid (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 106-7).

4.3 Hyperbole

The presence of this figure of speech in Zulu praise poetry has been overlooked by many critics. In the study an attempt will be made to assess the use of hyperbole in izibongo. According to Abrams (1981: 77), hyperbole is an extravagant exaggeration of fact, used either for serious or comic effort. Often hyperbole is part and parcel of the metaphor. One can identify pure hyperbole in the arrangement and choice of words in this example, "Every word that Webster used weighed a pound". Sometimes other images with hyperbolic tendencies occur, especially in metaphor. Consider the following examples used in traditional and modern praise poetry.

4.3.1 Traditional Praise Poetry

Ndaba is seen as:

*Obeyalala wangangemifula,*
*Obeyavuka wlangangezintaba* (Cope, 1968: 73.)

(Who when he lay down was the size of rivers,
Who when he got up was the size of mountains.)

Literally speaking nobody can be equal to rivers or mountains but figuratively Ndaba is said to be so. This emphasises how great Ndaba was. To say, "*Obeyalala wangangemifula*" could perhaps refer to Ndaba’s infinite thoughts while sleeping. Maybe he was strategising where he would start hunting. The phrase, "*Obeyavuka wlangangezintaba*" could also mean that when Ndaba got up, the first thing he would do was to go hunting in the mountains. It is noteworthy that his greatness was not as a result of being a national hero but of being a good hunter.
Jama is referred to as:

\textit{Ulama kaluthwana kangakanani,}
\textit{Nasenhlamvini yomkhon' anganela,}
\textit{Nasemagatshen' angaphathelela} (Cope, 1968: 73.)

(Jama is not deceived to the slightest extent,  
Even on the point of a spear he can be at ease,  
Even on branches he can hold tight.)

This praise describes how slender Jama was. Besides being slender, he was also shrewd and could master any situation.

Shaka is described as:

\textit{Osifuba sinenqaba uBayede kaNdaba,}
\textit{Ngob' enentethel' emaLangeni} (Cope, 1968: 107.)

(He whose chest is having a fortress, the royal one of Ndaba,  
For he had a skilled speaker amongst the Langeni people.)

No matter how huge a person was, it would be impossible for his chest to literally be the size of a fortress. This could perhaps refer to the fact that Shaka could keep secrets. Therefore, he was a kind of king who could not be easily cajoled.

Shaka is further described as:

\textit{Ocaba ngemikhonto amakhos' ecaba ngamazembe} ...
(Cope, 1968: 115)

(He who clears the ground with spears where chiefs use hoes ...)
The word *caba* means "to clear ground by cutting down trees". It is obvious that one cannot use his spear to clear the ground. Everyone knows a hoe should be used. Shaka's case was exceptional. What it means is that Shaka was excellent in using *umkhonto*, a spear. He established new methods of fighting, different from those used by his contemporaries. Instead of soldiers throwing long spears, short spears were used in hand-to-hand combat.

Zihlandlo is looked at as:

*Isibhene sikaNdaba esimhlan' unezindlela!* (Cope, 1968: 157)

(Straight-limbed son of Ndaba whose back has paths!)

This praise could be referring to the idea that Zihlandlo's back was full of scars. According to Cope (1968: 156) this praise may also refer to Zihlandlo's position as a dependant of Shaka.

Ndlela is said to be:

*UManxeb' angamanxuluma* (Cope, 1968: 187.)

(He whose wounds are as numerous as the huts of a large kraal.)

The word *amanxuluma* means "large kraals". Thus to say, "*amanxeb' angamanxuluma*" implies that Ndlela was so severely wounded in the war against Zwide, the Ndawandwe chief, that he nearly lost his life (Cope, 1968: 186).

Mbuyazi is referred to as:

*UMchilizi wezindlovu ziwe phansi,*

*UMakhomba ngentonga lidume linyazime,*

*Kuwe kufe konke akukhombayo* (Cope, 1968: 193 - 195.)
(Pusher-aside of elephants so that they fall,
He who points with a stick and thunder and lightning come forth,
Everything he points to falls and dies.)

It is simply not possible for an animal as big as an elephant to simply be pushed aside and fall. The implication here is that, Mbuyazi was skilled in using a gun.

Cetshwayo is seen as:

\[ UZandla \text{ zinnyama ngokuphat' imisebe yelanga } \text{(Cope, 1968: 227.)} \]

(He whose hands are black from holding the rays of the sun.)

The above extract refers to the fact that Cetshwayo had difficult times in his life, during which he was isolated by most of his brothers who backed Mbuyazi. Since Cetshwayo was brave and daring, he was not discouraged and instead carried on preparing for the war which he ultimately won.

4.3.2 Modern praise Poetry

King Zwelithini is described as:

\[ UQasa-liwasa, iNkomo esengwa iviyo \ldots \text{(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 56)} \]

(The strong man of Wasa, cow milked by the band of men \ldots)

It is a strange occurrence in Zulu culture for a cow to be milked by more than one person. The cow in this poem seems to be milked by a band of men. This exposes Zwelithini’s unusual character in the present royal history. The strange behaviour of the king is also revealed in the following extract:

\[ Inkosi ebhala ngemvubu, \]
\[ Amanye ebhala ngamapensela \text{(Mkhize, 1989: 99.)} \]
(The king which wrote with a sjambok,  
When others write with pencils.)

Where in the history of writing would one find a man writing with a sjambok? In real life, nowhere, but Zwelithini is said to have done so. In spite of the fact that Zwelithini is a modern monarch, he is not as educated as one would expect him to be. It is for this reason that he is "Inkosi ebhala ngemvubu". He is unlike other ruling monarchs, like Moshoeshoe and Mswati III, who are well educated.

Albert Luthuli is referred to as:

Namuhla yambheka uOswili Phiha, wafa (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 82.)

(Today it glanced at Oswald Pirow and he died.)

This praise is an allusion to the occasion during which Oswald Pirow, State Prosecutor at the Treason Trial of 1956 - 60 dropped charges against Chief Luthuli at an early stage (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 82.)

Gatsha Buthelezi is said to be:

UMnyikizi wezintaba ezilukhuni (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 88.)

(Shaker of rigid mountains.)

The phrase "umnyikizi wezintaba ezilukhuni" implies that Buthelezi could even challenge things which he knows very well are unchallengeable. Harry Gwala also shares this praise.
Zizwezonke is looked at as:

\textit{I}vimbela elibu\textit{k}e izintaba, 
zasi\textit{thibala},
labuka izintaba, zaphum' amanzi (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 164.)

(The Fabulous Water-snake that cast its eye towards the mountains; and they were covered in clouds, It cast its eye towards the mountains, and they poured down water.)

Zizwezonke is said to have cast his eyes on the mountains, and the latter turned cloudy. Perhaps his character was not accepted. He also cast his eyes on the mountains, and the water was seen oozing down from them. The pouring down of water here, could simply mean the flowing of tears. So, Zizwezonke is capable of causing physical or mental pain to other people.

Swidinonkamfela is seen as:

\textit{Mhlakazi-zinhansi zingamshisi} (Gunner and Gwala, 1968: 186.)

(Scatter of the embers but they do not burn him.)

The word \textit{inhansi} means "ember". The latter could only be noticed in the burning fire. Swidinonkamfela could scatter these embers without being burned. Perhaps, he is a brave man, unafraid of danger.
4.4 **Symbolism and Metonymy**

According to Diltz and McMaster (1989: 267), symbolism is the use of symbols in art to suggest, rather than depict or transcribe. For example, a "rose" may suggest the immaterial concept of beauty with all its other associations.

In spite of the idea that three types of symbols occur, namely: local, traditional, and private symbols, it is difficult to discern these in Zulu praise poems. In written Zulu poems these are in fact discernable.

In Zulu praise poems, only two examples of symbolism were identified. The *imbongi* eulogizes Albert Luthuli as:

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Ngizw' esiswini sikaMamaMngadi,
bathi, "Lapha inkunzi singxameni,
kungxamene inkunzi emhlopho nemnyama".
Babuz' ukuthi emnyama ibikuphi?
Bathi, "Imnyama esingaphezulu ... (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 86)
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(I heard of it when I was in the womb of MamaMngadi,
they said, "Here is a bull fighting with another,
a white and a black bull are fighting with each other.
They asked where the black one was.
They said, "It is the black which is on top ..."

*Inkunzi*, is a bull a symbol of power. In this extract, two bulls, white and black, are fighting. The white bull could represent white people and the black bull, black people. Thus, the black bull seems to be in possession of great power over the white bull. Therefore, blackness has positive association. In this praise, blackness is a symbol of strength and courage. Chief Luthuli's *izibongo* are a reference to the Zulu people's heroic, conquering past. This is done through the use of the symbols of a black and white bull locked in combat. The bard then shows the struggle at
Sandlwana, the scene of the Zulu defeat of the British in 1879. The "black bull" is clearly a reference to Cetshwayo. The imbongi has harnessed the symbols of strength and fearsomeness in his allusion to King Cetshwayo, and by extension, this allusion also refers to the Zulu people (Gunner, 1984: 360-1).

Harry Gwala is looked at as:

\[
\text{Siwubonile umfula ungenisa}\\
\text{Abasebenzi bawelela ngesheya osebeni lobunxele} ...\]

(Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 100)

(We did witness the river flooding in\nThe workers crossed over to the left bank ...)

The word \textit{umfula}, could mean any abundant stream or flow of water. It symbolizes the process of life, that fluctuates according to the given situation. So, Gwala is portrayed as unpredictable as the unexpected flooding of the river. Gwala's erratic behaviour marks him as an individualist. According to Gunner and Gwala (1991: 101) the phrase "osebeni lobunxele", (to the left bank), could be an allusion to WUSA affiliated to Inkatha. Herein applied to mean 'shindy shanks' because of apparent conservative intransigence.

### 4.4.1 Metonomy

A figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated. Let us consider the following examples:

King Cetshwayo is looked at as:

\[
\text{Isiziba sikaHamu benoZiwedu,}\\
\text{Esibhukudisa izihlangu zaseMkhweyantaba} ... \] (Cope, 1968: 221)
(Pool of Hamu and Ziwedu,
Which caused the shields of Mkhweyantaba to be immersed in water ...)

Cetshwayo is associated with *isiziba*, a pool, because of his cunning character. "Esibhukudisa izihlangu zaseMkhweyantaba", shows the treacherous nature of the pool.

Khondlo is described as:

_Manz' aseDengwini kawasaphuzwa,
Kwesatshw' izinwele zikaNgxobisa_ (Cope, 1968: 141.)

(Water of the Dengwini stream which is no longer drunk, For fear of the hair of Ngxobisa.)

According to Cope (1968: 140), Khondlo was the son of the chief who was drowned in the Dengweni stream, after which no one drank of its water.

4.5 **Conclusion**

On the grounds of the praises discussed above, we can conclude that personification has been effectively utilized. Human actions and emotions dominate Zulu praise poetry. Objects and other creatures are given a chance to share with human beings in their appreciation of the environment. Various objects are addressed as if they are human beings capable of hearing, speaking, and understanding. When comparing the use of personification in Zulu praises with that of metaphors and similes, however, it is minimally used. In his article Msimang (1981: 62) states that:

_This is not surprising if we consider that the praises are addressed mainly to the kings, chiefs, and other prominent figures who are already persons and cannot be personified further. Objects that come in for personification are of secondary importance._
A look at hyperbole and its use in Zulu praise poetry suggests that it has been ignored by some critics. The *imbongi* makes use of it to emphasise certain ideas or facts. For instance, the *imbongi*’s hyperbolic description of Ndlela as: 

"umanxeb' angamanxuluma".

As for symbolism, it is not easy to identify symbols in Zulu praise poetry. This is due to the over-abundance of metaphors. For instance, it is metaphoric to refer to Senzangakhona as: "ilang' eliphume linsizwa". *Ilanga*, the sun, represents Senzangakhona. Symbolically, *ilanga* is a symbol of a deity or god, representing a king, who is seen only as someone raised by God, to serve his people. In this corpus *ilanga* and other related words have been considered as metaphors. For this reason in this study very few examples of symbolism were found.

Metonymy has been neglected by many Zulu critics. It is metonymical to say, "Isiziba sika Hamu benoZiwedu", as "Isiziba" for "Cetshwayo"; an association depicting the cunning character of King Cetshwayo. "Esibhukudisa izihlangu zaseMkhweyantaba ..." shows the trecherous nature of the pool.
CHAPTER FIVE

5. COMPARING THE USE OF IMAGERY IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN PRAISE POETRY IN ZULU

5.1 Similarities and Differences

Zulu kings of old, especially Shaka, are considered to be among the great Southern African kings. For this reason images derived from very aggressive and powerful animals, such as lions, elephants and leopards have been used. These animals are references to the militaristic era, where an individual’s achievement in battle-fields was what determined his power. Some modern izibongo utilise similar animal images, because modern leaders are also engaged in a kind of battle.

Furthermore, images associated with royalty feature animals of dignity, power, and fearfulness. Those used for ordinary people do not in most cases carry these associations. For instance, when a lion image is utilized for an ordinary figure, the word imbube is used instead of the usual royal associated words, isilo or ingonyama.

Like traditional leaders, some modern leaders are associated with large birds of prey, such as ukhozi, hawk, and ingqungqulu, eagle. These birds are viewed as a power which can be both protective and injurious. Similarly kings or leaders protect their subjects, but sometimes they may lead their subjects into danger.

Images of cattle feature prominently in both traditional and modern praise poems but more expansively in traditional praise poems. This is because cattle were the main wealth of society at that time. Amongst the Zulus, the bull and ox are status symbols and symbolise virility, endurance and strength. The ideal fighting qualities of men and bulls are seen as similar. In this corpus, the bull image is more often used in modern izibongo than in traditional praises. Although the bull may represent strength, it could also, particularly in modern izibongo, represent male beauty and sexual power, as is the case in Zwelithini’s izibongo.

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The image of *inkonyane*, calf, dominates both traditional and modern praises. It has the connotation of worth and beauty, and is often used in royal and chiefly praise names. However, in some instances it is used in the praises of modern leaders who are not members of royalty.

Celestial images in particular those of *izulu*, sky; *ilanga*, sun; *umbani*, lightning; *inkanyezi*, star and *inyanga*, moon, are employed in both traditional and modern Zulu *izibongo*. The association is customarily with warlike vanquishment in the traditional *izibongo*, whereas in some modern *izibongo*, the association is with a well-heeled venture in the religious and political arena.

Blackness in both traditional and modern praise poems in Zulu has the implication, of dignity, strength, and fierceness. This is seen in the praises of King Cetshwayo and King Zwelithini.

Like Cetshwayo’s *izibongo*, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi’s create a sense of tautness between opposing forces. They refer steadfastly to external forces upon them and then express counter-aggression from within.

Looking at the use of simile in both traditional and modern *izibongo*, one sees themes of aggression, strength, and courage. In some modern *izibongo*, facial beauty, and not physical strength makes up the concentration of *izibongo*, as is the case with Elias Mjadu’s *izibongo*. In the case of Dingiswayo’s *izibongo*, association is on strength, beauty, and courage.

*Izibongo* and *ukubonga* are in many ways closely associated with *amadlozi*, ancestors, revealing an account of the descent of the person being praised.
6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study is an illustration of how the izimbongi utilized a variety of images: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism in traditional and modern praise poetry in isiZulu. It is noteworthy that the trade mark of nearly all Zulu izibongo is imagery, the most effective way in which izimbongi have been able to drive their point home. Therefore, a great majority of images employed succeed in exalting what is being described.

From the foregoing, one notes that metaphor as an image in Zulu praise poetry is extensively used. Because of the instant comparison, any noun can be used by simply changing the initial vowel to an U-class la. Some of these metaphors, although not directly connected with war, suggest warlike, aggressive qualities which can be applied to modern political or religious leaders as aptly as they were to warriors, kings or chiefs (Gunner, 1984: 345). As mentioned earlier, of the celestial images those of the sun and the sky are mostly found in traditional izibongo. This is because such images are said to be associated with royalty or kingship, and they have associations of fearfulness, dignity, and power. Many of the images used in modern izibongo are drawn from a wide range of small birds, though some are drawn also from birds of huge size. In traditional praise poems, valour was a virtue achieved through deeds of courage and self-immolation. Modern izibongo of leaders exploit the effective power of traditional praise names and offer sharp comment on contemporary affairs.

Indeed, modern leaders' izibongo differ somewhat from the traditional royal izibongo, in the sense that criticism in modern izibongo is very seldom directed at the praised, only at forces which are considered to be against him. The following example from Luthuli's izibongo shows this:

Namuhla yambheka uOswitti Phili, wafa.
Wathi wambheka uMalane, wafa.
Wathi wambheka uStrydom, wafa (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 82.)
Military imagery, and in some cases, the formulas from traditional royal izibongo are used in modern praises. For instance, Shembe, like Shaka has a martial, formulaic praise name; he is "UQaq' elibomvu ngasekuphathweni ..." This endorses the fact that images used in modern izibongo have their foundation in traditional izibongo. "So in some ways Zulu praise poems are backward-looking, drawing strength from the heroic exploits and the myth-making power of a past age, they also demonstrate a capacity to reflect contemporary experience, to inspire and be of use to present generations" (Gunner, 1984: 37).

The above discussion shows the grandeur of the metaphoric, hyperbolic, symbolic, metonymic nature of the praise names, tied together through the dominant notion of Zulu glory acquired by vanquishment. According to Gunner (1984: 343) the dynamic of war, expressed through the major themes of conflict and courage, is a major preoccupation in most Zulu praises. Closely related to the two major themes is the theme of strength and virility. The former and the latter extensively relate to cattle, elephants, lions, leopards and black mambas. Because the idea of war and glory is so ubiquitous in this study, a very wide range of images relate to the theme of strength and virility.

One looks back with pride at traditional izibongo which imbue a sense of identity.
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