

***Izigiyo* as performed by Zulu women
in the KwaQwabe community
of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Mzuyabonga Amon Gumede

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in the KwaQwabe community
of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

by

Mzuyabonga Amon Gumede

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

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Human Sciences: School of IsiZulu Studies**

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus

Supervisors: Professor Thenjiwe Meyiwa and Professor Noleen Turner

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Declaration

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate Programme in IsiZulu, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was used and that my supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Student name

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Signature

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Date

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Editor

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Dedication

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Abstract

This study investigates the content of *izigiyo* (specified personified solo dance songs) texts that Zulu women perform at social occasions in KwaQwabe, a rural area near KwaDukuza (Stanger) in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Though this study focuses on *izigiyo*, the KwaQwabe have different oral performances that are performed at specific social occasions. In the KwaQwabe area there lives people who practise subsistence farming. The common crops that they (especially women) grow are maize, beans, groundnuts and *imifino* (herbs). The cattle and goats that the KwaQwabe men keep are mostly slaughtered for the *amadlozi* rituals.

The study proposes that *izigiyo* as oral texts are largely responses to issues of heritage, culture, women abuse and domestic violence that lead to pent-up emotions, envy, witchery, gossip, and malpractices that can destroy a community-oriented life-style (Turner, 1998) that features in most African communities. The study hypothesises that Zulu women of KwaQwabe need to be treated with dignity and *inhlonipho* (respect) within the parameters of the Zulu tradition (Msimang, 1975). The study explores issues surrounding the *izigiyo* performance in order to establish whether Zulu women have always been silent (Bukonya, 2001) when it comes to issues that affect their lives, pertaining to issues that impinge negatively on their lives (Gunner and Gwala, 1991). The intended receivers of the messages (Ndoleriire, 2000) are always implied in the *izigiyo* texts and aim at serving as social regulators (Gumede, 2000). The language of *izigiyo* is in most cases metaphorical so as to avoid confrontation. In the midst of the *izigiyo* expression men and women relay their perceptions, experiences, and feelings about the way of life in their families and communities at large. This study, however, limits itself to the *izigiyo* texts that are enacted by Zulu women and does not include men's.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and general perspective

The intention of this project is to record, report, analyse and reflect on *izigiyo* (the specified and personified solo dance *songs*), as an understated form of relating experience and recording feelings amongst the Zulu-speaking people. Zulu men and women largely perform *ukugiya* (the solo dance). *Izigiyo* that I focus on in the dissertation are those that are performed specifically by Zulu women. The researcher collects thirty-three women's *izigiyo*, which are recorded in written form in the IsiZulu language and translates them into English. Further, the researcher explains, interprets, evaluates and critiques the *izigiyo* performances and texts into thematic categories and in the chronological order of the events as experienced by each performer who was interviewed. The analysis reveals the metaphoric, rhetorical and socially dynamic nature of the *izigiyo* texts.

Izigiyo are therefore oral texts that fall under the rubric of IKS (Indigenous Knowledge Systems) and Orally Traditionally Knowledge (OTK). The tourism policy document published by the Department of Education stipulates:

Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the South African context refer to a body of knowledge embedded in African philosophical thinking and social practices that have evolved over thousands of years (2003:4).

As a body of knowledge, the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) encapsulates all the activities that the indigenous people engage in order to maintain their social world. Such activities include their communal governance aimed at maintaining the community-oriented lifestyle (Turner, 1998), the promotion of *ubuntu* (humanism) which is a philosophy that prescribes that a human being's value is determined by his or her relation to other people around him, the employment of various strategies to enforce moral codes for people; for example, the use of superstitions, songs, fairy tales, etc. In the African context indigenous knowledges are orally traditioned, that is, they are handed down by the word of mouth and are kept in human memory. Hence, promoting "the essence and beauty of oral traditions" (Zondi, 2008: 6).

Izigiyo can be said to be one of the types of Zulu folk songs in that they "originated among the people" (Guma, 1967:3) and are shared by a group of people in a particular folk. In other words, they are part of folklore. Makhwaza (1997) defines a folk song as a song that lives in oral tradition that is learned through hearing rather than reading. She further says that it is disseminated within families and communities.

The genre of *izigiyo* expresses women's social experiences. Through this genre, women relay their perceptions and feelings about their way of life in their families and communities. The following comment is true of *izigiyo*:

In predominantly pre-literate societies, songs play a very important role in recording, preserving and passing on the people's history. It is through songs that such events as heroic deeds, wars, famines, natural disasters, etc. are recorded and passed on to the next generation. Song unlike narrative is more responsive to actual happenings in society and

therefore a more reliable record of historical events (Kabira and Mūtahi, 1988:25).

The *Izigiyo* incorporate daily activities, frustrations, disappointments, distress and ecstasy that women experience on a daily basis. These *izigiyo* expressions involve but are not limited to the following: tilling of land, collection of wood for fire making, cooking, fetching water from wells or rivers and cutting of grass for thatching.

Women learn to perform the afore-mentioned tasks during the socialization process when they are young girls and they grow up acquainted with these chores. Charlton-Perkins (1995) enlists some of the roles of the girls which are laid down as follows: cleaning of houses, helping in the fields.

Frustrations, dissatisfaction and disappointments among Zulu women which are enshrined in *izigiyo* are mostly grounded in a variety of factors that may include women's relationships with spouses, their relationships with in-laws, their relationships with families within a homestead/village, relates with neighbours who are believed to be envious, beliefs in witchcraft, gossip and related talk as well as disputes.

Gunner and Gwala elucidate the above stipulations when they comment:

Women's *izigiyo* hardly ever touch on war, and focus often on things close to their lives like money (or the lack of it) or absent lovers last heard of in inaccessible places... (1991:2).

The specified personified songs termed *izigiyo* are shared amongst women and other people of

the village at special social occasions (Masondo, 1997). The KwaQwabe women communicate their experiences through singing and dancing because this form of performance is the most appreciated by them. MaNgema Sishi (80), one of the *izigiyo* performers had this to say during an interview: “**izigiyo siyazithanda ngoba zenza siziqhenye ngobufazi bethu**” (we appreciate the *izigiyo* because they make us proud about our womanhood). Singing and dancing thus has its roots in early childhood (Charlton–Perkins, 1995).

Izigiyo have also a similar connotation with another form of communicating women’s experiences known as *izangelo*, including the familiar genre of *ukubonga nezibongo* (praising and praises). *Izangelo* are therefore praise poems composed by mothers and sung out loudly to infants (Ngcobo, 2003), however, the subtle function is often to voice the mother’s concerns about certain issues. In the oral genre of *izibongo* (praises) women too are praised although more commonly it is men who are praised. Women’s *izibongo* (praise poems) often carry the weight of their life experiences.

1.2 Reasons for the study

The three main categories of reasons for this study are academic reasons, personal reasons and social reasons.

- **Academic reasons**

Izigiyo fall into the categories of traditional songs known as *izingoma zomdabu* (traditional

songs) (Masondo, 1997) and *ukubonga*, (praise poetry). There is a good deal of literature on the topic of *ukubonga* that the study reviews and uses as its basis. There is a very limited body of literature on *izigiyo*, in particular.

Literature includes, to name but a few, the work by Ntshinga (1991), Dlamini (1994), Khumalo (1993), Gunner and Gwala (1991).

In the work *THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF XHOSA WOMEN'S SONGS* Ntshinga (1991) states that songs are one of the most interesting aspects of the Xhosa tradition in that they reveal both sociological and historical significance within the culture of the Xhosa-speaking people. These songs are said to evolve from a variety of factors that shape them. In other words the Xhosa songs depict, inter-alia, the philosophy of people's lives.

Dlamini (1994) in *THE MESSAGES CONVEYED THROUGH TRADITIONAL SWATI FEMALE FOLKSONGS* writes about the significance of folksongs in women's lives, specifically Swati women. It is shown in this study that in traditional Swati society a woman never reaches a stage at which she gains freedom of speech in her married life. The songs through which a woman expresses her views, attitudes, feelings and wishes depicts themes such as love, protest, resistance, hatred and so on.

Khumalo (1993) writes about *izibongo zabetesifazane* (women's praise poems) and *izigiyo zabetesifazane* (Women's *izigiyo*) in his *UZWATHI LWABENGUNI*. He points out that *ukubonga* was not restricted to males only as one may think, but was and is also of immense

value to women. It is arguably stated that women who did worthwhile deeds for the nation deserved and acquired their own praises.

Khumalo throws light on this by providing examples of women's praises like those of King Shaka's mother, Nandi, and others. Khumalo postulates that women's *izigiyo* have various functions most of which criticise unacceptable behaviour among people in specified communities.

Work by Gunner and Gwala (1991) *MUSHO ZULU POPULAR PRAISES* inspired the researcher to undertake the study of *izigiyo*. Gunner and Gwala postulate that *izibongo* (praises poems) constitute a genre of poetry widely used in Southern Africa by the Zulu, Ndebele and Xhosa-speaking people. Significantly, they point out that *izibongo* cross genre boundaries since they exist in very close relation to song and chant, and particularly to *izigiyo*. The postulation that "in popular performance the three activities, praising, dancing and calling out *izigiyo* fuse together" (1991:1) succinctly relates these three oral genres.

Most writers have written about songs in general and very few have written about the genre of *izigiyo*. This study intends to fill this identified gap by collecting, recording and analyzing women's *izigiyo* as an indispensable component of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and Orally-traditioned Knowledges. It is also hoped that an exposition of a philosophy and a theory that is behind *izigiyo* will have been provided, exemplified and critiqued by the time this research project is completed.

- **Personal reasons**

The practice of *izigiyo* is prevalent in the researchers' culture, the kwaQwabe Zulu-speaking community of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. By undertaking this study the researcher wishes to contribute to the ongoing written documentation of my culture, which is at this point scarcely represented in Zulu literary works. Language transmits, sustains and reflects culture. Ndoleriire (2000:272) supports the point when he writes:

A view that seems to be generally accepted is that language can be considered as a cultural practice, and that language is both an instrument and a product of culture.

The researcher started to notice the performance of *izigiyo* as a significant practice in KwaQwabe in 1988 when at the beginning of secondary school classes, he gradually became interested in them. He came to realise that the performed songs or expressions are rich in symbolic representation and are an extension and a genesis of the history of the performer. This is in line with the opinion of Gunner (1979) who postulates that poems are a reflection of a variety of facets that characterise women's lives in general.

Furthermore, the researchers' acute awareness of the significance of *izigiyo* was heightened when his mother took him in her company as a boy to a performance. It was fascinating to see local women performing their *izigiyo* in a very energetic spirit whilst shouting loudly in a communal manner. This indicates the learning of the important traditional performances as a young boy and a child. In support of this, Canonici (1992:11) comments that "there is no specific training for a performer, but a child learns by taking part in the performances in her own home

and in her neighbourhood.”

At the current social occasions female neighbours and relatives perform *izigiyo*. As a member of the kwaQwabe community, though a man, the researcher was happy that women performers were comfortable to perform *izigiyo* in my presence and offered any required explanations to my constant questions. He had over the years before this study began established good relations and trust in this area with the residents. This trust is an essential element which contributed to awareness and conservation of a particular genre of the Zulu heritage. Men are generally welcomed during *izigiyo* performances at social occasions and participate in singing; get the indirect messages that *izigiyo* entail, but cannot be told of the intended message in a direct manner.

- **Social reasons**

Izigiyo record significant incidents and events in Zulu women’s lives (Masondo, 1997). These *izigiyo* contribute to the identity of women and the groups to which they belong. Hadebe (2000:5) states that “song has been used for the establishment of identity, both individual and group”, while Gunner (1979: 264) makes the point that “with women, as with men, a praise poem celebrates the identity of its owner”. She also states that a praise poem enhances a woman’s reputation which then strengthens her sense of belonging to a particular community and to a particular cultural group.

In addition, the performance of *izigiyo* releases tension and thus reduces overt conflict (Turner,

1998). In other words the *izigiyo* contribute enormously to the sustenance of social order. These *izigiyo* and their function contribute to an understanding of the social dynamics of the Zulu people and therefore need to be recorded in writing, for this will raise awareness of the social status of women in particular, and will add value to the study of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) amongst the Zulu people.

1.3 Key assumptions

What can be gleaned in this study is that Zulu women share their experience of life in a very unique way. *Izigiyo* are in this regard an important mouthpiece for them and provide relief; they play an important function in daily social dynamics. It is further observable that the practice of *izigiyo* is a consequence of the fact that women, especially rural women, always find themselves under the domination of their male counterparts or other senior women in a homestead. This study explores the fact that women, through this oral creativity and these communicative measures, voice challenges to the normal order.

1.4 Broad problems and issues to be investigated

- **The *hlonipha* custom in Zulu tradition**

In any action that a Zulu-speaking person takes, he or she is guided by the *hlonipha* custom which is an old tradition that is practiced by the Zulus. The *hlonipha* custom is particularly prevalent in rural areas. The writers below define the *hlonipha* custom in the following various

ways:

Zungu (1985) defines *hlonipha* as a social form of avoidance. She further states that *Hlonipha* means to show appropriate respect for authority or seniority while Raum (1973) defines it as an expression of the pyramid of respect upon which the Zulu ethos is raised and as respect through avoidance as demonstrated in many relations of superordination and subordination by men and children, chiefs and commoners.

Hlonipha prescribes a Zulu-speaking person's role, behaviour and expression. Central to the *hlonipha* custom is *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* means all the good that one person does that contribute to the well-being of another person. *Ubuntu* encapsulates a variety of actions which include, among other things, showing respect, avoidance of actions that bring the names of people into disrepute, helping people who are needy.

Makhoba (2007) writes that an African, in particular, fears to involve himself or herself in the actions that cause harm to the image of his or her family. In African cultures, *umuntu ungununtu ngabantu*, meaning that a human being is a human being because of the existence of the other human beings. Showing of *ubuntu* goes beyond the parameters of *umuzi* (the homestead). Makhoba,(2007) makes the point that a person who has *ubuntu* further shows it in his or her community at large. Hence, *ubuntu* features in the community-orientated lifestyle (Turner, 1998). People who base their lives on *ubuntu* orally express themselves in an acceptable way. This study reveals that the KwaQwabe Zulu (African) women use the *izigiyo* texts as an acceptable and indirect way to express their discontent towards their husbands, in-laws and other

community. members.

- **The impact of the *hlonipha* custom on Zulu women's lives and its influence on their composition of *izigiyo***

Culturally, a Zulu woman is not expected to directly voice some of her concerns and experiences, especially those that relate to her family (inclusive of extended clan). This restriction is not only applicable to a woman as an adult, but it is also rooted in the process of socialization at a very early stage of her life (Dowling, 1988). The implication of such a cultural practice is that a Zulu woman never reaches a stage where she can be said to have complete freedom of speech. The *hlonipha* custom is a critical issue since it defines and moulds a woman's behaviour in a given context. This is also true of other Nguni women, as for instance, Swati women (Dlamini, 1994). Zungu (1985) comments that the *hlonipha* form is based on the idea that a Zulu woman is trained to be silent before her father-in-law, and in addition she must not utter syllables which are found in her in-law's name.

Women have therefore developed the *izigiyo* practice as a mode of indirectly expressing their views and concerns. This is one of the ways in which they try to conform to the *hlonipha* custom which restricts them from directly airing their views, concerns, dissatisfaction, humiliation and distress in a confrontational manner. Zulu women are therefore viewed as custodians of culture who have a duty to preserve and transmit ethnic identity to the young (Magwaza, 2001). The newly married woman is not allowed to treat this custom lightly and is subject to severe public shame should she ignore the rules laid down for her. The forces exerted by public opinion are very important deterrents in upholding these values for one's community (Finlayson, 1995).

Hence, the *hlonipha* custom is an important factor that gives impetus to the composition and performance of the izigiyo by Zulu women, specifically, the Zulu women of the KwaQwabe community where this study is based.

Polygamy

The other issue which is problematic to Zulu women of the kwaQwabe is polygamy. Polygamy is a marriage system which allows a man to have more than one partner. Polygamy is and has always been a way of life in Africa (Maillu, 1988). Polygamy as practiced by some of the males in the kwaQwabe area results in countless cases of dissatisfaction and distress which cannot be directly discussed by the woman affected. Resentment and hatred that manifests in polygamous marriages of kwaQwabe is also a significant contributory factor to the composition and performance of *izigiyo*.

In a polygamous society a man can have as many wives as he can afford. According to Xhosa tradition he should shoulder responsibility for all his family. He rotates his visits to his wives and their children. It happens that sometimes the man spends more time with one wife – his favourite. This is what causes jealousy, but the women are restricted by tradition not to vocalise their marital problems. (Ntshinga, 1991:126)

The issue of polygamy illustrates the fact that tension and rivalries are rife in Zulu marriages (Turner, 1997). This study exemplifies the issue of polygamy through the collection and analysis of the texts of *izigiyo*.

- **A Zulu *makoti*'s relationship with her in-laws**

Conflict between wives and in-laws is prevalent in the KwaQwabe area. The relationship between a Zulu *makoti* (daughter-in law) and her in-laws is sometimes not harmonious. In most cases a mother-in-law is the person in the family who has conflict with a *makoti*. This is because the mother-in-law is always available at home as the head of the women in the household. The conflict between a *makoti* and father-in-law is not common. This is because the father in-law is not always present at home, and the time that the father-in law spends with the family is very minimal. Even if the father-in-law is retired from work he still spends more time outside the homestead performing tasks, like the preparation of fields for cultivation, clearing the bushes, looking after the cattle, etc.

In some Zulu communities some (mothers-in-law protest about their *makotis* (Turner, 1998). The researcher has found that in the KwaQwabe community, some *omamezala* (mothers-in-law) with whom he has spoken protest about their *makotis* saying that they are lazy and disrespectful. In other words the *makotis* are said to have problems with the *hlonipha* custom. When it happens that a *makoti* is naturally unable to bear children (barren), she is often insulted by the mother-in-law. All these derogatory comments by the mother-in-law directed at the bride eventually create a situation which a *makoti* fails to put up with. Such pent-up emotions which a *makoti* experiences impinges negatively on her life and consequently she resorts to indirectly attacking *umamezala* (the mother-in-law) through the composition and performance of *izigiyo*. In so doing the KwaQwabe community *makoti* observes *ubuntu* and *hlonipha* because her overt confrontation with her *umamezala* (mother-in-law) is regarded as a disgrace. This is therefore

the acceptable way by which a *makoti* can express herself in order to voice her concerns. The mother-in-law can also use *izigiyo* in retaliation to give voice to detrimental deeds committed by the *makoti*, since sometimes the *makotis* themselves do not behave according to the norms of the families in which they find themselves after marriage.

- ***Ubuthakathi* (witchcraft) and envy**

Ubuthakathi (witchcraft) and envy are related problematic issues among some of the kwaQwabe residents. The kwaQwabe community strongly believes in *ubuthakathi*. When a person dies most of his or her family members and relatives utter that the *abathakathi* (witches) have killed him or her through their magic *muti* (traditional medicine). These beliefs linger strongly in most residents' minds and it is believed to be an outcome of envy (Khumalo, 1993). Not everyone appreciates the progress and success of other people in the community. To curb the glowing reputation of other members of the society which may be as a result of their increasing diligence, witches are said to use their witchcraft to their utmost to express their envy. Envy is therefore very prevalent in extended families who do not want other members of the extended family to excel in certain aspects of life (Turner, 1998). The performance of *izigiyo* comments on the practice of witchcraft. This research project explores the extent and manner to which this factor plays a role in the performance of *izigiyo*.

- **Gossip and related talk**

Gossip is another problematic issue in the kwaQwabe community. Some of the rivalries that emerge among the women are believed to be the outcome of gossip. Sometimes women are said to slander each other through gossip which is derogatory in nature. It is also believed that gossip goes hand in hand with jealousy. There exists the belief that men do not usually engage in gossip, and that they view it as something that impacts negatively on their lives, so they strongly criticise gossip. Some KwaQwabe women use their *izigiyo* as a vehicle to criticise gossip and gossip mongers (Khumalo, 1993) and this is reflected in the examples of *izigiyo* texts that this study records.

- **Women's daily activities**

Women's daily activities are some of the prominent issues entailed in women's experiences. The area of KwaQwabe is deeply rural and is not developed in accordance with modern urban planning. For instance, there is no electricity, taps and community water tanks. Women still fetch water from the rivers, wells or springs in the valleys. They collect wood for fire from the forests, wash clothes at the rivers, till the land for subsistence, etc. Akiva and Odaga (1982:1) comment on the lives of such women when writing that "their oral literature reflects their everyday activities and conditions: the kind of work they do, what kind of families they have, etc."

Daily activities, some of which have been mentioned above, are part and parcel of women's lives. They undertake a variety of chores which they shoulder in the absence of men. The role of *Izigiyo* in this normal daily activity will be explored. To a lesser extent, the *izigiyo* texts that this

research project examines demonstrate the KwaQwabe women's chores.

1.5 Introduction of basic terms and concepts

(i) *Izigiyo zabafazi / Izigiyo zawomame*

This refers to a specified personified solo dance song composed and performed by women.

(ii) *Ukugiya / giya*

This denotes the performance of *izigiyo*.

(iii) *Ukudlala / dlala*

Literally, *ukudlala* means to play. In this case the term does not mean real playing, but it refers to the performing of *izigiyo* or any kind of Zulu dance.

(iv) *Izingoma / Ingoma*

The term denotes any Zulu songs sung when there is a function. *Ingoma* is a singular form of the term.

(v) *Izingoma Zomdabu*

The concept encapsulates the corpus of traditional songs.

(vi) *Ukubongela*

This means to praise a person, animal, nature or any other inanimates.

(vii) *Ukuhaya / Haya*

The term refers to the singing of a song or recitation of a poem.

(viii) *Ukusina*

This is the stamping of feet coupled with the use of body and hand movements.

(ix) *Izinkondlo Zomdabu*

This is the concept which engrains all forms of traditional poems, e.g. clan praises, lullabies, etc.

1.6 Limitations of the study

This study limits itself to the *izigiyo* texts that the Zulu women of the KwaQwabe area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, enact, and excludes men's *ukujiya* (solo dances with accompanying songs).

1.7 The structure of the dissertation

Chapter one introduces the study on the practice of *izigiyo* and provides the general perspective surrounding the topic. It defines the practice of *izigiyo* in the context of Zulu oral tradition. It further provides the reasons for the study and the broad problems and issues, inclusive of the key assumptions, glossed basic terms and concepts as well as the layout of the dissertation and the limitations of the study.

Chapter two reviews the body of literature that has already been published in a related field of study. The body of literature covers topics on *izigiyo* and the related works.

Chapter three explains methodology and the research methods that have been employed to collect oral material from the field (the KwaQwabe area) in order to generate data that is not already known about.

Chapter four deliberates on the theoretical underpinnings of the *izigiyo* study, and focuses on the theories of human expression (Jousse, 1997, 2000, 2001 and 2004), communication model (Ndoleriire, 2000) and oracy for empowerment (Bukonya, 2001).

Chapter five provides a descriptive background of the KwaQwabe area; that is landscape, rivers, indigenous forests and fauna including their relationship with the people of the area. The chapter further touches on the life-style of the people of KwaQwabe involving their activities, their bold oral performances, as well as their belief system.

Chapter six takes a closer look at specific aspects pertaining to *izigiyo*. Such aspects include the skill of *izigiyo* composition, the kinds of *izigiyo* and their characteristics, social occasions at which women perform the *izigiyo* texts and the actual venue of performance and audience itself and these are inclusive of other significant concepts.

Chapter seven records the names of the KwaQwabe women performers and brief background information, their *izigiyo* texts in IsiZulu and translation into English. It thereafter narrates and analyses the recorded *izigiyo* on an individual basis.

Chapter eight summarises and draws conclusions. Recommendations are made for further studies on the practice of *izigiyo* and puts emphasis on the importance of such practice within the African indigenous knowledge systems.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the intention of this study, which is to record in writing and analyse Zulu women's *izigiyo* as performed in the KwaQwabe community of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. The chief reasons that prompted the pursuing of this study were unpacked and categorized into academic, personal and social. Broad problems which inform and reinforce the perpetuation of this practice have been explored and dealt with in detail, including problems such as *isithembu* (polygamous marriages), in-laws relations, envy, gossip and witchcraft. Such issues give rise to the composition and performance of *izigiyo* by Zulu women of the KwaQwabe area. *Izigiyo* texts act as the immediate tools for women to voice their concerns and resentment in a non confrontational manner. The strictures bestowed by the tradition upon women pertaining to the way they should express themselves, particularly the *hlonipha* (respect) custom (Zungu, 1985; Raum, 1975), has led to women's invention by way of *izigiyo*. This is an indication that women are not prepared to be seen as inferior and trivial in the communities which they inhabit. The basic terminology and concepts one may come across within the dissertation have been

introduced and glossed. The structure of the dissertation has been arranged and the layout thereof has been recorded in a way that the reader to knows, from the outset what the thesis contains.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section investigates a variety of literary works that have been reviewed so as to re-inform and reinforce the study on *izigiyo*. The body of literature that has been reviewed includes literature on *izigiyo* and its related genres-focussing on *izibongo* (praises) *izangelo* (children's poems), songs, poetry and other forms of oral tradition.

2.2 Writings on *izigiyo*

Gule et al. (1993) identify five kinds of *izigiyo* which are stipulated as follows: herd boys' *izigiyo*, men's *izigiyo*, elderly women's *izigiyo*, elderly men's *izigiyo* and women's *izigiyo*. Gule and associates only categorise the *izigiyo* in the above manner but don't account for the discrepancies between the afore-mentioned categories. They further furnish us with the examples of each category, without deeper explanations of those examples. This study focuses on women's *izigiyo* only, so that a detailed compilation and analysis on one type of *izigiyo* emerges. From an analysis of Gule and associates' work on *izigiyo*, it was discovered that they make mention of only one

function of the *izigiyo*, which is the exhibition of ecstasy and appreciation when there is a feast. This particular study aims at unveiling a variety of functions of women's *izigiyo*. It is the above-mentioned gaps that this study endeavours to fill.

The work by Read (1993) discusses *izibongo* (praises), the genre that he states embarks on *izithokozo* (thanking names) and *izigiyo*. What can be deduced from this work is that nothing more is discussed about *izibongo* (praises) and *izigiyo* other than just mentioning them. This study discusses issues on *izigiyo* so as to provide a clear comprehensive picture of women's situations in a Zulu context.

In his work, UZWATHI LWABENGUNI, Khumalo (1993), accounts for *izigiyo zabesifazane*. He postulates the functions of *izigiyo* as follows:

1. *Izigiyo* criticise and cast suspicions of witchcraft in the community.
2. They criticise the acts of gossip and serve as a warning strategy to those who commit it.
3. They condemn men's abuse of women, particularly physical abuse.
4. They are a vehicle for expressing any kind of discontent which may be rooted, for instance, in the women's misfortunes, child mortality, women's dysfunctional relationships with their spouses, and bad relationships between wives in a polygamous homestead.

There are other functions of *izigiyo* which are not included in Khumalo's exploration, hence much needs to be further uncovered in the study of *izigiyo*.

In his book, *INKUNZI ISEMATHOLENI*, Masondo (1997) gives an account of *izigiyo zabesifazane* (women's *izigiyo*). He points out that women performed *ukugiya* only when they were delighted. He then provides very few examples of women's *izigiyo* which are left unexplained. In the second place, Masondo talks about men's *izigiyo*, where he only shortly elaborates on the procedure followed when men perform *ukugiya*. In his explanation he leaves out the contexts in which the *izigiyo* are performed, most of which vary a lot. To a lesser degree, Masondo throws light on the characteristics of *izigiyo*. He writes that *izigiyo* are characterised by repetitions, that is, the repetition of words and phrases. He further states that *izigiyo* are characterised by a short structure as compared to other forms of oral genres; for example, praises. This study then will reveal some more characteristics of *izigiyo* and their contexts.

Gunner and Gwala (1991) make a crucial point in that they state that women's *izigiyo* focus often on things close to their lives. The point they are making will then be further elaborated on and clarified through the collection of Zulu women's *izigiyo*. In other words, things close to women's lives will be unpacked when treating the individual examples of specific KwaQwabe women's *izigiyo*.

Derwent (1998:134) writes: "An important part of many Zulu ceremonies is the *ukugiya*, a dance to entertain the crowds during which the man who is dancing receives affirmation from his friends and relatives." The investigation that the

researcher has undertaken will reveal the point that the *izigiyo* are also a vehicle for communicating individual life experiences in a collective setting with special reference to women's *izigiyo*.

Forbes (1985) writes about men's *ukugiya*. He says that it takes place in the cattle enclosure due to the belief that the ancestors are there. This investigation then will throw light on the forums where women perform their *izigiyo*. Forbes further postulates that “ the boys performed a solo dance (*ukugiya*) while his praises were being sung” and “his dance consisted of strides, runs, leaps and stamps, improvised by each individual dancer” (1985:25). The exploration that I will present on the *izigiyo* will prove that the procedure followed by the women when performing the *ukugiya* is more or less the same as the above stipulation suggests. Women's photographs will illustrate that strides, leaps, runs and stamps are also incorporated in Zulu women's performance of *izigiyo*.

2.3 Writings on *izangelo* (children's poems)

The writings on *izangelo* have been explored since they are closely related to *izigiyo*. Ngcobo (2003) clarifies that the *izangelo* are infants' poems that the infants' mothers compose and sing for them. She further states that the mothers sing *izangelo* to infants loudly, as a way of soothing them when they are crying. From Ngcobo's work it becomes clear that the intention of the composition and singing of *izangelo* is to

express the mother's pent-up emotions most of which emanate from hard life-experiences.

Msimang's (1991) work *INKOSI YINKOSI NGABANTU* briefly elucidates the traditional poems termed *izangelo* in the following manner:

Lezi yizidlaliso zomntwana azinikwa ngunina esemncane. Unina usuke ephawula ngezigidaba ezithile ezenzeke kuye esakhulelwe noma kusukela ekuganeni kwakhe. Ngakho-ke zilanda ngalokho okwenzeke umntwana obangwayo noma oteketswayo engakazalwa (1991:4).

(These are the child's poems composed by the mother for him or her. The mother uses the *izangelo* (children's poems) to air her concerns which emanate from particular events and circumstances which took place when she was pregnant or from the time when she entered married life. Nevertheless, the *izangelo* express the historic occurrences that existed before the birth of a particular infant who is being praised.)

Some of the events and circumstances that give rise to *izangelo* give rise to *izigiyo*. The intention of this exploration of the *izigiyo* is to unpack a detailed analysis of what leads to the existence of *izigiyo*. In other words, *izigiyo* will express a variety of specific experiences that mothers (women) go through and which Msimang does not mention or elaborate on.

2.4 Writings on *izibongo* (praises)

In her book, IHLUZO 3, Makhambeni (1989) writes about the significance of *izibongo* in Zulu society. The following phrase summarises what she stipulates about the *izibongo*: “Ziye zithinte umlando, ukuhlabana ezimpini, uzalo, ubuntu nokwakheka kwangaphandle kanye nezenzo ezigqamile zalowo obongwayo” (1989:97). (The praises tackle a variety of aspects relating to the person who is being praised and these include heroism in wars, extended families, humanity and prominent actions of the praised). The examples of the *izigiyo* will also indicate some of the features of *izibongo* as indicated in the above quote.

Izibongo (praises) are, according to Masondo (1997), the poems which engrain historic and remarkable events in one's life emanating from before birth up to birth and into adulthood. Masondo (1997) stresses the point that the events attached to the praised can either be about desirable or undesirable entities or behaviour directed at him. Masondo (1997) further provides examples of *izibongo* under the following categories without further elaborating on them: *izibongo zamakhosi* (Kings' praises), *Izibongo zamaqhawe* (heroes' praises), and *izibongo zabesimame basebukhosini* (praises of royal women). This study aims at elaborating closely on Zulu women's *izigiyo*, which is a genre more or less related to women's praises.

Masondo (1997) reveals the following five functions of *izibongo* which are also prevalent in the *izigiyo*:

- i. *Izibongo* entertain the praisee and the audience
- ii. They explicitly emphasise the value of orality and oralness of the Zulu nation
- iii. They warn anyone who is being praised of something that needs attention
- iv. They encourage the acceptable behaviour in people
- v. They unite a nation

The work of Turner (1997) engages with the dynamic and transformative nature of praising in contemporary Zulu society. She elaborates on *izihasho zabantu* (people's praises) which she points out are carried out for reasons such as complimentary functions and criticism. *Izigiyo* that will be analysed in this study will illustrate the point that their function is mostly about criticism rather than being complimentary.

Under people's praises Turner (1997) incorporates men's praises, women's praises and praises contained in *maskandi* music. The most profound and important point that Turner makes about Zulu women's praises is that they are used as a legitimate outlet in the close-knit structure of the Zulu polygamous unit where tension and rivalries are rife. Turner further agrees that a community is also strengthened enhanced and sustained by the existence of the praises. The point that Turner is making here is manifested in the *izigiyo*. This proves that there is congruence between the praises and

izigiyo. The point that I regard as the main point in Turner's account of praises and which is also true of *izigiyo*, is that a person's praises are “a means of making him or her accept any physical or behavioural oddity he/she may have, without developing any inferiority complex about these perceived failings” (1997:60).

Elizabeth Gunner also writes on praise poetry. Her work on praises covers the performance of Zulu women. Gunner (1979) purports that praising has always been associated with males. She further states that the praises for outstanding royal women such as Nandi (King Shaka's mother) and others have been documented and she argues that there is little in print about women's praises. As a related genre, *izigiyo* that will be presented in this study will endeavour to record women's voice in print. Gunner and Gwala (1991) record various specific *Izibongo zawomame* (women's praises) without accounting for the circumstances under which they came into existence. It is such a gap that the *izigiyo* study will try to fill.

Kamera (1999:9) further elaborates on the significance of oral poetry when stating that: “the performance of this genre of poetry when looked at from the outside reveals an internal multivalency which only a sensitive indigenous mind can fully decode.” The pillars of such internal multivalency, as demonstrated in women's *izigiyo*, will intensify women's voice in the world of strictures envisaged by women.

2.5 Writings on songs and singing

In his work, *ZULU TRIBAL HERITAGE*, William Charlton-Perkins (1995) postulates that singing and dancing is the appreciated heritage among the Zulu and it has its roots in childhood. He states that through singing and dancing, the Zulus exhibit their skills. Charlton-Perkins further points out that dancing is structured according to gender. He explains that men and boys have their own modes of performances which differ from women's. Charlton-Perkins makes an extremely significant point when he purports that singing and dancing "often embodies an element of social commentary about some ordinary event of everyday life" (1995:3).

Having studied Kenyan society, Kabira and Mitahi (1988) in their work *GIKUYU ORAL LITERATURE* categorise the songs in the following manner:

1. Songs for youth (sung at special occasions like circumcision, etc.)
2. Songs for young people (for example, early years of married life)
3. Songs for the old people (who had been at the stage of being the grandparents)
sung on special occasions such as marriage, beer parties, etc.

Kabira and Mitahi further identify six functions of songs which are stipulated as follows:

- i. Songs are reflectors of people's philosophy and aesthetics

- ii. Songs reveal a community's attitudes towards women
- iii. Songs are important as a way of castigating wrong doers and enhancement of positive behaviour
- iv. Songs serve as mediums of culture (transmit and enhance people's customs and traditions)
- v. Songs are used for entertainment
- vi. Songs record history

Although Kabira and Mtahi specify the above functions of songs as belonging to Kenyan society, such functions are not limited to Kenyans but are also replicated in other societies such as Zulu society. In this study, the second function among the above functions is the most significant one in that it states the community's perception of women. It is such community perceptions and attitudes that the study on Zulu women's *izigiyo* will delve and corroborate. The study will also demonstrate that Zulu women challenge incorrect perceptions which are foisted on them by the communities in which they dwell.

James writes on the nature of African indigenous music in his work entitled *MELODIC AND RHYTHMIC ASPECTS OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN MUSIC*. James (1992:15) says: "Music-making is such an important part of African social and cultural life that it is performed regularly in a wide diversity of social settings". He stipulates that when music is performed by a group or tribe it becomes a shared creative experience which enriches community life and it cannot be said to be

indispensable from social activities. James postulates that African music is characterised by repetitions which he says contribute to its design and structure. To add more value to what James says about this, this *izigiyo* study will unveil a wide diversity of social settings which mark their regular performance. Repetitions, as a characteristic of African music, as James says, are also embodied in the *izigiyo*. These too have been investigated in this study.

Furthermore, Ntshinga (1991 a) in her work entitled AESTHETICS AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN XHOSA SONGS states that the classification of songs is largely intertwined with a variety of factors that shape it. For Ntshinga performance has to be looked at very closely when songs' categorisation is carried out.

In addition to what she states above, Ntshinga (1991 b) writes about Xhosa women's songs in the work THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF WOMEN'S SONGS. Xhosa women's songs are, according to her, categorised into diviner's ritual songs, modified boys' initiation songs, wedding songs and women's work songs. The crucial point that is made here is that such songs take into cognisance the contextual background in which they are embedded. This writing reveals the point that any woman is entitled to sing such songs in a particular social setting. The examples of Xhosa women's songs that Ntshinga records indicate that they are not just one individual's asset but are any women's. What Ntshinga states about songs leads one to compare the Xhosa women's songs to Zulu women's *izigiyo* and thereafter draw the conclusion that Zulu women's

izigiyo exhibit a high degree of uniqueness in that they are specifically their owners' assets and therefore cannot be sung by any other woman. In exceptional cases one Zulu woman can sing the other's *izigiyo* with acknowledgement.

Another writer, Susana Dlamini (1994) looks closely at various forms of messages or themes which are enshrined in the Swati female songs. Such songs are said to be characterised by protests, most of which are rooted in painful relationships of married life. The fascinating point in Dlamini's scribal writing is that the Swati female songs are composed by women themselves and are performed and shared in a particular social setting.

From an analysis of the above work, I have identified a gap; the writer does not furnish one with a suitable Swati term for Swati female songs. Zulu women's *izigiyo* that are studied here will demonstrate that women are adept at composing and performing the songs which are unique to them, in addition to the general songs that they perform.

The work of Enoch Mvula (1988) looks closely at the songs which are sung and performed by women during the puberty rites ceremony of the Maseko Ngoni girls. He postulates that the Maseko Ngoni tribe resides in central Malawi. Mvula states that the traditional songs which are performed by women during the puberty rite embody virtue, beauty, modesty, humour and virginity, sexuality and fertility as well as marriage. In other words, such songs are educational since they introduce the girl into

the values and norms of being a socially-accepted woman. According to Mvula, these songs are mainly used as a vehicle for moulding a Ngoni girl into submissiveness after initiation and marriage. Comparing what Mvula expresses above to Zulu women's *izigiyo*, it becomes apparent that Zulu women are not submissive about their situations since through their *izigiyo* they voice whatever concerns they have internalised.

2.6 Writings on the naming practice

Reviewed in this study, are also the scribes on naming. One of the forms of oral tradition which correlate with *izigiyo* are names. This tradition and *izigiyo* demonstrate congruence in that both imply events and circumstances that are behind their composition.

In her work, ORAL LITERATURE IN AFRICA, Ruth Finnegan (1970) explores the significance of naming in Africa. Her exploration clearly shows that people make social comments in the naming practice. From Finnegan's account of naming it is significant that names are functional and minimise friction among people. Such a function is central to the practice of *izigiyo*.

Stewart's (1994) AFRICAN NAMES: NAMES FROM THE AFRICAN CONTINENT FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS reiterates the significance of naming in Africa in the following statement: "Traditional African names have wonderful meanings and unique histories" (1994: vii). As for names, *Izigiyo*

incorporates wonderful meanings and unique historical accounts. Such uniqueness in meanings and history will be exemplified in a collection of the KwaQwabe Zulu women's *izigiyo*.

de Klerk and Bosch (1997: 95) write on the value of nicknames. They argue that the value of nicknames is closely tied to the complex social networks in which they operate, and meanings are often dependent on the context of use, as are *izigiyo*.

In her article, THE COMPOSITION AND PERFORMANCE OF CRYPTIC SOCIAL MESSAGES IN ZULU ONOMASTICS, Turner (1998) writes about the profound significance of both Zulu personal and domestic animals' names as descriptive and narrative expression of the circumstances or contexts in which they are given. Turner's argument clearly discloses the notion that names convey essential messages that can be decoded by the receiver of the messages within the context in which the receiver of the message and the name giver find themselves. In the afore-mentioned articles, Turner documents and explains both people's and animals' names which reflect friction within social relations.

Turner purports that "the Zulu people live an essentially community-orientated lifestyle" (1998:238). She states that this kind of lifestyle is dependent on harmonious relations and it totally rejects any conflict that may arise and impede unity, whether within the family or between the neighbours or within the community at large. Turner (1998: 239) describes African life as life which "is centred on the principle of

ukuhlonipha (respect) which is central to the philosophy of *ubuntu*". Deduced from her work is that in African life anyone, whether a youngster or an adult, a person is subject to the obligation of observing the *hlonipha* custom. Confrontation is said to violate the *hlonipha* custom. Although the *hlonipha* custom, specifically in the Zulu society, is observed by everyone, it is practiced more by women than men since women are construed as the custodians of culture. The *hlonipha* principle greatly enriches the community-orientated lifestyle, as Turner suggests. When Zulu people name their infants and the domestic animals they reinform and reinforce the *hlonipha* custom as it is a way of avoiding direct confrontation which is completely condemned in Zulu tradition.

In the human relationship, friction is practically inescapable. In a community-orientated lifestyle, which is characterized by *ubuntu* (acceptable behaviour in humans as a philosophy) Turner points out that overt friction is overwhelmingly condemned, for its consequences are fatal or traumatic. Turner (1998) accounts for the categories of typical friction that are exemplified by Zulu onomastics. These categories are friction between spouses or lovers, friction between in-laws, friction within the family at large and friction with neighbours/local community. The main causes of conflict that reflect on names are, according to Turner (1998), accusations regarding witchcraft, jealousy between neighbours, accusations with regard to dishonesty and the spread of rumours or gossiping.

From Turner's research it can be deduced that the Zulus, and mainly Zulu women, have sought ways to voice their discontent in an indirect manner with the intention of avoiding conflict. This is deemed desirable. Personal and domestic animals' names, therefore, are used, in addition to other things, as a vehicle for retaliation in a conflict situation so as to avoid direct confrontation.

The function of naming and the function of *izigiyo* is more or less the same. As in the case of names, *izigiyo* largely reflect the afore-mentioned categories of friction that manifest in Zulu onomastics. The causes of conflict that have been listed above also give impetus to the composition and performance of *izigiyo* by Zulu women. The *izigiyo* that reflect conflict are rife in the KwaQwabe area, which is the project area. Naming and the practice of *izigiyo*, therefore, maintain and sustain a community-orientated lifestyle that strives for *ubuntu ebantwini* (humanism in humans). Unlike names, which may be individually given, *izigiyo* constitute a form of performed knowledge as they require audience participation during their actual performance.

2.7 Writings on *iziqubulo* (war-related songs) and *amahubo* (tribal songs or clan songs)

The work by Mabuya (1988) explores *iziqubulo* (war-related songs) and *amahubo* (Zulu traditional hymns), amongst other song types. Such songs are said to inspire the regiment when it is together. Mabuya (1988) purports that *iziqubulo* and *amahubo* are sung and performed in the form of *ukugiya* (a solo dance) on various social occasions.

Mabuya explains that *amahubo* and *iziqubulo* are used at various levels, namely: those that are sung by the regiments, those that are sung by old men, those that are sung by the girls and women including old women. Mabuya's account of *iziqubulo* and *amahubo* is brief. The women's *izigiyo* that I am investigating will demonstrate their closeness to *iziqubulo* and *amahubo*. The most prominent similarity that is manifested in the *iziqubulo*, *amahubo* and *izigiyo* is that their composition is grounded in the events that shape people's lives.

2.8 Writings on the concept 'oral tradition'

Akiva and Odanga (1982) define oral literature as a spoken, acted (performed) art whose media, like that of written literature, consist of words. The following statement sums up all they say about the delicacy of oral literature:

Just as the sculptor uses wood or stone to create his piece of art, so does the oral artist use the spoken word to create his art, e.g. a story. It is through a spoken word that oral literature has been kept and continues to be kept alive, is transmitted from one person to the next, and from one generation to the other (Akiva and Odaga, 1982: 1).

The work by Selepe (1997) stresses the point that literature should be studied or taught in relation to the social processes that shaped it. Selepe further argues that should the social processes such as economy, politics, religion and others not be taken into account, problems with regard to the teaching of African literature in a democratic South Africa will persist.

Msimang (1991) writes on *ubunjalo bobuciko bomlomo* (the nature of oral tradition). Msimang (1991:1) defines *ubuciko bomlomo* as *inkulumo* (speech) “enobuchwepheshe noma eyingxoxo eyedluliselwa ezizukulwaneni ngezizukulwane ngomlomo” (entailing huge wisdom which is handed down from generation to generation). Msimang stresses the point that *ubuciko bomlomo* (oral tradition) is not restricted to a specific period of the past, but is living within and around people today.

Msimang (1991) also covers *ukubaluleka kobuciko bomlomo* (the significance of oral tradition) in his discussion. He postulates that the objective of analysing oral tradition involves finding out about the philosophy of people (with special reference to Zulu philosophy).

The examples of Zulu women’s *izigiyo* that I collected and analysed demonstrate the wisdom that is perpetuated by oral tradition and show how people interact with their immediate world. *Izigiyo* are under-represented in the scribal record, where the focus has been limited to oral tradition genres such as proverbs, folktales, praises, with a very limited record of other forms of the oral tradition such as *izigiyo*. This is a critically important notion in the scholarship of the oral tradition of knowledge. *Izigiyo* that I collected and analysed will be interpreted, and will contribute greatly to such scarce scribal representation.

In his work, *THE TWO SUPPORTING WALLS OF IMBOKODO AND INDEPENDENCE HAVE FALLEN OVER*, Groenewald (2001) refers to a

significant point on the functions of oral art when commenting that “the functions of oral art should be viewed from a specific angle: from the performer’s point of view (intentionally), or from that of the audience (expectations). In determining functions, one should also distinguish between intention/motive of the performer and/or audience and the actual effect of the discourse” (2001: 235-236).

The KwaQwabe Zulu women’s *izigiyo* will contribute to a body of written forms of oral art viewed from a specific angle, which is, from Zulu women’s experiences of their immediate social world, and therefore will reveal the uniqueness of their performance including the audience’s possible expectations during the performance.

In addition to comment that Groenewald (2001) makes above, Dasyuva (2001: 181), views oral performance as “collective expression and the celebration of culture – related communal experiences that give voice to loric values. These values are rooted in the philosophical hermeneutics of a predominantly traditional society.” The loric values that Dasyuva makes mention of will be uncovered through the medium of the KwaQwabe women’s *izigiyo*. That is the value of the use of *izigiyo* as social regulators as well as *ubuntu* (humanism) reinforcing barometers.

The above point is further stressed by Dinslage (2001) in the work TADITIONAL EDUCATION AND ORAL LITERATURE when throwing light on the crucial role played by oral tradition in the following manner: “Oral tradition is a rich source of maintaining the consciousness of traditional values and patterns of moral behaviour in... societies” (2001: 46). Foregrounding the interrelatedness between oral tradition and education, Dinslage (2001: 47) states that oral tradition “kept a certain

pedagogical value until today. They can still be passed off as an educational tool and a pedagogic instrument by parents and elders to create a sense of ethnic solidarity in the children's mind".

2.9 Writings on translation

This study involves translation of *izigiyo* from IsiZulu to English. Okombo (1994) considers translation as a creative exercise rather than something negative. Okombo further observes that efforts in translating texts are worthwhile despite the loss of original flavour. For Okombo, translators "aim not for a true translation, but a satisfactorily appropriate one" (1994:18). Translation of *izigiyo* from IsiZulu into English was not easy in this dissertation, so they were explained in the context of their events.

Karega Mutahi (1994) stipulates that languages spoken in different environments will reflect different world views. This situation is said to lead to serious translation problems. According to Mutahi (1994:34), a translator can solve such translation problems "by paraphrasing or using explanatory notes."

The following comment by Brown (1998:12) refers to the issue of translation: "The difficulties of translating poetry are exacerbated by the fact that the structures of rhythm and rhyme often differ greatly from one language or language group to another."

2.10 The writings on the theoretical underpinning of this study

The theories regarding the anthropological nature of human expressions, as examined by Jousse (1997, 2000 and 2004), forms the basis for this study. Basically, the Joussean theories foregrounds the point that the oral gestual means is a remarkable tool and the cornerstone of socio-cultural affairs recording that prevail in the oral societies. Furthermore, the communication model by Ndolerriire (2000) applies to the modes of human expression. Ndolerriire's theory of communication process postulates that during the communication process there exists the encoding of the message by the sender following the decoding thereof by the recipient who will interpret and understand it in the context of the event.

The theory by Bukenya (2001), in addition, unveils crucial information about (African) women. Bukenya postulates that African women have always used oral performances to orate their experiences. Hence more platforms for female empowerment through oracy (the skilful and productive use of the spoken word) by themselves are a pre-requisite for demonstrating such performances. The above theories that inform this study will be dealt with in detail in the theoretical framework chapter.

2.11 Highlights on the writings on the research methodology and methods that inform the study

The work FOLKLORE METHODOLOGY by Kaarle Krohn foregrounds the point that "The first demand that is placed before the folklorist in his field of research is the

choice and scope of his problem” (1971: 28). In addition, Krohn (1971) states that it is advantageous for a folklorist to explore a broad perimeter before undertaking a restriction of that area. Having established a subject for research, a researcher needs to proceed to the next stage where it is necessary for him or her to “assemble as many variants of the same traditional item as possible” (1971: 36). Bearing in mind that a thorough collection of transcripts from several broad areas is virtually impossible, Krohn gives advice which may lead to the alleviation of such a burden by a researcher. This is: “at least one area where intensive work has been conducted and the results of which are available for the study should be carefully surveyed” (1971: 36).

The significance of the literature survey is conspicuous in Bruce’s (1996) work on research work. Bruce (1996: 143) makes mention of the purposes of literature survey which are posited as follows:

- to identify an appropriate research question
- to ascertain the nature of previous research and issues surrounding the research question
- to find evidence in the academic discourse to establish a need for the proposed research
- to keep abreast of ongoing work in the area of interest

It is known that after the survey of the relevant transcriptions on the subject of inquiry, field work is the next stage. Akiva and Odaga (1982) suggest that preparation before data collection is extremely essential. When the researcher is fully prepared it

is when he or she “goes to the area of collection, talks to people and decides from whom the material is to be collected” (Akiva and Odaga, 1982:129).

Akiva and Odaga (1982) provide further insights into the material collection methods when they state that a researcher (field worker) must carry a pen and paper and write down the material as it is told to him/her. Alternatively a researcher may listen carefully during the course of performance, aided by his /her mind and memory in the retaining of the materials and this may need several repetitions of the performance. They further advise that a tape recorder may be used to record oral performance if possible. Akiva and Odaga (1982) stress that the place of performance, time of performance, kind of audience present and the response of the audience during performance should be noted, coupled with the making of a bibliographical sketch of the performers. Further more, Akiva and Odaga write that record keeping of experiences should be carried out.

To add to the methodologies mentioned above, John Johnson (2001) in *COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF MUSIC AND PARODY: THE CASE OF SOMALI ORAL PERFORMANCE* makes the crucial statement that “in the process of learning about an oral tradition, field workers have long relied upon a methodology that uses ear training and field observation. Such methods are very similar to the kind of learning an apprentice accomplishes in the society being studied...” (2001: 2).

As an integral part of oral tradition, oral history methodologies are crucial in this study of *izigiyo*. This is evident in Sean Field’s statement that “the oral historian

seeks to resolve research problems by recording the spoken words and stories of others” Field (2001: 249). Field posits that the oral history method of material collection is dialogic in nature in that it is an interactive open-ended method featured by its peculiar strength of making sufficient space available for the interviewees to tell stories rooted in their past (2001). He views the oral history method as advantageous, for it is “open to dynamic and flexible use, according to the demands of different research projects and social situations” (Field, 2001: 249).

All in all, “Oral histories are created in a dialogue between a questioning interviewer and a story-telling narrator” (Field, 2001: 250), hence “oral historians need to listen with an acute ear for... echoes” (Field, 2001: 251). Since “each story and each interview has a peculiar uniqueness” (Field, 2001: 254). This is so in the case of the KwaQwabe women’s life stories in the medium of the *izigiyo* texts.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the corpus of literary works that have been read . This literary survey reveals a variety of genres related to *izigiyo*. The related genres include *izibongo* (praises), *izangelo* (children’s poems), *ukuqanjwa kwamagama* (onomastics), *izingoma ngokwejwayelekile* (songs in general), *iziqubulo* (war-related songs), *amahubo* (traditional hymns) and *ubuciko bomlomo* (oral tradition and other related concepts). The fact that the focus area, *izigiyo*, involves the translation of *izigiyo* texts from IsiZulu into English, has resulted in consultation of some literary

works on translation so that I could be in a position to be conversant with the issues involved in translation. I found that direct translation from language-to-language was practically impossible. Therefore, the contextual translation of the *izigiyo* texts has been adopted.

Furthermore the scholars writing on methodologies that oral literature or the folklorists pursue when engaged in field work were to a large extent explored, and consequently these informed methodological approaches used here. The body of literature surveyed was literature on the theories upon which this study on *izigiyo* is constructed. Such theories embody various forms of anthropological expressions in oral milieus (Jousse, 1997; 2000; 2004). Communication model-where there is a sender who sends a message to the receiver with an intention, and consequently the receiver decodes the message with the aid of background knowledge (Ndoleriire, 2000), and lastly the issue that (African) women have always skilfully used oral tradition to voice their concerns and experiences.

The substantive body of scholarly literature that has been surveyed, especially that which pertains to *izigiyo* and related genres, has been critically perused, and consequently the gaps that such literature had left unfilled were identified and to a large extent filled in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED IN THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

This section aims at revealing the methods and direction of investigation employed in the study. The study investigates the KwaQwabe Zulu women's *izigiyo*, the specified personified solo dance songs that the women compose and perform at social occasions with the intention of expressing their resentment, distress, dissatisfaction, humiliation and all their unfortunate experiences pertaining to their way of life. In other words, *izigiyo* succinctly narrate the significant events that the women encounter during the course of their life time. So the methods that were adopted intended to record the validity of women's personal experiences which are enshrined in and expressed through the medium of the *izigiyo* oral texts. The investigation thus used a qualitative approach since such an approach is "a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms" (Kirk and Miller, 1986:9). A qualitative research approach supplies rich narrative descriptive data. Such data embodies the wisdom, customs, history, beliefs, and overall world view of the various people (Akiva and Odaga, 1982). This project has therefore posed questions that aim at 'excavating' the respondents' perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and historical experiences in their immediate and extended families and social interactions. These are contained in *izigiyo* and inform their *izigiyo* performances.

For this study to yield the anticipated results it was necessary to identify specific and relevant respondents, i.e. women who actually perform their *izigiyo* 'texts'. The *izigiyo* that were collected from the field were recorded in writing, analyzed, critiqued, evaluated and interpreted. Hence the corpus of women's *izigiyo* recorded added value to the scarce modes of expressing themselves, and in this way they have demonstrated that they have the capacity to communicate social messages in a very peaceful, constructive and user-friendly manner.

3.2 The selection of the project area and the primary sources

The KwaQwabe area is a rural area located within the boundaries of the Ilembe District Municipality which is situated to the north of Durban in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. As a member of the KwaQwabe community I have developed an appreciation of many aspects of Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) prevalent in the area and particularly the *izigiyo* practice, the practice which I longed to find out about from women's perspectives. Hence, seventeen KwaQwabe Zulu women whose ages range from forty to old age were selected for the probe. Selection of primary sources (women) of this age group was made on the grounds that most of the *izigiyo* composers and performers fall into this age category. A large number of the KwaQwabe women who fit into this age range have little or no formal education. These women are therefore orally traditioned and this implies that they rely extensively on oral texts in the internalization and externalization of their dynamic social experiences. For this reason the *izigiyo* texts are most commonly used by these women to assert themselves as well as to

record their significant life experiences mnemonically. The majority of such women have composed and performed more than one *isigiyo* on separate social occasions such as *imigcagco* (Zulu weddings), *umemulo* (the coming of age ceremony for girls) and the *ukubuyisa* ritual (the ritual done to bring back home the spirit of the deceased) depending on how many experiences her life depicts. This study selected women who have resided in the KwaQwabe area for at least ten years. All seventeen women who are part of this study speak IsiZulu fluently as their mother tongue.

3.3 Fieldwork

Before collecting, recording and analysing, interpreting and evaluating Zulu women's specified solo dance songs termed *izigiyo* there had to be focus on women's modes of expression as well as their skill of allusively expressing their perceptions. I selected the participants whom I was familiar with and knew best and who composed and performed *izigiyo*. The participants were informed about the project prior to commencement, so that they would make adequate time available to furnish me with the data that I needed. The participants chosen were willing to freely furnish me with the data which was needed as they were aware of the intentions of the project.

During fieldwork, women of the KwaQwabe community were interviewed face-to face, guided by the questions recorded in appendices **B** and **C** on the dynamic social nature of their *izigiyo*. The questions posed to women participants were divided into two (2) sections. Section A comprised of questions that required the furnishing of personal

particulars like names, ages, marital status, etc. Section B posed open ended questions based on the women's performances *izigiyo*. Open ended questions allowed the interviewee to express her views on the questions posed so as to generate data that was needed for the purpose of this study.

The chief reasons they were interviewed face-to-face was because of the fact that an enormous number of the KwaQwabe residents who are adults are orally traditioned and thus they cannot read nor write. The interviews were conducted in the medium of IsiZulu since it is the vernacular of the area. To render the interview process simpler, the participants (women interviewed) were organized into four clusters. The criterion used was that women who resided in close proximity to each other had to form a particular cluster. The reason for the cluster method was that women in clusters know one another intimately and are at ease in one another's company and usually perform the *izigiyo* together at local social occasions. The four clusters were drawn from four sub-factions of the KwaQwabe area known as EmaQwabeni, ESinamfini, EMasomini and EZagqayeni.

As the participants were clustered, they were in user-friendly position to perform their *izigiyo* intimately and the participants' performance of *izigiyo* in front of me during the cluster visits made recording of *izigiyo* in writing proceed in a very easy, relaxed manner.

During fieldwork the research assistants accompanied me and assisted me in the interviewing of the participants, recording *izigiyo* in writing and taking performers' photographs as well as seeing to the catering requirements for the participants.

During each of the four cluster visits the recording in writing of the lyrics of each identified *umgiyi* (the *isigiyo/izigiyo* performer) was firstly carried out during the course of performance. After the performance of *izigiyo* by members of each cluster, the participants were individually interviewed for 45 minutes to an hour, each in a separate venue so to ensure confidentiality. The interview questions aimed at revealing information about obscure references contained in the informant's *isigiyo* or *izigiyo*. The life history/oral history methodology (Field, 2001) was used, since this method is dialogic and an interactive open-ended method with the potential to provide interviewees with the space to tell stories about what happened in the past and what possibly triggered some of the references in the performed texts. This approach enabled me to collect data pertaining to the interviewed women's life experiences, development of awareness and the reasons why the KwaQwabe women compose and perform *izigiyo*.

3.4 Observation and participation

Since I had an interest in *izigiyo* while still young, having attended a variety of social occasions over the years in this area, such as the coming of age ceremonies, weddings and the *amadlozi* related rituals in which *izigiyo* were performed. Such social occasions are common in this KwaQwabe area. These social occasions included women's performances such as *izigiyo*. I listened to many women who sang and performed *izigiyo*. I recorded the *izigiyo*, which were performed. By so doing, I was in a position to privately identify people to use as participants. Often after observation, informal

discussions with either parents or neighbours on the issues that were unclear and that were encapsulated in the *izigiyo* were held.

Not only were the performances carried out by women in the KwaQwabe area observed, but I also participated in them on specific occasions. Participation took place in the following ways:

- Singing together with performers
- Praising the performers so as to energize their performance
- Clapping of hands
- Beating of drums
- Whistling

Participatory methodology acquainted me with the performers who eventually became respondents. By the time fieldwork was commenced, most of the women, if not all, had already developed a trust in me with the result that most were willing to supply detailed data needed regarding their *izigiyo*.

3.5 The heritage celebration project

A research team, which is facilitated by Professor Conolly of the Durban University of Technology, usually holds workshops on Saturdays and a variety of issues pertaining to

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are the centre of these deliberations. These meetings are attended by the writer.

Some of the research team members including me were sponsored by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture to undertake cultural celebration projects which aimed at raising cultural awareness among communities. Each member who was sponsored had to specify which cultural activity was to be selected. I selected *izigiyo* as a cultural activity which would be celebrated in my community, the KwaQwabe community.

This cultural awareness project was carried out in December 2004. Many women, including those interviewed before for the present study, came and performed *izigiyo* in my homestead during a special cultural celebration day which was held on Saturday, 18 December 2004. The day was open to anyone who wished to take part, either as a performer or member of the audience. The celebration commenced at eleven o'clock (11:00) in the morning of the above-mentioned day and it finished at five o'clock (17:00). The cultural celebration assisted enormously in collecting more data. The data I collected was added to the data already collected in the clusters of participants. It could be rechecked and verified using what had already been recorded since some of the women who were performing *izigiyo* on the cultural celebration day were also participants that had been interviewed before that day's fieldwork. Some of the photographs used to elucidate findings were taken on that cultural celebration day. The heritage celebration

project added value to the methodologies and methods employed in this study insofar as it enabled me to verify and crosscheck information previously recorded.

3.6 The Azidl' Ekhaya heritage project

The Azidl' Ekhaya Project was a continuation of the cultural heritage celebration project that has been mentioned above. The celebration was hosted at the Durban Institute of Technology on 22nd February 2005. I brought ten KwaQwabe women to perform their *izigiyo* in traditional attire. The project also enabled me to collect more data as well as photographs of the women taken in their traditional attire.

3.7 The Ibuya Wethu cultural awareness project

The Ibuya Wethu cultural celebration was the second round of the cultural awareness campaigns that the research team held in Durban. The Ibuya Wethu cultural celebration was hosted in the Durban Cultural and Documentation Centre in December 2005. In this event the I brought with me another ten KwaQwabe women who performed the *izigiyo*. Again this event enabled me to collect data and to crosscheck and verify the data that had been previously recorded in writing whilst in women's cluster meetings; this included the data obtained through participant observation at social occasions. During this cultural event more photographs of women dressed in traditional attire were taken.

3.8 Aims of research and methodological outcomes

In engaging with all methodologies employed, the outcomes anticipated required to reveal the aim of the investigation into *izigiyo* include:

- The role played by *izigiyo* in Zulu societyThe role-played by *izigiyo* in Zulu women's lives.
- The contexts in which *izigiyo* are used.
- The recognition of *izigiyo* as a significant genre of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and Orally Traditional Knowledge (OTK)
- A transcribed and translated collection of *izigiyo*.

3.9 Research ethics

To avoid problems with issues of ethics in this research, the following steps were taken:

- The participants were asked to participate in the project. In other words, the participants were not obligated to participate.
- The participants were informed prior to the commencement of the project of the intention of the project. The researcher requested participation through consulting individual women who live in the vicinity of his homestead. The researcher requested some women whom he met at social occasions he attended. Some

women heard from the women he had requested and they were willing to participate the project before he requested them.

- Permission was asked from the participants with regard to the following:
 - The inclusion of their *izigiyo* and their contexts in the thesis.
 - The taking of their photographs.
 - The inclusion of their photographs in the dissertation.
 - The use of their names in the thesis.
 - The inclusion of their personal details in the thesis.

3.10 Research methodology predicaments

- **Fieldwork difficulties/ problems**

The problems encountered while gathering data are as follows:

Punctuality problems were experienced. Some of the participants did not come on time to the venue where performances and interviews were taking place. Performances and interviews usually took place thirty minutes to an hour later than the stipulated time. This resulted in a situation where it was not possible to capture all that was required on a chosen day. Participants had to be visited individually on another day in order to gather the data that had not been previously captured.

In addition to punctuality problems, some participants were slightly timid during cluster interviews so interviewing them on an individual basis at a private venue chosen either by the participant or the interviewer resolved this problem.

Amongst the fieldwork problems encountered was ascertaining the age of the interviewee. As a Zulu speaking person it was very difficult to ask the informant's age. This is because in Zulu culture it is deemed unacceptable for a youngster to ask an adult's age. All the participants included in this project were older than me. Some of the participants did not even know their exact ages since their parents did not record it in writing or accurately in their memory. Most of the participants' ages mentioned in this study are an approximation.

Other methodological predicaments encountered during the course of fieldwork pertained to the recording of the actual performance; the recording of the actual performance in writing was virtually impossible (Chamberlin, 1998). This was because the actual performance and the recorded performance were two different activities. When "putting performance on paper" the components that enrich it, become lost. When recording the *izigiyo* in writing the "corporeal manual gestes" (use of body and hands) as mentioned by Jousse (1997, 2000, 2001, 2004) of the performers, for example, were not being captured. In order to be able to record each *isigiyo* in writing, I had to listen carefully "with an acute ear" (Sean, 2001:251) and write down information whilst the performer was performing. It is better and more accurate to record the lyrics of a song by writing it down when it is sung rather than when it is stated or recited. This is because it is written down

in line with the way in which the lyrics thereof flow as a result of the rhythmic patterns heard.

The last problem was that of translation. During the translation of *izigiyo* from the Zulu language into English it became clear that translation can be quite challenging and problematic. It is difficult to engage in word-to-word translation so I decided to translate the *izigiyo* texts from IsiZulu into English in the context of the event rather than employing a word-to-word translation. During the translation of the *izigiyo* texts, there came the point where some words or concepts could not be translated. Such words had to be literally translated and certain words with special meanings had to be identified. The appropriate meaning of special words was therefore indicated in the language of translation so as to render them comprehensible to the target language reader. Okombo (1994) further highlights this point when he suggests that where there is no equivalence in target language during translation, explanatory notes or free translation may be the only way by which the reader of the target text (TT) can appreciate the linguistic and cultural resources of the source text (ST).

When translating data from one language into another an inevitable loss of information results in more ways than one, and often a loss of original flavour is experienced (Mutahi1994). This implies that “thinking realistically, we aim not for a true translation, but a satisfactory one” (Okombo, 1994:18).

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has identified and explicated the research methodology employed when collecting Zulu women's *izigiyo* in the KwaQwabe area. Data collection methods such as face-to-face interviews, observation and participation were mostly effective in that I was working with participants who are orally traditioned and whose data was descriptive and narrative, which is why a qualitative approach which is "mainly based on empirical data collection" (Thwaites et al., 1994:206) was adopted as "the focus is on explanations constructed by the participants themselves" (1994:206). Such method is also known as ethnomethodology. The women observed at social occasions such as *umemulo* (the coming of age ceremony), *imigcagco* (Zulu marriages) and other traditional rituals explained the reasons for their composition and performance of the *izigiyo* when interviewing them in clusters and individually. This made data meaningful. Since the *izigiyo* study is exclusively oral in nature, I also relied upon the methodology that uses ear training (Johnson, 2001; Field, 2001) during the *izigiyo* performance and during interviews so as to be able to record in writing the KwaQwabe women's *izigiyo* in a user-friendly and effective manner.

When devising research methodology, I had strategic questions in mind which guided me towards a qualitative approach. Such strategic questions were based on suggestions by Finnegan (1992: 53-57), that is:

(1) Who? The answer to this question was to identify the Zulu women in order to collect as much data as possible with regard to *izigiyo* performance.

(2) Where? The answer to this question was to identify the area; in this case the researcher's home area, KwaQwabe.

(3) How? The answer to this question was that I wanted to conduct a study on women's *izigiyo* as a participant observer, interviewer or collector.

(4) What? I wanted to collect and analyse the KwaQwabe Zulu women's *izigiyo*.

Despite minor problems like punctuality problems experienced during the course of fieldwork, the investigation was generally satisfactory. Collecting oral materials in the form of *izigiyo* enabled me to experience a wealth of oral literature at first hand, thus reflecting the statement that Akiva and Odaga (1982: 127) makes about fieldwork: that "collecting oral literature from live situations is the living foundation of the study of oral literature."

The research methods employed in this study enabled me to record in writing thirty-three *izigiyo* texts which were contextually translated from IsiZulu into English, interpreted, analysed, explained and evaluated in order to "produce understanding" (Kirk and Miller, 1986: 60). The photographs that are included in the thesis shed light on the explication of women's *izigiyo* performance. The cultural projects undertaken were the one organized in my home area, KwaQwabe, The Azidl' Ekhaya Cultural Project and The Ibuya Wethu Cultural Awareness Project, all of which have been explicated in this chapter and in the purpose of collecting data and crosschecking the data previously recorded in writing on *izigiyo*.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL UNDERPININGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides detailed explanation of the theoretical underpinnings which have been employed in this study. The three principal theories upon which this study is constructed are laid down as follows:

1. Anthropological theories of human expression (Marcel Jousse, 1997, 2000, 2004).
2. Communication model (Ndoleriire, 2000).
3. Theory of oracisation of experiences by (African) females for their own survival and empowerment (Austin Bukenya, 2001).

The above-mentioned theories have been selected taking into cognisance the fact that they are supportive of each other and pertain to this *izigiyo* study and relevant contexts. The afore-stipulated theories are used as a basis for the study of women's *izigiyo* because of the notion that they are all about how a person's social world shapes his or her life. They also shed light on his or her immediate social world guided by what the subject sees around him or her, including the way experiences galvanise the person into action. At the core of any human interaction is communication (Ndoleriire, 2000), expression (Jousse,

1997; 2000; 2004) and oracy, the productive and skilful use of the spoken word (Bukonya, 2001).

4.2 The anthropological nature of human expression (Jousse, 1997, 2000, 2004)

Marcel Jousse (1886-1961) played a major role in unearthing invaluable insights pertaining to human expression in a variety of ways and for a variety of functions. Jousse was born into an oral paysan milieu which he acutely observed. During his lifetime he further studied other oral milieus the world over. His insights pertaining to orality are substantial and significant. This is what Jousse says:

When I was about five or six years old and had become accustomed to the rocking melodies of my mother, she took me to my first evening gathering. These gatherings of paysans, all more or less non-literate people,.... As the evening progressed, and as the paysans got more and more into the swing of things, they would get up and strike a song. I could feel that the rhythms imbricated in me by my mother's songs responded to the deep 'rythmisation' of all these paysans...The people and more specifically, the women who knew the most songs were the old grandmothers. (Jousse, 1997: 4-5).

When exploring Joussean theories, it appears that the oral gestual medium (by means of 'audible and visible moment') is the way, mostly used by oral societies worldwide to record their socio-cultural affairs including genealogies, important events, laws and the

like. Oral societies pass valuable information from one generation to the next in the form of various oral mediums. According to Jousse, the use of the oral gestual medium as a mnemonic record-keeper resulted in the development of what he terms ‘Anthropological Global Oral Style’, which is for the purpose of this study abbreviated to the ‘Oral-style’ (Jousse, 1997).

Jousse (1997:41) identifies, inter-alia, the fundamental Mnemonic Laws that govern human expression which inform and reinforce the Oral-style, and the Mnemotechnical Devices which act as further memory aids. The Mnemonic Laws are:

- The Law of Mimism
- The Law of Rhythmism
- The Law of Bilateralism
- The Law of Formulism

4.2.1 The Law of Mimism

First and foremost, Jousse furnishes us with the description of the anthropos (human being), defining him as “an interactionally miming animal” (2004:54) and as an indivisible “psycho-physiology of essentially rhythmic human geste” (1997:659) in a global whole. The anthropos (man) understands things in so far as he will take them into himself. In other words, the anthropos ‘intussuscepts’ things. Man is played or in-pressed

(im-pressed) by the world around him which he registers in the context of previous experience and then re-plays or ex-presses the events that have been played into him. This playing or re-playing is carried out in the Universe which is fluid in nature and in which all interaction manifests. In the Universe “everything acts, is acted upon, and reacts” (2004:10). Jousse, therefore, terms this ‘playing’ and ‘re-playing’ of man and the cosmos, mimism. Mimism accounts for the potential of the human being to imitate his or her surroundings, animals and natural events; in other words, people are the sum of their immediate and mediated activity. In Jousse’s terms, what is ‘mimised’ is spontaneously ‘memorised’ as the “complexus of gestes”. It is therefore crucial to point out that “Mimism will be the first thing that imposes itself on the intelligent being” (2004:36).

The Law of Mimism has a place in this area of research on the *izigiyo*. Mimism thus applies in the *izigiyo* study in the following manner:

In the cosmos there exist people, animals, things, etc. These phenomena interact in a variety of ways. Zulu women, for instance, communicate their previous experiences in the midst of the *izigiyo*. The *izigiyo* texts stem from things around them which they intussuscept. Included in what they play (im-press) are hostilities, violence, bad relations with spouses, envy and the like. To re-play (ex-press) such experiences, Zulu women have developed a custom of composition and performance of the *izigiyo*. The *izigiyo* performance carries significant messages which are indirectly conveyed. Zulu women usually adopt metaphorical language when they compose and perform the *izigiyo* so as to render them indirect.

Mimism can be said to sustain the *hlonipha* (respect) custom among Zulu women which prohibits them from directly voicing their pent-up emotions. The metaphorical language used draws from things around people. The mimismological nature of the human being marks a clear indication that she is aware of her surroundings. This is what Jousse (2000:25) terms “The Laboratory of Awareness”.

The Universe therefore is understood in the specified context of the events or things. Jousse (2000:163) calls this “The Ethnic Laboratory”. Singing and dancing, as in the case of Zulu women’s *izigiyo*, is a continuous process which all people ‘play’, register and ‘re-play’. Performance of songs is therefore, *inter-alia*, part of establishing the concept of identity.

4.2.2 The Law of Rhythmism

Rhythm characterises the anthropos. This implies that a human being is characterized by the involuntary rhythms of his natural body functions, and his conscious expression and activities are rhythmic in nature, which energises his performance. Where there is rhythm, there is order. The anthropos’s body is ordered by rhythm (microscopic rhythm): likewise human expression and societal institutions are ordered by rhythm (macroscopic rhythm). The *izigiyo* are characterized by rhythm that stems from the order to the society (Zulu society). Suppose there were no songs, it would be difficult for humans to be critical about life in general since in most (oral) societies the world over songs are

acceptable vehicles by which people are able to criticize unacceptable deeds in society. If the *izigiyo* were direct, the response would be not ordered but more chaotic since the *izigiyo* would evoke negative responses and would not be entertained as an acceptable vehicle of expression.

4.2.3 The Law of Bilateralism

The oral-style purports that balancing or bilateralism is an essential element which sustains order. The anthropos is structurally bilateral or balanced in nature, with a left and a right side, a top and a bottom, a back and a front. Bilateralism and characteristic rhythm, in their multiplicity, enable each other to uphold the order of expression including the order of society. Bilateralism is evident in its function of serving the opposition between me and you. In other words one's *isigiyo* (specified personified solo dance song) differentiates each of the Zulu women studied from each other. Such opposition is a benchmark of bilateralism that is prevalent in the process of *ukugiyi*; for instance, there is the *izigiyo* for women, *izigiyo* for men and *izigiyo* for children. These differences in the *izigiyo* performances, including other traditional performances, are a hallmark of the practice of the *izigiyo* as a balanced practiced.

4.2.4 The Law of Formulism

The combination of Rhythm and Balancing give rise to Formulism, or the emergence of patterns of expression developed in a particular context of expression. Different societies

worldwide develop, for instance, their own models of composing and performing poetry, songs and praises in their own cultures. This implies that songs are thus anthropological (that is species-specific) and ethnic (that is group specific, for instance *izigiyo*) gestures.

The following are important in Formulism:

- **Memory**

From my reading of the Joussean theories it is evident that memory is a crucial entity that manifests itself in the anthropos. Through memory oral societies were and are still able to record their epistemologies; “the human memory, or more precisely, the memory, is essentially intelligence” (1997:429)

Once memory is lost, the socio-cultural archive is lost. The loss of part or whole of the existing archive will impact negatively within nationalities. In such circumstances, groups inevitably encounter an overwhelming traumatic loss of identity. What can be deduced from the above is that songs in general and *izigiyo*, to be specific, act as socio-cultural archives. People become stagnant if they exclude the memories of their roots (forefathers), for to reproduce the songs, including the *izigiyo*, are a reflection of group and individual identity.

- **Mnemotechnical Devices**

Mnemotechnical Devices, which are further memory-enhancing aids, are also identified by Jousse. Mnemotechnical Devices include, inter alia: anomination/clamp words (repetition of words), avocalisation/clamp rhymes (repetition of vowel sounds), aconsonantisation/clamp sounds (repetition of consonant sounds), paralinguistic features such as vocal inflexion, cadence, volume, pace or pause. Onomatopoeia and countdowns also enhance memory.

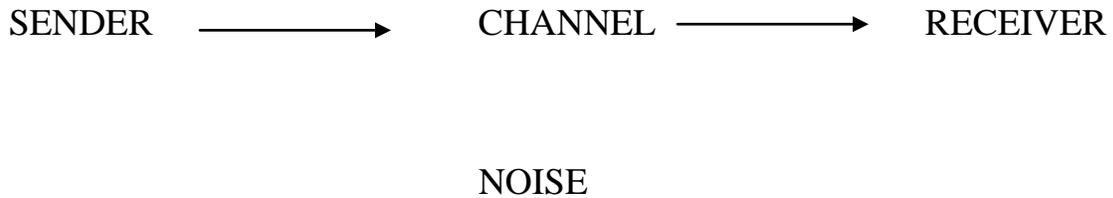
Mnemonic Laws and Mnemotechnical Devices are anthropological, globally, and they become ethnic only when they are applied in different individual cultures. *Izigiyo* for instance, demonstrate Mnemonic Laws and Mnemotechnical Devices to a large degree very well in Zulu Culture.

4.3 Communication model (Ndoleriire, 2000)

Ideas from Ndoleriire (2000) have been used as part of conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of this study. Ndoleriire (2000:269) postulates that the communication process can be represented in a simple chart which indicates the constituents which are laid down as follows:

- The sender (speaker)
- The channel (that through which the message is sent)
- The receiver (hearer) and
- The noise factor

Chart form



During communication, Ndoleriire states, the following procedure is embarked on:

- The sender encodes the message and directs it to the receiver (hearer).
- The message directed to the hearer flows through the channel (text) used by the sender to deliver his/her message.
- The receiver decodes the message, interprets it and understands the sender's intention with the help of the background knowledge (context).
- Feedback from the receiver of the message is sometimes, sooner or later, a reaction.

Ndoleriire further points out that the concept “noise”, as indicated in the chart form, explains various obstacles that hamper efficient communication between the sender and receiver, for example, lack of attention, distorted information, physical noise, etc.

Ndoleriire's Communication Model applies in the practice of *izigiyo* in this way:



UMGIYI

ISIGIYO

OLALELE

(The performer)

(Personified solo dance song)

(The decoder) who encodes *isigiyo*)

What can be deduced from the above model is that the *izigiyo* are, to be specific, oral texts that carry the weight of their composers' experiences. In other words, the *izigiyo* as performed by Zulu women, are not random and unintentional texts but are specifically message-driven, and are understood in specific contexts (Zulu context-KwaQwabe community context).

4.4 Theory of oracy among of African women as a strategy for empowerment (Bukonya, 2001).

Oracy is defined as a skilful and productive use of the spoken word. This definition clarifies the point that oracy is not only restricted to a person's capability to speak "but also to manage, marshal, and deploy the spoken word efficiently, for specific purposes, in specific contexts" (2001: 33). Engrained in the productive oracy of the African woman are the concepts such as self-definition, self-assertion, negotiation of relationships, resolution of conflicts, claiming of rights and indictment of their violation. As a strategy for empowering the (African) woman, oracy is viewed as holistic communication, attitude, posture, a voice, an expression, gesture and movement.

Bukonya supports the initiatives taken by the African women to empower themselves oracically. He writes:

“In the case of oracy it would seem that African women could take the oral forms of communication among themselves, including orature, and use them to create and claim space for empowering oracy to assert their survival needs.”

As a strategy to empower themselves in their patriarchal environment, the KwaQwabe Zulu women (according to the present study) have always used oracy in the form of *izigiyo* to voice their concerns. All in all, *izigiyo* demonstrate the skilful and productive use of the spoken word by the KwaQwabe Zulu women; so these forms of oral performances are extremely functional in the oration of woman’s experiences. This implies that (African) women have not been silent about things affecting their lives, “but have for centuries accepted forms of oral performance to examine, question, criticize and protest the norms and practices of their communities and kings” (Bukenya, 2001:36) .

4.5 Conclusion

There has been an elaboration in details on the theories upon which this study is constructed. The theories of Marcel Jousse (1997, 2000, 2004) of human expression have been influential in this study. His work is grounded in oral tradition. It has appeared that the use of the oral gestual medium as a mnemonic record-keeper in orally-traditioned societies has led to the development of what Jousse calls ‘Anthropological Global Oral Style’ or Oral Style. In Jousse’s terms the mnemonic laws that govern human expression are the law of Mimism, the law of Rhythmism, the law of Bilateralism and the law of

Formulism. The Joussean theories of human expression reflect the fact that where there is rhythm, there is order.

Order is an outcome of a bilateralised man. Through bilateralism and rhythmism the order of expression coupled with the order of society is upheld. Bilateralism or balancing functions, to point out that there exists oppositions or difference in the universe. Rhythm and balancing lead to what is called Formulism. Formulism is nothing but patterns of expression developed in a particular context and for such patterns to persist, memory is essential.

The communication model of Ndoleriire (2000), on the one hand, has impacted greatly on the revelation of the constituents of the communication process and the procedure therein. It has now become clear that for any communication process to be effective there must be a sender (speaker), the channel through which the message is communicated and the receiver (hearer) of the message. Ndoleriire has thrown light on the fact that for the message to be comprehensible it ought to be centred in the context in which it operates. If the message that the sender is conveying is out of the context that the receiver understands, it will be rendered null and void and in this case it will not serve the purpose of the sender. The message therefore will be hindered by this barrier.

On the other hand, Bukenya (2001) postulates that African women have always used oral performance to orate their dynamic social experiences. The effective use of the spoken word (oracy) proves that women are capable of orating their experiences without being

outspoken by the other parties involved, especially the male counterparts in the patriarchal environment. The *izigiyo* texts as performed by the KwaQwabe Zulu women (in this current study) are a shining example of how women effectively orate their experiences without the intrusion of males. Hence, oracy is rightfully the women's skill which they manifest as for men.

The insight that these types of theories have pertaining to human expression or oracy and the nature and functions of messages are particularly significant in this study amongst the Zulu.

CHAPTER 5

A WIDER PICTURE OF THE KWAQWABE AREA

5.1 Introduction

This section intends to provide the reader with a profile of the KwaQwabe area. The reason for the provision of the profile is to orientate the reader to the area where *izigiyo* (the focus of this study) are performed. The orientation includes:

- A description of the KwaQwabe area in terms of the etymology of its name, geographical location and the landscape
- Residents' lifestyle, namely:
 - Men's and women's activities
 - Livestock
 - The belief system and
 - Oral performances

5.2 The etymology of the name 'KwaQwabe'

Khumalo (1995: 35-37) explains the etymology of the name KwaQwabe. He states that the name originates from its legend in the name of Qwabe. (See appendix D.) It transpires

that the KwaQwabe people form part of the history of the Zulu people. Khumalo explains that Qwabe was the elder son of Malandela from whom the Zulu nation's history is traced. Malandela is said to have his homestead near the uMhlathuze river on the top of the Mandawe hill.

It is explained that Qwabe had a conflict with his younger brother, by the name of Zulu after the death of their father, Malandela. Khumalo states that Qwabe decided to leave his father's homestead as a result of conflict with his younger brother. He explains that Qwabe went to settle near uMhlathuze river in the proximity of the Ngoye hills. Qwabe is said to have named his homestead Mthandeni-meaning you must love him. It is stated that by naming his homestead in this way, Qwabe intended to encode a message saying that the people of his new area of residence had to love him because people of his own family had demonstrated that they disliked him. Khumalo reports that Qwabe began to have his own tribe (at oNgoye) which increased rapidly.

Khumalo (1997) further explains that when Shaka attacked Phakathwayo (the descendant of Qwabe), people of KwaQwabe moved away from oNgoye and went to settle across uThukela river near the river known as uMvoti. The area is between KwaMapumulo and Kwadukuza (Stanger). He explains that the Qwabe people commemorated their forefather's homestead (Qwabe's homestead) by naming their new homestead Mthandeni.

5.3 Geographical location

The KwaQwabe area is also referred to as the eMthandeni area. Mthandeni is the name of the Chief's homestead. The area is situated on the North Coast of Durban and is within the boundaries of the KwaMaphumulo District, as has been explained above; it is part of the Ilembe Regional Council.

5.4 Landscape

The KwaQawbe area consists of many hills and valleys. Most of the rivers and fountains from which the KwaQwabe women fetch water flow through the valleys. The valleys are also fertile areas where women cultivate their crops. Land tilling is one of the major roles of women of the KwaQwabe area. Most hills are naturally covered by dense indigenous thicket and rocks. The indigenous forests are crucial in people's lives since they are the source of fire wood and building timber. The women who perform *izigiyo* and who are the focus of this study collect wood for fire from the indigenous thickets. Wild animals like snakes, buck, rabbits and others find shelter in the indigenous thickets and under the rocks. The natural resources are hugely significant for women who perform *izigiyo* since they use them metaphorically in their *izigiyo* with the aim of avoiding directness within the *izigiyo* texts.



Figure 1: Landscape of KwaQwabe.

5.5 Inhabitants' lifestyle

5.5.1 Men's activities

A large proportion of the male population does not stay in the area as full time residents for they are part of the labour force in urban areas. Those who have recently become full time residents are those who have either retired from work or those who have lost their jobs due to retrenchments or some other reasons. Men's daily and occasional activities include, *inter-alia*, the following: the digging of building sites, collection of building timber from the indigenous forests, construction of houses (usually indigenous houses), renewal of existing huts, clearing of forests for land tilling, fencing of the fields - mostly with thorny branches from indigenous thorny trees - looking after the livestock, tilling of

land using the yoke drawn by either oxen or donkeys, erection of livestock kraals, burying of the dead and slaughtering and skinning of goats or cows for Zulu rituals.

Most of the KwaQwabe men who are in the job market work as general labourers since they are not formally trained for the jobs for which they are employed. A very few men are professionals like nurses, teachers and technicians.

5.5.2 Women's chores

The KwaQwabe women constitute the largest population as full time housewives.

Zulu women are highly respected for their devotion to their household duties. In the KwaQwabe area it is common to hear the community members commenting in this manner:

Umuzi akuwona umuzi ngaphandle komfazi (The homestead without a woman is not a homestead).

The inclusion of a variety of the KwaQwabe women's chores in this section aims at reflecting their commitments to the well-being of their families. Some of the *izigiyo* texts reflect the women's chores, most of which they perform under strenuous and depressing situations that they experience in their neighbourhoods which they share with their immediate and extended families.

Among other tasks, the KwaQwabe Zulu women perform the following chores: tilling of land (the seasonal activity of a rural woman), cooking, taking care of siblings, water fetching, collection of fire wood, washing of clothes, cleaning of *igceke* (the yard), cleaning of *izindlu* (huts), purchasing of groceries, erection of mud walls of the Zulu huts, brewing of Zulu beer, consoling the bereaved families, weaving of mats, broom-making (grass brooms), making of calabashes, grass cutting (for thatching the roofs), cutting of *amacheba* (the type of grass used for making sitting mats), transmission of *ihlonipho* (respect) to offspring as well as transmission of culture to the young. Old women are more responsible for this last role.

5.5.3 Children's role

Children attend schools, so they spend most of their time in the formal learning world. After school and during weekends as well as holidays, children help their parents in performing some of the tasks. Girls usually assist in tasks done by their mothers and boys usually help men. The most important role that the boys of the KwaQwabe play is that of looking after livestock. The fact that many children spend most of their time in schools puts the burden mainly on women: a situation which they sanction because they are concerned about their children's education. Even though the KwaQwabe women do encourage their children to assist them with the household duties, they make sure that they make adequate time available for them to complete their school work.

5.5.4 Livestock

People of the KwaQwabe area keep livestock. The types of livestock that they keep include: cattle, goats, pigs, chickens and ducks.

Among the afore-mentioned types of livestock, goats, cattle and chickens are common in large numbers in the area. Cattle are a significant asset of Zulu men. The number of cattle a man has enhances his reputation. In other words, the larger the herd of cattle a man possesses in Zulu society the greater his popularity becomes. The saying that; “*ubuhle bendoda izinkomo zayo*” (a man is worth a large herd of cattle) corroborates this point. The goats are the second most significant assets of men in the KwaQwabe area. The pigs, ducks and chickens are usually women’s or children’s assets. People of the area rarely keep ducks and pigs. The pigs, chickens and ducks do not attract prestige, so men do not bother about the ownership of such small stock. Because women are always seen as subordinate to men and as minors, they are entitled to this kind of ownership. *Izigiyo* thus challenge this kind of gender chauvinism. *Izinkomo* (cattle) ownership is important as a source of *ilobolo* (bride worth). In other words, *izinkomo* are a symbol of polygamy, which is common among KwaQwabe traditional men or families. Some of *izigiyo*, as exemplified in this study, were composed and are performed by the KwaQwabe women due to the hardships that they experience or experienced in their married lives most of which have roots in polygamous marriages.

5.5.5 The belief system

The majority of people in the KwaQwabe area believe in *amadlozi* (ancestors). The *amadlozi* are highly respected for their capacity to safeguard the members of the family against any evils of the world (Magwaza, 1993). The *amadlozi* are said to be living in close proximity to *uMvelinqangi/ uNkulunkulu* (God) and they are believed to have the perplexing capacity to link people and God. For the *amadlozi* to function efficiently they need to be worshipped (Mdluli-Nkuna: 2006). The KwaQwabe people perform a variety of rituals which are aimed at worshipping the *amadlozi* in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons. The rituals that are carried out require a beast to be slaughtered. The beast can either be a goat or cow depending on the nature of the ritual carried out. The cows and goats that most of the KwaQwabe men keep are mainly used for the *amadlozi*'s ceremonies than for commercial needs. The most common *amadlozi* ritual ceremonies in the area include:

- *Ihlambo* rituals. (A ritual which is carried out after three months of a man's death. The man is said to be given his shield since it is a symbol of manhood. In this ritual a cow is usually slaughtered).
- *Ukubuyisa* ritual. (A ceremony carried out with the intention of bringing back the spirit of a person who has died. Such ritual is carried out after a year has lapsed since the death of a person).
- *Isidwaba* ceremony. (This is a ritual which is commonly done months after a woman's death. The woman who have died is said to be given her *isidwaba*, a

Zulu woman's skirt, made up of a cow's hide. In this ritual a goat or a cow is slaughtered.)

- *Umgcagco* ceremony. (Zulu marriage. Here a cow is slaughtered to let the *amadlozi* know of the newly joining *makoti* in the family.)
- *Umemulo* ritual. (A ritual carried out by a father with the intention of thanking his daughter for her capacity to maintain her virginity to an acceptable age or stage in life, according to Magwaza (1993: 300). In this ceremony a cow is slaughtered. The girl who is involved should follow the *umemulo* ceremony procedure in collaboration with other *izintombi*, girls.)
- *Ukupha ukudla* ceremony. (A ritual of giving food to the ancestors. In this ritual a member of the family may slaughter a goat or a cow saying that he is giving food to a particular ancestor with the aim of commemorating him/her. It may also be that he is thanking that ancestor together with others for fortunes they have brought him.)

There are other distinct rituals which are performed, depending on the family concerned. Everything that is done for *amadlozi* is done with *inhlonipho* (respect) since the *amadlozi* are said to get easily irritated when the family members behave in an undesirable manner. The *amadlozi* condemn *umsindo* (dispute) within *umuzi* (homestead) or within *uzalo* (family at large). People of the KwaQwabe are very scared of the *amadlozi* since they are said to act against members of the community who are detrimental to the well-being of the family. Although some of the KwaQwabe inhabitants have been christianised, they still strongly believe in ancestral spirits and for this reason they venerate them greatly. In

the area there exist Shembites (the followers of the Shembe Religion) whose religion is grounded on the notion that the continuity and well-being of the Zulu nation lies with the *amadlozi* (ancestors).

5.6 Performances common in the KwaQwabe area

The KwaQwabe community is resourceful in terms of oral performances. It is for this reason that there is a need to briefly outline the various and the very dominant avenues of expression in the context of traditional songs and dances. Such traditional songs and dances are of profound significance in the ‘oration’ (Bukanya, 2001) of people’s immediate personal and collective experiences. In other words, the oral performances which include the following share a common factor which is the conveyance of dynamic messages which stem from community-learned experiences:

- *Izigiyo*

Izigiyo (the specified personified solo dance songs) which are the focus of this study and which are widely performed in the KwaQwabe community. The introductory chapter of this research project discusses the point that the *izigiyo* performance is about the airing of people’s experiences, most of which emanate from discontent, humiliation, and distress that prevail in their social world.

- ***Isigekle (group songs)***

The *isigekle ingoma* (dance) is usually performed by women as a group. Men sometimes participate in the performance of *isigekle*. Women perform the *isigekle* dance whilst singing the *isigekle* songs on social occasions. The *isigekle* songs comment about life in general. The *isigekle* performance has the following functions: entertainment, warning, educating, commenting and protesting. The discrepancy between the *isigekle* songs and the *izigiyo* is that *isigekle* performers dance it in larger groups whereas the *izigiyo* dancers dance them solo.

- ***Iculo/ihubo lasekhaya (The clan song)***

Any family at large has its own song, which characterizes it as a distinct family. The song becomes a binding factor in the family and it links the family and the dead since it is usually a song which one of the forefathers of the family composed in the past. This song is sung in any family ritual. Should the ritual ceremony be carried out for a deceased woman the women present at the occasion perform *izigiyo* after the singing of the clan song.

- ***Isicuphi***

This kind of *ingoma* (dance) is usually performed by the youth. It is danced in solos. *Isicuphi* dance songs are about things close to the youth's life.

- ***Imvumo***

The *imvumo* songs are commonly performed by the youth and are one of the group songs. Such songs are only for singing and not for *ukusina* (dancing). Such songs comment about everyday life - for example, theft, adultery, etc.

- ***Amaculo omemulo* (songs for umemulo)**

The *umemulo* songs are only sung during the *umemulo* ceremony. Such songs are sung by the girls only and are the transition markers of the girls involved who are going from childhood to adulthood.

- ***Amaculo omgcagco* (Zulu marriage songs)**

These songs are sung by either *ikhetho* (a group from the groom's side) or *umthimba* (a group from the bride's side) during the *umgcagco*. The *ikhetho* songs direct messages to the bride and the *umthimba* songs convey messages to the groom (Masondo, 1997).

- ***Ihubo lesizwe* (The Tribe's song)**

This song belongs to the whole tribe and people sing it on certain social occasions, as for instance during the *umgcagco* (Zulu wedding), *umemulo* (the coming of age

ceremony) etc. *Ihubo lesizwe* is strictly sung within the boundaries of the tribal authority. It is of paramount significance in that it is a cementing factor among the community members and the chiefdom at large and it further differentiates one tribal authority from the other. Such songs include the significant historical account of the chiefdom.

- ***Amaculo ezangoma (Diviners' songs)***

Izangoma (the diviners) have songs specifically used by them. Such songs are sung during the course of *izangoma* rituals. Songs for *izangoma* serve as a vehicle for communicating with the ancestral spirits. The *izigiyo* are sometimes performed at *izangoma* ritual ceremonies including those belonging to the ancestors.

- ***Amaculo embakelana (imbakelana songs)***

When people are performing *imbakelana*, they perform the dancing in pairs. There are specific songs for this kind of *ingoma* (dance). Such songs and dancing are performed by adults. *Imbakelana* songs comment about life in general.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the profile of the KwaQwabe area. This is done to contextualize the reader for a better understanding of the area. The chapter

demonstrates that the KwaQwabe area dwellers cling in their own unique lifestyle which makes them a unified community. This can be attributed to their belief system - foregrounding the veneration of ancestors, including the sacrifices done for them through beast slaughtering and a variety of traditional ceremonies.

The activities that men and women carry out show that the KwaQwabe area has socially-constructed roles. During the socialization process the roles are clearly defined according to gender. Such roles are carried out harmoniously for the benefit of the community. This is in line with Beall (1981) who pursued a study on African women's functions and status in the social and economic life in Natal and Zululand and who comments that:

All work connected with cattle was done by the male sex. Boys herded cattle and milked the cows. Men slaughtered the beasts when the occasion demanded, and cooked the meat (1981: 36).

This chapter further demonstrates that people of the KwaQwabe area perform a variety of traditional performances over and above the practice of *izigiyo*. All the song performances have a primary role of decoding important social messages.

From the above account it appears that people of the KwaQwabe area use their situations to decisively and creatively express themselves with the intention of upholding the *hlonipha* (respect) custom which is part of *ubuntu* (humanism) among the people. *Ubuntu* and *ukuhlonipha* is seen to be favoured by the *amadlozi* (ancestral

spirits) in that they abhor disrespect. The totality of activities that exist in the KwaQwabe area strengthen “the community orientated lifestyle” (Turner, 1998: 238). Hence, the practice of *izigiyo* plays a vital role in this regard.

CHAPTER 6

SOME MORE ASPECTS AND CONCEPTS PERTINENT TO *IZIGIYO*

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores some aspects that are related or pertinent to the *izigiyo* practice. Such aspects involve women's composition of *izigiyo*, characteristics of *izigiyo*, the social occasions at which the *izigiyo* are performed, the actual venue of the *izigiyo* performance, the audience of the *izigiyo* performance. These aspects are immediate to the *izigiyo* performance since they are the core of our understanding of *izigiyo*. *Izigiyo* are characterized by their unique characteristics that differentiate them from other forms of oral genres like repetitions and metaphors. When composing *izigiyo*, the KwaQwabe women on whom this study is based consider such characteristics. *Izigiyo* are not performed at just any place, but at specific social occasions which suit them. At the proper social occasions such as the *Ukubuyisa* ceremony, the audience enthuses making the *izigiyo* performance lively.

The chapter further explores the concepts that are congruent to the practice of *izigiyo*. The concepts that it includes involve *izigiyo* and five cultural milestones, *izigiyo* and reputations, *izigiyo* and songs and oral poetry, *izigiyo*

and acknowledgements, *izigiyo* and identity, *izigiyo* and healing, *izigiyo* and empowerment and *izigiyo* and proverbs. These concepts demonstrate the role they play in the explanation of the underlying importance of the KwaQwabe women's *izigiyo* like the importance of empowering and healing.

6.2 Composition of the *izigiyo* texts by the KwaQwabe women

Women are the prominent performers and composers of the *izigiyo*. It is unusual to see a woman of younger than forty years of age performing *izigiyo* in the KwaQwabe area, because it is believed that she has not yet experienced life sufficiently in a manner that she can compose *izigiyo*.

Quite a number of composers and performers of the *izigiyo* in the community are women whose ages range from forty to old age. It is of vital significance that the *izigiyo* are composed by Zulu women themselves. In other words, each woman composes her *isigiyo/izigiyo*, which is/are pertinent to her own life experiences. The further implication of this is that Zulu women's *izigiyo* are never similar. Gunner highlights women's capacity to compose the *izigiyo* in the following manner:

Women's praise poems are not composed by men in praise of women as desirable objects. They are for the most part composed by women themselves (1979: 240).

A woman's composition of the *izigiyo* depends entirely on her skills of composition (Jama, 1991).

In addition to what has been said above, it is crucial that "over the centuries and generations there have been women who compose poetry on political and other serious matters" (Jama, 1991:44). The practice of *izigiyo* is an old practice in that it has been handed down with accuracy from generation to generation.

6.3 Social occasions of *izigiyo*

Izigiyo are performed at a variety of social occasions. Such occasions include:

- ***Umemulo* ceremony**

Zulu women's *izigiyo* are performed when there is the *umemulo* ceremony. *Umemulo* is a ceremony which is usually organized by the father with the intention of being thankful for his daughter should she have reached maturity without disrepute to him by losing her virginity or by bearing a child before the accepted stage of life (Magwaza, 1993).

The performances of *izigiyo* during the *umemulo* ceremony are primarily instructive in that they inform the young woman about other's experiences as

a wife and a *makoti*. At the same time they are entertaining. By performing the *izigiyo* in this ceremony, Zulu women indeed exhibit their degree of delight and approval which is the essence of the ceremony. Such a ceremony is extremely jovial as it exposes the girl's achievement of maintaining her virginity up to her formal transition from girlhood to adulthood.

- ***Umbondo***

The *umbondo* refers to the practice of offering goods and is carried out by *intombi* (a young woman) who is being paid *ilobolo* (bride worth) as presents to her in-laws. The *umbondo* usually embraces foods and non-foods such as blankets, utensils and the like. After having received their presents, the older women spontaneously perform their *izigiyo* to explicitly express their jubilation (Masondo, 1997). The *umbondo* gathering, therefore, serves as a platform on which women communicate their experiences in the medium of the *izigiyo*, for “the message is the most important thing in the song” (Hadebe, 2000:10).

- ***Ukubuyisa* ritual**

The *ukubuyisa* ritual ceremony denotes the bringing back home of the spirit of a person who has passed away. This ritual is carried out after a year has lapsed since the death of a Zulu person. When carrying out the *ukubuyisa* ritual a

beast is usually slaughtered. This ritual is very important as it establishes the deceased as *idlozi* (the ancestor), according to Mdluli-Nkuna (2006). In Zulu society the ancestors are believed to guide daily lives so the Zulus make sacrifices to the *amadlozi* (ancestors) to ensure that they safeguard them (Charlton-Perkins, 1995). In this regard Zulu women perform the *izigiyo* only if the *ukubuyisa* ceremony is carried out for a woman who has passed away. Should the *ukubuyisa* ceremony be carried out for a man who has died, only men perform the *ukugiya*. This ceremony serves as a platform for commemorating the deceased, and the living people strongly cling to the notion that they always share entities with the *amadlozi* (ancestral spirits) so during the *ukubuyisa* ritual ceremony the people who perform the *izigiyo* believe that the *amadlozi* are taking part in the performance and they cling to the notion that the *amadlozi* spirits empower them to effectively and efficiently perform their *izigiyo* including other performances.

- ***Udwendwe* occasion (Zulu marriage)**

Udwendwe (Zulu marriage) is an event that the Zulus highly regard. This is because it is viewed as one of the fortunes that the ancestors bring to them. The Zulu custom of *ukwenda nokwendiselana* (Zulu marriage system) is therefore regarded as a blessing (Khumalo, 1997).

When there is marriage, women perform *izigiyo*. Some women view married life as a very frustrating and distressing experience in that it is indeed an arena of conflict. A large number of the KwaQwabe Zulu women protest through the *izigiyo*. Their grievances are based on the difficulties that they experience immediately or sometimes after marriage. MaMnguni Nxumalo commented that their married life is difficult. Her *isigiyo* states: **Kuyashisa emendweni** (The married life is hot). By performing the *izigiyo* at marriages, women indirectly inform their male counterparts that they are aware of the imbalances that their married life brings to them. Through their oral performances, the KwaQwabe women further vigorously give courage to the new *makoti* to put up with any obstacles that she may come across in married life, the life to which the newly married *makoti* is not used.

6.4 The venues of the *izigiyo* performances

Unlike men's *ukugiya*, which is performed in an open space, especially *esibayeni sezinkomo* (in the cattle kraal) *egcekeni lomuzi* (within the premises of the homestead) or in the field, women's *izigiyo* are performed indoors, that is, inside *indlu yesizulu* (zulu hut) within *umuzi* (homestead). Gunner (1984:62-63) writes in favour of the above statement:

Women's *izibongo* are never performed at large public gatherings in the flamboyant and martial atmosphere of "*ukugiya*" as are men's, but

rather in small social gatherings at a homestead, indoors after the main dances on a large occasion such as a wedding....”

The pre-structuring of the women’s venue of performance has both patriarchal and *ukuhlonipha* (respect) implications. *Ukuhlonipha* (respect) custom requires that women do most of their performances indoors since it is believed the *amadlozi* never appreciate their leaps and stamping of feet in the open. This situation perpetuates the patrilineal nature of the Zulu society which culminates in women’s composition and performance of the *izigiyo*. Women’s *izigiyo* therefore serve as a vehicle of challenging severe male domination of their lives.

6.5 The audience during the *izigiyo* performance

The audience is very mixed during the *izigiyo* performance. It includes, *inter-alia*:

- Women who do not perform the *izigiyo*
- Men
- Children
- Youth

The audience is never passive when the performance of *izigiyo* (including other kinds of oral performances) is occurring. It also plays an integral role in

energizing the performance. The audience responds enthusiastically by participating in the singing of *izigiyo* and it further energizes the performance by the loud clapping of hands so as to allow the performer to stamp her feet in time to the rhythm that surges within him/her through hand clapping sounds and *izigiyo* melodies. The audience receives various messages that *izigiyo* encode. The very mixed nature of the audience (men, women, young women, young men) during the course of *izigiyo* performance aims at providing the audience with the opportunity of being educated and warned against any undesirable and unacceptable human behaviour which is contrary to the 'community oriented lifestyle' (Turner, 1998). This lifestyle foregrounds *inhlonipho* as a cornerstone for survival and continuity. The availability of men as the audience and *izinhloko zemizi* (the heads of the homesteads) in particular, herald in them apprehending messages pertaining to the proper way of managing their families, for *umuzi wesiZulu uphathwa ngenhlonipho*, meaning people need to handle a Zulu homestead with respect (Msimang, 1975). Hence the *izigiyo* warn men about the inappropriate deeds that they direct towards women when men embrace physical and verbal abuse as well as gender chauvinism. One of the *izigiyo* performers, MaSishi stated that her husband used to beat her. For this reason MaSishi performs her *isigiyo* depicting such experiences.

It is important to note that some future performers, especially young women, learn a lot by attending and participating in the actual performance of the

izigiyo as part of the enthusiastic audience, whether in their homes or in the neighborhood (Canonici, 1992). The young women internalize the nature of the *izigiyo* practice and actualize it as a mode of indirectly expressing themselves in future, which is in line with the pyramid of *ukuhlonipha* (the respect tradition) operating within the parameters of Zulu society.

6.6 Characteristics of *izigiyo*.

The features that characterize *izigiyo* are presented as follows:

- Highly figurative language with metaphor as the most common and prevalent figure of speech: Figurative speech renders the expressions of the KwaQwabe women, in particular, highly allusive. The chief reason for women's employment of metaphoric language is the fact that a Zulu woman is prohibited by tradition to be direct when she verbally attacks people of higher status than herself. A number of metaphors that Zulu women use in their everyday speech draw from the natural environment, as for instance, animals, plants, etc. Familiar animals as a basic conceptual metaphor best describe the characters and characteristics of people the women know (Hermanson and du Plessis, 1997). It is therefore stated that a "basic conceptual metaphor consist in our experiencing or understanding of one kind of thing in terms of another" (Hermanson and du Plessis, 1997:56).

- The *izigiyo* are shorter than other forms of oral poetry; for example praises are longer (Gule et al, 1993). Despite the fact that the *izigiyo* are shorter, they are imbued with deep comments (Kunene, 1997).
- The *izigiyo* are characterized by repetitions. Gunner and Gwala (1991:226-227) comment:
Izigiyo ziphindwa kaningi ma zishiwo. Wulo ogiyayo ohola izigiyo enze nokuthi zihambelane kahle.
(They may be repeated any number of times, depending on the inclination and good judgment of the solo performer who has to integrate them into the total *ukugiya* performance).

James (1992) states that African music is characterised by repetitiveness. He sees repetition as an important formal characteristic contributing to the design and structure of African music.

- Like praise poems, the *izigiyo*, which are mostly women's, are characterized by protest. Gunner (1979:243) corroborates this statement when she writes: "the complaint motif, however, is so common as to be almost a convention of composition."

6.7 *Izigiyo* and five cultural milestones

Izigiyo are evident as indispensable elements of each of the following five cultural milestones, which are common to all cultures worldwide (Gumede, 2000):

- **Birth**

During the ceremonies surrounding the child's birth, the KwaQwabe women perform *izigiyo*. The birth of a child is regarded as a huge blessing from *uMvelinqangi* (God). The child-bearing process is also attributed to the will of the *amadlozi* (ancestors). The KwaQwabe dwellers believe that if they *hlonipha* (respect) the *amadlozi* by actively avoiding *umsindo* (the dispute) within their *imizi* (homesteads) and also by carrying out the *amadlozi* rituals, the rewards thereof include an increased number of child births without complications. Women's performance of *izigiyo* benchmarks their spontaneous exhibition of delight evident at the birth of a child (Masondo, 1997). Women's performance of their individual *izigiyo* during the ritual ceremonies surrounding the child birth, including those that they perform on behalf of the *amadlozi*, is an indication of the expression of their indebtedness towards the *amadlozi*.

- **Naming**

Naming is not fixed to the period closer to birth but is a continuous process in the life cycle of some human beings. For instance, in some cultures women get new names after marriage or are named after certain incidents in their lives. In the KwaQwabe area some women have their nicknames derived from their *izigiyo*. MaMthethwa Nyathi, one of the performers whose *izigiyo* have been recorded in writing in this study has also been nicknamed 'Bamjikela' (the one people turn against), because through one of her *izigiyo* she narrates a story she told during interviews that when she was a young woman she used to be her niece's companion whenever she was visiting her in-law's homestead before marriage. As is always the case in Zulu society, the *umakoti* (the bride) needs to have the company of *umakotshana* (the young female who acts as a bride's assistant in the in-law's *umuzi* during her occasional visits prior to the wedding and three months after the wedding) on her wedding day. What encouraged MaMthethwa to compose the *isigiyo* which gave rise to her nickname, 'Bamjikela', was the sudden and unforeseen incident that took place on her niece's wedding day. MaMthethwa Nyathi attended the wedding knowing that she would continue with her roles as *umakotshana* only to find that her niece had dramatically changed her mind by selecting another woman who would take the lead in the *umakotshana* role. MaMthethwa viewed this situation as an act through which her niece

turned against her. What upset MaMthethwa greatly was that her niece did not fully explain the motive behind her turning against her.

- **The coming of age**

The KwaQwabe community still carries out *imicimbi yokukhulisa izingane* (the coming of age ceremonies). The most common coming-of-age ceremonies involve the *umemulo* (a ritual ceremony whereby a Zulu girl is valued for sustaining her virginity up to an accepted stage), *umbondo* (the practice whereby a daughter-in-law offers presents to the in-laws- after the in-laws have paid *ilobolo* - the bride worth). At such social occasions the KwaQwabe women perform *izigiyo* to express their “delight” (Masondo, 1997). At the same time women use the coming-of-age ceremonies as platforms for sharing their experiences in a collective setting. The boys also practice *ukugiya* when at *ekwaluseni* (at the pastures where they look after cattle). When engaging in the practice of *ukugiya* the boys call out their *izibongo* (praises). Such practice accompanies *induku* (Zulu martial arts), which is one of the processes involved in boys’ initiation. This practice watermarks the coming of age. The crucial nature of *izigiyo* is therefore further understood in terms of the coming-of-age processes.

- **Marriage**

Both men and women perform *ukugiya* during the *umgcagco* (traditional Zulu marriage). The performance of *izigiyo* during the *umgcagco* chiefly serves as a colloquium for transmitting the values of married life such as *ukuhloniphana* (respecting each other), *ukubekezela* (endurance) and *ukwethembeka* (trustworthiness) be practiced by the bridal couple. (See 6.3.2 in this chapter)

- **Death**

When the KwaQwabe residents carry out the death-related rituals, particularly those that they carry out some time after the person's death, they perform *izigiyo*, including those that belong to the deceased. Under such circumstances the *izigiyo* performers sing their *izigiyo* and dance in order to commemorate the deceased as well as to communicate their hard-learned experiences. The performance of *izigiyo* is, in a way, a strategy by which the family of the deceased, supported by other community members, gain courage to endure the situation of living without the physical existence of the deceased and to accept that the deceased spiritually exists in the family after death. (Also see 6.3.2 for more explanations of the kinds of death-related rituals at social occasions and at which the KwaQwabe dwellers perform *izigiyo*.)

Akiva and Odaga (1982) in their research on oral tradition make mention of categories of songs which are related to the afore-listed and discussed five cultural milestones. These categories of songs include birth songs, child-naming songs, invitation songs (associated with the coming of age), marriage songs and death-related songs.

6.8 *Izigiyo* and identity

Identity is a profound element contained in people's songs. This study relates to the oral nature of the 'anthropos', therefore songs are extremely crucial in the studies of oral traditions for they embody "information about the identity and development of the community"(Creed,1984:13). People of KwaQwabe who perform *izigiyo* can be identified by their songs (*izigiyo*): who they are and where they come from, that is, their geographical location, their language and ethnicity (Zulu ethnicity), their lifestyle and their modes of expression. Read (1993:226) comments: "All people who have any claim to distinction possess *izithokozo* and *izibongo* . . . ," The KwaQwabe women in particular ultimately act according to their identities, that is, the employment of the *izigiyo* texts as unique, indirect and respectful avenues of expressing their communal experiences.

6.9 Izigiyo and reputations

The KwaQwabe women's *izigiyo* are a splendid oral phenomenon in that they entail pride, history, popularity and personal description. History, pride and popularity that the *izigiyo* restore are embedded in the social context in which they are composed and performed. What Gunner states below is true of women's *izigiyo* as oral texts that restore and further enhance their reputations in their neighborhood:

A woman may be widely known among her circle of friends and acquaintances, by one or more of the praise names in her praises poem (1974:241).

The *isigiyo* therefore, is a symbol of its owner and it may be equated with the owner as in the case of names: "in our society as well as in others, a name enjoys a special status. A name symbolizes a person and may even be equated with that person" (Raper, 1982:63).

6.10 Izigiyo and acknowledgements

When the *isigiyo* has been composed, it is strictly the entity of its composer and no one can claim the ownership thereof except its owner. The owner of her *isigiyo* performs it at social events. However, there are exceptional cases

where the owner of the *isigiyo* cannot recite and perform his/her *isigiyo/izigiyo* due to the following reasons: health reasons, absence, old age and the mourning period. In such cases a close relative or friend may recite and perform the *isigiyo/izigiyo* of another person on his/her behalf. The performer who is performing on behalf of someone is duty bound to acknowledge the real owner of the *isigiyo* before the performance kicks off. Jama (1991:43) writes:

If a poem is composed by a woman her close female friend and relatives may memorise it and recite it to other friends and relatives.

Izigiyo are not only performed on behalf of the living people, but are also performed on behalf of their owners who have passed away. Even if the *izigiyo* are performed on behalf of people who are no longer living, they still strictly require a clear acknowledgement by the performer.

Every young man has his praises which he retains until he is an old man. When he dies his praises remain and it is by these that he is remembered and identified in the locality (Mzolo, 1977:29).

Gunner (1984:62-63) further supports the point that Mzolo is making above when she writes:

... after a man's death his *izibongo* may be a part of the solemn ritual of addressing the shades. Yet in his life they are the vehicle by which he himself records his own experiences and states his own poetic identity.

In the KwaQwabe area, where this study was undertaken, it is common to hear the performer who is performing the *isigiyo/izigiyo* on behalf of someone who is living or has died commencing the performance in this manner as a way of acknowledgement: “Lezi zigiyu engizogiyu ngazo ngezika...” (“The *izigiyo* that I am going to perform belong to...”).

6.11 *Izigiyo*, songs and oral poetry

The *izigiyo* are a component of songs, especially *izingoma zomdabu* (traditional songs). They are also closely related to *izinkondlo zomdabu* (traditional poems). To point out that there is no discrepancy between songs and poems, Stewart writes:

In my study I have used the terms ‘song’ and ‘poem’ interchangeably, as a song is poetry that is sung (1994:3).

6.12 Izigiyo and izaga (proverbs)

The practice of *izigiyo* can further be associated with *izaga* (proverbs). The *izigiyo* that Zulu women compose and perform, for example, express their experiences, most of which they learned the hard way. Similarly, *izaga* encapsulate the knowledge and experiences of different generations. Nyembezi (1974: X11) makes a point when he writes:

The proverbs are a collection of the experiences of a people, experiences, some of which have been learned the hard way. Those experiences are stored in this manner, and from generation to generation they are passed on, ever fresh and ever true. The new experience of the younger generations are themselves embalmed in this special manner, and more and more.

These genres, the *izigiyo* and *izaga*, are never trivial; for they embody the intelligence of a people they are invaluable. *Izaga*, on the one hand, express social realities precisely in succinct short phrases or utterances. The *izigiyo*, on the other hand, treat issues that prevail in people's social world.

Ke, izisho nezaga lezi abazithathi kalula abase Afrika nabaseShayina kanye nabaseNdiya ngoba yindlela leyo yabo yokubeka ubuhlakani nokubenza bande nasebantwini bakwetshise nsuku zonke (Kunene, 1994: Introduction).

(Africans, Chinese and Indians don't treat proverbs and sayings lightly because such oral genres are their mode of expressing their intelligence which sustain and develop them among humanity and which need to be revisited on a daily basis).

6.13 Izigiyo and healing

Zulu women, in particular, fall prey to a variety of malpractices that society directs at them. Such malpractices inevitably become more and more irritating to Zulu women affected and they eventually create conditions where women affected do not feel well. Consequently, an affected woman composes and performs the *isigiyo* as a weapon (Dyubelle, 1994) by which she retaliates or voices her pent-up emotions. After having communicated with other women through her *isigiyo/izigiyo*, an affected woman becomes healed because by this time she has 'vomited' all irritations that were pent up inside. Nevertheless, *izigiyo* function as the healing texts among the KwaQwabe women in that they are "an important way of releasing frustrations that would otherwise be repressed" (Piersen, 1977:22). MaSishi, an *izigiyo* performer at

KwaQwabe, said during interviews that “ukugiya kwenza ukuthi umuntu abhodle uma kukhona okumphethe kabi” (*Izigiyo* performance makes a person release his/her pent up frustrations). It is cathartic.

6.14 Izigiyo and empowerment

It is an undeniable fact that many women have been marginalized in many of the nationalities of the world. Such marginalization has consequently impinged negatively on women’s lives. Zulu women, to be specific, have been and are still experiencing subjugation because of male domination, domination by other senior women like *omamezala* (mothers-in-law) and the other culturally-constructed strictures like *Ukuhlonipha* (respect) custom that requires that a woman be submissive and polite within *umuzi* (the homestead) and outside in the community. The way Zulu women have been socialized has led to them “being regarded as secondary in status to men” (Charlton-Perkins, 1995:8), and in this way they grow up feeling powerless. The feeling of powerlessness in taking decisions about their lives among the KwaQwabe women is further exacerbated by the mere fact that they never reach a stage where they can be said to have freedom of speech (Dlamini, 1994).

Not withstanding such conditions, Zulu women of KwaQwabe have sought ways of empowering themselves through oral performances ‘for survival’ (Bukonya, 2001) by declaring their concerns to the public. They have

achieved power by expressing their concerns through the practice of composition and performance of *izigiyo*. Zulu women realise that empowerment is not something that comes from the outside, but comes from within. Stewart comments:

The song of rural Zulu women demonstrates how the women have exercised freedom of speech through songs of protest (although often in an oblique way) and freedom of artistic creativity through the medium of their oral poetry (1994: 95).

Notably, Zulu women become more empowered when they are together sharing their experiences, feelings and ideas through the medium of *izigiyo*. When they are together they become inspired since they realize that they are able to use their oral art form (*izigiyo*) to jointly fight against socially-constructed gender imbalances, including other malpractices that prevail in the society in which they exist. Through their *Izigiyo* the KwaQwabe women “express and exchange feelings and ideas” (Canonici, 1992: 1).

6.15 Concluding remarks

The above discussion reveals that oral performances function in a specific manner for varying purposes at various social settings. The *izigiyo* performance largely appears to be a way through which Zulu women

communicate their deep experiences. The *izigiyo* performance that the KwaQwabe women perform demonstrates that the *izigiyo* are not composed for frivolous reasons, but for a variety of functions most of which are didactic, informing and instructive. The Zulu women compose the *izigiyo* in relation to the social context in which they prevail. This study in particular, depicts the KwaQwabe social context. Thus, “it is common knowledge that an artist cannot work in a vacuum” (Ntuli, 1984: 15). It has also been noted that the composition of oral poems/ *izigiyo* by Zulu women is also talent-driven.

This section explains that social occasions such as Zulu marriages, the *umemulo* ceremony and others, provide a platform on which Zulu women interact and convey their significant messages through the *izigiyo* performance. Notably, the *izigiyo* performance on such social occasions is carried out indoors and this has *ukuhlonipha* (respect) implications. When a performance of this kind is in progress, audience participation is extremely crucial and mixed (children, men, and women), hence, rendering the performance enthusiastically. This demonstrates that an oral poet usually has his or her listeners or audience face-to-face (Olatunji, 1979).

Izigiyo as songs demonstrate, to a large extent, the composers’ and performers’ identities. The *izigiyo* explicitly show who the performer is, to which group he/she belongs and where he/she comes from (Gunner, 1979).

Being known by their *izigiyo* implies that the KwaQwabe Zulu women's reputations are enhanced in their community.

This research, furthermore, shows that the composers and performers of *izigiyo* are the authentic owners of the *izigiyo* that they compose. This implies that *izigiyo* form an integral part of their lives. For this reason no woman can be allowed to perform another woman's *isigiyo* without acknowledging her.

The chapter, furthermore, indicates that *izigiyo* are also healing oral texts since they relieve the performers (KwaQwabe Zulu women) from the agonies emanating from the internalised pent-up emotions. By interacting and exchanging their experiences and ideas through the medium of *izigiyo* (oral texts) at social occasions, the KwaQwabe Zulu women experience and achieve self empowerment which enables them to conquer ethno-stress (the stress that is inculcated by the social traumas in people).

Most of the oral genres that prevail in Zulu society (KwaQwabe community) share the same main intention which is "an enactment of every aspect of life, total experiences starting from birth through life's happiness and tribulations to death" (Moto, 1998:134). So it is with the KwaQwabe women's *izigiyo* practice.

CHAPTER 7

PRESENTATION OF THE KWAQWABE ZULU WOMEN'S *IZIGIYO*

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents examples of women's *izigiyo* and deconstruct meanings which are skillfully woven into the *izigiyo* by the Zulu women of KwaQwabe. As with *izibongo* (praises), the meanings and the understandings of allusions (Gunner, 1979) in *izigiyo* are in most cases only possible with the help of background information, hence the need to include some background biographical information about the women performers. In addition to the women's background biographical information, the chapter shows some photographs of women performing at social occasions. The reason why not all the photographs of the women included in this study are shown is that there were technical problems when they were taken. The *izigiyo* that this chapter discusses are those that I collected and recorded in writing during the sessions of the actual performance. These *izigiyo* are by and large short performances focusing on one issue only, so this research project presents thirty-three *izigiyo* by the women of KwaQwabe of ages ranging from forty to old age; this is the age group that largely performs *izigiyo* in the area because of their experience of married life in the community.

The chapter presents one *isigiyo* or a series of *izigiyo*, in chronological life sequence, performed by each performer on various occasions briefly giving the personal particulars of each performer. Each *isigiyo* that this research project presents demonstrates that it is part of each woman's concept of her own identity in that it is "formed from personal

beliefs, attitudes and experiences” (Marrs, undated: 4). *Izigiyo* composition and performance by the kwaQwabe women emanate from conditions such as unpleasant relationships between *umamezala* (mother-in-law) and *umakoti* (daughter-in-law), friction between spouses, friction between neighbours/community members, unpleasant relationships between co-wives in polygamous marriages, friction within the extended family, witchcraft, envy and gossiping. The *izigiyo* texts further highlight the KwaQwabe women’s activities including their way of life.

Zulu women’s *izigiyo* that follow indicate that “performance becomes the art of persuasion, of ridicule, of far-fetched images, of hyperbole and of clearly defined motif” (Mnthali, 1998: 125).

7.2 Names of the KwaQwabe women performers, their biographical information, their *izigiyo* texts and their contexts

1) MaMhlongo

MaMhlongo is a woman of approximately 66 years of age and is married into the Ngidi clan. She has resided in the kwaQwabe area since her birth. She is regarded as the best *izigiyo* performer in her area, the Ezagqayeni cluster. She performs three *izigiyo* at social occasions which she herself composed.

She enjoys the *izigiyo* performance as she is always enthusiastic about this cultural practice.

Figure 1: MaMhlongo performs facing the audience.



When invited to the cultural performance at my homestead in December, 2004, she once said, “*Ngiyeza noma kanjani ngizogiya, kade ngingaphilile ezinsukwini ezedlule kodwa manje sengingcono*” (Surely I will attend the cultural celebration with the intention of performing *izigiyo* since I have recovered from illness). Of all the tasks that MaMhlongo performs she says she enjoys *ukulima* (land tilling). She also likes the young people who are respectful, including her daughters-in-law.

MaMhlongo’s first *isigiyo*

MaMhlongo: *Ngithi komakoti:*

Aziwe phansi izambozo

Aziwe phansi

MaMhlongo: *Komakoti:*

Chorus: *Aziwe phansi izambozo*

Aziwe phansi

English translation

MaMhlongo: *This is what I say to the daughters-in-law*

They have to take off their headdresses

They have to take them off

MaMhlongo: *To the daughters-in-law:*

Chorus: *They have to take off their headdresses*

They have to take them off

MaMhlongo said that she directs the above *isigiyo* to her daughters- in-law. When she composed this *isigiyo* she said she was extremely upset by the behaviour of her daughters-in-law after they had joined her family. She explained that initially she was immensely delighted with the arrival of her daughters-in-law at the Ngidi family homestead since she thought that they would assist her and relieve her of some household duties as she was getting older. Unfortunately her initial anticipations went awry as the newly arrived daughters-in law did not behave in the way she had expected. MaMhlongo pointed out that her daughters-in-law behaved in an undesirable and unacceptable manner in the homestead. In other words, she pointed out that the daughters-in-law did not perform all the duties that good daughters-in-law would normally do.

The most prominent fact that led to MaMhlongo's composition and performance of the above *isigiyo* was that her daughters-in-law did not want to cook food for her; instead they spent most of their time in their huts at the homestead eating a variety of delicious foods. She commented that when the daughters-in-law were eating delicious meals they did not even think about her as their mother-in-law. She said they disrespected her by not taking into account the fact that what they ate alone in their houses in the homestead was bought with her sons' money.

MaMhlongo further pointed out that what most upset her was the undeniable fact that she spent huge sums of money assisting her sons in the payment of *ilobolo* (bride price) in order for the *makotis* to be legitimately accepted into the Ngidi family. The undesirable

and unacceptable behaviour of the daughters-in-law is construed by MaMhlongo as a violation of the *hlonipha* custom. She commented that she saw no point in daughters-in-law wearing of *izambozo* (headdresses) since they no longer upheld the *hlonipha* (respect) tradition. She stated that the daughters-in-laws wearing of *izambozo* as a sign of *ukuhlonipha* was just cheating since they no longer respected the tradition. It is through this that MamMhlongo insists, in the medium of her *isigiyo*, that the *izambozo* must fall down (be taken off) from the *makotis*' heads, meaning that they must not wear their *izambozo*; instead they must remove them because they were just pretending to be the good *makotis* in the eyes of the neighbours when in fact they were are not.

From the above *isigiyo* it is evident that women of the KwaQwabe area wear *izambozo* (headdresses) as part of their dress code. In Zulu tradition married women are bound by tradition to wear *izambozo* as a way of showing *ukuhlonipha* to in-laws including other people in the neighbourhood. It therefore shows that *hlonipha* and head covering by women are some of the hallmarks of the way of life among the *KwaQwabe* community.

Most noticeable in these lyrics is that the composer of the above *isigiyo* uses *Impindwa* which is repetition of the verse of a song (Buthelezi, 1994), or what Jousse (1997) terms anomination and clamping, and which he identifies as mnemo-technical agents. Using repetition is functional in that it creates rhythm which becomes effective during the recitation of the *isigiyo* by the performer. Hence the emphasis on her message regarding her disapproval of misconduct of the daughters-in-law.

MaMhlongo's second isigiyo

MaMhlongo: *Ngizozithini lezi zindaba?*

Chorus: *Bhanda phezu kwazo*

MaMhlongo: *Kodwa ngizozithini lezi zindaba?*

Chorus: *Bhanda phezu kwazo*

MaMhlongo: *Ngenzenjani ?*

Chorus: *Bhanda phezu kwazo*

MaMhlongo: *Nithini?*

Chorus: *Bhanda phezu kwazo*

English translation

MaMhlongo: *How will I deal with these matters?*

Chorus: *I ignore the matter*

MaMhlongo: *So how will I deal with these matters?*

Chorus: *Ignore the matter*

MaMhlongo: *What do you say?*

Chorus: *Ignore the matter*

MaMhlongo's first *isigiyo* and the second one share the same theme which is the unpleasant relationship between mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. MaMhlongo said that her second *isigiyo* was a continuation of the first one and therefore it further detailed her story of protesting against her daughters-in-law.

MaMhlongo revealed that she had composed the second *isigiyo* after she had sought advice from her neighbours with regard to her son's *makotis* who were not conforming to the norms and values that prescribe that the daughters-in-law should observe the *ukuhlonipha* custom and should take care of their parents-in-law. The irresponsibility of the daughters-in-law eventually created conditions which MaMhlongo as a mother-in-law could not put up with. Before she composed the above *isigiyo* (second) she said she had tried to admonish them on numerous occasions but they turned a deaf ear. MaMhlongo stated that she then consulted her neighbours and asked them to give her advice as to how was she going to deal with these daughters-in-law. Her neighbours respectively told her that she must not intervene in her daughters-in-law's deeds. Indeed she was given advice by others that this matter belonged to her family and hence need not be discussed with outsiders despite the unsatisfactory conditions that she was experiencing.

MaMhlongo then took her neighbours' advice seriously. She said she ignored her sons' *makotis*' behaviour within the homestead and in so doing avoided friction. MaMhlongo pointed out that her performance of the second *isigiyo* was her way of letting her son's *makotis* know that although she had decided to ignore their misbehaviour, she still took note of it.

MaMhlongo's second *isigiyo* is sung in the form of question and answer. MaMhlongo, as a leader, sings, asking a question: *Ngizozithini lezi zindaba?* (How will I deal with these matters?) The participants who are present at the *isigiyo* performance respond by providing an answer to the question that the *umgiyi* (performer) is posing. The answer to the above question is: "Bhanda phezu kwazo" (Ignore the matter).

The question and answer method in the performance of the above *isigiyo* indicates that MaMhlongo engaged in dialogue with some of her neighbours with the intention of getting advice from them as to how was she going to resolve the predicament she was experiencing within her homestead.

MaMhlongo's third *isigiyo*

MaMhlongo : *Ngangizohlebelani bani ?*

Chorus : *Iyathutha intuthane*

MaMhlongo: *Kodwa ngangizohlebelani bani?*

Chorus: *Iyathutha intuthane*

MaMhlongo: *Ngangizohlebelani bani?*

Chorus: *Iyathutha intuthane*

English translation

MaMhlongo: *Who would I tell my secret to?*

Chorus: *The ant is busy transferring news*

MaMhlongo: *But who would I tell my secret to?*

Chorus: *The ant is busy transferring news*

MaMhlongo: *Who would I tell my secret to?*

Chorus: *The ant is busy transferring news*

This *isigiyo* builds on the second *isigiyo* where MaMhlongo comments that she had tremendous trust in some of her neighbours and therefore she told them her family's secrets pertaining to her daughters-in-law who did not cook food for her. She further commented that some of her neighbours seemed to be sympathetic to her when she was seeking advice.

What prompted MaMhlongo to compose the latest *isigiyo* is the fact that some of her trustworthy neighbours betrayed her trust as they secretly consulted the daughters-in-law and told them what MaMhlongo had said about them. This is why MaMhlongo posed the question as to whom she would tell her secrets since her friends, whom she trusted the most, had turned against her.

In this *isigiyo* MaMhlongo uses allusive language which is metaphoric in nature. She associates the neighbours who transferred the secret news to her sons' wives with *izintuthane* (ants). Ants are usually seen busy transferring their loads from one place to another. The ant as an insect has therefore been used as a basic conceptual metaphor; in

this case, that it describes the characters and characteristics of people as gossiping busy bodies (Hermanson and du Plesis, 1979).

Through this *isigiyo* MaMhlongo intended to warn her neighbours, in figurative language, that to gossip is not a worthwhile practice. This *isigiyo*, in MaMhlongo's terms, functioned to let her disloyal neighbours know that she was conscious of their gossiping. The use of figurative language here renders *isigiyo* to be indirect. She has used a creature, (an ant) to convey her cryptic message (Turner, 1998).

2) **MaMphendu**

MaMphendu is an elderly woman of about 75 years old. She is married into the Mathibela clan and has resided in the KwaQwabe area since marriage. She composed one *isigiyo* which she performs at social occasions. She greatly enjoys land tilling, so she hates women who are too lazy to till the land but beg for the harvested produce from the diligent women. During the interviews she said: "Ukulima yinto yomfazi ongumZulu, akafuneki umfazi wasemakhaya ongakwazi ukulima." ("Land tilling is the habit for a Zulu woman, so a rural woman who is unable to till the land is unacceptable in a society").

MaMphendu's *isigiyo*

MaMphendu: *Sekuyalinywa bafazi*

Chorus: *Uyafa wena*

Uyafa

MaMphendu: *Ngithi sekuyalinywa bafazi*

Chorus: *Uyafa wena*

Uyafa

Mamphendu: *Bayalima abafazi?*

Chorus: *Uyafa wena*

Uyafa

MaMphendu: *Sekuyadliwa*

Chorus: *Shwi imilenzana*

Imilenzana

Shwi imilenzana

English translation

MaMphendu: *It is now the time for land tilling, women*

Chorus: *You are dying*

You are dying

MaMphendu: *I say it is now the time for land tilling, women*

Chorus: *You are dying*

You are dying

MaMphendu: *Women are tilling the land*

Chorus: *You are dying*

You are dying

MaMphendu: *Now it is the time for eating*

Chorus: *You move swiftly with your small legs*

Small legs

You move swiftly with your small legs

MaMphendu composed the above *isigiyo* after having realized that there were some women in the community who were too lazy to till the land during the tilling season.

The composer and the performer of this *isigiyo* condemns the disregarding of land tilling by some women in the community. She felt that land tilling was a most important and commendable responsibility of a woman in the rural area.

In MaMphendu's terms, those women who were too lazy to till the land persistently commented that they were not feeling well during the tilling season. She further pointed out that these women seemed to be amazingly energetic when it was time for eating what had been harvested from the fields. She said that she noticed that these women became active when the diligent women in the community were eating what they had reaped. The lazy women were at the time busy moving from home-to-home asking to share the produce of women who had been busy during the land tilling season. Seeing such behaviour MaMphendu became furious and composed and decided to perform the above *isigiyo*.

This *isigiyo* therefore serves to protest against any woman of her area who does not see land tilling as a significant activity. MaMphendu purported that she did not limit the above *isigiyo* to those community women who were too lazy to till the land but to other women in the neighboring communities who might also happen to dislike land tilling. The argument of her *isigiyo* states that women who deliberately decide not to till the land, hoping to cheat the diligent women by saying that they were sick, must seriously not ask for their end products and must bear the consequences of their laziness.

The repetition of the same lines and words is again prevalent in the *isigiyo*. The lines “*Sekuyalinyalwa bafazi*” (It is the time for land tilling, women) and “*Uyafa wena*” (You are dying) maintains the rhythm during the recitation of *isigiyo*. The first line “*Sekuyalinywa bafazi*” (It is the time for land tilling, women) reminds the community women of the tilling season and as a mnemonic device for women to engage in this activity. The *isigiyo* indicates that the KwaQwabe area is inhabited by women who engage diligently in the land tilling practice. From the above *isigiyo* it can be pointed out that land tilling is one of the most prominent activities of Zulu women in the KwaQwabe area, and that it is an area of subsistence economy, among other things.



Figure 2: MaMphendu's maize field.

3) MaFaya

MaFaya is an elderly woman of approximately 90 years of age and she married into the Cele clan. When MaFaya got married into the Cele clan, it was an extended family comprising of her husband and his younger brother, who got married after her arrival. Her being married turned her life into an unhappy one in that she was suspected by some of her extended family members of practicing witchcraft following the death of her brother-in-law. She composed two *izigiyo* with the aim of voicing her concerns.

MaFaya's first *isigiyo*

MaFaya: *Uthakatha ekuseni ngovivane*

Unezikhwama uMafaya

Chorus: *Uthakatha ekuseni ngovivane*
 Unezikhwama uMafaya

MaFaya: *Uthakatha ekuseni ngovivane*
 Awuzethule MaFaya

Chorus: *Uthakatha ekuseni ngovivane*
 Awuzethule MaFaya

English translation

MaFaya: *She bewitches in the dawn*
 MaFaya owns the bags

Chorus: *She bewitches in the dawn*
 MaFaya owns the bags

MaFaya: *She bewitches in the dawn*
 Take out your bags, MaFaya

Chorus: *She bewitches in the dawn*
 Take out your bags, MaFaya

MaFaya reported that she composed the above *isigiyo* when she was raising her third child after some years since the beginning of her married life. She stated that something depressing and humiliating occurred in her life when she was labeled a witch by some members of her extended family. She said that this stigmatization had its roots in the death of her youngest brother-in-law. MaFaya said that she was suspected of having bewitched her brother-in-law. She said some family members commented that she owned *izikhwama* (the bags) in which she puts *imithi* (medicine) with which she bewitched people. It was the members of the family concerned who spread the malicious news that MaFaya was carrying out witchcraft at dawn.

From then onwards MaFaya said she began to perform this *isigiyo* at social occasions so as to alert family members involved that she was aware of this damaging news that aimed at destroying her character within the extended family, as well as in the neighbourhood. MaFaya satirically conveyed the message through her *isigiyo* that she would take out her *izikhwama* and continue with witchcraft, though she knew that she was not a witch. MaFaya reported that those family members who unceasingly expressed derogatory comments about her became timid whenever she was performing this *isigiyo*. She said that they realized that they had besmirched her character in the community and they therefore ceased to spread the news for which they had no concrete evidence since they had never proved that she was carrying out witchcraft.

MaFaya's second *isigiyo*

MaFaya: *Usesangweni umthakathi ukwaCele*

Chorus: *Uyinja mthakathi usesangweni*

Uyinja mthakathi

MaFaya: *Usesangweni*

Chorus: *Uyinja mthakathi usesangweni*

Uyinja mthakathi

MaFaya: *Baphela abantu wasala wedwa*

Chorus: *Uyinja mthakathi usesangweni*

Uyinja mthakathi

English Translation

MaFaya: *The witch is by the main entrance of the Kwa Cele homestead*

Chorus: *The witch is a dog; she is by the main entrance*

The witch is a dog

MaFaya: *She is by the main entrance*

Chorus: *The witch is a dog; she is by the main entrance*

The witch is a dog

MaFaya: *The number of people is diminishing and you are left alone*

Chorus: *The witch is a dog; she is by the main entrance*

The witch is a dog

Through the latter *isigiyo* MaFaya was referring again to the story of being suspected of witchcraft which she had experienced. In the midst of this *isigiyo* MaFaya wanted to let the family members who were involved know that she was aware that they were making fun of her and slandering her by spreading the news that she was a witch.

From the latter *isigiyo* it appears that MaFaya married into the Cele clan, so that is why she states, through the *isigiyo*, that the witch is in the Cele clan. It is therefore the Cele clan that made derogatory comments against MaFaya. MaFaya stated, furthermore, that she was referred to as the *umthakathi osesangweni* (the witch who is by the main entrance of the homestead). By this they meant that she was carrying out witchcraft at a very early stage of her married life. The family members who suspected her of witchcraft spread the news that she practiced witchcraft immediately after she had entered the new in-laws' family premises.

In this *isigiyo* there is evidence of exaggeration. MaFaya was said to have killed all people in order for her to live alone. This is impossible in real life. She said this was the way of declaring her a most dangerous witch in the family. The following line from MaFaya's latter *isigiyo* shows this exaggeration:

“Baphela abantu wasala wedwa”

(People are finished and you are left alone)

In the above *isigiyo* there is also an explicit usage of metaphor through which MaFaya shows that she was referred to as a dog following her being labeled a witch. This is what

she said they had to say to her: “*Uyinja mthakathi*” (You are a dog, you witch). Here the witch suspect is associated with a dog which bites people and is sub-human.

The repetition of the same words and lines in the *Ukuhaywa* (recitation) of the *isigiyo* functions to reinforce MaFaya’s message which she directed to the family members who suspected her of witchcraft, without concrete proof thereof. The repetition technique further maintains rhythm in the *isigiyo*.

4) MaSishi

MaSishi is a widowed old woman of about 85 years of age and is married into the Mzimela clan. Her married life was unstable since her husband used to physically abuse her in the form of beatings. She was nicknamed ‘Nomazula’ (she who loiters) by the community members because of her unstable married life. She composed and performed one *isigiyo* in which she reveals her resentment of her beatings by her husband as well as her being nicknamed ‘Nomazula’ by her neighbours.

MaSishi’s *isigiyo*

MaSishi: *Hhiya! Hhiya!*

Ngaze ngazula

Ngazula

Cohorus: *Zula Nomazula*

MaSishi: *Ngaze ngazula*

Chorus: *Zula Nomazula*

MaSishi: *Ngaze ngazula*

Ngaze ngazula

Chorus: *Zula nomazula*

English translation

MaSishi: *Hhiya! Hhiy!*

I am wandering up and down

I am wandering up and down

Chorus: *Wander, Nomazulu!*

MaSishi: *I am wandering up and down*

Chorus: *Wander, Nomazula!*

MaSishi: *I am wandering up and down*

I am wandering up and down

Chorus: *Wander, Nomazula!*

MaSishi composed her *isigiyo* when she was a middle-aged woman. Her story shows that before her husband's death she experienced a series of hardships in her life which she had to endure.

She revealed that she was not on good terms with her husband. When she complained about things that her husband did, which she did not like, he used to quarrel with her. She also said that her husband used to beat her and drive her out of the homestead. After being chased away by her husband she used to go to her birth family, the Sishi family. After a while her husband would come to fetch her from her birth family and they went back together to the clan into which she had married. MaSishi stated that this situation persisted for a long time during her married life and she endured it. It is about this that people of the neighbourhood nicknamed her ‘NomaZula’ (a person who wanders up and down). “ Omakhelwane bangiqamba ngoNomazula ngoba ngangehla ngenyuka indoda ingixosha ibuye ingilande” (My neighbours gave me the nickname of ‘Nomazula’ because I was up and down as my husband used to chase me to my birth family and then all of a sudden fetch me and take me back to his homestead), (MaSishi: personal interviews).

In the midst of her *isigiyo*, MaSishi said she intended to make her husband conscious of what people were saying about her, that is, her being nicknamed ‘Nomazula’. She further wanted her husband to know that it was through his wicked behaviour of chasing her away and then fetching her that consequently led to her being given this new name, ‘Nomazula’.

MaSishi purported that she was also protesting against the community members who called her Nomazula since it was not her intention to be moving around; it was force of circumstance that she was experiencing at that time. She was, through the medium of her *isigiyo*, making her neighbours conscious of their detrimental habit of making fun of her by naming her ‘Nomazula’.

MaSishi as a leader in the singing of the above *isigiyo* commences her performance by loudly uttering the consecutive words “*Hhiya hhiya*” These words refer to nothing in particular but they serve as a way by which the performer draws the attention of the audience, and the utterance of these words energizes the performance.

The repetition of the phrases “ngaze ngazula” and “zula Nomazula” in the above *isigiyo* can be associated with MaSishi’s repetitive and continuous dismissal by her husband from his homestead and her being insistently called ‘Nomazula’ by her neighbours.

5) **Tholakele**

Tholakele is 54 years old. She resides in her late parents’ homestead with her children because she is not married. Consequently, her peers address her by her first name, **Tholakele**. She performs three *izigiyo* at social occasions, two of which are self-composed and one inherited from her late mother, which she performs with acknowledgement.

Tholakele’s first *isigiyo*

Tholakele: *Bafazi ake nikhuze udoti womfazi!*

Chorus: *Doti womfazi*

Tholakele: *Bafazi khuzani futhi udoti womfazi!*

Chorus: *Doti womfazi*

Tholakele: *Bathi ngiyini?*

Chorus: *Udoti womfazi*

English translation

Tholakele: *Women, say this is an evil woman*

Chorus: *An evil woman*

Tholakele: *Women, say again this is an evil woman*

Chorus: *An evil woman*

Tholakele: *How do they call me?*

Chorus: *An evil woman*

Tholakele said she composed this *isigiyo* after her male partner's mother had shown that she explicitly disliked her. Her male partner's mother began to slander her before the *ilobolo* was paid for her. Tholakele expressed the view that her partner's mother did not want her to join her male partner's family. In other words, that particular woman tried to destroy the relationship between Tholakele and her son for no valid reason.

Tholakele stated that whenever her partner's mother talked to her family members and her neighbours about her, she always referred to her as *udoti womfazi* (an evil woman). She explained that this irritated her in such a way that she composed the above *isigiyo*

with the intention of indirectly informing her mother-in-law that her being called a “rubbish woman” by her had come to her attention.

Tholakele purported that she was, through the *isigiyo*, protesting against her mother in-law’s deed of insulting her as a “rubbish woman” for no good reason despite the fact that she was not yet part of her family. Hence members of her partner’s family developed a dislike for Tholakele after having been influenced by this mother. Despite this situation Tholakele’s partner loved her very much and he did not desert her even though he did not finish the *ilobolo* payment for her due to the fact that he lost his job before completing payment at an earlier stage of his youth. Tholakele ended up staying at her own birth family, the Mthethwa family, and her partner to whom she still wishes to be married, visits her frequently.

Tholakele’s second *isigiyo*

Tholakele: *Khuza impukane yakho*

Khuza impukane yakho

Ingangithinti

Tholakele: *Khuza impukane yakho*

Khuza impukane yakho

Chorus: *Ingangithinti*

Tholakele: *Ifunani kimi?*

Ngingeluhlobo lwayo

Chorus: *Ingangithinti*

Tholakele: *Ifunani kimi?*
Ngingeluhlobo lwayo

Chorus: *Ingangithinti*

Tholakele: *Khuza impukane yakho*
Khuza impukane yakho

Chorus: *Ingangithinti*

English translation

Tholakele: *Warn your fly*
Warn your fly
It must not touch me

Tholakele: *Warn your fly*
Warn your fly

Chorus: *It must not touch me*

Tholakele: *What does it want from me?*
I am not its type

Chorus: *It must not touch me*

Tholakele: *What does it want from me?*

I am not its type

Chorus: *It must not touch me*

Tholakele: *Warn your fly*

Warn your fly

Chorus: *It must not touch me*

Tholakele's second *isigiyo* develops the story of her partner's ill-tempered mother. Tholakele said that she was indirectly communicating a message ridiculing her partner's mother saying that she was supposed to warn her son not to approach her and propose love for her because she did not ask him to come to her.

In the latter *isigiyo* Tholakele has employed figurative language which is metaphoric in nature. The word "fly" refers in this case to her male partner. Tholakele associated her male partner with a fly since he was flying up and down like a fly when he was frequently visiting her in her own birth homestead. Tholakele knew very well that her partner would not be dictated to by his mother because he loved her very much despite her being stigmatized by his mother. Through this *isigiyo* Tholakele managed to satirically decode a message to her partner's mother as she would not be allowed to convey a message using simple everyday language.

Tholakele's third isigiyo

Tholakele inherited her late mother's *isigiyo* which she sometimes performs at social occasions on her behalf with acknowledgement. The *isigiyo* of her mother, MaMcondo, is laid down as follows.

Tholakele: *Ake nikhuze umfazi ongenandoda*

Chorus: *Mfazi ongenandoda*

Tholakele: *Uye-ke lo umfazi ongenandoda*

Chorus: *Mfazi ongenandoda*

Tholakele: *Sengizothungelwa ngubani?*

Chorus: *Buthunge*

Tholakele: *Sengizothungelwa ngubani?*

Chorus: *Buthunge mfazi ongenandoda*

Buthunge

Tholakele: *Sengizothungelwa ngubani*

Chorus: *Buthunge*

Tholakele: *Sengizothungelwa ngubani?*

Chorus: *Buthunge mfazi ongenandoda*

Buthunge

English translation

Tholakele: *Say this; a woman without a husband*

Chorus: *A woman without a husband*

Tholakele: *This a woman without a husband*

Chorus: *A woman without a husband*

Tholakele: *Who will serve Zulu beer for me?*

Chorus: *Serve it*

Tholakele: *Who will serve Zulu beer for me?*

Chorus: *Serve it yourself woman without a husband*

Serve it

Tholakele: *Who will serve Zulu beer for me?*

Chorus: *Serve it*

Tholakele: *Who will serve Zulu beer for me?*

Chorus: *Serve it you woman without a husband*

Serve it

Tholakele said that her mother performed the afore-recorded *isigiyo* from the time when she was a young woman. When she became a grown up she wanted to know from her mother what the circumstances were which led to the composition and performance of her *isigiyo*. Understanding her mother's story, Tholakele purported that she began performing her *isigiyo* after her mother had passed away, hence remembering her for her skill of *isigiyo* composition and performance which influenced her (Tholakele).

Tholakele said that her mother, MaDube, told her that Zulu beer brewing was one of the important activities undertaken by Zulu women. She also told her that a Zulu girl is traditionally trained to acquire the Zulu beer brewing skill at a very early stage of life because when she gets married she will be required to brew Zulu beer for the in-laws and for the *amadlozi* rituals. The daughter, as a performer of the above *isigiyo*, wanted to let fellow women know that the frequent brewing of traditional beer is a very important custom and ought to be adhered to.

Tholakele's mother is said to have continued with the habit of brewing Zulu beer even after her husband had died. After the death of her husband she said things became hard for her. She composed this *isigiyo* to focus on the fact that she (Tholakele's mother) was a woman without a husband.

Tholakele said that her mother told her that in Zulu tradition, a woman is entitled to prepare and brew Zulu beer but she is not allowed to serve it when it is ready to be drunk. She argued that it is the men's responsibility to serve Zulu beer to people. The composer of the *isigiyo* told her daughter, Tholakele, that after the death of her husband she had no one to serve the Zulu beer since she did not give birth to a male child who would take on

his father's responsibility. Tholakele said that her mother resorted to serving Zulu beer to people herself whenever her brothers-in-law were away. Through the *isigiyo*, Tholakele said that her mother wanted to make other women see that they can perform men's tasks if the situation warrants it.

Tholakele stated that her mother posed the question, "*Sengizothungelwa ngubani?*" (Who will serve Zulu beer for me?") using her *isigiyo*. Fellow women who sympathized with her responded by saying "*Buthunge mfazi ongenandoda*", (Serve it, you widow").

The above *isigiyo* touches on the fact that the presence of *umnumzane* (the head of the family) in the Zulu tradition is important and women who are widows experience problems with some household duties that have to be performed as they are gender-orientated, and there is always a strict division of labour within the household, according to traditional customs.

6) MaNdimande

MaNdimande has married into the Gumede clan. She is approximately 50 years of age. She performs one *isigiyo* at social occasions which she herself composed. She was at one stage involved in a conflict with some community members regarding her husband, so her *isigiyo* narrates her circumstance.



Figure 3: MaNdimande performs izigiyo in 2004. She is the first from the left.

MaNdimande's izigiyo

MaNdimande: *Sebekhuluma ngami*

Sebekhuluma ngami

Chorus: *Emabhasini*

MaNdimande: *Ngizwile sebekhuluma ngami*

Sebekhuluma ngami

Chorus: *Emabhasini*

MaNdimande: *Sebekhuluma ngami*

Sebekhuluma ngami

Chorus: *Emabhasini*

MaNdimande: *Sebekhuluma ngami*

Sebekhuluma ngami

Chorus: *Eshaka*

English translation

MaNdimande: *They are talking about me*

They are talking about me

Chorus: *At the busses*

MaNdimande: *I heard they are talking about me*

They are talking about me

Chorus: *At the busses*

MaNdimande: *They are talking about me*

They are talking about me

Chorus: *At the busses*

MaNdimande: *They are talking about me*

They are talking about me

Chorus: *At Shakaskraal*

MaNdimande composed this *isigiyo* after she had had friction with some members of the community. She said that she suspected that her husband had a relationship with a certain woman of one of the homesteads in the community. Her husband categorically denied

that he was having a relationship with anyone. The composer of the above *isigiyo* maintained that her husband was usually seen around the homestead of the woman whom she suspected to be in love with her husband.

The friction commenced when MaNdimande saw the woman concerned. On seeing this woman, she warned her not to spend time with her husband. The woman denied what was said by this wife and became furious. She regarded the accusations as false allegations. The whole family of the woman concerned intervened and wanted to fight MaNdimande. Some people who were passing by tried to prevent the fight that was brewing and MaNdimande said she then left the scene and went home.

After a few weeks of friction MaNdimande said that she was approached by different people who knew her. They then told her that the woman, who quarrelled with her, together with her sisters, had made her name the subject of discussion in the bus in which they were travelling to town. They said they heard that they were making derogatory comments about her on the bus. MaNdimande became indignant about the abuse of her name. What further fuelled her anger was that she heard that those women continued to slander her at a small town called Shakaskraal after they had alighted from the bus. Since MaNdimande no longer desired tension and confrontation, she pointed out that she then composed the above *isigiyo* and used it as her weapon against the women who were speaking ill about her on the bus and in town.

The composer of the above *isigiyo* has emphasised her circumstance by using the plural form “*emabhasini*” (at the buses). From MaNdimande’s story it appears that those who talked detrimentally about her were on a single bus and not in many buses. Through this

she wanted to highlight the fact that her anger had increased. The way MaNdimande reacted in fury made her decide to overemphasise the incident in order to sound as if these women had talked destructively about her on many buses and not just one.

7) MaMnguni

MaMnguni is approximately 57 years old and married into the Nxumalo clan. She is the first wife of two in a polygamous marriage. Her married life has always been difficult due to her husband who used to be involved in extra-marital relationship with another woman at his workplace. This is the reason that led her to compose and perform her two *izigiyo* at social occasions.

MaMnguni's first *isigiyo*

MaMnguni: *Kubuhlungu emendweni*

Kufanele ngithini mina?

Kuyashisa emendweni

Kufanele ngithini mina?

Chorus: *Kuyashisa emendweni*

MaMnguni: *Kufanele ngithini?*

Chorus: *Kuyashisa emendweni*

MaMnguni: *Kunjani emendweni?*

Chorus: *Kuyashisa emendweni*

MaMnguni: *Kunjani*

Chorus: *Kuyashisa emendweni*

English translation

MaMnguni: *The married life is painful*

What should I say?

Married life is hot

What should I say?

Chorus: *Married life is hot*

MaMnguni: *What should I say?*

Chorus: *Married life is hot*

MaMnguni: *What is married life like?*

Chorus: *Married life is hot*

MaMnguni: *What is it like?*

Chorus: *Married life is hot*

MaMnguni composed the above *isigiyo* after her husband had started displaying irresponsible behaviour in the homestead. Before MaGumede's composition of the *isigiyo*, life was reasonably better in their homestead and her husband, as the only breadwinner, took care of her and the children. She reported that her husband then

gradually changed his good habit of supporting the family financially. What alarmed MaMnguni was her husband's new tendency of reducing the financial support for his family and that consequently resulted in her experiencing hardships with regard to the homestead's maintenance. She stated that her husband was oblivious to her requests pertaining to the household needs.

MaMnguni eventually received no financial support from her husband at all. She heard that her husband was staying with a certain woman near where he was working. This is what MaMnguni said about her husband during the interviews: "Indoda ihlala eThekwini nezifebe akangithumeleli imali ngiyahlupheka." ("My husband lives in Durban with the prostitutes and as a result he does not send me money. I am starving.") She pointed out that her heart was broken because their children were starving. These conditions made MaMnguni protest against the traumatic married life that she was experiencing at that stage. That is why she stated that "*kuyashisa emendweni*" (Married life is hot).

MaMnguni's second *isigiyo*

MaMnguni: *Ngakho-ke mina ngidla malini?*

Ngidla u-R2000

Ngidla malini?

Chorus: *U-R2 000*

MaMnguni: *Malini?*

Chorus: *U-R2 000*

MaMnguni: *Ngidla malini?*

Chorus: *U-R2 000*

English translation

MaMnguni: *Therefore how much do I spend?*

I spend R2 000

How much do I spend?

Chorus: *R2 000*

MaMnguni: *How much?*

Chorus: *R2 000*

MaMnguni: *How much do I spend?*

Chorus: *R2 000*

Notwithstanding the hardships that she experienced due to her irresponsible husband, MaMnguni resorted to seeking temporary jobs in order to feed her children who were starving. Having found a job, she was able to make a living and the children were, from then on, not destitute.

MaMnguni composed her second *isigiyo* to protest against the in-laws who ridiculed her by saying that she earned and spent R2 000, (The money she earned from working). MaMnguni pointed out that she was indignant about this because the payment that she was receiving as a casual worker was far less than R2 000. She protested against the

unsympathetic comments made about her saying that they were making fun of her since her husband had deserted her.

8) MaMthethwa

MaMthethwa married into the Nyathi clan. As a 66 year old, MaMthethwa enjoys land tilling more than any other rural women's tasks. She is regarded by the women of her circle as one of the best *izigiyo* performers. Her characteristic skills of leaping and stamping her feet as well as imitation during performance are greatly appreciated by women of her circle including other people who usually attend these social occasions. She recently performed three *izigiyo* at social occasions. MaMthethwa composed her first *isigiyo* when her husband had shown that he loved his second wife more than her.



Figure 4: MaMthethwa performs.

MaMthethwa's first isigiyo

MaMthethwa : *Uma kugula mina*

Uthula uthi du

MaMthethwa : *Uma kugula mina*

Chorus: *Uthula uthi du*

MaMthethwa: *Uma kugula uzakwethu*

Chorus: *Kushintshwa amasheke*

Kushintshwa amasheke

Kushintswe izimali

English translation

MaMthethwa: *If I am sick*

You do not take any action

MaMthethwa: *If I am sick*

Chorus: *You do not take any action*

MaMthethwa: *If my husband's other wife is sick*

Chorus: *The cheques are cashed*

The cheques are cashed

The monies are spent

MaMthethwa said that she never experienced complete satisfaction in her married life. She argued that it was her husband who mostly gave her difficult times in her life. She further stated that the arrival of her husband's second wife in the family exacerbated her unhappy experiences, during her marriage. MaMthethwa reported that after the arrival of her husband's other wife, her husband began ignoring her. She pointed out that her husband spent a lot of time with the other wife. MaMthethwa maintained that the financial support that she usually received from her husband deteriorated significantly after the arrival of the second wife. The rapid deterioration of the financial support from her husband consequently resulted in the conditions where the fundamental needs of the family were not well catered for. MaMthethwa stated that she endured these unsatisfactorily life conditions for a long time.

What made MaMthethwa even more unhappy in her married life was that whenever she approached her husband to report that she was sick, her husband did not take any action. MaMthethwa once said the following when we had a conversation pertaining to her *izigiyo* in June, 2004: "*Esithenjini kuhlale kunezinnto ezingaphathani kahle njengokuthi uma ngigula indoda inganginaki.*" ("In a polygamous marriage there are always things I am dissatisfied with, especially when my husband does not take any action when I am ill"). She said that such behaviour showed by her husband was evident on numerous occasions when her husband always appeared to be running short of money when she was in need of it.

On the other hand, whenever MaMthethwa's husband's other wife was sick, her husband swiftly responded by taking her to a medical centre. In these situations he never uttered

any word that showed that he was broke; instead he cashed his cheques in order for him to pay for his other wife's medical expenses. The above *isigiyo* served as a vehicle through which MaMthethwa protested against her husband's tendency not to treat his first wife fairly.

This above *isigiyo* is MaMthethwa's attempt to draw attention of any other husband who treats his wives unequally. Comments such as MaMthethwa's could and can apply to similar situations where polygamous marriages are common in African societies.

MaMthethwa's second *isigiyo*



Figure 5: MaMthethwa performs moving with her knees and feet to imitate the movement of a pig.

MaMthethwa: *Uyadla ukotshi*

Chorus: *Uyadla*

MaMthethwa: *Ukudla kwezingane zami*

Chorus: *Uyadla ukotshi*

Uyadla

MaMthethwa: *Ukudla kwabantwana bani*

Chorus: *Uyadla ukotshi*

Uyadla

MaMthethwa: *Ngehla ngenyuka*

Ngizamela abantwana bami

Chorus: *Uyadla ukotshi*

Uyadla

English translation

MaMthethwa: *The pig is eating*

Chorus: *It is eating*

MaMthethwa: *The food for my young ones*

Chorus: *The pig is eating*

It is eating

MaMthethwa: *Food for my children*

Chorus: *The pig is eating*

It is eating

MaMthethwa: *I am up and down*

In order for my children to live

Chorus: *The pig is eating*

It is eating

To reflect her discontent with her younger sister's male partner, MaMthethwa composed the above *isigiyo*. She said that her sister's male partner did not want to work and therefore was not in a position to support his children financially. When he managed to get employment he usually worked for a few months, but then left the job without a valid reason. He was employed only for a brief period of his life.

MaMthethwa said that her sister resorted to seeking work in order to support her children. Her sister is said to have eventually found employment. What made MaMthethwa most upset is that her sister's partner usually ate food that her sister had bought for their children. MaMthethwa's sister did not like what her sister's partner was doing but she could not take any measures to stop him from that habit.

In her latter *isigiyo*, MaMthethwa has conveys a message of protest making fun of her sister's partner by referring calling him a pig. She pretended to be her sister and she used the pronoun "I" and the possessive pronoun "my" (my children). MaMthethwa talks as if the children whose food was eaten were hers, whereas they belonged to her sister. This

functions as an indirect message. MaMthethwa uses metaphoric language in her above *izigiyo*. She talks about a pig which eats her children's food, metaphorically referring to her sister's partner. This metaphor satirically conveys a message of how she feels about her sister's partner. A pig is an animal that is hugely despised - an animal that greedily devours any food. MaMthethwa therefore describes her sister's partner as having the character and the characteristics of a pig.

Men culturally hold higher status in the KwaQwabe community. The status of a man is heightened by responsibilities that he as a man observes. The man who does not cater for the needs of his family is regarded as a failure, and his manhood status diminishes a great deal. The man who fails to safeguard his family is culturally ostracized. It is through this medium of *izigiyo* that MaMthethwa protests against her sister's partner's irresponsible behaviour.

9) MaMxoveni

MaMxoveni is 55 years old and is married into the Khoza clan. She is the eldest wife in a polygamous marriage of three wives. Currently she and her husband live separately due to conflict they have had. MaMxoveni lives with her five children in a homestead that she and her children erected after her separation from her husband. Her two *izigiyo* communicate her fate when leaving her husband's home and the traumatic married life that she experienced when she was in her late forties. Living without a husband in the new homestead taught her to strive for the best for her children. Being my neighbour, MaMxoveni used to utter this in informal conversation with her: "Mina angikwazi ukubuka omunye umuntu uma kukhona engikudingayo. *Ngazifundisa ukuzenzela ngoba*

ngiyazi ukuthi anginabani.” (“I do not rely on another person for help when I am needy. I taught myself to be active since I know that I have no one to help me.”) To make a living she relied much on hawking. Her children are now working so she has been relieved from the burden of being the only breadwinner.



Figure 6



Figure 7

On the left, MaMxoveni performs during the cluster interview. On the right, she performs in her traditional attire.

MaMxoveni's first *isigiyo*

MaMxoveni: *Kugiya umfazi oshaywa emini*

Abanye beshaywa ebusuku

Chorus: *Umfazi oshaywa emini*

MaMxoveni: *Nangu umfazi oshaywa emini*

Chorus: *Umfazi oshaywa emini*

MaMxoveni: *Ngaze ngamuhle ebusuku*

Emini ngimubi

Chorus: *Ngimuhle ebusuku*

Emini ngimubi

MaMxoveni: *Ngoba?*

Chorus: *Ngimuhle ebusuku*

Emini ngimubi

English translation

MaMxoveni: *Performing is the woman who is beaten during the day*

While others are beaten at night

Chorus: *A woman who is beaten during the day*

MaMxoveni: *Here is a woman who is beaten during the day*

Chorus: *A woman who is beaten during the day*

MaMxoveni: *I am beautiful at night*

I am ugly during the day

Chorus: *I am beautiful at night*

I am ugly during the day

MaMxoveni: *For?*

Chorus: *I am beautiful at night*

I am ugly during the day

MaMxoveni told her story; she never had any satisfaction in her married life. She stated that her husband turned irresponsible towards the family from the very early stage of her married life, even before separation. She stressed that he did not bother about financially supporting her and their children. MaMxoveni commented that her mother-in-law shouldered the burden of being the breadwinner since her son deliberately declined to accept his responsibility as the breadwinner. MaMxoveni said that in the course of time she realized that the old woman was heavily burdened with a problem which did not actually belong to her. This accumulation of the burden was exacerbated by the fact that MaMxoveni's husband had other two wives whose children were also financially supported by her mother-in-law.

In order to make her conditions less stressful, MaMxoveni and the other wives jointly decided to engage in informal trade in the neighborhood so as to cater for the basic needs of their children. This decision effectively lightened their mother-in-law's load as she was no longer able to enjoy her old age pension grant due to her having to support her son. MaMxoveni stressed that they got used to this kind of trade and they endured it for years. With money they saved through informal trade, MaMxoveni and her other husband's wives clothed and educated their children.

Having endured an unsatisfactory married life, MaMxoveni said she experienced further strife when her husband began a habit of occasionally beating her for no apparent reason.

Mamxoveni said that the members of the family into which she married convened meetings a number of times in an effort to warn her husband not to beat her mercilessly, but their attempts were futile. MaMxoveni commented that her being beaten by her husband perplexed her, for he inflicted physical pain on her with beatings only during the day time and not at night. In MaMxoveni's view being beaten by a husband during the day time was rare in the neighbourhood. In the medium of the above *isigiyo*, MaMxoveni portrays a message metaphorically that her being beaten during the day must have meant that she was ugly during the day time. Since she was not beaten at night it implied that she was beautiful at night. Through her *isigiyo*, MaMxoveni reveals her husband's abusive behaviour which persisted during the day time and not at night.

MaMxoveni's second *isigiyo*

MaMxoveni: *Hhiya! Hhiya! Makhosikazi*
Nangu ubamxosha emzini wakhe

Chorus: *Bamxosha*

MaMxoveni: *Nangu ubamxosha*

Chorus: *Bamxosha*

MaMxoveni: *Sebethi angisuke behlale*
Ngoba zonke izigodo ziyasuka

Chorus: *Simbuka sigodo*

MaMxoveni: *Isigodo asisuki*

Chorus: *Simbuka sigodo*

English translation

MaMxoveni: *Hhiya! Hhiya! Women*

Here is the one dismissed from her house

Chorus: *The dismissed one*

MaMxoveni: *Here is the dismissed one*

Chorus: *The dismissed one*

MaMxoveni: *They say I must get away in order for them to stay*

Because all the dry tree trunks are able to be uprooted

Chorus: *Be uprooted dry tree trunk!*

MaMxoveni: *The dry tree trunk is unable to be uprooted*

Chorus: *Be uprooted dry tree trunk!*

Through the medium of her second *isigiyo*, MaMxoveni said she wanted to “vomit” her resentment that stemmed from her dismissal from her house by her husband. Having no option and seeing that her dismissal from her in-laws’ family was inevitable; MaMxoveni said she returned to her own family of birth after realising that staying with her husband would wreak havoc in her life. To divulge information indirectly about her husband’s deed, MaMxoveni composed and performed the above *isigiyo* in which she identifies herself as uBamxosha (the sacked one). MaMxoveni voiced her suspicion that there were

some members within her in-laws' family who might have instigated her husband's decision to chase her out of the homestead.

In the above-recorded *isigiyo* MaMxoveni employs metaphoric language to render her *isigiyo* indirect. Metaphor is evident in the line of *isigiyo* which reads thus: "Be removed dry tree trunk". Here MaMxoveni simply refers to herself as the dry tree trunk which is to be uprooted. By the removal of the dry tree trunk she meant her dismissal as the eldest wife from the family into which she is married. She pointed out that her tolerance of the traumatic married life for so long paralleled the dry tree trunk which is deemed impossible to uproot. However, MaMxoveni maintained that the dry tree trunk (herself) which they failed to dislocate for many years, was eventually uprooted (her dismissal). She metaphorically referred to herself as a dry tree trunk which her husband no longer needed. She said her dismissal from her husband's homestead would not be approved in terms of the norms of the Zulu culture. She made the point that she was not only the bride of the living family members, but she was also the bride who was formally accepted by the ancestors of the Khoza clan.

MaMxoveni's third *isigiyo*

MaMxoveni: *Nangu umfazi owashawa ngezagila*
 Kodwa wangafa
 Umafa avuke njengedangabane
 Nangu umfazi owashawa ngezagila

Chorus: *Umfazi owashawa ngezagila*

MaMxoveni: *Ngenzani KwaKhoza?*

Ngenzani?

Chorus: *Umzimba kawubhoboki*

Ukube uyabhoboka

Ngabe unezimbobo

Mzimba kawubhoboki

English translation

MaMxoveni: *I am a woman who was beaten by knobkerries*

But who did not die

The one who dies and rises like grass species

I am a woman who was beaten by knobkerries

Chorus: *A woman who was beaten by knobkerries*

MaMxoveni: *What did I do to the Khoza clan?*

What did I do?

Chorus: *The body is not pierceable*

If it were so

It would sustain holes

The body is not pierceable

MaMxoveni's last *isigiyo* reveals that she is married into the Khoza clan in the line 'Ngangenzeni KwaKhoza' (What did I do at KwaKhoza). MaMxoveni said the final day when she left the Khoza family was when her husband tried to beat her with a knobkerrie.

On that day MaMxoveni said she realized that the dispute between her and her husband was far from being settled. MaMxoveni stated that she wedged the door open in order to instantly escape from her husband who was fuming and held a knobkerrie in his hand. MaMxoveni pointed out that she described that day as the day of a narrow escape. She stated that the way she escaped her husband's fury is still miraculous. MaMxoveni referred to herself as "*umfazi owashaywa ngezagila kodwa wangafa*" (a woman who was beaten by the knobkerries but who did not die). She described herself as a person who died and was resurrected. MaMxoveni reported that her being physically abused by her husband spiritually killed her and only her physical body survived death.

MaMxoveni poses a rhetorical question asking what she did within the Khoza clan which resulted in bringing her life into jeopardy. By this question she comments that she did not comprehend the grounds which prompted her husband to expel her from his homestead in a harsh, merciless and inhuman manner. Undoubtedly, MaMxoveni said that if her bitter experiences and pent-up emotions were able to physically pierce her body, it would manifest itself in conspicuous holes which would bear testimony to her hard-learned experiences. MaMxoveni has also used a simile in her *isigiyo*. She compared herself to a grass species known as *idangabane*. When the *idangabane* gets destroyed from the spot where it grows, it grows again vigorously like a weed. The implication of this simile "*Umavavuke njengedangabane*" (the one who dies and rises again like *idangabane* grass) is that after MaMxoveni had left her husband's home, she started a new positive and peaceful life in her new homestead which she and her children built.

10) MaNgiba

MaNgiba Mavundla is approximately 56 years of age. She lives with her grandchildren in their homestead as her husband and her own children live away in town where they work. She stayed at one stage with her daughters-in-law. She performs most of the household chores alone since her grandchildren are too young to assist her. She has composed two *izigiyo* which she performs. In addition to her two *izigiyo*, she performs one more *isigiyo* that she inherited from her late mother-in-law.



Figure 8



Figure 9

MaNgiba performs in both figures 9 and 10.

MaNgiba's first *isigiyo*

MaNgiba: *Kudlala isonakali esaziwayo*
Emfuleni eBhikakhona
Umfazi ohlala yedwana

emzini omkhulu

Webafazi! Webafazi!

Nasi isonakali

Chorus: *Isonakali*

MaNgiba: *Webafazi! Webafazi!*

Siphi isonakali

Chorus: *Nasi*

MaNgiba: *Kodwa ngizohlala nobani?*

Ngizohlala ngedwana

Ngizohlala nobani?

Chorus: *Ngizohlala ngedwana*

English translation

MaNgiba: *Performing, is the famous wicked woman*

At the Bhidakhona river

A woman who stays alone

In the extended homestead

Women! Women!

This is a wicked woman

Chorus: *A wicked woman*

MaNgiba: *Women! Women!*

Where is a wicked woman?

Chorus: *Here she is*

MaNgiba: *But who will I stay with?*

Chorus: *I will stay alone*

MaNgiba: *Who will I stay with?*

Chorus: *I will stay alone*

In her first *isigiyo*, MaNgiba mentions that she is a woman who stays alone in an extended homestead. MaNgiba explains that her staying alone in the extended homestead is something she began to experience after her daughters-in-law had left her and went back to their birth families. After they had left her she heard of the allegations that some neighbours perceived her as a wicked woman who ill-treated her daughters-in-law. These allegations alarmed MaNgiba and she regarded them as false. The people who were involved in the allegations were said to have asked the question as to who would MaNgiba stay with as she was the cause of the departure of her daughters-in-law. Using her *isigiyo*, she indirectly responds to the question in this way: “*Ngizohlala ngedwana*” (I will stay alone). Through her *isigiyo*, MaNgiba reveals that the gossip about her is carried out at the local river named Bhidakhona, where women of the area fetch water, bath and wash clothes. In her *isigiyo*, MaNgiba announces that she does not bother about staying alone. MaNgiba further intends, through the *isigiyo*, to warn her neighbours who appeared to be antagonistic to her, not to interfere in her family affairs.

MaNgiba's second isigiyo

MaNgiba: *Ngizokhuluma ngithini?*
Iyathutha intuthane
ithuthela emgodini
Ngizokhuluma ngithini?

Chorus: *Iyathutha intuthane*
Ithuthela emgodini

English translation

MaNgiba: *What am I going to say?*
The ant is busy with the load
It takes the load to the tunnel
What am I going to say?

Chorus: *The ant is busy with the load*
It takes the load to the tunnel

Puzzled by the leakage of the delicate affairs pertaining to her family, MaNgiba was prompted to compose the above recorded *isigiyo*. She said that she once discussed some delicate matters with her family, which she did not intend to go beyond the boundaries of the homestead. MaNgiba stated that she used to share her confidential conversations with her family members, especially after she had cautiously warned them not to disclose such

sensitive matters to the outside world. What MaNgiba said saddened her was that after each and every deliberation that was engaged in within the boundaries of the homestead, it was discovered that someone or some people outside were well-informed about the sensitive issues that were the subject of the family's deliberations. MaNgiba pointed out that members of the family might have been involved in the disclosure of her secret family affairs to the community. Eventually, MaNgiba was approached, directly, by a community member who informed her that she knew very well what MaNgiba's family deliberations were about, and the community member told her that the breach of confidentiality about family matters was due to her son's daughter-in-law. Hearing this, MaNgiba was infuriated. However, she was not in a position to engage in arguments with her son's daughter-in-law due to the norms and regulations set in Zulu society, MaNgiba used her above *isigiyo* as the mouthpiece to retaliate against her son's disloyal daughter-in-law.

The retaliatory message that MaNgiba directed to her son's daughter-in-law was metaphorically and satirically conveyed. This is recognizable in the *isigiyo*. MaNgiba referred to her son's daughter-in-law who divulged her family secrets to the outside world as *intuthane* (the ant). Ants are commonly seen busy carrying their loads from one place to another. Similarly, MaNgiba's daughter-in-law transferred and disclosed family's secret affairs to outsiders. The implication of this is that people are described as having both the characters and characteristics of animals.

MaNgiba's third *isigiyo*

MaNgiba: *Ngagcaba uhlanga*
 Lokuthandwa yindoda

Chorus: *Kawungicobebele*
 Kawungicobebele

MaNgiba: *Ngagcaba uhlanga*

Chorus: *Kawungicobebele*
 Kawungicobebele

English translation

MaNgiba: *I inserted muti in my body*
 So as to be extremely loved by my husband

Chorus: *Give me some muti*
 Give me some

MaNgiba: *I inserted muti in my body*

Chorus: *Give me some muti*
 Give me some

Not only does MaNgiba perform her own *izigiyo* that have been dealt with, but she also performs the latter recorded *isigiyo* on behalf of her late mother-in-law. MaNgiba said she was well aware of the circumstances that heralded the composition of the later *isigiyo*

by her mother-in-law. MaNgiba's mother-in-law told her that she composed her *isigiyo* after she had discovered that some women in the community had been gossiping about her and commenting that she had fed her husband *muti* (medicine) so that he would love her more. Angered by the gossip, MaNgiba's mother-in-law pointed out to MaNgiba that these women were jealous of the satisfactory married life she was living, for her husband obviously cared about her well-being and her family. The other women are said to have asked her to also give them some of the *muti* that had led her to be so loved by her husband. In order for MaNgiba's mother-in-law to retaliate and express her resentment against the gossiping women, she used the subject of their gossip as a source of the composition for her *isigiyo*. Through her *isigiyo*, she satirically pretended to have used *intando* (love medicine) to strengthen the love of her husband. Her *isigiyo* criticises gossiping and envy.

11) MaNxumalo

MaNxumalo is approximately 50 years old and is married into the Zungu clan. Her husband has passed away, so she lives with her four children in the homestead that she and her husband built. She performs two *izigiyo* at social occasions, one of which she inherited from her mother.

Manxumalo's *isigiyo*

Manxumalo: *Hhawu! Hhawu!*
Ngabona ngendoda
Ithwele umthwalo

Ngingenze lutho kodwa

Ngabona ngendoda

Chorus: *Ngabona ngendoda*

Ithwele umthwalo

Ngingenze lutho kodwa

Ngabona ngendoda

Manxumalo: *Uma esefile*

Uyofuna bani?

Chorus: *Uyofuna wena*

Manxumalo: *Uyofuna bani?*

Chorus: *Uyofuna wena*

Manxumalo: *Uyongifica ngenzani?*

Chorus: *Uyongifica ngihlezi*

Ngihlezi

Uyongifica ngihlezi

English translation

Manxumalo: *Hhawu! Hhawu!*

I simply saw a man leaving

He was carrying luggage

But I have not done anything

I simply saw a man

Chorus: *I simply saw a man leaving*

He was carrying luggage

But I have not done anything

I simply saw a man

Manxumalo: *When he dies*

Who will be responsible for him?

Chorus: *You will be responsible*

Manxumalo: *Who will be responsible for his death?*

You will be responsible

Manxumalo: *What will I be doing when he returns?*

Chorus: *He will find me still living here*

I will still be here

He will find me still living here

MaNxumalo said that her composition and performance of her *isigiyo* followed the feud that developed between her and her brother-in-law. She stated that long before her husband's death, her husband's brother approached her and her husband and asked them if they would grant him permission to establish his own hut within their homestead since he was not married and both of their parents had died, and he saw no point in establishing

his own separate homestead. MaNxumalo said that after lengthy discussions she and her husband agreed to their brother's request and he, thereafter, commenced erecting his hut within their homestead. Having completed his hut MaNxumalo's brother-in-law moved into it without delay.

MaNxumalo explained that her husband became ill and was admitted to various hospitals in order for him to be cured, but all the attempts were futile and he eventually passed away.

After the death of her husband, MaNxumalo said she experienced hatred between her and her brother-in-law, pointing out that the main cause of friction between them was that her brother-in-law became rude after her husband's death, especially on days when he was under the influence of liquor. She said her brother-in-law used to go out of his hut and confront her with the intention of imposing trivial rules. MaNxumalo divulged this in the interview held in April 2004: "*Umfowabo womenyi wami wayefuna ukusebenzisa ithuba lokuthi angishayele umthetho ngoba esazi ukuthi ngingumfelokazi*". ("My brother-in-law was taking advantage of my widowed status as he wanted to dictate my life and impose his rules on me"). Friction between MaNxumalo and her brother-in-law continued as a result of these unnecessary impositions.

Having been angered by her brother-in-law, MaNxumalo said she one day left her homestead and went to spend a week with her mother's family. Returning to her homestead, she said that she discovered that the situation had simmered down, though the feud between them had not entirely diminished.

MaNxumalo stated that she one day unexpectedly saw her brother-in-law leaving his hut carrying his belongings. Astonished, MaNxumalo saw him moving hurriedly away from the homestead without uttering a single word. She said that her brother-in-law never came back again after he had left her homestead. MaNxumalo stated that the departure of her brother-in-law from her homestead was a huge relief after the unpleasant emotional life that she had led after the death of her husband.

She introduces her *isigiyo* with the howling and exclaiming words: “Hhawu! Hhawu!” to emphasise that she simply and unexpectedly saw a man carrying his belongings and moving away from the homestead without prior notice. MaNxumalo says that she did not feel any guilt about her brother-in-law’s decision to leave her homestead as she says: “Ngingenze lutho”. (“I have not done anything wrong”). When performing, MaNxumalo poses a question to the audience during her recitation of her *isigiyo* as to who will be responsible for her brother-in-law’s death should he die before she dies, and the audience responds by stating that “*uyofuna wena*” (“you, MaNxumalo, will be responsible for his funeral and other things after your brother-in-law’s death”). Proudly, MaNxumalo suggests in the midst of her *isigiyo* that even if her brother-in-law returns, she will still be living in her homestead. By this, she implies that she had not been responsible for her brother-in-law’s departure from her homestead despite the hatred that prevailed between them. MaNxumalo uses her *isigiyo* as a warning that men ought not to bully women on the grounds that they are men since they may at the end of the day find themselves at the mercy of women whom they had emotionally abused.

MaNxumalo's inherited isigiyo

MaNxumalo: *Hhiya! Hhiya! Makhosikazi!*

Kwathi angimthathe

Chorus: *Mthathe*

MaNxumalo: *Ngaba sathe ngiyamangala*

Ngazozwa izinduna

Ngazozwa izikhulu

Chorus: *Ngazozwa izinduna*

Ngazozwa izikhulu

MaNxumalo: *Kwashisa isibumbu*

Kwathula inhliziyo

Chorus: *Kwashisa isibumbu*

Kwathula inhliziyo

English translation

MaNxumalo: *Hhiya! Hhiya! Women*

I feel like fighting

Chorus: *Fight!*

MaNxumalo: *Having tried to open the case*

I was hated by the headmen

I was hated by the officials

Chorus: *I was hated by the headmen*

I was hated by the officials

MaNxumalo: *The vaginal temperature became high*

The heartbeat stopped

Chorus: *The vaginal temperature became high*

The heartbeat stopped

With acknowledgement, MaNxumalo performs the second *isigiyo* which she inherited from her late mother. She said that she was well-versed about the conditions and events that led to her mother's composition and performance of her *isigiyo* when she was living. MaNxumalo stated that the life that she had lived as a child with her mother was one of struggle. The hard life that she said they lived was greatly exacerbated by her father's irresponsibility in the household.

MaNxumalo said that her father had at one stage a secret love affair with a neighbouring woman who was a widow. The allegations pertaining to her father's new secret partner, as MaNxumalo told the story, spread like veld fire and eventually were heard by her mother. Emotionally devastated by these allegations, MaNxumalo's mother voiced her dismay to her husband. In response, her husband denied the allegations. After MaNxumalo's father's denial of the allegations regarding his love affair with a neighbouring woman, he was seen spending much of his time with the alleged woman. MaNxumalo said that her father eventually admitted in the presence of his wife that he

was in love with the woman. MaNxumalo said that her mother was not an argumentative person, so she accepted the situation, though it was depressing and humiliating.

Driven by *isikhwele* (love jealousy), MaNxumalo's father's casual partner wrought havoc in their homestead. MaNxumalo said that her father's private partner secretly went to their homestead and on her arrival there she set MaNxumalo's mother's hut on fire and made off instantly, hoping that no one had seen her. All the family's possessions that were indoors went up in flames. On her return from the social occasion she had attended, MaNxumalo's mother burst into tears after she realised that her hut had been burnt ashes. MaNxumalo stated that at a later stage, it was disclosed that her mother's hut was demolished by her husband's woman. This incident marked the beginning of unpleasant hostilities in the homestead.

MaNxumalo said that her mother approached the *induna* (head man) with the intention of opening a case regarding the burning of her hut. Having reported the case to the *induna*, she waited to hear from him as to which day would be ideal for the deliberation regarding her issue. Receiving no response, MaNxumalo said that her mother went back to the *induna* to find out what had delayed the day of the trial. The *induna* did not seem prepared to entertain her issue. She said that all the other officials of the area were also not prepared to deal with her mother's hot issues; instead they developed a hostile attitude towards her. MaNxumalo said that her mother was furious following the denouncement of her issue by the officials of the area, and it later came to her attention that her case was ignored on the ground that the accused (her husband's partner) was the headman's close relative. She said this incident was at the core of her resentment referred to in her *isigiyo*, which explains why she ended up being hated by the *izinduna*

(headmen) and *izikhulu* (officials). The *isigiyo* functions as a strategy used by MaNxumalo's mother to expose the weak points and the unfairness of her area's judicial system.

Using her *isigiyo*, MaNxumalo's mother made known publicly that the ignoring of her issue by the officials concerned depressed and traumatised her. It was because of this situation that MaNxumalo's mother's *isigiyo* made reference to her temperature being high as she was angered by the inhuman and cruel act of the officials of her area. To exhibit the extreme anger that she internalized, MaNxumalo's mother exaggerated the situation by commenting that "kwathula inhliziyu (the heartbeat stopped) due to her emotional trauma. MaNxumalo said that her mother always introduced her *isigiyo* by saying "Kwathi angimthathe" (I feel like fighting). The implication of this introduction is that MaNxumalo's mother felt like fighting whenever she saw people who were involved in this traumatic situation.

The *isigiyo* indirectly discloses that the KwaQwabe area's governance is vested in the hands of stakeholders like the *izinduna* (headmen). The *izinduna* govern the factions of the tribal authority, and their main function is to serve as peace monitors in order that the "community oriented lifestyle" (Turner, 1998: 238) be sustainable. The *izinduna* work in collaboration with *inkosi* (chief) of the KwaQwabe area, who, in the view of the community members, is the main governor of the tribal authority as a whole. As the chief's representatives within their specific *izigodi* (geographic communities), the *izinduna* resolve petty cases, and those that are too complicated are referred by them to the chief.

12) MaSihlangu

MaSihlangu is an elderly woman of approximately 75 years old and is married into the Msane clan. She is one of the women of the area who value land tilling since she tills vast fields of crops. She likes to keep traditional dress in her homestead for the use of her family members on social occasions like *umemulo* (the coming of age ceremony) and *udwendwe* (the Zulu wedding). She hates people who speak ill about others. She is the composer and performer of three *izigiyo* that will follow.

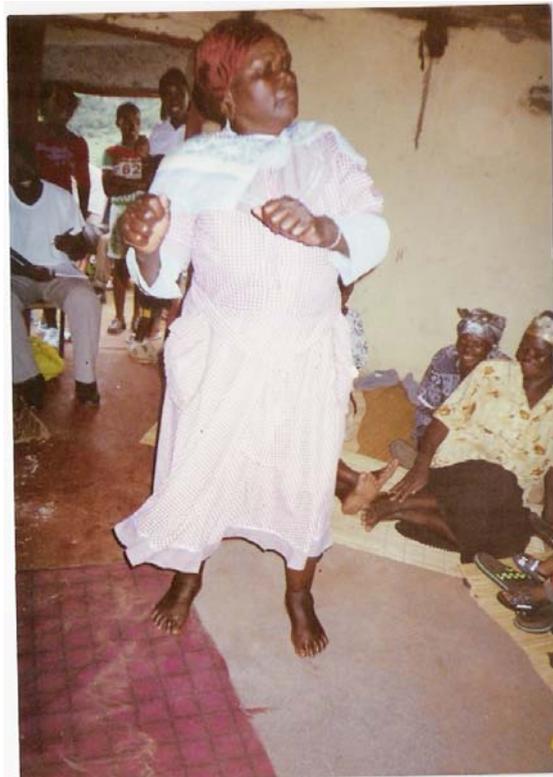


Figure 10: MaSihlangu performs at a cultural occasion.

MaSihlangu's first *isigiyo*

MaSihlangu: *We mnqunukazana!*

We mnqunukazana!

Abanye bayabhinca

Chorus: *We mnqunukazana!*

Abanye bayabhinca

English translation

MaSihlangu: *You, the naked woman!*

You, the naked woman!

Others are traditionally dressing themselves

Chorus: *You the naked woman!*

Others are traditionally dressing themselves

MaSihlangu said that although she did not wear traditional attire on a daily basis, she clung strongly to the idea that traditional attire would always be essential for specific social occasions which were traditional in nature. MaSihlangu said she felt that every Zulu speaking person in the KwaQwabe area must make a point of owning traditional attire to be used when necessary. Seeing that more than half of the KwaQwabe population is without traditional attire kept at their homesteads, she said she resorted to the composition and performance of the above *isigiyo* as a way of expressing her feeling that everyone should be in possession of his/her own traditional attire and not rely on other people in the event of traditional social occasions.

Frustrated by the number of women of her area who repeatedly approached her to borrow traditional attire from her, especially the *izidwaba* (the hide skirts which are usually worn by married Zulu women); MaSihlangu said she made the point that in the Zulu tradition a woman who was without *isidwaba* was tantamount to a naked woman. Hence she ridicules any woman without the traditional attire as *umnqunukazana* (the inferior naked woman). When she performs this *isigiyo* at social occasions she usually begins by mockingly saying: “*Uma ufuna isidwaba woza KwaMsane*”. (If you want a Zulu traditional hide skirt comes to the Msane homestead”). Through her *isigiyo*, MaSihlangu informs the women without *izidwaba* and other various kinds of Zulu traditional attire to buy or get their own traditional attire which they have to *bhinca* (wear) at social occasions without bothering about going to someone else to lend them traditional attire. MaSihlangu said that her composition and performance of this *isigiyo* was an attempt to remind women in the community to value traditional attire.

MaSihlangu’s second *isigiyo*

MaSihlangu: *Mphimbo ogcwele izindaba*

Chorus: *Umphimbo ogcwele izindaba*

Ogcwele izindaba

Umphimbo ogcwele izindaba

English translation

MaSihlangu: *The throat that is full of gossip*

Chorus: *The throat that is full of gossip*

Full of gossip

The throat that is full of gossip

MaSihlangu said that she directed the second *isigiyo* at some people who gossiped about her and other people. Using her *isigiyo* she states that anyone who always gossips has “*umphimbo ogcwele izindaba*” (a throat which is full of news/ gossip). For this reason she condemns gossiping and indirectly warns those who gossiped about her not to do so. MaSihlangu said that she was irritated by people who gossiped about her, but also by those who borrowed attire from her.

MaSihlangu’s third *isigiyo*

MaSihlangu : *Ngizokhuluma nobani?*

Ngizokhuluma noJesu

Ngizokhuluma nobani?

Chorus: *Ngizokhuluma noJesu*

MaSihlangu: *Ngizokhuluma nobani?*

Chorus: *Ngizokhuluma noJesu*

Jesu Jesu

MaSihlangu: *Ngizokhuluma noJesu*

English translation

MaSihlangu: *Who will I talk to?*

I will talk to Jesus

Who will I talk to?

Chorus: *I will talk to Jesus*

MaSihlangu: *Who will I talk to?*

Chorus: *I will talk to Jesus*

Jesus Jesus

I will talk to Jesus

Hearing derogatory comments made against her by some of her community members, MaSihlangu said she simply composed and performed the later *isigiyo*. She reported that there were some community members who made fun of her in their gossip. MaSihlangu said her daughters stayed with her together with their children as they were not married. This led some people in her community to laugh and ridicule her. What MaSihlangu said also annoyed her greatly was that she had on numerous occasions, been suspected by her neighbours of practicing witchcraft. MaSihlangu said that such allegations had brought to her life enormous stress. Through the medium of her *isigiyo*, she poses a question as to who she should talk to regarding her marginalization and stigmatization by her neighbors. Experiencing such derogatory comments aimed at jeopardizing her name, MaSihlangu said that she made the point that she would find refuge in Jesus. In other words, she provides the answer to the question that she poses by explicitly stating that she will talk to Jesus whenever she is emotionally traumatized. MaSihlangu explained that she would

never confront her rivals regarding anything that aimed at bringing her name into disrepute, but instead they would face the might of Jesus. MaSihlangu pointed out that despite her being a traditionalist, she also believed in Jesus Christ. To express her innocence regarding the accusations of witchcraft, MaSihlangu had this to say when she was talking to her niece in my presence: “*Kukhona abathi bagula nje ngoba bathakathwa yimi, ngithi kuyayiwa ezulwini, kuyocaca ukuthi angithakathi.*” (“There are people who say that they are ill because of my witchcraft; I say we are going to Heaven where my name will be cleared since I am not a witch”).

13) MaStifu

MaStifu is about 65 years old. She married into the Chili clan. She and her husband live in their own homestead with their children, grandchildren and daughters-in-law. Their homestead is located near other Chili homesteads with which they share the common ancestors. She said that envy was rife among people of the same clan especially if their homesteads were built in close proximity to one another. She was, in the early stages of her married life, labelled a burglar of trousseaus by her mother-in-law. (MaStifu’s *isigiyo* explains this situation in more details). She is a person who commends good works done by other people, so she hates envious people. Of all the rural women’s activities, she likes crop cultivation most. She is a great performer at social occasions.



Figure 11

MaStifu performs *izigiyo* in different venues.



Figure 12

MaStifu's *isigiyo*

MaStifu:

Kudlala mina

Kudlala umgqekezi

Umgqekezi wamabhokisi akwaChili

AmaChili nje

Chorus:

Banomhawu ingcosana

Banomhawu

MaStifu:

AmaChili nje

Chorus

Banomhawu ingcosana

Banomhawu

Banomhawu ingcosana

Banomhawu

English translation

- MaStifu:** *Performing, is me*
The burglar is performing
I am the burglar of the Chili clan's trousseaus.
The Chili clans
- Chorus:** *They are slightly jealous*
They are jealous
- MaStifu:** *The Chili clans*
- Chorus:** *They are slightly jealous*
They are jealous
They are slightly jealous
They are jealous

When performing the above *isigiyo*, Masitifu always introduces it by referring to her very early experience which occurred after she had been married. She ironically and mockingly refers to herself as a burglar of the Chili clans' trousseaus when she says "kudlala mina, kudlala umgqekezi, umgqekezi wamabhokisi akwaChili" (performing is me, the burglar, the burglar of the Chili clans' trousseaus). MaStifu said the inclusion of such an introductory comment in her *isigiyo* was sparked by her mother-in-law who suspected her of the trousseau burglary when she was a young bride. MaSitifu reported that she internalized this frustrating experience which she said was aimed at besmirching her name and self esteem. Her externalization of her early experience with her mother-in-law was socially communicated when she composed and began to perform her *isigiyo*. In

retaliation against her mother-in-law, MaStifu said she used the subject of her mother-in-law's suspicions to compose her *isigiyo*. MaStifu exaggerated the situation, in the medium of her *isigiyo*, by referring to herself as the burglar of trousseaus instead of one trousseau as her mother-in-law had stated. By so doing, MaStifu intended to intensify her retaliation and to make fun of her mother-in-law who made allegations against her without any proof.

In the medium of her *isigiyo*, MaStifu further makes comment on the clan into which she is married. From her experience, MaStifu suggests that some of her marriage clan members (the Chilis) are jealous. When interviewed, MaStifu pointed out that she always used her *isigiyo* as a tool through which she criticized unnecessary jealousy that was current within her extended clans. MaStifu suggested that she wholeheartedly condemns jealousy, irrespective of its severity or slightness, for it usually developed into bitter and unravelled hostilities.

14) MaGumede

MaGumede is married into the Mavundla clan and is approximately 67 years old. She lives with her only son and daughter-in-law and her two grandchildren. She tills vast crop fields during the land tilling season. One of the household chores that she usually performs is the brewing of Zulu beer. The reason why she usually performs the latter chore is that her son is a *sangoma* (diviner). MaGumede alluded to the belief that a *sangoma* divines under the control of the *amadlozi* (ancestors), hence the *amadlozi* are believed to enjoy traditional beer, so it makes them work effectively through a *sangoma*. MaGumede's distressing experience was that she had always been suspected of practising

witchcraft. She once said this to my mother during her visit at my homestead: “*Bathi sithakatha nje kuyasifanela*” (They call us witches and witchcraft becomes our stigma).

MaGumede has composed two *izigiyo* which she performs at social occasions.



Figure 13: MaGumede performing.

MaGumede's first *sigiyo*

MaGumede : *Ngake ngazenza*
Ngaziphosa esijingini!

Chorus : *Ziphose esijingini*
Ziphose

MaGumede : *Ngake ngazenza*

Chorus : *Ziphose esijingini!*
Ziphose!

English translation

MaGumede : *I blame myself*
I threw myself into the sorghum and maize porridge!

Chorus : *Throw yourself into the sorghum and maize porridge!*
Throw yourself!

MaGumede : *I blame myself*

Chorus : *Throw yourself into the sorghum and maize porridge!*
Throw yourself!

Having been married into the extended clan with members who make adverse comments about her, MaGumede states in her *isigiyo* that she blames herself for her situation as ever since she got married, she has been unhappy with her in-laws. She continued telling her

story saying that her in-laws had always suspected her of the practice of witchcraft. MaGumede pointed out that this derogatory suspicion with no proof directed at her by her in-laws in the extended family, had consequently brought great turmoil in her life. Her being stigmatised a witch had turned her community members and neighbours against her and they were scared of her. Using her *isigiyo*, MaGumede parallels her entering married life to throwing herself into the hot sorghum and maize porridge which is used to brew traditional beer. She threw light on her traumatic experience by providing an example of a domestic animal (the chicken) which she said suffered or sustained severe injuries when it accidentally fell into *isijingi* (sorghum and maize porridge). Through her above *isigiyo*, MaGumede aimed at making her in-laws conscious of the hard time that they had caused in her life. MaGumede's *isigiyo* demonstrates that some KwaQwabe dwellers believe in witchcraft. MaGumede has composed her *isigiyo* through associating one of her common chores, which is sorghum and maize porridge cooking for the brewing of Zulu beer, with her painful experiences.

MaGumede's second *isigiyo*

MaGumede: *Kuyini lokho?*

Chorus: *Izimpimpi*

Zihleba ngami

MaGumede: *Kodwa kuyini lokho?*

Chorus: *Izimpimpi*

Zihleba ngami

English translation

MaGumede: *What is that?*

Chorus: *Those are the spies*

They are gossiping about me

MaGumede: *But what is that?*

Chorus: *Those are the spies*

They are gossiping about me

In the medium of her second *isigiyo*, MaGumede attacks the spies whom she says gossip about her. She voices her concern saying that she had always been referred to as a wicked woman by certain community members and extended clan members of the family into which she married. They passed such remarks in their gossip. MaGumede stated that some women who appeared to be friendly to her made her subject of their gossip when they were away from her. She further alluded to the common gossip about her saying she was suspected of witchcraft. MaGumede pointed out that her association with witchcraft has always hugely tainted her name and defamed her character. By performing the above *isigiyo*, MaGumede stated that she intended to alert her rivals to the fact that it had come to her attention that there are people who spied on her. She said she hoped that her performance of this *isigiyo* at social occasions would lead to a situation where those who spied on her reproached themselves and ceased slandering her through hurtful gossiping.

15) MaSibisi

MaSibisi is approximately 70 years old and married into the Bhengu family. She is a senior wife in a polygamous marriage of two wives. The arrival of MaSibisi's husband's second wife brought hardships in her marriage as she experienced tensions with her husband which she had not experienced when she was the only wife. She maintains that the cause of the tension was her husband's other wife. MaSibisi said that she ended up leaving the Bhengu family and went to find employment at the nearest town of Stanger/KwaDukuza. After her son's marriage she stated that she left work and went to live with her daughter-in law and grandchildren in their homestead. She said that she composed the following two *izigiyo* to narrate and communicate feelings about her bitter married life.



Figure 14: MaSibisi is shown performing.

MaSibisi's first isigiyo

MaSibisi: *Uyaziwa*

Hamba nondindwa

Uyaziwa

Chorus: *Waze wahamba*

Wayofika e-Stanger

Base bethi

Uyoqoma amaMpondo

AmaMpondo azokubulala

Uyaziwa

Hamba nondindwa

Uyaziwa

English translation

MaSibisi: *You are well-known*

Go, you whore

You are well-known

Chorus: *You went*

You reached Stanger

Then it was said

You will fall in love with the Mpondo people

The Mpondos will kill

You are well-known

Go, you whore

You are well-known

MaSibisi said that she composed the above *isigiyo* after she had been engaged in a dispute with her husband. She reported that her husband's other wife had great influence and control over their husband that she (the second wife) eventually forbade him to visit her in her hut in the homestead. Realizing that it was pointless to stay in the homestead with the husband who demonstrated that he no longer loved her, MaSibisi said that she left and sought a job. She said she got a job in the town of Stanger where she worked for more than five years. Wracked by his conscience, MaSibisi said that her husband attempted at a later stage to reinstate their relationship by pleading with her to return to his homestead. Hearing about her husband's attempts at getting MaSibisi back to his homestead, the second wife of MaSibisi's husband engaged in bitter arguments with her husband, and hence MaSibisi's husband's attempts to get her back became futile. MaSibisi reported that her husband's other wife referred to her as the well-known whore of Stanger who fell in love with the Mpondo speaking people, and she stated that the Mpondos would kill her. During the fieldwork I conducted on 10 April 2004, MaSibisi stated this: "*Emendweni wami ngakhishwa uzakwethu. Ngithe sengise-Stanger wathi ngiqome amaMpondo.*" (My husband's other wife managed to get me out of my married life. When I was working at Stanger she insulted me by saying that I had fell in love with the Mpondo people.)

MaSibisi's second isigiyo

MaSibisi: *Sanibona Makhosikazi!*

Chorus: *Yebo!*

MaSibisi: *Ngiyahamba mina*

Chorus: *Uyaphi?*

MaSibisi: *Ngiya eZibisini*

Chorus: *Uyokwenzani?*

MaSibisi: *Ngiyofuna intando*

Chorus: *Uyenzeni?*

MaSibisi: *Ngifake indoda*

Chorus: *Kanjani?*

MaSibisi: *Ngiyithi mbe mbe mbe*

Ngiyithi nkli nkli nkli

English translation

MaSibisi: *I greet you, women!*

Chorus: *Yes, we are fine!*

MaSibisi: *I am going now*

Chorus: *Where are you going to?*

MaSibisi: *I am going to the Sibisi clan*

Chorus: *What are you going there for?*

MaSibisi: *I am going to fetch love medicine*

Chorus: *What are you going to do with it?*

MaSibisi: *I will secretly put it in my husband's meal*

Chorus: *How will you do that?*

MaSibisi: *I will put it in him "mbe mbe mbe"*

I will put it in "nkli nkli nkli"

To further communicate her life experiences, MaSibisi said she composed and performed her second *isigiyo*. She said that the unhappy relationship that prevailed between her and her husband due to his second wife eventually reached a conclusion. Seeing no point in putting up with her fruitless relationship with her husband who seemed to be manipulated by the other wife, MaSibisi said she resorted to a new love partner whom she met when she was working in Stanger. MaSibisi reported that her new partner demonstrated reliability and responsibility from the very early stage of their engagement. She pointed out that her new partner paid *ilobolo* (bride worth) for her, and their relationship was a harmonious one. Noting the harmonious and loving relationship that MaSibisi and her new partner had, their neighbours felt envious. MaSibisi said that her neighbours started gossiping, commenting that MaSibisi had used *intando* (love medicine) in order for her to be so loved by her new

husband. Such envy driven gossip and comments made about MaSibisi sparked her to compose her second *isigiyo*.

In retaliation against the envious neighbours, MaSibisi ridiculed them by using the words they said in the composition of her *isigiyo* - that she had used *intando* (love medicine) that she got from eZibisini (her birth clan) to strengthen her partner's love of her. Mockingly she delivered her message, emphasising that she had made sure that her partner received *intando*, and that his intake thereof was abundant. This is evident in her usage of ideophonic words like "mbe" and "nkli" which have been repeated consecutively. By employing her *isigiyo*, MaSibisi reported that she chiefly aimed at informing her neighbours that she was fed up with their envy-driven gossip. To effectively convey her message, MaSibisi employed dialogue during composition of this *isigiyo*. In other words, her last *isigiyo* is tantamount to *isilandelo* (children's poem) a genre which is dialogic when it is sung. When MaSibisi performs the above *isigiyo*, she always leads into it by making a statement. The participants then ask a question to elicit the response of the statement made which is then followed by an answer from the leader (MaSibisi). MaSibisi always introduces her *isigiyo* by specifically greeting her fellow women. The implication of this, as she said, is that the employment of greeting as an indispensable part of her *isigiyo* draws the inquisitive attention of the participants, more especially women. This style of greeting as introduction to her *isigiyo* adds to its unique quality.

16) MaNgema

MaNgema is an elderly woman of approximately 85 years of age. She married into the Sishi clan and her husband has passed away. When she was a newly-married woman her

children often used to be ill but they later recovered. Now she has more than ten grandchildren. She is critical of *ukuhleba* (gossiping). Her one *isigiyo* that she usually performs at social occasions condemns gossiping.

MaNgema's *isigiyo*

MaNgema: *Pi Pi Pi*

 Umfazi obizwa yibhasi

 Ibhasi lithatha bani?

Chorus: *Lithatha wena*

MaNgema: *Lithatha bani?*

Chorus: *Lithatha wena*

MaNgema: *Impondo liphi?*

Chorus: *Lisebhasini*

MaNgema: *Liphi?*

Chorus: *Lisebhasini*

English translation

MaNgema: *Pi pi pi pi*

 A woman whom the bus calls

 Who is taken by the bus?

Chorus: *It takes you*

MaNgema: *Who is taken by the bus?*

Chorus: *It takes you*

MaNgema: *Where is the Mpondo speaking person?*

Chorus: *He is at the bus*

MaNgema: *Where is he?*

Chorus: *He is at the bus*

Explaining why she had composed her *isigiyo*, MaNgema stated that some of her neighbours engaged in hurtful gossip about her, which stemmed from her frequent tendency to take the local bus to town. MaNgema said that some of her neighbours commented in their gossip on the fact that she liked traveling by bus. MaNgema was not impressed by such hurtful gossip since she reported that her frequent traveling by bus was due to specific situations. She stated that when her children were young they often contracted illnesses and she had to rush them to clinics or hospitals in town for treatment. She added that it was alleged by her neighbours that she had a private male partner who was a Pondo. They said that she always boarded a bus in which the alleged partner travelled, so that they would be together. MaNgema pointed out that she regarded this as an act of trying to taint her name and character which could consequently lead to bitter disputes between her and her husband. She said that such derogatory comments made about her by her neighbours did not destroy the harmonious relationship that existed between her and her husband as gossiping thought it would, since she and her husband

were both loyal to each other. MaNgema therefore viewed her neighbours as unsympathetic to her regarding her children who often became ill. Through her *isigiyo*, MaNgema said that she wanted to stop the unsympathetic gossip that had been voiced by her neighbours.

MaNgema's *isigiyo* is sung in the form of question and answer style, where she asks a question as a leader, followed by the participants who respond by providing an answer to the question posed. The first line of her *isigiyo* contains the words "Pi pi pi pi" which represent the hooting noise of the bus in which MaNgema used to travel. MaNgema clarified the fact that such onomatopoeia serves as a prelude to the possible content of her *isigiyo*. In other words she said that the participants who were familiar with her *isigiyo* were aware, from the outset, of the fact that the content of her *isigiyo* pertained to the bus story. The function of the "pi pi pi pi" words employed in the *isigiyo*, according to MaNgema, was to draw the attention of the audience to the forthcoming performance as well as to conjure up the image of the bus in their minds. MaNgema refers to herself as a woman whom the bus calls (line two). The implication of this is that MaNgema has personified the bus she used to travel in. Since MaNgema frequently commuted by bus when her children were young, she pretended that it had become her friend, which is why it called her. By this MaNgema said she intended to sarcastically retaliate against her neighbours who alluded to the fact that she liked the buses.

17) MaNgidi

MaNgidi is about 55 years old. She married into the Nxumalo clan as a second wife of two in a polygamous marriage. She and the senior wife live in the same homestead but in

different huts. Their relationship is not always good. MaNgidi allusively refers to her married life experience in a metaphoric and satirical way in the medium of her *isigiyo*.



Figure 15: Performing, is MaNgidi.

MaNgidi's *isigiyo*

MaNgidi: *Wenogwaja njalo*
Uhlakaniphe ngakhona
Ngoba waqholiswa ngonogwaja
Uhlakaniphe ngakhona

Chorus: *Wenogwaja njalo*
Uhlakaniphe ngakhona
Ngoba waqholiswa ngonogwaja
Uhlakaniphe ngakhona

English translation

MaNgidi: *You, rabbit*
You are so clever

Chorus: *Because a rabbit was slaughtered to honour you as a bride*
That is why you are so clever

Chorus: *You, rabbit*
You are so clever
Because a rabbit was slaughtered to honour you as a bride
That is why you are so clever

MaNgidi said she directs her *isigiyo* at her husband's other wife. MaNgidi reported that her husband's other wife's character is unpredictable in that she sometimes appears to be friendly to her, and then all of a sudden she unexpectedly develops animosity towards her. MaNgidi therefore felt that her husband's senior wife's relationship with her was not consistent. She noticed that she sometimes talked detrimentally about her when she was away from her and pretended to be friendly when she was present. MaNgidi said she metaphorically referred to her husband's senior wife as a rabbit (as her *isigiyo* suggests). In other words MaNgidi attributed the senior wife's behaviour to a rabbit, an animal

which is well-known for its cleverness. MaNgidi said that her husband's senior wife always want to appear cleverer than her in front of their husband.

MaNgidi's metaphoric reference to the senior wife as a rabbit is clearly satirical. This is evident in the first line of *isigiyo* when she says: "Wenogwaja njalo" (you rabbit). To further satirically comment on the senior wife, MaNgidi states that she was *qholiswad* (honoured) by *unogwaja* (the rabbit). To *qholisa* means to slaughter a beast in a groom's home with an intention of honouring a newly married bride's presence there. The beast that is usually slaughtered is a cow. To make fun of her husband's senior wife, MaNgidi expresses, in the medium of her *isigiyo*, the thought that the *umqholiso* (the beast which is slaughtered in honour of a bride) of her husband's senior wife was a rabbit instead of a cow. MaNgidi does not mean that her husbands' senior wife is clever in the real sense of the word, but she makes fun of her so as to be critical about her unpredictable behaviour.

MaNgidi's *isigiyo* reveals the custom that married women of the KwaQwabe area are honoured for their womanhood by their in-laws. The joining of the newly-married woman in the family usually impresses the in-laws as it raises their status in the community. It is common to hear comments like the following in the KwaQwabe area: *Bayajabula abantu bakulowa muzi ngoba sebenomakoti* (Happy are people of that homestead, for they have a bride). A newly-married bride is honoured by the slaughtering of a cow, for her role within *umuzi* (homestead) is important.

7.3 Concluding remarks

This chapter has recorded, analysed and discussed Zulu women's *izigiyo* that have been collected from the KwaQwabe area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Each *isigiyo* has been recorded in writing under the name of *umgiyi* (the performer of *isigiyo*) in the medium of IsiZulu language followed by its translation into English. The analysis of the recorded *izigiyo* has focused on the following themes embedded in their content: polygamy, envy, witchcraft, family friction, spouse friction, friction with in-laws, way of life including women's activities, and gossip (these themes have been treated in the broad problems and issues section in the introductory chapter). The provision of each woman's brief background has painted a picture of her (married) life before the analysis of her *isigiyo/izigiyo*. The underlying events and circumstances that gave impetus to the composition and performance of the *izigiyo* by the KwaQwabe women have been clarified taking into account the manner in which they (the women) have explained them as the composers. Various aspects of the KwaQwabe women's experiences are revealed in these *izigiyo*.

What can be deduced from *izigiyo* that have been presented, analysed and critiqued in this chapter is that women have always been in a position to withstand a variety of hardships that men and other women of their communities have brought upon them. Zulu women who perform *izigiyo* (as narration and analysis reveals) have experienced disappointment, distress, dissatisfaction, being gossiped about, being referred to as witches, being slandered in a variety of ways, being referred to as wicked women and being mocked. Zulu women of the KwaQwabe area internalise such hard-learned experiences until they are presented with an opportunity to perform their *izigiyo*.

Significant to highlight is that all the *izigiyo* that have been recorded in writing in this chapter are ‘pregnant’ with intentional messages most of which function “as an attempt to exert a form of social control on a purely inter-personal, community level” (Turner, 1997: 60). The exploration of *izigiyo* shows that women who compose the messages, always have in mind the receivers to whom they direct their messages. The receivers of the *izigiyo* messages decode, interpret and understand the sender’s message with the aid of the contextual background (Ndolerriere, 2000). The messages that are incorporated in the KwaQwabe women’s *izigiyo* are “indirectly communicated” (Kabira and Mutahi, 1988:25) in order for direct confrontation to be avoided. The indirect communication of messages is achieved through avoiding the incorporation of the receiver’s name in the *isigiyo*. Some women have employed metaphor, satire or irony as a mode of avoiding directness in their *izigiyo*. MaMhlongo Ngidi calls her neighbours who spread rumours *izintuthane* (the ants) using her *isigiyo*, and MaNgidi Nxumalo makes fun of the other woman in her polygamous relationship by calling her a clever rabbit and by saying that that woman was honoured by the slaughtering of a rabbit by her in-laws. Metaphoric, satirical and ironic language serves as a means of making the recipient of the message conveyed through the *isigiyo* accept any “behavioural oddity he/she may have without developing any inferiority complex about these perceived failings” (Turner, 1997:60) and without developing animosity and tension which may in turn lead to the violation of the “community-orientated lifestyle” (Turner, 1998:239) as well as the *inhlonipho* (respect) based lifestyle of the Zulus (Msimang, 1975).

As an attempt to effectively transmit the cryptic messages encoded in the *izigiyo*, Zulu women of the KwaQwabe have characterised their *izigiyo* with repetition, which help to maintain rhythm during the *ukuhaywa* (recitation) of the *izigiyo*. MaSishi Mzimela

responded in this way to the question I posed pertaining to the skill of using the repetition of words in oral (texts) tradition (Jousse, 1997; 2000; 2001, 2004) during the fieldwork: “*Uma ugiya kufanele usebenzise ukuphindaphindwa kwamagama ukuze izigiyo zakho zibe nesigqi*” (When one performs the *izigiyo* one must employ the repetition of words so that one’s *izigiyo* will rhythmically flow during their chanting).

The presentation and analysis of the above KwaQwabe women’s *izigiyo* has demonstrated that women are not passive about the things that affect their lives, so they have always embarked on “their own ways” (Derwent, 1998:96) to empower themselves orally (Bukanya, 2001). By expressing all their pent-up emotions and experiences women experience relief and vindication for the things that affect them.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This dissertation has recorded in writing, explained and analysed the significance of Zulu women's *izigiyo* and has highlighted this as a way in which the Zulu women of KwaQwabe can indirectly communicate their experiences (Nyembezi, 1974). The *izigiyo* texts that this study has explained and analysed demonstrates that the experiences that women undergo are unique to them as they touch on things close to their individual lives (Gunner and Gwala, 1991: 2) - the things that they have internalised as a result of the influential world around them and externalised (Jousse, 1997; 2000; 2001 and 2004) in the medium of *izigiyo*.

The KwaQwabe women have always been deprived of their right to voice their concerns and pent-up emotions in the form of simple direct everyday language by the tradition known as *ukuhlonipha* (respect). Though *ukuhlonipha* is meant to be observed by every Zulu-speaking person, it places far greater restrictions on women and is rooted in the process of socialisation (Dowling, 1988). Zulu women are duty bound to preserve and transmit the *ukuhlonipha* custom to the youth in their community (Magwaza, 2001). To uphold the *ukuhlonipha* custom by avoiding confrontation (Turner, 1998) and directness in their expressions, the KwaQwabe Zulu women have used and still use *izigiyo* as art which is traditionally accepted in that

they employ figurative language or indirect communication, hence avoiding confrontation and tension.

The chapter summarises the main themes that the discussion demonstrates. It also quotes some explanations that some of the KwaQwabe women provided during the interviews. Such explanations elucidate the importance of the practice of *izigiyo* from the women's point of view emanating from their experiences.

8.2 Reiterating remarks

Zulu women fall prey to a variety of unkind practices at the hands of family members and their community (Mathonsi and Gumede, 2006). When using *izigiyo*, Zulu women of KwaQwabe are in a position to voice their outcry against abusive and oppressive social systems. The discussion shows that the *izigiyo* texts express women's concerns and experiences under the following thematic categories:

- The *izigiyo* texts that demonstrate women's immediate experiences: These express women's experiences with their husbands. For example, MaGumede (performer number fourteen in chapter seven) and MaMxoveni (performer number nine in chapter seven) said during interviews that they started to compose and perform their *izigiyo* after having been emotionally and physically abused by their husbands.
- *Izigiyo* that demonstrate the relationship between women and their in-laws: These express women's relationships with people like mothers-in law,

sisters-in-law, brothers-in law, etc. MaFaya (performer number three) said during interviews that one of her brothers-in-law died at one stage. She said her in-laws suspected her of having bewitched him. MaFaya said her *izigiyo* have roots in this incident.

- The *izigiyo* texts that trace women's experiences with the community outside their families: Such *izigiyo* composition is triggered by jealousy, witchcraft and gossip. Some *izigiyo* texts comment on how people should live in a community. For example, MaSihlangu (performer number twelve in chapter seven) in her first *isigiyo* comments that people should keep their own traditional attire for use at cultural ceremonies other than relying on borrowing from others. MaMphendu (performer number two in chapter seven) complains about women who do not till the land during the land tilling season when she says 'sekuyaliwa bafazi' (it is the time for land tilling, women).

The sharing of experiences at social occasions in the form of *izigiyo* by Zulu women of the KwaQwabe area make them feel empowered since they say this form of practice allows them to orate (Bukonya, 2001) their concerns in a way that make them feel dignified. This indicates that the *izigiyo* performers "perform for their own benefits but are also spokesmen for their communities" (Sullivan: 1984:60).

The analysis of *izigiyo* in this study has shown the way the words give Zulu women a voice of protest both artistically and freely (Stewart, 1994) within certain limits, for instance, women protesting against in-laws, spouses, neighbours or community members and polygamous marriages. A variety of the unkind practices that the

KwaQwabe women protest against are an indication that *ubuntu* (humanness) is in the process of vanishing in the social structures. *Isigiyo* that MaNxumalo performs on behalf of her late mother whose hut was burned to ashes by another woman, exemplifies dehumanising and heart-breaking practices that are prevalent in the community since after she had reported the crime to the officials of the area she received no attention so she protests through her *izigiyo* saying “ngazondwa izinduna, ngazondwa izikhulu” (I was hated by the headmen and the officials).

The other rife dehumanising issue that women have to deal with is domestic violence; many are abused physically and emotionally. This is evident in MaMxoveni’s *izigiyo* (which have been discussed in chapter seven); she tells of her serial beatings by her and aspects of their separation. Such treatment has wreaked havoc in MaMxoveni’s inner being because of the malice.

In referring to the previously-discussed MaFaya’s three *izigiyo*, MaSihlangu’s third *isigiyo* and MaGumede’s *izigiyo*, it is evident that they protest against dehumanising stigmas that the extended families and some community members attach to them by suspecting them of practicing witchcraft. The stigmas of this kind jeopardise meaningful relationships among people of the community. This brings the lives of the suspects into danger since they may be evicted or murdered for the witchcraft practice for which evidence is not even available. It is more likely for old women to be labelled witches because people take advantage of their vulnerability in old age to stigmatise them.

The female discourse that this study explores reveals that women ranging from forty to old age do not necessarily tolerate being subordinated by patriarchal cultural practices (Mathonsi and Gumede, 2006), and can break away from the confines of early socialisation implanted through the *ukuhlonipha* (respect) custom (Zungu, 1985). This custom teaches women not to question authority or adult males, so women satirically allude to complaints against (Piersen, 1977) dehumanising acts directed at them (Piersen, 1977) , they use various social occasions as an arena for conveying discontents (Mabuya, 1988).

8.3 The explanations by the KwaQwabe women which best summarise the functions of *izigiyo*

MaNgema's explanation: “Ezigiweni sithola umlando ngempilo yomuntu ngamunye ogiyayo. Izigiyo ziyakuveza ukuthi bakuphatha kanjani abasemzini kanye nomakhelwane uma usanda kugana. Ezigiweni sithola umlando wendawo ukuthi abantu bakhona baphila mpiloni”. (The *izigiyo* texts function to give the life history of each performer. They also express the way the in-laws and neighbours treat the newly-married woman including the lifestyle of the area in which they are performed.)

MaSishi's explanation: “Ngokuqopha izigiyo usuke ufuna indlela yokuhlabelela ngento ekuhluphayo. Izigiyo zenza ukuthi inhliziyo ihlambuluke uma kukhona okukuphathe kabi.” (By composing and performing *izigiyo*, the performer aims at singing about something that upsets her, so they are a way of expressing the pent-up emotions.)

MaMlandu's explanation: "Izigiyo sizisebenzisela ukuthi sibhodle okusuke kusiphathe kabi. Siphinde sizisebenzisele ukujabulisa umoya wethu. Izigiyo zenza siziqhenye ngobufazi bethu." (We use *izigiyo* to relieve ourselves from any hurtful experiences so that we will regain our moral happiness. Our performance of the *izigiyo* texts makes us proud of our womanhood.)

MaManzi's explanation: "Izigiyo zisetshenziselwa ukuthi abantu abakuhlebayo bazi ukuthi usuyazi." (*Izigiyo* are used to indirectly let people who badly gossip about you know that their gossip has come to your cautious attention.)

8.4 Recommendations

The KwaQwabe women's *izigiyo* on which this dissertation reports demonstrate the importance of their recording, "and their meanings, and functions in context as conflict-reducing agents and as social 'barometers' and regulators" (Gumede, 2000: 51). This study puts in the spotlight ways women find to indirectly fight for power (Mathonsi and Gumede, 2006) and social justice. In addition, the *izigiyo* texts cast light on the life-style of the communities in which they are performed, hence the goal of *izigiyo* performance being simply "acknowledgement and recognition" (2006: 491). The *izigiyo* performer by the name of MaFaya, for instance, sends her message in the medium of *izigiyo* to the intended receivers; in this case, some members of her in-laws' family (Ndoleriere, 2000). In this way she is recognised as a normal woman and not as a witch as has been suspected by them.

Because of the importance of studies such as this, I recommend that further research on *izigiyo* be undertaken so as to make a meaningful contribution to the world of academia for both current and future use. If women's *izigiyo*, inclusive of the other related performances, are thoroughly researched and reported on, the dehumanising, distressing, disappointing experiences that they reflect will be in the spotlight and accessible for a wider audience. Hence, people who access such literature will learn and realise that women are not passive when it comes to things that affect their lives, especially those that paint a negative picture about them - the events such as being labelled witches, being gossiped about and being denounced in a variety of ways by other people in their families or communities. Such events impinge adversely on the community-orientated life-style (Turner, 1998) that characterises most of the traditional African cultures.

The documentation of women's performances such as *izigiyo* by researchers in writing will mean that there will be written documentation of culture (Ndoleriere, 2000), that is, the Zulu culture within which they (*izigiyo*) operate. For this reason language transmits, sustains and reflects culture (2000) The criticisms that the *izigiyo* portrait illustrate that the Zulu (African) culture foregrounds the well-being of community members through *ukwazisana* (treating each other with dignity and respect) and *ukwesaba ihlazo* (avoidance of disgrace) (Makhoba, 2007). The exploration and the documentation of *izigiyo* in writing by researchers will make people aware that in African cultures (Zulu culture) "umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu" (Makhoba, 2007: 5), which means that a human being is a human being because of the existence of the other human beings. Despite oppression Zulu women of the KwaQwabe area that this study investigates are assertive through the medium of the

izigiyo texts and highlight the need for better treatment as humans among other humans. They reject their marginalisation through the emotion catalysing acts that some people direct at them. (See MaMxoveni's and MaMthethwa's *izigiyo* in chapter seven.) The art of *izigiyo* composition and performance forms an integral part of "the roots of Africa" (Lifestyle newspaper, 5-19 April 2006: 24); this needs further investigation.

Research on *izigiyo* is "'do-able' and feasible" (Gumede, 2000, 51). This leaves the researcher convinced that if other investigators embark on research of this kind, they will be in a position to 'excavate' much valuable data and issues that will draw the attention of many people who would like to be part of a "Treasure Hunt' of this richly-endowed and vast 'Island of Research' " (2000: 51), that is the practice of *izigiyo* and their dynamisms in contexts.

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Appendix A

Glossary of Zulu terms and concepts

<i>Abathakathi</i>	:The witches, people who are believed to be able to cause illness and deaths using traditional <i>muti</i> (medicine).
<i>Amaculo omgcagco</i>	: Zulu marriage songs
<i>Amaculo omemulo</i>	: The traditional songs sung at the coming of age ceremony for girls
<i>Amaculo ezangoma</i>	: Songs that the diviners sing during a ritual. Such songs are : dedicated to the ancestors
<i>Amacheba</i>	: Grass -species used to make mats for sitting
<i>Amadlozi</i>	: The ancestors
<i>Ekwaluseni</i>	: At the pastures where the boys look after the cattle
<i>Egcekeni lomuzi</i>	: Within the premises of a homestead
<i>Esibayeni sezinkomo</i>	: At the cattle enclosure
<i>Hlonipha</i>	: It is a custom that teaches a Zulu speaking person a particular behaviour and expression. It teaches the Zulu speaking people that they must treat each other with dignity and respect within their families and their communities
<i>Iculo lasekhaya /</i> <i>Ihubo lasekhaya</i>	: A clan song sung when there is a clan ritual
<i>Ihubo lesizwe</i>	: A tribe's song sung at certain social occasions
<i>Igceke</i>	: The home yard
<i>Ikhetho</i>	: A group that accompanies the groom during the course of Zulu marriage
<i>Ilobolo</i>	:Bride worth
<i>Imbakelana</i>	: A dance performed in pairs while <i>imbakelana</i> songs are sung.
<i>Imizi</i>	: The homesteads
<i>Imicimbi yokukhulisa izingane:</i>	The coming of age ceremony
<i>Imvumo</i> dancing	: Group songs that are sung loudly. They are not meant for
<i>Induku</i>	: Zulu martial arts
<i>Indlu yesizulu</i>	: a Zulu hut
<i>Ingoma</i>	: Zulu dance
<i>Inhlonipho</i>	: the behaviour that shows respect among the Zulus
<i>Ihlambo</i>	: A ritual carried out after about three months of a men's death. In this ritual a man who died is believed to be given his shield. A cow is usually slaughtered for this ritual
<i>Isidwaba</i>	: An animal hide skirt usually worn by a Zulu married woman. It also refers to a ritual carried out within about three months of a Zulu of a woman's death. In this ceremony it is said a woman is given her isidwaba .A cow is usually slaughtered for this ritual

<i>Isigekle</i>	: Group dance Zulu
<i>Isicuphi</i>	: Solo dance usually performed by the Zulu youth
<i>Isithembu</i>	: Polygamous marriages common in African traditional societies
<i>Izaga</i>	: Proverbs
<i>Izigiyo</i>	: The specified and personified solo dance songs performed by both Zulu and men and women at social occasions in order to voice their concerns and experiences
<i>Izingoma zomdabu</i>	: Zulu traditional songs of all kinds.
<i>Izinkomo</i>	: Cattle
<i>Izinkondlo zomdabu</i>	: Traditional poems
<i>Izintombi</i>	: The matured girls
<i>Izinhloko zemizi</i>	: Heads of families
<i>Izindlu</i>	: Zulu huts
<i>Makoti</i>	: A Zulu daughter-in-law
<i>Omamezala</i>	: Mothers-in-law
<i>Umsindo</i>	: Literally noise .In this case it figuratively means dispute
<i>UMvelinqqangi /UNkulunkulu:</i>	A Zulu name for God
<i>Ubuthakathi</i>	: The practice of witchcraft
<i>Ubuntu</i>	: Means that a person is a person through his or her relationship with other people .Who a person is, is shaped by his or her place within his or her community .It foregrounds that everyone treats each other with love and respect
<i>Udwendwe</i>	: Means Zulu traditional marriage
<i>Ukubekwezela</i>	: To endure
<i>Ukubonga nezibongo</i>	: Praising and praises .This is a genre used by social commentators to critique a society covertly
<i>Ukubuyisa</i>	: A ritual carried out to bring back the spirit of the person who had recently died. A cow is used as a sacrifice during this ritual
<i>Ukugiya</i>	: Zulu solo dance
<i>Ukuhlonipha</i>	:The behaviour showing respect
<i>Ukuhloniphana</i>	: Respecting each other
<i>Ukusina</i>	: Performance of traditional dance
<i>Ukupha ukudla</i>	: A Zulu ritual of giving food to ancestors with the aim of commemorating them, thanking them for the fortunes or asking them to bring fortunes
<i>Ukwenda nokwendiselana</i>	: A Zulu marriage system
<i>Ukwethembeka</i>	: Trustworthiness
<i>Umuntu umuntu ngabantu</i>	:This is a saying used in Africa meaning that a human being is a human being because of other people in a community
<i>Umakotshana</i>	: A young female acting as a makoti's temporal assistant within three months to six months of her marriage . <i>Umakotshana</i> assists with the household duties

<i>Umbondo</i>	: The goods that a daughter-in-law offers to her in laws
<i>Umemulo</i>	: A Zulu coming of age ceremony
<i>Umgcagco</i>	: Zulu traditional marriage
<i>Umuzi</i>	: The homestead
<i>Umthimba</i>	: A group that accompanies a bride during Zulu Marriage

Appendix B

Imibuzo ye-inthaviyu

Isiqephu A (Imibuzo edinga imininingwane yobuzwayo)

1. Ubizwa kanjani?
2. Uneminyaka emingaki ubudala?
3. Usube yisakhamuzi saKwaQwabe isikhathi esingakanani?
4. Ngabe ushadile?
5. Yiluphi ulimi lwakho lwasekhaya?
6. Ukuliphi ibanga kwezemfundo?
7. Wenza msebenzi muni owuqashelwe?
8. Yimiphi imisebenzi yasekhaya oyenzayo? (Uma kungukuthi awuqashiwe.)

Isiqephu B (Eminye imibuzo)

9. Sithini isigiyo kumbe izigiyo zakho?
10. Wasiqamba nini isigiyo/ izigiyo?
11. Zihlatshelelwa kanjani lezi zigiyo?
12. Yisiphi isimo esenza ukuba uqambe isigiyo/ izigiyo zakho?
13. Yiziphi izinto ezibalulekile owazifunda empilweni yakho ezithintwa yisigiyo/ yisigiyo/ yizigiyo zakho?

14. Yikuphi okuyizigameko eziwumlando eziqukethwe yisigiyo/ izigiyo zakho?
15. Zinamiphi imisebenzi kumuntu ngqo noma emphakathini izigiyo?
16. Ngabe zikhona ezinye izizathu zokuhaywa kwezigiyo ezingale kwalokhu okusho ngenhla?
17. Wasiqamba kanjani izigiyo/ izigiyo zakho? Ngabe yibuphi ubuchule obusebenzisayo ekuqanjweni kwezigiyo noma usugiya?
18. Zehluka kanjani izigiyo kwezinye izinhlobo zamaculo omdabu?
19. Yimiphi imicimbi ogiya kiyona?
20. Kuba namuphi umthelela ukuba khona kwabanye abagiyi nezethameli uma ugiya?
21. Ngabe zikhona yini ezinye izigiyo okungeyizona ezakho kodwa ozisebenzisayo ukugiyela umnikazi wazo? Uma zikhona yiziphi futhi yini eyenza ukuba ziqanjwe? Yini eyenza ukuba ugiye ngazo esikhundleni somnikazi wazo?

Appendix C

Questions for interview

Section A (Personal details)

1. How are you called?
2. What is your age?
3. For how long have you been a KwaQwabe resident?
4. Are you married?
5. What is your home language?
6. What is your educational level?
7. What is your occupation?
8. Which of the household chores do you perform? (If not employed)

Section B (Other questions)

9. What is your *isigiyo/ izigiyo*?
10. When did you compose your *isigiyo/ izigiyo*?
11. How do you sing your *isigiyo /izigiyo*?
12. What situations gave rise to your *isigiyo/ izigiyo*?
13. Which significant experiences are addressed by your *isigiyo/ izigiyo*?
14. Which most significant and historical aspects do your *izigiyo* embody?

15. What personal and social functions do the *izigiyo* texts entail?
16. Are there any other reasons beyond the ones postulated above for which *izigiyo* can be used?
17. How did you compose your *isigiyo/ izigiyo*? Are there any techniques which you employ in the composition or performance of *izigiyo*?
18. How do *izigiyo* differ from other types of traditional songs?
19. On which social occasions do you perform your *isigiyo/ izigiyo*?
20. What role is played by the availability of other *izigiyo* performers and the audience when you perform your *isigiyo/ izigiyo*? What prompts this?
21. Are there any other *izigiyo* which you perform on behalf of other people? If any, what are they, and what was the reason behind the composition thereof by the authority thereof? Why do you perform each *isigiyo* on behalf of its authority?