

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

16

THE TEACHING OF ORAL LITERATURE

IN

SWAZI SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

A CRITIQUE

**MINOR DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS (APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES)
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

BY:

**PHINDILE ALICE DLAMINI
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
2000**

SUPERVISORS:

**DR. RUSSELL H. KASCHULA
MR. JAN ESTERHUYSE**

Abstract

The significance of oral literature as a container for communal wisdom in the past cannot be overemphasized. The attitudes of society, particularly the older generation towards it is testimony of its relevance in Swazi traditional society. Oral literature was highly regarded in traditional education because it was believed to mould morally sound citizens as well as encapsulating the essential values of the community.

This study is an investigation of the problems and challenges facing the teaching and learning of oral literature in Swaziland's contemporary secondary schools. The nature of the problems is distilled from the interviews conducted on both learners and teachers concerning their attitudes and views to the teaching and learning of this subject.

Investigations into the learners' and teachers' attitudes to this subject reveal a general attitude of ambivalence with regard to oral literature. Such ambivalence basically emanates from the lack of motivation towards the subject, lack of teaching/learning material, the teaching methodologies employed by some teachers, and most significantly, the conflicting ideals and values between modernization and traditionalism.

In order to alleviate these problems, this study recommends that oral literature be reconceptualised and scaled down in the SiSwati curriculum. It is further recommended that a Life Skills programme, which includes contemporary didactic oral literature strategies, which enhance contemporary understanding of society be introduced.

Declaration

I hereby declare that **The Teaching of Oral Literature in Swazi Secondary Schools : A Critique** submitted by me for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Cape Town is my original work and has not been previously submitted in its entirety or in part for assessment purposes to any other university. I further declare that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed by candidate

.....26/01/2001

Phindile A.Dlamini

(Date)

Acknowledgements

'In everything give thanks for this is the **WILL OF GOD** in Christ Jesus concerning you' (1Thesalonians 5:18). I would like to extend my profound gratitudes to my supervisors Dr Russell H. Kaschula and Mr Jan Esterhuyse for their impeccable and inspirational intellectual guidance in the materialization of this work. Without their regular support, encouragement and feedback, this work would not have been possible. A big **THANK YOU** also goes to the English Language and SiSwati teachers and pupils of Ka-Boyce, St Marks, Ka-Schiele, Mhubhe, St Francis, Mater Dolorosa and Mdzimba high schools for their kind and efficient organization of the interviews and for taking part in the interviews. My special thanks also go to Professor Sienaert of the University of Natal for his constructive and illuminating comments on an earlier draft, Dr Kamera and Ms G.N. Mamba of the University of Swaziland, and Mrs T. Vilakati and Mrs T. Msibi of William Pitcher Teachers' College for their feedback on a number of areas. To my family, **MANY THANKS** for the space you gave me when I needed it. The unwavering moral and emotional support and assistance in a variety of levels you freely rendered will always be cherished. To my children Bongumusa and Nokwanda, this work is entirely yours.

The financial assistance of the Flemish government and the VVOB generously given towards this research through CALSSA is hereby acknowledged. However, opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the VVOB.

Table of contents

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract.....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Chapter 1. General introduction to the study.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Motivation.....	3
1.3 Objectives and significance.....	4
1.4 Methodology.....	4
1.5 Scope.....	7
1.6 Definition of terms.....	8
Chapter 2. Culture, Language and thought and oral literature.....	10
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.....	11
2.3 Jean Piaget.....	14
2.4 Lev Vygotsky.....	16
2.5 Culture, language and thought in relation to oral literature.....	18
2.5 Conclusion.....	23
Chapter 3. Overview and significance of oral literature.....	25
3.1 Introduction.....	25
3.2 Folktales.....	28
3.3 Wisdom lore.....	33
3.4 Oral poetry.....	41
3.5 Conclusion.....	52

Chapter 4. Attitudes to oral literature : A general critique.....	53
4.1 Introduction.....	53
4.2 Low status attributed to oral literature.....	53
4.3 Ideology in oral literature.....	56
4.4 Master symbols in oral literature.....	62
4.5 Implications in the classroom.....	72
4.6 Conclusion.....	74
 Chapter 5. Attitudes to oral literature: Empirical findings.....	76
5.1 Introduction.....	76
5.2 Teaching methodologies.....	77
5.3 Teachers' attitudes.....	79
5.4 Learners' attitudes.....	81
5.5 Teaching of oral literature: Problems and challenges.....	84
5.6 Summary of Findings and discussion.....	86
5.7 Conclusion.....	94
 Chapter 6. Contemporary approaches to oral literature	96
6.1 Introduction.....	96
6.2 The pernicious element in oral literature.....	96
6.3 The positive use of oral forms.....	101
6.4 Life Orientation - Life Skills programmes.....	103
6.5 Conclusion.....	107
 Chapter 7. Conclusions and recommendations.....	108
6.1 Introduction.....	108
6.2 Conclusions.....	109
6.3 Recommendations.....	110

Bibliography.....	111
-------------------	-----

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Folktales.....	121
Appendix 2. Folksongs.....	130
Appendix 3. Kings' praises.....	131
Appendix 4. Interview questions.....	139
Appendix 5. O'Level siSwati syllabus and J.C.examination paper....	141

University of Cape Town

THE TEACHING OF ORAL LITERATURE IN SWAZI SECONDARY SCHOOLS : A CRITIQUE

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Oral literature refers to a body of knowledge incorporating a people's culture, wisdom and civilizations. Its continued existence is mainly by word of mouth and manner of behaviour, which is handed down from one generation to the other. What gets passed on over the generations and how that is done is decided by what the communal mind deems important to preserve. According to Tisani in Sienaert et al (1994:169) oral literature is therefore group property reflective of the collective mind to which it belongs. In earlier times, oral literature in Swaziland was, as was the case in other African countries, confined to individual families, communities and societies. Among the functions it performed was to council, admonish, entertain, reprimand and most significantly, to educate and guide the younger generation in their behaviour, beliefs, norms and values.

However, the advent of formal education coupled with contact with other philosophies, divergent socio-political ideologies and more sophisticated economic and educational systems which have exerted a profound effect on the Swazi cosmology has resulted in conflicts between the traditional norms, ideals and practices and modern ideas increasingly being introduced through internationally funded projects and the advancement of technology. This has resulted in many groups of people adapting quite differently to their social and natural environments by developing and observing institutions in which these new ideas are expressed. This has consequently witnessed the erosion of the revered traditions that constituted the core of Swazi heritage resulting in a legacy of a generation of cultural illiterates; ignorant of the traditional culture of their societies.

In an effort to bolster its popularity and encapsulate the underlying values, the educational authorities of Swaziland have blended oral literature in the siSwati syllabus where it is taught as a component next to siSwati grammar, modern

literature, composition and reading comprehension.¹ Since the children's education is now largely delegated to schools, it has been seen as prudent that the Swazi cultural treasure be handed down to the next generation in the schools. Educational authorities seem to envision schools as appropriate sites for cultural reproduction and I think they believe that if the cultural essence of the Swazi people is taught in the schools, that could also correct the current state of the degeneration of traditional moral standards so widespread among youngsters, and venerate the traditions of the past. Educational authorities and the conservative elders of the Swazi nation seem to believe that the nation's culture could be restored through the concept of cultural literacy as embodied in the nation's oral literature.

Though the introduction of oral literature is seen as an invaluable means to preserve the tradition for posterity, and is so much treasured by the older generation, contemporary learners and teachers seem to perceive oral literature in a fairly different manner from their forebears. They do not seem to attach the same value their grandparents attached to this body of cultural knowledge. It is assumed that this emanates basically from the deep tensions and contradictions between modernization they are now exposed to, and the traditionalism entrenched in oral literature. In a personal communication with Mrs. Vilakati of William Pitcher College on the subject, it transpired that conflicts and tensions sometimes emerge between the modern ideas and lifestyles that are being increasingly introduced globally, and the old traditional norms and practices oral literature portrays. As such, it is in some quarters, received with mixed feelings in the educational circles of Swaziland. Some pupils and teachers scoff at oral literature and describe it as residues from the past that impede progress. Some associate it with an illiterate and primitive society. It is alleged that it does not empower learners in terms of progressivism, critical thinking skills and gender mobility. Instead it portrays not only a rigid society that is not moving anywhere, but also some rigid values that are no longer useful today. Bloom in Apple & Christian-Smith (1991:216) who shares the same sentiments writes that 'the culturalist perspective prevents us from seeing the sunlight and culture is an enemy to openness.' Giroux in Apple & Christian-Smith (1991:230) reinforces this when he says that

¹ An example of the O'Level syllabus and the Junior level siSwati examination paper which takes the same format with the O'Level paper (with the exception of Sigaba C, no. 1) can be found in appendix 5.

'belittling' mentality and it seeks to confirm or disconfirm these 'misconceptions' and allegations.

1.3 Objectives and significance

The objective of this study is to critically evaluate the teaching of oral literature in Swazi secondary school education. This will be evaluated through an investigation of the teachers and learners perceptions of the subject. An investigation of this nature attempts not only to determine the perceptions of oral literature in secondary schools, but mainly to scrutinize the values underlying the teaching of the subject. This study is thus intended to contribute to the process of curriculum design. It is hoped then that it will also help educators find ways of reconciling some of the more salient traditional values with the modern education which itself is no longer a Western tradition as such, but our 'hybridized' culture.

This study also seeks to evaluate critically the teaching methods of oral literature in order to expose the flaws in the teaching of this subject. Solutions about how to retain this subject in the curriculum if deemed desirable or replace it with something else will be sought.

It is also hoped that besides being informative, especially to pupils and teachers, in uncovering the problems and challenges facing the teaching of oral literature in secondary schools as the focal issue, this study should contribute to the raising of the awareness of curriculum planners, educationists and administrators in particular with respect to the need to devise teaching strategies and textbook material whose content is more sensitive to the needs of the 21st century.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Context and site of study

An exploratory survey of pupils' and teachers' attitudes to oral literature was conducted. The random sampling method was used to choose a representative sample.

The sample fraction was drawn from eight co-educational secondary schools comprising of twenty teachers and fifty Form 3 and 4 pupils, all native speakers of siSwati from government schools located in semi urban and urban areas.

The criteria for choosing the schools² were guided by accessibility and the availability of a time slot within the siSwati teacher's timetable. More importantly, as Qorro (1999:16-17) also observed, the choice of public schools over private schools was guided by the fact that different bodies with a different set up and different curriculum and syllabus will make it difficult to generalize across schools (though this was not the primary goal of this study). In the case of government secondary schools, most teachers have undergone training in similar institutions and they use the same curriculum and syllabus. Hence generalizing findings across the schools would be possible.

1.4.1. Informants for the study

A group of twenty teachers of siSwati and fifty Form 3 and 4 learners in urban and semi-urban secondary schools were subjects of this study. The selection was based on the fact that they were all teachers of siSwati. The Form 3 learners were selected because they were at the final stage of the junior level and the Form 4's had just graduated from the junior level and were beginning their senior level of secondary school and it was assumed that with the transition to another level, they might have a fresh perspective on the subject.

The study was conducted over a period of three weeks during the second school term. The same interviews were independently undertaken with informants contacted through neighbourhood networks generated from the researcher's daily contacts among neighbours and friends.

² According to Malatji (1999:36) qualitative researchers are interested in understanding people's experience in context. Therefore to discover or uncover what is to be known about the phenomenon of interest, the natural setting is the ideal place for a researcher (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:45). So, it was within this context that this research studied the attitudes of both learners and teachers within the school situation.

It must, however, be noted as early as this stage that this study is not wholly intended to present findings that can easily be generalized concerning the teaching and learning of oral literature in Swazi secondary schools. For one reason, the research was limited to eight schools out of the two or more hundreds of secondary schools in the country. For another reason, it was based only on the Form 3 and 4 classes located in urban and semi urban areas. That being the case, different findings may come in rural areas. Therefore because of these limitations, its general applicability has to be approached with care. What the research should be able to do is to give an idea of how oral literature is generally perceived in Swazi secondary schools and the reasons behind such perceptions.

1.5 Scope

This study commences with a general introduction to the topic. Its motivation, objectives, methodology and scope are then highlighted. Chapter 2 provides a cursory survey of the theoretical aspects on which the concept of oral literature is based. I examine the interaction between culture, language and thought the product of which is oral literature, manifesting the culture of a people. Chapter 3 gives an in depth study of the essence of oral literature and the role each genre plays in society. This is discussed in order to give a broader outlook of the uses our forebears put into oral literature. A critique of the teaching of oral literature in secondary schools is a theme that has received more expansive coverage in chapter 4. This has been deduced from the factors that influence the negativistic attitudes towards oral literature. The main focus is on the low status of the subject, the ideology, and the master symbols inherent in some genres of oral literature. Chapter 5 focuses on the analysis of the data generated through the interviews conducted in schools on the different attitudes teachers and pupils have towards oral literature. Chapter 6 explores the contemporary approaches to oral literature. It begins by exploring the pernicious element of oral literature in the siSwati curriculum and thereafter recommends an introduction of a Life Skills education as an antidote to this subject. The last chapter, which encompasses findings, conclusions and recommendations, rounds off the study.

1.6 Definition and clarification of terms

Perception: a way of seeing, understanding or interpreting something. It is how a subject is viewed, or a people's insight into a subject

Attitude: a way of thinking about something or behaving towards something. It is a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour. It cannot be directly observed but is latent and inferred from the direction of persistence of external behaviour. According to Sunkuli and Miruka (1990:8) attitude is the point of view of an artist or of the society to an object, situation or idea as conveyed through oral material.

Genre: a broad category or division of oral literature usually according to the nature of composition, subject matter and manner of performance such as narrative or folktale, poem, riddle, or proverb (Sunkuli & Miruka 1990:37).

Teaching methodology: the way a body of knowledge is structured and presented to learners so that they grasp it. It is the practices and procedures used in teaching, and the principles and beliefs that underlie them (Nunan 1995:2).

Swazi education: the education system of Swaziland: the training and instruction of young people in the schools in Swaziland to give them knowledge and develop skills.

Secondary school education: this is the post primary but pre-tertiary education, which includes Grade 8 (Form 1) to Grade 12 (form 5). It has an enrolment of learners between the ages of 13-18 years.

Junior Level: this includes Grades 8 (Form 1) to Grade 10 (Form 3). The Junior Certificate examination is written at the end of Form 3.

O'Level: This includes Grades 11 (Form 4) and Grade 12 (Form 5). The examination written at the end of this period of study is the Ordinary General Certificate Examination (O'Level G.C.E).

Pedagogical role: the instructional or educational role a subject performs.

SiSwati curriculum: the different components or areas included in the course of the siSwati subject.

Tinkhundla: courtyards where state affairs are openly discussed

University of Cape Town

Chapter 2

Culture, language, thought and oral literature

2.1 Introduction

Oral literature is the ethnography of its society reflecting the modal or typical mental content of the people in a society (Jason & Segal 1977:277). It is the data that deals directly with the states of mind and in its creation a number of forces come into play. These forces are language, culture and thought. Therefore in order to assess the whole issue of oral literature and its impact on society, it is necessary to examine the relationship between culture, language and thought in terms of how we think and how reality is constructed. In exploring this relationship and one's construction of one's world-view the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Piaget and Vygotsky's theories are highly relevant. This will allow for an analysis of the implications and effects these hypotheses and theories have in relation to oral literature, as well as the learners to whom oral literature is taught. The objective behind the examination of the interaction between language, culture and thought is to find out how language shapes the thought processes of a people and consequently shape their mindset or worldview which accounts for all the categories of phenomena which a people are conscious of; their culture. Their culture then constitutes a charter for the observance of customary patterns of activity and established social duties and privileges.

Many scholars believe that language contributes in the shaping of a people's thought processes and that it is through language that they create a worldview different from, for example, a speaker of another language or for that matter, a variety of that language. They believe language shapes the person's view of reality, influences their memory and thinking processes and also contributes to their understanding and misunderstanding of other cultures (Cole & Scribner 1974:52). Let us examine the works of three scholars: Benjamin Lee Whorf, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky.

2.2 The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941) and Edward Sapir (1844-1939) both American linguists believe that language and culture are close-knit and it is not possible for one to be understood or appreciated without the knowledge of the other. Language is embedded within a culture of a people. What a people believe in and value as well as their needs are reflected in the language they speak. Culture as a form of social behaviour that is explained in terms of societal values cannot exist in a vacuum and has no life apart from language. According to Lanham (1980:11) 'language is a vehicle on which culture is transmitted; it is the essential medium by which culture is conveyed afresh for each generation' (cited in Kaschula and Anthonissen 1995:21). So, according to the Sapir/Whorf hypothesis a particular language is a reservoir of a particular culture, it influences the worldview of those who control it and directs their behaviour to some extent. According to them, language dominates and shapes its users' perception of reality, thus providing a total paradigm or mindset. In other words, the way a person views or perceives the world is conditioned or restricted to a large extent by their native languages. It provides a screen or a filter to reality and determines how speakers perceive and organize both the natural and social world around them (Wardaugh 1986:215). Wallwork (1978:32) who shares the same sentiments echoes this when he writes that 'the language used in a situation is related to what the different speakers perceive as reality.'

Not only does a person's mother tongue provide him or her with a series of categories, which form a framework for his or her perception of things, it also 'decides what thoughts are possible to that person and the person cannot escape from it into any other way of perceiving the world' (Sutherland 1992:30). In short, language as a system of communicating thought influences the kinds of thinking one can do. Whorf (1956:252) articulates this when he writes that,

The forms of a person's thoughts are controlled by inexorable laws or patterns of which he is conscious. The patterns are the unperceived intricate systemization of his own language. And every language is a vast pattern-system different from others, in which are culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyzes nature, notices or neglects types of relationships and phenomena, channels his reasoning, and builds the house of his consciousness.

Echoing Whorf, Carroll (1964:xii) writes that thought and cognition are presupposed by language – speech is a consequence of thought or cognition, even though language structure may channel or influence thought. Hall (1976:9) who also subscribes to the idea also emphasizes it when he says *the natural act of thinking is greatly modified by a person's culture of which language is part* (my emphasis). The syntax or grammatical patterns which are widely different in the different languages then led Whorf and Sapir to conclude that language must structure thought thus determining the ways of thinking and responding of which members of language community are capable of. Therefore, people who speak different languages perceive the world differently and this implies that people are prisoners of their languages (Chaika 1994:51). The limits of their languages are the limits of their worldviews. From this perspective, people are therefore at the mercy of the particular language, which has become the expression for that society. They are more or less slaves of their mother tongue in their thinking and their way of comprehending the world.

In support of this hypothesis, Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:21) quote the vocabulary each language possesses which is developed partly according to the priorities of its culture. The vocabulary of a language provides a reflection of the culture of the people who speak it, since it is a catalog of things of import to a society, an index of the way speakers categorize experience, and often a record of past contacts and cultural borrowings (McKay & Hornberger 1996:360). 'The objects, relationships, activities and ideas important to the culture get coded onto single words, which are often highly specialized to express subtle nuances' (Chaika 1994: 350). The words a people use for concepts do help form their ideologies, values, norms, attitudes and behaviour (*ibid*: 350-352). If then one perceives certain phenomena within the framework provided by one's language, then one's language controls their worldview.

For example, in a conversation between a siSwati speaker and a non speaker of this language, certain words may denote certain items that do not have equivalents in the hearer's language and this may result in a miscommunication because a cultural chasm separates the two systems and as such these words may not be part of the hearer's cultural heritage. This then means that the hearer's view cannot be fully expressed in siSwati. Their own linguistic background shapes their view of the world and this is commonly referred to as linguistic determinism. Linguistic relativism, on

the contrary, states that the distinctions encoded in one language are not found in any other language. Each language codes the experiences of a people into sound in a unique manner. Hence each language is semantically arbitrary relative to every other language. For instance, a song composed about the *incwala* 'the first fruit ceremony,' one of the revered traditions of the Swazi, is only clearly understood by the native traditional Swazis who may know the beliefs and values attached to this ritual. It would not make sense to a non-Swazi because of the obscure terminology used. The physical environment a people inhabit and the values of a society may have an effect on the language they speak. For example, Swazis like any nation, have names for the fauna and flora that are useful in their lives but treat other phenomena as insignificant because they do not form part of their cultural heritage. Livestock in general is culturally relevant and form an integral part in their economy hence the many different names to describe it. Likewise, the Inuits³ to whom snow plays an important part in their lives, have different names for the different kinds of snow.

Similarly the values of a society also affect language. What a society values is reflected in their language. Acts or words and expressions that are not acceptable for utterance and referred to as taboo are reflected in the language. Therefore a worldview of a Swazi cannot be fully expressed in Inuit,⁴ but can only be shaped by the Swazis own linguistic and cultural background. The differences, especially in syntax and the unusual features of different languages then prompted Whorf to conclude that language structures thought and determines the ways of thinking and responses of which members of a community are capable.

However, the Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis becomes contentious when we consider the fact that all languages are mutually translatable. What can be said in one language can be said in another. Just because a language has no exact equivalences, or else, a single word for an entity, it does not mean that given a similar experience, a people are not able to think about that entity in their language. Though languages have different lexical differences, this does not mean that since a language has separate terms for certain phenomena, the users of that language are unable to distinguish these

³ North American Eskimos. These are members of a race living in the Arctic regions of North America and East Siberia.

⁴ The language spoken by the Inuits.

phenomena from others. For instance, it does not mean that non-speakers of Inuit cannot see the differences between the different kinds of snow. The different languages do not irredeemably limit their people's perceptive abilities. It is just in particular areas that their language is unable to assist them in the same way as [Inuit] does (Kaschula and Anthonissen 1995:19).

2.3 Jean Piaget

Contrary to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Piaget who is also interested in language development and the perception of reality is of the opinion that it is thought that determines language in the construction of reality. According to him, the development of thought predominates over that of language. Language is a way of packaging thought rather than a model that shapes our thoughts. He contends that although young children cannot express their thoughts that are working inside, they do engage in some thought processes even before they acquire language (Carruthers 1996:41). This implies that thinking in children emerges earlier than their first words. Devitt and Sterenly (1987:118) endorse this when they say that 'pre-linguistic children think, but not obviously in a public language'.

Piaget (1955) believes that the development of representational abilities at the end of the sensory motor period of a child makes possible the development of language, as well as other forms of representation such as drawing and mental imagery. He argues that children's speech is to a large extent egocentric and children talk mainly to play or to accompany their activity. So, their thoughts are derived from their actions, and not from their language. Speech development, according to Piaget, is the suppression of egocentrism (Vygotsky 1962:vii). This idea is clearly described by Vygotsky (1962:132-133) in the following words,

Piaget contends that the child's egocentric speech is a direct expression of the egocentrism of his thought, which in turn is a compromise between the primary autism of his thinking and its gradual socialization. As the child grows older, autism recedes and socialization progresses, leading to the waning of egocentrism in his thinking and speech. In Piaget's conception, the child in his egocentric speech does not adapt himself to the thinking of adults. His thought remains entirely egocentric; this makes his talk incomprehensible to others. Egocentric speech has no function in the child's realistic thinking or activity – it merely accompanies them. And since it is an expression of egocentric thought, it disappears together with the child's egocentrism.

After a study where he investigated the emergence of intelligence in children and how it manifested itself in language, Piaget found that the construction of reality was an action of an individual and not its perception. He therefore argues that the early child does not distinguish his own thoughts and the external world. *So it is the child's own thoughts that present the starting point for the construction of reality* (my emphasis). 'Immediate experience, that is, the accommodation of thought to the surface of things, is simply empirical experience which considers, as objective datum, reality as it appears to direct perception' (Piaget 1955:381). Just as the child makes his own truth, so he makes his own reality (Piaget 1929:167).

According to Piaget, the bond uniting all the characteristics of child logic is the egocentrism of the child's thinking and egocentrism occupies an immediate position, genetically, structurally, and functionally between autistic and directed thought (Vygotsky 1962:11-12). Crystallizing these modes of thought Piaget says:

Directed thought is conscious i.e., it pursues aims that are present in the mind of the thinker. It is intelligent, i.e., it is adapted to reality and strives to influence it. It is susceptible of truth and of error. and it can be communicated through language. Autistic thought is subconscious, i.e., the goals it pursues and the problems it sets itself are not present in consciousness. It is not adapted to external reality but creates for itself a reality of imagination or dreams. It tends not to establish truths, but to gratify wishes and remains strictly individual and incommunicable as such by means of language, since it operates primarily in images and must, in order to be communicated, resort to roundabout methods evoking, by means of symbols and of myths, the feelings that guide it (*ibid*: 12).

So, according to Piaget, a child's way of thinking is naturally autistic and it changes to realistic thought *only under long and sustained social pressure* (my emphasis). This then means that as the child is socialized into his society through oral literature his mindset or paradigm eventually changes and forms realities of the ideas, values and beliefs of his people indoctrinated to him. For the child, speech which is one of the influences the adults exert on the him is 'not imprinted on him as on a photographic plate: it is assimilated, that is to say, deformed by the living being subjected to them and become implanted in his own substance' (*ibid*:14). Therefore, speech is both social and egocentric. Egocentric speech is a transitional stage in the evolution from vocal to inner speech. In egocentric speech the child's talk is centred around himself, yet in the social they exchange talk with others, asking questions, conveying information and begging for something. To endorse Piaget's claims, Alfred Bloom (1981:10,75), cites Piaget and Chomsky at length as follows:

After a study where he investigated the emergence of intelligence in children and how it manifested itself in language, Piaget found that the construction of reality was an action of an individual and not its perception. He therefore argues that the early child does not distinguish his own thoughts and the external world. *So it is the child's own thoughts that present the starting point for the construction of reality* (my emphasis). 'Immediate experience, that is, the accommodation of thought to the surface of things, is simply empirical experience which considers, as objective datum, reality as it appears to direct perception' (Piaget 1955:381). Just as the child makes his own truth, so he makes his own reality (Piaget 1929:167).

According to Piaget, the bond uniting all the characteristics of child logic is the egocentrism of the child's thinking and egocentrism occupies an immediate position, genetically, structurally, and functionally between autistic and directed thought (Vygotsky 1962:11-12). Crystallizing these modes of thought Piaget says:

Directed thought is conscious i.e., it pursues aims that are present in the mind of the thinker. It is intelligent, i.e., it is adapted to reality and strives to influence it. It is susceptible of truth and of error. and it can be communicated through language. Autistic thought is subconscious, i.e., the goals it pursues and the problems it sets itself are not present in consciousness. It is not adapted to external reality but creates for itself a reality of imagination or dreams. It tends not to establish truths, but to gratify wishes and remains strictly individual and incommunicable as such by means of language, since it operates primarily in images and must, in order to be communicated, resort to roundabout methods evoking, by means of symbols and of myths, the feelings that guide it (*ibid*: 12).

So, according to Piaget, a child's way of thinking is naturally autistic and it changes to realistic thought *only under long and sustained social pressure* (my emphasis). This then means that as the child is socialized into his society through oral literature his mindset or paradigm eventually changes and forms realities of the ideas, values and beliefs of his people indoctrinated to him. For the child, speech which is one of the influences the adults exert on the him is 'not imprinted on him as on a photographic plate: it is assimilated, that is to say, deformed by the living being subjected to them and become implanted in his own substance' (*ibid*:14). Therefore, speech is both social and egocentric. Egocentric speech is a transitional stage in the evolution from vocal to inner speech. In egocentric speech the child's talk is centred around himself, yet in the social they exchange talk with others, asking questions, conveying information and begging for something. To endorse Piaget's claims, Alfred Bloom (1981:10,75), cites Piaget and Chomsky at length as follows:

There is a realm of thought or cognitive structure separate from behaviour, which mediates between our perceptions of external phenomena and our reactions to them, in which we represent to ourselves information about the worlds that process information and plan our actions. This realm of cognitive structure develops in interaction with inputs from the environment but under constraints, which at some level of specificity have been programmed by genetic factors. This realm of cognitive structure is separate from language, beginning its development in the child before the advent of language, providing in fact the cognitive basis upon which the child acquires language, and although perhaps later coming to be influenced and elaborated by language, continuing to serve as the structural medium in which thinking takes place.. The schemas that our language names serve as the cognitive vehicles through which we must pass our thoughts in order to communicate them in language. We formulate many of the thoughts we intend to communicate within the unlabeled portions of our schematic repertoires; but to communicate those thoughts through language we must first "put them in words"- i.e. translate them into schemas that bear labels.

These schemas are different from each other and this implies differences in languages, and consequently, differences in the cultures of different people. This then 'reflects differential esteem for different functions of language and any individual's perception of language use will be coloured by the perception of the people among whom they are brought up. Thus the child and later the adult's perception of language will affect perception of what 'real life' is and the way in which a person can lead his life' (Wallwork 1978:19). This then implies that the forms of oral literature we have today, and the themes, values, and beliefs therein that are transmitted transgenerationally, were meditated upon first before they could be packaged in the language of the Swazi. As these values are continually expressed to the child⁵ who is still in the process of developing their language, the construction of reality is gradually being built into their thought processes. By the time the child's speech is fully developed, the child would have constructed their truth and reality. For a secondary school pupil, the long and sustained social or educational pressure would have changed their autistic way of thinking into realistic thought. They would therefore regard the values, norms and beliefs in oral literature as the real life and the model way in which they have to lead their life. If these were in any way tainted or negative, then the child's perception of oral literature will be adapted accordingly.

3.4 Lev Vygotsky

Vygotsky also focuses on the interrelation between language and thought, but contrary to both Whorf and Piaget, he notes an important mutual influence between

⁵ Although it is argued that a foetus does respond to outside stimuli, we will base our argument on a child beginning from infancy through teenagehood.

language and thought, hence his assertion that 'the relation between thought and word is a living process; thought is born through words and word devoid of thought is a dead thing, and a thought unembodied in words remains a shadow' (Vygotsky 1962:153). According to him, words (i.e. language) play a central role in the development of thought and in the historical growth of consciousness as a whole, and thought together with language reflect reality. After criticizing Piaget's theories, he built up his own, alternative to Piaget's concept of egocentric thought and speech. In experiments he carried out where he explored the behaviour of young children where there is a pre-linguistic phase in the use of thought and a pre-intellectual phase in the use of speech, he found that 'it is the internalization of overt action that makes thought, and particularly the internalization of external dialogue that brings the powerful tool of language to bear on the stream of thought (Vygotsky 1962:vii). According to him egocentric speech is connected with inner speech and it does not die as the child grows older as Piaget believed. Instead it disappears at school age when inner speech begins to develop. It is a precursor to inner speech, representing and restructuring thought. 'It serves mental orientation, conscious understanding; it helps in overcoming difficulties; it is speech for oneself intimately and usefully connected with the child's thinking (*ibid*:133).

According to Vygotsky though speech and thought stem from different genetic roots, they are social phenomena that affect each other. The true direction of the development of thinking, contrary to Piaget's observation, is from the social to the individual. He argues that 'man is shaped by the tools and instruments that he comes to use, and neither the mind nor the hand alone can amount to much' (*ibid*: vii). To him the tools and aids that prevail are the developing streams of internalised language and conceptual thought. Sometimes these run parallel and sometimes merge each affecting the other. Speech being social in origin is learnt from others. At first it serves the affective and social purposes but with time it comes to have self-directive properties that eventually result in internalized verbal thought. Underlining this idea, Hamers and Blanc (1983:47) argue that 'language, first developed as a means of social communication, is later internalized and becomes a crucial tool in the shaping of cognitive processes relevant for the elaboration of abstract symbolic system which will enable a child to organize thought'.

Vygotsky further contends that adults have a great input in language acquisition and cognitive development. He says these two concepts, language acquisition and cognitive development are a result of mutual interaction between the child and the people he has social contact with. Lewis (1963:47) echoes this when he writes that,

A child adapts to his society, he transforms his own language in the direction of the mother tongue, and the mother tongue in the direction of his own language. For their part, those who speak to him sometimes adopt his speech and sometimes adapt their speech to his. *The child moves towards conformity with the usages of his society* (emphasis mine).

In the process of development and adaptation to the active environment, the child does not master only the items of cultural experience, but the habits and forms of cultural behaviour, and the cultural methods of reasoning (Van der Veer & Valsiner 1994:57). This is enforced through the means of socializing him into the environment, one of which is the oral literature of his people. Therefore, the child's talk whether egocentric or social depends on the surrounding conditions. What then are the implications of this language, culture and thought relationship in relation to oral literature? This is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

2.5 Culture, language and thought in relation to oral literature

As has been shown above, there is an intrinsic relationship between culture, language, and thought. Language and thought shape or influence one another. The oral literature we have is an end product of this mutual influence resulting in the formation of a frame of mind or a way of thinking of a particular people. It is therefore the kind of language (the metaphors) encapsulated by these cultural artifacts that shape thought and thereby attitudes to certain phenomena, thus both Piaget and Vygotsky's bi-directional approach seem to be confirmed here.

Most of the themes or moral lessons found in Swazi oral literature therefore confirm the thesis that a people's language shapes their worldview and vice versa. Themes found in Swazi oral literature were largely agreed upon by 'consensus'⁶ by the Swazi people and that was the worldview they had created for themselves through their

⁶ The fact that activities are socially constructed does not mean that they are democratically constructed and controlled. Most activities are constructed and controlled by the powerful elites rather than the majority of people who engage in them (Valsiner 2000:7).

language, siSwati. Although according to the Vygotskian perspective people are shaped by the tools they use, the physical patterns of life found its way into oral literature. This then means that Swazi oral literature has been shaped by the traditional culture. Folktales, for instance, which constitute the mainstream of [Swazi] thought patterns, and convey certain maxims and truisms are the evidence of 'consensus of opinion' of the whole society (Msimang 1983:136). Therefore, the way the older generation perceived certain concepts, valued certain phenomena and had certain beliefs as manifested in their language (a global oral style) was largely determined by the worldview they had formed of their societies and this found expression through their native languages. However, the school education where most of our pupils are delegated today determines their philosophy and view of life and also equips them with skills that help them form different worldviews. It also determines the criterion on which judgements are based and those elements, which make up ideals, ideology and goals. Long after the subject content of the lesson has been forgotten, those values absorbed by the pupil will continue to influence them (du Preez 1983: 11).

In addition, the older generation, the custodians of oral traditions that transmitted oral traditional literature over the generations were mostly uneducated and monolingual. As Skutnabb-Kangas (1981:5) puts it 'it is sometimes difficult for monolinguals to see that the particular way their mother tongue uses to describe and classify an extremely multiform reality is one of the many possible ways. It is often not until one begins to learn other languages and loses one's monolingual naivety that one begins to realize how relative and arbitrary is the way in which one's own language describes the world. To some extent, the structure of our mother tongue "selects" for us what it is necessary and less necessary for us to notice, yet the world around us is made up of millions of details and when we look at it [through the lenses of our culture as portrayed in oral literature] we "see" only some of them, the ones that contain meaning to us. Our language, its structure, vocabulary and what of it we have learned, participates in choosing which details we "see" (*ibid*:7). However, it is to be expected that as teachers and pupils are exposed to formal education, their view of the world, should be different from that of their forebears whose only language, siSwati, chose the details they could see. Through formal education they have been exposed to the outside world and other languages such as English and French, and this has enabled them to realize in *a broader spectrum than an oral person* that the world is neither

monolingual nor monocultural (my emphasis). As such they have taken a step outside their monocultural world and gained 'a viewpoint which is not merely a widening of their horizons, but allows them to see new and quite different horizons' (Buttjes & Byram 1991:29-30). They have thus been able to leave their small traditional homesteads and they see themselves in relation to others. Through travel which broadens the mind and gives one perspectives on their society and forces them to re-assess what they have taken for granted, exchange holidays, educational tours, contact with native teachers of foreign languages, and the study of the different subjects such as English literature, they have realized that there is more to life than just Swaziland and that there are other possibilities out there. Saayman (1997:122) articulates this when he writes that,

if we accept that language shapes our worldviews, then in fact in most African countries students are exposed simultaneously to several different worldviews: one which is based on African languages spoken at home, and another which stems from one of the colonial languages: French, English or Portuguese. The latter tends to widen the differences in perception, values and thinking between Africans educated in modern schools and the rest of the population [and it does not emphasize the same ideal of an educated person and social norms that [Swazi] society values].

Furthermore, by virtue of being exposed to these cosmopolitan languages in their modern education system, secondary school teachers and their pupils are competent in more than one language. Some learners and teachers are bilingual while others are even multi-lingual. Most studies report positive consequences of bilingual experience. Several studies have shown that bilingualism promotes general intellectual development. According to Vygotsky in Hamers and Blanc (1983:47) the ability to express the same thought in different languages enables a person to see their language as one particular system among many and to view its phenomena under more general categories, and this leads to awareness of his linguistic operations. The internalization of two languages rather than one result in a more complex, better equipped 'mental calculus' enabling the child to alternate between two systems of rules in the manipulation of symbols (*ibid*: 47). Bilinguals are said to even show a greater degree of divergent thinking and a higher level of creativity and organization of information (*ibid*: 50). Since this is what characterizes today's pupils and teachers, they may 'see' the world differently from their parents and forefathers, and probably develop different attitudes to some of the values, beliefs and norms their parents treasured.

Most importantly, these world languages bring with them a frame of reference that is (post)modern. As all human beings are inclined to wish for progress, the traditionalism that characterizes oral literature is regarded with a sense of being passé or quaint, and viewed as outdated in terms of the contemporary demands of the world today, especially those brought by modern technology.

Furthermore, through formal education, pupils and their teachers have, unlike the older generation, gone beyond their traditional horizons and gradually discovered the surrounding country and got to know the different kinds of people and social groups. They have added more than a few facts to those that they already know, hence they have changed their interpretation of things. As Piaget (1959:270) also observed, what for the older generation has been an absolute or central group has become merely a point of view as against other points of view amongst the young. What in oral literature is a recommendation, to them is just raw data, what is a value, to them is a fact and what 'ought' is just another possibility among many. According to Ong (1982:78) the concept of literacy restructures consciousness.

According to McKay and Hornberger (1996:421) literacy is a vehicle for changing the status quo. It is 'a skill that is acquired by an individual, generally within an educational context, utilizing oral language as a basis and ultimately affecting cognitive development' (*ibid*: 422) and the 'ability to process the written word transforms the mind and creates the ability to think independently and abstractly' (*ibid*: 425).

According to Moto in Whitaker and Sienaert (1986:287), among the changes brought about by literacy was the opening of avenues for critical thought and consequently 'the way individuals perceive themselves and the environment'. This then means that the way literate people perceive themselves is different from the way the illiterate perceive themselves and the environment around them. (*This, however, does not mean that literacy creates unison of thought or perception*) (my emphasis). The danger of these different perceptions of people who share the same culture may cause great misunderstandings. Hence literacy programmes have been introduced with the main aim of bringing about change; especially change in the individual's way of thinking.

From a linguistic viewpoint, it involves change in the semantic component of the new literate's language (*ibid*: 287). For example, one who strongly believed in a large family, could after reading relevant information on family planning, that a smaller family is at times the best, begin to change his attitude or belief. This in other words emphasizes the fact that literacy brings about change in the way one views things opening broader avenues of critical thought. Although other scholars 'concede that cognitive development is possible with oral language, they maintain that the written language allows for greater cognitive benefits' (*ibid*:425). Well (1987:113) articulates this when he remarks that,

Certainly, composing in speech may also be an aid to thought just as one may be led to reorganize one's thinking in listening to the speech of others. However, if the skills of transforming thoughts and knowledge are not dependant on having learned to read and write, they are most effectively extended and developed through engaging in these more reflective modes of language use.

According to Moto in Whitaker and Sienaert another change brought about by literacy is,

the weakening and wiping-out of time-honoured beliefs that are entrenched in a particular society. Such beliefs may be those seen as affecting development in a negative way. Such beliefs may centre around the causes of death, and beliefs and customs surrounding birth. With the power of the printed word, pre-literate persons may change from irrational thinking to a logical way of looking at problems that surround them (*ibid*: 287).

These changes brought about by literacy, therefore imply that the pupils' and teachers' way of thinking and view of phenomena around them have changed from that of their forebears. According to Groenewald (1990:135) the school has had 'an even greater effect on their mentality and general attitudes, which condition to some extent their acceptance of folktales'. Likewise the time-honoured beliefs of their grand-parents have been weakened and 'wiped out' hence, some children often interrupt a performance of a folktale by asking if that is true because their teacher told them something different. Literacy has enabled them to become more logical thinkers than the oral people and they look at problems surrounding them in a more advanced logical way and the technical and scientific bias of the education system has left no room for the faculty of imagination. I believe this has an influence on how oral literature is perceived nowadays in class.

Not only that, children are fundamentally different from adults. Therefore what seems reasonable from an adult perspective may seem completely unreasonable from a child's point of view and vice versa (Ault 1977:183). This is echoed by Piaget when he writes that 'a child is not a miniature adult and his mind not the mind of an adult at a small scale' and he is not merely a replica of the adult (Vygotsky 1962:11). Not only does the child think less efficiently than the adult but he also thinks differently. The above can therefore be extrapolated into all the forms of oral literature.

2.4 Conclusion

Our concern in this chapter has been the relationship between culture, language and thought in complementing each other and shaping a people's worldview as presented by different scholars. It became evident that language along with other entities such as values, beliefs and norms is a component of culture and a vehicle by which culture is transmitted. Whorf and Sapir believe that thought is dominated by language and a people are prisoners of their languages, which determine their thought processes and consequently their worldview. They believe language is a reservoir of culture, a determiner of thoughts and worldviews. Capitalizing on structural differences between languages, Whorf concluded that people of different languages perceive the world differently from one another. Piaget, on the contrary, is of the view that thought presupposes language. Language is a secondary product of thought. According to him before a child even babbles, their thought processes are already at work. Though at this stage a child's way of thinking is autistic, he creates reality of the environment around him and through long and sustained pressure realistic thought is formed. Vygotsky believes there is a mutual influence between language and thought in the reflection of a reality; the mindset of a people. He believes adults play an important role in the cognitive development of a child through the mutual interaction between them and the child with whom they have social contact. The significance of the relationship between culture, language and thought is to show that there is a very close link between language and thought. Both language and thought shape each other and this theoretical construct holds important implications for the use, development and teaching of the oral literature of a people. The concept of literacy has also been examined. Literacy restructures consciousness and opens avenues for critical thinking. This has enabled pupils and their teachers to form a mindset different from their

forebears. Thus they view their forebears' values and beliefs as embodied in oral literature with a critical mind and this may result in the development of attitudes to some of the traditional values, different from those of their forefathers. It is to discussion of the essence of oral literature and the aspects the older generation believed were novel and consequently necessitated transmission to the future generation that we must now turn to in the next chapter.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 3

Overview and significance of oral literature

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has given background information from which an oral literature of a people emanates. It is through the interaction of the language and the thought processes of a people that their oral literature is born. It is through the oral literature of a people that one is able to understand a people as it throws some light on their ways of thinking. The major thrust of this chapter is to discuss the essence of oral literature in the Swazi context, and explicate the role it plays in society. Oral literature has been divided into three broad categories: folk-tales, wisdom lore and oral poetry, and each of these categories has been examined and the significant roles each plays in a society established. Examples have been drawn from the Swazi community where this subject is contextualised. It is hoped that this discussion will give a deeper and fuller understanding of this kind of literature in relation to the modern world in which we are living and used as a guide to understanding the past, to constructing the present and to projecting into the future.

3.1.1 Definition

Various scholars have defined oral literature in various ways. Canonici in Groenewald (1990:129) defines oral literature as a spoken and performed art whose medium is the spoken word. According to Kamera et al (1998:71) oral literature is verbal art, which is lived, experienced, produced and observed in every village. It is actualized in and through performance. From it we discern the cultural fabric of the society as symbols of order, patterns and systems of social control and the complexities of personal relationships are revealed and demonstrated in its performance sessions. Kasapo in Moyo et al (1986:52) believes oral literature is an education, an entire cultural heritage, and a body of philosophical and artistic teaching of the *past* about human life, which is modified or enriched by successive generations that have passed it on or transmitted it solely by word of mouth. *It shows the individual, his relationship to the society and it guides in integrating one in society, for it teaches one what his behaviour, his attitude and beliefs should be. It puts before man the standards of rules or customs and encourages him to develop his personality* (my emphasis). Guma

(1964:3) cited in Sienaert and Bell (1988:183) writes that oral literature is 'a survival of an indefinite past which was handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth [and] which is alive out of print and in the bookless world of the ancients.' Kabira & waMutahi (1988:3) are of the idea that oral literature is a creation of the society that produces it. It reflects and shapes the lives and ideas of a people, that is their feelings, hopes, fears, aspirations, philosophy and aesthetics – the totality of their way of life.

Whitaker and Sienaert (1988:285) draw a demarcation line between oral literature and oral tradition and define oral tradition as the totality of messages that society considers as having been inherited from its ancestors, which is transmitted orally from generation to generation. Oral literature is that part of oral tradition in which the poetic function appears. Arguably, no hard and fast dividing line can be laid down between the two and this is echoed by Lord (1988:5) who notes that oral tradition though useful is vague and it is sometimes synonymous with oral literature – in fact it maybe another way of saying oral traditional literature.

Anyone of the definitions thus rendered may be easily adopted but let us consider them all and draw a list of the salient features to get a fuller definition and understanding of what oral literature really is. From the definitions given, a number of aspects emerge. Oral literature is:

- performed
- shared
- orally transmitted over generations
- a cultural heritage
- taught and is educational
- helps one develop character

However explicit as they are, the definitions alone do not really give a vivid picture of the real essence of oral literature. For it to be clearer, it is better defined and understood in terms of the social functions it serves in a community of people. It is to the examination of the significance of oral literature in Swaziland specifically that we must now focus on.

3.1.2 Significance of oral literature

In Swaziland and many other African countries, oral literature in its various manifestations serves a multiplicity of functions. By function we refer to the social purposes underlying oral literature's uses, whether the purposes are intentional or unconscious.

Generally, in African culture oral literature has been preserved and perpetuated *mainly by women* from generation to generation by word of mouth and is revered for its antiquity and wisdom (my emphasis). It has been used over the years to pass on amassed knowledge, beliefs, wisdom, ideas and methods of carrying out responsibilities in a society. In other words, it has been used to transmit the culture of a people over the generations. In that way it serves as a mirror of the culture and the philosophy of a people. Today, it gives the reader a glimpse into the mind and thought of the people who created it and enables him in some measure to look at certain aspects through the lenses of that people. In the words of Guibbert cited by Zeiss (1998:v), 'in its various manifestations it forms part of the heritage of mankind [and] enshrining the folk memory and traditions, it constitutes the living museum of our civilization.' According to Whitaker and Sienaert (1988:285) oral literature expresses a society's cultural artifacts, rich traditions of religion and intricate organization and administration. It is a window into the worldview of a particular society through which one views the norms and values of that society; its culture.

By culture we refer to 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society' (Taylor 1871:1). We refer to that behaviour which is learned as a result of living in groups, which tend to be patterned, and is transmitted over the generations (Saayman 1996:106). The transmission of culture over the generations is, therefore, the main function served by oral literature. This is what Miruka in Bukenya et al (1994:48) terms the normative function, which Hornby (1995:788) defines as *setting standards or rules of language or behaviour, which should be followed* (emphasis mine). So, serving this function oral literature warns, cautions, satirizes, advises, invects, educates and encourages members of a society on the acceptable code of conduct of

that society. All this presumes that the society has certain standards that it cherishes and wishes to perpetuate. Oral literature therefore facilitates the achievement of that goal (*op cit*: 48).

However, the desired standards were not *preached* as moral lessons, but were often expressed or alluded to in colourful dance, music, storytelling, proverbs and the riddling games. Lubozhya in Moyo et al (1986:415) articulates this when he says that although the older people did not know how to read and write, they preserved the culture of their people through many careful devices which never failed to impress; wise sayings, tales, and songs. In all these arts they were capable of effectively portraying all the many aspects of life. Therefore, oral literature in the form of oral poetry, traditional stories, proverbs, riddles and songs, as expressive verbal art-modes was used to put into perspective, evaluate and interpret socio-political experiences over a period of time (Whitaker and Sienaert (1988:286).

Scholars such as Lestrade (1959:292-295) have separated oral literature into three categories. These are narrative prose (folk-tales), oral poetry and wisdom lore and naturally there is a certain amount of overlapping in their functions. Below we will examine their significance in the life of a person with the express aim of debunking the deeply ingrained 'misconceptions'⁷ people have about these categories of oral literature.

3.2 FOLK-TALES

These are popular fictional folk stories told mainly for amusement and passed on orally by tradition from one generation to the next. Though not overtly didactic and moralizing, they have some covert educational value. Folktales are about both animals and human beings and they were popular to both the young and the old for their aesthetic value and for the didactic and moral elements they embodied.

Folktales are mainly about a people's philosophy of life; their world outlook. People use them to entertain themselves and to record their historical experiences (Hanghe

⁷ These may not necessarily be misconceptions as they might find support in the course of this study.

1988:105). According to Miruka (1999:22) they are vehicles through which society passes down its wisdom and commentary to future generations. Traditionally, during the evening in a beehive hut, a grandmother narrates a story to the children who usually gather around the hearth (the energetic centre of family life) and listen spellbound to the wise storyteller as she educates them by introducing them to the value system and organization of their society. They learn their *history, traditions and customs* of their people, *the acceptable code of behaviour and their social responsibilities* (Canonici 1999:14 & Hanghe 1988:107). Folktales are therefore a school of life where a person's character is *moulded* at an early stage (emphasis mine).

3.2.1 Functions of folktales

'Function cannot be defined in any other way than the satisfaction of a need by an activity in which human beings co-operate' (Malinowski in Makgamatha 1991:7). Folktales primarily serve the function of satisfying social and spiritual needs of a particular group and to a certain extent contribute to their maintenance and continuity. They serve as cultural and societal reinforcement and they contribute to the maintenance and continuity of the social group by validating culture and justifying institutions to those who observe them (Makgamatha 1991:8).

William Bascom (1965:279) cited in Canonici (1987:12) identifies four basic needs served by tales in a particular society. These are discussed below.

i) Amusement

According to Lestrade (1959:293) tales are told for the delight they provide. They are a form of entertainment told to while away idle hours usually after dinner when the daily chores have been accomplished and everyone is relaxing. This is common in non-literate or semi-literate communities where the other forms of entertainment such as television and radio are still not widespread. Tales are therefore told "just for fun" [and] are intended to be amusing to varying degrees' (Makgamatha 1991:8). The delight is heightened considerably by the dramatic manner in which the narrators tell the tales, the effect of which once experienced is never forgotten (*op cit*: 293). Narrators employ gestures, facial expressions, pantomime, impersonification or

mimicry and encourage the audience to participate in the form of laughter, chanting or singing. However, beneath this great humour lies a deeper meaning. From this, children learn the nuances of the language and as they also take turns in storytelling, self-confidence is being nursed, nurtured and developed.

ii) Education (The didactic and moral function)

Generally, folktales are performed and their performance is a school of life, not based on a detached and cold syllabus, but on the total involvement of the child in the life of family and community (Canonici 1995:21). In Swaziland folktales have served as the mainstream of the traditional education. As stories are told, the young are educated in the traditional way and they are equipped with practical knowledge of the vast oral culture of their people (Hanghe 1988:107). The children readily remember the images in them, and the lesson driven home remains attached to the narrative cores, which are not easily forgotten. As a tale is told, the child's imagination is fired and it produces an emotional involvement, which educates the mind, body and soul (Sienaert & Bell 1988:111). Trickster stories whose cleverest character is the *dassie*, for instance, are subtle examples of the traditional Swazi education, which convey what could be called preventive education or cautionary tales. The trickster The old woman and the *dassie* (appendix1, no. 1) about a *dassie* that requests an old woman if they could while away time by playing a game where they would cook one another for a few seconds is an example of cautionary tales. In this tale the *dassie* is the first one to get into the pot and after a few seconds he cries to the old woman that she is 'cooked'. The old woman takes her turn and the game continues in this way until on the old woman's third turn she is cooked until she dies. This trickster is a representative of what is evil in a society and to what fools easily succumb. Fools are unable to guard against it, or recognize the signs of the evil trickster's approach. The tale seems to imply that the world is full of 'tempters' rather than have abstract 'temptations'. Children are therefore educated, in fact trained in a very humorous way to be well aware of this fact and to be on the lookout for trickster tempters. The characteristics of tricksters are the capital sins of human nature, attractive in one way, and often appealing to the individual, but lethal to an orderly and harmonious community because they put individual interests before the common good (Canonici 1995 & Sienaert & Bell 1988).

Furthermore, folktales also educate the young by preparing them for adulthood. Girls, on the one hand, are prepared for marriage and motherhood. A tale centred on marriage and motherhood would prepare them subliminally for all the mysteries and unexpectedness of life (Bill 1995:24). They need maturity and the ability to bear children. They have to be *good wives* hence they have to be instructed in *obedience, in carrying out duties faithfully and in a manner pleasing to their husbands* (Bill 1995:45)(my emphasis). To accomplish this objective, the narrator uses language that is charged with symbols the girls would only fully understand during the actual life in marriage. Boys, on the other hand, are taught manhood, perseverance, patriotism and bravery.

In a narrative performance, the narrator and the other members know each one of the audience. Everyone is encouraged to take part in the performance in the form of laughter, the clapping of hands, the rhythmical performance, the pace of the performance and the singing. As everybody takes part or shares in the action, a child learns that in life, tasks must be performed in harmony with pace, interests and rhythm of other people if one is to be at all successful. By discovering his individual role and personality, the child becomes able to define himself in relation to others, to weigh his strengths and to accept his weaknesses. This creates in him a sense of personal identity and of value, especially within the social nucleus - his family and his clan (Canonici 1995: 20).

Not only do tales serve as the medium of education, they are also pointedly moralizing and moral teaching ultimately assists in good character building. They inculcate moral principles through the symbolism expressed in the various characters. They are 'images of private conduct and public morality', and the storyteller is the society's soul searcher (*ibid*: 14). Morality is a vital source of order among the Swazi as evidenced in the strict rules in connection, for instance, with premarital sexual relationships, which is taboo and is censored at all costs. According to Makgamatha (1991:9) folktales that incorporate morals serve to inculcate in the young attitudes and principles such as diligence, faithfulness, as well as to scorn or ridicule qualities such as laziness, greed and rebelliousness. However, these morals and the didactic lessons are never preached or explicitly stated to the audience, but are revealed through the performance. The artist is not a preacher; she does not openly moralize. The

educational and moral functions are subtly realized in an artistically pleasing manner, through which the ancient wisdom is communicated (Jordan 1973:2). Morals are revealed in a down-to-earth fashion, especially through the actions of the various characters.

iii) Validation of culture.

Scheub (1975:88) writes that,

The [folktale] is an organic extension of culture from which it springs; it is the image of the perfect society, preserved through the years and daily renewed in the performance. The performer is the intellectual of this society, she is the educator. But she is also the artist, and she desires to project an image that is at once a re-affirmation of her own inherited ideals, an extension of her culture.

From what Scheub says, one concludes that folktales are representations of life in a society. They reflect the philosophy and values of the society that reproduces them and they also emphasize that they are observed (Kabira & waMutahi 1988:10). So, from them children learn their history, the tradition and customs of their people, and the acceptable code of behaviour and their social responsibilities (Canonici 1995:14).

However, at times, some people deliberately and others erroneously deviate from the social conventions with which they are familiar. To correct such deviant behaviour and exercise social control, folktales are used to express disapproval of such behaviour. Animal folktales through transfer of association are used to comment on human condition. They often become the clearest metaphor of human behaviour. In that way for the one who is criticized it is not possible to take personal offence and the performer is afforded a forum in which she is free to criticize anyone without any fear of any reprisals on the part of the transgressor. Naturally, a direct rebuke is an intolerable feeling that may affect human relations. Animal stories are humorous, and fun is certainly conducive to education.

iv) Aetiology (answering questions about origins)

Human beings are naturally curious to know about naturally observable phenomena. For instance, they are baffled by the fact that a rock rabbit has no tail when all other animals have one; only the cock crows at dawn and when man dies he never rises up again. Folktales offer simple and imaginative explanations to such questions that baffle children. In that way *they stimulate intellectual curiosity or challenge the*

children's faculty of imagination (my emphasis). In the words of Canonici (1995:15) & Willies (1997:20) they train the mind in the quest for more knowledge and wisdom.

v) Strengthening of family ties

Folktales can also be a strong bond that strengthens family ties. The scene for the performance of a folktale is usually intimate; a beehive hut or a family yard and the members of the audience, as earlier indicated, know each other. With such company a child feels secure in their little world, surrounded by their loved ones and protected from all kinds of interfering dangers. So the familiar setting and the audience comprising of people who know one another deepens and strengthens family and societal ties within a community of people (Canonici 1995:20).

3.3 WISDOM LORE

In the realm of wisdom lore we find both proverbs and riddles. Kasapo in Moyo et al (1986:62) defines a proverb as a popular maxim expressed in few words stating in a picturesque way some rule of conduct or advice regarding social morality. Finnegan (1970:393) defines it as a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense and salt and distinguished by popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it. It is a short, pithy sentence expressing some general truth or sentiment (Doke in Kaschula 1993:266). A riddle is defined as a question, direct or indirect, complete or incomplete, in traditional form whereby the questioner challenges a listener to recognize and identify the accuracy, the unity, the truth, in a statement that usually seems implausible or self contradictory, but that is in its own peculiar light always true (Jansen in Coffin 1968:231). According to Finnegan (1970:426), although a riddle is interrogative in intent, in form it is a brief statement and the answer is not guessed but must be identified by the analogy referred in the allusive sentence. From the definitions it is evident that proverbs and riddles share a common genre; they are related and they display the same structural features – they are couched in metaphorical and allusive language. They are both characterized by terseness of expression, an economy of words with much left to implication and by traditional popular acceptance (Doke in Kaschula 1993:266). Though no words are wasted and all propositions are stated as succinctly as possible, problem riddles or conundrums, however, are longer as their question part draws comparisons or describes some part

of nature or an object and from the descriptions given in those comparisons the solutions must be found.

Wisdom lore is an integral part of the culture and traditions of a people and it is founded upon matters of actual facts, such as elements of native culture, material as well as spiritual (*ibid*: 282). Proverbs according to Guma (1967:99-101) reflect the whole life and thought of a people who use them.

In a community that could neither read nor write, they constituted the unwritten laws of the people. In them the sanctions and approval of the communities as a whole was reflected. Because of this, they touched on heart-strings of every individual, and made him a policeman unto himself. They teach; they counsel. They do this on the basis of past experience. They contain the pith and marrow around which a people's life has rotated for generations drawing succour and sustenance there from. These are the love for law and order, peace and goodwill towards all men at all times.

Proverbs and riddles are valued for their pungent wit and striking aptness. In the past riddles, in particular, were held in high esteem by the young for the amusement they provided and the older generation treasured proverbs for their instructive value (Lestrade 1959:293). Junod in Miluba (1988:18) views wisdom lore as responses of a people to the influence of their surroundings and in the same vein, the result of their outlook of life in general. Guma (1967:65) echoes this when he writes that proverbs are an embodiment of the distilled and collective experience of the community. They deal with the world around man; the things he knows and the things he sees. According to Doke in Kaschula (1993:276) they originate from the hard school of expediency rather than in that of lofty morals. Hence they reflect experiences in which are mirrored the results of honesty and duplicity, of bravery and cowardice, of cunning and stupidity, and of anger and forbearance.

Guma believes wisdom lore is the voice of the ancient [Swazi] that speaks directly to his descendants counseling, and teaching him from his own experiences in life (1967: 176). *It outlines the rules of conduct, stating what should and should not be done* (my emphasis). Proverbs, in particular, lay down conditions for certain actions and attitudes. They serve as social charters condemning some practices while recommending others. The statements can be negative, positive or conditional. The negative ones usually assert what should not be done. They often embody a moral or practical precept or a rule of conduct. Some statements outline the conditions for

certain behaviour with the idea of defining what should and should not be done in such situations (Olatunji 1984:175).

It is worth noting, however, that to clearly understand the wisdom lore of a people, one needs to fully understand the culture of the people who use them, otherwise they would be meaningless, or perhaps outright stupid, which is not the case. This is confirmed by Doke in Kaschula (1993:275) when he writes that: 'It is only to be expected that an understanding and appreciation of the application of many an aphorism depends upon an understanding of the people. Often detailed knowledge of local conditions and customs is necessary.'

3.3.1 Functions of wisdom lore

Miruka in Bukenya et al (1994:47,48) and Mutasa in Sienaert et al (1994) propose several functions served by wisdom lore: a sign of mastery of language, the aesthetic, the reflective, the summative and the normative. This will be discussed in turn.

i) The aesthetic value/a sign of mastery of language

Most communities in Africa and Swaziland is not the exception place a lot of stress on fluency in speech and those people who have distinguished themselves as orators are regarded with much respect in their communities, irrespective of their material well-being in the society (Bukenya et al 1994:52). An indication that one has mastered a language is one's use of wisdom lore in that language, hence Chinua Achebe's assertion that proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten. Likewise, Saayman (1996:ix) states that proverbs are the salt for the stew and wise human beings speak in proverbs the very epitome of erudition. Proverbs in particular are a model of forceful language (Khuba 1985:11). They facilitate or embellish verbal communication, thus making it enjoyable. They make any conversation colourful. The aesthetic value elevates the level of expression and an orator who quotes proverbs aptly, readily and profusely on appropriate occasions is admired and appreciated by their audience and is said to have spoken explicitly and convincingly.

Proverbs are also colourants of creative writing. In creative writing, they determine an individual's literary capabilities (Mutasa 1999:34-35). A piece of creative writing adorned with proverbs is forceful, is appealing, and is powerful. It is enjoyable indeed. The same holds true of riddles. If one can propound riddles in a language they surely have mastered that language and are able to entertain. Riddles are used for recreational purposes; as a pastime before going to sleep or as an appetizer; a prelude to a performance of a folktale. This form of entertainment is usually between children. Each child aspiring to be seen as outstanding in the event, poses a riddle to another or a group. They propound an enigma, which seems difficult but through scrutiny and commitment, the answer or solution becomes simple. This is intended to amuse them and is a good way of relaxing.

ii) Educational value

Wisdom lore is also instructive and educational. Through the use of proverbs and taking part in riddling games, language competence skills are cultivated in children. The child's competence in speech gives assurance to parents that the child will relate well with other children and would do as well as any other child (Bukonya et al 1994:53). For this reason some parents would usually sit with their children quizzing them with riddles and expounding proverbs until the riddles and the proverbs they themselves learnt in their childhood are mastered by their children. Their mastery through the exposure to connected speech enhances language competence skills such as speaking skills, listening in order to respond correctly and a variety of sentence structures. One's mastery of a language will then be reflected in the generous use of the proverbs in both speech and writing and also the use of various riddles in a riddling game.

Furthermore, through its wit and aptness, wisdom lore impresses wisdom in the mind of the listener. Children are therefore taught to think sharply and quickly, read meanings between the lines and so be able to provide suitable answers and challenges during conversations and arguments (Awoniyi 1982:17).

Wisdom lore reflecting a people's physical environment and their material world, makes mention of nature as a whole, geographical names and some contain references to historical events. Such riddles and proverbs help one develop a sense of

observation, thus they educate or train children to be keen observers of natural phenomena, fauna and flora, insects, grass, trees and wild animals. In the olden days, a person had to depend a lot on observational skills in food gathering, travelling, herding livestock and hunting. Therefore in wisdom lore, a child was trained to master observational skills in nature, phenomena, and structure hence riddles such as *ngikuphica ngesipani sami setinkhabi lesilima insimu lendze. Ekuseni letinkhabi tiba tine, kutsi emini tibe timbili, kantsi ntsambama tiphindze tibe tine* 'a span of oxen is ploughing a long field. In the morning it is a span of four oxen that ploughs the field, but by noon it is a span of two, yet by the fall of night it is again a span of four oxen.' The answer to this riddle is the magical cycle of life. When one is born into this world they first crawl on all four and at adulthood they walk on their two feet, yet at old age they again crawl on all four. In riddles, it is worth noting that accurate observation is confined to local nature, yet with proverbs it usually has a much wider application (Guma 1967:39).

ii) The summative value

Wisdom lore is in a great sense a summatory activity for the expression of values. Through proverbs mainly, people summarize the everyday experiences (real or imaginary) they have had in life or in getting on in the world, as it is (Guma 1967:65). In Swaziland this is prevalent in many titles of stories, plays and poems. Using proverbs, authors summarize their messages and experiences in these pieces of writing. Others begin with a proverb, which gives credence to the experience to be narrated about the origin of that proverb. Thus in Swaziland we have book titles such as *Umjingi udliwa yinhlitiyo* 'one man's meat is another man's poison', an Ordinary G.C.E.level drama textbook, *Inhlitiyo ngumtsakatsi* 'a heart is a witch', another drama textbook for the Junior level where people's experiences are summarized.

Not only that, proverbs serving the summative function are also used in the naming of business enterprises, stores and buses usually owned by black entrepreneurs as there is a strong drive towards the promotion of black businesses (Mutasa in Sienaert et al 1994:161). According to Mutasa (1999:35) the use of proverbs for this purpose is a pointer to the philosophy that is projected by the individual when they go into business. It is a question of consciousness and attitude. The proverb used in naming the business then projects the business owner's understanding of what they are going

into, their understanding of the capitalist world as opposed to traditional enterprises (*ibid*: 35). Thus in Swaziland we have shops such as *Vukuzenzele* 'wake up and do it yourself'. The name *Vukuzenzele* might have been prompted by the shop owner's fear in business. He might be from a community where there is no regard for people's property or where people are generally lazy. So by naming his shop *Vukuzenzele* he sounds a strong warning to those who think they might break into the shop or practice shop-lifting (*ibid*: 36).

Children too, largely those from polygamous families bear names summing up experiences of their parents, especially co-wives. Thus when the husband in favour of a junior one has deserted a senior wife, children especially *girls* born under those conditions are usually named *Lahliwe*, which means deserted, *Sibangani* 'what are we fighting for' or *Tentile* 'you have done it yourself' and for female children it must be quite deterministic to live with names such as these considering the implications behind them. In this way proverbs do not only summarise experiences but reflect the relations between members of a household and extend from there to cover the society as a whole (Guma 1967:65-66).

iii) The Reflective value

Wisdom lore reveals much about the way people think and view life. According to Miruka in Bukenya et al (1994:47) wisdom lore presents us with a codified wisdom of a society accumulated over many years of happy and bitter experiences. In them we see how the society perceives life and such a perception having developed as a result of careful observation and reflection of the nature of life. Thus proverbs and riddles are known as the pearls of wisdom. From them one acquires the wisdom of old hence riddles such as: *ngikuphica ngelilahle lelincane kepha lelitsi lingadzilikela etjanini noma buncane kangani lishise live lonkhe* 'I riddle you with the smallest coal that upon landing even on the smallest patch of grass burns the whole veld'. The answer is the tongue. Before they thought about such a riddle the older generation might have witnessed havoc caused by backbiting. Therefore through this riddle the young are cautioned to be careful of what they speak and to whom they speak as the tongue may cause great trouble and ill feelings in a community of people.

Similarly proverbs such as *indvuku lenhle igawulwa etiveni* 'a good stick is one fetched from afar' meaning a woman that makes a good wife is one from far away, are very common in the preparatory stages of the young for marriage. Having had nasty experiences with a woman one married from the neighbourhood and the problems this entailed; the older generation saw it wise to marry one from afar. Misunderstandings between the couple will remain within the walls of their house, as she would not have enough time to be going home to report all the trivial issues of her married life, which might eventually cause ill feelings between the two families. It may also allude to an expansion of the genetic pod.

iv) The normative function

Every society has certain standards it cherishes and wishes to perpetuate. At the same time some people deviate from the social norms and as such need to be discouraged. Serving the normative function which Hornby (1995:788) defines as setting standards or rules of behaviour which should be followed, wisdom lore contains practical rules and lessons for the guidance of life as a whole – guidance in behaviour, beliefs, social norms or knowledge on the basis of which the community must act. They represent the doctrine by means of which a society maintains its coherent structure and this explains why proverbs in particular are associated with the elders of a society because it is in their interest to maintain the existing structure of their society (Knappert 1986:7). In this category, we have wisdom lore that initiates the young into the conventions of the society and those that incorporate morals or lay out the rules of conduct. Morals are important as parents and elders use this code to inculcate into the minds of the children what they expect of them (Katengo & Murale in Moyo et al 1986: 474). Proverbs, for instance, that deal with morals reach not only to the head but also to the conscience.

They stir the conscience...they help in the exercise of deciding between good and evil, justice and injustice, right and wrong. They are highly pregnant with religious content accumulated over the generations, [and] they address themselves to all parts of the society... from the family to the nation... from the rulers sitting on golden stools to beggars squatting by the gutters (Mokitimi 1997: xiv).

For example, *intsandzane lenhle ngumakhofwa ngunina* 'a good orphan is one taken care of by its mother' reprimands someone who is cruel to a youngster who is not his own child and also stirs his conscience. It embarrasses and teaches him to refrain from

bad behaviour he may be practising. Cruelty to children is to be avoided and all children should be brought up by everyone as one's own. No child should feel unwanted in a Swazi family.

Again we have proverbs such as *emehlo lamabili ayabonisana* 'two eyes aid each other to give a clearer view'. Such proverbs castigate individualism and encourage collaboration; that is joining hands to accomplish tasks or objectives, which cannot be done by one person.

Other proverbs and riddles council especially couples and in that way bring them into compliance with social expectations. They act as catalysts of knowledge and wisdom and provoke further reflection and call for deeper thinking (Khuba 1985: xii). Due to certain pressures of social instability or family strain or provocation many couples resort to fighting yet *indvuku ayiwakhi umuti* 'a stick does not build a household'. Quarrels and fighting are not conducive to a healthy relationship and they can break up a family. Besides, *akukho soka lingenasici* 'everyone is prone or vulnerable to mistakes'. So with these pieces of advice from the older generation, one is challenged to seriously reflect on their deeds and in that way marriages are saved.

From the above discussion it is evident that wisdom lore depicts definite ways of behaviour or conduct, which are expected of the individuals comprising a social unit. Some of the models of conduct behaviour serve the purpose of instructing or cautioning the younger and the ignorant generations or serve as reminders of the old, who have been remiss in their observance of the rules of conduct expected in the society (Mutasa 1999:38 & Mokitimi1997: xiii). For this reason Guma (1967:1) advises that,

[Wisdom lore] should not only be nursed and nurtured, but also preserved and jealously guarded for all times.... Without it, a nation is like a tree without roots, liable to be blown over the gentlest of breezes; with it, it can withstand the strongest of hurricanes because it is firmly rooted.

4.4 ORAL POETRY

Oral poetry is by definition a form of poetry that is transmitted over the generations by word of mouth and as such it circulates by verbal rather than written means. It is primarily designed to be heard rather than read. 'It lives in the mouths and minds of men, women, and children who flourish in their cultural tradition and never consciously seek to break away from the long established tradition for its own sake' (Moyo et al 1986:37). Oral poetry can only be appreciated through performance. It addresses both the eye and the ear as people can see and hear it being chanted. It is not dependent on a fixed text that has been memorized by the performers. 'Instead, each performance is a recreation out of the singers' vast store of verbal and literary formulas of a literary work that they and their audience have never heard in its entirety and completeness or ever, even incompletely, in the same words twice.' (Kgobe 1999:43). The significance of the performance is endorsed by Finnegan (1970:2) when she writes that oral literature is 'dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion; there is no other way it can be realized as a literary product.'

In the domain of oral poetry are praise poems and folk songs. These are categorized together because they share a common genre. They both 'depend on a performer for their actualization' (*ibid*: 51). The performers of both praises and folksongs, for instance, to give meaning to their performances, blend renditions with action such as body movements; facial expressions, gestures and vocal tone devices used to manipulate the social situation and convey the message and these create very dramatic performances (Dlamini in Sienaert 1994:88). Furthermore, both praises and folksongs are chanted in front of a live audience on special occasions such as weddings, ceremonies, and funerals, to name a few. The audience, in turn, responds to these performances by taking part in the dance. Movements such as ululations, clapping of hands, the stamping of feet on the ground or a strong rhythm, joining in the singing and 'the interaction of the audience puts an active flame in the song or praises' (*ibid*: 47). For this reason oral poetry does not persuade the mind by logic but appeals to the emotion. Finally, praises and folksongs are structured in a more or less similar way and they serve the same functions as will be discussed below.

Like the other forms of oral literature, oral poetry mirrors the culture or the philosophy of life of a people. It reveals how a people view the world they are in contact with around them. According to Opland (1992:19) oral poetry is 'a people's autobiographical ethnography the songs we sing [the praises we perform] all reflect the values and outlook of the social groups in which we are all members. Thus the traditional [songs] and poems circulating among a group of people reflect its concerns and aspirations.' Abrahams in Opland (1992:19) echoes this when he says,

As with any object or concept, every work of folk creation or transmission is an artifact potentially capable of providing great insight into the story of its culture, because that work in both its forms and its function reflect the preoccupations and values of those who create and transmit it.

Oral poets who chant this poetry believe they are obliged or have a responsibility to perpetuate whatever traditions have been handed down from the previous generation (Moyo et al 1986:137). Vilakazi in Kaschula (1993:55) confirms this when he writes that: 'such a man is never requested to do his duty, but stirred by the performance of tribal ceremony and imbued with national pride, he feels it most opportune to express his feelings, and thus fulfills his self-imposed duty.

In the form of song, oral poetry is intimate, personal and subjective (Guma 1967:102). It is descriptive of joys, sorrows, hopes and aspirations of an individual yet *tibongo* 'praise names' are primarily concerned with naming, identifying and giving significance and substance to the named person or object. They are characterized by brevity and are highly allusive in nature (Gunner and Gwala 1991:2). Not only that, praise names are available and are used both within an "authoritarian populism" and an emergent "popular democratic culture". They are thus at the centre of contested terrain and are a key art form in the political discourse of the day (*ibid*: 2).

In all the different forms of oral poetry, the voice of the speaker always represents the experiences of a particular group in a society. Even if singular forms of address are used, the person talking is always viewed as a representative of her or his group and the words within the poem point to cultural practices, which pertain to particular sections of society. Sometimes the words are not from the particular speaker's point

of view, but nevertheless, they represent perceptions of the group by society (Mamba in Moyo et al 1986:184).

4.4.1 Functions of oral poetry

Merriam (1964:223-227) and Kgobe (1999:48-51) identify several functions served by oral poetry in a community among which are the entertainment / aesthetic, social, historical, political, educative, religious, cognitive /conative and the communicative values. These will be discussed in turn.

i) The Entertainment / aesthetic value.

Depending on the occasion of the performance, oral poetry mainly serves the entertainment/aesthetic function in society both for the creator (artist) and the contemplator (audience). In social gatherings such as wedding ceremonies and informal get-togethers oral poetry in the form of praises, dances, music and song is composed and performed for recreational purposes: to excite and entertain the people. At times the wording of the song, for example, is not even clear cut or not audible at all, but their performance and dance dominates it thus encouraging physical reactions and eliciting physical responses on the part of the audience who join in to enjoy their compatriots' aesthetic productions. Hence the screams, the whistles, and ululation heard from the audience obviously spell appreciation. Male praises, for instance, performed especially during the solo 'kugiya' dance at which the worrier dances vigorously and ferociously to the recitation of his praise, excite and delight the audience (Brown 1998:87-88).

ii) The Communicative value

Oral poetry is a very powerful device for communication. It communicates messages, and it is a means of emotional expression, feelings and views of the world around a poet. According to Merriam (1964:223) in the form of song, 'shaped in terms of the culture of which it is part, oral poetry communicates direct information to those who understand the language in which it is couched.' The messages communicated could be to a ruler, a bride or any other individual and the feelings expressed could be to a loved one not revealed in ordinary discourse. Since oral poetry communicates 'important' messages, the words used are carefully chosen and have different levels of

meanings. The language used is usually heavily loaded with coded messages. Hence their interpretation goes beyond their rendition. In the following extract from the praises of Sobhuza II recorded by T.T. Ginindza from a performance by Makhosini Dlamini, the first Prime Minister of Swaziland an important message is communicated (Vail and White 1991:189).

Banelusongo!
 Bayakusongela!
 Bayasonga!
 Ngebezitheni nebekhaya.
 Banemanga ke.

They are full of threats!
 They threaten you!
 They threaten!
 It is the enemies and those at home.
 They are wrong.

From the above extract the former king of Swaziland, Sobhuza II is informed and cautioned to be aware that as king enemies who threaten his reign surround him. His enemies are not only those far from him but his close relatives as well. As such, he has to be very careful. Let us again look at the following song:

Hlobo lwekhakhami (x2)
 Muhle umntfwana make (x3)
 Ngitsandza nabheke le
 Muhle umntfwana make

Oh my in-laws (x2)
 My mother's child is handsome (x3)
 I love his back
 My mother's child is handsome

In the above song the composer expresses her feelings about a loved one. Mutual attraction between two people of the opposite sex is the primary requisite for marriage (Dlamini in Sienaert et al 1994:90). In traditional Swazi society, in expressing her love for a man, the woman presents him with a necklace known as *lijuba* 'dove' made out of light blue beads, which is a symbol for true and endless love. In addition to that, the woman usually composes a song where she expresses her deep love for her husband. The above song in which the physical attractions of a man are described is an example of such an expression of affection. It expresses the woman's deep love and pride not only of her husband but also her in-laws. She describes the physical attractions that justify her love for this man and she is obviously proud of her choice.

iii) The social value

In the past and even today, there is no written Swazi law on shared values and norms among the Swazi people in any form of constitution or government gazette. These laws, however, were taught and learnt through oral literature and as such every member of society was expected to abide and respect these norms and values. Any

deviant behaviour or violation of these norms and values prompted a situation whereby the offender was uncompromisingly attacked usually satirically so as to be forced to conform to the social norms. Satire served as a weapon for enforcing unwritten rules and codes of conduct. It was always acutely conscious of the differences between what things are and what they ought to be (Groenewald and Makopo in Sienaert et al 1991:205). Satire refers to an art of communication that may be used to criticize, ridicule, scorn, mock, warn, correct, or educate. It is that aspect of literature in which human deviation from cultural norms and values is held up to ridicule (Dyubhele in Sienaert et al 1994:142). For example, in 1973 Sobhuza II suspended the 1968 constitution, banned all political parties and assumed full political power. Swaziland is a one party state; a traditional society that is highly stratified and patriarchal. As Brown (1998:76) puts it, power is centralized in the hands of the king and is devolved through local chiefs and headmen to the leading men of individual households.

However, due to divergent socio-political ideologies and practices facing the world today, multi-partism is mushrooming in this kingdom and is exerting a profound effect on the Swazi cosmology. As a single party state, the elders and the conservatives of the country are not prepared to bend to this 'foreign' concept of multi-partism. So, to discourage it and ridicule the 'erring' members or 'rebels' of the traditional practices, songs have been composed. The composers have been afforded the forum by the two media houses (television and radio stations) to openly criticize and castigate the leaders of the progressives and the workers' organizations who are instituting multi-partism and are rebelling against Swazi norms. *So by indirectly establishing what is considered to be proper behaviour, the conservatives are using oral poetry as an instrument of cultural indoctrination where aspects of the Swazi values, traditions and expected code of behaviour are indoctrinated into the younger generation* (my emphasis). To break with social values, for instance, is to feel the shame of popular disapproval. Characters such as Mphandlana Shongwe, a popular activist of the Swaziland Youth Congress (SWAYOCO), Mario Masuku, the president of the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO), Jan Sithole, the secretary general of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Union (SFTU) and Obed Dlamini, once a Prime Minister of the country and now a dignitary of the Ngwane National

Liberation Congress (NNLC) are subjects of ridicule and victims of negative reports on Swaziland media stations.

Not only that, through oral poetry and the song, for instance, social evils are criticized without reserve. Songs of protest particularly call attention to what is proper and improper in a society, hence both the good and the bad that goes on in a community come out clearly in oral poetry. For example, in Swaziland polygamy in traditional societies, largely in the rural areas, is still very common. However, one finds that the man fails in his duties to equally serve his wives and this failure is the root cause of bitter jealousies, which sometimes lead to foul play. The woman who suffers the injustice (usually the senior wife) cannot, however, confront the husband and tell him to shoulder responsibility for all his family since in Swazi traditional society a woman never reaches a stage at which she gains freedom of speech. Tradition restricts her from vocalizing her marital problems. So, her only channel of communication where she expresses her feelings and 'let off the steam' remains the song hence the following composition:

Indvodza yelijazi
Iyagula
Uma iyolala kami.

The man in the coat
Is sick
When he has to sleep in my house.

In the above song, the wife is complaining bitterly about her husband who is no longer responsible for her and her children. He no longer rotates his visits to his wives and children. Instead he spends many days with the other wife and when it is the senior wife's turn, he goes about wearing a heavy overcoat in pretence that he is not well. In singing the above song, the woman is externalizing the complaint and appealing for change. Anger is not the only revolutionary attitude available to women, but the power of laughter can be just as subversive. In a very humorous manner the woman is trying to persuade her husband to validate the social system of serving wives equally and also criticizing him for his failures.

Conformity to social norms is also enforced through praise names. There are poems about ordinary people, for instance, which serve not to highlight or praise a person but which may tease, expose, criticize and humiliate him. They praise this person sarcastically and their aim is to criticize unbecoming behaviour (Groenewald and

Makopo in Sienaert et al 1991:203). These satirical compositions are usually performed in traditional weddings, drinking sessions and in sporting events. They reflect or depict a certain behaviour trait for which that person is well known or notorious of (*ibid*: 104). Affectation and hypocrisy, pride, sex and promiscuity are some of the favourite topics of a satirist.

iv) The historical value

Both the praise poems and folksongs are living records of past events, the deeds of historical people and their places. They are a nation's archives because they are oral documents, which contain a lot of information collected over many decades. These historical records serve to equip the present generation about important people who existed in time immemorial and events, which once happened (Kgobe 1999:50).

As stated by Kgobe above, oral poetry is invaluable historical evidence. Praise names, for instance, are an oral history of the people from their own point of view. They are an authentic account of the turmoil of the nation and its leaders in the form of kings and outstanding warriors. Their names and deeds are perpetually enshrined in them..

They are a remembered history that keeps the memory of the past alive and preserves it in the present (Guma 1967:181). Hilda Kuper in Vail and White (1991), for example, in her praises of Sobhuza II where she depicts him as a defender of the Swazi territory gives a history of his reign. In the adulation of his deeds, from which he acquired fame, Kuper summarizes important events in his long reign since his accession in 1921. The poem tells of his voyage to England when he conquered the oceans, his challenge to king George when twice the heavens flashed within the palace of the English and his rise to preeminence within Swaziland devouring herds of men from his administrative capital at Lozithehlezi on the ridge of Lancabane (Vail & White 1991: 155). So from this extract, one learns the history behind the success of Sobhuza.

Mswati III is also praised thus:

Lwandle luyadzikita lapho kunendlovu!
Indlovu ngeyefu maSwati,
Ngemandla!
NguMakhosetive inkhosi lebuse
Tive kucala
Ibe bukhosi bakhe abushiyele bakakhe
Bona batiko kutsi

The sea stirs where there is an elephant!
The elephant is ours Swazis,
Power!
It is Makhosetive the king who ruled
Nations first
Yet he reserved his reign for his people
Those who know that

Mafika muva udl'umlente
Inkunzi isematfoleni

He who comes late eats the fleshy thigh
The bull is amongst the calves.

Vilakati & Sibanda (1997:42)

In the above extract indicative of the king's lordship, the praise singer touches on incidents related to Mswati III before he ascended to the throne in 1986. He went to school abroad and in his absence and minority, Queen Dzeliwe had to act for him. The poet touches on Mswati's genealogy and the history of the former kings, especially Mswati II who was responsible for building up the Swazi nation (Vilakati and Sibanda 1997:43). So, from a poem, much history of a person or a nation may be revealed.

v) The Political value

Oral poetry, particularly praises of kings is not only a record of their laudable achievements, but they also point out certain aspects of their personality and actions. They go beyond the boundaries of cultural values and are used to comment on political affairs. This poetry serves as the voice of the people in favour or in criticism of the monarch. Hence it may be taken to be the conscience and radar with which the direction of the society is monitored (Sithebe 1998:48). It is a political weapon where people voice their concerns about current affairs in a community in relation to social mal-administration and practices of injustice. The praise poet who performs these praises is a political watchdog guarding against unjust practices (Kaschula 1997:1). He negotiates relations of political power within the society. He criticizes the king when this is perceived to be necessary and he also articulates the expectations of the subjects of their ruler (Brown 1998:91-92). This is echoed by Groenewald and Makopo in Sienaert et al (1991:76) when he writes that oral [poetry] has always been topical in the sense that it was always prepared to criticize dominating, harmful practices, albeit in a predominantly obscure fashion. The criticism is couched in the typically allusive phrasing of [tibongo], which makes it hard to pick out words unless one is in the know (Gunner and Gwala 1991:18-19).

In this context, praises deal with the way in which people feel oppressed under a particular government. They reveal social displeasure. They are therefore directed to a

ruler who may be misdirected in his concerns or whose behaviour is erratic. In the light of this Ngwane III is thus praised:

Ngwane lonelulaka ekhaya
Netsafeni
Emathunzini ezintaba
Mbetsi wetidzandzane emasekweni
Kwetfuke emadvodza
Bonina bangekho
Basematsafeni

Ngwane who rages at home and on
the plains
In the shadows of the mountains.
You strike girls against hearthstones
Frightening men
Their mothers are away
Gone to the fields.
(Vail & White 1991:182)

In the above extract Ngwane III is severely criticized for his irrational violence. He mercilessly killed both animals and the people, especially girls of the tribes he had defeated. It was only when he came to Ngwane's rock, a boulder on the border between Swaziland and South Africa, where the desolation of the scene of dying cattle, bare rocks and vultures attracted by the smell of decaying meat crowded that brought him to his senses and he began to govern properly (*ibid*: 182).

Praises therefore reflect public opinion in criticizing and cautioning a ruler of his actions and personality. The *imbongi* 'poet' acts as a mediator between the leader and the common people on the ground. He operates under a constraint to speak the truth as he sees it on behalf of the people. He praises and decries figures of authority that control the lives of people, to express outspokenly the burning issues of the community (Opland 1992:21). The criticism is, however, not intended to stir up dissent or dissatisfaction, but rather to express popular opinion and to moderate excessive behaviour (Opland 1988:17). Hence, the king would not take offence in what was vocalized about him and punish the reciter because he knows that the poet is a mouthpiece of his subjects; a social critic fulfilling a function. Instead he would be reminded to check his actions towards his subjects, and know his weak points through the interpretation of the praise poem as recited by his subjects.

In the same vein, political songs are very popular amongst the progressives in Swaziland. They carry with them criticisms of the current government and a message of liberation and the creation of a new society. They play the role of mediating on prevailing circumstances making an attempt to reduce societal imbalances and integrate the society. They advocate change for the betterment of the whole Swazi

humanity. Militarism is the most characteristic feature of these songs and they form an integral part at funerals of political leaders, political rallies, marches and strikes. After the 1973 decree where all political parties were banned in Swaziland and the king assumed full political power, all issues pertaining to the welfare of the country are deliberated upon at the different *tinkhundla* centres. At these centres it is very difficult for most progressives to be given the forum to criticize the system of government. Because of this deprivation of the mechanisms of protest, social protest songs emerge. Groenewald and Makopo in Sienaert et al (1991:85) express a similar view when they note that 'it is evident that where direct access to political activity is absent, as a result of repression and denial, the freedom hymn finds fertile soil'. In huge marches and rallies they are [therefore] rendered and received as part of a broad nationalistic desire to redress the balance of power and inspire a need for a deep political change (Gunner and Gwala 1991:13).

vi) The religious value

Most Swazis are traditional people who believe strongly in the traditional religion of ancestors. Ancestors are believed to be a channel through which the living can speak to *Mlentengamunye* 'God'. The spirits of the ancestors are perceived to influence the affairs of the living as intermediary presences (Brown 1998:110). So one way of making contact with or evoking them is to recite their praises usually at religious ceremonies, traditional weddings and funerals. In times of crises such as when war was undertaken, the imbongi performed the praises of the former kings, the ancestors of the nation, interceding on behalf of the people and enlisting their assistance in such an insurmountable endeavor. Likewise when a deceased person is being taken to her or his burial place, the imbongi intercedes on behalf of both the dead person and their family that the ancestors welcome and take care of them where they are. Similarly, when a woman is married the traditional way, before she departs to her new home the ancestors have to be reported to and their guidance and blessings solicited as the woman establishes her own family.

vii) The educational value

Oral poetry is today used in an innovative way to teach the Swazi people about health related issues. It is used as an educational tool to warn and inform people about the HIV/AIDS epidemic and family planning. The killer disease, Aids, currently plagues

Swaziland and the birth rate largely among the illiterate living in rural areas and school children is very high. Oral poetry, in this context, is used as a weapon not only to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS epidemic and to minimize the high birth rates but also to educate people about how HIV/AIDS, for instance, is acquired, preventive measures, how it is spread and how people should care for the AIDS sufferers. It also appeals to the whole Swazi community to change their attitudes especially to sexual relations.

viii) The cognitive and conative values

Cognitive refers to the ability of the mind to grasp the message of the praise poem or song. It can also refer to how praise or song psychologically affects the audience, as well as their reactions to the impact (Kgobe 1999:49). The melody and the tone as expressed in the performance of song or praise stimulates people's imagination and arouses intense emotions and different kinds of reactions in an audience and in a way channeling crowd behaviour. Oral poetry, both song and praises aid in inducing an attitude of pride, loyalty, bravery, turmoil, solidarity and hatred. For example, in the olden days when there was going to be war an imbongi would continuously sing praises of the brave warriors of the past. He would sing praises that even those who have got water in their hearts could go out fully and fight (Opland 1998: 24).

According to Kgobe (1999:49) at the funeral of Chris Hani, one of the leaders of the ANC, who was assassinated,

the singing gave the youth the power and courage. the wings of the quotation to plunder and mesmerize the Boers along the way to Boksburg cemetery. When Sam Shilowa started "Hambakahle Mkhonto we Sizwe" all hell broke loose. Music [had given] wings to the mind and flight to the imagination.

This scenario is reminiscent of the tragedies of the years 1994 and 1995 when Ka Boyce High School in Mbabane lost a number of pupils in different incidents. As the song/poem,

Hamba ka hle ..
Kepha senzeni na Nkosi

Go thee well ..
But what have we done Oh Lord

was sung repeatedly in a very solemn tune, the audience was thrown into a frenzy of excitement and went wild mourning bitterly at the loss of the children. Again, music

had given wings to the mind, and flight to the imagination. It had excited and channeled crowd behaviour, thus eliciting physical reactions.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, oral literature in its entirety has been defined and the role it plays in a community of people has been established. The different categories of this form of literature have also been defined and the several functions they serve in a traditional community established. Common in all these different categories of oral literature is that they reflect the culture of a people and they contribute immensely to its continuity and stability. From the traditional conservative perspective, oral literature serves as a vehicle of history and social control stressing what is right and wrong. It provides a 'normal' and 'solid' activity, which assures the members of the society that the world continues in its proper path.

Not only that, oral literature as a mainstream of African education shows an individual their relationship to society, guides and integrates them into society. *This education teaches an individual the correct code of behaviour by putting rules and customs in very subtle means that encourage a person to develop his personality* (my emphasis). This education is transmitted orally over the generations. However, due to modernization certain types of themes or subjects in oral literature are on the decline. Others, however, especially those in oral poetry are arising within new contexts. In his concluding remarks, Guma (1967:185) cautions that as much as we should try to preserve our traditional heritage, we should do so in the light and learning of the modern world. Through an investigation of the factors influencing the negative attitudes towards oral literature, the next chapter will explore the teaching of this subject in the light and demands of the modern world clearly projecting the 'flaws' inherent in it.

Chapter 4

Attitudes to oral literature : A general critique

4.1 Introduction

Bukenya et al (1994:2) point out that 'it must be admitted that not everything contained in oral performance is positive or progressive'. Human rights' violation, class chauvinism and gender stereotyping or even degradation are features not rare in orature. These are the elements that may breed negativistic attitudes to this subject both in the classroom and society at large. With examples from the different genres of oral literature, this chapter seeks to investigate the factors that may influence negative attitudes to oral literature in Swazi society in general and the schools in particular thereby providing a critical exposé of the teaching of this subject in the light and learning of the modern world. Among these factors, the low status conferred to oral literature, ideology and master symbols inherent in the subject will be investigated. The implications these factors may have in the classroom will be explored at the end of this chapter.

4.2 Low status attributed to oral literature

According to Tollefson (1991:16) language policy is one mechanism by which dominant groups establish hegemony in language use (cited in Mesthrie 1995:332). As a result that policy may be established not for the benefit of those whom the program is intended to serve, but rather for the benefit of those in power (Tollefson 1993:75). In Swaziland, the language-in-education policy⁸ advantaged English politically, educationally and economically and undervalued siSwati and consequently its curriculum. As a result the culture and selfworth embodied in siSwati faced greater devaluation, as these people were unable to fully participate in national affairs and the development of their country.⁹ This had a great effect on the perception of the teaching of siSwati, which had been relegated to the position of insubordination.

⁸ It is, however, not possible within the limits of the present study to evaluate all aspects of Swaziland's language policy as my interest focuses on critiquing the teaching of oral literature. I shall, however, point out briefly the basic theoretical assumptions, which I consider erroneous.

⁹ It should also be recognised that siSwati has been taught in a soulless way in which basic literacy rather than critical literacy is the goal.

Consequently, the general feeling about siSwati, which oral literature is a component of is that, like the many African languages, it does not take people anywhere economically. Unlike, for instance, English to which is ascribed the attributes of supremacy or high status, good education, good employment opportunities and access to the world outside Swaziland and is viewed as a language of economic, and political opportunity, 'African languages are considered 'backward' because they have failed to develop in step with the needs of their speakers who live in urban areas' (Mahlalela-Thusi 1999:82). Unlike English too, siSwati is not seen as a bridge towards access to international literature and commerce. SiSwati is believed not to have any access to higher education, Science and Technology and it cannot serve as a window on the outside world. It is conceived not as a language of power and it is believed that it cannot function in cognitive areas pertaining to abstract thought. It is believed to be unable to serve in higher realms of thinking. Fardon and Graham (1994:57) confirm this when they write that 'African languages were believed to be inappropriate for rational argument, intellectual vigour and science and technology'. As a result the inclination or zest to learn the language even among the semi-literate is non-existent. Greater allegiance is towards the use of English or French by many. It is therefore to be expected that learners will inevitably be less enthusiastic about a subject that will neither enable them access to higher education, science and technology nor access to the international community.

The Swaziland ministry of education itself also aggravates the low status of this subject. The profession of a siSwati teacher does not enjoy a high social status. If a need arises in a school for a siSwati teacher, the Teaching Service Commission gives credence to Swaziland's policy of zero-growth, and usually informs the school to utilize the services of *any other* teacher in the school or employ a temporary teacher (emphasis mine). The ministry of education seems not to be aware that there is any intellectual basis for siSwati in general and oral literature teaching in particular. In the past it was popular belief that any native speaker of that language could teach that language, more especially its oral literature. Whiteley (1974:461) emphasizes this when he writes that 'teachers were considered qualified to teach the mother tongue by reason of being native speakers of the language.' So for that reason teachers who were not even qualified in the subject would be made to teach it. The utilization of the services of an unqualified teacher for the teaching of siSwati had a negative impact

not only on the standards of teaching/learning but on the learners also. Such a person could hardly inspire the students and this discouraged many as Awoniyi (1982:25) observed. It seems as if the educational authorities of Swaziland do not regard the teaching of siSwati and its oral literature as a specialist assignment in much the same way as the teaching of Physics or English yet like the other subjects 'it requires adequate training in the language structure and literature, in addition to a good knowledge of the language' (Bamgbose 1991:93-94). Teachers should not only master the subject matter and disseminate it successfully to the learners but they should also possess pedagogical skills and educational understanding. So if *anyone* can teach oral literature, and the government is reluctant to spend on resources' distribution when it comes to teachers of siSwati and its oral literature, the idea that the subject is not important simmers in the minds of many and this is not at all inspiring to the learners and an aversion for this subject may be expected (my emphasis).

Furthermore, passing in siSwati let alone its component, oral literature, for admission to tertiary institutions and for all jobs is *not* compulsory both at junior and senior secondary schools (my emphasis). It is only now that siSwati is required for courses in the language concerned or for jobs such as broadcasting in which the use of the language is important. So, as long as the pursuance of higher education and careers are possible only by using a European language, siSwati and its oral literature will not be studied with any enthusiasm. Bamgbose (1991:94) confirms this when he says,

as long as [siSwati and its oral literature] is not required for specific purposes, such as appointment to the administrative cadre of the civil service or admission to the Arts programme of colleges education, the question of low prestige will continue to affect the conditions and prospects of their teaching.

From this discussion it is evident that several factors can be identified that contribute to the problematic position of siSwati. However, there is also a strong perception that certain inherent problems regarding the values embedded in orature compound this problem. These are the ideology and master symbols.

4.3 Ideology in oral literature

Hornby (1995:589) defines ideology as a set of ideas or beliefs that form the basis of an economic or political theory that is held by a particular group or person. For the purposes of this study ideology will be defined as a set of ideas, the norms and the values or the manner of thinking characteristic of a certain class of people or society. Ideology can be fostered into the child through the reading material the child is exposed to. Oral literature in the siSwati curriculum is mainly intended for children, and as such its intention is to foster in the child reader a positive appreciation of socio-cultural value. These values include morality and ethics, a sense of what is valuable in the cultures past and . aspirations about the present and future. Since a culture's future is invested in children, oral literature writers take upon themselves the task of trying to mould audience attitudes into desirable forms, which can mean either an attempt to perpetuate certain socially dominant values, and ideology, which most learners and teachers unfortunately oppose (Stephens 1992:3). Hence on ideological grounds or when the ideologies learners and teachers have differ widely from those presented in a praise poem, for example, some ambivalence or aversion towards the subject may be expected. Ideas such as *the* tradition, the nature of the world, *how* to live in it, *how* to relate to other people, *what* to believe, *what* and *how* to think are widely evident in oral literature (my emphasis). These ideas are constructed within social practices.

In Swaziland the role of ideology has been of seminal importance in securing and maintaining royal hegemony, hence it is mainly the ideology of a certain class; the conservative or traditional ruling class that is perpetuated in the classroom (Levin 1991:7). This is mostly evident in praises of the Swazi kings and folksongs, which carry with them an implicit ideology in the form of assumed social structures, tradition and habits of thought. When people are told that something is *the* tradition, they assume it is age-old, unchanged since its inception and therefore not to be changed nor challenged. According to Furniss and Gunner (1995:161) conformity is relatively easy to achieve in a culture that generally does not challenge authority. This then is the ideology that has propagated tradition and has been central in the maintenance of royal hegemony. Folksongs and the kings' praises have therefore been used as powerful vehicles for an ideology because implicit, and therefore invisible,

ideological positions are invested with legitimacy through the implication that things are simply so (Stephens 1992:9). Let us look at the following praises of King Mswati III. Further praises and folksongs can be found in appendix 3.

Asitfokoteni maSwati,
 Ubutsetse bukhosi Mswati Wesitsatfu,
 Bukhosi labushiyelwe nguSobhuza Wesibili.
 Lutfokotile neLusushwana,
 Lebelugadze kufika kwaMswati Wesitsaftu,
 .
 Asibongeni,
 Khon'eMdzimba neMbilaneni, kulabaphansi,
 .
 Labaphumelelise kutsatsa kwaMswati bukhosi;
 .
 Singakhohlwa kubonga kuSomandla,
 Lobambisene nalabaphansi,
 Kwaze kwaphumelela umsebenti
 Mswati.wabutsatsa bukhosi
 Emehlo etfu akabuke eLudzidzini,
 Silindzele lokuchamuka kuMswati,
 Sikwente ngeligcabho nangekutitfoba.
 Akuphele kunhinhhitela.
 Insika yetfu iseLudzidzini Lwesitsatfu;
 NguMswati Wesitsatfu.

Let us be happy Swazis
 Mswati III has ascended to the throne
 The throne left to him by Sobhuza II
 Little Lusutfu river is excited
 Which has been anticipating the arrival
 of Mswati III
 Let us be thankful
 To the ancestors at Mdzimba and
 Mbilaneni mountains
 Who made the ascension to the throne
 successful
 Let us not forget to be thankful to God
 Who collaborated with the ancestors
 Until the success of this endeavour
 Mswati took the throne
 Our eyes should be focused at Ludzidzini
 Wait for the arrival of Mswati
 And do it proudly and humbly
 Grumbling should come to an end
 Our pillar is at Ludzidzini
 It is Mswati III
 (Dlamini 1986:15)

The above poem hails the coronation of the king of Swaziland in 1986. Despite difficulties experienced before he was crowned king such as the ousting of the then Prime minister and Queen regent, he was eventually *rightfully* crowned. This is the kingship position his father left to him (line 2). Kings in Swaziland have to leave power to their *sons*; to their heirs. Swazis therefore should be excited and be grateful to both God and the ancestors about his accession to the throne. In the last stanza, the poet, Dlamini then advises, cautions and commands the Swazi nation of their due respect for the young king and their maintenance of a harmonious relationship with royalty as the Swazi traditional way of life demands. In this way, the Swazi people are not only expected to conform to social order – being submissive to the king but are expected to be loyal to him, and hold him in very high esteem. The kingship institution is regarded as a socially stabilizing institution, which should be guarded against all corrupting alien influences and negative internal developments (Furniss & Gunner 1995:82). In a very blunt way law and order are reoriented through these praises as authority, fixed rules and maintenance of social order are highly valued. In the eyes of the *imbongi* 'poet' correct behaviour consists of doing one's duty – being

loyal, obedient and being contented with what one has, showing respect for authority and maintaining social order for its own sake (Sund 1976:103). Viewed from a different perspective, this has an entirely ideological orientation wielding staggering doses of ideological and political undertones and also anti-democratic values.

However, this authoritarianism which implies a hierarchical view of the world, and nurtures paternalism, patron-client relationship and social rigidity no longer appeals to most modern people whose exposure to the outside world has enabled them with a frame of reference that is post-modern and as such wish for progress as the contemporary world demands¹⁰ (Harrison 1992:13). This conflict in ideology then in a way tends to make many people including both teachers and learners develop an aversion for oral literature. In passing, it is interesting to note, however, that the Swazi people including the learners and their teachers love their king *as a person*; his physique is quite handsome. He is trendy and very particular with his looks; something that gives him a spectacular appearance but they loathe some of 'his'¹¹ ideas about governing the country.

Sobhuza II's praise names (appendix 3, no.1) glorify his great achievements. He sent thousands of regiments abroad to assist the British against the Germans in World War II. From this praise poem apart from the great achievements of Sobhuza II, the traditional ideology of values such as one party rule wielded by Sobhuza II himself when he dismantled the constitution in 1973 are highly respected. As such contemporary views on democracy, multi-parties and fighting for equal rights are unpalatable and are met with strong resistance from some quarters especially the native conservatives. Hence, they are often described as rhetorical smoke that smacks of a revolution and have no place in Swaziland. According to the Swazi traditional ideology these are foreign practices and are unfit for the Swazi way of life. Therefore, political practices alien to the traditional life are highly undesirable and are felt to be incompatible with the way of life in the Swazi society. This is evidenced in the vulgar language used to describe those who bring in and accept the foreign ideas or concepts.

¹⁰ As earlier mentioned, the paradox is that the very modern world as represented by the superpowers (America, for instance), the World Bank and the IMF establish a similar relationship with third world countries dependent on them.

They are described as *tamaku taMawiki* 'Marwick's dogs,' *tingulube takaNgwane letimbhembesele taye tamgicitela nangematje* 'pigs that have turned against Sobhuza and thrown stones at him', and *BoHlamkile labafuyile* 'rebels he has nurtured'. The constant denigration of oppressive multi-party power and the tendency to frame all relationships between the ruler and the ruled in terms of the threat to aristocratic exploitation, a powerful mythic filter through which the monarchical values of the Swazi society have been sustained and reaffirmed over the generations is constituted (Furniss & Gunner 1995:82). One views this as an attempt to reconstruct traditional ideology and is facilitated by the emergence of an authoritarian form of populism (Levin 1991:5). This to a large extent is both a condemnation of partism and an appeal to the subjects to abandon elements of Western ideology and politics. This kind of suppression could also be seen as a suppression of innovative ideas and progress. However, on the contrary, this serves as a 'smokescreen to stifle opposition against the repressive measures' which outlaw party politics (*ibid*:5).

Teachers and learners in schools and many other Swazis have studied or have been exposed to the concept of democracy and multi-partism. Neighbouring South Africa on whom Swaziland is highly dependant is a democratic state and through the democratic system of governance even the masses have to a certain degree benefited. However, in Swaziland such governance is viewed with scepticism hence phrases such as *Hha! sesitawubuswa ngumpondompondo* 'Ah! We will [not] be ruled by mpondompondo' (multiparty form of government). Therefore, to learners and teachers this shows that some of the traditional values and attitudes inherent in some forms of oral literature do in a way impede progress especially toward political pluralism. The Peoples' United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) and other progressive movements in the kingdom have been calling upon the democratization of political institutions to facilitate active mass participation in decision-making, but because of the traditional authority and ideology, the one-people-one-leader concept, this cannot be so. Justification for the one-party-state-rule is that the nation is a single family as such *atibekwa tibetimbili tiyabulalana* 'no two bulls can be enclosed in the same kraal; they will kill each other'. Instead because of its potential artistic power to

¹¹ It is clear that he is only the front figure and a mouthpiece. People ruling the country include the indlovukazi and the elders of the nation. Therefore the ideas he always communicates to his subjects about the governance of the country belong to THE rulers of the nation.

influence the thinking of listeners and its appeal at both the intellectual and emotional levels thus educating, informing, *convincing and persuading* an audience for or against an issue (Furniss & Gunner 1995:24) oral literature is used as a means of political propaganda to influence the majority against such 'alien' ideas (my emphasis). Hence Sithebe (1998:48) concludes that oral poetry is the conscience and or the radar with which the direction of a society is monitored. However, the paradox is that the same oral literature used to facilitate the integration of the young into the logic of the current system and bring conformity to it also creates sensitivity to what is happening among these young people. 'The erosion of the old concepts of authority open the way to acute awareness of this new bondage. The young perceive that their right to voice their word has been stolen from them.

Furthermore, the celebration of ideals embodied in fallen heroes as in the above poem tends to get extended, and diverts attention from the need to continue to transform society in order to move closer to the realization of contemporary or post-modern ideals. According to Sienaert et al (1991:108) the retrospective praise poem, which is essential in recording a memorable landmark in the history of a people can tempt those people to sit on their laurels. Such poetry wallowing in nostalgia instills old value systems that are anti-progressive and in that way progress is indeed impeded.

Most current praises of Mswati III especially those performed by Qethuka Dlamini, Qhawe Mamba and Basize Dube stocked with huge volumes of flattery at times are a mere record of perceived laudable achievements. They only entrench the power of the king and proclaim his excellence¹².

¹² Like his predecessors, he is a provider and the guarantor of protection and survival to mankind. Indeed young as he is, he has played a significant role in wooing investors to come and invest in Swaziland. This in turn has created job opportunities for the Swazis. However, exorbitant amounts of money that could have been used to open up small businesses are spent when he and his huge delegation undertake trips abroad. Not only that, many people including the teachers and learners have tremendously suffered under his governance such as when the teachers called a national strike in 1997 over salary increments. Furthermore, his handling of the strife between civil servants and teachers and government at the end of 1989 overtly showed his disrespect for human dignity when he referred to the people who did not attend the *incwala* ceremony as *tintfo* 'things' a statement that the populace perceived as infradigne. Not long ago again, the people of Macetjeni and KaMkhweli were forcefully evicted from their places because of their refusal to recognize a prince that he had imposed on them as chief. The whole Swazi nation was profoundly disturbed by the inhuman manner in which the evictions were conducted, more so when other strategies could have been engaged in this matter still achieving the same desires. According to Mbikiza (2000:12) 'the Macetjeni-kaMkhweli saga is an account of horrifying experiences, human right violation, power abuse and violation of fundamental democratic principles observed in the civilized world.' Freire (1972:51) describes a person who sees others as

However, although criticism in oral poetry is licensed criticism for unbecoming behaviour, rarely if ever do Mswati's praises covertly or overtly criticize bad governance (Vail & White 1991:41). Patronizing poets such as the above mentioned, though they are presumed to be the voice of the voiceless and have a degree of liberty to criticize rulers in public, liberty denied to other citizens, they do not do that. Instead leaders and governments are glorified with positive symbols and their mistakes are glossed over or excused. The poet is usually silent on reverses and defeats suffered by the king (Msimang 1991:59). And since they are operating in a society dominated by kingship and conservatism, they are inclined to present praises that support the rulers and propagate their ideology.

The fact that, at times, praise names do not always spell out the truth, the truth known to subjects, but 'flatter' the king and are a misrepresentation of the commoners' views is demoralizing and is received with ridicule and scorn in the classroom. To discover that it is political propaganda that learners are picking up in some kings' praises, they lose both trust and interest in the subject, hence some ambivalence may be expected towards oral literature. In the poet's quest to maintain the status quo and propagate the ideology of the ruling class, oral poetry today in Swaziland seldom represents the viewpoint of the common person. Instead poets have thus become the mouthpiece presenting what their leaders want to hear and not what the commoners feel. This in a way leads one to examine the serious political role played by the poet and see latent functions of the patriotic poems. On closer scrutiny one realizes that this is a means of seeking favours from those in authority and that is probably why poets like Qhawe Mamba amidst controversies and scandals in the running of the Outside Broadcasting Corporation have managed to secure their jobs and positions. Indeed such a revelation is bound to breed some aversion toward this subject in the classroom.

things as necrophyllic. 'The necrophilous person is driven by the desire to transform the organic into the inorganic, to approach life mechanically as if all living persons were things.[He] can relate to an object – a flower or a person – only if he possesses it; hence a threat to his possession is a threat to himself. Based on his mechanistic, static, naturalistic spatialized view of consciousness [he]

4.4 Master symbols in oral literature

According to Piaget our intellectual world revolves around language. Language is a means of unpacking the thought processes. '[It] explains the involved thought processes of a specific group of people' (du Preez 1983: 1) and reflects on a people's view of the world around them; their reality. Because of language, a human construct, certain subjects have been labelled in a particular way because they are viewed and experienced in a definite way. According to du Preez (1983:2) the use of metaphors always implies the selection and/or non-preference for certain symbols and by studying the metaphors found in the communication media of a people, one is therefore able to form a clear picture of its dominant symbols. By symbols in this context we are referring to what has become the law, the norm, the bible, the culture, or the laws of nature in a society. These symbols reflect how we understand and how we conceive our environment and they are the vital elements that constitute social discourse.

The dominant symbols with which a society identifies are reflected inter alia in its oral literature. 'These symbols explain social behaviour and what to expect from a society's future citizens equipped with this particular symbolic system' (*ibid*: 3). Where a symbol has been strengthened, the symbolic meaning eventually takes over and in so doing becomes potentially an undying symbol or a master symbol. A fixed concept of a person, a group, or an experience result in a stereotype. 'Stereotypes are static pictures of the world around us, to which we adapt our habits, tastes, preferences, abilities and expectations' (*ibid*:6-7). All efforts aimed at preserving the status quo naturally strengthen stereotypes which in most instances have negative characteristics such as not allowing deviation from a fixed idea, limiting variety, inadequately describing human behaviour and consolidating and maintaining existing belief systems.

As earlier mentioned, a folktale is, on the one hand, a mirror of the cultural context from which it comes, and its theme or moral lesson is the expression of the view of life as well as the philosophy of life of its society. Proverbs, on the other hand, reflect

transforms [people] into receiving objects. [He] attempts to control [their] thinking and action, leads men to adjust to the world, and inhibits creative power.

the deepest set of values of a people and serve as keys to open the door into African's view of the nature of reality, the meaning of life, and the foundation of their value judgments. The role of women in oral literature, particularly in folktales and proverbs has been depicted in various ways.

Positively a woman is portrayed as a heroine, and she is cherished as a life-giver, nurturer, provider, peacemaker and comforter. The Woman and the Lion and The Snake (appendix 1, no. 5 & 6) bring out clearly these positive attributes of a woman. In The Woman and the Lion, for instance, the heroine, a submissive Swazi woman, a mother who is selfless, sacrificial and fearless armed with the symbols of her culturally designated position, stoops to conquer the lion and save her children. Single-handedly she sets her children free and resourcefully provides for her family. In The Snake death is hovering over people's heads, in the form of a giant mamba snake, which has occupied a tree in a strategic place in the country. It takes a woman to put an end to this tyranny and death. The woman hatches a plan where she resorts to the unnoticed, unappreciated task of cooking thin porridge. Where everyone fears to tread, the woman carries her pot of thin boiling porridge to confront the snake. The snake uncoils to strike the woman only to land on boiling thin porridge and it dies. Through very humble means the woman saves the whole community.

However, negatively a woman is a second-class citizen, less intelligent and incapable of reasoning, generally not trustworthy, fragile, passive, potentially destructive and submissive. Her major role is the production of children and tending the crops in the fields. In order to succeed in life she has to work hard and make numerous sacrifices. In certain instances women are so daft that they lack responsibility even over themselves. In important domains they are excluded, trivialized or denigrated. According to Perumal (1997:ix) 'all this is engineered to marginalize the female population, perpetuate gender binarism and ensure [their] continued subordination.' Mtuze (1990:16) who notices this biasedness writes that,

While oral literature especially folktales are 'aimed at a broad spectrum of listeners or audience, a close study of certain characters in the stories show a definite bias towards female characters. The storytellers, normally old women entrusted with moulding the characters of the younger generation of both sexes, at the crucial formative years of their lives, always seem to stress exemplary conduct and self sacrifice in the case of girls, more than in the case of boys.

Folktales and proverbs again feature more prominently in indicating a negative conception about women and they also embody an element of openly denigrating them. For instance, a close scrutiny at the role played by a Swazi woman in society as portrayed in these two genres, reveals that a woman is presented as a valueless creature, a non-entity whose place is in the kitchen and not in any other important domain. She is silenced, expected to stay at home, and look after children. She is depicted as docile and subservient. She is a submissive wife, a sex object, and a weak and passive individual who suffers silently. A man on the contrary is strong, rational, aggressive and is a leader. He dominates, hence when one is afraid he is often rebuked not to be a woman but a man.

Since a woman is designated to the kitchen and no other important domain, a boy who is probably warming himself in the kitchen is often reprimanded with such proverbs as *uguje edladleni ungumfati yini* 'why are ^{you} locked inside the kitchen, are you a woman?' Apart from the confines of the kitchen and giving birth to children as will be shown below, the woman seems to have no other important role to play. She does not enjoy the same status and privileges as a man. When it comes to authority in public affairs and major decision-making, the woman is relegated to the background and the man in the forefront. Should a man raise an unacceptable point of view in a public meeting or tribal court, the other men are quick to ridicule him for *kukhuluma njengemfati* 'talking like a woman' an indirect suggestion that he is immature, less intelligent and unfit to deliberate in such a gathering. Scoundrel maxims such as this one imply that a woman is not intelligent enough thus cannot participate in important decision-making deliberations. However, if good advice has been solicited from a woman that woman is said to have 'uttered a man's word' *ukhulume lendvodza* because again it is envisaged that only men can talk more sensibly. Whatever good comes from a woman is associated with manly attributes. Hence aggressive women who succeed in man's spheres are considered unfeminine and unnatural. When they have done or said something intelligent, their kind of intelligence, their intuition, is equated with flightiness and fuzzy thinking. This then shows that a woman's voice does not carry the same weight as that of a man. For this reason and the fact that gender is a social construct, there have been no women ministers and head teachers in the past. Many intelligent women have been kept away from decision-making

positions taking into account such negative images painted of them. Men have been paramount in all their activities both in the family and public affairs.

In the folktale The dassie and an old woman (appendix 1, no.1) where the main character is a woman, she is presented as incapable of reasoning and lacking a sense of responsibility even over herself. In this folktale, it is the poor woman who is cooked to death. She brought all this upon herself by acting in a very irresponsible manner, succumbing to the ploy of playing such a dangerous game. If she were intelligent enough, she could have realized that the game was dangerous and could have been cautious as everyone is expected to be in life. She should have also reflected on the consequences rather than being so foolish and easily convinced. To act in a responsible way is the highest virtue in Swazi society, and neglect of one's duty is a vice hence the irresponsible are invariably punished. In presenting the woman in the manner depicted above oral literature is propagating the belief that women are indeed incapable of reasoning, instead they are guided by emotion rather than reason. They cannot think abstractly.

On issues relating to marriage, it is the woman who has to suffer and sacrifice in order to be married. For a female to be considered a woman and be 'respected,' she has to be married and give birth to children. Before that woman qualifies for marriage, however, she has to suffer and make numerous sacrifices. In Lokuthula, Lochalachala and Mamba Makhubu (appendix 1, no.2) Lokuthula has to accomplish an acid test symbolized by old women. She has to *lick* the woman's runny eyes before she marries the man of her dreams. Not only that, she has to accomplish another test again posed by another old woman. She has to help her with her loads. For suffering this humiliation and for her moral excellence she is given blessings and is rewarded with a good and prosperous marriage. Her sister who flatly refuses to neither lick the old woman's runny eyes nor help the other woman with her loads and behaves in a rude and arrogant manner is cursed that she will not succeed in her marriage. As expected, Mamba Makhubu drives her away. From this folktale, women have to undergo difficult tests before they finally settle down with the ideal men. Boys, on the contrary, never undergo situations where they have to do sacrificial acts like licking the dirt on a woman's eyes to enable them to marry the girls they love. As Mtuze (1990:17) notes, respect for the elderly apply to both sexes, but when contextualized

for the purposes of a given story, the young woman stands to be a victim and lose an eligible partner 'if she fails to display basic attributes such as kindness, humility and self-sacrifice. In patriarchal societies such as Swaziland, the woman, who is completely obedient to commands, obsequiously polite and shows respect at the cost of her humiliation such as Lokuthula above, and who willingly and happily submits to her husband and father is an ideal woman, the submissive wife (Ferguson 1977:17). Hence men today often complain that no wives, like their own mothers, can be found in their times. They hold their submissive mothers as models to be imitated. These are the values men look back to with nostalgia now that they live in societies where equal rights abound.

Again on issues relating to marriage, proverbs feature more prominently. The marriage of people who have come of age is one of the social concerns of the Swazi. Out of a marriage, relationships extending to in-laws, relatives and friends are established. More importantly, out of marriages, children are born. Furthermore it is only after one is married that one is considered 'a fully fledged adult' (Mathumba 1988:136). However, although a woman plays a significant role both as a mother and wife, and the Swazi exalts these roles, they on one hand have little regard for womanhood. This is highlighted in proverbs such as *tsats'umfati, bang' inhlopheko /kukhuluma* which literally means, 'marry a woman and cause trouble or a lot of talking'. From this proverb it is clear that women are portrayed as inevitably sources of trouble. This proverb is mostly used to advise a young man before he commits himself into wedlock on what to expect in her marriage. It however does not paint a positive image of the woman the man is about to marry. Although it is 'good' advice in its figurative sense meaning that the man should not expect the woman to behave and think exactly like him since she is a different person with her own interests, it has a negative tenor implying that the woman is bound to cause him a lot of trouble and talking as if the man will not do the same to the woman.

Marriage in Swaziland largely among those with limited literacy especially in the rural areas is predominantly polygamous. As such, linguistic convention marks them as male property. They 'are seen and regarded as appendages of men' (*op cit*: 216). The proverb *indvodza yinhloko yemfati*, which literally means 'a man is the head of the woman', emphasizes this point. Polygamy is believed to enhance a man's status

since a man with more than one wife commands respect both among his wives and in the community. A man with one wife is often ridiculed as *indvodva lehlafula ngamhlatsi munye, emadvodza sibili ahlafula ngamibili* 'a man who chews with a single set of molars yet real men chew with both'. This shows that polygamy enhances a man's status in Swazi society. It is through the many wives and children that one becomes fully-fledged and respectable man in a society. The model of manhood is the accumulation of several women, as it is believed that 'males are biologically programmed to need sexual relations regularly with more than one woman' (Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, 2000:29). It is noteworthy that the Aids pandemic is one of the lamentations of the new millennium and having more than one wife increases the risks of contracting and sustaining this disease. Women have always been the victims in the face of Aids as they are unable to prevent themselves from the HIV infection brought home in most instances by the apathetic and reckless behaviour of their husbands. As they may 'expect a beating, not only if they suggest condom usage, but also if they refuse sex, [or] curtail a relationship', they suffer silently and helplessly as 'sex in marriage is simply expected as part of the marriage 'deal' whenever the man demands it' (*ibid*: 30). So if oral literature still sees the accumulation of women as a model of manhood, it is in a way encouraging the spread and sustenance of Aids.

The several women the man has accumulated in a polygamous set up are often regarded as his children and in conversations he refers to them as *bantfwabakhe* 'his children'. Like a child, a woman is a minor and equally the property of the husband. This does not only imply a woman's subordination to the man but that like a child, the woman is less wise, and has no choice but to be obedient and submit to the husband's will. She must be submissive not only to the husband but to all people placed in a similar position of authority as her husband. This also borders on undue submissiveness even regarding their reproductive rights hence a woman with many children is an ideal one. Again, this is in sharp contrast to the degree of freedom and autonomy of decision regarding the birth of children that underlies the ideal modern conceptions of family planning programmes, which emphasize women's reproductive rights (Saayman 1996:208). According to Collen Lowe Mama (1995:17) the Beijing conference declared that the 'human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters relating to their sexuality

including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, and discrimination and violence' (cited in Kamera 1999:61). Oral literature still does not seem to respect this right.

The woman's subordinate role also means that like a child, the woman is prone to discipline should she misbehave. Thus in some communities wife battering is still practised as a mode of discipline. As a result some women have died because of such abuse encouraged by oral literature and its norms that *emendvweni kufelwa khona* 'one dies at her married home'. Nowadays the issue of domestic violence is of great concern to the feminist movements as it is according to international human rights laws a gross violation of human rights.

Most importantly, as earlier mentioned, out of a marriage children *must* be born. Playing her significant role as a wife the woman has to give birth to children especially the male offspring to ensure her husband's immortality. One who has children has greater riches. They are highly prized and regarded as a great asset in Swazi society. *Bantfwana bangumliba loya embili* 'children are the lineage that goes forth'. It is envisaged that the male offspring will perpetuate the clan name, take care of the parents at their old age and also inherit their property when they die. The parents, especially the head of the family, are satisfied to know that whatever happens to them the family is secured in the sense that the clan name will live on and the family will be provided for. However, this sentiment is especially expressed in as far as the male children are concerned because the Swazi are patriarchal. Female children are not considered as that valuable except that they will get married outside the family and bring *lobola* 'bride price' into the family. The boy on whom so much value is attached has to be an heir, take over the responsibilities of the father, inherit the family property and perpetuate the family name. Thus when there is no boy child in a family the Swazi man consults and pleads with the ancestors to provide him with one. Alternatively he marries another woman, something that sharply contrasts with the standard of conjugal faithfulness and fidelity expected of married couples nowadays and it emphasizes the man's lordship. Sentiments as those expressed in the above proverb paint a negative image of the girl child and also breed ill feelings between the two sexes. They also instill a despicable attitude in the boy child in his view of a girl child as someone worthless. Likewise the girl is embittered to know that apart from

accumulating wealth for her brother in the form of *lobola*, she is otherwise of no value. Saayman (1996:220) aptly comments that in traditional societies where male dominance is buttressed by an ideology of male superiority, the woman is bound to suffer. Contemporary society needs women who can swim against the high tide of patriarchal domination.

Marriage is an important undertaking that needs to be approached with the greatest care. Before boys engage in such an undertaking they are usually cautioned that, *likhiwane lelihle ligcwala tibungu* 'a fine fig is full of worms' which literally means that a fig may look very attractive on the outside, but when opened, it may be found to be full of worms. Figuratively this means that a beautiful woman usually has some bad character traits in her. So, in choosing a life partner a young man has to be careful because in most instances outer appearances are deceptive. Also, regretting the choice he made, a man who married a beautiful woman, who turned out to be lazy and badly mannered makes use of this proverb. Though this proverb embodies good advice, literally it gives a negative image of a beautiful woman. A beautiful woman is conceived to have very bad character traits in her. She is lazy, not trustworthy, promiscuous (despised as a bitch) and ill mannered.

Perumal (1997:62) says 'when a woman is deflowered, she loses her virginity.' At times a single girl beyond the marriageable age of about thirty chooses not to marry. Such a girl is often pitied or ridiculed and described as someone *losagugele emashiceni* 'someone who has aged in traditional beer's chaff.' Traditional beer's chaff is usually fed to the pigs and to describe a lady in such despicable terms shows the ambivalent attitude Swazis have towards someone who for reasons known to her has decided not to marry. Pointedly such proverbs do not encourage the status of a single woman yet this phenomenon is on the increase in modern societies today. Today there are more women than ever living without men, many voluntarily and happily. Many single women have found fulfillment in single life. Instead such proverbs encourage women to assume their positions as wives as this is what is desirable of them and a natural role they have to fulfill. If she remains unmarried the society see her as really queer and she is perceived as someone symbolizing withdrawal from life. For this reason some women trying to avoid this negative perception about them have 'thrown' themselves to men they do not even love.

Similarly, a man who is at a marriageable age and is not married is often described as clinging to his mother's apron '*ubambelele etidvwabeni tenina*'. His mother is portrayed negatively as someone, especially a boy, should not cling to as it is believed that being tied to a woman's aprons has a crippling effect. It limits his chances of mixing with girls freely and demonstrating his virility. Consequently, this limits his chances of getting himself a wife, becoming a man and gaining the respect of his community.

On issues relating to parents and their children some folktales again paint a negative picture of both parties. For instance, *Nyoni yami* 'My bird' (appendix 1, no. 4) demonstrates the parents' neglect of their duties to provide for their children by selfishly satisfying their own hunger and hiding *emasi* 'sour milk' from the children. On another note, it emphasizes children's responsibility to respect and obey their parents especially the father who has absolute authority in the family. His word is law; his will is supreme and his person sacrosanct (Bryant 1994:442). The lack of respect and obedience entails an institutional 'ordeal' to ensure obedience to the father's prescription as illustrated in the form of punishment meted to the children. Though the children's behaviour could be described as an act of villainy and not acceptable in traditional Swazi ideology, one could view such severe punishment as a form of abuse to the children. However, they could not defend themselves for the 'crime' they committed though they had a right to be provided for by their parents. The severe mode of punishment meted on the children by their father exclusively for the perpetuation of his own selfish desires is intolerable to today's learners who are conscious of their rights. Paternal cruelty as a form of discipline is today viewed as child abuse and whoever practices it is liable to prosecution and even imprisonment, but in this folktale traditional values are used to condone and justify the father's action. Although according to traditional ideology he has every right to punish the children for disobeying his orders, contemporary society raises eyebrows at the father's action and asks whether there is indeed a judicious code of conduct in this community. Contemporary society is left feeling that parental discipline for children needs checks and balances to guard against extremes (Miruka 1999:34).

Negative images of human conduct such as the one displayed above are consequently used to inculcate social and moral truths. It is evident then that such a folktale as this

carries an explicit ideological message, which conforms to prevailing social norms and the degree of retribution inflicted upon those who transgress social norms is an indicator of the more or less coercive character of the norms concerned as well as the degree of tolerance with which they are enforced (Furniss & Gunner 1995:83). It seems as if such tales aim at disarming reason and to lure the audience into an illogical frame in which nonsense becomes the basis for a new set of rules.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, oral literature has been preserved and perpetuated mainly by women. The irony is that it is the same women who are suppressed that are perpetuating their own subservient positions. They propagate their own subversion in their interaction both among themselves and among the male counterparts. Thus there are many instances where women themselves characterize one another as aggressive, destructive and uncooperative. In this way some of the negative images that are conveyed in oral literature are clearly by the women themselves (Saayman 1996:211). Swazi women evidence this in the following chant:

Leader: Nans'indvodz'ingshaya bo!

Chorus: Mushaye ndvodza!

Leader: Iv'emagam'ekutjelwa bo!

Chorus: Mushaye ndvodza!

Leader: Iv'emagam'emcamelo!

Chorus: Mushaye ndvodza!

Here's my husband beating me oh!

Beat her husband!

He hears rumors ah!

Beat her husband!

He hears rumours about the pillow!

Beat her husband!

From the above chant it is evident that the Swazi society views *the infidelity of a woman* with distaste (my emphasis). According to traditional Swazi society it is an offence for a woman to have extra-marital relationships. Should the husband discover that his wife is involved in an illicit affair, he has every right to beat her or punish her in any way he sees fit. The women who join in the chorus echo the form of punishment the husband metes on the woman who has *violated* this rule and in that way show 'conformity to this rule set by society' (Mamba in Moyo et al 1986:186). The frames of attitude exhibited by the women who openly criticize the non-conformist indicate their mindset and the fact that women are the very people who propagate their own denigration. It is noteworthy, however, that all this was formerly the norm, but it is restricted only to a few areas primarily conservative today.

If, as Canonici (1989:23) says that [oral literature] is meant to explain and validate for the children a system, which is traditionally appreciated and treasured in society,

modern learners and teachers exposed to the modern world would find it unacceptable, let alone to treasure such ideals. Hence a negative attitude on the subject may be expected.

4.5 Implications of master symbols in the classroom

It is evident that a large number of the examples of folktales and proverbs depicted above indicate negative conceptions mostly about women and they embody an element of openly denigrating them. Jean Piaget says that a child's way of thinking changes to realistic thought only under long and sustained social pressure. So by teaching pupils such negative conceptions about women, teachers are in a way reinforcing the traditional stereotypes of the Swazi nation and pressurizing the learners into constructing reality accordingly. They are instilling in the thought processes of a girl child that when one is a woman, one is not to be aspired to when they repeatedly tell her or reduce both her and her mother to the most valueless entities. This is the vision of his mother and future wife a boy child will form when such symbols are instilled in his small mind. This is the skewed reality children have to face in life. These are the values, norms and rituals culture seeks to impose on everyone. To Perumal (1997:46) with whom I concur, it seems as if this is a subtle means to force the young woman to learn a weak, trivial and deferential style as part of their socialization, which is essentially conditioning her how to become subordinate. According to Hall (1976:5) a kind of gnawing, emptiness, longing, daily corrosive frustration and displaced anger overwhelms the girl child when the subordination and denigration of women is taught. 'Whether the anger is turned inward on the self, or outward toward others, dreadful destruction results' (*ibid*:5). The flip side of the coin mainly is the hampering of children's cognition. The mindset that is related is very detrimental to the intellectual development of the learner.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) says one of the advantages of mother-tongue instruction is that children understand the concepts better in their first language. Since oral literature is taught in the learners' mother tongue concepts therein have the advantage of being clearly understood. In addition, since language and thought are interrelated and according to Vygotsky influence each other, we are in a way creating master symbols where the boy child will always view himself as superior to anyone else both

at home and in public. As mentioned earlier, we are to an extent conserving the status quo and propagating a generation that will further denigrate and subordinate women and this is not in accordance with the realities of the twenty-first century; modernization. Nowadays, in social studies, emphasis is placed on equal rights, equal employment opportunities, freedom of speech or expression, so we are to a certain degree confusing the thought processes of a child. If in an oral literature class the picture of a woman is distorted and the girl child is continually told she is valueless yet the boy child is superior, and in a social studies class the same pupils are told they have equal rights, their thought processes are bound to be confused and this will take a long time to dispel. Furthermore, if the humanistic Curriculum 21, in South Africa and the global course content canvasses for cultural relativism, our culture of subordination and hierarchy as embodied in some of the forms of oral literature does not feature in this global village. According to Hall (1976:212) studies of the holographic synthesizing capabilities of the brain have shown that it is difficult to get people to change once they have internalized a certain image and mode of behaviour. Against this background, my argument is that a cool look at such forms of oral literature may not serve the many ills in this subject. It may however serve a useful purpose to acknowledge their existence and indicate possible surgery which is, those forms of oral literature that no longer conform to the realities of the 21st century should be ushered out of the school curriculum and be replaced with Life skills education. Though it can be explained that every text has a context in which it is used and there is a lot we can learn from the past oral literature enforces, we need to move from it and go where the search for relevance might take us. The oral literature in the siSwati syllabus anchors us very firmly in yesterday and to a certain extent some genres are detrimental to the psychological development of today's learners. Saayman (1997:212) advises that,

while we appreciate the strong cultural support for our identities there is a need to critically re-examine it in an attempt to build a future, which does not see a man and a woman as living in different worlds. The ultimate goal is to create a situation where men and women can stand side by side and confront the system of beliefs, practices and norms that they have inherited and which sometimes seem to set one against the other.

Besides, we are all racing towards globalization, so if in our oral literature we still emphasize such subordination and encourage such stereotypes, we are encouraging our culture as manifested in oral literature to box us in and prevent us from the

worldview of modernity. In a way we are being boxed in and prevented from joining the highway to modernity, globalization and universal culture. Our oral literature does in a way impede progress as alleged. That being the case, our oral literature needs to be 'exorcised' and purged of its denigration symbols and oral literature performers, especially the writers, need to undergo an ideological conversion.

As mentioned earlier, it would be shortsighted to deny the positive role of oral literature even about women. However, as revealed above, some master symbols embodied in the same oral literature are awesome and may have a negative effect to the pupils and are inevitably the root causes of the negative attitudes they display to this subject.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter a critique of the teaching of oral literature in Swazi secondary schools has been provided. This has been distilled from the factors that may influence the negative attitudes to oral literature in Swazi society. It has thus become evident that the low status attributed to the siSwati language of which oral literature is a component impacts negatively on learners. If society, the ministry of education and inevitably parents in the homes hold antipathetic views about siSwati and inevitably its oral literature, learners will follow suit and not regard this subject as important as the other ones and consequently not like it. Similarly the traditional ideology inherent mostly in folksongs and kings' praises contribute to the causes of the ambivalent attitudes to this subject. The traditional ideology propagated in these forms of oral literature, differ widely from those held by today's society members including teachers and learners. These wide differences on ideological grounds inevitably result in an aversion for the subject. Master symbols inherent mostly in folktales and proverbs also do in a way impact negatively on members of the Swazi society and on both teachers and learners. Some forms of oral literature paint negative images especially of women. Examined closely, these negative images entrenched in this subject are seen to be detrimental to the cognitive/psychological development of the pupils. It is suggested then that a subject embodying such model constructs should be ushered out of the school curriculum. These idioms, proverbs and folktales reinforce archaic values that are out of line with those supporting a modern democratic society

where all members of society are being treated as equals. So having noted the various factors militating against oral literature, particularly the low public image of the subject and the master symbols inherent in the subject, one is left with a somewhat negative picture of the responses which oral literature teaching/learning will evoke among its practitioners and learners. It is to their voices that need to be heard and considered that we now turn to in the next chapter before any concrete conclusions are drawn.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 5

Attitudes to oral literature: Empirical findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses data generated from the interviews with teachers and learners in the different secondary schools concerning their views and attitudes to oral literature and its teaching and learning thereof. As explained in chapter 1, twenty teachers and fifty learners were interviewed. Most of the respondents displayed negativistic attitudes to this subject as will be shown below. This chapter will further analyze the problem and challenges facing the teaching of oral literature in relation to the data collected. Trends will be identified. The initial category will focus on the teaching methodologies of this subject and their effectiveness. The second and third sections will explore the teachers and learners attitudes respectively. The fourth section will discuss the problems teachers encounter in the teaching of oral literature and the challenges thereof. The summary of findings and implications of the study conclude the chapter. These categories or themes are grouped according to major experiences, presented and described in detail mainly by means of narrative descriptive material. In each case the description is followed by a selection of *unmodified quotations* from the respondents (my emphasis). It is worth noting that in the analysis of the data generated there are some fairly consistent patterns, but there are at times paradoxes and even contradictions within attitudes of the same category of people.

It is also worth noting that information on the sample group that the researcher assumed could have a bearing in their attitudes was obtained, hence statistics on age, gender, religious affiliation, place of birth and the location of the school was obtained. However, although these were assumed to be the key factors in determining respondents' attitudes, this study established that this information had no bearing to the attitudes. All respondents irrespective of age, gender etc. expressed almost similar views. As these factors are evidently not variables, this information will not be included in the analysis.

5.2 Teaching methodologies

In Swaziland individual teachers decide for themselves what teaching methodologies to use in order to achieve intended outcomes. The methods used are largely determined by the purpose for teaching. Qorro (1999:41) confirms this when she writes that 'what is important is that the method we choose must be in consonance with the objectives for teaching [that subject].' From the interviews it transpired that teachers use a mixture of several different methods in their presentation of oral literature. The discussion, telling/lecture and the question and answer methods took precedence over all the others. However, examples, silent reading, participation and interaction, research by asking parents, role-playing, learners' presentations and stimulus variation rated lowest. Of the twenty teachers interviewed 55% claim to use the discussion in conjunction with other methods, whereas 35% use the telling/lecture method. The remaining 10% share the remainder of the methods: the participation and interaction, reading, presentations and examples. Most of the teachers claimed effectiveness of the teaching methods they use as most learners participate actively and are involved in discussions, 'they contribute freely and constantly,' one teacher commented. The learners are said to give answers to questions, exchange views with others and *seem* to enjoy the subject. Another teacher even noted that 'they are able to relate what they learn to their lives.' A few teachers, however, agree that the methods they use are not very effective and not inspiring at all. Constant refrains such as, 'some of the pupils do not read areas they were assigned to read' are indicative of this. 'When that area is under discussion in class the next day, some look lost and simply stare at the teacher, neither contributing nor responding to questions asked. Others on the contrary, especially those in the senior levels find the lesson comic and therefore do not take it seriously. Hence they make a lot of noise during the lesson thus making the class very difficult to control.' Another teacher lamented the use of the same traditional methods in the teaching of this subject, which she had observed to put off the learners. As a result, they end up cramming and not understanding the content.

Responses given by learners on how they are taught oral literature, however, give a different picture from the one painted by the teachers. There seem to be no correlation between the methods teachers claim to be using and what the learners describe the

teachers to be doing in an oral literature lesson. Responding to a question where they were asked to describe what their teachers do when they teach them oral literature, 56% of them wrote that the teachers read the books or ask the learners to read certain sections. Thereafter, they explain the meanings behind those sections read. 'Our teacher reads the book and *explains* the themes and expects us to answer any questions we may encounter in an exam,' one learner wrote. In support of his colleague another wrote that, 'they read to us while we listen and they try to *describe word for word or sentence by sentence what it means* and they summarize the whole poem or story.' Another wrote that 'after reading the stories or poems to us, they *explain* the role played by each character. In a poem they ask us for our opinions, then they *tell* us what it is about' (my emphasis). Another wrote that, 'we read and she explains,' and yet another wrote that, 'they read and explain what is meant in poetry and give us examples.' Generally this amounts an authoritarian kind of pedagogy. This will be explored further later in the chapter.

Other popular methods according to the learners are the reading and question and answer methods. 'They tell us to go and read at home and in class they *ask us questions*,' one student wrote. Another wrote that 'we read the books at home and go to school *ready to answer questions*'. 'Teachers are *ready with a stick* if you *don't answer questions* or not ready to present,' one other learner wrote (my emphasis). The least popular method according to learners is the discussion method. Out of the fifty interviewees only one wrote that 'they ask us to read one by one, stanza by stanza and then they tell us the theme and *sometimes we discuss* as a class together with the teacher' (my emphasis). Those who read at home and are asked questions the following day totaled to 22% and the remaining 20% varied in their responses ranging from teachers mimicking characters, dressing in traditional attire to telling them about life in the past. These differences between the teachers' and the learners' responses shown above seem to confirm Piaget's theory that children are not miniature adults and the way they think is totally different from the way adults think. A child makes his own truth, his own reality, which is totally different from an adult's. The above contradictory information also emphasizes the fact that people interviewed at times give responses that they believe the interviewer needs, not necessarily what they practically do in the classrooms. It also reflects the disparities between the perceived and the actual teaching styles. Therefore from the responses given one acknowledges

two variables: the delusion and ignorance factors. From the delusion factor it is obvious that it sounds good to say that one uses a progressive method when in actuality it may not be so. From the ignorance factor, it looks like some respondents did not comprehend fully some terms as the interviewer intended to view them.

5.3 Teachers attitudes to the teaching and learning of oral literature

According to Baker (1992) a survey of attitudes provides an indication of current thoughts and beliefs, preferences and desires of a people, and attitudes displayed by a group of people or an individual provide a measure of the health of a subject. Baker (1992:12) identifies three main components of attitudes: the cognitive, affective and readiness for action. The cognitive component relates to thoughts and beliefs. The affective component concerns feelings toward the object. The readiness for action, also known as the conative component, is described as 'a behavioural intention or plan of action under defined contexts and circumstances.' This study is confined to the cognitive and the affective components.

Generally teachers demonstrated an overall unfavourable attitude toward their subject, i.e. oral literature. Asked whether they enjoyed the teaching of this subject and to give reasons for the favourable or unfavourable variable, 65% of the teachers interviewed do not enjoy teaching oral literature. They expressed concern at the fact that the subject's mode of analysis is too childish and is not appropriate for learners at secondary school. According to some teachers the best level at which to study oral literature is the elementary and not the secondary level. This is further exacerbated by the fact that some of the secondary school learners have come to realize that oral literature, particularly folktales and some praises of kings enforce a pre-colonial and rural culture very different from modern lifestyles. Oral poetry, particularly kings' praises, give historical facts of kings that ruled societies before the advent of formal education. Other teachers expressed concern that the subject has no direction to the world of work. 'What are the pupils going to gain at the end, financially? There are no job opportunities for oral literature stars. Why then play around with pupils, teaching them something you know won't help them?' one teacher demanded to know. Another spelt it out in no uncertain terms that praise poetry in particular has obscure meanings, 'sometimes I cannot figure out the meaning of a praise poem myself,

how much more the pupils? There are no guides, no reference material, how is one expected to teach in such circumstances then and why should such material be taught anyway?' Another indicated that 'the attitudes of society and the students towards the subject are not positive and this is demoralizing.' Another one who even refused to respond in writing demanded to know from the researcher what values were teachers expected to enforce in an oral literature lesson in this modern society? He made it clear that it was demoralizing to teach pupils phenomena they themselves did not believe in. He spelt it out that this was tantamount to poisoning the minds of the innocent pupils, as what they were teaching had no relation to the kind of life people lead today. The negativistic attitudes teachers display seem to be confirmed in Apple's (1991:231) words that as critical educators, teachers who are forced by the syllabus to teach something they do not enjoy teaching are demoralized by the ravages inflicted by the state policies (cultural literacy) on education and as critical educators they have become their worst enemies. According to Freire (1972:114) 'work which is not free ceases to be a fulfilling pursuit and becomes an effective means of dehumanization.'

However, to some teachers as it is with some learners, oral literature occupies a very special place in their hearts. They regard it as a rich heritage that must be preserved. Attitudes therefore in favour of oral literature were supported by the fact that what is in oral literature is their culture. 'It is part of our heritage, it inculcates the Swazi cultural values and it teaches learners their history,' one teacher wrote. Another teacher vehemently argued that native Swazis inherited their culture from their ancestors. 'As teachers and parents to the learners, we have the obligation to transmit the culture to our pupils. We should not, therefore, let it die at our hands in the pretext of modernity. A nation will always be a nation, different from another because of its culture,' the teacher argued. Such sentiments confirm the presumption that every nation would like their children to know about their historical past as well as the prominent legends in their literature as they are the repositories of their people's thoughts and attitude to life. They also confirm Sienaert et al (1994:330) observation that 'an English man is proud of his English heritage, just as a Japanese will not want his cultural heritage to be mistaken for that of a Chinese.' From such sympathetic responses one observes both a 'royalty' and 'loyalty' to culture and naturally most people are often reluctant to have anything they have become accustomed to changed.

Though this may be the case, we need not forget that some aspects of our cultural heritage are not static entities. They are evolving and developing not rapidly but deliberately. The overall effect of static historical constraints, for example, is that a society remains a prisoner of the past. Most importantly, as Bajah (1993:20) cautions "the survival of our culture must be argued from a strong educational utility and not just because certain things were done by our fore-fathers and therefore they must be done" (cited in Mahlalela-Thusi 1999:63). And according to Awoniyi (1982:41),

emotional sentiments or a blind royalty to [Swazi] culture are not enough. We must also understand the culture and estimate its significance in the light of the modern developments. [Swazis] cannot remain culturally in the 10th century while other people are in the 20th century. We must know which aspects of our culture are retrogressive and therefore need changing, and which ones are valuable and need preserving.

5.4 Learners attitudes to oral literature

Learners generally displayed a mixture of attitudes towards oral literature. There was a general consensus among teachers that learners enjoy this subject and are enthusiastic about it. Asked whether they thought the pupils enjoyed oral literature, 55% of the twenty teachers interviewed wrote that learners seemed to enjoy the subject. They cited their free and constant contributions in an oral literature lesson, their ability to express themselves in their mother tongue and their ability to relate what they learn to the lives as indications of learners' enjoyment of the subject.

However, 45% of the teacher respondents have observed that learners seem not to enjoy the subject. They cited the traditional values enforced in this subject in relation to contemporary realities, the vulgarity of the language used in some genres, the obscurity of the figurative language used especially in oral poetry and the informality of the lesson as some of the distractions that put learners off. Hence they look bored, some angry and yet some with an I-do-not-care attitude. One teacher commented that such attitudes are probably fueled by the generally negative attitude society has toward oral literature as an unimportant subject. Some of the learners therefore believe this subject is useless, outdated and not related to modern life. Their interest is thus on television and other forms of entertainment. The negativistic attitudes,

therefore, can be attributed to the more intensive acculturation to which urban and semi urban learners are exposed to and the modern forms of entertainment.

There is, however, a clear contradiction between the attitudes of two sets of respondents. The delusion factor seems to be in all likelihood in operation again. Though learners seem, at face value, to enjoy oral literature, it is generally not their favourite subject. Math, the Sciences and the Commercials took precedence over all the other subjects. 76% of those interviewed have a combination of the Sciences, Math, English, Accounts and Commerce as their favourite subjects. Only 24% have a combination that includes siSwati and/or Religious Knowledge. Explanations for the few whose favourite subjects include siSwati cite the 'excitement', relaxation and the 'refreshing moment' they get in an oral literature lesson after the *difficult* subjects (my emphasis). They also like the 'good' moral lessons, the history they learn especially from folktales and praise poetry and the fact that oral literature makes them 'know [their] culture and traditions', 'know things other people do not know', and 'it makes them different from other nations'.

The majority that prefers other subjects to siSwati (like their teachers) thinks the mode of analysis of oral literature is too childish and as such the subject is suitable for primary school pupils. 'At O'level you are asked to propound or a give the meaning of a riddle as if you are at primary school,' one learner commented. A large number of learners believe it is not related to modern life. 'We are living in a new millennium, what are we going to do with ancient ideas? one learner queried. Others largely hated the way female characters are portrayed as opposed to male characters especially in folktales and proverbs and this confirms the theme discussed in chapter 4. Such ambivalence is summed up as follows by one pupil, 'it is as if if you are a woman, you are dull, you always have to suffer in order to succeed in life and you are just a useless entity in a community. All you are good for is giving birth to children and working in the fields. Men on the other hand are leaders and even if they misbehave such behaviour is condoned.' Some pupils expressed concern at the lack of job opportunities even if one passes this subject very well and they spoke with respect to Math and Science. 'Even if you can get a distinction in siSwati, of which oral literature is a component, you are not guaranteed a job, yet someone with an E in Science or Math might get something. The negative attitude pupils have towards oral

literature is backed up by the responses they gave when asked if they do listen or watch traditional literature programmes on television or radio and what they usually do during their spare time. 56% of them watch other programmes on television and play music, 18% play soccer or netball and have no time for traditional programmes that are boring and only 8% do at times listen to such programmes as they give answers to some of the poems they do not understand in class. Asked if they would consider pursuing studies in oral literature, the negativistic attitude toward this subject was clearly projected. In this category 46% responded in favour of pursuing studies in this subject and 52% out-rightly rejected to ever considering such an option. The remaining 2% were not sure. Those for the favourable category are basically interested in promoting the culture of the Swazi people and this confirms Vygotsky's (1962:23) philosophy that a child's thinking and speech is influenced by the surrounding conditions. This also supports Freire's (1972:124) view that children internalize conditions and situations they grow up under and in their adulthood would repeat the patterns in which they were [mis]educated. Others will pursue studies in this subject because this is a soft option to pass. However, those for the unfavourable variable believe they have more important things to do than play with children in an oral literature lesson. Others have future intended careers that have nothing to do with oral literature. 'Not that I hate oral literature, but I'm more into Math and Science', one learner wrote. Others expressing their respect for the Commercial subjects wrote that, 'at least we can see commercial institutions where our knowledge of accounts can be applied practically, where can one ever apply their knowledge of oral literature except, once upon a time, in a class, and I'm not into teaching.' Some of those interested in Science, like their counterparts in the commercial stream wrote that they wanted more practical work. Others put it bluntly that they resent oral literature, hence one commented that, 'people go to colleges and universities to study for important qualifications. There is no reason wasting time to study folktales, proverbs and poems.' Other learners cited the punishment they always received if they failed to give correct interpretations especially to proverbs and oral poetry as the cause of their resentment of the subject.

5.5 Teaching of oral literature: Problems and challenges

Teacher respondents were requested to indicate the specific problems they encounter in their teaching of oral literature. Teachers' responses show that there are numerous problems and challenges facing the teaching and learning of this subject in secondary schools nowadays. Teachers cite the lack of innovative material such as improved books and the lack of teaching/learning aids such as radios and video recorders as some of the problems facing the teaching of oral literature. There are not enough books including reference material and guides for this subject. Sometimes a teacher cannot discern the meaning of a poem because of the archaic, figurative language and the symbolic meanings of images used in it. The language used especially in praise names is heavily loaded with coded messages hence the interpretation of the words go beyond their rendition. In such cases where messages are clothed in words that hide a deeper meaning, a teacher has nowhere to run to for answers as there are neither guides nor reference material.

Apart from the lack of material, another problem that a number of teachers drew attention to concerned the general attitudes of the learners to oral literature, which are non-motivational at all. They look down upon the subject and do not take it seriously. They claim it is ancient, not related to modern life and impedes progress. This is confirmed by some of the responses from the learners' interviews. 'The country is developing and everything has changed. The old tradition of oral literature is taking us back to the Stone Age yet people are more and more into modern life. Oral literature is for the old people and is backward,' one pupil commented when asked about the value of oral literature nowadays.

Another problem teachers cite is that of learners' lack of exposure or background to the subject. Some totally do not have any background information with regard to oral literature. Hence when a teacher teaches this subject not equipped, some are lost and thus the negativistic attitudes. In these modern societies most families are nuclear and live in towns. As such the extended network of relatives who could tell tales has disappeared. So when one talks of a *chakijane*, 'a dassie' some learners are at sea and when they are asked to tell a folktale, they narrate the events of soap operas they watch on television. Television has not only changed their leisure habits but the more

urbanized the people, the less conversant they become with the oral literature of their people. Teachers also claim that this is the very reason why they use the authoritarian lecture method of teaching because they first have to give a lot of background information to learners, use a lot of teaching aids and this slackens the progress of finishing the syllabus.

Another problem is the very content of the subject still taught in today's schools. As most pupils indicated in the interviews, the content of some secondary school oral literature textbooks has no bearing to modern life and is not at times applicable to real life situations. This is the same content that was taught ten or even more years ago. It is therefore not to be expected that learners relate or identify with ancient lifestyles reflected in oral literature. As shown in the foregoing chapter, traditional lifestyles do conflict in many ways with the modern ones.

Because of its being non-motivational in terms of employment opportunities, some teachers feel that oral literature should be removed from the curriculum. 'What good is it to teach pupils something that has no financial rewards at the end of the road? one teacher asked. A learner who wrote that 'there are no good jobs for people who pass oral literature well apart from may be teaching if you are lucky, so I cannot waste my time in oral literature' supported this.

Asked if they thought oral literature still had some value nowadays, both teachers and learners responded that to 'a certain degree some forms of oral literature no longer have any value in these modern days since we have already lost our culture to modernity.' They argue that in the past it was meant to shape morals as discussed in chapter 3 but today it no longer plays the same central role in popular education as it once did. Today there are television programmes, friends' experiences and the school itself that help in shaping morals, not a folktale, a song or a poem any longer. Some of those values instilled through oral literature long ago, are currently instilled by novels, television programmes, soap operas and open talk shows.

On the future of the subject, teachers have mixed feelings and so do the learners. Some teachers believe the future of this subject is bleak and therefore should be scrapped from the curriculum. As it is not motivational, there is no reason to keep it in

the curriculum. 'It neither motivates the learner nor the teacher, why then should we keep it in the curriculum?' one teacher wanted to know. Besides, it is gradually being substituted by other sophisticated methods of documentation. 'It has no future; books, television and other documentaries are gradually replacing it,' one teacher noted.

However, some teachers though aware of the bleak future of this subject seemed sceptical about scrapping it from the curriculum and expressed sympathetic views about its future. They view scrapping it from the curriculum as a betrayal of their culture; the abandonment of their roots. 'Let us keep it, but leave it at primary school because it is part and parcel of the Swazi life and this is the only way we can preserve our culture, otherwise it is true, it is slowly fading,' one teacher responded. Another indicated that, 'if we don't keep it, we will be viewed by the international community as if we look down upon our culture, and prioritizing foreign cultures. A nation is a nation by its customs and traditions.'

The same question evoked a range of comments from learners ranging from the fact that oral literature still has a future in the new millennium and therefore should be kept in the school curriculum, but only at primary schools as infants still enjoy it. 'It is our culture, and it has good suggestions for the next generation, it also increases the standard of unity in our country,' to 'some students may find careers in oral literature as it is an exceptional exercise for future actors and actresses.' Learners who believe the future of the subject is bleak give explanations ranging from 'people nowadays are influenced by western culture and are more into modern life, you cannot take them back through oral literature,' 'we spend most of our time on television,' to 'students do not like the subject, why should they be forced to do it? We are not forced choose Science or Accounts, it is up to us to choose what we like. Because we are forced to take it, we fail it. This shows that its future is deteriorating.'

5.6 Summary of findings and discussions

Evidence from the data distilled allows one to conclude that the overall attitude to oral literature is generally negative. Areas identified to be the root-causes of such attitudes include teachers' methods, lack of teaching/learning material, the underlying values reinforced by the subject (gender patriarchy, anti-progressivism and kingship as

supreme rule) and lack of motivation. Such findings may give some insight into what approaches could be used to improve the teaching and learning of this subject if need be.

5.7 Teaching methods

According to Jalling (1968:3) teaching has been a static profession for a long time with teachers accepting and using the traditionally oriented methods and aims of the former generation. This is the hegemonic culture of teaching/learning: teaching the way one was taught. This is confirmed by the data generated, which indicates that there is still a great prevalence of didactic classroom practice, which supports teacher dominance over passive learners. Teachers are still trapped or captured in the old traditional authoritarian method of teaching (telling, question and answer method). This method is teacher-centred. 'The teacher is unproblematically considered to be the fountain of knowledge and authority, and the role of the learner is to submit to certain prescribed norms (Mahlalela-Thusi 1999:64). The teacher is all knowing and the recipient is an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge hence teachers *tell and explain to the pupils what poems mean and what the themes are in folktales* (my emphasis). This method still embodies the transmission model of education where it is assumed that (much against Piaget's theory) children are miniature adults with the same level of development of mental faculties as their elders.

In this model, it is assumed that children need to be provided with information so that their mental faculties are exercised. The logical teaching strategy is that of the teacher acting as the fountain of knowledge, pouring it out for the pupils to absorb. The pupils are expected 'to be passive, complete the worksheet, repeat-after-me, and find the right kind of answers learners' (Weaver 1990:57). For this reason the teacher comes to class 'reads a poem, explains the meaning of stanzas word by word and the next day he asks us questions and gives us the correct answers' as one learner responded when asked what their teachers did in an oral literature lesson. Such a method is not supportive of student participation and inquiry, and the end result of this education is that learners learn by rote. A learner is compelled neither to reason nor understand but to memorize mechanically what the teacher has explained to him because when a test or an examination is given he has to regurgitate what he was told. However, this

method is said to have negative effects on the part of the learner. It has the adverse effect of retarding critical thinking and inhibiting creative talent (Moyo et al 1986:469). The child is unable to take charge of his own learning, discover knowledge and make judgements on what he considers to be important knowledge. According to Moyo et al (1986:467) such traditional methods are fraught with techniques of brainwashing. As a consequence, pupils' ability to think critically is suppressed and this method has greatly influenced pupils to be memorizers instead of sophisticated, rational individuals. According to Sund (1976:59) emphasis on memorization at the expense of thinking may actually impede the development of higher levels of reasoning. If pupils memorize they learn nothing else than a conditioned reflex, which has no value outside the school and the examination situation (Engelbrecht 1975:51).

The authoritarian method, which is also referred to as the banking method produces learners who are passive and who cannot question things. All questions and answers the pupils might have are 'silenced by a spuriously unitary answer' (Mahlalela-Thusi 1999:41). Refrains such as 'they read to us the proverbs, riddles and poems, ask us what they mean, then give us the right answers,' and 'they read in class and give us important points,' support this. Pupils are not at liberty to think critically and reflectively but are expected to take what is given to them as the truth indisputable and not questionable. School learning thus become a deadening experience for lapses are often met with brutal punishment, hence one pupil in describing what their teachers did in an oral literature lesson wrote that 'the teacher is ready with a stick if you don't give answers or are not ready to present'. Rote learning, in turn breeds fear and interferes with and may prevent learning. This is because 'the neocortex does not function properly in situations that are threatening. For this reason, children who fear the teacher, punishment or making a mistake may be unable to learn or remember what they have learned' (Yule 1992:8).

Such rigid control discourages the pupils from developing and exercising the critical literacy and thinking skills needed to participate fully in a technologically and advanced democratic society (*op cit*: 41). Their ability to develop a creative and transforming mind remains retarded and the lack of emphasis on critical thinking skills, active learning and participation dampers pupils' enthusiasm in that subject.

Katengo and Mwale in Moyo et al (1986:468) echo similar sentiments in the following remark.

'any education system that treats the learner as adaptable and manageable a creature heads for problems because its product automatically accepts the passive role imposed on it. The learner adapts himself/herself to the world and conditions created for him/her without question. [Consequently], there is no way such a learner can intervene and change the world to suit his/her circumstances because the sense of critical consciousness is lacking.

Instead, pupils who will express stereotyped individualistic views even after they leave school have been created. Baswell (1993) cited in Qorro (1999:42) advises that 'an approach that emphasizes critical thinking skills produces more analytical writers. This means that if we want analytical writers, then critical thinking should form part of our teaching methodology.'

5.8 Lack of teaching/learning material

According to Whiteley (1974:458) 'good teaching of any subject depends largely on the availability of suitable textbooks and teachers' guides.' However, evidence from the data distilled indicates that both teachers and learners do not have enough material and resources for teaching/ learning oral literature. What is available is too scanty and hopelessly inadequate to meet the quest for knowledge secondary school learners have in this modern world. According to some teachers the inadequacy of the teaching/learning material contributes immensely to the ineffectiveness of some of the teaching methods they make use of. For instance, sometimes pupils are assigned some work to read at home but they do not read, because some do not have the books. When that assignment is 'discussed' in class on the following day, they look lost; others stare at the teacher, yawn and make no contribution.

Not only is there insufficient material, the few oral literature books that are there are fraught with archaic language, and mostly in poetry, the meaning of certain words and the whole poem is often difficult to discern. Some 'include strange ideas puzzling to most urban students', one teacher commented. The praises of Sobhuza II (appendix 3 no.1) are an example of such poetry. In the absence of reference material or guides for the teacher, it is difficult to explain the meanings of certain words and poems to the pupils. If learners have problems in comprehending the content of their prescribed

textbooks, they will not only be less inclined to read anything on their own outside of the school requirement, but they will be unable to take in the information which that material is intended to convey. Without good literal, interpretive, and comprehension, the message of the subject area will not be gained. This results in poor performance and even failure. That is why some pupils say that the reason they do not enjoy oral literature is because they fail it. They fail it because they do not comprehend what is in the books.

To prove that published work in relation to oral literature is deplorably scanty, both the junior and senior secondary pupils share two books on proverbs and for poetry each level has one book. The junior level alone has one book on folktales and there is none on riddles. There are no radios or video recorders for the schools even if a teacher would like to play a tape for the pupils. The schools cannot afford them. So in the absence of such innovative material in the teaching/learning of oral literature it is hard to imagine that any pedagogy is feasible other than memorization. Although Mniki (1995:5) discounts this view and claims that ^{more} important than the mere provision of teaching/learning material is the optimal utilization of the scarce resources, which should be mediated so as to achieve maximum benefit, I still believe that enough resources and material lead to student gains in learning, or to enriched learning experiences, or to improved teaching.

Nevertheless, the impression given to the researcher by such a state of affairs is that the ministry of education, the head-teachers and the curriculum planners do not take seriously the position of siSwati and any work in the mother tongue than they do that of giving children competence in English, for instance. This tendency is enhanced by this inadequacy of material in siSwati oral literature, yet schools and public libraries are stacked with a wide variety of books in English. This is demotivating to both the teacher and learner of siSwati oral literature.

5.9 Metaphors and values reinforced by the subject

From the data distilled it is obvious that apart from the lack of material, the content of oral literature is a problem especially to the learners. The master symbols portrayed particularly in folktales and proverbs and the ideology in oral poetry conflict with

ideals some pupils have constructed in contemporary society. The world-view some forms of oral literature enforce to modern learners and teachers do not to have a place in this day and age in contemporary society. Although some themes or forms of education could have been well intentioned as deterrents, they are no longer in consonance with or within the realities, abilities and interests of the modern learners. They are no longer within the homogeneity of interest within today's learners in this age of technological advancement and modernization. Jalling (1968:1) holds the view that education must be related to the needs of a new frontierless world, and it must promote international understanding. Some forms of oral literature are a reification of the past and celebrate old values society held dearly, and no longer play the same central role in popular education that they did in the past. Instead, they seem to draw us back and imprison us in the past. Some seem to bind the pupils more tightly to the demands and prestige channels of their societies thereby modelling them into the type of human beings their societies anticipate (*ibid*: 2). For this reason, pupils interviewed on the future of this subject spelt out clearly that, '[the future] is bleak as this subject no longer serves the purposes it served long ago.' Social conventions are variable. There is no guarantee that the values and social norms so important to us today will be important in ten years to come. Norms and values change through time. So to pigeonhole pupils would be doing them grave disservice. To pressure them to conform to some long established norm or orthodox by their ancestors is bound to hinder their individual development as creative independent thinkers. This will also tend to deprive them of the sort of original thinking from which good leaders are most likely to emerge (Sellers 1994:37-38). Learners 'should be made aware that they are living in a world that is always in process and transformation, and their knowledge should be in compliance with such a revolutionary demand' (Katengo & Mwale in Moyo et al 1986:472).

5.10 The problem of status

As discussed in the previous chapter, the data generated shows that siSwati enjoys low prestige, as is the case with many African languages. Since oral literature is in the siSwati curriculum the depressed level of status is translated to it. Like many of the African languages it is believed that siSwati cannot develop pupils cognitively as it is taught at present, nor can it be used to as an educational tool as it lacks scientific and

technological terms. It is presumed to be unable to function at higher levels of education and its exclusive use could isolate Swaziland from the rest of the world. English or French, on the other hand, open a window to the world. So like the main siSwati curriculum, the general feeling about oral literature is that it is unable to take one anywhere economically hence its functions tend to be localized and its esteem tends to be poor (Adegbija 1994:114).

The perception of oral literature by the Swazi community, mostly parents, is flawed. Some parents do not fully accept oral literature as a 'fully fledged' subject and 'withhold from it the accepted privileges and obligations accorded by society to more highly regarded [subjects]' (Ivey 1986:86).

5.1 The rational factor (lack of motivation)

Generally oral literature seems not to be motivational both to the learner and the teacher. As discussed in the preceding chapter, it is believed that it does not pay off in terms of economic viability in the same way as the other subjects. The fact that there are very scarce employment opportunities even if one excels in oral literature is a real challenge to the teaching/learning of this subject. Teachers pointed out that it is pointless teaching pupils a subject they themselves know has no financial rewards in the end. For instance, all upper-cadre civil service jobs and higher education are impossible to obtain with oral literature as a subject. Not only that, this subject, like the main siSwati curriculum, is not seen as a vehicle for upward social mobility as it does not confer on its learners and teachers enormous societal advantages and benefits, especially as far as rising high in the social ladder is concerned. For this reason, there is no strong desire to learn it.

Not only that, oral literature under the umbrella of the main siSwati curriculum is not even made an entry requirement into institutions of higher learning except where one is going to train as a school teacher majoring in that subject. To study for a Bachelor of Science degree one has to obtain good credits in Science, Math and English. So generally the status of this subject is very low compared to the other subjects and pupils therefore pay keen attention to those subjects that 'carry a lot of weight'. For

example, it is only until recently that William Pitcher Teachers' College has made the siSwati subject of which oral literature is a component an entry requirement only if one is going to specialize in it. So as long as siSwati is not required for specific purposes apart from the teaching profession and journalism, the question of the low prestige will continue to negatively impact on learners and the public image of this subject^{to} inevitably influence the teachers to their profession.

Likewise, siSwati teachers in general are undervalued in intellectual terms and are not considered as proficient enough as the teachers of English, Math or Science. The profession of a siSwati teacher does not enjoy a high social status in Swaziland. Because the attitude to siSwati and consequently oral literature tends to be predominantly negative, it affects the type of person attracted to teach it. Some teachers of siSwati, for example, have since developed a poor self-image of themselves and some loathe even admitting in public that they are teachers of this subject.

This negative view of siSwati impacts negatively on the learners who like society tend not to consider siSwati teachers as proficient academically as the teachers of the other subjects. Some teachers likewise carry this attitude with them into the classrooms and also tend to be non-motivational like the subject itself. Hence one pupil wrote that, 'she just sits and talks. She explains at times and asks us questions.' In most cases teachers of Science and the commercial subjects on the other hand do motivate their learners by taking them to commercial institutions and industries where the knowledge of these subjects could be applied practically. This is inspiring. The non-motivational behaviour on the part of the oral literature teacher also seeps to his pupils, who also 'sit in class, stare at the teacher looking bored, some with an I-do-not-care attitude.' Mordaunt (1981:3) states that 'the teacher's role in the teaching-learning situation cannot be underestimated since his attitude and motivation will influence positively or negatively the attitudes of the students entrusted to his instruction.' Harrison et al (1972:174) echo this when they write that the teacher exerts some influence and he is the most important factor in making his students fail or succeed in learning. However, Allright (1977) cited in Mordaunt (1981:17) cautions that,

the responsibility for motivating students should not be placed squarely on the teacher, but the rest of the world would have to realize that the teacher should not be expected to necessarily succeed if he finds himself at variance with other potentially powerful influences on learner motivation.

The fact that the subject is non-motivational and is therefore not taken seriously in schools has other implications. The implication is that this lack of seriousness is not simply confined to the learners. 'The fact that outside class the learners are discouraged from using their mother tongue (where they could be free to tell tales, propound riddles, and recite poems) apart from English with which they can hardly express themselves freely is a reflection upon the status of the siSwati language as a whole. English, a language of supremacy has always been privileged and siSwati has always been subjugated and marginalized. This has stigmatized the subject and 'killed' any enthusiasm for it. Furthermore, the greater use of English at the expense of siSwati especially on Swazi television and parliamentary debates has almost completely squeezed out the language from the Swazi airwaves.

5.2 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the data generated from the interviews with both learners and teachers in the Swazi secondary schools. From the interviews it is evident that there is a general ambivalent attitude to oral literature in secondary schools. Factors contributing to this ambivalence include traditional teaching methodologies, the problem of status, the rational factor (i.e. lack of motivation), the old traditional values enforced by the subject and the lack of teaching/learning material. Traditional authoritative methodologies breed passive learners and the old traditional values, which are a reification of the past no longer have room in contemporary society. It is evident from these factors that attitudes relating to oral literature have political, economic, cultural and educational dimensions. These different dimensions impinge on each other and generally tend to result in many attitudinal misconceptions, which manifest themselves in the creation of generally negative attitudes towards the teaching/learning of oral literature in the schools. Politically, oral literature is believed to be a tool of political propaganda and economically, it is conceived to have no financial gains. Culturally it is believed to be a people's roots, their heritage and therefore should not be discarded and educationally some respondents believe that it teaches learners good morals and the history of a country or society. However,

because of the subject's lack of motivation and the model principles or educational ideals it still enforces in a new millennium some teachers feel that it needs to be scrapped from the curriculum and be left to the individual families and societies as was the practice in the past. Some teachers view its future as bleak as more sophisticated methods of documentation and television are gradually replacing it. However, some feel that it needs to continue being taught in the schools because it is part of our cultural heritage. If we discard it, the international community will view us as if we despise our own cultures and prioritize foreign cultures. Generally there are contradictions between the two sets of respondents. From these contradictions I have acknowledged two variables; the delusion and ignorance factors. These variables seem to reflect disparities between what is perceived to be happening in the classrooms and what happens in actuality. In the light of this, the next chapter explores the contemporary approaches to oral literature. The pernicious element of oral literature will be investigated, and the positive use some forms of this subject can be put into will be explored. Finally, the possibility of introducing a Life Skills programme as an antidote to oral literature will also be considered.

Chapter 6

Contemporary approaches to oral literature

6.1 Introduction

The two foregoing chapters have established that as much as some aspects of culture as transmitted through oral literature are positive, not everything in that culture is positive. The negative aspects of culture, which include the subordination and denigration of women, power relations and the violation of human rights hamper the cognition of children and inflict damage to the people in that culture. It represses them and enforces bad habits and custom. As such the traditional ways propagated by some forms of oral literature are no longer adequate for modern man's aspirations. This has inevitably resulted in the development of negative attitudes among the learners and teachers to oral literature. This doubtlessly poses a formidable challenge to its teaching and learning in the schools. In this chapter the pernicious element of oral literature in the siSwati curriculum resulting in the attitudes displayed by the respondents will be explored. Later on, the possibility of using some oral art forms positively will also be examined. Thereafter, the introduction of a Life Skills programme as an antidote to oral literature will be considered.

6.2 The pernicious element of oral literature

When one views the definition and the role oral literature plays in society in the modern perspective, one is but forced to conclude that these two elements are narrow and do not make way for democracy. Oral literature seems to be conservative and prescriptive in nature and wants to conserve a particular set of values. As Freire (1972:23) observed 'every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms to the prescriber's consciousness.' In folktales and kings' praises, for example, certain forms of knowledge are legitimized while others are disclaimed and the knowledge is canonized. It can neither be teased nor challenged. Learners are told how things were and how they should be. It is a directive from the above; a guideline stressing upon what is right and condemning what is wrong. Should one deviate from the stated code of conduct, one is reprimanded without question or else counseled so

that he does not err again. Should a king stray in his form of governance of a society, the praise poet, the voice of the people is quick to criticize him on unbecoming behaviour. If he operates according to the socially constructed traditional norms, he is hailed with praises. From this, learners internalize and adopt the guidelines of the prescriber and learn that this is the only way things are done and in a subtle way a sense of duty, morality and cultural correctness is enforced. Consequently, the status quo is maintained. To question the traditional norms is tantamount to challenging the status quo and is viewed as cultural treason.

Though this is not only characteristic of oral literature¹³, the kind of life portrayed and enforced in this subject could be described in Freire's (1972:10) terms as 'the culture of silence.' In a way, oral literature makes objects of the people it is performed for. In a subtle way it programmes them into conformity to the logic of its system and it does not open room for dialogue. To the degree that this happens, the people are submerged into the culture of silence, as they do not question what has been prescribed for them. According to Freire (1972:13-14) the kind of education such as the one found in oral literature functions as an instrument, which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it. As the performer performs a narrative, for example, he moulds the audience to his patterns and ways of life and the audience is likewise expected to follow the action of the performer and begin to respond to the values, the standards and goals of the performer. When this is done, it is essential that the audience comes to see their reality with the outlook of the performer rather than their own; for the more they mimic the performer, the better citizens they are (*ibid*:122). This atmosphere is continued in the oral literature class and the learners soon discover that in order to achieve some satisfaction, they must adapt to the precepts, which have been set from above. One of those precepts being not to think (*ibid*:124).

Contemporary educational practices and reality, unlike the ones enforced by oral literature, entails taking charge of one's own learning, discovering knowledge and making judgements on what one considers important. In addition to that,

¹³ As earlier mentioned, this also characterizes the attitude superpowers, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have towards third world countries which are dependant on them both economically, educationally and otherwise.

contemporary knowledge and society entails empowering learners with more overt critical thinking and learning skills as opposed to learning the virtues of having students accumulate information for the purpose of shoring up the status quo, a common feature in oral literature. Learners, therefore, need not only to be encouraged but also equipped to know and also respond to concrete realities of their world critically as critical capabilities are needed to keep societies dynamic. Oral literature seems to breed passive and round individuals who take things as they are at face value and never question contradictions in them. As a result, the learners' ability to think critically is inhibited as the methods of transmitting the knowledge to learners are often fraught with techniques of brainwashing and the exercise of domination by the performer stimulates their credulity with the ideological intent of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of [following prescriptions] (*ibid*:52). According to Stanton & McConnell-Ginnet (1990) cited in Perumal (1997:51) in modern society 'those who are denied speech cannot make their experiences known and consequently cannot influence the course of their lives or of history.' Swazis therefore need to wake up from their 'traditional lethargy' and look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves and take the initiative in acting to transform society (*op cit*: 9). This lethargy is a direct product of the whole situation of social and political domination and of the paternalism of which they are victims – all entrenched in oral literature. Rather than encouraged and equipped to know and respond to the concrete realities of their world, in oral literature learners are submerged in a situation in which critical awareness and response are practically impossible and are interpreted as cultural treason. This, however, is not a denial or shortsightedness to the subversive or perhaps the protest elements in oral literature such as in women's protest songs, political songs and some kings' praises as discussed in chapter 3. The argument is that the critical mode in this subject, which is covert in most instances inherited from the past, no longer seems to fit the reality experienced by the new, open-minded and frank generation exposed to the concept of democracy.

Furthermore, from its authoritative nature it is evident that learners are taught cultural literacy in an oral literature class. They are *indoctrinated* with cultural correctness; morality and in that way the acceptable code of conduct is enforced (my emphasis). Oral literature is just a museum of information that merely legitimates a particular view and set of values at the expense of what someone else may consider important or

not. As Apple & Christian-Smith (1991:233) put it, it is a set of sacred goods designed to be received rather than being interrogated by the learners. The behaviour of the members of society is prescribed and those members have to follow the prescribed guidelines (Freire 1972:23). This model of cultural literacy is a threat to democracy, as it does not encourage dialogue and critical thinking yet contemporary education emphasizes interaction, critical thinking/learning skills and consequently cognitive development. If learners are not developed cognitively, they are not developed at all. The development of the mind is very essential in the development of a human being. The kings' praises, for example (appendix 5) are examples of the prescribed guidelines of a people and they seem to be used as a weapon to fight those aiming at democratizing institutions and relations of power. The flip of the coin is that learners having internalized this education and behaviour might, when they too become professionals, repeat the rigid patterns in which they were miseducated and in that way the status quo, which the conservative traditional community holds dearly would be preserved. Such rigidity in the new millennium, where all societies are canvassing for democracy no longer has any place.

The undemocratic model of oral literature is also evidenced in the fact that neither the teachers nor the learners have control over the material they teach and learn and they have no say in what they teach and learn. As Apple & Christian-Smith (1991:8) also observed, teachers are 'a mere factory hand whose duty is to carry out mechanically and unquestioningly the ideas and orders of those clothed with authority of position'. This position ignores the wider complex of social and political forces that deeply influences the way society is structured. Such teachings lack the knowledge that can help students to thrive in the modern world and students that lack the requisite contemporary information that constitute the canon of civilization will not be able to function properly in society. As already mentioned, these young people will repeat the rigid relationship structure emphasized by oral literature when they too become professionals.

If oral literature continues to be taught, I think the concern should be shifted from a knowledge based on culture to one that emphasizes critical literacy as the traditional cultural literacy refuses to train students adequately to meet the demands of the changing world. According to Dewey in Apple & Christian-Smith (1991:232) today's

generation both educators and learners need to be empowered with critical thinking/learning skills as opposed to learning the virtues of having students accumulate information for the purpose of preserving the status quo. Armed with critical skills, learners can evaluate the past experiences and philosophy in relation to contemporary ideals. Schools are therefore crucial for the all round development of learners including encouraging them to be educated for critical citizenship – that is as political subjects capable of exercising leadership in a democracy.

Furthermore, from the authoritarian method used in the teaching of this subject, it is evident that oral literature assumes that students are *tabula rasa* upon which the wisdom of the ages (which to some extent is no longer that useful today) places an imprint (Apple & Christian-Smith 1991:224). However, it is noteworthy that learners and their teachers are not empty vessels into which knowledge is poured. 'Rather than participants in [the] 'banking' education students are active constructs of the meanings and of the education they encounter (*ibid*:14). As such contemporary education and society entails affording them that opportunity to construct the different meanings. They need to be empowered as active and critical citizens. The awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are [the] real components of an oppressive situation (Freire 1972:16). Provided with the appropriate critical thinking/learning skills, Swazi learners and their teachers are capable of looking critically at the world provided by oral literature. In that way they can perceive their own personal and social reality as well as contradictions in it, become conscious of their perceptions of their reality and deal critically with it. When a learner participates in this sort of educational experience, he comes to a new awareness of self, has a new sense of dignity, and is stirred by a new hope and when this happens in the process of learning learners discover that they are creators of culture (*ibid*:12-13). Oral literature does not, however, avail such an opportunity to the learners. It is then in the light of this and the negativistic attitudes displayed by respondents in the previous chapter, which have both political, economic, cultural and educational dimensions that one concludes that oral literature is indeed a very pernicious element thus warranting its immediate removal from the siSwati curriculum before a lot of harm is caused to the learners.

6.3 The positive use of oral art forms

Although from the humanistic curriculum viewpoint, some elements of oral literature have been found to be extremely pernicious in the siSwati curriculum as they are to a large extent detrimental to the cognitive development of both learners and teachers, according to Kaschula (1999) there surely is a possibility of using oral art forms positively in society. The new political order of South Africa is propounding the African Renaissance – a renewed pride in being African, which is spiralling out to the other African countries including Swaziland. This is gradually reviving both the status and role of oral literature in the context of contemporary living. As such oral poetry, for instance, can be and is used in an innovative way especially in the media houses to teach people about issues related to AIDS, family planning, democracy and many more. Furthermore with the scarcity of job opportunities facing Swaziland today, oral art forms can be commercialized to earn people a living. Contemporary art forms that can be used positively include ‘contemporary’ stories, entrepreneurial oral literature and contemporary oral poetry.

Contemporary stories

Folktales, when interpreting contemporary society from a sociological point of view have a lot to offer such as enforcing or entrenching contemporary values. Such tales include those that present a feminist outcry and protest against the oppression and denigration of women. For example, traditional tales (embodied with traditional values) can be reinterpreted to comment on the role of women in contemporary society. In the story of Lokuthula and Lochalachala (appendix 1, no.2) in contemporary society Lochalachala could be reinterpreted as a representation of women’s opposition of the cultural prescriptions of society – the women’s struggle to the realization and assertion of heroic womanhood. Lochalachala is a self-willed or self-assertive individual (virtues of contemporary society). Like her sister Lokuthula, she consciously treads the same social and cultural terrain but deliberately refuses to succumb to the cultural prescriptions set by society. Although in traditional society she is viewed as a rebel (hence she is not rewarded with a marriage), in contemporary society she ‘assets the values of women, the human dignity and worth of each individual’ (Kamera 1999:61). She is governed by the free flow of her feelings and

expression of personhood and not by the clichéd ideas of men-made rules and regulations regarding marital power (*ibid*: 61). Contemporary society is characterized by such individuals and this is what a contemporary learner should be taught – modern society values, contemporary culture.

1.5 Entrepreneurial oral literature

Chapter 3 vividly points out that the different forms of oral literature are artifacts handed down transgenerationally by word of mouth. According to Kaschula (1999:6) it can be argued that modern craftwork such as wirework, beadwork, grass work and woodwork mostly sold at craft markets can be categorized as oral literature. The people involved in this form of oral art gained their knowledge while they were still children and grew up making toys such as car replicas. This was handed down from one generation to the other. Today this art form is commercialized and with the lack of employment opportunities facing the world today wire baskets, wood carvings, grass mats and curtains are sold at informal markets. They form an integral part of the emerging entrepreneurial market. So such forms need to be encouraged at the school level so that when the learners leave school, they do not resort to crime and drug abuse because of the lack of jobs, but engage in oral art forms.

1.6 Contemporary oral poetry

As discussed in chapter 3 oral poetry serves a multiplicity of functions and is dynamic in nature feeding on and moulding itself with current happenstances. Oral poetry can be heard at graduation ceremonies, funerals, political gatherings and many more. Because of its dynamic nature, oral poetry can be used to advantage by many aspiring oral poets. The songs or poems can be compiled, recorded and consequently released in a compact disk or book. From the royalties and the sale of these compact disks and books people can make a living.

However, although oral literature can be used positively as in the manner discussed above, the major problem with contemporary tales, for instance, is that no one really takes them seriously. Programmes on the media on this subject are generally not listened to or watched. With entrepreneurial oral art the problem lies in the attitude

learners have toward this art. Although art forms are recognized as income generating, school leavers are not convinced that they can make a living out of them. After spending at least twelve years in the classroom, they do not believe that like their 'uneducated' parents they can end up by the road carving and selling wood instead of being officers. Entrepreneurial work is still associated with those who could not make it in formal education or never attended formal schooling and therefore shunned by many school leavers. With oral poetry the problem lies with the publishing and recording companies and the market for these products. Both producers and publishers produce what will sell. These are pieces of merchandise to earn their producers a living. Producers and publishers finance something they feel would sell enough copies and show profit within a reasonable time. However, oral poetry does not sell well in Swaziland and the government does not seem enthusiastic about helping oral poets much against von-Dirige Par (1991:161) advice that 'since what is educationally desirable may not be necessarily profitable, there is a need for partnership between government and [oral literature] teachers for meaningful results to be achieved.' So it is also against this background that I strongly recommend that oral literature be scrapped from the curriculum, left to individual families and for reference' sake be documented and stocked in the archives of the country. Scholars such as historians, anthropologists and sociologists can make use of it in their reconstruction of the historical past and research. In its place Life skills programmes, which embody more humane values, humane to both learners and teachers in contemporary society should be introduced.

6.3 Life Orientation - Life Skills Programme

It is noteworthy that subjects in a school curriculum need to be reassessed in importance in the light of their present day contribution. Those subjects on which our present and future hang should stop being debased but prioritized. The education and skills in Swazi oral literature seem to be of little value today as we are living in a modern world and as such need to adjust ourselves to this ever changing world. They seem not to be enough to promote healthy, well-adjusted individuals who are capable of reaching their full potential in this contemporary society. It seems to be good in providing 'prescriptions and recipes' about acceptable codes of conduct as was in the years past and seems to forget that we are living in a new era, in a society that is

different, where values are different, knowledge, communication, roles, families, lifestyles and above all, a future different from that of our forebears. This then gives the education system of Swaziland a challenge to provide an education that will ensure that learners are developed holistically and are equipped with the relevant skills to survive and thrive in an increasingly complex society in which the traditional value systems are being eroded and challenged. This is the Life Skills Education, a life long education comprising of a huge body of literature used across the globe to equip learners with skills to empower themselves and progress or engage well in the 21st century. So if Swaziland wants to enrich her learners in a general way and give them the tools of life, she has to tap Life Skills education into the curriculum and teach it as a matter of course at all the levels of education focusing on issues pertinent to the particular developmental phases.

Life Skills education, which subsumes the subject of guidance,

includes abilities for adaptive, positive behaviour that enables us to deal effectively with the challenges and demands of everyday life. This encompasses: decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self awareness, ability to empathize, coping with emotions, coping with stresses, skills of developing self, adapting to unchangeable circumstances, skills of respecting and relating to others as well as to the environment, and skills of learning (Department of Education 1998:75).

According to Lindard, Dlamini and Barnard (1983:3) Life Skills education is 'an activity in which the teacher brings children into contact with the world as it really is, and helps them to make choices wisely in their day-to-day lives. Hopson and Scally (1981:49) point out that the important objective of Life Skills education is the development of responsibility for oneself and equipping each individual with skills and an approach to life that will reduce the over-dependency that is often as much a burden for the 'supporter' as it is for the 'supported'. Echoing this Brownell et al (1996:1) note that Life Skills programmes involve the teaching of skills that are necessary for survival and growth, enable us to communicate more effectively with others and help us deal with new and unfamiliar situations.

Central to the Life Skills philosophy is the concept of self-empowerment and a belief that skills can be learnt, modified and improved as the person develops and adjusts to life challenges. There is also the conviction that all young people need to be prepared for life at all levels – physically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and socially – if we are to have a

society comprising mentally healthy and balanced individuals capable of contributing to a strong nation (*ibid*: 1).

Life Skills education includes teaching skills such as self-empowerment, information retrieval skills, information organization, study skills, problem solving skills, assertiveness, AIDS prevention, coping with emotions and a host of others. According to Rooth (1997:6) life skills are essential because they 'make life easier, and increase the possibility of people realizing their potential and becoming productively involved in the community'. They ensure that individual pupils do not only have the personal equipment but a host of skills to face the uncertainty and unpredictability [of life] and to survive whatever the future holds (Hopson et al 1981:41). They assist in empowering people to take responsibility for their own lives, find out relevant information and make their own individual decisions and to make a positive contribution to the society in which they live. When people are empowered, they believe in themselves and feel confident to face the challenges of life. As Life Skills education develops abilities that are adaptive and behaviour that is positive, this enables people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Such values are not only desirable per se but are also necessary to help individuals grow in the new era.

A close examination of the Life Skills education makes one conclude that such an education is, contrary to oral literature, conducive to mental wellness as it encourages students to explore and develop necessary skills for successful learning and living. These are skills to be enforced and instilled in today's learners. According to Rooth (1997:12) 'the more coping skills that students have, the better their chances for improved quality of life and functional behaviour' yet indoctrination as is the case with oral literature, is likely to disable, retard development, delay maturation, and to require later a sizable effort to unlearn dependency (*op cit*: 49).

Learners at secondary school, for instance, are in their adolescent stage, a developmental stage that is challenging and demanding as many changes occur in their young lives. Learners at this stage need skills to cope with growing up. Life Skills education in that area can assist the learners in this phase to make the transition into adulthood easier and less traumatic (*op cit*: 30). Similarly the killer disease AIDS,

which is not only devastating couples, but adolescents as well, plagues the world today. So, Life skills on AIDS prevention can also help learners prevent not only themselves but others as well from contracting this disease.

Life Skills education can be made more effective through experiential learning. As learners bring their own experiences and knowledge, these are validated and utilized in the classroom situation. Experiential learning then affords the learners the opportunity to get a sense of their own worth and capacities to learn. Hence skills such as positive self esteem, cooperation, problem solving, networking and self confidence are encouraged and this helps equip learners for contemporary living. The more skills, competence and confidence a learner has, the less he needs to fear tomorrow. The learner has been equipped with whatever tomorrow requires.

According to Hopson et al (1981:79) learners take an active role in experiential learning in the construction of knowledge. Learning therefore becomes dynamic as it depends largely on their participation. Passivity, a common feature in oral literature's authoritarian teaching becomes a relic of the past as experiential learning does not allow for it. Furthermore, experiential learning is very democratic as learners are actively involved in choosing the topics of the lessons and the teacher acts as the facilitator. They are also involved in the actual teaching/learning situation. This makes them feel more in control of the learning and more responsible for their actions as they are exposed to decision-making and the freedom of choice. From this they learn that their actions have consequences and they also 'develop an increasing internal locus of control'. Learners who feel in control of what is happening in their lives realize that they have the power to change. They feel confident and motivated as they realize that they can make a difference and have an impact on the way they live; a rare feature in orature (*ibid*: 80).

Though Life Skills education is still at its formative years, it is evident that this is the kind of education needed for contemporary living. Rather than teaching learners their culture, nowadays they need to be prepared effectively for life beyond the confines of the school syllabus. The past needs to be confronted to help build a nation in which the individual will be truly valued and also be of value to society. In the words of Hopson et al (1981:44) '[oral literature with its enforcement of culture] has been

tasted, [but] has not excited the taste-buds [of most learners and teachers], and has left a legacy of indigestion.' Introducing Life Skills education would be ensuring 'that all the crew and passengers [in the Titanic] have lifebelts, lifeboats, and survival kits, so that whether the ship founders or sails there will be few casualties or (hopefully) none at all' (*ibid*: 38).

6.8 Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has explored the pernicious element of oral literature. It has been found that oral literature presents a cultural knowledge for promoting social order and control. It also portrays a kind of life described by Freire (1972:10) as the culture of silence as its authoritative nature does not open room for dialogue. This in turn does not encourage critical thinking and awareness and is highly detrimental to the psychological development of children. However, since, depending on the context, there is still something valuable learners can learn from some forms of oral literature, the possibility of using oral art forms positively has also been explored. It has, however, transpired that learners do not take kindly even to those contemporary art forms. They do not listen or watch programmes where contemporary tales are told. The government and the publishing companies are also not supportive of aspiring oral artists. Finally the learners themselves do not associate craftwork with the world of work; hence they shun entrepreneurial art forms as much as they can. In the light of the above, I believe it is prudent to remove oral literature altogether from the siSwati curriculum and adapt a Life Skills programme. Life Skills programmes empower learners to take responsibility of their lives. They also equip learners with a host of skills to face the uncertainty and unpredictability of life. Such an education is conducive to the mental wellness of the learners and is one of the demands of the 21st century. It is to the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study that the next chapter now turns to.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In this study I set out to investigate the problems and challenges facing the teaching of oral literature in secondary schools as well as exploring the pedagogical value oral literature plays in contemporary society. In order to do so, I set out to assess the interrelationship between the culture, language and thought, a theoretical construct that holds important implications for the use, development and teaching of oral literature in its educational context. Oral literature's psychosocial values, which turned out to take precedence over its traditional cultural values, entailed the scrutiny of traditional customs, morals, values and the didactic instruction not only for children, but the society at large.

The research points conclusively that although oral literature was held in high esteem by the older generation, this is not so with young learners. Instead, the young learners are being disadvantaged by the values underpinned through its teaching, thanks to the anti-progressive sentiments often encapsulated in it as a whole. The traditional stereotyped value systems and power relations entrenched by this corpus of literature are in fact detrimental to the spontaneous socio-cultural development of Swazi children. Its celebration and re-enforcement of the old constructs of reality violate human rights and hamper learners' potential for optimal cognitive development. Oral literature proved to have repressive and stifling qualities that should not be reinforced through the uncritical teaching of this body of literature.

The research further concluded that curriculum development should pay particular attention to the real needs of learners. The identification of the negative aspects associated with oral literature necessitates a critical review of the siSwati curriculum. The need to modernize in all respects has brought about new demands on the language curriculum. This need to infuse language teaching with the full spectrum of Life Skills required by children to function in a modern society should place a serious

question mark behind the teaching of the antiquated value systems inherent in oral literature.

7.2 Conclusions

With regard to the teaching/learning of oral literature in secondary schools, conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- The cultural values of a speech community are mirrored through their oral literature and it is closely tied up with their language and thought processes. Both language and thought shape each other and the end product of this mutual influence is oral literature. However, oral literature, which is shaped by the traditional culture, does not necessarily equip a young generation with values and skills to function in a modern society.
- Oral literature has bred deep tensions in the classroom and seems to seriously undermine the authority of those who teach it, as children show an instinctive aversion to the inherent values.
- The broad development of literacy in Swaziland has restructured the people's consciousness and has opened avenues for critical thinking. This has enabled learners and teachers to form a mindset different from that of their forebears in relation to the traditional values and norms embodied in oral literature. This is evidenced by the ambivalent attitudes these two sets display towards this subject
- Some forms of oral literature still enforce archaic and anti-progressive traditional values and old constructs of reality. These include the support of old privileged vested statuses, phallocentrism, and anti-democratic values. These cultural constructs are detrimental to progressive pedagogical visions.
- The education and training of Swazi learners within the paradigm of traditional oral literature pedagogies, which is authoritative and prescriptive, preclude them from developing a critical and reflective mindset. This authoritative and prescriptive approach to teaching is not

supportive of student participation and inquiry. Instead it enforces a culture of silence, as it does not open room for dialogue.

- Unless learners are equipped with contemporary educational practices and reality and the requisite contemporary information that constitute the canon of modernity, they will be unable to function properly in society and take charge of their own learning, discover knowledge and make judgements on what they consider important. Instead they will continue to express stereotypical communal values devoid of any individualism.
- It is imperative that if oral literature continues to be taught, the concern should be shifted from cultural literacy as enforced by this subject to a knowledge that emphasizes critical literacy.
- The lack of relevant skills and values in oral literature that conform to the demands of the 21st century necessitates a critical review of the siSwati curriculum and the infusion of a Life Skills education which can develop learners holistically and equip them with the relevant values and skills to function properly. Life Skills such as self empowerment, problem solving, coping with emotions, to name a few, help learners to function properly and be able to face the uncertainty and unpredictability of life in a modern society.

7.3 Recommendations

Leading from my conclusions, this study recommends the following:

- SiSwati language and literature education must be related to the real needs of both the learners and the new global village.
- The siSwati curriculum needs to be critically reviewed in order to bring it in line with modern language and literature curricular.
- The body of oral literature that has proved to be educationally problematic should be removed from the curriculum.
- Language planners should consider the incorporation of a carefully developed Life Skills programme as an integral part of a modern siSwati language curriculum.

Bibliography

- Adegbija, E. (1994): *Language Attitudes in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Multilingual Matters Ltd: Clevedon.
- Apple, M.W. & Christian-Smith L.K. (eds) (1991): *The Politics of the Textbook*. Routledge: New York and London.
- Ault, R.L. (1977): *Children's Cognitive Development*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Awoniyi, T.A. (1982): *The Teaching of African Languages*. Hodder and Stoughton: London.
- Baker, C. (1992): *Attitudes and Language*. Multilingual Matters: England.
- Bamgbose, A. (1991): *Language and the Nation: the language Question in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.
- Bauman, R. (1986): *Story, Performance and Event*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Bill, M.C. (1995): The Initiatory Journey in Tsonga Tales of Two Sisters in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 6 (1995) pp 24-54.
- Block, J.H. (ed) (1971): *Mastery Learning – Theory in Practice*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.: United States of America.
- Bloom, A. (1981): *The Linguistic Shaping of Thought*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers: Hillsdale, New Jersey.
- Bloom, A. (1987): *The Closing of the American Mind*. Simon and Schuster Inc.: New York.
- Borries, B. (1988): *Attitudes to Political Violence In South African Student Population*. Unpublished B.A.Hons. dissertation: University of Cape Town
- Booth, A.R. (1983): *Swaziland Tradition and Change in a Southern African Kingdom*. Westview Press: Boulder Colorado.
- Brown, D. (1998): *Voicing the Text: South African Oral Poetry and Performance*. Oxford University Press: Cape Town.
- Brownell, A.J.J. et al (1996): *Life Skills: Personal and Interpersonal Development*. Kagiso Publishers: Pretoria.
- Bukenya, A., Kabira, W.M. & Okombo, O. (eds.) (1994): *Understanding Oral Literature*. Nairobi University Press: Nairobi, Kenya.
- Bukenya, A. (1999): *Oracy and African Empowerment in Africa*. Department of Literature, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. Paper presented on the 3rd International Conference on Oral Literature in Africa (21-23rd October 1999).
- Buttjes, D. & Byram, M. (eds.) (1991): *Mediating Languages and Cultures*. Multilingual Matters Ltd: Clevedon, Philadelphia.
- Canonici, N.N. (1987): *The Inganekwane Tradition*. University of Natal, Durban.
- Canonici, N.N. (1988): Educational Aspects of Trickster Folktales in Sienaert E.R. & Bell A.N. (1988): *Oral Tradition and Education*. Multicopy: Durban.
- Canonici, N.N. (1995): Folktale Performance as an Educational Experience in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 6 (1995) pp13-23.

- Canonici, N.N. (1990): *The Folktale Tradition Yesterday and Today in Groenewald*, H.C (ed.) (1990): *Oral Studies in Southern Africa*. HSRC: Pretoria.
- Carmichael, J. (1969): *Educational Revolution*. Harlow: Longmans.
- Carroll, J.B. (1964): *Language and Thought*. Prentice Hall Inc.: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Carruthers, P. (1996): *Language, Thought and Consciousness*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Chaane, T. (1991): *Orality and Narratives – The Art of Story Telling*. Paper presented in the New Writers' Conference, University of Witwatersrand: 1-6 December 1991.
- Chaika, E. (1994): *Language: The Social Mirror*. Heinle and Henle Publishers: Boston, Massachusetts.
- Chirikure, C. (1991): *Orality and Poetry*. Paper presented in the New Writers' Conference, University of Witwatersrand: 1-6 December 1991.
- Chokoe, S.J. (1993): 'Thou Shalt Not,' says the Northern Sotho Riddle in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*, Volume 4, 1993 pp 47-59.
- Coffin, T.P. (1968): *American Folklore*. Voice of America Forum: Chicago & London.
- Cole, M. & Scribner, S. (1974): *Culture and Thought: A Psychological Introduction*. John Wiley and sons, Inc.: New York.
- Cornillon, S.K. (1972): *Images of Women in Fiction*, Bowling Green University Popular Press: Bowling Green, Ohio.
- Dargie, D. (1988): *Xhosa Music – its Techniques and Instruments*. David Philip: Claremont, South Africa.
- De Clereq, J.L.W. (1980): *Attitudes towards family Planning and Related Issues in Esikhawini Township*. University of Zululand: Natal.
- Department of Education. (1998): *Quality Education for All – Overcoming Barriers to Learning and Development*. Report on the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET), National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). CTP Printers: Parow.
- Devitt, M. & Sterenly, K. (1999): *Language and Reality*. M.I.T. Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Dlamini, O.S. (1986): *Sinkayinkayi*. Longman Swaziland Ltd: Manzini, Swaziland.
- Dlamini, S. (1994): The Messages Conveyed through Traditional Swati Female Folksongs in Sienaert E. et al (1994): *Oral Tradition and its Transmission*. The Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies: University of Natal, Durban.
- Dlamini, P.N. (1986): Mswati III in Ntiwane, N.D., Mamba, G.N. *Takitsi*. Macmillan Boleswa Publishers (Pty) Ltd: Manzini, Swaziland.
- Doke, C.M. (1993): Bantu Wisdom lore in Kaschula, R.H (ed.) (1993): *Foundations in Southern African Oral literature*. Witwatersrand University Press: Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Dorson, R.M. (1959): *American Folklore*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London.
- Dyubhele, F.J. My Song is my Weapon: Satire as a communicative Strategy in Xhosa Folksongs in Sienaert E. et al (1994): *Oral Tradition and its*

- Transmission. The Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies:*
University of Natal, Durban.
- Dundes, A. (1980): *Interpreting Folklore*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington.
- Du Preez, J.M. (1983): *The Africana Afrikaner: Master Symbols in South African Textbooks*. Librarius Felicitas (Pty) Ltd: South Africa.
- Engelbrecht, S.W.H. (1975): *The School Textbook*. H.S.R.C.: Pretoria.
- Fardon, R. & Furniss, G. (1994): *African Languages, Development and the State*. Routledge: London and New York.
- Ferguson, M. (1977): *Images of Women in Literature*. Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston.
- Ferron, O.M. (1981): *Collection of Research Papers in Education*. Umtata.
- Finnegan, R. (1970): *Oral literature in Africa*. Oxford University Press: Nairobi, Dares Salaam.
- Freire, P. (1972): *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Sheld and Ward: Great Britain.
- Furniss, G. & Gunner, L. (eds.) (1995): *Power, Marginality and African Oral Literature*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Gerard, A.S. (1981): *Comparative Literature and African Literature*. Heer Printers: Pretoria.
- Giglioli, P.P. (1972): *Language and Social Context*. Penguin Books: Harmondsworth.
- Ginindza, T.T. (1977): *Tibongo Temakhosi Netetindlovukazi*. Longman: London.
- Ginindza, T.T. (1992): *Sibongo: Swazi Clan Names and Clan Praises*. Swazi Heritage Series, Bluemoon Printing Company: Manzini, Swaziland.
- Golby, J.M. & Purdue, A.W. (1984): *The Civilization of the Crowd*. Batsford Academic and Educational: London.
- Groenewald, H.C. (ed.) (1990): *Oral Studies in Southern Africa*. Human Sciences Research Council Publishers: Pretoria.
- Groenewald, H.C. & Makopo, S. (1991): *The Political Song: Tradition and Innovation for Liberation in Sienaert, E.R. et al (eds.) (1991): Oral Tradition a and Innovation: New Wine in Old Bottles*. University of Natal Oral Documentation and Research Centre: Durban.
- Guma, S.M. (1967): *The Form, Content and Technique of Traditional Literature in Southern Sotho*. The Hiddingh-Currie Publications of the University of South Africa.
- Gunner, E. (1986): *A Dying Tradition? African Oral Literature in the Contemporary Context in Social Dynamics*, Volume 12(2) pp31-38.
- Gunner, L. & Gwala, M. (eds.) (1991): *Musho: Zulu Popular Praises*. Michigan State University Press: East Lansing.
- Hale, T.A. (1990): *Scribe, Griot and Novelist*. University of Florida Press: Gainesville.
- Hall, E.T. (1976): *Beyond Culture*. Anchor Books: Doubleday, United States of America.
- Hamers, J.F & Blanc, M.H.A. (1989): *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Hanghe, A.A. (1988): *Folktales from Somalia*. Motala Grafiska: Motala.

- Harrison, L.E. (1992): *Who Prospers?: How Cultural Values Shape Economic and Political Success*. Basic Books: United States of America.
- Heugh, K. (1995): *Diabling and Enabling: Implications of Language Policy trends in South Africa* in Mesthrie, R. (ed.) (1995): *Language and Social History*. David Phipps: Cape Town and Johannesburg.
- Holladay, V. (1970): *Bantu Tales*. The Viking Press, New York.
- Hopson, B. & Scally, M. (1981): *Life Skills Teaching*. McGraw-Hill Book Company (UK) Limited: Great Britain.
- Hornby, A.S. (1995): *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Hymes, D. (1964): *Language, Culture and Society*. Harper and Row Publishers: New York.
- Ikonne, C., Oko, E., & Onwudinjo, P. (eds.) (1992): *Children and Literature in Africa*. Heinemann Educational Books: Nigeria, PLC.
- Ivey, D.L. (1986): *Attitudes Towards the Library and Information Profession among Practising Librarians and Information Workers in the Western Cape*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of Cape Town.
- Jalling, H. (ed.) (1968): *Modern Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press: London.
- Jordan, A.C. (1973): *Tales from Southern Africa*. University of California Press Ltd: London.
- Jason, H. & Segal, D. (eds.) (1977): *Patterns in Oral Literature*. Mouton Publishers: The Hague, Paris.
- Kabira, W.M. (1983): *The Oral Artist*. Heinemann Kenya Limited: Nairobi.
- Kabira, W.M. & waMutahi, K. (1988): *Gikuyu Oral Literature*. Heinemann Kenya Limited: Nairobi.
- Kamera, W.D., Kunene, E.C.L & Sibanda, E.S (1998): *Tinganekwane TesiSwati: SiSwati Folktales in Faki*, H. (1998): *University of Swaziland Research Board Series no.2*, University of Swaziland: Swaziland.
- Kamera, W.D. (1999): *Trickster Heroines in Swazi Folktales in Voices: A Journal for Oral Studies* volume 2, pp 49-63.
- Kasapo, J.M. (1986): *Utilization and Promotion of Oral Traditions: A case of Zambia*. in Moyo, S. et al (1986): *Oral Traditions in Southern Africa Volume I*. Division for Culture Research: Institute for African Studies, University of Zambia.
- Kaschula, R.H. (ed.) (1993): *Foundations in Southern African Oral Literature*. Witwatersrand University Press: Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Kaschula, R.H. & Anthonissen, C (1995): *Communicating Across Cultures in South Africa*. Hodder & Stoughton, Witwatersrand University Press: Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Kaschula, R.H. (1997): *Xhosa Oral Poetry and its Reception: Past and Present in Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies*, Volume 8 (2) pp1-17.
- Kaschula, R.H. (1999): *Contemporary forms of South African Oral Literature*. Department of African Languages and Literatures: University of Cape Town, pp 1-10.
- Katengo, M. & Mwale, G.S. (1986): *Can Traditional Education be Integrated with Modern Education System in Moyo*, S. et al (1986): *Oral Tradition in*

- Southern Africa* Volume IV. Division for Culture Research, Institute for African Studies: University of Zambia.
- Kgobe, D.M. (1997): The Role of Music in an African Community with Special Reference to Northern Sotho Children's Songs in *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies*. Volume 8 (1) 1997 pp39-48.
- Khuba, A.E. (1985): *Proverbs as a Mirror of the Vhavenda Culture and Philosophy*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of the North.
- Knappert, J. (1986): *Proverbs from the Lamu Archipelago and the Central Coast*. Dietrich Reimer Verlag: Berlin.
- Kuper, H. (1978): *Sobhuza II – Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland*. Duckworth: London.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980): *Metaphors we Live by*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London.
- Lander, H. (1966): *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press: United States of America.
- Leclerc-Madlala, S. (2000): *The Silences that Nourish Aids in Africa*. Mail & Guardian :11-17 August, 2000
- Lehman, D. (1983): *Folktales from Zambia*. Deitrich Reimer Verlag: Berlin.
- Lestrade, G.P. (1959): *Traditional Literature in I. Schapera: The Bantu Speaking Tribes of South Africa*.
- Levin, R. (1991): Swaziland's Tinkhundla and the Myth of Swazi Tradition. in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. Volume 10 (1-2), pp 1-23.
- Lewis, M.M. (1963): *Language, thought and Personality*. George G. Harrap and Company: London, Toronto.
- Lindfors, B. (1980): *Research in African Literatures*. Volume 11(3), University of Texas Press.
- Lindhard, N., Dlamini, N. & Barnard, W. (1983): *Guidance in the Classroom*. Longman Penguin Southern African (Pty) Ltd: Cape Town.
- Lord, A.B. (1988): Words Heard and Words Seen in Whitaker & Sienaert (1988): *Oral Tradition and Literacy*. Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre: Multicopy, Durban.
- Lubozhya, A.D. (1986): Oral Traditions: The Role of Archivists, Volume III in Moyo, S. et al (1986): *Oral Traditions in Southern Africa*. Division for Culture Research, Institute for African Studies: University of Zambia.
- Macmillan, H. (1985): Swaziland: Decolonization and the Triumph of Tradition in *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23-24, pp 643-666.
- Mafela, M.J. (1988): *The Narrative Technique in some Novels of T.N. Maumela*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of South Africa.
- Mafela, M.J. (1997): Reflecting on Trends in Tshivenda Praise Poetry in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 8 (2) pp 49-62.
- Maged, S. (1997): *The Pedagogy of Large Classes*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of Cape Town.
- Mahlalela-Thusi, B. (1999): *Curriculum 2005 and (Post) Modernizing African Languages: The Quantum Leap*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of Cape Town.
- Makgamatha, P.M. (1991): *Characteristics of the Northern Sotho Folktales*. Perskor Publishers: Johannesburg and Cape Town.

- Makgamatha, P.M.(1993): The Trickster tale and its Cultural Symbolism in Northern Sotho in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 4 (1993) pp 60-69.
- Malan, J.S. (1985): *Swazi Culture*. Africa Institute of South Africa: Pretoria, South Africa.
- Malatji, S.M. (1999) *The Transition into Teaching*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of Cape Town.
- Manana, M. (1989): Tibongo TeNkhosi Mswati III in Mbhele, N.F., Mthembu, E.T. and Zulu, E.S.Q. (1989): *Ligabazi*. Macmillan Boleswa Publishers (Pty) Ltd: Manzini, Swaziland.
- Mamba, G.N (1997): Group identity in Swazi Oral Poetry in Moyo, S. et al (1986): *Oral Tradition in Southern Africa Volume II*. Division for Culture Research, Institute for African Studies: University of Zambia.
- Mathivha, M.E.R.(1970): *The History of the Venda Literature*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of South Africa.
- Mathumba, D.I.(1990) Tsonga Proverbs – An Open Sesame to the Tsonga People's Philosophy of Life in *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies*. Volume 1 (1990) pp10-13.
- Mathumba, D.I. (1988): *Some Aspects of the Tsonga Proverb*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of South Africa.
- Mathumba, D.I. (1998): Survival of the Fittest: The Form of the Proverb Revisited in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*, Volume 9 (2) 1998 pp59-65.
- May, J.P. (1995): *Children's Literature and Critical Theory*. Oxford University Press: New York & Oxford.
- Maykut, P. & Morehouse, *Beginning Qualificative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*. The Palmer Press: London.
- Mazrui, A.A & Mazrui, A.M (1998): *The power of Babel*. James Currey: Oxford.
- Mazrui, A.A. (1990): *Cultural Forces in World Politics*. James Currey Ltd.: London.
- Mbikiza, The Patriot (2000): The Church Should not be seen to be Dull in *The Times of Swaziland*. Thursday, 26 October 2000.
- Mc Cormick, K.(1983): *Attitudes to the Two Official Languages and their Dialects in Cape Town*, Department of English, Centre for African Studies: University of Cape Town.
- Mc Kay, S.L & Hornberger, N.H. (eds.) (1996): *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Merriam, A.P. (1964): *The Anthropology of Music*. Northwestern University Press: Evanston, Illinois.
- Miruka, O. (1999): *Studying Oral Literature*. Acacia Stantex Publishers: Nairobi, Kenya.
- Miruka, O. (1994): Understanding and Teaching Proverbs in Bukenya A. et al (1994): *Understanding Oral Literature*. Nairobi University Press: Nairobi, Kenya.
- Mniki, L.F. (1995): *An Analysis of African students' Perceptions of their School Media Centre as a Resource for Learning*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of Cape Town.
- Moilwa, J. (1975): *The Sociolinguistics of Tswana Literature*. Carlifonia State University: Fresno.

- Mokitimi, I. (1997): *The Voice of the People*. UNISA Press: Pretoria, South Africa.
- Monye, A.A. (1996): *Proverbs in African Orature*. University Press of America: Inc., Lanham, New York, London.
- Mordaunt, O.G. (1981): *Attitudes Towards the Utility and Socio-Cultural Influences of the English Language: A Study of Prospective Teachers in Swaziland*. Unpublished PhD thesis: Indiana University.
- Mordi, A.R. (1982): *Attitudes Towards Wildlife in Botswana*. Garland Publishing: New York, London.
- Mosilo-Matheleli, C.P. (1999): *An Exploration of the Learning-Teaching of English as a Second Language*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of Cape Town.
- Moto, F. (1988): The Effects of Literacy on an Orally-Based Society in Whitaker, R. and Sienaert, E.R. (1988): *Oral Tradition and Literacy*. Natal University Oral Documentation and Research Centre: Multicopy, Durban.
- Moyo, S.P.C., Sumaili, T.W.C. & Moody, J.A. (1986): *Oral Traditions in Southern Africa*. Division for Culture Research: University of Zambia.
- Msimang, C.T. (1991): A Review of the Praises of Dingana in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 2 (1991) pp51-60.
- Msimang, C.T. (1983): *Folktale Influence on the Zulu Novel*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of South Africa.
- Mtuzze, P.T. (1990): *A Feminist Critique of the Image of Women in the Prose Works of Selected Xhosa Writers*. Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Cape Town.
- Mutasa, D.E. (1999): The Shona Proverb over the Ages: The Sociolinguistic Approach in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 10(1) (1999) pp30-41.
- Mutasa, D.E. (1994): The proverb at the Present Time: The Sociolinguistic Approach in Sienaert, E.R., Cowper-Lewis, M. & Bell, A.N. (eds.) (1994): *Oral Tradition and its Transmission*. The Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies: University of Natal, Durban.
- Nkunzana, K.J. (1988): *A Critical Evaluation of the Poetry of E.P. Ndlambi and W.Z. Nkondo*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of South Africa.
- Nyembezi, S. (1954): *Zulu Proverbs*. Witwatersrand University Press: Johannesburg.
- Nunan, D. (1995): *Language Teaching Methodology*. Phoenix ELT: Herfordshire.
- Oettle, A. (1973): *A Survey of Oral Poetry in Selected Southern Bantu Languages*. Unpublished B.A. Hons. Dissertation: Department of African Languages, Rhodes University.
- Olatunji, O.O. (1984): *Features of Yoruba Poetry*. University Press Ltd: Ibadan.
- Ong, W. (1982): *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Methuen: London and New York.
- Opland, J. (1983): *Xhosa Oral Poetry*. Ravan: Johannesburg.
- Opland, J. (1992): *Words that Circle Words*. National Book Printers: Goodwood, Cape Town.

- Perumal, J.C. (1997): *Exploring the Role of the Postmodern Feminist Voice in the Development of the School Language Text*. Unpublished Master's Dissertation: University of Cape Town.
- Piaget, J. (1929): *The Child's Conception of the World*. Kegan Paul: London.
- Piaget, J. (1955): *The Child's Construction of Reality*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd: London.
- Piaget, J. (1959): *The Language and Thought of the Child*. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.: London.
- Pluckrose, H. & Wilby, P. (eds.) (1980): *Education 2000*. Temple Smith: London.
- Pottow, C.L. (1990): *Special Structures Relating to the Family in Zulu Folktales*. Unpublished M.A. dissertation: University of Natal, Durban.
- Qorro, M.A.S. (1999): *A Qualificative Study on the Teaching and Learning of English in Tanzania Schools in Relation to the Writing requirements of Tertiary Education*. Unpublished PhD thesis: Tanzania.
- Romaine, S. (1994): *Language in Society*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Rooth, E. (1997): *Introduction to Life Skills*. National Book Printers via Africa: Western Cape.
- Rycroft, D.K & Ngcobo, A.B. (1988): *The Praises of Dingana*. University of Natal Press: Pietermaritzburg.
- Saayman, W. (ed.) (1996): *Embracing the Baobab Tree - The African Proverb in the 21st century*. UNISA Press: UNISA, South Africa.
- Scheub, H.E. (1975): *The Xhosa Ntshomi*. Oxford University Press: London.
- Schoffeleers, J.M. & Roscoe, A.A. (1985): *Land of Fire - Oral literature from Malawi*. Popular Publications: Limbe, Malawi.
- Sellers, M.N.S (ed.) (1994): *An Ethical Education*. Berg Oxford Providence: United States of America.
- Sienaert, E.R. & Bell, A.N. (1988): *Oral Tradition in Education*. Multicopy: Durban.
- Sienaert, E., Cowper-Lewis, M. & Bell, A.N. (eds.) (1994): *Oral Tradition and its Transmission*. The Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies: University of Natal, Durban.
- Sirayi, G.T. (1989): *The Xhosa Novel*. Unpublished PhD thesis: University of South Africa.
- Sithebe, Z. (1994): Oral Lore: In Search of the Missing Link in SiSwati Modern Drama in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 5 (pp26-51).
- Sithebe, Z. (1998): Tale and Praise: The Reflection of Primaeval and Modern Man's Philosophy in the Epic in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 9 (2) pp43-51.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1981): *Bilingualism or Not: The Education of the Minorities*. Multilingual Matters Ltd.: England.
- Sowell, T. (1994): *Race and Culture*. Basic Books: New York, United States of America.
- Sund, R.B. (1976): *Piaget for Educators*. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company: Columbus, Ohio.

- Sunkuli, L.O. & Miruka, S.O. (1990): *A Dictionary of Oral Literature*. Heinemann Kenya Limited: Nairobi.
- Sutherland, P. (1992): *Cognitive Development Today*. Paul Chapman Publishing: London.
- Taylor, E.B. (1871): *Primitive Culture*, John Murray: London.
- Thuynsma, P.N. (1980): *The Oral Tradition in Southern African Literature*. University Microfilms International: London, England.
- Tisani, N. (1994): Classified Material in Oral Tradition: Its Survival and Transmission in Sienaert, E. et al (1994): *Oral Tradition and its Transmission*. The Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies: University of Natal, Durban.
- Tollefson, J. (1993): Language Policy and Power in *The International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. (1993) no.103, pp 73-95.
- Ulich, R. (1965): *Education in Western Culture*. Harcourt, Brace and World Inc.: New York.
- Umeasieabu, R.N.(1989): *The Way we Lived*. Heinemann Educational Books: London, Ibadan, Nairobi.
- Vail, L. & White, L. (1991): *Power and the Praise Poem – Southern African Voices in History*. University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville.
- Vallette, R.M. & Disick, R.S.(1972): *Modern Language Performance and Individualization*. Harcourt Brace: Jovanovich, Inc., New York.
- Valsiner, J. (2000): *Culture and Psychology*. SAGE Publications, Volume 6 (1), United States of America, Clark University.
- Van der Veer, R. & Valsiner, J. (1994): *The Vygotsky Reader*. Basil Blackwell Ltd: Oxford, UK, and Cambridge.
- Vilakati, T.S. & Sibanda E.S (1997): *Chaza Ngive*. Macmillan Swaziland National Publishing Co. (Pty) Ltd: Manzini, Swaziland.
- Vilakazi, B.W. (1993): The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu in Kaschula, R.H.(ed.) (1993): *Foundations in Southern African Oral Literature*. Witwatersrand University Press: Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Von-Dirige Par, H. (1991): *Language Standardization in Africa*. Helmut Buske Verlag: Hamburg.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1962): *Thought and Language*. The M.I.T. Press: Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley & sons, Inc, New York and London.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978): *Mind in Society*. Havard University Press: Cambridge.
- Wallwork, J.F.(1978): *Language and People*. Heinemann Educational Books: London.
- Wardough, R. (1986): *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Basil and Blackwell: Oxford.
- Weaver, C. (1990): *Understanding Whole Language*. Heinemann: Toronto, Canada.
- Willies, W. (1997): The Educational value of Story: Perspectives from Bibliotherapy and Narrative Therapy in *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies*. Volume 8 (1) (1997) pp 20-26.
- Whitaker, R. & Sienaert E (eds.) (1986): *Oral Tradition and Literacy*. Oral Documentation Centre: University of Natal, Durban.

- Whiteley, W.H (ed.) (1974): *Language in Kenya*, Oxford University Press: Nairobi.
- Whorf, B. (1956): *Language, Thought and Reality*. MIT Press: Cambridge Mass.
- Yule, R.M. (ed.) (1992): *Teaching English*. Lexicon Publishers (Pty) Ltd.
- Zeiss, C.S. (1998): Foreword in *The African Journal for Folklore Studies*. Volume 9 (2) (1998) ppv-vi.
- Zumthor, P. (1990): *Oral Poetry – An Introduction*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

University of Cape Town

Appendices

Appendix 1. Folktales

1. The old woman and a dassie (Salukati nachakijane)

Once upon a time, there lived an old woman with her grand children. The dassie occasionally visited this family to play with the children. One day the dassie came very late and found that the children had gone to play with other friends far from home. Feeling rather lonely, he asked the old woman if they could play a game where they would cook one another. The old woman agreed.

The dassie got into the pot first and after a few seconds she cried to the old woman that she was cooked. The old woman took her turn and likewise after a few seconds, she cried that she was cooked. The dassie went into the pot and on and on the game continued. On the third turn of the old woman in the pot, the dassie put in more firewood and when the old woman cried that she was cooked the dassie did not let her out until she died in the pot.

When the children came from where they had gone to play, the dassie served them with some meat. Little did they know that they were eating their grandmother until the youngest child recognized their grand mother's little finger. It was then that the dassie ran away shouting that the children had eaten their grandmother. They pursued him until they found and killed him.

It is finished.

Kwesukesukela bekunesalukati sihlala nebatukulu baso. Chakijane lobesangumngani walabantfwana abehle abavakashela atodlala nabo. Ngalelinye lilanga watsi uyefika chakijane wakhandza kutsi sebaye kuyodlala nalabanye bantfwana khashane nasekhaya kubo. Eva situnge chakijane wase ucela lesalukati kutsi abadlale kuphekaphekana. Singasoli lutfo salukati, sivume.

Angene ebhodvweni chakijane, sibase salukati ngaphansi. 'Sengivutsavutsiwe,' amemete chakijane. Simkhokhe salukati kungene sona ebhodweni. Abase naye chakijane. Emvakwesikhashana simemete salukati, 'sengivutsavutsiwe.' Aphume ebhodvweni. Kubuye chakijane, naye emvakwesikhashana aphume. Ngelihlandla lesitsatfu lesalukati ebhodvweni sibatse siyakhala kutsi sesivutsavutsiwe abindzise nje chakijane. Sachaphatela njalo ebhodvweni sate safela khona.

Uma babuya bantfwana ekudlaleni kwabo abaphakele lemnandzi inyama chakijane. Badle bashaye letibovu tisu bangati kutsi badl' ugogo wabo. Kusadliwa asole lomunye umtfwana ungatsi ubona lugalo lolunjengelwa gogo wakhe. Bamhhawute bonkhe, kutsi akusilo. Sekudliwe asukume chakijane abaleke. Atsi nje nasasekudzenyana, 'Pe! pe! Nadla gogo wenu. Bamangale bantfwana bamsukele bamcoshe. Lapho bambamba khona bamshaya bate bambulala.

Seyiphelile

2. Lokuthula, Lochalachala and Mamba Makhubu(Lokuthula,Lochalachala naMamba Makhubu)

Once upon a time, two sisters not born of the same mother, in the course of carrying out their duties encounter a mishap. The elder sister Lokuthula accidentally breaks her mother's clay pot. She asks her younger sister to break the news to their mother. Lochalachala comes back and reports that their mother is red with anger and thus Lokuthula cannot return home. She consequently sets out to look for and marry Mamba Makhubu who nobody, including herself, has ever seen.

On the way she meets several old^{people}, who are covered with sores and who are deformed. She licks their sores and runny eyes and helps them with their loads. For her kindness they give her their blessings and some pieces of advice about what she is going to encounter along the way and the man she is going to marry. As she moves on she meets strange creatures, and laughingstresses. She sees sour milk in containers along her forest path. She displays impeccable behaviour. She, as advised, remains cool and collected, and does not help herself to the milk although she is hungry and does not talk back or laugh. She remains silent and presses on with her journey. She arrives at a homestead and is invited in. She is told to grind sorghum to make porridge for Mamba Makhubu', who is out grazing cattle. Night comes and she is told to lock herself in the house. Mamba Makhubu comes at night in the form of a snake and drops beside her on the bed. Lokuthula masters her fear and Mamba Makhubu is pleased with her and her food. Everyday he crawls in and out of the house as a snake. Eventually Lokuthula gives birth to a handsome baby boy. She asks for permission to go home to her parents and show them the child. Mamba Makhubu agrees.

Her stepmother seeing Lokuthula's fortune encourages her daughter Lochalachala to set out to achieve the same. She, however, does not respect listen to the frightening crones and monstrous beings she meets on the way. For her lack of respect the old women curse her. On arrival at the homestead, she does not grind the sorghum finely and when Mamba Makhubu comes at night, she screams, calls for help and runs out. Mamba Makhubu chases her all the way to her parental home where he is killed. It is finished.

Kwesuka-sukela, umfati nendvodza banebantfwana lababili labangemantfombatana. Labantfwana bebaye basitane ekwenteni umsebenti wekhaya njengekukha emanti, basindze, bayotfota nekupheka.

Lapha ekhaya unina abebayalile kutsi emkhatsini wetimbata takhe ikhona lebekangatsandzi kutsi bahle bayetfwala, noma bayokha ngayo emanti. Ngalelinye lilanga watsi Lonkombose, lamuhla ngifuna sikhe emanti abemanyenti. Mine Ngitakwetfwala lembata lenkhulu yamake.

Batsite nasebasemfuleni bakhelela timbata tabo Lokuthula watsi ku Lochalachala akametdwese lembata abambisise kahle. Nembala Lochalachala wambambisa etama kumetfwesa. Shelele imbata bhibi phansi! Wakhala Lokuthula watsi kuLachalachala akahambe ayombika ekhaya kunina. Lonkombose abesidzandzane lesilunge kakhulu. Wefikake Lochalachala wakhandza unina ahleli neyise nembala wayibeka indzaba. Unina waLochalachala wamtjela kutsi akahambe ayombata abuye ekhaya ingoti yingoti.

Nakefika lemfuleni Lochalachala atjele Lokuthula kutsi unina utfukutsele ugane sicoco, utsi angacale nje abeke umconjwana wakhe lapha ekhaya utambulala nekumbulala. Lokuthula weva buhlungu ngemavi laphuma kunina wase uncuma kutsi utawuduka nelive ayotendzela ku Mamba Makhubu lake weva ngaye. Nembala alusukele luhambo langalwati nekutsi luyomfikisa kuphi.

Ekhatsi nelihlatsi lapho abesadvukuta kulo ahlangane nesalukati lebetes minci lubhici emehlweni. Sitsi salukati, 'Ase ungisite ungikhotse nalubhici mntfwanami.' Wabindza Lokuthula wangasho lutho, wavele wenta njengobe aceliwe. Sase sitsi salukati, 'Hamba mntfwanami, uyowutfolela umendvo nalapho uya khona. Utsite asachubeka neluhambo lwakhe waphindze wahlangana nalomunye umuntfu lobeketfwala ngetibunu. Wacela lomuntfu kutsi Lokuthula afane ametfwese. Wavele wacukula imitfwalo wametfwesa. Wase utsi lomuntfu, 'Hamba mntfwanami, uyawuwutfolela nemendvo lapho uya khona.'

Asahamba endleleni wahlangana naletinyentana tigigaba kepha kuto tonkhe abengatsi vu, abevele ente lalabatsi akakwente, emvakwaloko bonkhe bamfisele inhlanhla. Kwatsi emvakwesikhatsi lesidze wagcina efikile Lokuthula emtini wa Mamba Makhubu. Ufika nje akekho nalowo Mamba Makhubu uyokwelusa, kodvwa ke bebakhona labanye bantfu laph'ekhaya. Batse bangambingelela, bambuta nempilo bambuta kutsi ubahlasele ngani. Watsi ute kutokwendza kuMamba Maqubu. Bamlandvulela kutsi akekho lowo Mamba Makhubu, useyokwelusa. Base sebaletsa emabele kutsi awasile. 'Ucaphela kutsi uwagaye uwacolise.' Nembala waguca etjeni Lokuthula wasila. Wasilisisa wacolisa njengobe ayaliwe. Kutsite emini wabuya Mamba Makhubu. Bamtjela masinyane ngentfombi lebe ifikile itsi itokwendza kuye. Wajabula kakhulu nakeva lawo mavi.

Intfombi ke yatsatfwa yangeniswa endlini. Kwavalisiswa kwashiywa imbotjana lencane etulu endlini. Leyombobo ngulabetawungena ngayo Mamba Makhubu. Nembala ke emvakwesikhatsi wangena ngayo imbobo Mamba Maqubu. Phela Mamba Makhubu kwakuyinyoka. Wangena wacondza ngco entfombini beyitomendzela. Wefika kuyo wayotongolotela. Inhloko yakhe wayibeka entsanyeni yalentfombatana. Yabindza nje intfombatana yangakhombisi naloluncane luvalo. Wabona Mamba Makhubu kutsi lentfombatana inesibindzi. Wase uyasombuluka kuyo wayophuma ngembobo langene ngayo, wahamba wayovulela tinkhomo wayotelusa. Ntsambama wabuya asetotivalela. Utse angacedza kuvalela wabuyela elawini lapho kuhleli khona intfombi letomendzela. Wahlala ke Lokuthula lapha asendze kuMamba Makhubu. Emvakwesikhashana wabe sewutfolela umntfwana lomuhle wemfana.

Asakhulakhulile umntfwana wacela Lokuthula kutsi afane ayobakhombisa ekhaya. Wavuma Mamba Makhubu nembala wahamba Lokuthula wayovakashela ekhaya. Bethuka ekhaya bambona atseleka nemntfwana bangati nekutsi washonaphi.

Wambuta unina kutsi ufika nemntfwana nje uchamukaphi nekutsi wahambelani ekhaya. Wachaza ke Lokuthula kutsi wanconota kuduka nelive uma eva emagama labuya nadzadzewabo Lochalachala mhla avellelwe yingoti yekubulala imbata emfuleni. Ekuhambeni kwakhe ke wahlangana na Mamba Makhubu labe sewendza kuye. Wajabha kakhulu unina nakeva lamavi, noko wajatjuliswa kubona umntfwanakhe aphila futsi asanemtukulu.

Dzadzewabo Lochalachala ngekubona kutsi Lokuthula ubukeka ahleli kahle emendvweni waphatfwa ngumona naye wafisa kuyokwendza kuloyo Mamba Makhubu. Wangena indlela ke naye ayotetamela inhlanhla lapho kwendze dzadzewabo khona.

Endleni ahlangane nesalukati kutse ngci lubhici emehlweni. Sitsi salukati, 'ase ungikhotse nalu lubhici mntfwanami.' Yabamba lukhalo intfombi yakabo yatsi, 'kodvwa utsi nawungibuka ungibone ngikhotsana nelubhici lwakho mine. Wate wajabula bo!' Siphendvule salukati, 'chubeka chalachala ndzini, kodvwa ungeke uwutfole umendvo lapho uyakhona.' Yacasuka intfombatana yaphendvula yatsi, 'kodvwa bengikucelile yini kutsi unginike umendvo?'

Itse seyihambe umgamu lomudze yaphindze yahlangana nesalukati lebesetfwele lomkhulu umtfwalo. Sitsi salukati, 'ase ufane ungetfwalise mntfwanami.' Yabambelela elukhalweni intfombi yakabo yatsi, 'Ini? Mine? Utsi awungihloleli. Utsi nawungibuka nje ubone ngifanele kuhamba ngetfwesana nawe mine?' 'Hamba chalachala ndzini, ngeke kodvwa uwutfole umendvo lapho uya khona,' kusho salukati. Ayitange ikunake loko intfombi yashikitela yate yayofika ka Mamba Makhubu. Nayifika bayibuta kutsi ingabe bangayisita ngani. Yachaza ke kutsi itokwendzela Mamba Makhubu. Bayinika emabele kutsi iwagaye iwacolise. Yawatsatsa yahhakata yahhakata yabanika.

Emini wabuya Mamba Makhubu bamtjela kutsi kunalenywe intfombi letomendzela. Wajabula wafa Mamba Makhubu kutsi sewutawuba nalomunye makoti. Waphangisa wavalela tinkhomo.

Intfombi yafakwa endlini kwavalwa, kwasala imbotjana etulu lapho atawungena khona Mamba Makhubu. Nembala ke utse angavalela wacondza lapho kuhleti khona intfombi Mamba Makhubu. Wangena ngaleyo mbotjana.

Utse Lochalachala nabona kungena inyoka wakhala wahlaba inyandza leyo. Yatsi kona lapho inyoka itsi iyamtongolotela wakhala lucandvucandvu umntfwanemfati. Watfukutsela kabi Mamba Makhubu ngalesento saLochalachala wambuta kutsi kantsi abeyaphi. Wamemeta watsi abamvulele ahambe. Waphumisa kwenhlavu yesibhamu wabaleka wangabuki nasemuva acondze ngco ekhaya kubo. Mamba Makhubu wamgijimisa njalo ampheketela ngendvuku wate wayomfaka kabo. Ekhaya kubo babona acoshwa yinyoka baphuma bonkhe bamelekelela babulala lenyoka. Seyifile bayishisa ngemlilo.

Seyiphelile.

3. Mother-in-law at her son-in-law (Umkhwekati kamkhwenyana)

A lonely woman went to live with her married only daughter and her son-in-law. While the daughter and son-in-law were busy working in the fields, the old woman feasted on *emasi* 'sour milk' nicely prepared for her son-in-law. When the two return from the fields they discover that someone has eaten the son-in-law's sour milk, but the old woman denies knowledge of what had happened. This occurs on several occasions until the son-in-law decides to hide inside the hut to capture the one who ate his food. Eventually the old woman is caught in the act dressed in the son-in-law's

emajobo 'loin skin' sitting on his stool and eating his sour milk using his wooden spoon. For this evil deed the son-in-law sent her on an impossible task to go and draw water from a frogless spring.

She embarked on the long search until eventually she is successful. However, she discovers that she has drawn water belonging to the king of the animals. She becomes trapped in the roots of a tree and the king furiously announces that she will be eaten the following day. Fortunately for her, she escapes death through the assistance of a genet, which wipes dew on the feet of an elephant making it appear as the guilty party. The old woman returns to the home of the son-in-law with the water. It is finished.

Kwesuke sukela, salukati sahamba satsi sisayohlola intfombi yaso lebeyenze khashane. Nasifika lapha kamntfwanaso bajabula kakhulu. Lesalukati sefika ehlobo ngesikhatsi sekuhlakulwa.

Satsi lesalukati sifuna kuyobahlakulisa, yatsi intfombi yakaso wen make utophumula lapha ekhaya. Ubohlahukhulakula lapha entasi kwemuti, kubotsi naselishisa ukhumuke uyekele. Lapha ekhaya bekunetingula temasi edladleni. Umfati phela ngelusiko akawadli emasi uyahlonipha. Ute awadle nangabe bakubo bamuphe inkhomo. Ngalelinye lilanga lesalukati sahlakuhlakula kancane nje sase sitsatsa sidvwaba saso sisikhungela ekhubeni, sesiyalimisa lelikhuba. Sona sase sishona phansi lapha emakhabeni, sasihamba site siyovumbuka ngasesibayeni ekhaya.

Lesalukati sangena edladleni, satfulula ingula yemasi, sayitfululela eludziweni, sase siya endlini kamkhwenyana, satsatsa lucwephe lwemasi etulu endlini, sase sihlala etikwesigici semkhwenyana sitsi, 'Umkhwenyana wenza nje umntanami ahlezi lapha, Umkhwenyana wenza nje umntanami ehlezi lapha uthi khemshe athi moshe.' Usho njalo nje utsela emasi esandleni bese uyadla nakatsi moshe. Wadla wacedza wageza ludziwo, wabuyisela konkhe endzaweni yako. Wabuyela ensimini wahlakula. Nakasendlini adla bekume likhuba nesidvwaba. Ihle itsi intfombi yakakhe, make nanguya uyabonakala uyahlakula. Nababuya ekhaya bayammemeta batsi, 'buya bo make seliyashisa lilanga, sale ukhumuka nawe.' Utsite umkhwenyana uya enguleni wamangala, emasi kute. Wathula. Baphindze betsa lubisi lwagcwala, bakhokha umlaza ngakusasa. Babuye betsa lubisi, kwase kuba ngemasi. Saphindze salukati salingisa kucala sabaleka ensimini, savunula emajobo emkhwenyana, sahlala esigcikini semkhwenyana sesiphetse lucwephe sitsi, 'umkhwenyana wenza nje, umntanami ehlezi lapha, umkhwenyana wenza nje, umntanami ehlezi lapha, athi khemshe athi moshe.' Wageza ludziwo wabuyisela konkhe lakusebentisile etindzaweni tako wabuyela ekuhlakuleni.

Umkhwenyana watsi nakabuya ekuhlakuleni, wabona sakucala. Ingula ayinalutfo. Wabindza nje. Kuhambe kwahamba, kwetsiwa, kwakhokhwa umlaza, baphindze betsa futsi. Mhlazana ivutsiwe ingula umkhwenyana wavutsa lulaka. Waguzela bonkhe, watsi yeyi, yeyi, yeyi akuhanjwe kuyohlakulwa. Lukhula lunyent solo alupheli. Salukati sashona entasi kwemuti. Intfombi yakaso nayo yaphuma ngeligonso. Wasala umkhwenyana wangena endlini kakhe. Wemisa emacansi. Wabhaca ngaphansi kwawo.

Emini salukati sabuya satikwenta lomkhiba waso. Satsi sesicalile sidla, sicamatatile, silingisa umkhwenyana, washaya emacansi awa phansi umkhwenyana. Waphumela kuso salukati watsi, 'Ya! Make nguwe lolongibotisako. Besengimangele! Tsatsa nasi sigubhu uyongikhelela emanti lapho kungakhali coco khona lapho kungakhalini khona!' Waphuma endlini nemahloni amudla asahamba ashwayita. Watsatsa sidvwaba sakhe wavunula, wangenela indlela, ayofuna emanti langashekelwa ticoco lafunwa ngumkhwenyana.

Wahamba gogo, wabona sititjana lesibukeka sinemanti lamnandzi. Wefika kuso watsi, 'Coco, coco ukhona na?' Tasabela tonkhe lebetilapho ticoco tatsi, 'U, u! sikhona,' Wendlula. Wahamba wahamba, wabona lesinye sitiba wasondzela. Wabuta watsi, 'Coco, coco ukhona na?' Kwatsi nya! Waphinza futsi watsi, 'Coco coco ukhona na?' Taphendvula ticoco tatsi, 'U, u sikhona.' Wendlula.

Lilanga beseliyoshona. Intfombi yakakhe yamangala nayifika ekhaya, iva kutsi ngunina lolodla emasi emkhwenyana.

Utsite uyabuka lapho aya khona wabona kumengetela, kantsi ngemanti kunesitiba lesikhulu. Nakefika kuso wabuta katsatfu, solo atsi, 'coco, coco ukhona na?' Kungaphendvuli lutfo. Wajabula, wawakha emanti, wawanatsa waweve amnandzi. Wase utsi usahlala, etikwemphandze yesihlahla lesikhulu, lebesenta umtfunti lomnandzi. Nasatsi uyasukuma, kwale. Imphandze seyimilele lapha etibunu kuye. Kutsite nakuhwalalako weva umsindvo lomkhulu, bugidzigidzi. Watsi uyabuka wabona tinyamatane letinyenti tatsi, 'Ngubani lolohleti esizibeni senkosi?' Satsi salukati, 'Ngimi babe, ngatfunywa ngumkhwenyane watsi angiyomkhelela emanti lapho kungakhali coco, lapho kungakhalini khona.' Tatsi tinyamatane, 'Sala njalo kuyeza okukhulu okuzayo.' Letinyamatane tanatsa emanti, takhuphukela phansi kwemtfunti tahlala. Kwachamuka letinye nato tasho njalo. Salukati besesikhala sesaba letinyamatane. Kwatsi setiphelele tonkhe tinyamatane yatsi lenye, kubebete umuntfu lotawukhokha lesalukati lapha emphandzeni. Uma akhona lotasikhumula lesalukati utawulala ematolo etibunu.

Ebusuku wavuka chakijane, wasikhokha salukati wasidzabula letimphandze le betisibambile wahleba watsi asikhe emanti sibaleke sihambe. Sentanjalo salukati. Watsi ulele chakijane wativa asalele ematolo etibunu. Wavuka wawasulela etibunu tendlovu. Nativuka tonkhe tilwane ekuseni tabukana. Takhandza indlovu imanti etibunu, tayibulala. Tatsi tingayihlinza lendlovu tase tiyisika tigadla tiyayetfwala, titsi titayidla le esikhotseni.

Endleleni chakijane abehambe akhuluma yedvwa ahleka. Titsi natitsi leletinye tinyamatane, 'Utsini yeChakijane?' atsi yena 'Ngitsi iyangisindza lenyama.' Bamnike lenye lencane. Agijime aye le embili afike atsi, 'Babulele indlovu yebantfu batsi ngiyo lekhulule salukati kantsi ngimi.' Tase tiyeva leletinye tinyamatane. Tamcosha. Wabaleka watishiya. Wefika emfuleni ugwele udla tibi. Tatisolo titile timcosha leletinye. Wase ugucuka uba yimbokodvo lenhle lencane. Natifika titsi uphi, uphi, tangamboni. Se itsi lenye inyamatane, 'nangingambona lapha ngesheya, ngingamjikijela nganayi imbokodvo,' asho atsatsa yona lelengu Chakijane ayijikijela ngesheya. Nayiwa ngesheya itsi chu! Teva tinyamatane asatsi chakijane, 'Pe!, pe! Waye wangeweta. Pe! Pe! Waye wangeweta.' Tajika tonkhe tinyamatane ngoba betingeke teweke lomfula ngoba emanti abemanyenti. Seyiphelile.

4. Nyoni yam'wontsha (My bird)

In a certain country there was a severe drought that resulted in a great famine. Despite that a certain man and woman went out to cultivate the fields but was prevented from doing so by a wagtail, which proclaimed that the land belonged to its father. It turned the clods of earth back. After several attempts to till the soil but in vain her husband decided that he would remain behind buried in the soil with only his hand showing above the soil. When the bird came, it perched itself on his hand and he captured it. It pleaded that it should not be killed for it will provide them with sour milk. He took the bird home and hid it in a pot. Every time when they were hungry, they went to the pot and the bird made *emasi* 'sour milk' for them.

One particular night one of the children saw them eating the sour milk and confided to the other. When the parents had gone to the fields the children opened the pot and helped themselves with the sour milk. Upon their return they discovered that the children had meddled up with the bird and it had flown away. The father punishes them severely by stabbing them with sharp needles.
It is finished.

Kwesuka-sukela eveni lelitsite kwahlasela indlala lenkhulu. Umfati nendvodza bahamba bayolima. Bebanebantfwana lababili. Labantfwana bebasala ekhaya uma kuyolinywa.

Le esikhotseni bacala kulima, kwatsi ntsambama bashiya emakhuba babuyela ekhaya. Ngakusasa ekuseni nabavukela le ekulimeni bamangala, ngoba lapho bebalime khona bakhandza kuhlumile kubuyele kunjengakucala. Batsatsa emakhuba balima futsi. Entsambama umfati wabuyela ekhaya yedvwa ngoba indvodza yasala ilele lapha emagadzeni. Umfati wayigcibedzela ngetjani washiya sandla wasiveta ngetulu kwemagadze. Kutsite kuphele sikhashana ahambile umfati, kwefika inyoni, yahlala esandleni sendvodza, yatsi, 'Mhlaba kababe! Wo gcibe! Gcibe!' Wayibamba wavuka watsintsitsa umhlaba watsi, 'Ngikubambile kantsi nguwe lologcibela insimu yami?' Yakhala inyoni yatsi, 'Kahle phela babe ase ulalele ngikutjele. Uma ungitsatsa ungibeka etikwentfo, bese uyabuta utsi, 'Ungunyoni bani wena? Ngitakutjela, uphindze futsi ubute kwesibili, ngitakutjela.'

Nemambala wahamba nalenyoni, waya nayo etjeni belinesigojana solo ayibambile, wefike watsi, 'Ungunyoni bani wena?' Yatsi, 'Ngingunyoni ntjantjaza.' Yase isheka umlaza lomnyenti. Waphindza kwesibili futsi watsi, 'Ungunyoni bani wena?' Yase itsi, 'Ngingunyoni khihlita.' Yase ikhihlita emasi lamanyenti lamhlophe latse bha. Yadla, yadla indvodza yatsatsa inyoni yayo yaya nayo ekhaya. Yafika ekhaya sekuhwalele yesutsi emasi. Yatsatsa lenyoni yayifihla embiteni lebe ingenalutfo. Yambonya. Badla kudla kwakusihlwa bacedza. Lobabe wase utsi kulabantfwabakhe abangene atingutjeni balale. Watsi kulomake akapheke tinkhobe. Lengutjana labantfwana bebalala ngayo yayinetikhadlana idzabukile. Lomfana akatange alale abebuka ngetikhala. Inhliyo yakhe yatsi, 'Babe namhla utsi asisheshe siyolala nje kunani?'

Setivutsiwe tinkhobe watsi lobabe atisilwe. Setisiliwe, wasukuma wakhokha inyoni yakhe embiteni. Wacela kutsi bakhulumele phansi ngoba bantfwana balele. Washo lobaba watsi kulomake akasondzele neludziwo. Umfati wasondzela neludziwo.

Wabamba inyoni wayibuta watsi, 'Ungunyoni bani wena?' Yatsi, 'Ngingunyoni ntjantjaza,' yase isheka umlaza wagcwala ludziwo. Umfati wamangala. Wanatsa weva kutsi ngumlaza ngempela. Yaphindza indvodza yatsi, 'Ungunyoni bani wena?' Yatsi, 'Ngingunyoni khihlita.' Wo yakhihlita, yakhihlita emasi kwagcwala ludziwo yate yatsi indvodza, 'khawula.' Yakhawula inyoni. Bavuba emasi badla, lamanye bawabekela likusasa. Inyoni bayibuyisela embiteni lenkhulu. Umfana solo uyabuka konkhe lokwentekako.

Bavuka ekuseni banika bantfwana umdokwe, bona betfwala lamanye emasi labatawadla ekulimeni. Loku bakwenta emahlandlana aba manyentana. Langa limbe batsi sebahambile, emini umfana watsi kudzadze wabo, 'Pheka tinkhobe wena.' Yabuta lentfombatana kutsi utatentani tinkhobe. Watsi umfana, 'Ngiyati mine, musa kungibuta.' Tatsi tingavutfwa tinkhobe watsi umfana, 'Sila ticaba.' Yasila intfombatana solo imangele kutsi engabe kwentenjani. Walungisa tindziwo taba tinyentana umfana, wase ukhokha lenyoni wenta njengoba uyise bekenta ebusuku. Yakhihlita yakhihlita inyoni angayikhawuleli umfana ate aphela emasi enyonini wase uyayiyekela iyatindizela. Seyindizile bavuba emasi badla.

Batsi nababuya emasimini batali babo bajakela embiteni lapho bafihle khona inyoni yabo. Phutaphutsa, kute inyoni. Babite bantfwana babute kutsi inyoni ngabe ishonephi. 'Beyikuphi, asikate siyibone tsine.' Baphike bahlante kwakutsanti bantfwana. Tindziwo lesolo tichichima ngemasi tivele tibacebe nje kutsi bati lukhulu ngenyoni.

Uyise wabo watfukutsela wagana sicoco wababita wabahlohla tinsungulo lebetibobotsiswe emlilweni lapha emadlebeni. Bakhala bayabatseka babaleka baye bangena esitibeni lapho bakhokhana khona leto tinsungulo. Nasebaphumile esitibeni abaphindzanga babuyele ekhaya.

5. A Snake (Inyoka)

Once upon a time, there was a Mamba which had eaten whole people and cows. There was also a certain woman who was very old and who cooked soft porridge. She went to the king of the area. She told the king that she was going to kill the Mamba.

The king agreed and said this woman must go ahead with her plan of killing the Mamba. This woman cooked the soft porridge and carried it on her head boiling and very hot. She then left, carrying the soft porridge and went straight to the tree where the Mamba was. Hhaw, the Mamba seeing the woman moved stealthily! When it tried to bite the woman's head, it fell into the soft porridge and that was its death. It is finished.

Kwesukesukela, kulelinye live bekunemamba lenkulu lese icedze bantfu netinkhomo talelo live. Abona buphela sive umfati lotsite wacabanga kutsi angasivikela njani lesive sakubo. Kwafika engcondweni yakhe kutsi akapheke lidokwe. Wase usukuma phasi uya enkhosini yalelo live wayoyitjela kutsi yena utimisele kubulala lenyoka leluhlupho.

Yavumela etulu inkhosi yatsi kulomake akachubeke nelichinga abesalicabangile lekubulala lemamba. Nembala umfati waligalela walipheka lidokwe lakhe. Lisashisa lichaphatela waletfwala enhloko, nango ashona lapho kwakunalemamba khona. Ewu, ibona lomfati yanyombuluka imamba. Yatsi laphio igalela enhloko yalomake, hhawu shobe edokweni lelibilako. Kwabe kufa kwayo. Seyiphelile.

6. A woman and a lion (Umfati nelibhubesi).

Once upon a time there was a Woman, a Man and Children. One day the man and the woman went to weed and the children remained at home, which was built on the animals' pathway. The animals came and said, 'who has built on our pathway?' The children said, 'It is not us. It is our mother.' They passed by. Others came and said, 'who has built on our pathway?' The children said, 'It is not us but mother.' The animals passed by. Then a lion came next. The lion said, 'who has built on our pathway?' The children said, 'It is not us: it is mother.' The lion said, 'I will swallow you.' The children said, 'Swallow.' The lion then swallowed the children and left. The cock had seen all this and crowed, 'Kukulukugu! The lion has swallowed the children.'

The cock went to where the man and woman were weeding to report that the children had been eaten by the lion. 'Kukulukugu! Lion has swallowed the children.' The woman went up to the home, and when she arrived, the animals came and said, 'Who is this who has built on our pathway?' The woman said, 'It is me.' The lion came and said, 'Who is this one who has built on our pathway?' The woman said, 'It is me.' The lion then said, 'I will swallow you.' The woman said, 'Just swallow,' Then the lion swallowed her. This woman was carrying firewood, a pot and matches. When she came into the stomach of the lion and found her children, she kindled a fire. They cut the meat (from the lion's insides), cooked it and ate and they were satisfied. The lion felt sick. The other animals asked, 'What is wrong?' The lion said, 'It is these children that I swallowed – they are moving inside.' The lion was sick. Then the woman cut the lion's liver and cooked it. The lion was very sick and finally died. The woman came out with her children after they had cut the lion. The woman then carried the meat of the lion home. On arrival they ate, because the Man was almost dead because of hunger.

It is finished.

Kwesukesukela, bekunemfati, indvodza nebantfwana. Ngalelinye lilanga lendvodza nemfati baya emasimini bayolima. Bantfwana basala ekhaya lebelakhiwe endleni yetilwane. Tefika tilwane tafike tabuta, 'Ngubani ke lolosakh'endleleni yetfu?' Baphendvula bantfwana, 'Akusitsi, ngumake.' Tengce tilwane. Kuchamuke letinye nato titibutele, 'Ngubani ke lolosakh'endleleni yetfu?' 'Akusitsi, ngumake', kuphendvule bantfwana. Tengce tilwane. Emvakwesikhashana kuchamuke libhubesi. Libute libhubesi, 'Ngubani ke lolosakhe endleleni yetfu?' 'Akusitsi, ngumake,' baphendvule bantfwana. Litsi libhubesi, 'Ngitanimita mine.' 'Simate phela,' baphendvule bantfwana. Nembala libamite libhubesi. 'Kukulukugu', likhale lichudze. 'Libhubesi selimite bantfwana.'

Ligijime lichudze liyewubika lapho lendvodza nemfati bebasebenta khona kutsi libhubesi selimite bantfwana. Asukumele etulu umfati acondve ekhaya. Nakefika nje ekhaya ahlangeane netilwane letambuta kutsi, 'Ngubani lolowakhe endleleni yetfu?' 'Ngimi,' aphenhvule lomfati. 'Ngitakumita,' kubhodle libhubesi. 'Ngimite phela', kuphendvule lomfati. Nembala limumite libhubesi. Nakamitwa lomfati abephetse tinkhuni, libhodo kanye nemetjiso. Nefika esiswini selibhubesi akhandza bantfwabakhe wabasa umlilo, wasika inyama langekhatsi esiswini selibhubesi wosa wadla wesutsa nebantfwabakhe. Lacala kubonyabonyeka libhubesi. 'Kwentenjani?' kubute leletinye tilwane. 'Ngunabantfwana lengibamitile bayangigijagija langekhatsi. Kwalicinisela kugula libhubesi. Umfati waphindze wasika sibindzi wasipheka. Labangwa netibi libhubesi, ekugcineni kwalenela, lafa. Waphuma wachasha umfati nebantfwabakhe emvakokuba asalisikile libhubesi wavula sikhala sekuphuma. Umfati watfwala inyama yelibhubesi waya nayo ekhaya. Watsi nakefika nje yaphekwa.kwadliwa. Indvodza lebeseyifile yindlala yadlisa kwesilwane. Seyiphelile

Appendix 2. Folksongs

1. Telutsango

Mswati khuluma
Ngubani lokubangisa live
Khuluma

Mswati talk
With whom are you fighting for land
Talk.

2. Tengabisa

1.Mphatse umntfwana weliSwati
Umfundzis'inhlonipho
Umnike nemasiko akaNgwane

Raise a Swazi child well
Teach him respect
And give him the tradition of kaNgwane

Yiphatse kahle ingabisa yeliSwati
Uy'fundzis'inhlonipho
Uyinike nemasiko akaNgwane

Nurture a Swazi girl well
Teach her respect
And give her the tradition of KaNgwane

2. Yebotishela buyelan'emaklasini
Yehha yehha sice'lmfundvo
Tsine sice'lmfundvo

Oh teachers go back to class
Oh Oh we are asking for education
We are asking for education

Ngemoya lomuhle buyelan'etikelweni
Yehha yehha sice'lmfundvo
Tsine sice'lmfundvo

With due respect go back to class
Oh Oh we are asking for education
We are asking for education.

Yebotishel yekelani kutelega

Oh teachers stop engaging in strikes

Yehha yehha siceI'imfundvo
Tsine siceI'imfundvo yebotishela.

Oh Oh we are asking for education
We are pleading for education oh
teachers

Appendix 3. Praise names

1. Sobhuza II (1921-1982)

Liphutfuma ngelaMahlokohla
Liphutfum' eGibhitha
Laphutfum' eTaliyane
Litse lisendleleni
Lahlangana neluhlanya lwetintsaba
Lwaluhamba luqephuta
Loluhlanya lwalubitwa kutsiwa
Iyabhomba ngu Hitlari
Yen' abetsi lidin' utalidl' eThekwini
Embaban' eSwatini.

The hurrying one of Mahlokohla
Who hurries to Egypt
Who hurried to Italy
And along the way
Met a lunatic of the mountains
Who was jumping as he walked
This lunatic was calling that
Hitler's army is bombing
He thought he would dine in Durban
In Mbabane in Swaziland

Babe sebayamemeta ngebaseNgilandi
Bats' "Inyandza leyo mntfwanaMahloko-hla!"
Wena wabes' uyaluncandza luhlanya
Waluncandza ngesidzidzi semasotja

Then the English called
Saying 'Help oh son of Mahlokohla!'
And then you made the lunatic retreat
You made it retreat through a multitude
of soldiers

Nalamuhla njena tive tidzidzekile.
Nalongakayingeni utawut' ayingene
Bantfwana bayidlal' ingcabetfu kaLobamba

Even today nations are confused
Even the one who does not care will
Children are playing a galloping game at
Lobamba

Sobhuza uyingenile imph' ingeyalabamhlophe. Sobhuza involved himself in a white
men's war

Sidzidzi semasotja
Abephum' eShiselweni
Abephuma kaHhohho
Aphum' eLubonjeni
Aphuma kaManzini
Abey' eNkhanini
Abeya kaLobamba
Ngesheya kwemanti.

Multitudes of soldiers
Were from Shiselweni
Were from Hhohho
Were from Lubombo
Were from Manzini
Were going for Nkhanini
Were going to Lobamba
Across the oceans.

Lawuphendvul' umoya
Bavimbi bematubuko
Nivimbe njan' ematubukweni?
Ingan' uSobhuza uwelile.
Ngimbon' awukhephuta ngesigeja
Ayawukhwela kulesimhlophe sitimela.

The weather changed
Blockers of all outlets
How did you block the outlets
Because Sobhuza was able to go across
I saw him dancing with his knobkerrie
Going to board a white train

Aphikisana odvwan' emadvodza
Atsi kakusiye lona uSobhuza
Usobhuz' abengasitsatsaphi

Men disagreed among themselves
Saying that was not Sobhuza
Where could Sobhuza find

Sitimela lesimhlophe?
 Angesiye Khingi Joji
 Angesiy' inkhosi yalabamhlophe.
 Atse lamanye akusiye Khingi Joji
 Khingi Joji abengasitsatsaphi sigeja

Angesiye Sobhuza
 Kungesiy' inkhosi yakaNgwane
 Angesiy' inkhosi yemaSwati
 Ngoba yinkhosi yemaNdwandwa
 Yinkhosi yemaNxumalo.

Mnh-h-h!
 Nani tamaku taMawiki sesinisolile
 Mandandasengusihlal' usebandlenigelenu

Anits' inkhosi yakits' igugile
 Kants' uSobhuza usenemagonso
 Lamadvodza yikomidi kaHhohho
 Nabakits' akusalekuhlanguana
 Letindzaba tiyewubikelwa Makhosin' eNkhungwini

Atalwa nguNdzabankhulu.

Nalokutsi bakaNgwane basale bacel' elunyaweni
 Bayembikela Nkruma yinkhosi yelukhetfo

USobhuza tingulube takaNgwane timbhembesele

Tiye tamgicitela nangematje kuseMdzimba

Ngekondla yondlile ikhulisile
 Inkhonyane yaMahlokohla
 Ngulamuhla njena seyifuye boHlamkile.

Baqhamuk' eMhlum' eBhik' Bhend' eMbabane

Bashay' emahale
 Bebagodle tagila
 Nabo bacondze kaLobamba
 Watsi longati butimba ngebetintsenetja

Qha, libandla laDumisa
 Lifuna mpondo ngelilanga.
 Silevu kawugobani yinhlamba yetamaku taMawiki

Kube siyagobana ngabe sesingemashiligodwane.
 Vukani kusile nani batsaphuni betindzaba

Hambani kuMatsapha niyewutitsaphuna

A white train?
 When he is not king George
 When he is not the king of the whites.
 Others said it was not king George
 Where could king George find a
 sigeja (traditional attire)
 When he is not Sobhuza
 When he is not the king of kaNgwane
 When he is not the king of the Swazis
 Because the king of the Ndwandwa
 Is the king of the Nxumalo.

Mnh-h-h!
 You dogs of Marwick have grown fat
 Mandanda is the chairman of your
 committee

You say our king has aged
 Yet Sobhuza can still jump
 These men are a committee from Hhohho
 Let therefore a meeting be converged
 So that these stories are reported
 to Makhosini at Nkhungwini
 He who is born of Ndzabankhulu.

Others resorted to walking
 To report to Nkruma the electoral
 officer

That the pigs of KaNgwane have
 revolted against Sobhuza
 And thrown the Mdzimba stones
 at him

He has fed and nurtured
 The young one of Mahlokohla
 But today he has reared rebels

They came from Mhlume, Big
 Bend, Mbabane
 Having formed queues
 Carrying knobkerries with them
 Heading for Lobamba
 He who did not know thought it
 was a hunting expedition
 It is Dumisa's men
 Demanding a pound a day
 Oh beard you do not bend, that is
 the insult of Marwick's dogs
 If it bent, it would be coiled
 Wake up, it is already dawn you
 journalists
 Go to Matsapha to obtain news

Titsashunwa kuZwane loyinyanga ngeyesilungu

Utawutsaphunela nkosazana Sikath' useNqabaneni

Amtsaphunele Mndzebel' useMhloshen' ekolishi.

Kona lokuts' uSobhuza live lakaNgwane

Ulitsengis' eNyonyana

Mine ngangingaba yinkhosi yenabakitsi

Ngangingacansuka

Ngobe nalokungenaludvonsi njena kuyasutela

Lizembe lini lel' imits' ingab' isasala!

Sicale seva ngelivi

Kukhulu lokutako mntfwanaMahlokohla

Lokunye bekusegcekeni 'be iyahlala inyoni.

Nanso-ke inhlalakahle seyifikile ciniso

Yimidvweshu kaNgwane ifikile

Nakotini kaNgwane sewuyalinywa

Yinsimbi eNgweya iyembiwa

Ngemapheph' eBhuny' asayagaywa

Zondle, Zenzele, Sebenta ufikile

Nemaswidi kuMatsapha buncamuncamu

Ngumbhobh' umsakat' eMbaban' alufakwa

Nesikontiyela sifikile

Nesitimela sifikile

Mpondompondo ufikile

Lubalo lufikile

Ivoti ifikile.

Sasitsi siyabhudza silele kusebusuku

Sasiyiphik' inkhuni silandvula

Sihlet' emidangalazini singakholwa

Sate sakholwa mhla sichumbus' emasakeni.

Ngitsi ngitsi ngifika kaMsunduza

It is obtained from Zwane a
modern doctor

He will get some for Miss Scutt
of Nqabaneni

And also obtain some for
Mndzebele of Mhlosheni college

The fact that the land of Ngwane
Has been sold to the Union

If I were king really

I would have been annoyed

Because whoever has anything to
say, says it

What kind of axe that leaves no
tree

It was first rumoured

A lot awaits the son of

Mahlokohla

Something else was obvious, the
bird landed

Development has really arrived

Contours at kaNgwane have
arrived

Even cotton is grown at kaNgwane

Iron-ore is mined at Ngwenya

Paper is produced at Bhunya

Feeding scheme, entrepreneurial art
and adult literacy have been I

introduced

Sweets in Matsapha are produced

There is the broadcasting service
in Mbabane

Even tar has arrived

The train has arrived

Multi-party has arrived

Census has arrived

Voting has arrived.

We thought we were at night

We were adamant and refused to
accept

We were in shebeens refusing to
understand

We were only convinced when
we were voting

When I arrived at Msunduzaa

Ngitsi nje Sobhuza uyinkhosi

Bangibuka phansi bangibuk' etulu
Sebatsi ngisasholani kuts' uSobhuza yinkhosi?

Phela selitawubuswa nguMpondompondo.

And declared that Sobhuza is
king
They all stared at me
Asking why I was saying
Sobhuza was king
Because we would be ruled by
multi-party

Etfukil' onkh' emaSwati

Nalo libhunga lemadvodza lihlet' etinkhondvweni tonkhe takaNgwane Groups of men
were gathered around the country

Abatsi libandla leMbokodvo Lingabe lisalal' emakhaya Saying the Imbokodvo party
should not sleep at home

Alingabe lisadla nekudla

Alingabe lisageza nekugeza

Asale lijakel' elukhetfweni.

And should not even eat

Should not even bath

But hurry to the voting polls

Kudl' akudleki nkhonyane yaMahlokohla

It is difficult to eat young one of
Mahlokohla

Ngiyibonile iphuma phansi kwetitfwetfwe

Ayiyawuwela ngeleSidvokodvo

Ngoba leSiphofaneni liyajikeleta

Iyewubikela tikhulu teShiselweni

Kona lokuts' emasik' akaNgwane

Aphum' aphelile yehheni maSwati!

Ingan' esibayeni kaLobamba

Akusavalwa nekuvalw' emnyango

Sibone ngematfol' asasala kubonina.

I saw it passing through the shrubs

Using the Sidvokodvo route to cross

Because the Siphofaneni one is winding

To report to the chiefs of Shiselweni

The fact that Swazi traditions

Have been eroded!

Because at the catllte brye at Lobamba

The outlet is never closed

We saw the calves remaining with their
mothers

Tendlulile timoto letits' esitolo kaNkominophondo

Cars bearing the name

Letimoto tatimbimb' emaduku kwesabeka!

Nkominophondo passed by

These cars were decorated with
scarfs, it was scary

Lelenye yayihlabela "Khethomthandayo"

The other one was singing

'choose who you like'

Lelenye itsi

Another was saying

"Umatima lomtfwalo wehlul' emadvodza."

'This task is difficult even for
men'

Bafundzi bemaphepha titsini tindzaba?

Newspaper readers what is the
news

Mine ngivil' angikaboni

I have heard, not seen

Laba bakaNgwane

Those of kaNgwane

Balile kubuswa ngumpondompondo

Refused to be ruled by multiparty

Bats' inkhosi nguSobhuza kuphela

Saying Sobhuza is the only king

Loku kufakaze tinombolo temaphepha

The number of votes is testimony
to this

Tiphuma tigayw' emathinini.

From the voting boxes.

Sabela mashisindlu
 Washis' indlu yaketfu
 Walibala kushisa yakamtsakatsi.
 Awusabele sewubitwa nguMahlokohla

Ubitw' eMasundwini

Kani sewubitwa botishela

Bakubitela tindzaba letinkhulu

Ngoba tindzaba temcwasho
 Baphindze bakubita
 Bakubitela tindzaba letinkhulu
 Ngoba tindzaba teMbokodvo kuba tibahishile.

Wase uyachaza
 Mchazi wetindzaba
 Mfundzi wetindzaba
 Mfundzi wencwadzi namhlazana ivaliwe.

Imigomo yakitsi
 Uyayitsandza loyitsandzako
 Ayitondze mtondzase.

Lapha nasewubusa ngenkantini
 Emakhos' akaNgwan' abusa ngemcombotsi

Sowugibela sitimela
 Emakhos' akaNgwan' agibel' injomane

Wabhaca phas' elisundv' eMasundvwini

Emakhos' akaNgwan' abhac' emigedzeni

Utsite tidzandzan' atiyowungcwatjw' eKhasino

Emakhos' akaNgwan' atsi

Atingwatjw' etaleni kubonina

Wase usakata ngemsakato

Emakhos' akaNgwane
 Asakata ngemancusa.

Utsite wena wentela

Respond to the call house burner
 You burnt our house
 And forgot to burn a witch
 Respond to the call, Mahlokohla I
 is calling you
 You are being called at
 Masundvwini
 Oh you are summoned by the
 teachers
 They are calling you for crucial I
 issues
 Because of stories of umcwasho
 They are calling you again
 For crucial issues
 Because the news about the I
 Imbokodvo puzzled them

And then you explained
 Explainer of news
 News reader
 Book reader even if it is closed

Our aims
 He who likes them does so
 He who dislikes them also does
 so

You rule with a beer bottle
 When older kings of kaNgwane
 ruled with traditional beer
 You board a train
 When older kings of kaNgwane r
 rode on a horse
 You hid under a lisundvu tree at
 Masundvwini
 When older kings of kaNgwane
 hid in the caves
 You said the young girls should
 be burried at the casino
 When the kings of kaNgwane
 said
 They should be burried next to
 their mothers
 And then you broadcast in the
 broadcasting station
 When the kings of kaNgwane
 Broadcast through messengers

You said you were doing this

Khona ungenawukhulunyelwa

Khon' ungenawengetelwa.

Wena waphakathi!

Bayethe!

Mhlabeleli Dlamini

So that no one talks on your
behalf

And add what you did not say.

You of inside!

Hail!

2. Mswati III (1986- Present)

Laphuma lilanga,
Kuleli laMswati
Kwakhanya emagumbi
Omane emhlaba.

Mswati yinkhosi,
Ngimbita ngiyesaba,
Ulizinyane lesilo,
Mswati yinkhosi yemhlaba.

Bamemeta kulo lonkhe
LaMswati batfokotile,
Sibevile badvumisa,
Kusuka kaZombodze emuva,
Kuya etulu kaHhohho;
Hha! Waba muhle Ngwane.

Jabulani nonkhe Maswati,
Phila Ngwane, khula Ngwane,
Utfutfuke ubuse ngekuthula;
Uyincaba yeMaswati,
Ulitsembe leMaswati.

Mabhac'ebaleni,
Unjengeligolode nesiliva,
Umatima uyesabeka Nkhosi.

Bhejane waseHlane,
Lomphondvo tintsatfu, ingani
Bonkhe bampondvo timbili;
Yindzal'indzaba Maswati,
Yibuteni kumake lomkhulu anitekele.

Sililo setemhlanga tintfombi,
Tinhhinhhitela 'inkhosi ayikasiboni';

The sun arose,
In Mswati's land
The four corners
Of the world brightened.

Mswati is the king,
As I call him I shiver,
He is the young one of a beast,
Mswati is king of the world.

They shouted all around
Mswati's land, very excited,
We heard them praising,
From Zombodze in the South
To the Hhohho region up North;
Ah! You are beautiful Ngwane.

Be happy yee all Swazis,
Live long Ngwane, grow up Ngwane,
Develop and rule peacefully;
You are the pillar of the Swazis,
You are the hope of the Swazis.

You hide in the open,
You are like gold and silver,
You are heavy, you are scary oh king.

Hippopotamus of the veld
Who is three horned
When all others have two;
This is an old story Swazis,
Enquire from the elder aunt to narrate it
for you.

The reed dance girls lamented
Murmuring 'the king did not see us';

Basifihlile tsine,
Kantsi, inkhosi seyhamb'embili.
Ngob'ihamba naMvelinchanti,
Ihamba naboMahlokohla naboSomhlolo,

NemaNgisi kulaseNgilandi adzelile,
Iwashiye abamb'imilomo.

Mvila wetinkhomo tasePhondvo awulandzelwa, The cattle route to Phondo is never
followed,
Loyokulandzela uyatibambelesa;
Whoever follows it is delaying
Awulandzelwa. himself;
It will never be followed.

Kubute salukati lesinadvolocina,
'Ngubani lolonhinhhitelako?'
Batsite babone inyoka lencane,
Leluhlatana mabonw'abulawe,
Kantsi banemanga, bayasiyenga.

An elderly woman asked,
'Who is complaining?'
They said they saw a small snake,
Greenish, which when seen is killed,
Yet they were lying, deceiving us.

Yimamba lemyama yetihosha,
Lephakeme, yaphakama yalingana
Netintsaba teMdzimba.
Kuwe emadvodza bugicigici,
Kwakhala bomake nebantfwana.

It is the black mamba of the valleys,
Which has risen
To the heights of Mdzimba mountains.
Men fell from all sides,
Women and children cried.

Iphakeme yalingana netindlulamitsi,
Kwabaleka bonkhe batsakatsi,
Baye, bamitwa Lusutfu

It rose to the heights of a giraffes,
All the witch doctors ran away,
Until they were swallowed by the
Lusutfu river
Together with their bags.

Netikhwama tabo.

Yendvodza lengesheya,
Nesive siyabuta imbala,
'Ngubani lolonhinhhitelako na?'
Utsini, utsi asente njani?

Oh yee man across,
Even the nation is asking,
'Who is it that is complaining?'
What is he saying, what does he expect
us to do?
What exactly do you want?
Because he who is looking for him,
Is looking for a cow on a tree top.

Ufunani kantsi wena?
Ngobe lofuna yena,
Ufuna inkhomo esihlahleni.

Hhe-hhe! Iyaphakama!
Isatawuphakama futsi,
Idle emajabhane,
Idle emahuzu nemahumusha.

Ah! Ah! It is rising!
It is still going to rise again,
And eat the murderers,
And eat the hooligans and the
untrustworthy.

Balekani ke nani Magundwane.
Lomkhumbi wenu sewuyacwila,
Kodwa nitawubalekela kuphi?

Run away oh yee rats.
Your ship is sinking,
But where are you going to run to?

Ngobe anikwati nekuhlamba.

Because you cannot even swim.

Imnyama Maswati ngeyethosha,
Ayinaluhala, kayatiwa ngumuntfu,
Yinkhosi yeluhlanga, yinkhosi yemhlaba,

Oh Swazis, it is black, it is of the valleys,
It has no trace, it is unknown to anyone,
It is the king of a certain breed, king of
the world,

Loyitsandzako utsandza liZulu.

He who loves him loves heaven itself.

Imihambo yemaSwati,
Iyakusala ibatekela tindzaba,
Sesingekho tsine sesihambile.
BAYETHE! WENA WAPHAKATHI!

The customs of the Swazis,
Will remain to tell the stories,
When we have left.
OH HAIL! YOU OF INSIDE!

Matiwane Manana.

University of Cape Town

Appendix 4: Interview Questions

Teachers' interview

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible by ticking the correct answer and filling in the blank spaces.

Location of school: urban / rural / semi urban
 Region : Shiselweni/ Manzini/ Lubombo/ Hhohho
 Gender : male / female
 Age range : 20+ - 30 31-35 36-40+
 Religious affiliation.....
 Place of birth

1. Oral literature is in the school syllabus. Do you enjoy teaching it? Give a reason for your answer.....

2. Do the pupils you teach enjoy oral literature?.....

3. What do you think are the reasons behind their attitudes in 2 above?.....

.....

4. What teaching methods do you make use of in teaching oral literature?.....

.....

5. Do you think these methods are effective and inspiring to the pupils? Please support your answer.....

6. If you think your teaching methods are not effective, what form of assistance do you need to make them more effective?.....

.....

7. What specific problems do you encounter in your teaching of oral literature in secondary school?.....

.....

8. How do you think these problems could be solved?.....

.....

9. We are living in a new millennium; do you think oral literature still has some value in these modern times? Please support your answer.....

.....

10. What do you think is the future of oral literature in Swaziland? Do you think it should remain in the school curriculum? What are your reasons?.....

Learners' interview

Please answer the following questions by using a tick mark in the box that applies to you and fill in the blank spaces where necessary. Also write brief comments or explanations on questions that require your opinions and reasons.

Age range: 15-16 ☐ 17-19 ☐ 20-21 ☐

Gender : male ☐ female ☐

Place of birth:

Religious affiliation:

Location of school: urban ☐ rural ☐ semi-urban ☐

Region where school is located: Hhohho ☐ Manzini ☐ Shiselweni ☐ Lubombo ☐

1. What are your favourite subjects?,.....

2. Oral literature (temdzabu) falls under siSwati literature. What do you understand about it? What do you think oral literature is?.....
.....

3. Have you ever performed oral literature? Yes ☐ no ☐

4. If you have, did you enjoy this activity? Yes ☐ no ☐

5. What made you enjoy this activity?.....
.....

6. If you never performed this activity, what is your reason?.....
.....

7. At school, do your teachers perform oral literature? Yes ☐ no ☐

8. Briefly describe what they do.....
.....

9. If your teachers perform oral literature, do you enjoy the activity? Yes ☐ no ☐

10. If you do, what makes you enjoy it?.....
.....

11. If you do not enjoy it, what makes you dislike it?.....
.....

12. On both television and radio there are programmes on oral literature. Stories are told and the meanings of proverbs are given. Do you listen to or watch such programmes? Yes ☐ no ☐

13. Why do you watch or listen to these programmes? Alternatively, why don't you watch or listen to them?.....

14. What do you like doing in your spare time?.....

15. What in your opinion is the future of oral literature in Swaziland? Do you think it should continue being taught in schools? What are your reasons?.....

.....

16. In a few years time, you would have completed school. Would you like to pursue your college studies in oral literature? Give reasons for your answer.....

.....

.....

Appendix 5

1. O'Level siSwati syllabus (1994-1995) (overleaf)
2. Typical SiSwati Examination paper - JC Level (same format with the O'Level SiSwati Paper except Paper II, Sigaba C no.I) (overleaf)

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE LOCAL EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE

School Certificate

SISWATI

(Subject Number 3164)

Syllabus for 1994 - 1995

Available for the November examination only

There will be two question papers. The approved SiSwati orthography will be used in the question papers and candidates will be required to write their answers in the SiSwati orthography.

PAPER 1 (3 Hours) (150 marks)

Section A - Free Composition in SiSwati (30 marks)

Candidates should be advised to spend about forty minutes on this question. A choice of subjects will be given; these may include an essay, letter, a dialogue or a description. Special account will be taken of arrangement, subject matter, general expression, idiom and command of the language.

Section B - Situational Composition (20 marks)

Candidates should be advised to spend about thirty minutes on this question. Candidates may be given a picture, a set of pictures, a set of notes, etc. from which to write a composition.

Section C - Comprehension (25 marks)

A passage, poem, or extract from a poem, in SiSwati, with questions to test comprehension of the passage, poem, or extract from the poem in detail. Candidates may be asked to make a summary or precis of the whole or part of the passage or poem and to explain individual words or phrase in relation to the context. They may also be asked to suggest a suitable title for the passage or poem and to comment on the style.

Section D (75 marks)

SiSwati terminology only may be used.

ACCIDENCE AND SYNTAX

The following works are recommended for study..

1. J.V. Dlamini : Luhlelo LweSiswati, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter 1979

N.B. This book must be studied thoroughly.

2. C.L.S. Nyembezi : Uhlelo LwesiZulu, Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter 1956 (third edition 1961)

Teachers are advised to consult also the following books:

- D. Ziervogel & E.J. Mabuza : A Grammar of the SiSwati Language, Pretoria, J.L. van Schaik, 1976.
- C.M. Doke : A Textbook of Zulu Grammar, Cape Town, Language 1927 (sixth edition 1961)
- J.P. Shongwe : Tinkondlo Tayitolo Netalamuhla, Centuur.
- H.M. Magagula : Likhetselo lemagama esiSwati, Shuter and Shooter.

PAPER 2 (2½ Hours) (100 marks)

Section A - Modern Literature (80 marks)

Four books will be prescribed in this section as follows:

1. Drama : Umjingi udliwa Yinhlitiyo ngu S.W. Nsibandze.
2. Poetry : Inhlavu ngu Mthembu, Mbhele, Zulu (Bahleli)
3. Short Stories : Idubukele edited by E.T. Mthembu and D.B.Z. Ntuli.
4. Novel : Ubolibamba Lingashoni ngu E.A.B. Mkhonta.

Candidates will be required to answer one question from each of the above books.

Section B - Traditional Literature (20 marks)

Proverbs and idioms

Questions of a varied nature will be set to test the candidate's knowledge and ability to use SiSwati proverbs and idioms. A book recommended in this connection:

Live Liyengcayelwa by H.M. Magagula published by Longman, Manzini, Swaziland.

* See Appendix

CANDIDATES NUMBER:

LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND

EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

NOVEMBER 1990

SISWATI — PAPER II

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30th — 9:00 — 11:00 a.m.

TIME:	2 HOURS
-------	---------

TOTAL MARKS:	60
--------------	----

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

1. Copy from the question paper the exact number of the question you are going to answer and write your answer immediately below it
2. Marks will be deducted for wrongly numbered questions and for untidy work.
3. Always begin your questions on a fresh paper. No question should start at the bottom of a page.

SIGABA A

Kulesigaba phendvula Umbuto 1 nobe 2 hhayi yomibili.

1. INDZABA

Khetsa sihloko sibe sinye ubhale ngaso indzaba ibe likhasi nesigamu (lo-
kungaba ngemagama langema 250 kuya ema 300)

- (a) Bhala inkhulumo emkhatsini weliphoyisa nemntfwana lolahlekile.
- (b) Umsebenti weBaphalali kaNgwane.
- (c) Litulu Lelasishiya sikhamisile.
- (d) Lengikutsandzako ngesigodzi sakitsi.
- (e) Maye kumnandzi kuba ngumntfwana.

(20)

2. INCWADZI

- (a) Bhalela umnakenu losebenta eJozi umcele imali yekuvakashela emafemini ku Matsapha ubeke kubaluleka kwaloluhambo.
- (b) Uyindvuna esikolweni lofundza kuso. Bhalela umphatsisikolo umatise ngetinkinga lohlangana nato ukulesikhundla.
- (c) Bhalela uyihlo lokutfumelele timphahla tekugcoka ubonge letembatfo.
- (d) Batali bakho batfole umbiko wekungatiphatsi kahle kwemnakenu.

Mbhalele umchazele kutsi baphatseke kabi kanjani ekhaya, umbonise kutsi angenta njani nekutsi kutambangela tinkinga tini.

(20)

SIGABA B

3. SIVISISO: Fundza lendzaba uphendvule imibuto ngalokuphelele.

Lasa lelingali kwayiwa enkantolo. Lusendvo lwakaNkhambule bewuhleti lapha, newaka hnumalo lapha. Balingani base babingelelene, baye bekhuta umhlolo wekuhlushwa bantfwana seabadzala kangaka. Ngemuva kwesikhashane bangenile, kwevakala bukwayikwayi beticatfulo, kantsi sekungena Lokulandvwa. Isho ishayela etulu intfombi yakubo ngisho seiyohlala phansi yangakhombisi inhlonipho ngekube itibutse, itigoge embikwebantfu labadzala. Tevakala futsi tigci kantsi sekungena labo labagweba emacala. Lijaji layohlala lapha esihlalweni salo, umshushisi lapha nemmeli wa Lokulandvwa lapha, nemmeli wa Magendza lapha. kwabe sekungena emaphoyisa aphase Magendza ngala nangala. Afike amshiya ekhotho ancandzeka sekashaya indesheni.

Njengoba licala lembula ingubo lingene, lapha kulelo bekute ummangali ngo-be ngilo matfupha lelatibeka ebaleni lashaya umkhulungwne njengenja.

Umshushisi wasukuma watsi "Magandza Khumalo, inkantolo ikubeka licala lekufuna kubulala ngenhloso, lekuti leso sibhamu losisebentisile awunamvume yaso. Nelicala lekuhlasela umuti walenze indvodza ngenhloso yekubhubhisa konkhe lokuphilako lohlangana nako. Tihlambulule ulandzise inkantolo ngalokwatiko.

Wasukuma wayokuma ebhokisini. "Uyafunga kutsi loko lotakulandzisa inkantolo kuiciniso? Uma kanjalo-ke funga kuloya mshushisi.

Magendza waphakamisa sandla wafunga watsi: "Inkhosi ingisite". Kwatsiwa akatjele inkantole-ke kutsi wahamba kanjani.

Wayicala emsukeni wayo wayilandza njengakucala lapho bambuta esibhedlela. wabatjela kusukela ekucabaneni nemkakhe, laNkhambule phela.

IMIBUTO

1. Mhlolo muni lona lokukhulunywa ngawo kulendzaba? (2)
2. Nginike labatsatfu labamcoka nakutsetfwa licala lababaliwe kulendzatjana. (3)
3. Kuchazani loku:
 - (i) Kutibutsa

4. Kushoni kutsi "licala lembula ingubo lingene"? (2)
5. Cala lini lelibekwe Magendza? (3)
6. Yini balingani? (2)
7. Ngubani ummangali kulelicala? (1)
8. Chaza ngebuntfu baLokulandvwa. Sekela imphendvulo yakho. (5)

(20)

SIGABA : C

4. TEMDZABU

I. TINGANEKWANE

Lonkombose na Demthelele

1. Yini loku lokufananako ngemphilo yaletilwane?
 - (a) imboma
 - (b) inhlatfu
2. Ase ukhetse lapho kunetintfo letimbili letingumsebenti wengoma enganekwa-neni ikakhulu lena ya Lonkombose naDemthelele.
 - A. Isola batali baboLonkombose naDemthelele ibonge inhlatfu.
 - B. Ichaza kutsi kwayangani Lonkombose abe kulesimo lakuso ibuye ifinyete lenganekwane.
 - C. Ichaza kutsi kwaya ngani Lonkombose abe sesitibeni isola umoya kutsi nawo wamgcumsela esitibeni. (1)
3. Loku lokubili kwatsi akentiweni Lonkombose
 - (a) imbona (b) inhlatfu? (2)
4. Kwaya ngani Lonkombose abe sesitibeni? (1)
5. Wabuya njani Lonkombose ekhaya? (2)
6. Sifundvo sini lesikulendzaba? (2)

(20)

II. TISHO / TAGA

1. Unonele ekhatsi njengendlati.

(i) Yini indlati? (1)

(ii) Nika inchazelo yalesaga. (2)

2. Sebentisa lesaga lesilandzalako emshweni ukhombise kutsi uyasati kutsi sishoni:

Lala lulata sikwengule. (2)

(5)

III. TIPHICAPHICWANO

(i) Ngiphe siphicaphicwano lesinenchazelo lenguloku:

libhodo leliphalishi. (2)

(ii) Nginemiti lemitsatfu leyehlukaniswe yimifula. Kunesihlahla sema olontji

lenaso sehlukaniswe ngumfula emtini wekucala. kulesihlanhla ngifuna

kukha ema-olontji ngiphatsele bafati bami ngekulingana. Inkinga isekutsi-

ni nangiwela umfula ema-olontji lengiwaphetse ayaphindzeka. Manje ku-

fanele ngisuke nema-olontji lamangakhi kute imiti yami itfole ngekulinga-

na? kona ngitakushiya mangaki emtini umunye? (3)

(5)