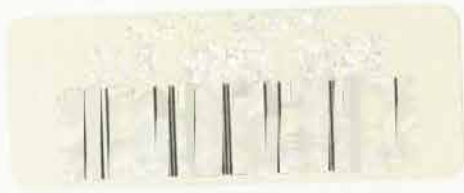


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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DIVINATION PROCESSES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE INCORPORATED BELIEF SYSTEMS OF SEVERAL NGUNI DIVINERS AND THE SUBSEQUENT EFFECTS ON THE SYMBOLISM, FORM, STRUCTURE AND STYLE OF THE MUSIC ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR RITUAL PRACTICES

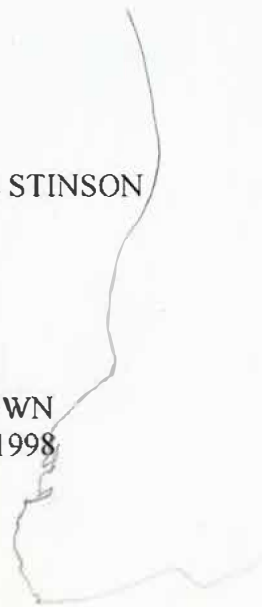
A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF MUSIC IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MUSIC

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

BY

KATHRYN LEE STINSON

CAPE TOWN
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My special thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. [Name], for his guidance and support throughout the course of my study. I am also grateful to my colleagues, who were instrumental in my late research work with me. My thanks go to my family, who were instrumental in my late research work with me. My thanks go to my family, who were instrumental in my late research work with me.

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I am deeply indebted to many people for the assistance I received in the preparation of this dissertation. The benefits and knowledge I have gained from coming into contact with such unique individuals, during the conduct of my research, extend far beyond the boundaries of this work and into many aspects of my life, which I had never previously discovered, and about which I continue to learn.

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Gogo Morwadi

Chief Nicholas Gcaleka

Makhosi Athobile

David (as he wishes to be identified)

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Gogo Morwadi and her family, who accepted me with warm hospitality. Not only did Gogo Morwadi allow me to accompany her on some incredible journeys across the country, but she ensured that I met other diviners and experienced the life of a diviner, without having to become one. The same may be said for Chief Gcaleka, whose sense of the fantastic and adventure stunned me more often than not - and may be summed up in his advice, "Whatever you do, follow your spirit, or there will be hell to pay!"

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ABSTRACT

The traditional musical practices of the Nguni people of Southern Africa are of a social nature, directed at fulfilling specific functions. Divination music in particular is of no exception, and it is intricately linked to the methodology and religious symbolism employed by Southern Nguni diviners, providing proof of the role of the ancestors as protectors of health and welfare of their living descendants. Divination songs are a means of artistic expression and communication between the ancestors and the people, and are performed in the context of rituals in which they convey special meanings and serve a certain purpose.

This study is concerned with structures of divination and several methods employed by Nguni diviners (ie. of Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi origin). My analysis of the training of diviners and the examination of particular rituals performed by certain Southern Nguni diviners, is carried out in the context of their world view and systems of beliefs, as documented in current anthropological literature and in the words of my informants. I also attempt to examine innovations arising from cross-culturalisation, which find expression in such ritual action.

Ethnographic evidence has demonstrated over and over again that, among the Nguni (and other Southern Bantu-speaking peoples), "ritual forms the articulation point between the belief system and the network of day-to-day interactions between men which is society." (Hammond-Tooke (ed), 1974:344) During the course of my study, I encountered practices amongst my informants that indicated particular changes in their traditional belief systems and methodology. These changes - which particularly showed an assimilation of foreign cultural aspects - were evident in the form and content of the rituals practised, and furthermore, they had a particular effect on the associated music. Features included the language of the texts, and the meaning and symbolism within them and musical elements such as the use of particular modes and accompanying drum rhythms, which identified with the "foreignness" of the incorporated elements.

The incorporation of foreign elements into the thought patterns of the Nguni has been documented as a fairly recent occurrence. This was certainly reflected in the reactions I received from various informants, when discussing diviners who have embraced such innovation. What I found (according to my informants) was that diviners are even differentiated into "types" (based on their religious convictions) and consequently, their music contrasts considerably to that of other diviners. I have attempted assimilate literary evidence on this matter with full descriptions furnished by my informants. Ultimately this incorporation is also shown through elements of form and structure in the performance of associated ritual music.

PREFACE

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the type of musical communication used, and its function in divination processes, in which certain cultural, ritual and musical patterns are used repeatedly, but have been expanded by the incorporation of changes and innovations introduced by individuals (diviners) working within the established cultural forms.

This study examines several divination processes including the calling to the profession, the training involved therein and the subsequent ritual events performed by Southern Nguni diviners. The ritual procedures I have documented have included the performance of music to varying extents and I have related the music which I have heard to the ritual circumstances in which it occurs.

My documentation of the music incorporates a transcription of songs performed in context of the ritual event, accompanied by a formal analysis. It must be noted that in divination song, the music communicates not only through its associated texts, but also by its performance style. The performance style in music-making is essentially concerned with

the physical delivery of musical content, for instance, how the people sing the song and what they do in so doing. This includes aspects of stance, gesture and movement, plus facial expression, which all are exploited by the performer. In some cases, I examine the physiological generation of the music, and its associated movement patterns. I have attempted to address this in my discussion of the music. In my study, I also present the musical content in its associated ritual context, and with reference to:

- The socio-cultural environment and conditions in which the ritual was conducted.
- The reasons concerning the performance of ritual action.
- The protagonists of action, these being the officiant(s) and the clients and other devotees concerned. The performance styles of the devotees.
- The ritual procedure followed and the significance of the musical action therein.
- Variations in ritual procedure and action, and their subsequent effect on the musical performance, which may largely be contributed to the assimilation of foreign concepts and religious beliefs.

The research material is presented as follows:

In the Preface, I present an account of selected fieldwork experiences, encompassing my research methodology and the strategies which I employed to obtain information. I relate several personal experiences I had whilst undertaking my active research, and I outline some of the problems I faced as a researcher in this fairly sensitive field.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to fundamental concepts of traditional religion, as documented in current anthropological literature, and practised by the Nguni - with which my study is concerned. I examine the dual concept of good and evil which operates in these

belief systems and the role of the diviner therein, to combat evil and maintain a balance between the community and its environment. The outcomes, effects and ultimate function of the performance of divination music are discussed in the light of the views held by my informants, whilst the formal and stylistic components of the music are broadly elaborated upon, as documented in available literature. I also examine the important role of the diviner as musical protagonist in the ritual action.

In this chapter, I provide case histories of my main informants, focussing on the systems of belief operating in their lives. It is in this material that the adaptation to social change and assimilation of religious concepts foreign to Nguni cosmology, becomes apparent. Such a case is mentioned with respect to *amandawu*¹ (Ndau) ancestors. These ancestors have been selectively incorporated into two of my main informants' systems of belief. I discuss the reaction to the incorporation of these beliefs, as voiced by other informants. Such modifications to the core religious beliefs of my informants have had a powerful effect on the content and style of the divination music performed by them, an aspect which is highlighted in the material of subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 examines the procedures involved in becoming a diviner. I examine the calling to the profession, the training period and the graduation of the diviner. Anthropological documentation is substantiated with evidence provided by my informants in this regard, and I include documentation of initiates' dream recollections, their songs, and excerpts from *iintlombe* (seances)² pertaining to the novitiate, plus a personal account of medicine collection (a task undertaken by diviners and training diviners alike) at the close of the

chapter. As documented by Hansen (1981:563, 1982:43-44), the music of diviners - *iingoma zamaqgirha* (diviners' songs), *iingoma ze(zi)ntlombe zamagqirha* (songs of the seance(s) of diviners), constitutes a particular category of Xhosa music, being classified emically on the basis of its social function. (An emic classification is one which is based on the evaluations of the people who belong to the particular culture concerned.) This Xhosa classification stresses the strongly utilitarian role which music plays among the Southern Nguni, as it does among many other African peoples south of the Sahara. At the same time, music is also appreciated for its own sake, as a form of expression that has aesthetic value, but also serves a broader purpose. Hansen has also stated that, because the Southern Nguni classify their music in this way, they are concerned not so much with song titles as with song types. Hence, song titles are not provided unless asked for, in which case informants generally derive a suitable one from the text. (Hansen, 1981:579) Another musical genre denoted by the term *intlombe*, is categorised by Hansen as *lingoma zentlombe / iingoma zentlombeni yabafana namantombazana*. (*intlombe* dance songs' or 'music of the dance party of initiated young men and girls'). (1981:859) This music is performed by young men who practise circumcision, namely, at the time of Hansen's research, being Cape Nguni, except the Bhaca, Mpondo, Xesibe and Ntlangwini. Hansen found that these large scale social events took place every two weeks in the winter months. *Intlombe* music is also performed by girl initiates before and after their 'coming out' ceremony, in the seclusion hut. (See Hansen, 1981:359ff)

This chapter also focuses on alternatives to accepting the divination profession. I have included a brief overview of the responses of certain individuals to the call to the divination

profession, whose choices were largely influenced by their association with Zionist-type churches. I give a brief account of several general musical procedures in the Zionist-type Church services which I attended, drawing some parallels with divination music proper.

Chapter 3 concerns ritual action in divination processes and the role of music therein.

Where possible, my research has been subjected to follow-up interpretations by those involved in the ritual action ('fieldbacking'³), and subsequent cross-examination and translation by other members of the same cultural group. In this chapter, two rituals are documented, which involve the consultation with *amandawu* ancestors namely, a description of a ritual killing, plus a *femba*⁴ (SiS) ritual and their musical contents.

Chapter 4 comprises a documentation of the motivations, content, ritual action and music at *iintlombe*. I have chosen two case studies to describe in full the sequence of events, and I have also provided descriptions of specific ritual and musical action which I witnessed and recorded at other *iintlombe*. These include songs sung during ritual sacrifice, and other ritual songs performed in specific ritual contexts. I note the significant cultural differences in the performance styles observed in township *iintlombe*, and the incorporation and manipulation of a number of foreign concepts into the divination techniques and associated music of certain diviners, including songs associated with different categories, and Zionist concepts in Chief Gcaleka's *intlombe*.

Nguni cosmology and principles operating in Nguni religious ritual, have been discussed in anthropological literature on the Nguni to a greater or lesser degree, by many authors.

Anthropologist W.D.Hammond-Tooke has published copiously on the Nguni. It should be noted, however, that the music used in Nguni divination processes has not been documented very widely. In many instances, the musical activity involved in these procedures has been superficially described (if at all), which leads one to believe that there is very little music operating in divination processes. In fact, divination rituals may employ a considerable amount of music.

Academic ethnomusicological works which have explored this field of study have been written by Hansen (1981), Dargie (1988) and Coppenhall (1990) respectively. Hansen conducted research in twenty-eight districts of the Eastern Cape, formerly known as the Transkei, plus the Pedi-King Williamstown and Grahamstown areas of the Eastern Province. Her extensive research findings include detailed analyses of music performed in divination contexts, as practised by the Xhosa-speaking people of the areas researched. Hansen found that in rural areas, the socio-economic climate promoted the frequent performance of divination music, which involved large groups of people, including creative and innovative performers whose exceptional musical expertise was acknowledged by their community members, and who contributed greatly to the rich polyrhythmic harmony which characterised this music. Although *iintlombe* took place whenever necessary, the winter months provided the right social conditions for regular ritual events, and frequent performances enabled the music to be well-rehearsed by the same group of people. Such musical 'saturation' gave people the opportunity to develop their musical expertise. (Hansen, 1981:580)

Coppenhall's study examines the effects of urbanization on seance music and divination practices of selected diviners residing in the townships of Cape Town. His study demonstrated that in urban areas, "seances, especially the large *iintlombe*, take place infrequently and only when necessary; the reasons are mainly economical...It seems then, that [with the] effects of urbanisation, of 'city living', [there] has been a considerable loss of musical repertoire, especially as far as divination music is concerned. People are not familiar with the music, and they do not socialise sufficiently to become familiar with it. The result is that they are unable to sing the songs that have to be sung at certain seances." (1990:291-2)

Coppenhall's research demonstrated that because the people who attended *iintlombe* came from different cultural and economic backgrounds, they contributed to the neglect of songs, through their lack of knowledge of the repertoire. The diviners involved exacerbated these situations by incorporating foreign songs into their own repertoire. An example of this were two *-hlehla* songs documented by Coppenhall, as performed by one of his informants, Gogo Morwadi.

I have had the opportunity of meeting and working with Gogo Morwadi, who subsequently became a valuable source of information in my own research work. In my study, however, I have attempted to focus on other aspects of Gogo Morwadi's divination practice which are not covered in Coppenhall's dissertation.

THE ANCESTORS

Central to the world view of my subjects is the African traditional religious concept of ancestor veneration. The ancestors are the deceased members of the lineage and clan, as well as the spiritual custodians of their communities of living descendants, in whose lives they take a keen and enduring interest and concern. (Hunter, 1964:231; Krige, 1974:283; Hammond-Tooke, 1974:324)

Vernacular terminology for the ancestors in the Zulu-, Xhosa- and SiSwati languages (the main language groups with which I have worked) are respectively: *idlozi* (pl. *amadlozi*), *ithongo* ("household god," pl. *amathongo*) and *iminyanya* (pl. *izinyanya*), and *idloti* (pl. *emadloti*). (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:801; McLaren, 1994:163; Rycroft, 1982:117) As pointed out by Hammond-Tooke (ed, 1974:328) the vernacular terms are almost always in the plural form when used by the people, which stresses the importance and significance of the collective aspect when referring to the ancestors. (ibid) In my research, I have found that such a case exists with my informants, who utilise a seemingly remote group of ancestors, rather than specific or individual ancestors in divination processes. Such a practice is known to vary between different cultural groups. (Hammond-Tooke, 1974: 329)

In Nguni existence, an attempt is made to balance and maintain an amicable relationship between human beings and the ancestors. Disturbance of this order is recognised through physical indications such as certain illnesses, natural disasters and unnatural death (only death through longevity is considered natural). Such disorder is perceived and interpreted

as misfortune, bestowed on an individual or a number of people, the source being evil forces manifested in the powers of witches and sorcerers, or the ancestors, who are punishing the afflicted person for neglecting a customary obligation. With regard to the latter, "when ancestors punish transgression, they do not directly inflict harm. Rather, they temporarily relinquish their role as guardians, leaving their wards defenceless against attack from a witch or sorcerer." (Kiernan in Prozesky & de Gruchy, 1995:23) Hence, even though they are perceived to be generally protective and benevolent, the ancestors expect and even demand respect, honour and veneration from their descendants, demonstrated in the form of customary religious and kinship rituals. If these are neglected, the offender may be 'sent' a misfortune (an illness) as a punishment for his breach of duty. Ancestrally-sent illness as a reprimand for neglect of duty is always curable, and it is through religious ritual, that the return to equilibrium is effected. (Hunter, 1964:234,274; Elliot, 1970:104; Hammond-Tooke, 1974:336; Krige, 1974:320,284; Ngubane, 1977:51; Berglund, 1989:79)

Nguni rituals take the form of dramatic presentations in which fears, anxieties, repressed guilt and doubts are objectified, and thus dealt with in a more meaningful, practical and constructive way. (Thorpe, 1992:21) In such ritual, the diviner and the ancestors play a crucial role. The ancestors are appealed to in these instances of misfortune, and in many such cases, a channel is needed to enable communication between the ancestors and their descendants, in which enlightenment, clarification and ultimately wellbeing, may be achieved.

The agent qualified for such a task is the diviner, who is effectively "the link between the people and the ancestors" (Chief Gcaleka), and permanently in a state of closeness to them⁵. He/she has acquired such a position through a 'calling' (*ukubiza*)⁶ to the divination profession and undergoes a training period as a novice diviner (*ithwasa*)⁷ in which he/she learns the processes of diagnosing and treating illness and misfortune. Thus, diviner becomes the ancestors' "visible representative...specially selected for the task of mediation between the spiritual and physical world." (Thorpe, 1991:107) Since the vocation of diviner originates with the calling by the ancestors, and since divination rituals are essentially concerned with communication with the ancestors who speak through the diviner, the diviner is the intermediary between the ancestors and their living descendants and it is his/her responsibility to interpret the causes of misfortune and to prescribe the means for restoring good interpersonal relationships which have been ruptured.

FIELDWORK

GOGO MORWADI

I was first exposed to divination systems and the work of diviners as an undergraduate music student at UCT, in the Ethnomusicology lectures delivered by my supervisor, Dr Deirdre Hansen. I had never before come into contact with aspects of African traditional religion, apart from the occasional thrilling and fearful descriptions of 'witchdoctors' at all night parties, where a great amount of prickly-pear beer was consumed, as related by my friends who own a farm in Kowie, Eastern Cape. In Hansen's lectures, I was so riveted by the music and the actions performed in video footage of *iintlombe*, that I could barely sleep for several nights, and in my excitement, I felt instantly compelled to further my studies in

divination music. Little did I know that contact with such powerful individuals as diviners, would dramatically change my western-moulded perceptions about religion and the construction of society with its associated values, and at the same time, provide me with knowledge that would irreversibly change my attitude towards life in general!

Before registering for the degree, I tested the feasibility of my study via a connection that was set up by my supervisor through a mutual friend, who was the son of a prominent diviner, residing and working in the Cape township of Langa. I was promised an interview (and prospects of a further working relationship) with the diviner upon his return from the Eastern Cape, and it was also proposed that I would be able to travel there myself, to meet his brother, who is deemed a powerful influence in the Lusikisiki area. With this knowledge, I commenced my Masters degree in 1995, with the generous support of a number of scholarships and awards.

However, from the start of the research and six months into it, attempts to make contact with this diviner informant, and any other diviners for that matter, failed dismally. Appointments and arrangements were consistently thwarted by telephone cancellations and no-shows. It began to occur to me that the diviners in question were suspicious of my motivations, and this was being demonstrated in their evasive behaviour, which was coupled by attempts to distance themselves from me. As an uninformed novice in the field, I too was not equipped to handle the situation tactfully. I held romantic assumptions that it would be easy to secure the interest of a diviner, from my position as a young white

researcher. Besides, I naively believed that the majority of people were freely comfortable about parting with information, and that diviners were no different!

My supervisor went on sabbatical for the second semester, and still having not made much progress with my active research work, I began to doubt the nature of my research and above all, my capability for it. Taking on lectures and other commitments in my supervisor's absence taught me much, but put the need for attention on other aspects of Ethnomusicology and not on my thesis. Despite this, I continued to search for diviner informants, by approaching African friends at the university. Some eagerly attempted to assist me, but what was on their minds was a reality which only compounded my doubt. In answer to my enquiries regarding diviners, they would commonly retort, "Yes, I know of some, but they won't talk." (Why?) "Because you're white." Little did I know at the time that in this post-Apartheid era, the colour of my skin indeed would be both an advantage and a disadvantage in my research.

By August 1995, I was convinced that I was unlikely to find any diviners willing to collaborate in my research. However, a fortuitous meeting with Gavin Coppenhall, an Ethnomusicology Masters graduate from UCT, dispelled my feelings of defeat. Gavin's research had been concerned with divination practices and music of the *iintlombe* of several diviners operating in the Cape Town township areas during 1989-1991. He instantly identified with my problem, having experienced the same difficulties in his research. Gavin most generously offered to help me establish contact with a diviner he knew, Gogo Morwadi, who was eager for him accompany her on an expedition to her training ground in

"Swaziland", in order to collect traditional medicine. She had told him that the vegetable material in the Cape Peninsula has no power, as the salt deposits from the sea affects all the soil and dries up that power. This has been substantiated by another diviner, David. Gogo Morwadi does, however, use certain products from the sea. (see Coppenhall, 1990:128-129)

Initially feeling a little reluctant and confused about meeting this diviner, I hesitated to call Gavin and take him up on the offer. He alone seemed to be so knowledgeable in the field, and how would I ever be able to repay such a favour? Besides, it all sounded too easy- was there going to be a snag? However, we met as per chance for the second time within two days, when I agreed to give a mutual friend a lift to save him from the rain. On my friend's behalf, we called in at Gavin's workplace and Gavin seemed only too happy to escort me to the diviner. The following afternoon, we paid a visit to Gugulethu. We arrived at the home of Gogo Morwadi (Mary Josiah), known as a teacher and powerful Swazi diviner, who had been the most influential informant for Gavin's thesis completed in 1990.

Gogo Morwadi lives in Section 3, with her children and extended family in a small, neat semi-detached face brick house. Upon entering the front yard I noticed a fully grown brown-haired goat, and a man, who was introduced as Jeff. Jeff is also a diviner, who is not currently practising and is one of Gogo Morwadi's three sons. Jeff told us that Gogo Morwadi was not at home, but visiting friends in Section 4, Gugulethu. We decided to look for her and all three of us squeezed into the front of the 4X4 and drove to Section 4.

"Swaziland", in order to collect traditional medicine. She had told him that the vegetable material in the Cape Peninsula has no power, as the salt deposits from the sea affects all the soil and dries up that power. This has been substantiated by another diviner, David. Gogo Morwadi does, however, use certain products from the sea. (see Coppenhall, 1990:128-129)

Initially feeling a little reluctant and confused about meeting this diviner, I hesitated to call Gavin and take him up on the offer. He alone seemed to be so knowledgeable in the field, and how would I ever be able to repay such a favour? Besides, it all sounded too easy- was there going to be a snag? However, we met as per chance for the second time within two days, when I agreed to give a mutual friend a lift to save him from the rain. On my friend's behalf, we called in at Gavin's workplace and Gavin seemed only too happy to escort me to the diviner. The following afternoon, we paid a visit to Gugulethu. We arrived at the home of Gogo Morwadi (Mary Josiah), known as a teacher and powerful Swazi diviner, who had been the most influential informant for Gavin's thesis completed in 1990.

Gogo Morwadi lives in Section 3, with her children and extended family in a small, neat semi-detached face brick house. Upon entering the front yard I noticed a fully grown brown-haired goat, and a man, who was introduced as Jeff. Jeff is also a diviner, who is not currently practising and is one of Gogo Morwadi's three sons. Jeff told us that Gogo Morwadi was not at home, but visiting friends in Section 4, Gugulethu. We decided to look for her and all three of us squeezed into the front of the 4X4 and drove to Section 4.

During the ride, Gavin chatted to Jeff, hearing the latest news and asking questions about Jeff's home life.

It is at this point that I look back and wish I had thought of more questions to ask, and taken out my notebook and recorded the information. However, I was still trying to get my bearings in an area that was so far removed from my comfortable dwelling in Rondebosch, both in distance (the mountain seemed far away, but the only directional source!) and the surroundings. Children moved out of the street as we drove by, playing with pieces of cardboard, wire and broken shopping trolleys. Dogs hovered in driveways, scarred and mangy, and goats grazed on open mounds of grass.

We arrived at a slightly more dilapidated house in Section 4 and Jeff disembarked to locate Gogo Morwadi. A gentleman standing in the doorway of the house indicated to him that she was in a corrugated iron structure, just to the right of the house. He disappeared into the latter, to inform her of our arrival. I waited with baited breath. Gogo Morwadi appeared and with a broad smile, she greeted me. Trying to look confident, although quaking under her kind, but piercing gaze, I replied, returning the greeting in Xhosa, which seemed to please her.

Gavin had pre-warned me during the ride to Gogo Morwadi's house, that any diviners I were to meet would almost definitely "test" me, before deciding whether my intentions were serious and purposeful or not. Moreover, they themselves would determine how genuine my desire was to learn about divination and consequently base their decision to co-

operate upon this. After the Xhosa exchange of greetings, I still felt uncomfortable, but I proceeded to introduce myself and state my intentions in a mixture of English and Xhosa as I was anxious to make myself understood. I need not have said a word: as if reading my mind, Gogo Morwadi had instantly guessed my motivations. She turned to me and with a big grin and asked, "What will you give me?" Somewhat nonplussed by this unexpected response, I managed to reply, "What do you want?"

"...take me to Swaziland," was her answer.

Everything suddenly fell into place. I recalled that Gavin had mentioned the diviner's desire to return to her training ground, which she identified as Swaziland. On average, Gogo Morwadi carried out this expedition annually in order to collect traditional medicine, and she had been eager for Gavin to join her on previous occasions. After his timeous absence, Gogo Morwadi sensed that with Gavin's return he had brought not only another white person who was curious about her work, but also news of fulfilling her wishes. She and I were excited at the prospects of such travel and we unanimously agreed that a trip to Swaziland was in order.

We made our way into the small dwelling from which Gogo Morwadi had emerged. Inside, we were greeted by Jeff, a young woman with her baby and an old man, all seated around a paraffin stove. The room was fairly large, with a double bed taking up one corner. The walls were lined with makeshift shelves containing household objects, boxes and cartons. Opposite the bed was a case of shelves, overflowing with bottles of all shapes

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and sizes made from plastic and glass. The bottles seemed to contain powders of different colours. I assumed that I was inside an *indumba*⁸, the owner of which I was not sure. The air was thick with cigarette smoke and the pungent smell of boiling tripe.

Nobody seemed particularly surprised or affected by my appearance and we took seats around the stove. I was introduced to the people in the room - the old man was also a Swazi diviner, and he had just returned from Swaziland the previous Friday. He wore wrist bands of white and red beads, as did Gogo Morwadi. She explained that such colours were associated with Swazi diviners, distinguishing them from the Xhosa who wore pure white beads. (I subsequently found these colours to be worn by other informants of Zulu and Bhaca training, who had been instructed by their ancestors to do so.)

The conversation was light, focussing on the latest news, such as the whereabouts of Gogo Morwadi's common-law husband of eight years, Mike, whom she had left. They also spoke about the other diviners who had collaborated in Gavin's research. Conversation was conducted in English, Xhosa and SiSwati. Not being particularly fluent in conversational Xhosa, I had to concentrate intensively to keep up with the topic - this was possibly part of the test. Without warning, Gogo Morwadi posed a question to me in Xhosa, "*Ufuna ukufunda amayeza?*" ("Do you want to learn about medicine?") Then the old gentleman diviner continued, without giving me a chance to reply to her question, "Do you want to become a diviner?" Not having ever contemplated the option, the question terrified me. I suddenly considered the implications of my intended fieldwork and I began to wonder why I had chosen such an area of research in the first place, concerning a topic about which I

knew very little. To answer the question would be complicated, as it would show my lack of confidence, so I acknowledged that I would like to learn medicine.

My assent resulted in an enthusiastic discussion of the proposed trip to Swaziland, commencing during the September vacation, which occurred in three week's time. Gavin generously offered his 4X4 bakkie for transport, but he stressed that not *everyone* could fit into it. This was prompted by Gogo Morwadi's suggestion that we purchase a sacrificial goat for the *intlombe* to be held in Swaziland, prior to our departure from Cape Town. She swiftly changed her mind when Gavin retorted that if we drove to Swaziland with a goat in the back of the bakkie, she would be the one to clean up! Gogo Morwadi then relayed a gruesome story involving the transportation of a goat in the closed boot of a car, on a trip from Richmond (near Hazyview in Mphumalanga), to Cape Town.

Gogo Morwadi stated that it would be necessary to hold an *intlombe* at her home in Gugulethu, prior to our departure for Swaziland, in order that 'the way be opened'. In so doing, she would inform her ancestors of our intended travels and ask them for their assistance in making the road safe, until we reached our destination. Another *intlombe* would be held in Swaziland to ensure our return. Gogo Morwadi relayed a story of a how an *impundulu* (the 'Lightning bird' see pp.) in the form of a 'dirty wind' blew the car in which she was travelling off the road during her previous trip to collect medicine. "I should be dead, but I am still Morwadi. My spirit is strong," she said. Gogo Morwadi attributes this attempt on her life to the jealousy of other diviners regarding her successful practice.

My first afternoon with a diviner ended with a visit in *Ezinyoka* ("Snakepark"⁹), an informal settlement near New Crossroads in order to inform a Swazi diviner and friend, Gogo Tryfina, of the imminent *intlombe*. The roads were not well defined and we lost our way. Gogo Morwadi left the car to see whether she could recognise Gogo Tryfina's house. Immediately, about a dozen children surrounded the bakkie, curiously peering at what they considered to be an unfamiliar sight. Authoritatively, Gogo Morwadi bellowed at them, asking the whereabouts of Gogo Tryfina. Sensing Gogo Morwadi's status they timidly replied and swiftly disappeared.

This was the first time I witnessed the respect and awe with which a diviner is treated by the community, something which was demonstrated to me over and over again, particularly in the case of female diviners. During interaction with family and friends, I noticed the well-known patriarchal trend that exists in this society. Women, however, transcend their role of subservience when they become diviners and they gain far more respect from men than their ordinary counterparts.

Diviners are also treated with fear and trepidation. On many occasions when I have driven my car into the townships to visit friends and diviners, I have been requested to park the car well within the driveway, in close proximity to the front door, for fear of a break-in or theft. During nightly visits, my hosts have even insisted that they post somebody to watch over it. One evening when I accompanied my diviner-informant David, to a destination in his car, I asked whether it was necessary to park my car within the gates of his house. He replied that I need not do so. I felt slightly uneasy about leaving my car in the road for

once, especially at night, and upon our return, my obvious relief that my car had remained untouched, made David chuckle. "...It's because it was parked outside *your* house, is it not?" I asked. He nodded in reply.

It was decided that I would fund the impending *intlombe* in Cape Town and a shopping list was drawn up, which included foodstuffs, beverages and a goat plus two fowls. The goat was intended as a sacrifice to Gogo Morwadi's *manguni*¹⁰ (Nguni) ancestors, whilst the fowls were for her *amandawu* (Ndau) ancestors. (see pp.) At the time, I did not appreciate the distinction between such ancestors, an issue that would arise repeatedly amongst other informants during the course of my research. Gogo Morwadi briefly defined *amandawu* as inhabiting water environments and that they had to be appeased, because they had been "thrown in there" by earlier members of their lineage. She described how I would see the different drums she plays for each "kind" of ancestor when we arrived in Swaziland.

Purchasing animals for a ritual sacrifice was a task that I had not imagined I would ever undertake. Bearing in mind that I considered myself an animal rights activist in my adolescent years, I found the four-hour excursion to the livestock and battery farms in search for a sacrificial goat and chickens, quite traumatic. It was evident that because we looked for the animal on the Friday afternoon before the *intlombe*, the largest and fattest stock had already been purchased by others who had similar intentions. After driving out past Phillipi and as far as Stellenbosch, we eventually decided to settle for a sheep, which Gavin kindly transported in the back of his 4X4 bakkie later that evening. I was only required to purchase sacrificial animals upon one other occasion, and during the rest of my

fieldwork, I supported my diviner informants' functions with donations of beverages, money and transport.

I attended my first *intlombe* on Saturday, 9 September, 1995. A *-phahla*¹¹ session had preceded the *intlombe* the previous Tuesday (documented in Chapter 4, see p. 303). I arrived with Gavin at Gogo Morwadi's home at 17:30 and she was relieved to see us, but at the same time she seemed to be in a state of anxiety with regard to the time. Unfortunately, both of us had been busy with work commitments until 17:00. Gogo Morwadi mentioned that the sheep had to be slaughtered for the ancestors before sundown, or else the sacrifice would bring some form of misfortune.

I compounded Gogo Morwadi's anxiety when I brought in the crates of beer which I had purchased in the Southern suburbs. It proved to be the incorrect brand and therefore unacceptable for the *intlombe*. Gogo Morwadi assured me that it could be used at the *intlombe* in Swaziland and she ordered that the crates be stashed in her bedroom. My oversight resulted in my having to borrow money, and a trip to one of the local shebeens with several members of the family in an ancient Volkswagen combi, belonging to Gogo Morwadi's son, Jeff. The trip to the tavern which commenced after the car was push-started, turned into an adventure itself.

When we arrived, it was decided that we would keep the car running, and three of us went to purchase the beer. Inside the corridors of the shebeen, South African Breweries crates were stacked up to the ceiling, most of them containing empty 750ml bottles. We entered

another room that had a fairly small section which was sealed off like a cage, behind which were the refrigerators containing liquor. Men queued up in front of the cage, and placed their orders before paying their money. Inside the caged area, a disabled man lay face down on a bed with the lower part of his body covered with a blanket and collected the money. Other men inside the cage made up the liquor orders. I was allowed inside the caged area, where I met the disabled man, who introduced himself to me as the owner. We purchased a quantity of beer and left. On the way out, I was informed that the owner had been the victim of an armed robbery in his own shebeen. The intruders had amputated his legs and his brother had lost his life.

It was rapidly getting dark, but before returning with the beverages, we had been instructed to fetch some more people for the *intlombe*, including Gogo Dubulamanzi, an associate of Gogo Morwadi. We drove to her home, where we were told that she was visiting at another address. Feelings of panic about the time were aggravated by the possibility that we would run out of petrol any minute, as Jeff was not certain whether the petrol gauge was working or not. Upon our arrival at the destined house, two of the men sauntered in to fetch Gogo Dubulamanzi, her husband and their friends, whilst the rest of us debated whether to keep the car engine running or to switch it off! We were informed that Gogo Dubulamanzi was not quite ready, but would make her own way to the *intlombe*. We finally arrived at Gogo Morwadi's house at approximately 20:30 after putting some petrol into the car.

However, my introduction to divination had only just started! Equipped with a recording walkman, photographic camera and a video camera, I braced myself to record the ritual

slaughter of the sheep, in the yard behind the house. Nothing could have prepared me for this occasion, and overcome with nausea, I stopped filming and fled into the house, where I was given sugar water for my '*thwasa*' - ie my apparent illness. My reaction had been interpreted by the diviners present as a sure sign of *ukuthwasa*, (the calling, see Chapter 1 pp.136) and it was becoming particularly difficult to convince Gogo Morwadi otherwise. Their assumption of my condition was compounded later that evening, when I was invited to dance with Gogo Morwadi's female *ithwasa* (initiate diviner). Having had prior experience in African performance styles, I swiftly learned the required dance steps and began to enjoy myself. However, this convinced some people even more that I should become a diviner!

The majority of my informants have expressed their belief that I should undergo a training in divination. I believe that this is due to the fact that they interpret my interest in their work as a calling to the profession. I always declined the offers, and this at times threatened my good working relationships with my informants. One diviner informant, who met Gogo Morwadi and who felt that a white *ithwasa* was acceptable in the circumstances, subsequently told me that Gogo Morwadi was the correct person to train me. She felt that I had ancestors who may be affiliated to *amandawu* ancestors. However, my informant David, a diviner and Zionist minister realises that it would be highly inappropriate for me to undergo training in divinership. He also knows that my interest in divination is not co-incidental, and that the real reasons for it are at present beyond my understanding.

It became clear to me that Gogo Morwadi felt that I had a vocation to be a diviner. My timely meeting with Gavin, and the subsequent meeting with Gogo Morwadi herself, were clear indications to the diviner that the ancestors were bent on calling me to the profession. Gogo Morwadi therefore believed that in order for her to impart knowledge, I was required to make necessary payment in return, as an initiate would do. Referring to me as her *ithwasa*, Gogo Morwadi insisted that she would train me to become a fully-fledged diviner, and I would eventually be able to practise as one. Convincing her that I did not want to become a diviner, but wished to learn about what diviners did in ritual contexts, became almost impossible, as Gogo Morwadi refused to see the difference between her objectives and mine.

We discussed the matter at length, and arrived at a solution which pleased both of us, and R1000 fulfilled my obligations. I also agreed to contribute to her trip to Swaziland (on which I would accompany her), and she would collaborate in my research, and even give me some information about her medicines. She would also teach me to perform the diviner's special dance. A further fee of R2 000 was due by me at the end of my learning and training.

I realised that the total sum of money required from me was the amount any novice would have to pay Gogo Morwadi for six months of training. I hastily calculated the implications of my acceptance of the diviner's stipulation, and its potentially ensuing commitment, which I feared could have irreversibly devastating consequences, owing to our conflicting perspectives on the whole issue. I saw myself as a student of ethnomusicological research,

whereas Gogo Morwadi saw me as a potential diviner. I feared the temptation to become too involved in divination, and in fact just being an observer had begun to affect me emotionally! Since we could not reach an agreement on the matter, I asked for some time to consider it.

Back at the university, I was at a loss as to what to do. My supervisor was in America on sabbatical and unreachable and I asked the advice of a member of the Anthropology department. I was told that it was up to me to decide what to do and since I was desperate to commence fieldwork, I attempted a compromise. I offered to fund the two *iintlombe* to be held in Cape Town and Swaziland respectively, to the value of R1 000 each, plus I would pay Gogo Morwadi an instalment of R1 000 cash, as she had requested. This was handed over at the *-phahla* session, prior to the first *intlombe*. I also explained that she would not have to contribute anything towards the cost of the trip to Swaziland. Gavin kindly offered to share the travel costs of the Swaziland trip with me, and provide his 4X4 for transportation. I am indebted to Gavin for his generosity, because without his aid, the fieldtrip would not have been possible. His vehicle sustained considerable damage as a result of the distance and the rough terrain which we covered.

Our departure to Swaziland was threatened the night before we were due to leave, when Gogo Morwadi requested further payment, based upon the grounds that she would be absent from her job whilst we were away and would therefore be losing out on the income from her regular clients. Upset and disillusioned by this demand, I replied that I could not afford further expenses at that stage, and under the circumstances, I would have to

reconsider the feasibility of the trip. Eventually we both agreed to continue with our plans, but Gogo Morwadi made it obvious that she would not willingly provide any information about the medicines to be collected in Swaziland. I did not pursue the matter, but I reassured myself that my study was to focus on musical performance, communication and function in ritual contexts, and that any further extra-mural information I acquired from the trip would be a bonus.

Although Gogo Morwadi's 'businesslike' attitude continued to worry me, I also felt that I knew from whence it came. Since I was the second cultural researcher to approach her for co-operation and collaboration, she probably felt that she did not want her service open to abuse and exploitation by me. I knew that Gogo Morwadi's collaboration in Gavin's research had contributed significantly towards its completion. Not only was she a sympathetic informant, but she also introduced Gavin to other diviners and herbalists, and was generally encouraging and supportive. Gogo Morwadi was business-minded at all times, which was to be expected since diviners are always paid for their work.

As a white student with no previous fieldwork experience, I nevertheless knew that my fieldwork would involve a whole range of people whose relationships are defined in both social and economic terms. Gogo Morwadi's forthright manner in stipulating financial terms was initially very intimidating (the more so since my research budget was limited). I was quite unprepared for it, and I did not know how to handle the situation. I also tried to understand it from Gogo Morwadi's vantage point. She would be providing me with exclusive knowledge from which I would greatly benefit, whilst I would be enhancing my

academic status through writing "the book" (thesis) - and probably secure meaningful employment in time. Ultimately, she would be giving away 'secrets', a process not generally approved by other diviners, who thought that she was 'crazy' to undertake it. With some misgivings, but not without a certain amount of hope and determination, I continued with plans for the two *iintlombe* and the Swaziland trip. I had no other option. I was guided by the diviner's availability and her willingness to assist me.

Being confronted with this issue at the outset, made me aware of the need for tact and diplomacy in the field situation. The whole matter of finding informants is a sensitive one, fraught with difficulties, and efforts must be made by researcher and informant(s) to arrive at a mutually beneficial arrangement. This usually involves consent reached by mutual concessions and compromise - an art which all cultural researchers must acquire. This is something I learned to achieve with Gogo Morwadi and with my other informants, throughout my field research, during which both my informants and I were happily satisfied with what we all gained from the whole undertaking.

Gogo Morwadi would not state how many people would be coming to help prior to our departure for Swaziland, but I knew that several of her close family members would accompany her, including her two sons Jeff and Aubrey. Another man, Isaac was to also travel with us. Gogo Morwadi felt that all three men were strong and 'fresh' and therefore they would be able to help us with the digging efforts.

My field excursion from 19-30 September, 1995, with Gogo Morwadi was full of surprises.

The objective of the fieldtrip was to take Gogo Morwadi and a few helpers to dig medicine "in Swaziland" (so I was told). I presumed that this meant the Kingdom of Swaziland (KaNgwane). We travelled northwards as far as Nelspruit, where we stopped and received further directions. When we were instructed to continue northwards instead of eastwards, I realised that we were not destined for the independent Kingdom, but for a locality in what was a former South African homeland, which is inhabited by SiSwati-speaking people amongst others, namely, Swalala. Swalala is a large African settlement stretching from Witrivier, about 50 km to the south and Hazyview, approximately 20km to the North. Swalala borders on the Numbi Gate of the Kruger National Park.

Those who came on the medicine collecting expeditions included Gogo Morwadi and her son Jeff (both Swazi diviners of Gugulethu), Gogo Lamashigo (Gogo Morwadi's teacher and resident of Swalala), Gavin and myself and an old gentleman known as Khosa, whose deceased father had been a diviner in the area. He was our local guide, as he had grown up in the area and, as a child, had accompanied his father on medicine collecting expeditions. Apart from being familiar with the area, he also had a vast knowledge of medicinal plants and their vernacular names, even though he himself was not a diviner. Khosa could not speak much English and he tended to talk to Jeff and Gogo Morwadi mostly, when he was not digging. Vusi, reputedly a young *sangoma* at the age of twelve, also accompanied us. He spent much time playing and singing to himself, fashioning spears out of sticks and chatting to me. Gogo Morwadi's other son, Aubrey accompanied us occasionally, but the real reason for his inclusion on the trip was revealed when he was treated for some

mysterious ailment by Fangoma, a relative diviner of Gogo Morwadi who resided in Goroman. Isaac came up with us from Cape Town as well. He was not a relative of Gogo Morwadi, and we found out more about him through a 'fortune' (divining) session held by Gogo Lamashigo during our first digging expedition. (Several expeditions were made over a period of seven days.)

Isaac was brought along by Gogo Morwadi to help in digging up the required roots. This is hard labour, especially when one takes into consideration the blunt and sometimes impractical implements we had at our disposal: an axe (the head kept falling off towards the end of the trip), a pickaxe, a hoe and two *pangas*. Gogo Morwadi generally supervised the digging, which was done by the men and myself. Sometimes women accompanied us to help in transporting them in bundles balanced on their heads. Gogo Morwadi kept on reminding us of how "heavy" it was to dig - she used to do it herself when she was younger, walking long distances to and from the locations of the various medicines, often with only one boy to help her carry the full bags of medicine. (She had told me back in Cape Town that if I was to become a *sangoma*, we could go digging together, taking a few boys along to help us. They would be paid R20 for their efforts.)

The plant material collected ranged from species of trees, to water plants and small shrubs growing in sandy and rocky places. We collected specimens within a 50km radius of Swalala, the areas including the outskirts of Witrivier and Hazyview, Goroman, Mafifti (an area in Swalala where plots of land were R50 each) and Nyamazane, near the Crocodile River.

Apart from the collection of medicine, I also witnessed a *-femba* (sniffing out) ritual and an *intlombe* before returning to Cape Town. The *-femba* ritual constitutes a large section of Chapter 3. (see pp. 244 ff)

CHIEF GCALEKA

The second informant I was to meet was the controversial "Chief" Nicholas Tilana Gcaleka, from Teko Kona in the Eastern Cape, (formerly Transkei). The title 'chief' is not a political one, but one adopted by Chief Gcaleka, who as a diviner, recognises a realm of ancestors of both Xhosa and 'foreign' cultural origin, and perceives himself as a "Chief of all the ancestors."

Chief Gcaleka claims to be the great-grandson of Tilana Gcaleka KaPhalo. Apart from being a diviner, he is also a Methodist minister and the current president of the Eastern Cape National Traditional Healer's Organisation in Kwamagxaki, Port Elizabeth. Chief Gcaleka said that during his month-long initiation as a diviner, he was under the water for thirty days, where he received a message, in the form of an *ithongo* (ancestor), which informed him that, until the head of Hintska¹² was returned to South Africa from its reputed burial place in Scotland, there would be no peace in this country. (source: Letter of application for funding of Chief Gcaleka's trip and personal communication)

Hintska Ka Phalo (1789-1835) was a chief of the Gcaleka chiefdom and Paramount Chief of the Xhosa cluster of chiefdoms (of which the Gcaleka were the main chiefdom), who was

shot dead by a British scout George Southey, at the site of the Ngqabarha River on 14 May, 1835. Prior to this incident, he had been deceptively forced into signing a peace treaty by Cape Governor Benjamin D'Urban, who had him held as a hostage for the ransom of 50 000 cattle and 1 000 horses. Hintsa was killed in his attempt to escape. It was reputed that his skull was later taken as a war trophy to Scotland, where it was buried. (KaPokwana & Mbesi, *Citi Vision Township News*, 14-20/03/1996) Chief Gcaleka believed that the head of Hintsa lay in Scotland. He related this story to me:

In 1835, I was not there [as I am now], but I was there in the past life, as a white man. This time, I have been born black, to help the blacks with their Spirit, because they have got problems. Hintsa's head was cut, and the black man died because of the [lack of] the spirit. The spirit has gone bad. I am born black now, and the spirit I have [is] of the Hurricane, the son of King Phalo. The Hurricane was born black, as the black Mamba. He ran to the water, where he stayed all his life. He called one of his twins, King Gcaleka, to stay with him in the river. They never died. When the English people came to South Africa, the Spirit was already in the water.

They killed Hintsa at Nqabara river, but the Spirit was there in the water. But the men who killed Hintsa did not see the Spirit. The Spirit wrote it down - what happened that day. Then the Spirit was reborn as me. That is why I know what happened.

Anthropological literature refutes Chief Gcaleka's allegations, and most sources claim that the head of Hintsa was blown off during his escape from capture. J.B. Peires documents the fate of Hinsta thus:

As the column marched along the Nqabara river, Hintsa made a dash for freedom. He was pulled off his horse, shot through the back and through the leg. Desperately he scrambled down the river bank and collapsed into the water-course. A scout named George Southey, coming up fast behind him, blew off the top of his head. The soldiers cut off his ears as keepsakes to show around the military camps.

Others tried to dig out his teeth with bayonets. Thus died Hintsa, king of the Xhosa, for trusting the honour of a British Governor." (1981:111)

The depiction of Hintsa's death by John Milton is even more gruesome.

"...George Southey who is to Hintsa's left, standing some five metres away, takes deliberate aim and fires. The ball strikes Hintsa in the temple, shattering his cranium, spattering his brains over rocks and grass. The body slumps down into the water, falling backwards and sideways, the shattered head a dreadful sight, the torn scalp peeled away and hanging over the staring dead eyes of the Paramount Chief of the Xhosa Nation." (1983:123)

The exact details surrounding Hintsa's death remain a mystery to a certain extent. Due to the nature of the evidence surrounding the death, the British attempted to cover up the execution and mutilation of the body and there are several versions of the incident. Chief Gcaleka believes that Hintsa's head received a bullet, but it was not blown apart. He alleges that the skull he brought back from Britain did indeed contain a bullet hole.

When I met Chief Gcaleka in March 1996, he had just returned from a three week journey in Britain, where he had been to search for and retrieve the head of Hintsa. I was introduced to Chief Gcaleka at the SABC studios in Sea Point, Cape Town, by a fellow student, Ms Nunzia Faxi. He was about to commence an interview with Radio Xhosa and we were permitted to accompany him. Surprised by my attempts to converse in Xhosa, he laughed at my greeting. After the interview, I accompanied his party back to New Crossroads, where the rest of the evening consisted of various home visits and consultations, which I was permitted to witness.

Chief Gcaleka's overseas mission to retrieve the head of Hintsa was well documented in the 1996 media, both nationally and abroad. He had many followers who believed his message that the return of Hintsa's head and its burial in South African turf would bring national peace. However, great controversy surrounded Chief Gcaleka's story and accomplished journey, and support for his mission was very much divided. Many Eastern Cape chiefs and members of the community distanced themselves from the issue; they did not believe Chief Gcaleka, and feared that he would disgrace the Xhosa nation. Chief Gcaleka was continuously under fire from the international press and his own people for 'conjuring up' stories about Hintsa's head. However, underlying his journey to Britain to retrieve the skull was his personal conviction that he was the rightful heir to the Royal House of the Xhosa. According to Chief Gcaleka's explanation, Hintsa was the last of the Xhosa kings, murdered by the British. The message which Chief Gcaleka had received in a dream, and which led to the retrieval of (reputedly) Hintsa's skull and its return to South Africa, was proof that the diviner himself, being of royal blood (a member of the House of Phalo) is in fact the hereditary King of the Xhosa. Chief Gcaleka envisions a new government order in 2004, which will be more spiritually orientated, and in which he will have his rightful place.

In March 1996, the skull was confiscated by the current head of the Xhosa Royal house and in the following August, it was handed over to the University of Cape Town's Medical School for DNA testing. Chief Gcaleka was enraged by the tardiness in the DNA testing. He told me that the ancestors were very angry with the state of affairs. He wanted to carry out the burial as soon as possible, thereby returning Hintsa's head to its rightful ground in

Butterworth (Gcuwa), Eastern Cape. Once this obligation was fulfilled, the ancestors would be happy and peace would be restored to the nation. Ancestral satisfaction and national harmony would be demonstrated by the formation of a large, thick cloud, covering Table Mountain in Cape Town, and the whole of South Africa for one week.

In September, 1996 the testing of the skull contradicted Chief Gcaleka's assumptions, and the skull was identified as being that of a Caucasian woman. Concurrently, Chief Gcaleka was held in custody in Umtata and charged with fraud, ironically not in connection with the Hintsu issue, but over an issue of allegedly fraudulent cheques. After he was released from gaol, I visited him occasionally at his New Crossroads residence, where he had set up a prospering diviners practice. He also had a small entourage of initiates (five in number) at the back of the house. He frequently commuted with them between Cape Town and the Eastern Cape.

In March, 1996 I was fortunate to attend an *intlombe* hosted by Chief Gcaleka in his New Crossroads home, accompanied by Ms Faxi. The *intlombe* concerned the issue of the skull which had recently been confiscated. Chief Gcaleka wished to communicate with the ancestors, not only his own ancestors, but all the ancestors of South Africa. Chief Gcaleka wished to negotiate with them in order to pave the way for his talks with President Nelson Mandela, regarding the controversy surrounding his finding of the Hintsu skull and its burial procedure, which was scheduled for May 1996.

I arrived at the house just before 18:00 and several people were seated in the tiny front room. Initially I concluded that I had arrived well before the proceedings were to start because generally before an *intlombe* begins, one is aware of the excitement in the air, and the host's home becomes a hive of activity. In this case, however, the few guests who had arrived were seated and fairly relaxed. Yet there was a sense of urgency about Chief Gcaleka when he appeared from the adjoining bedroom to greet me. He was clad in his traditional attire comprising a three-tiered black skirt and red shirt, both ornamented with simple white beadwork, and long socks and a pair of hiking boots. I was offered a seat and Chief Gcaleka disappeared into the bedroom to finish dressing.

As I sat in the front room, I heard the distant sounds of singing through a loudhailer, which I initially assumed to be the Moslem call to Prayers, the sound of which was very familiar to me, having grown up in a suburb in which it was a likelihood. Yet I immediately realised the impossibility of such an occurrence in New Crossroads! The sounds grew louder, and I was just in time to retrieve the video equipment from my car, when the source of the sounds - a man with a megaphone accompanied by about fifteen people, entered the front yard. This man had been rounding up the neighbourhood people with the help of the megaphone, into which he sang a divination song, *uTtshaw' uyawaz' amayeza* ("The Tshawe person knows medicine"), which was enthusiastically taken up by his followers. The aim of the performance was to notify the community of Chief Gcaleka's impending *intlombe*, which anyone was free to attend.

The *intlombe* was to be the focus of an issue of national importance - the Hintska skull, and its significance in the quest for national peace. For this reason, Chief Gcaleka wanted as many people as possible to attend the event. The critics of Chief Gcaleka construed this call to the *intlombe* as just another example of his flamboyant public 'road-shows', clearly intended to impress rather than to inform. As I learnt later on in my fieldwork, not all diviners are in favour of such ostentatious display, and tend to regard their extrovert counterparts as being less powerful and lacking credibility, hence their likelihood for spectacle and pageantry.

The growing throng of singing men and women moved through the garage area at the side of the house, before retracing their steps through the garden and entering the front room of the house. In the cramped conditions, everyone was being jostled, including the man with the megaphone, but the singing never faltered. It was accompanied by drumming, in which a man played on a double-skin drum strapped onto the back of a woman, who marched in front of him. Chief Gcaleka then re-appeared in full ritual regalia: his beaded headpiece, and his shirt and skirt partly covered by a cheetah skin, complete with head, the latter hanging below the diviner's waist. Over his left arm Chief Gcaleka carried a purple blanket, and in his right hand he held an *itshoba*¹³ (a fly-whisk, or switch). He did not wear bandoliers, which are usually worn by diviners - in fact, I have never seen him include such accoutrement in his regalia.

On the floor of the front room traditional beer, a bottle of Smirnoff, and burning *imphepho*¹⁴ were placed. The goat was also brought inside by two men. Chief Gcaleka

stood with these offerings. A bucket of *ubulawu*¹⁵ was placed before him, which he would *-phehla* (froth up) after he had 'opened' the event. (See plate 1) *Imphehla* is the name of the foaming substance resulting from the action of the verb, *-phehla* (Xh) eat out, bore (a hole); twirl a firestick, make fire; shake a milk sack, churn milk. (McLaren, 1994:125) In this case it refers to the 'twirling' and frothing up, of a pot or bucket of *ubulawu* with a forked stick.

Chief Gcaleka opened the *intlombe* with a speech, in which he stated that he had been waiting a long time for the people to arrive with the drum. This statement seemed to have a double meaning; he was not referring exclusively to ontological time, but also to the time it had taken to receive some support for his views. (Given the serious controversy surrounding the Hintska skull, Chief Gcaleka felt that it was essential for him to explain his standpoint, and hopefully win some support for it.)

Before carrying out the ritual killing, Chief Gcaleka planned to make a trip to the seaside that evening, in order to 'fetch all the ancestors of South Africa'. He insisted that everyone present follow him, adding that, had no-one turned up at his house, he would have made the trip alone. He believed in his mission, and he accepted responsibility for his call to his office, and his obligations as a diviner. Even if the drum had not been present, he would have gone to the sea regardless, because the ancestors wanted him to go. Expressing his joy at seeing so many people, he added a note of criticism by commenting that people would have made an effort to assemble earlier than they did, had the issue at hand concerned Jesus Christ. However, the issue had to do with the skull of Hinstka, and therefore with the

ancestors, and it was deemed less important. In so saying, he urged everyone to leave with him for the seaside, since it was getting late and the goat should have already been sacrificed.

Everybody piled into three cars and the goat was mercilessly squeezed into the boot of Chief Gcaleka's van. We followed Chief Gcaleka's van towards the coast. Unfortunately, the convoy of cars became separated, and the passengers of the two remaining cars had conflicting ideas as to which beach Chief Gcaleka was heading. We drove quite a way up the coast, hoping to see some sign of Chief Gcaleka's van, before we turned around and headed in the opposite direction. Eventually, I began to worry that I was going to run out of petrol, and so I left my car at the roadside and we all climbed into the remaining car. We caught up with Chief Gcaleka and his passengers at Mnandi beach just as they were returning from the ritual of gathering the ancestors. The goat, which had been taken onto the beach for the ritual, was led back to the boot of Chief Gcaleka's van, and we all travelled back to New Crossroads, stopping on the way to fetch my car.

The *intlombe* was subsequently a fairly large affair and three beasts (two sheep and a goat) were sacrificed. The first sheep was brought out upon our arrival and sacrificed in front of my car in the driveway (not by Chief Gcaleka himself), amidst energetic singing. (See plate 2) The entrails were put into a bucket and people dipped their hands into it as they entered the house. The next sheep was slaughtered inside the house, followed by the goat. The killings were rather protracted and cruel, and the blood of the animals soaked into the floor. (Chief Gcaleka subsequently renewed the floor carpeting.) Chief Gcaleka stated that it was

imperative that the animals be sacrificed indoors, in order to keep the ancestors in the house during the *intlombe*. Chief Gcaleka has estimated that he has ritually killed 35 cattle, 1 000 goats and 120 chickens in attempts to appease the ancestors.

I had been able to borrow a video camera and a tape recorder for the occasion. Filming in the front room of the house was difficult, because interior space was constricted and totally inadequate for the number of people attending the *intlombe*. There had been little attempt to enlarge the space by removing the furniture from the room, and many people watched the proceedings from outside the window. Filming in such circumstances became a common procedure, however, and I dare say that with each fieldwork encounter, I acquired a little more patience and expertise when I was forced to work in such cramped conditions. In this particular *intlombe*, the tape recorder which I had secured to my belt was knocked about, and flipped automatically into radio mode, with the result that a considerable amount of the music performed was not recorded. I was unaware that the tape was recording an SW radio signal. I realised this after the ritual action had ended, and I was able to check my recordings. This was one of many times when I was angry with myself. Although I always made certain that I carried sufficient camera film, tapes and batteries when attending an event, I soon realised that meticulous preparation was quite useless if I inadvertently recorded with the pause button switched on, or forgot to switch on the microphone! At times, the tape recorder would malfunction completely, at which point I would realise that the responsibility no longer rested with me but with the *amadlozi* (ancestors). On a number of occasions, the film recordings of *iintlombe* and divination processes malfunctioned when I wanted to play back for my informants, for friends and even during lecture presentations.

This happened once when I visited Gogo Morwadi at her home, to let her see the video of an *intlombe* and her VCR would not play the tape. Gogo Morwadi attributed this malfunction to the *amadlozi*, "...who do not like such things", and I had to bring another VCR to play the tape.

When I attended my first *intlombe* in September 1995, I had acquainted myself with the basic running instructions of the video camera which my parents had lent me. A wide angle lens, plus light adjustment settings had been suitable for the filming of the proceedings that evening; however, such dim light demanded maximum battery power, and in order to save for emergencies, I was forced to use electricity (mains power), that for one reason or another, kept on short-circuiting the power to the oven in the kitchen, which was being used to cook steamed bread! Using the mains further restricted my mobility in a room already overcrowded with people. Being short in height, I found myself precariously balanced on a bench propped against the wall in a corner of the room, just behind the drummers, which was the best vantage point from which to film the proceedings. The video camera's cord and adapter was held by a lady participant, who followed my movements from one end of the bench to the other, by moving the cord back and forth about the people's heads. I was very much parked in! Being so restricted, it was both frustrating and annoying to film the events, and the camera in position against my face made me feel even more removed from the action. In such a situation I at least had visibility; in certain township areas and rural localities without electricity, recording was even more problematic.

MAKHOSI ATHOBILE

Makhosi Athobile¹⁶ works in Muizenburg, Cape Town. She is in her sixties and she was born in Zastron, in the Orange Free State. She is a Xhosa, of the clan name Mirha, and she trained in Mount Frere, KwaBhaca. Makhosi Athobile sees herself as a Xhosa diviner, yet since her 'training mother' was a Bhaca diviner, she calls herself *isangoma* (as stated earlier) and not the Xhosa equivalent, *igqirha*. Like most diviners she has a strong sense of cultural affiliation, in this case with the Xhosa-speaking people (to which group the Bhaca belong), and she is slow to trust diviners who have trained in Swazi methods.

Makhosi Athobile has lived much of her life in Soweto, where some of her children still stay. She does not have a husband. I met Makhosi Athobile about a year after I had been told by her employer, Mrs Gayle Hansen, that she communicated with Native American Indian guides, as well as her own Xhosa ancestors. Mrs Hansen is the director of the Cape Reflexology College in Muizenburg, Cape Town, and I became acquainted with her when I enrolled in a course in July 1995. Makhosi Athobile had been working for Mrs Hansen for a number of years, and when Mrs Hansen moved from Johannesburg to Cape Town in early 1995, Makhosi Athobile was intending to follow suit. Makhosi Athobile and Mrs Hansen work together and learn from each other's healing practices. Although a staunch diviner, Makhosi Athobile has been learning the technique of Reflexology, which involves the manipulation of the reflex centres located on and in the feet. She is steadily building up a consultancy as a diviner, but she has found it difficult because, being from Soweto, she has few contacts in Cape Town. This has often left Makhosi Athobile in two minds as to whether Cape Town is really where she should live.

Makhosi Athobile arrived in Cape Town in June 1996, and I was delighted by Mrs Hansen's offer to become involved in a Reflexology teaching programme for non-whites. Makhosi Athobile (who has experience in Reflexology techniques in the Xhosa language) and I were to help with Xhosa translation and demonstration. This was how our first meeting came about:

"I'll just call Sophie," Mrs Hansen said and she left the room.

A short woman with a well-rounded figure appeared at the door. She was dressed in a domestic overall and headscarf and her folded arms revealed the beaded wristbands of a diviner, as did her bare ankles.

"*Thokoza, gogo*," I greeted her with a soft double clap.

"*Makhos'*," she replied. "You are just as I had seen you, but I had seen you with long hair."

I explained that after about a decade of having waist length hair, I had cut it short the previous month.

The Reflexology programme took us to the Matthew Goniwe High School in Khayelitsha on the school's careers day, in order to represent the Cape Reflexology College. What an

extraordinary combination we made as a white woman and a diviner, promoting Reflexology! I should add at this point that I have been pleasantly surprised by the reception received from informants generally, regarding my knowledge of Reflexology, when I applied it in selected fieldwork situations. It proved to be an invaluable 'icebreaker' in some cases, arousing the interest of diviners as well. I usually asked them to put their feet up on the couch and then I would 'read' their feet. The problems which predominate are associated with the liver, due to diet and lifestyle. My readings, which are on the whole accurate, were greeted with surprise and curiosity in the parties concerned.

I provoked a rather interesting incident one day when I took Makhosi Athobile and her *ithwasa*, Florence, to visit Gogo Morwadi in Gugulethu. Makhosi Athobile was pleased at the thought of meeting another diviner, because she felt isolated in Cape Town; all her associates live in Gauteng. When we arrived and Gogo Morwadi let us in, I noticed a distinct tension in the air, generated by Gogo Morwadi. She was not particularly pleased to see me, her 'protégé' in the company of another diviner. In order to demonstrate our working relationship, Gogo Morwadi requested us to sit down and she proceeded to show a video of the *-femba* ritual in Swalala, which I had given her. Makhosi Athobile, fully aware of Gogo Morwadi's motivation, defused the situation by politely praising Gogo Morwadi's excellence in her field and describing how she had met me through her employer. By the time we were ready to leave, circumstances were quite congenial, and Makhosi Athobile commented on our way home that Gogo Morwadi was a 'good' Swazi diviner.

I had encountered Gogo Morwadi's possessive behaviour towards me on previous occasions, particularly during our daily medicine collecting expeditions in Swalala. When I seemed to be paying too much attention to Gogo Morwadi's training diviner, Gogo Lamashigo, Gogo Morwadi would attempt to interrupt us. She also tried to jeopardise an interview I was having with another diviner at an *intlombe* in the Cape township area, by talking excessively loudly outside the door of the room, before coming in and interrupting our discussion.

Although I did not attend any *iintlombe* with Makhosi Athobile, I visited her in Muizenburg, and we would talk about diviners and divination whilst she did various chores. I found her down-to-earth and frank approach most refreshing and she was able to fill in many gaps in my work during the later stages of my research. One evening, we watched my video recording of an *intlombe* hosted by Chief Gcaleka. This made Makhosi Athobile and her *ithwasa*, Florence, so excited that they could not sleep that night. Makhosi Athobile was not particularly impressed with Chief Gcaleka, and she described him as a diviner who took medicine to get him to the position he holds. This medicine, she says, is used by Swazi initiates to enable them to communicate with their ancestors in a trance so deep, that they cannot remember what they have said when they come out of it. Makhosi Athobile and another diviner informant, David (mentioned below), doubt that diviners who undergo such a training have gone about it in the 'right' way.

DAVID

One person who has demonstrated great patience with me, plus a genuine interest in my work, is David (as he wishes to be known). I met him in October 1996, at a time when I was not considering further field research for the dissertation. David turned out to be a valuable informant and friend, and his information forms a fairly substantial part of this work. A meeting with David was set up through a close relative of his family, who is a friend and colleague of mine. I had known this friend for about a year; however, I never really discussed my research topic with him. I mentioned it once in passing and he then divulged that he had two relatives who were an *igqirha* and an *othokoza*¹⁷ (a diviner who has trained in “other methods”, that are not associated with the Xhosa, according to David) respectively. I was anxious to meet them, in order to clarify the differences between these two types of practitioners. To my surprise, a meeting was arranged with the *igqirha*, David, within ten days. The *othokoza* whom he took me to see was much to everyone's astonishment, a colleague of Gogo Morwadi, whom I had already met.

David, who was born in Cape Town, resides in Gugulethu with his wife and their two young children. When we initially met, it was difficult for me to know how to address him, because I had been told that he was highly respected both as an *igqirha* and as a Zionist church minister (*umfundisi*¹⁸). It was late on a Sunday afternoon when I arrived at his house, and he was reclining on his bed, clad in a dark suit and a red tie; there was no visible sign of his status as a diviner. Towards the end of our discussion, he produced a strand of white beads from his blazer, and he commented that he was never without a

symbol of his divinership. "I may carry one or two [strands] in my pocket now and then," he said.

David does not have a consultancy as a diviner at present - and he ceased to practise in his own home a few years ago. David's motivations regarding this are elaborated upon in the ensuing chapters. He is currently actively involved as the founder member and *umfundisi* of his Zionist-type church, the Witness Church of Christ. He earns his livelihood in an office job in Cape Town, which allows him to support his church while still remaining financially independent of it. The congregation meets thrice weekly in the homes of its members, the majority of whom live in Khayelitsha.

Despite his involvement in the church, David fully acknowledges his diviner status as something which is very dear to him. His father was an *igqirha*, whilst his mother was a committed Zionist. As the *umfundisi* of his congregation, David combines in himself two roles, and he describes the church as a "waiting room" for people who are supposed to become diviners. David appreciates the similarities between the occupations between diviner and church prophet, and he believes that one may not become a prophet without experiencing the calling to divination. Several diviners presently attend his church and are recognised as prophets.

At our initial meeting, David showed me his divination regalia which he keeps in a steel case in a bedroom at the back of the house. It includes amongst the apparel, a majestic baboon skin hat and traditional white Xhosa skirt. He explained to me that he did not enjoy

public show, and that he did not often wear his regalia. He told me that, "It is only used when it has to be used, otherwise I do not go around showing everyone." David said that he may not attend an *intlombe* dressed as a diviner and in fact, he preferred to sit and observe the course of events. He believes that the best way to learn anything is to watch the actions of others. He commented that if the *intlombe* were particularly to his liking, he would subsequently participate.

Right from the start, David was very accommodating and open with me. All of my interviews with him were held in English, and David would painstakingly answer questions and discuss issues with me for hours on end. Sometimes our discussions would become so involved, that David and his wife would laugh and comment, "You sometimes forget that you are white, Kathryn!" Towards the end of our sessions, when my head was buzzing with fatigue, David would ask, "So, what shall we talk about next?!" I marvelled at his insight and his attitude towards life: -

You have to realise that you will have to help someone else, who may have the same problem that you have today. So if you do not do things the right way, how are you going to help the next person, who will not know what to do? You need to have the experience in doing things the proper way, in order to help the next person. That is how it goes.

Initially, going to an *intlombe* with David seemed out of the question; however, after a couple of months, it became a possibility. I did, however, attend his church services on a regular weekly basis. Each Thursday, I would drive with David and his family in his car to Khayelitsha, where the service would be held in the home of one of the members. Each

member had his/her turn in acting as a host, and the venues were planned a few weeks in advance, at the close of each service.

We would frequently stop on our way to church in order to fetch some of the members. Upon our arrival at around 19:30 or 20:00 outside the house, we would be greeted by the sounds of some of the members singing from within. Inside the house, which was in most cases an informal dwelling, all the furniture including the TV and the sofa, would be removed from the front room and stacked in the bedroom or kitchen area, so as to make space for the congregation. A table reminiscent of a makeshift altar, would remain against one of the walls or in the corner of the room, upon which a tin candlestick holding three to six candles would be placed. David and several others placed their Bibles on the table. David also put his watch on the table and I would be amazed at the discipline he exercised regarding the duration of the service. He would frequently take note of the time and development of the service accordingly, punctually closing it at 21:30. I noticed that this was in great contrast to an *intlombe*, which will continue unabated for a whole weekend in some cases. David stressed the need for such discipline in his church for just that reason; despite the fact that members of the congregation were dealing with energies not unlike those found in divination contexts, the service was not an *intlombe*, and hence he was to ensure that it would not get out of control. (Everyone was to be able to function normally the following day.) David exercised this discipline further through the choice of songs and structure of the services, which he said moulded the congregation's behavioural responses.

The room provided for the service would often be no larger than 5m X 5m and it would host any number from eight to sixteen people. One night we arrived to find that a second Zionist service was under way at the house next door. David decided that it would be best for his congregation to join them, which we did after an opening worship session. This proved to be quite an ambitious endeavour which resulted in over twenty-five people, tightly squeezed into one room!

When I initially attended a service, I was concerned that my presence (with tape recorder) might disrupt the proceedings. However, I was surprised at the welcome I received from the church members upon my second attendance the following week. David mentioned that they had noticed my absence at the two intermediate services. This was reiterated by several women who added, whilst pointing at my jeans and hiking boots, that "Next time you must not wear these."

The following week, I accordingly arrived in a dress and I brought a scarf to cover my hair. However, I was still considered insufficiently attired, and it was subtly urged by all the members that I wear the uniform of a long white tunic (*sambatho*) and headscarf. Despite my polite protestations regarding my own feelings of discomfort in wearing something which I feared did not contain personal or religious meaning, I realised that it was important to the congregation that I dress as they did. The following week, David's wife furnished me with a tunic and upon our arrival, I went through to the bedroom to put it on (as was the procedure for everyone). I emerged from the bedroom, my face burning with embarrassment, yet I was greeted with smiles all round. The woman hosting the

service produced a white headscarf, which she wrapped over my hair. Nobody took much notice of me after that and slowly I began to feel comfortable. Only after the service, when I thanked David and his wife for lending me the tunic, did I realise that I had been granted the honour of wearing the *umfundisi's* tunic, when David commented, "Well, you are as good as being *umfundisi's* daughter in that."

Concerned for my safety in Gugulethu at night, David would escort me out of Gugulethu to the freeway in his car, after the service. I should mention how blessed I am to have been so warmly accepted by the people I have met in the township areas thus far. Driving into the heart of the poorest areas of Cape Town can be a highly risky endeavour for a white woman, and I was repeatedly warned of the dangers attached to such missions by concerned parents, township friends and my supervisor. I recall with chilling fear how once, when looking for a petrol station, I was about to pull into the garage opposite the taxi rank, when I recognised it was the site where American exchange student, Amy Biehl was brutally murdered. (The local newspapers carried photographs of the incident.) I felt that I simply could not purchase petrol there. I continued to drive on to a petrol station outside Gugulethu.

One of the most careless things I did, was to lock my keys in my car after pulling over at the Langa taxi rank on a Saturday evening! A friend was with me and thankfully we both managed to depart from the situation unscathed and much relieved! Again, on an evening spent driving in a labyrinth of dust and gravel roads, where the only light available to see the potholes and stray bricks and dogs is that of the car headlights, I have found myself

amazed with both excitement and fear that the only visible connection I have with my own culture, was the faint silhouette of Table Mountain far off in the distance. Sometimes, the mountain itself became my only key to finding my way home again!

My car has suffered more damage than I have from the trips to the township areas. The streets are riddled with potholes and bumps, which are barely visible at night. These conditions, combined with the weight of the passengers frequently squeezed into the back seat, contributed to the wear and tear of the car. Naturally, my transporting a group of (singing) diviners around the township created quite a spectacle. On one occasion, I had the police squad on my tail late one night, when I was taking some diviners home after a party.

Early one Sunday evening, I remember hitting a particularly deep pothole in Nyanga, which resulted in my exhaust pipe becoming dislodged. My friend (who lived in Nyanga) and I had to pull over at the Nyanga Junction (a train station, which has been described to me as a rough area) and remedy the situation. Naturally I attracted much curiosity (to the extent that someone tried to sell me their child!), whilst my friend climbed under the car. I was most pleasantly surprised, however, by the arrival of a friendly and most helpful gentleman who, after describing himself as a mechanic who worked in Seapoint, willingly sorted out the problem temporarily. He even offered me a special repair deal if I were to bring the car into his workplace the following day.

It seems ironic that, while I received warmth and respect from the people I met in the township and rural areas, I fell victim to a scathing, racially-orientated attack, from people

of the very institution with which I am registered. As the 1996 recipient of the prestigious Harry Oppenheimer Institute Award for African Studies, I was invited to present my first-ever paper at the department's Africa Seminar series, in October of the same year. The focus of the paper was lifted from my thesis and entitled "Music and Ritual in African Divination Contexts: An account of the uses and functions of music in several Southern Nguni divination processes."

After my presentation of the paper, I was eager to listen to criticism and input of an anthropological nature. However, I was devastated by the unfounded remarks from two members of the Religious Studies Department, who branded my informants as "artificial" and my fieldwork as "not genuine." This was apparently based upon one member's single assumption that, "When we black people see a white person, we see evil and therefore, no real diviner would ever tell a white person like you the truth."

As a cultural researcher working in a cultural system other than my own, I am involved with processes of intercultural understanding and interpretation. The South African situation is a particularly sensitive one, carrying with it a long legacy of racial oppression and discrimination. Today, a white researcher may be perceived by self-respecting black people as being in a position to which he/she has no right to certain information, and therefore collaboration is not necessary. This attitude was evident in the opinions of the members of the Religious Studies department, who felt that my informants had deceived me.

Towards what was intentionally the end of my research, I began to realise (almost too late) that their harsh words held an element of truth. David explained to me that as with anything in life, one gets genuine and pirate goods and similarly, people who are real about what they do and others who are fake. I am not in the position, nor do I want to label any of my informants as such in any way, as in this study, it is not my wish to cast judgement. Above all, I respect each informant for his/her beliefs, which in their own individuality, are ultimately very real to them indeed.

Diviners, like all professionals serving communities, have their followers and their critics, and any researcher, who might be a cultural outsider, is likely to become caught up in contrasting views of diviners, as held by members of their own culture. No matter how impartial a researcher tries to be, his/her very choice of informants is bound to provoke criticism from people who do not like the informants. It seems that there is no such thing as an equitable choice of informants, and researchers are bound to offend someone in their choices. An incident at a public event in UCT's College of Music is a good example of such intra-cultural bias:

In September, 1996 I was involved in African Music workshops for American undergraduate students affiliated with an exchange programme, offered by the School for International Training. It was arranged that we would have a discussion about diviners and divination music in the South African context, to be held at UCT's College of Music. I invited Makhosi Athobile and Chief Gcaleka to participate and they agreed to do so. (I informed both parties of each other's proposed attendance.) I duly drove to Chief Gcaleka's

New Crossroads home at 07:30 to escort him to the College of Music. He brought an entourage of four *iithwasa* (trainee diviners) and an *imbongi* (praiser), and they travelled in Chief Gcaleka's car.

After a nightmarish journey, during which I lost sight of Chief Gcaleka's car on the freeway to the Southern Suburbs, for a time, we eventually established contact on Woolsack Drive, near to the College of Music - much to my relief! Considering that Chief Gcaleka did not know exactly where we were headed, I was rather impressed by his ability to find my car. He retorted, "Kathryn, you must learn to trust your spirit!"

The entourage made an impressive entry into the College of Music, singing as they did so. Makhosi Athobile arrived a short while after them, and I soon realised that having two diviners in the same room was going to be problematic. Makhosi Athobile, who took an instant dislike to Chief Gcaleka, received a message from her 'guides' to keep quiet. The morning progressed into what was aptly described by Makhosi Athobile as "a circus", aided by Chief Gcaleka's flamboyant dramatic display. Apart from intimidating the students, Chief Gcaleka became involved in a fierce debate over his authenticity as a diviner and the controversy surrounding the Hintsisa skull. This was provoked by some African students and a University academic, who had been invited to attend the proceedings. The argument got out of control and had to be defused by the performance of music.

Rumours of Chief Gcaleka's visit spread fast throughout the College of Music and in the aftermath, I was treated coolly with suspicion and curiosity by my students and friends,

who affiliated me to the likes of the diviner, and in so doing, began to ostracise me. In experiencing this myself, I realised that when it came to diviners, one man's meat is another man's poison.

This incident aroused my curiosity, and together with the disappointment and despair I experienced at the Africa Seminar, I decided that there was something missing in my research, and that I was not understanding, and indeed, misinterpreting the depth of my topic. This was a most devastating realisation, as it was high time to complete the thesis. A week later, I had the great opportunity of meeting David, with whom after hours of discussion, I was able to find answers to the many questions I had.

Taking into account the sensitivity of this research, and the fact that this is my work alone, it should be acknowledged in the light of my position as a cultural researcher. The dissertation contains facts which I have gathered from numerous interviews with different people, diviners and non-diviners alike, and the experiences which I have recorded. This biographical evidence is substantiated where possible, by contemporary literature on the subject.

I believe that I am indeed advantaged by being an outsider to the culture which I have chosen to study. This vantage point affords me the objectivity and emotional detachment required in such sensitive research issues to which I have been exposed, and which the topic encompasses. I acknowledge that my status as a white student has excluded me from gaining knowledge and understanding of the deeper, esoteric aspects of divinership.

However, I am satisfied to acknowledge that such information belongs to those who enter the divination profession alone. Such respect for other people's privacy and the highly personal and chosen right to knowledge, prevented me from accepting innumerable offers to undergo a form of training myself, a fashionable thing for whites like myself to do, judging from the increasing popularity of books written by 'white *sangomas*'.

It would be incorrect to assume that I have not been affected by the research I have carried out. I find that my interaction with such powerful people, as diviners are, has irrevocably changed my philosophy towards life and my perspectives on religion and culture in general. It has been difficult at times to remain emotionally detached from the relationships, conditions and situations I have experienced in the Cape Town townships. I consider this experience a rare and precious privilege, which too few South Africans from my cultural background are afforded.

 NOTES

1. The Zulu term, *Ndawu* refers to "a member of the Ndaui tribe of Southern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa and people regarded as accomplished in magical practices." (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:537)
2. The term seance is used to explain the word *intlombe* by Hammond-Tooke (1989:108), Hansen, (1981:563,586) and subsequently Coppenhall (1990). It seems to be more succinct and therefore appropriate than the literal Xhosa dictionary translation of *intlombe* as "a meeting for singing and dancing, held especially on moonlight (sic) nights." or "a party for singing and dancing." (McLaren, 1994:161, 60)
3. The term 'fieldbacking' was coined by Yoshihiko Tokumaru, in his article, "The ATPA project in Retrospect" (Dialogue of Cultures: Traditional Music and Cultural Policy, 1991). Every field informant who collaborates in a research project has the right to be informed on how his/her information was processed by the researcher. This is achieved through 'fieldbacking', in which the informant is consulted about the incident that has been recorded by the researcher. Through 'fieldbacking', the field informant can appreciate and understand the similarities and deficiencies of learning and imparting knowledge between the researcher and him/herself.
4. *kufemba* (SiS) 1. sniff 2. divine, smell out (as a diviner). (Rycroft, 1982:25)
5. Peek notes that, "A divination system is often the primary institutional means of articulating the epistemology of a people...the diviner is central to the expression and enactment of his or her cultural truths as they are reviewed in the context of contemporary realities." (Peek, 1991:2)
6. *ukubiza* (Xh) to call or summon (McLaren, 1994:14) Also for Zulu. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:79)
7. From verb *-thwasa* (Xh) become visible, appear (of the moon, stars); commence (of the season); commence practice (of a doctor). (McLaren, 1994:171) *-thwasa* (Z) means "emerge for the first time (as a season or new moon; become possessed by a spirit (as of divination)" (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:812) An *ithwasa* is a novice diviner.
8. The Xhosa and Zulu dictionary entries of *indumba* state its meaning to be 'a mass, heap' and a 'bean-pod or pea-pod containing the grains; swollen veins, varicose veins' respectively. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:173; McLaren, 1994:33) I have recorded other informants' use of this term to describe the dwelling which houses the diviner's pharmacopoeia (Makhosi Athobile, for instance). This storage space may constitute a diviner's bedroom, or a small hut built on the diviner's property (the former applying to Makhosi Athobile's *indumba* and the latter being the case with Gogo Lamashigo

of Swalala). Coppenhall, who also identifies Gogo Morwadi's use of this word, cited the following possible derivation, "*Indumba* is thus the graphic, descriptive name of the room in which the diviners keep a 'mass' or 'heap' of pharmacopoeia and ritual articles." (1990:161) Priscilla Mafuyeka furnished me with the SiSwati translation of "a rondavel used as a consultation room, and sometimes as a storeroom for 'muti', gear and other related equipment."

9. David, another diviner informant who also has acquaintances who live in this area, told me that it was named "Snakepark", because it was formerly a "forested" area with snakes. It has now become an informal settlement area.

10. From 'Nguni', referring to an ethnographical classification, to which my informants belong. (van Warmelo in Hammond-Tooke, 1974:60)

11. *kuphahla* (SiS) means I. offer libation. ii Be on either side of iii. foretell iv. report falsely (about) (Rycroft, 1982:78)

12. I wish to comment on Chief Gcaleka's identification of Hints'a's skull: when referring to it, he uses the phrase *intloko kaHints'a*. The root *-tloko* refers to "the head or a chief person" (McLaren, 1994:161), whereas another name is used for "skull". I believe that Gcaleka intentionally refers to the skull as a 'head', because for him it is more than mere bone mass; it is the symbol of a deceased king.

13. *itshoba* (Xh) the tuft of hair at the end of a tail. (McLaren, 1994:166) A fly-whisk.

14. *imphepho* (Z) Species of small everlasting plants with a sweet smell, used for burning as an offering to the spirits, eg. *Helichrysum miconiaefolium*. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:658)

15. *Ubulawu* is described literally as "a sweet smelling ointment or perfume." (Xh), or a "love potion; medicinal charm, as commonly used by young men in their dealings with girls." (Z) (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:45; McLaren, 1994:81) In the context of divination, it refers to a medicinal plant extract used in a broad sense, to increase promote clairvoyance.

16. From the verb, *-thoba* (Xh) bend, bow, stoop, down; *-thobela*: bow to, bow under, submit to, obey. (McLaren, 1994:162) Makhosi Athobile spelt her name as one word:-Makhosiathobile, which re-written by a Xhosa expert is Makhosi Athobile.

17. From *-thokoza* (Z) 1. Be grateful, thankful, be happy, glad; express delight 2. Enjoy good health 3. Praise, express praise or gratitude for; give thanks to 4. Enjoy. The causative, *thokozisa*, literally means "cause to be grateful; make happy" or "satisfy; delight". (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:799) My informant, David, has implied that this term refers to a diviner who has trained in methods other than those associated with the Xhosa. Therefore, as a verb *-thokoza* denotes a praise ritual of sorts (which could occur in a number of contexts), but individual diviners use the noun derivative

in a special way. Clearly *oothokoza* denotes a certain class of diviners, differentiated on a basis of training and ritual action, which differ from Xhosa traditional methods.

18. *umfundisi* (Xh) - a teacher; a missionary; a clergyman. (McLaren, 1994:40)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

African peoples know that the universe has a power, force or whatever else one may call it...It is difficult to know exactly what it is or how it functions...there is no African society which does not hold belief in mystical power of one type or another.

Mbiti (1980:192)

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF NGUNI TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND THE ROLE OF THE DIVINER THEREIN

Universally, belief systems and culture are inextricably linked, and African traditional religions in their social contexts are no exception. African traditional religions are also primal religions, in the sense that they have for centuries existed independently of other world religions, such as Christianity, Islam etc. Furthermore, they are enduring, coherent belief systems which provide people "with ways of coping with the mysterious realities in their immediate environment - natural forces, ancestral spirits and powers felt to be functioning through the social institutions of the tribe or community." (Thorpe, 1991:1-3, 107)

All African traditional religions recognise the dualism between good and evil, as does Christianity. However, "...the war waged between them...is essentially here and now, and not in an apocalyptic future existence." (Hammond-Tooke (ed), 1974:318) Life must be lived according to behavioural norms, as laid down by the religious system and other social mechanisms, which are intended to cope with the stresses and conflicts of social living. Yet social mechanisms do not make people immune to evil, illness and misfortune, and their occurrence creates an imbalance between a person and his/her environment or other people, which has to be restored.

It may be said that in the African world view, there is no place for the phenomenon of chance. All occurrences in life, be they negative or positive, are intricately connected to, and the result of, work by an external force. In African society, an attempt is made to keep "an equilibrium in which [a] good relationship to the gods, to the forces of nature and to one's fellowman must be [maintained]." (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:336) Any evidence of the disturbing of such a balance is hastily recognised through physical indications such as illness, drought, crop failure and other natural disasters and unnatural death. (At most, death through longevity is considered natural.)

The return to equilibrium from a state of disorder, as created by misfortune, is achieved only through religious ritual, in which the diviner and the ancestors play a crucial and pivotal role.

Therefore, apart from much illness attributed to fluctuation in climatic conditions, all

occasions of illness linked to misfortune and untimely and unnatural death, are ascribed to the work of a supernatural agent, either a supernatural being (an ancestor) or a human being using supernatural or evil powers (a witch or a sorcerer). (Ngubane, 1977:26) I reiterate that it is the work of the diviner to interpret the causes of misfortune and to prescribe the means for restoring good interpersonal relationships which have been ruptured.

Kiernan writes that "the explanation of misfortune rests on the conjunction of anti-social and pro-social forces, the combination of living evil-doers and deceased ancestors. In their protective capacity, ancestors shield their descendants from the depredations of nature and from the designs upon them of witches and sorcerers. When ancestors punish transgression, they do not directly inflict harm. Rather, they temporarily relinquish their role as guardians, leaving their wards defenceless against attack from a witch or sorcerer." (Kiernan in Prozesky & de Gruchy, 1995:23)

The ancestors are the spiritual custodians of their communities of living descendants, in whose lives they take a keen and enduring interest. They may be perceived to maintain an equal status to that which they had on earth, hence the importance of a man in his living years determines his importance as an ancestor. Although they are perceived to be generally protective and benevolent, the ancestors expect and even demand respect, honour and veneration in the form of customary religious and kinship rituals. If these are neglected, the offender may be 'sent' a misfortune (an illness) as a punishment for his breach of duty. Ancestrally sent illness, being a reprimand for neglect of duty, is always curable, and a

occasions of illness linked to misfortune and untimely and unnatural death, are ascribed to the work of a supernatural agent, either a supernatural being (an ancestor) or a human being using supernatural or evil powers (a witch or a sorcerer). (Ngubane, 1977:26) I reiterate that it is the work of the diviner to interpret the causes of misfortune and to prescribe the means for restoring good interpersonal relationships which have been ruptured.

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ritual killing may be made to propitiate the offended ancestors. (Krige, 191974:284) Hammond-Tooke notes that if the ancestors were merely benevolent, they would not play such a vital role in African religion (op cit.:330) In fact, "...the ancestors are capricious, jealous and easily offended." (331) The wrath or displeasure of the ancestors over the neglect of customary ritual duties is a common interpretation of misfortune. In that such a misfortune is of ancestral origin, the victim has only himself to blame!

I have already made mention in the Preface that the ancestors, as the deceased members of the lineage or clan, are known by the Zulu-, Xhosa- and Siswati-speaking peoples as *amadlozi*; *izinyanya* and *amathongo* and *emadlo*. Hammond-Tooke (1974:325); Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi (1990:801); McLaren, (1994:163); Rycroft (1982:117). As stated by Hammond-Tooke (ed, 1974:328) the vernacular terms are almost always in the plural form when used by the people, which stresses the importance and significance of the collective aspect when referring to the ancestors. In my own experience, I have found the term *amadlozi* predominant amongst my Xhosa- and SiSwati-speaking informants. In some cases, this term is shortened to *'dlozi*, pronounced with a slurred tongue. Another Xhosa informant refers to the ancestors as *isihlwele*¹, which also suggests their collectivity.

Most informants refer to the ancestors in English as being "the ancestors". I have not heard the word "shades" (Berglund) used amongst my informants. They are aware of the meaning of the latter. However, this merely has been illustrated in their understanding of the term when I have interpolated it in conversation. Krige distinguishes between the Zulu definition of spirit or soul (*idlozi* or *ithongo*), and 'shade' (*isithunzi*), the latter also literally meaning

a shadow². According to Zulu cosmology, the shadow, or 'shade' of a living person is linked to his or her spirit, seated in the mind. The contraction of such a shadow indicates the shortening of the lifespan of an individual, who upon death will only possess a small shadow. The shadow is then perceived to depart and turn into an ancestral spirit or an *idlozi*. The ancestor is only acknowledged as such after the enactment of the *ukubuyisa* (synonymous with *ukugodusa* (Z)) ritual, instating the 'bringing back of the ancestor'. (Krige, 1974:284) *Ukubuyisa* (Xh) means "cause to come or go back, send back, bring back, return, restore, repay". (McLaren, 1994:19) Also, *-buyisa* (Z) refers to the performance of rites necessary to gain admittance for the spirit of a deceased person into the spirit world. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:96). *Ukugodusa* (Xh and Z) also means "to bring or send home". (McLaren 1994:46) It is also cited in SiSwati as *ukubuyisa lidloti* ('after the death of a man, his 'spirit is brought back'. (Marwick, 1966:225)

According to one of my informants, *ukubuyisa* is most commonly performed sometime within a year (or in the case of the Swazi, at full moon), after the *ukugodusa*³ ceremony of a deceased person. The *-godusa* is a ritual intended to 'send home' the deceased person to his/her ancestors. Persistent misfortune in a family may be interpreted by a diviner as being indicative of the isolation of the ancestor in the lineage who has been laid to rest, but not 'brought back home' (*-godusa*) to the family as an ancestor. (Eiselen & Schapera, 1962:250; Marwick, 1966:227; Hammond-Tooke, 1974:352)

In Zulu belief systems, Ngubane mentions that the supernatural world is established as the "World Below". Making up this domain are three categories of spiritual entities, notably "that of the unborn spirits, that of the recently deceased spirits, and that of the ancestors." (1977:141) The process from conception to child birth is intricately linked to the category of unborn spirits. After the first sacrificial rite (*imbeleko*⁴) is performed for the newborn child, it will be placed under the care of its parents' ancestors. Upon death, the deceased is considered to be in an isolated dimension, or "'in a place of wilderness' (*endle*) 'in an in between state' (*esithubeni*)." (ibid, 141) A ritual sacrifice (*-buyisa*) is performed a period after the death, in order to integrate the deceased into the realm of the ancestors.

Ngubane mentions further that the ancestors which possess a diviner are "those who have reached the complete state of spiritual being." (1977:142) They are therefore not from the categories of the newly deceased or unborn. Anthropological literature states that married women are influenced by both their husband's and their own ancestors. Ngubane disputes this contention, stating that "ancestors return to this world through their daughters, not through their wives, mothers or daughters-in-law. The diviner is principally possessed by the spirits of her own descent group, not those of her husband's." (1977:142)

It has been documented that among the Nguni, the most powerful ancestors are those in the male line. The only ancestors of the female line who have bearing on a person, are those of the mother, this only occurring in the instance when a person is sick *inkathazo*⁵, ie has received the calling to be a diviner. In my own experience, two of my main informants were called by ancestors of their father's lineage; however, I came across a woman who

was being called by her mother's ancestors, whilst the ancestors of her father's line wanted her to remain in the church. She was made aware of this through her own dreams.

(Hunter, 1964: 233)

Ancestors frequently communicate with their living descendants in dreams or through illness. It is common for the illness to be subsequently identified by a diviner. I have found that a person need not go to a diviner for a dream interpretation in every instance: a gentleman I know held an *umcimbi*⁶ after his deceased grandmother had appeared to him in a dream. He decided to hold such a ceremony in order to protect himself from misfortune and this decision was based upon consultation with his close family members, particularly his mother, and no diviners were involved.

In some cases, the ancestors take on the form of a wild animal, for example, a lion, elephant or leopard. In such cases the person concerned will show respect to the animal by not mentioning its name, or killing it. (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:333, Hansen, 1981:58)

Diviners may have specific ancestors who appear in the form of such animals, as described in this chapter. Elliot has documented that Xhosa families own wild animals, known as *izilo*, through which the ancestors approach the earth "and make their will known." (Elliot, 1970:127) My informants have said that they experience dreams of such wild animals, which they believe to be their ancestors.

Below, in the accounts of my informants' cosmological beliefs, it becomes apparent that all of them seem to categorise different types of ancestors, including those in the form of wild

animals. Despite their classifications being of a personal nature, they are nonetheless derived from a broader spectrum of beliefs shared by the majority of Nguni. Another case in point is the *amakhosi*⁷ ancestors, which are identified by Makhosi Athobile, David and Chief Gcaleka. *Amakhosi* (also known as *abalazi*⁸) reputedly "whistle and converse directly with their clients from the rafters, particularly above the *umsamo*⁹ area [of the hut]." (Ngubane, 1977:57) Ngubane has described these ancestors to be the *amakhosi amakhulu*, and "a diviner possessed by such ancestors is said to have great ancestors." (1977:103) This reference was endorsed and elaborated upon by David in conversation:

D: I call the *amakhosi* 'masters', because they are so good. In most cases, someone with *amakhosi*...they are like an extra spirit, who can help you. They can go out and protect you. For example, say I went to church today and as I left, people remaining there started to plot against me. Immediately the *amakhosi* would be there to warn me that this was going to happen.

Most of us have *isihlwele* [ancestors], but I sometimes wonder where a Black man comes from. Whatever we do, it somehow has something to do with animals in the jungle. We are somehow connected. Whenever you want the *amakhosi* to speak to you, you have to go through *ehlathini*¹⁰ [*izinyanya ehlathini*] and slaughter a goat for them.

K: Nobody has been able to tell me what *amakhosi* look like.

D: That is because nobody has seen them. For instance, (if) you have *amakhosi*...Whilst I was still young, I used to have itching in my ears. I used to stick my fingers in them to relieve the itch. I used to turn around as if to find something behind me, but there never was anything there. Now, say at the age of twenty, I start getting headaches. I go to an *igqirha* and he tells me that I have *amakhosi*. In order to understand what they are trying to tell me, I will have to train with someone who has *amakhosi*. One has to acknowledge them, for example, by slaughtering an ox, in order to let them know that one has realised that they are there and trying to communicate.

The use of these ancestors constitutes the strongest technique a diviner may employ in divination procedures. (Ngubane, 1977:103) In order to make use of the *amakhosi*,

however, the diviners must be possessed by them, which according to my informants, is a gift that few diviners have. This is elaborated upon at the end of the chapter.

Among the Zulu, an intimate relationship between the ancestors and their living descendants is conceptualised in the term *-fukama*¹¹, the "brooding" of the ancestors, who protect and nurture their living relatives like a hen brooding over her chickens. (Berglund, 1989:127) This is also found amongst the Xhosa, with the verb *ukufukama*. According to ethnographic evidence, it would appear that a balance is preferably maintained in the degree of concern shown by the ancestors: in certain cases, excessive brooding of the ancestors may cause (the western perception of) insanity¹². This may be illustrated when certain individuals receive a "calling" (*ukubiza*) from the ancestors. The latter select those they wish to have as diviners, which entails ultimately initiation into the group. Such 'insanity' is characterised by psychosomatic symptoms, which vary in intensity, yet are all unpleasant to the afflicted persons.

The only 'cure' for this state (known as *ukuthwasa*) with its associated 'troubles' (*iinkathazo*), is for the subject to undergo training to become a diviner, for only then will the symptoms be alleviated and ultimately removed. A diviner is always employed to ascertain what, or who, is causing the 'trouble', and indication may be made to a particular ancestor who is responsible for the calling. Such an ancestor is known in anthropological literature as a communicating ancestor and is quite distinct from the particular ancestors who are specifically involved in rituals, the latter being designated 'working ancestors'. (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:329) This view is in contrast to my own findings, for example,

my informant Makhosi Athobile names her deceased grandfather as her 'working' ancestor, who called her to the profession and consequently still plays an important role in her life.

It has already been mentioned that the dual concept of good and evil in such a religion acknowledges evil forces, symbolised by witchcraft and sorcery, which manifest themselves through various misfortunes, illness and death in the society. The terms for acts of witchcraft and sorcery which perpetrate evil, are *ubuthakatha* (Xh), *ubuthakathi* (Z) and *butsakatsi* (SiS) (Rycroft, 1982:187; Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:564; McLaren 1994:156) There are two protagonists of evil in Nguni cosmology, namely the witch and the sorcerer¹³.

Both the witch and the sorcerer are known to work alone and in secret. Several distinctions can be made between these agents and the methods they employ. The sorcerer uses tangible medicines that are obtained from a herbalist, and mixes them with evil intent, such as an incantation which renders the medicine harmful. The witch, who may also use medicine, is more prone to the use of invisible agents, labelled as 'familiars', which are 'sent' to their victims. Witches are known to exercise conscious and even unconscious mental powers that are considered humanly abnormal and extremely potent, to effect evil influence. Such powers are inherent in a witch, and it is generally found that witchcraft runs in families, with the parents passing on the ability to their children. This is not the case with sorcery, and even though sorcerers are of a similar anti-social disposition, they are still considered normal human beings, who harbour evil intentions. (Elliot, 1970:109; Krige, 1974:321; Hammond-Tooke, 1989:73-8; Kiernan in Prozesky & de Gruchy, 1995:23)

I have mentioned that the witch is said to work with invisible and evil agents called familiars. The latter obey all the commands from the witch and assist in witchcraft procedures. Familiars have the ability to become invisible and they often visit their victims at night and bewitch them, or deposit medicine somewhere on the property. Familiars may be of the animal species, including owls, snakes, wolves, baboons and hyenas. It is alleged that such familiars need constant sensitive attention, for fear of them turning on the owners themselves. (Krige, 1974:325; Hammond-Tooke, 1989:76)

Other fantastical familiars include the following:

i) *uThikoloshe* is a small hairy creature in the form of a knee-high male (or female), who inhabits the banks of rivers. Grotesque features of this familiar include its excessive hairy face, a lengthy penis (which is propped over its shoulder) and only one buttock. *uThikoloshe* has the ability to make himself invisible, which he is to most people, apart from those who own one. Children have the ability to see this familiar, who will often play with them on the banks of rivers. Whilst once staying in the Eastern Cape in Phelindaba, I was told by my hosts that their dogs could see *uThikoloshe* and that was why they barked at night, in order to keep it off the property. I was also forbidden to wander off the property after dark, one of the reasons being the wrath of the familiar, who belonged to a nearby witch. Hunter has stated that some people allegedly purchase the fat of this familiar and give it to their dogs to eat, enabling them to scent its presence. In fact, *uThikoloshe* is not dangerous unless it has been leased by a witch as a familiar. One of my informants, Gogo

Morwadi, encounters cases involving this familiar in her work as a diviner. The clients generally are unaware that their illness or misfortune is the result of the work of this familiar. She uses several medicines to remove it and protect her clients from it. (Hunter, 1966:276-282; Elliot, 1970:109,112-113; Hammond-Tooke, 1989:75)

ii) The *impundulu* or *izulu*¹⁴ is commonly owned by female witches. This familiar has been described in existing literature as having black or white feathers and a hooked red beak and red legs. It is said to transform itself into a beautiful young man, with whom the owner allegedly has sexual relations. This familiar is also known as the Lightning bird, in that "he is the lightning" (Elliot, 1970:110), therefore, it is often held responsible for storms. Lightning flashes symbolise the laying of its eggs, which if found are a powerful immuniser against lightning flashes. (Elliot, 1970:110; Hammond-Tooke, 1989:75)

The *impundulu* is associated with sickness and death which it effects in a mysterious way. A woman who suffers a miscarriage may be said to have been kicked by an *impundulu*. (Hunter, 1966:282) Gogo Morwadi has described this familiar as appearing in a great gust of wind, as a 'big bird', which resembles an ostrich. Gogo Morwadi also told me that if it were given the opportunity of kicking a person, the latter would bleed extensively from the mouth (cough up blood) and ultimately die. "If you see him alone, he will kick you."

Gogo Morwadi has had first hand experience with such a familiar, which was once sent to her by a male acquaintance she knows, who practises under the guise of a diviner. The *impundulu* appeared to Gogo Morwadi and her son Jeff, in October 1994 on their return

from medicine collection in Swalala (Mphumalanga). They were seated in a car when a great gust of wind swept the car off the road. The car rolled and they were lucky to get out alive. However, the *impundulu* did leave its mark of sickness, Jeff suffered a nervous breakdown as a result. Gogo Morwadi believes that the incident was the work of this man, who is jealous of her 'powerful spirit' and resultant success. Since I have worked with her, he appears to have made several attempts on her life through witchcraft. She believes, however, that her "spirit is too strong" to be affected by any harm directed at her by him¹⁵.

A Xhosa friend described to me the suddenness and velocity with which the *impundulu* will strike. He said that, for instance, one minute a person could be enjoying a game of soccer, and the next, he would be dead. My friend also attributes car accident fatalities to the work of this familiar. Someone who is killed in such an unfortunate way is described by the community as having been "kicked" (*ukhatywe*¹⁶ *yimpundulu*). My friend has indeed been in such a situation, where a passenger in his car was killed in a road accident. My friend was left unconscious and he also almost bit his tongue off - on the impacting of the car - an injury which he described as "the *impundulu* trying to cut my tongue out." This particular idea has certain implications, which come to light in David's elaboration:

Once I was talking to a friend of mine, and he told me of an old man in his church who was very good *emoyeni* [in/with the spirit]¹⁷. One day a woman came to see this guy. She wanted help and he told her that he would help her if she came to meet him at the church. She went there with her husband and two other friends.

The old man, who was a prophet, started to tell the woman *iindaba zakhe* [her news]¹⁸. He asked her, to her surprise, "Why did you come all the way down to Cape Town from the Transkei, especially considering that on the day before your arrival, your husband [who works here in Cape Town] was nearly knocked down by a car? Who told you to come down to Cape Town? Your husband did not tell you, he was not even aware of the fact that you were

coming."

The prophet turned to her husband and asked, "Is that not so?"

The husband replied, "Yes, I just saw her arriving. I did not ask her to come down."

The prophet continued, "Do you know why she came down? Because you are supposed to be dead! This woman has sent her *impundulu* to kill you. You had been working here in Cape Town for years now. Obviously you have made a lot of bucks [money] now, so your wife came down to get your money."

The husband could not believe it. You see, people will do anything for money, even if it means killing a husband. For money, people will do anything. The woman was so embarrassed. She did not think that another person would have the ability to reveal such things.

David continued:

The purpose of *impundulu* is to confuse. It is also invisible [to most people], but it can appear as a bird. I can see it *emoyeni*. If it is present, it is always behind you and you will feel as if there is something there, but you just cannot see it. You will keep turning around to check. You would find yourself, for example, if you are walking down the road, it can cause your death, by letting you be in the middle of that road [at the wrong time] or you may find yourself somewhere where you are not supposed to be. That way you could, for example, get knocked over by a car.

What you have to realise is that it [the whole idea] is actually invisible. The person [or body of the person] who gets knocked over is not you, it is the *impundulu*. It has disguised itself as you.

K: But in reality, you have been knocked over and killed!

D: No, you do not get killed, you just disappear.

K: But your body is left lying in the road there!

D: It is something that looks like you, but it is not you. You have disappeared. You are made *isithunzela*.¹⁹ Then you become a slave. That is the whole purpose, to make you into the slave of the *igqwirha*²⁰ who sent the *impundulu*. Then she may use you in any way she likes. I have a friend...I went to see a diviner once and he asked me if I ever experienced a strange knock on the door, when there was actually nobody there at the door. I told him that I had. He told me that it was my friend, to whom I was very close. I knew that he had died in a very

strange way. The diviner told me that my friend was not dead, he was *isithunzela*. He therefore will go and visit his friends as usual. The only difference is that he cannot come in human form, so there is no way that he can enter and be with you. You would not like that to happen to you, now would you?!

iii) The condition of *isithunzela* has been documented by Krige. Witches allegedly raise people from the dead and utilize their corpses, by doctoring them. She describes this procedure thus:

The first step is to bring back the *isithunzi* (shadow or soul) to the dead person; next, the heart must be made to beat and do its work of circulating the blood, so that the person will become warm and able to move. Then the corpse must be doctored to be able to sit down, to stand, and then to walk and run. This is a very risky part of the procedure because it might run away! (Krige, 1974:326)

By cutting out the tongue of the corpse and wedging a nail of wood into the head, it will be unable to give away its owner's secrets. Also known as an *umkhovu*²¹, such a person takes on the form he or she had when alive. This concept has much to do with the controversy of witch killings, whereby witches intentionally kill people, in order to raise them from the dead and enslave them. (Hunter, 1966:289; Krige, 1974:326)

iv) The *impaka* is another familiar which has been documented in the form of a small rodent that is sent by witches to their victims to bite their throats (Hunter, Mpondo cosmology), or a wild cat, which may be used as a messenger and bewitcher on behalf of its owner (Krige, Zulu cosmology). (Hunter, 1966:286; Krige, 1974:325)

The wrath of this magical creature extends to some African people's preconceptions

regarding urban cats. For instance, a SeSotho friend from Nyanga informed me that cats are sent by witches to their victims to bring them bad luck. He believes that cats are evil, and after one bit his mother, he killed it by throwing it against the wall. After the first attempt to kill the cat failed, it still came back to attack him. David explained this to me further:

Amagqwirha will use cats to do their dirty jobs. As a result, people used to be very fond of cats, but now they do not trust cats. That is why you hardly ever see cats in the township. Do not be surprised if you see a boy or someone throwing a stone at a cat. It may seem cruel, but it is because of their [association with witchcraft]. Maybe he saw that cat inside his house or on top of his roof, making some kind of noise, as cats normally do. But because of the reality [of witchcraft], cats are not to be trusted.

v) The *ichanti* and *umamlambo* are both familiars which take on the body of a snake, but are not necessarily the same (type of) familiar. *Ichanti* has the ability to metamorphose into many different forms, thus people who believe in this familiar are never sure when or how it may appear. However; anyone who sees such a familiar will fall ill and die. Hunter documented that leprosy could be attributed to the stare of an *ichanti*. The *ichanti*, also known as *inyoka*²² is a familiar commonly associated with women. (Hunter, 1966:286; Elliot, 1970:110; Hammond-Tooke, 1989:75)

The iguana is said to be a servant of *ichanti* and *uThikoloshe* (Hunter, 1966:287) An informant once told me of a dream of such an animal, which acted as a warning regarding an evil woman in the workplace, who wanted to bring the informant misfortune. My informant left the job.

uMamlambo is a familiar that may be possessed by a man. It may be purchased from a herbalist or European and Indian traders and it also has the ability to transform itself. It is an agent of sickness and death. Gogo Morwadi charges R1000-00 for treatment against the *umamlambo*.

Krige mentions the *umhlange*, which is a snake possessed by an *umthakathi*. "In order to use a snake as a familiar, an *umthakathi* will go with medicine into the veld. When he finds a snake he will stultify it by spitting all around it, till at last he spits on the snake itself. Then he doctors it with medicine and *insila*²³ (dirt) of the person to whom he wishes to send evil, a process which puts the snake still further into his power, and finally he sends the snake to the village in which his enemy lives." (Krige, 1974:324)

Snakes may symbolise both good and evil in Nguni cosmology. In some cases, a snake is considered to be an embodiment of an ancestor. Krige refers to these snakes as 'spirit snakes', which often have physical attributes which resemble those of the deceased. Spirit-snakes do not fear moving around a house and the people therein. (Krige, 1974:286) An informant told me that likewise, such a snake would not be feared by the people themselves; it would be perceived as a symbol of great luck. An illustration was given that if a snake were to appear, during the birth in a home, it would symbolise the presence and consent of the ancestors in this regard. The snake would even be allowed near the baby and mother.

I have been told that some people keep a snake, as it brings them wealth. Other people visit

this person in the hope of becoming wealthy too. Gogo Morwadi, from her position as a diviner, illustrated to me that "spirits of snakes" on the other hand, could be harmful. This issue arose during one of the medicine digging expeditions in Swalala where I found a piece of semi-decomposed snake skin. Vusi, the young diviner who was with me, took it back to the rest of the group and Gogo Morwadi showed a great interest in it. She swiftly accompanied us to fetch the rest of the snake, the remains of which included part of its head. When I asked her about it, Gogo Morwadi replied that medicine made from the remains of a snake, was called *ibaso*, and it was used for someone who is "burned on by the spirit of a snake", viz. he visualises snakes. She was reluctant to tell me more and we were interrupted by the others who had begun to pack up the bags in search of a new patch.

The sorcerer concocts medicines, which have either been purchased from a herbalist or manufactured by him/herself. These medicines may even be the same as those used by a diviner, however, the intents behind them may make them evil. Gogo Morwadi mentioned that if she were to collect her medicines during a thunderstorm, some of those medicines would be affected by the thunder and bring it back to the house and her patients. Medicines may consist of herbs and other plant material, plus anatomical parts of animals or insects, which are ground or burnt into a fine powder. Often, the medicine will be mixed with bodily exuvia of the intended victim. Indeed, it is believed that "the most deadly of all medicines to any man or woman are those made up of parts of his or her own body, such as finger-nails, hair or excreta." (Krige, 1974:321) Sorcerers may even gather up soil from a footprint of their victim and combine it with medicine.

It is believed that sorcerers 'send' medicine to their victims. Other than depositing it in the victim's food or drink, sorcerers are known to stir, or chew on the medicine, and/or swallow it and purge themselves, thereafter uttering the name of their victim. Such sorcery which is directed at a single person through the calling of his/her name, is called *ukulumba*²⁴. (Hunter, 1964:292)

Another method employed in sorcery, is to place medicine along paths or roads along which a person (specified or unspecified) will travel. Generally in cleansing rites which are held under the auspices of a diviner, the bodily fluids emitted (vomitus in the case of *ukuphalaza*²⁵) or troubling spirits (from an exorcism) will be carefully left behind in a place where they can be of no harm to another person. In that sorcery is concerned with creating the opposite effect for which divination practices strive, detrimental medicine will be deliberately left in a place to beset misfortune. Hence, it becomes the responsibility of the community to keep their locality clear of pollutive material, by discarding it on paths and crossroads, in order that outsiders and passing travellers may carry it off. (Elliot, 1970:107; Krige, 1974:322; Ngubane, 1977:30; Hammond-Tooke, 1989:78)

Ngubane, who uses the Zulu term *ubuthakathi* to denote "sorcery", differentiates between three such types encountered amongst the Zulu:

i) Night sorcery is practised by a person who is essentially born evil and will harm another, "for no apparent reason." (Ngubane, 1977:32) Night sorcery is practised by men exclusively because the activities involved are perceived to be impossible for a woman to carry out. Such a feat demands that the subject train baboons as familiars and exhume corpses for the creation of zombies. These are compulsory nightly activities, which a woman would not easily be able to do, owing to her position in society, which demands that she stay at home at night. (ibid, 44)

ii) Lineage sorcery is practised by men in association with their respective lineage. In that such sorcery depends on ritual obligations, such as ritual sacrifice, which pertain to the lineage, only men as officiants of these rituals may practise such sorcery. Effectively, the evil officiant of the ritual may direct the proceedings in such a way as to cause deprivation of ancestral protection to certain members of a family. (ibid, 36) As Ngubane states, "there is yet another paradox in the operation of sorcery. The ancestors who are considered custodians of one's destiny, are sometimes persuaded by the very descendant they protect to abandon one of their number." (ibid, 45)

iii) Day sorcery is practised by a man or a woman, however, more women tend to follow this trend, owing to the types of situations in which the sorcery operates, namely those arising out of jealousy and competition commonly associated with the polygynous practices

of the Zulu. Ngubane describes how a married couple lost four children during their marriage, because a jealous woman stole some chyme from the marriage beast (*eyesikhumba*²⁶). (Ngubane, 1977:35)

It has been documented that more witches tend to be women, whilst the majority of sorcerers are men. This is accountable to the place of a woman in society in general. Ngubane, however, notes that a man is able to practise all three above mentioned types of sorcery, whilst a woman may practise only one. She concludes that "this indigenous sociological interpretation indicates that Zulu are aware of a relationship between sorcery and the nature of the structure of the society, the roles that people play, and the religious beliefs which operate." (ibid, 44)

The ancestors, as the custodians of their lineage are appealed to in instances of misfortune and illness attributed to witchcraft and sorcery. In many such cases, a channel is needed to enable communication between the ancestors and their descendants, in which enlightenment, clarification and ultimately wellbeing, may be achieved. The agent qualified for such a task is the diviner, who is permanently in a state of closeness to the ancestors. She has afforded such a position through being 'called' to the divination profession (*ukubiza*) and undergoing a training period as a novice diviner (*ithwasa*), in which she learns the processes of diagnosing and treating illness and misfortune.

My informant David noted that:

You have *amagqirha* because you have *amagqwirha*. As an *igqirha*, you may have a special gift that not everybody has, that is the ability to strike or combat *izinto zamagqwirha (Z)*²⁷ [sorcerer's things]. The purpose of *amagqwirha* is to destroy, and their way of destroying is through slow poison. They may send a *thikoloshe* to a particular house. They instruct the *thikoloshe* to go to the house and take some medicine there, leaving it in the ceiling. Obviously nobody can see something which lies in the ceiling. As an *igqirha*, you may have a special gift from *izinyanya zakho* [your ancestors] which allows you to see the medicine and also the power to remove it. Not everybody has the ability to see such things, nor remove them. It is not something that you can see with human eyes. The medicine can even move. Spiritually, you may see it in a certain place. You might decide to go and dig a hole for it and remove it, but it might not be there when you get back. Somebody, [like a diviner] with that special gift, is the only one who qualifies to remove it.

Since the vocation of a diviner originates with the calling by the ancestors, and since divination rituals are essentially concerned with communication with the ancestors who speak through the diviner, the diviner is the intermediary between the ancestors and their living descendants. Thus, the office of diviner is closely associated with the ancestors. The diviner is their "...visible representative...specially selected for the task of mediation between the spiritual and physical world." (Thorpe, 1991:107)

THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN DIVINATION

Diviners incorporate music extensively into divination processes. Though much anthropological literature concerning diviners may fail to recognise the importance of divination music (commonly in the form of singing, dancing, clapping and drumming), the performance of such music is necessary for many successful ritual procedures. During my field research, I became increasingly aware of the importance of the music used by diviners

in their work.

Diviners sing much of the time, even when they are not involved in ritual events. I have not been able to drive somewhere in a car, accompanied by a diviner, without our journey resulting in an outburst of song. This is because the music of diviners is such an integral part of their lives and it is instilled shortly after the calling to the profession. When undergoing training, music and dancing is essential in the process of becoming a diviner. (Hunter, 1964:325; Hansen, 1981:565) This has been endorsed by my informants, who have told me that it is necessary to "sing to the ancestors," which one learns to do during training. It is during this important period that the novice will dream of the songs he/she will sing in years to come as a diviner. When I enquired about David's repertoire of divination songs, he replied that he obtained them from dreams. He stated that:

[A divination song] does not come from one just going to an *intlombe* and saying to oneself, 'I like this song!' You will wake up one day and find yourself singing or humming that song and it will stay in your mind all the time, including the words. Anything, *anything* that comes in the form of *ukuthwasa* [involving the process of becoming a diviner], has to come through a dream or some way. It is not something which you will go out and find somewhere, because it is not *you* who wants *ubugqirha* [divinership]; you are *told* to become one. This is what you have to do and this is how you have to go through it. That is the difference between a person who has to become an *igqirha* and someone who wants to become one.

According to Makhosi Athobile, these songs are "given" to the novice by the ancestors, who will subsequently impart the songs to the training diviner, along with the confession of dreams. (endorsed by Hunter, 1964:325) Such songs will then be sung to the novice by the diviner, whilst the former undergoes training. By singing these songs the ancestors' attention is sought and they are "made to come and listen." (Makhosi Athobile)

I was also informed that diviners do occasionally add songs to their repertoire by attending *iintlombe*. Under these circumstances, a diviner will hear a song which he/she finds particularly appealing, and that song will remain special and unforgettable. David explained the relationship between song and the ancestors at an *intlombe* as follows:

D: The song is like a prayer. It is a way of getting through to them. It is a way of communicating with the *izinyanya*.

K: How does the song do that? How does it happen?

D: At first, your body changes - something changes within you. You become a different person. For example, say that you are sitting at home and you are concentrating on something or you are reading a book. All of a sudden, somebody knocks at the door. It sort of 'wakes you up' and you think, "Who is there?" Immediately, you change. Then if you were expecting somebody, you could start having feelings that it could be this person or that person.

It is your way of reaching out to them [the ancestors]. You feel as though you are getting through to them. You are trying to get something from them, or you want to know something from them and you cannot get it 'right now'. Then you have to find an answer to that, so you have to find a way of getting through to them - singing. Somehow, it is like the door opening slowly, slowly and eventually, you are there. Once you are there, you get what you want.

Other attempts to ascertain the specific reasons for singing and the use of music by diviners for the ancestors, were treated with mirth and bouts of laughter by Makhosi Athobile. She told me that the ancestors like music, and because it makes them happy, it is "the law" to sing for them. Furthermore, the performance of music in divination contexts "reminds them [the ancestors] of what they were doing before they went to the *grammadoelas!*" (ie to the back of beyond, or beyond physical reach, essentially in the spiritual realm).

Gogo Morwadi has motivated that it is necessary for diviners to sing when they wish to communicate with the ancestors, because musical performance "makes the 'dlozi come up." (Gogo Morwadi interchanges the word *amadlozi* with "the/your spirit".) Chief Gcaleka describes his experiences with song as thus:

The *igqirha* is the link between people and the ancestors. The songs and the dancing at the *intlombe* help to call the spirits of *izinyanya* to come near to *amagqirha*. These spirits are happy to provide me with ways that will throw light on how to run a nation. When these spirits possess me, I sing a song. The singing and the song transform [me] into a different state, a state in which I can communicate with and understand the spirits. These spirits (of people who are no longer with us) possess [me] in such a way that what I say constitutes what the spirits say. (Translation from Xhosa, M.Ntleki)

It may be concluded that music, which has both meaning and value in Nguni society, provides an effective form of communication with the ancestors. Therefore, it would seem to be the perfect tool to be used by a diviner for such purposes. Gogo Morwadi's description of her spirit 'coming up' and Chief Gcaleka's mention of personal transformation in the above paragraphs, shed light on just how music is used by diviners in the communicative process.

In examining these mechanisms used to enable communication, the physical movements generated by the dancing of diviners must first be considered. As well as being competent song leaders, diviners are expected to be exceptional dancers. The dance of diviners and their training novices is known as *ukuxhentsa*²⁸. (Hunter, 1964:325; Hansen, 1981:565) Such dancing is characterised in Xhosa terms as the galvanic pounding of the feet alternately, whilst shifting the body weight from the ball of each foot to its heel. An upright posture is maintained by the torso and the diviner will invariably carry a switch and a

spear. This is performed concurrently with the drumming, singing and clapping provided. Another integral aspect of this physical performance, is the characteristic muscle-quivering and shivering of a diviner's torso. I have not seen any of my Swazi informants perform this action. It is common for the diviner to wear a set of leg rattles around each ankle. The rhythm produced by the rattle supplements the rhythmic patterns provided by the drumming and clapping, when performed concurrently with the musical action. As noted by Coppenhall, "the wearing of leg rattles explicitly defines the music's basic metre and rhythm." (1990:288)

The term *ukugida* is also frequently referred to as the dance of diviners, particularly by my Swazi informants. Makhosi Athobile, also associates *-gida* (Z) - meaning dance" (as for pastime or enjoyment; generally amongst women and children) - with *iintlombe* attended predominantly by Swazi. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:245) She made a distinction between the two terms as follows:- *ukuxhentsa* is a *abaNguni* (as in Xhosa) dance and it involves dancing in a circle (as described by Bührmann, 1984:57), whereas *ukugida* is a Swazi dance which involves an outward movement of the legs and sometimes the dancing of diviners in line formation.

The purpose of the diviner's dancing at an *intlombe*, is to effect a communicative link between this world and the ancestors, along with the singing itself. (Indeed, it must be acknowledged that in all African music, no distinction between physical movements, perceived by Westerners as dance and vocal singing, is made per se.) The pounding movements of the *-xhensta* dance, in accompaniment to the often enthusiastically loud

singing, which brings about a state of transcendence, when the ancestors 'come up'. This would seem to be comparable with, or close to, the state of *ihlombe*²⁹. (See plates 5,6,7) None of my informants used such terminology to describe their state of transcendence, in fact they seemed reluctant to use one word to label it at all. My informants rather talk of this state as a point at which the spirit or ancestors 'come up'. For example, according to Makhosi Athobile, "to *-xhentsa* is the diviner's way of calling the ancestors to come up [in him/herself]." Perhaps *ihlombe* is indeed an insufficient word to describe these circumstances, and it is more applicable in situations where a group of people become affected by the process of music making, thus emphasising the underlying social nature of the state. I asked David for his opinion regarding this issue:

K: What do you call that feeling of arrival, when you say that you have made contact with the ancestors through the song? Would it be *ihlombe*, or is that more what everyone in the group experiences together?

D: Yes, you would call it *ihlombe*. *Ih lombe* is like jumping into cold water and when you get out you start shivering. It is like making contact with them [the ancestors].

K: Do the ancestors actually speak to you in words?

D: Yes, they do. Sometimes it may come...let's say by example, when you start to become an *igqirha*, it does not come in words. Let's say that you are sitting there with a problem. Now you do not have to tell me that problem, you just tell that you have a problem. All of a sudden, we exchange bodies in a spiritual way. I start to feel all those symptoms which you have - If you have a headache when you get up in the morning...I start to tell you all those things, because we have swapped bodies. That is how you start. Then, once you start getting to know these things, they will talk to you.

K: So when you are at an *intlombe*, and this happens, are you able to ask the ancestors what you want to know?

D: In most cases when you are at an *intlombe*, you are not there to ask them [the ancestors] things. For instance when you are there, 'doing your

thing', all of a sudden, they [the ancestors] will come to you and they will say, "Listen, the person sitting next to you has got this and this and that and that..." Now, that person is sitting there, right next to you, so you cannot [openly] say, "Yes, and what else?", because it will 'give away' that you are busy communicating with them. So obviously, you will just keep quiet. If they want to tell you more, then they will. All you must do is listen and that is it. You do not need to ask questions. They [the ancestors] will question themselves and tell you whatever you need to know, and that is it.

Once the diviner has received the presence of the ancestors, he/she will indicate for the music to be stopped, and kneel on the floor and begin to speak at a rapid pace. According to Makhosi Athobile, at times the ancestors become present for the diviner in such a vigorous manner, that he/she will run out of the room and quickly beg them to come back under control. Some diviners will interrupt their own speech to clap in double claps or snap their fingers (Swazi and Zulu diviners in particular). At the onset of the speech, the diviner will generally pick an onlooking diviner, a novice, the person for whom the *intlombe* is being held, or even a member of the audience, to direct such dialogue. The latter will respond at intervals with expressions of acknowledgement and praise, "'camagu!" (*icamagu*)³⁰ or "makhos'" (*amakhosi*) (Xh) or "thokoza" (SiS). Such a session has been described thus as "we -*thokoza / makhosi* [a person]." Gogo Morwadi attempted to describe the action as 'fortuning', and in certain contexts of her school of training, it may apply (Swazi diviners are reputedly good at reading fortunes) but this should not be used as a blanket term.

Makhosi Athobile's descriptions are similar to those of David. She intimated that whilst in the above mentioned state, a diviner will reveal the messages sent by the ancestors to the people. Makhosi Athobile claimed that for instance, if the person in question holding the

intlombe would be going on a journey, the diviner on behalf of the ancestors would describe how the journey would be. Assistance by the ancestors may be asked for in such cases. She elaborated that this method of divining is different from the *-vuma*³¹ technique (of consenting), which is used in the case of illness or misfortune.

Thus the diviner can be described as a medium, who through the involvement of music, reaches an altered state of consciousness, and receives desired and otherwise inaccessible information from another level. Hammond-Tooke describes the *-xhentsa* dance as one which is designed to invoke trance in those who perform it. (1974:349) The concept of trance is indeed fashionable and topical, and it currently seems to be used rather loosely, in order to label mental states associated with many different cultural genres. The 1990's rave culture and its associated music in the West, is a case in point. Furthermore, the contention that the state of *ihlombe* is related to trance, and indeed the inducement of trance through musical performance alone, are issues refuted in much ethnomusicological research, and there is no published evidence to support such theories. Therefore I find it necessary to use the word 'trance' with caution, because of its popularity and wide connotations, plus my informants do not use it on a regular basis. The reason for the latter is not linguistically based; in fact both Makhosi Athobile and David associate the word 'trance' with particular types of diviners, which I discuss below.

Psychological factors can aid the onset of trance or even induce it, hence ethnomusicologists do not accept the assumption that trance is physiologically generated by music. Blacking states that, through communal music making, "personal and socio-cultural

identity could be linked in a very real way, because the bodily sensations that were felt by the individuals involved could be related to a system of ideas about self, other, other self, and the environment...Nevertheless, musical performance is a way of knowing, and the performing arts are important means of reflection, of sensing order and ordering experience, and relating inner sensations to the life of feeling of one's society." (Blacking, 1995:176-77)

My informants have had difficulty in labelling the state into which they go when they perform *-xhentsa*. They seem to be more aware of a *general situation* which is generated in music making, which all participants feel to varying degrees, noted by Hansen as *ihlombe*. This general feeling of 'upliftment' in this social experience is not confined to divination music, but pervades most forms of Nguni music making³². This feeling is often invoked in a collective performance of music, where the majority of the performers experience these feelings. *Ihlombe* is the result of the *process* of music making, rather than the music itself. This process is culturally acquired and *ihlombe* may be seen as the expansion of social experience. This raises the question of whether other categories of Nguni music also generate the performers' susceptibility to levels of trance.

This does not prevent one from questioning whether *ukuxhentsa* (Xh) and *ukugida* (Z) are not similar to the ancient 'trance' dance associated with healing rituals amongst the San cultures. In the latter, the objective is to raise healing energy (*n/um*³³) through the spinal cord, where it 'bursts' at the base of the skull. This is remarkably similar to Gogo Morwadi's description of her 'spirit coming up' when she dances. I relate a description by

a San healer, as documented by Lee (1984:109):

N/um is put into the body through the backbone. It boils in my belly and boils up to my head like beer. When the women start singing and I start dancing, at first I feel quite all right. Then in the middle, the medicine begins to rise from my stomach. After that I see all the people like very small birds, the whole place will be spinning around, and that is why we run around. The trees will be circling also. You feel your blood become very hot, just like blood boiling on a fire, and then you start healing.

In a diviner's case, he/she will be prepared to enter an altered state of consciousness at an *intlombe*, but not necessarily in other musical contexts. This suggests the possibility that the social situation of musical performance has greater bearing on this condition, than the music itself. Blacking has stated that, "...no music has power in itself. Its sounds and circumstance can be related to a coherent set of ideas about self and other bodily feelings. There can surely be no direct connection between the sounds of music and people's emotional responses to them." (1995:176) This is endorsed by Rouget who believes that if there were particular responses to certain drum rhythms, "the whole of sub-Saharan Africa would be in trance from the beginning to the end of the year." (in Blacking, 1995:176) Gogo Morwadi, for instance, will not perform *-gida* outside of culturally prescribed conditions or contexts. She has stated that in order to perform, she must be appropriately attired in her divination regalia and the *situation* must be right in order to support her when "the '*dlozis* come up." This supports Blacking's argument that "Music can communicate nothing to unprepared and unreceptive minds, inspite of what some writers have suggested to the contrary." (Blacking, 1995:176) Hence, the above-mentioned factors may have a powerful effect in precipitating trance. Besides, diviners are expected to go into trance at an *intlombe*, so they do! (Hansen)

It is true that during *-ombela* (music-making), the diviner reaches some kind of altered state of consciousness, and receives desired and otherwise inaccessible information from another level. However, I personally am still reluctant to advocate at this stage that all diviners experience 'trance'. I raised the question of music and altered states of consciousness with Makhosi Athobile and David, and whilst they endorsed that the medium of music creates the necessary conditions through which diviners may 'communicate' with the ancestors, both of them mentioned that the 'trance' state was distinct from their experience. From their descriptions, I ascertained that they viewed (to say the least, the word) trance as an intense or heavy state of altered consciousness, in which the subject would be so 'gone' that they would not be able to recall anything when they came out of it. In that communication with the ancestors is the primary objective under these conditions, such a state would be futile if there was no recollection of what was communicated!

Furthermore, both diviners commented that those diviners who experience such a deep state have taken special medicines during their training in order to do this. Makhosi Athobile and David have mixed feelings about this procedure because they believe that it is unnatural and indeed, the people who undergo this method of training are those who essentially have desired to become diviners, they have not been called to the profession.

Makhosi Athobile informed me thus, "I do not go into trance when the ancestors come out, but those [who train] in Ndaun [divination] practices do." She therefore associated such trance states with those who train under diviners who possess Ndaun spirits, notably the

Swazi (and Zulu) diviners. David, who is also a Xhosa diviner, held similar culturally-orientated views regarding trance and these diviners. This is elaborated upon in the section below.

I found it problematic in linking the effects of divination music on this induced state, and the value of the music in this context. This became increasingly difficult in circumstances when my informants (Chief Gcaleka in particular) attached the notion of spirit possession to this state. I am an outsider to the culture, therefore my understanding of this concept is further prejudiced and I am more reliant on anthropological literature on the subject. This is attributable to the sociological basis of music, which is explained by Blacking, as "organised into socially accepted patterns, and music-making may be regarded as a form of learned behaviour...[therefore,] music expresses aspects of the experience of individuals in society." (1995:33, 32)

Blacking has noted that there is a growing amount of interest and research into the music and dance of "spirit possession"; however, he believes that wider and more systematic studies need to be conducted before any comparisons or conclusions should be drawn regarding the effect of music therein. Moreover, he states that it would be encouraging if spirit possession and altered states of consciousness "were more widely accepted, not as signs of some pathological or rare condition, but as common heritage of the human species." (1995:175) I cite Blacking further on this issue in conclusion:- "...spirit possession and altered states of consciousness in themselves, as general phenomena, are neither problematic nor particularly interesting as subjects of ethnomusicological research,

since one would expect any sensitive human being to experience the same or similar somatic states quite regularly." (1995:175-176)

With regard to musical repertoire, every diviner may be considered to be an accomplished musician, with a vast repertory of divination songs, which he or she uses in divination procedures and rituals. (Hansen, 1981:567-8) Some of these songs may be his/her own compositions, and some may have been handed down through training. I questioned David as to how diviners acquire their songs:

K: I wish to ask you about the music which is sung *entlombeni*. Do you have your own repertoire of songs?

D: Yes, I do. That comes from a dream. It does not come from one just going to an *intlombe* and saying to oneself, "I like this song!" You will wake up one day and find yourself singing or humming that song and it will stay in your mind all the time, including the words.

I have found amongst my informants that they generally have a repertoire of songs which are language specific and which delineate their own cultural group. I have found that such a repertoire may be shared amongst a group of diviners who associate together at seances regularly or who undergo the same or similar culturally-orientated divination training. This also applies to dance styles which, apart from individual innovation, maintain a certain degree of cultural conformity. I have been fortunate to witness such delineation at several *iintlombe*, at which diviners from different cultural backgrounds have attended³⁴.

THE COSMOLOGICAL BELIEFS OF MY INFORMANTS

MAKHOSI ATHOBILE : "I am a prophet, I have got *amakhosi* and I am a *sangoma*."

Makhosi Athobile was born in Zastron, the Orange Free State. Although she is Xhosa, she trained in Mount Frere with a Bhaca diviner, hence she calls herself *isangoma*. Makhosi Athobile became a Zionist prophet before she trained as a diviner, and currently she feels that both religions are influential in her life and furthermore, she cannot function as a balanced person without both of them. (This is illustrated in Chapter 2, see pp.) I will outline Makhosi Athobile's belief system, which incorporates her ancestors, *amakhosi* ancestors, spiritual guides of a more foreign nature, and her perception of God.

Makhosi Athobile perceives her "controlling" ancestor (working ancestor) to be her deceased grandfather on her father's side. Although he passed away before she was born and she therefore did not know him in a physical form, Makhosi Athobile immediately recognised him when he first appeared to her in a dream. The working ancestors of Makhosi Athobile sometimes appear to her as her grandfather alone, or in a group of as many as four individuals. Makhosi Athobile mentions that apart from her grandfather, her deceased mother and auntie come to her frequently in dreams and visions.

Makhosi Athobile's ancestral grandfather played a pivotal role in her youth, and he still does, as he influenced her to join the Zionist church in Soweto when she was twenty. She became a prophet in accordance with his wishes, and it became an occupation which she continued to practise, despite the agonising *iinkathazo* (troubles) she experienced with

ukuthwasa. Her ancestral grandfather initially had not wanted Makhosi Athobile to train as a diviner; however, he finally came to her in a dream and told her that she must train, as it was what all her other ancestors wished for her to do.

Makhosi Athobile feels that she has *amakhosi* ancestors. *Amakhosi* appear to be distant and rather enigmatic ancestors to Makhosi Athobile, and ones that are not as clear as her "controlling" ancestors. She even has doubts that *amakhosi* which come to her are her own, as she describes:

I do not know what exactly brings them on. When they come to me, I always feel that they are not my *amakhosi*, but that they belong to [my friend,] Aaron. He is also *isangoma*, but he has *amakhosi*. I was married to him once, and we never got divorced - I just ran away from him. So when *amakhosi* come to me, I know that they are his.

Makhosi Athobile described to me that diviners who train with *amakhosi* are powerful, because they venture into the river, where they obtain information which is not readily accessible to those who do not go beneath the water. These people have the ability to see more than others and they sometimes are equipped with more healing skills. She told me that the actual training of the novice in these conditions is done by the ancestors themselves, and not a diviner. She also believes that if a novice trains with a diviner who possesses *amakhosi*, then the novice will inherit *amakhosi*:- "If someone trains you and they have them, then you will get them."

David's view regarding *amakhosi* training, which is more commonly held, is to the contrary. He mentions that, "There are people who have *amakhosi*, but they are born with

them and they must *-thwasa* with someone who has also got *amakhosi*. Initiates must have the same thing as their trainers; if they go to anyone else, the latter will not know what to do with the *ithwasa*. This is because there are different ways of *ukuthwasa*."

Although Makhosi Athobile stayed with her friend, Aaron, who was training under such a diviner, her own training diviner in this case did not have *amakhosi*. During her training, Makhosi Athobile experienced a dream that indicated to her training diviner that she possessed *amakhosi*:

I dreamed of a *braai* (barbeque)- or big party we were having on the banks of the river. There were many *sangomas* there and we were singing. A man came to kill the goat and we put half of it in the river. They made *imphehlo*. They put medicine and tobacco in it. They also put lots of silver money into the *ubulawu*³⁵. Then they put it in the water. It disappeared deep down into the water and the *sangomas* followed. I did not know what the dream meant, and when I told my training mother about my dream, she looked at me rather thoughtfully and told me that we would have to go to the river before I went back home to Johannesburg.

Makhosi Athobile was taken to KwaZulu-Natal by her training diviner, where she spent "only a week" underwater in the Nkomazi river. She described how she went deep into the river to the point at which there was no more water. Her ancestors were there to meet her. She said that there were even houses there and some snakes. She sustained herself with a certain type of mud:

I walked alone at night to the river. I had to find a place to go in and my ancestors had to be there with me, otherwise I would have died and never come up again. I do not know how I got down there, or even how I came out again. I cannot remember what happened. The ancestors just instructed me when to leave.

I asked Makhosi Athobile how she calls *amakhosi* to her, and she described that after two days of fasting and praying, they will come to her. *Amakhosi* would also appear to her during the performance of music at *iintlombe* and mark their arrival with a whistling noise ("They flute").

Makhosi Athobile also accepted a Native American Indian as one of her "spiritual guides" or ancestors. This idea has apparently stunned her counterparts, and many diviners refused to accept that she had a "white man" as an ancestor.

In certain esoteric philosophies, life is perceived as existing concurrently on a number of levels other than the physical, these levels pertaining to the realms of ancestors and "spirits" that are considered by the majority of people to be dead. The African person recognises that the line between life and death is slight. (Ngubane, 1977:77) Symbolically, death ends where life begins and therefore, a diviner is in a marginal state of being, because she is working with the ancestors who have passed through the world of the living. Makhosi Athobile's employer, Mrs Gayle Hansen, who is a complementary health practitioner herself, rationalises the situation as follows:-

Most diviners tend to acknowledge and invoke the ancestors of their lineage, who have seemingly had a considerable effect on their physical lives: they are in themselves living proof of their ancestors. Spirits of other "cultures" seem further removed from the diviner's current realities and they exist on levels that are more remote and culturally inaccessible.

Makhosi Athobile was obviously once exposed to processes of thought that were not within her cultural conditioning as a diviner, which she subsequently adopted. Hence her ideology

was met with adversity by her associates. Makhosi Athobile explained her perspective thus:

You see, I have got [Native American] Indian ancestors. I do not call on them, in fact, they just come to me at certain times. It was hard to believe at first, and I have always questioned my [ancestral] grandfather as to why I have such ancestors. Even before I trained, the [Native American] Indian guides were there. They would come and sing to me frequently [sing - she demonstrated with low chanting]. I did not want anyone to know about them whilst I was training.

After my training though, I went to visit an [Native American] Indian lady in Johannesburg. I told her my story of how I dreamed of these people. I described how a [Native American] Indian would appear seated before me and begin to draw paintings in the sand. He would then make a small heap of sand, and tell me that I would make lots of money if I were to listen to him. Then he would disappear and a feather would appear.

The woman was so surprised that she remarked, 'How on earth do you do this? You will have to go there and be trained!'

Apart from the Native American guide, who indicates his presence with the appearance of a white feather, the ancestors seem to appear to Makhosi Athobile in dreams during sleep and in daydreams.

When asked whether the ancestors actually take possession of her when Makhosi Athobile communicates with them, she replied:

They talk, but it is actually you, who is talking. I do not always go into trance. When I go into a slight trance, I hear the whistling sounds, like those of the *amakhosi*. Everybody will hear the whistling. At that point in time, I cannot open my eyes, I must just clap and then they will talk to me.

Makhosi Athobile believes in God as the creator. She has expressed that if there was no God, then there would be no ancestors, because the ancestors were created by God. She says that God comes to her in dreams and daydreams. When asked whether she has seen God, she answered that she had. He appeared as a large face, with a beard, looking down

at her. Makhosi Athobile says that God appears to warn her of things which could be dangerous. He advises her regarding her clientele.

DAVID

David became an *igqirha* before he joined the Zionist Church where he subsequently became a prophet. David's involvement in the church, plus his experiences with divination, are discussed in further detail in the following chapter, and it will suffice to say here that he is presently the *umfundisi* of a branch of the Witness Church of Christ in Khayelitsha, which has an ever growing congregation. Although he does not currently practise as a diviner, David still identifies very strongly with divination processes and he calls himself an *igqirha*. He enjoys the work of the church and divination equally and he has told me that he would not wish to exclude either discipline from his life. David feels that he has a tendency to swing from one occupation to the other, because his ancestors are at odds with one another. This is due to the fact that he has not performed the necessary ritual to bring his ancestors together. He explained it thus:

With ancestors [referred to as *izinyanya*], this is how it works. You have ancestors on your father's side and you have ancestors on your mother's side. Both these *izinyanya* have to work together because if they do not work together, those from your mother's side will tell you this [something] and those from your father's side will tell you a different story [a conflicting opinion].

K: How do you make the ancestors work together?

D: You can make them work together. Once you go through the whole [*ukuthwasa*] process, what you have to do after you become an *igqirha*, or even before you become a full *igqirha*, you have to go through your

father's side first and then you go to your mother's side. You have to try to bring these two together, by slaughtering an ox, in order to get them to work together. It is called in Xhosa *ukudibanisa*³⁶ *izinyanya*.

K: Have you performed this ritual?

D: I have not done it yet. I still have problems. That is why I may be with the Zionists tomorrow and the *amagqirha* the following day. I still have these problems.

David's description of this ritual is described in the following chapter, in context of my research findings concerning diviners and Zionist-type churches. In expressing his cosmological views, David described that he possesses ancestors in two localities, namely the river and the forest. They appeared to him in *ukuthwasa* dreams symbolically as beads of green and blue³⁷. David associates the colour green with the ancestors of the water (*izinyanya zasemlanjeni*³⁸) and the colour blue with the ancestors of the forest (*izinyanya ehlathini*³⁹).

For David, the ancestors of the forest appear in animal form, notably as a tiger or a puma (his English description). His Xhosa descriptions of these animals are *ingwe*⁴⁰ and *ingwe 'mnyama* (black leopard) respectively.

David also described that, "Most of us have *isihlwele* [ancestors]. I sometimes wonder where a Black man comes from. Whatever we do, it somehow has something to do with animals in the jungle. We are somehow connected." He went on to say that there is an intimate connection between people and the forest, displayed in the fact that it is the location where diviners and herbalists collect their medicines for treatment and healing.

Bührmann documents different types of ancestors, as found by Mpondomise diviners, which demonstrate similar thought patterns to those of David. She differentiates between the category of "living dead", associated with deceased members of the clan and a category of ancestors who are not directly related to the human element, but are known as the "People of the Forest" and the "People of the River." She states that, "of the two categories of ancestors, the second is more powerful and numinous. The ancestors of the River are reputed to live under the water, are white, and have long flowing blond hair." (1984:29) Bührmann goes on to say that the River ancestors play an important role in the bringing on of *-thwasa* in those people destined to become diviners. (ibid, 1984:30)

David tends to utilise the same ancestors for divination and in the church, although it seems as though the ancestors of the forest are more related to divination whilst the ancestors of the water are related to the church. He has remarked that there is a fundamental difference in the way his ancestors communicate with him in these two contexts. The ancestors in divination contexts are wild and rude, whilst the ancestors working through *uMoya* (the Spirit) in a church service are more restrained. The particular ancestral communication is directly demonstrated in the affected person's behaviour in either context. David explained once again the necessity for performing the above mentioned ritual in order to placate the ancestors in order that they would communicate in an appropriate manner in both contexts. The communication parallels David's choice of music in a church context. This is elaborated upon in the following chapter. David put it this way:

There is a difference in the way both of these people [ancestors] speak to you. The Zionist side will always talk to you nicely - maybe because it is the religious side. They always talk to you nicely, but if the *amagqirha* side speaks

to you...unfortunately, I still do not understand this, but the *amagqirha* side are a bit wild and rude - very, very rude. At first, I could not understand this, but I had a friend who was an *igqirha* and he was damned rude. I could never explain why this person was so rude, until they [the ancestors] started working on me. Then I realised that the man could not help himself. Once that side starts working on you, you become a true person, you start swearing!

K: You have mentioned that you have ancestors of the jungle and ancestors of the river. Do you use them for different reasons, or do they just appear to you?

D: They come to me in different ways: the ones from the river come more quietly, whilst the jungle ones are more wild. This would be displayed in my behaviour. For instance, if I am talking to you, I will start to get edgy, then that will be the time when [the latter one] is starting to work on me now.

K: Do you use specific ancestors to treat certain illnesses?

D: When it comes to illness, for example, say you come to me with an illness. They [the ancestors] may not tell me at the time what kind of medicine I have to use to help you. So when it comes to knowing what to use, I may have an idea, but whilst I stand in front of all my *amayeza* (medicine), they start talking to me and they instruct me, telling me which ones should be mixed together. One may know much about *amayeza*, but one always learns every day.

In discussing the role of a deceased grandfather or grandmother and possibility of their ancestral influence in the lives of many diviners, I asked David how he perceived these lineage members in relation to his ancestors of the forest and river. David replied that he has not 'seen' his ancestral grandparents as such, although other diviners with whom he has consulted have claimed that they are omnipresent in his life. He explained that his grandfather had a part in the calling to divination; however, he does not make himself 'visible' to David:

I started experiencing *ubugqirha* [divinership] whilst my father was still alive, whilst he was an *igqirha*. My father and I were never really close, because two people who have *ubugqirha* in them may have different *izinyanya* in them. For

instance he may have *igusha*⁴¹ (a lamb) and I may have *ibhokhwe*⁴² [a goat], and those two do not mix well. So spiritually, when those two clash, so would we. I know he loved me and that he still does, but we were never that close. Eventually I had to move out, before things got bad between us. [This illustrates] that your *ubugqirha* would not come from your father, *ubugqirha bakho* would come from your ancestors, such as your grandfather or great grandfather. I have not seen my great grandfather in my dreams, but he has been described to me by *amagqirha*, who have told me that he comes to me; however, I do not understand what he says to me. It could be said that he appears to me as the ancestors of the forest, whilst the ancestors of the water represent the *amaZiyone* [influence] from my mother's side.

CHIEF NICHOLAS GCALEKA AND GOGO MORWADI

Chief Nicholas Gcaleka's cosmological beliefs demonstrate that he is a *bricoleur* of note. Elements of Chief Gcaleka's *modus operandi*, such as his beliefs in reincarnation and the existence of different categories of ancestors which are not based on the classic hierarchical structure, also contribute to his controversial and sometimes unpopular public image as an unorthodox diviner. Foremost, Chief Gcaleka uses the term *amadlozi* to describe the ancestors. Sometimes, he uses the term *ithongo* (sing.), for example, *ithongo lomNdawu* (The spirit of the Ndau)⁴³. Ngubane distinguishes between these two by saying that the *amathongo* "is a collective term for all the departed spirits" (1977:50), whilst *amadlozi* refers to "the ancestral spirits responsible for protecting or disciplining the descendants." (1977:50)

Chief Gcaleka describes four kinds of ancestral spirits, and he has mentioned that "spirits of different types come with songs of different types." He claims that, "We have four spirits in the world: - the spirit of the white people, the spirit of the mixed nations (Coloureds),

the spirit of the *amakhosi* (the spirit of the Black nation) and the spirit of the Angels, or *abantwana bancinci*." The categories may be listed as follows (trans. from Xhosa, M. Ntleki):

- 1) The spirits of the *amakhosi* are (Black) African ancestors. They arrive with the songs of *amakhosi*.
- 2) The spirits of the White nations (*izizwe*)
- 3) The spirits of the smaller nations (*izizwana*), the Coloureds and Indians.
- 4) The spirits of messengers from heaven, who are also known as the spirits of the Angels (*abantwana bancinci*⁴⁴ - unborn children). They are small children who have not survived the birth process, either as a result of abortion or miscarriage. They are described by Chief Gcaleka as, "the foetus you abort and leave in the toilet, who will grow up and become a messenger from heaven. These are the ones who seize the *igqirha* readily and tell him everything. For children have no secrets." These 'spirit messengers' are able to communicate in any way and indeed they are extremely powerful, because as (unborn) children, they have not had a chance to grow up in the world, and therefore they never lie.

I find it interesting to compare the above categories of Chief Gcaleka's belief system and Ngubane's description of spiritual categories. I have already noted in the Introduction, her mention of spirits of the unborn, being those who are waiting to be conceived in the human dimension. Furthermore, if a child dies before it is afforded an *imbeleko* ritual, it will return to the realm of the unborn spirits. (1977:141) I find it remarkable that there are parallels between this evidence and Chief Gcaleka's perception of *abantwana bancinci*. However, Ngubane states that the unborn spirits are not the ones to take possession of a diviner candidate. Nonetheless, it appears that Chief Gcaleka uses these spirits in his divination practice.

Furthermore, I find similarities in Chief Gcaleka's concept of spiritual categories of different races and Ngubane's description of spirit possession, with particular regard to the highly detrimental condition known as *ufufunyana*⁴⁵. In the case of a person suffering from this disorder, he/she is considered to be mentally deranged, and is reputed to be "possessed by a horde of spirits of different racial groups. Usually there may be thousands of Indians or Whites, sometimes hundreds of Sotho or Zulu spirits." (1977:144) These spirits have to be driven out of the patient, this treatment being administered by a diviner or herbalist. (Prozetsky & de Gruchy, 1995:81)

It can be seen that Chief Gcaleka's collective description of the ancestors is diverse. He does not seem to possess his own personal set of close ancestors, rather he classes the ancestors into the above mentioned four groups, for which he uses particular labels. I have not spent enough time with Chief Gcaleka fully to investigate the contexts in which he uses all his categories of ancestors. However, evidence seems to suggest that with regard to treatment and cure, Chief Gcaleka will call on the specific category which is most appropriate for the patient, into which his/her ancestors fall (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, Chief Gcaleka may use a combination of categories. For instance, at the *intlombe* concerning the Hintsa skull to which all the ancestors of South Africa were invited, I noticed that the evening was marked by distinct musical change, characterised in the dancing style and accompanied by obvious costume substitution, which denoted an engagement in different ancestral spirit categories. Chief Gcaleka has a large repertoire of songs, each of which seems to be related to a spiritual category. Two other categories do not seem to fall into his classification, one of which includes his belief in Jesus Christ.

Chief Gcaleka's cosmological beliefs have also been influenced by Christianity. Chief Gcaleka claims to be a Methodist minister, and I have seen him on several occasions donning a Zionist robe when he wishes to "call up Jesus." (See Plates 10, 11)

Chief Gcaleka also describes and uses another category of ancestral spirits which appear to be more distant and abstract, namely, the spirits of *emlanjeni* (spirits in the river), which he synonymously refers to as *amakhos' emanzini*, or *amandawu*. In this dissertation, I refer to such spirits as *amandawu*, or the ancestors/spirits of the Ndaus (people). The Zulu term, *Ndawu* refers to "a member of the Ndaus tribe of Southern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa and people regarded as accomplished in magical practices." (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:537) (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:127) Dr Alcinda Honwana (Anthropology, UCT) refers to the Ndaus as being "foreign to the southern Mozambique belonging to central Mozambique and are part of the Shona-Karanga group." (1996:43)

Gogo Morwadi also incorporates *amandawu* (Ndaus) ancestors into her system of beliefs. She has described two categories of ancestors which work for her. She defines them as the *manguni* (Nguni - initially pronounced 'mangoni') and (*ama*)*ndawu* spirits. I can only surmise that in the case of the former *manguni*, that Gogo Morwadi is referring to early Zulu descendants. In the 1820's, the Nguni were led by Soshangane from Zululand, in order to escape the destruction of Shaka. They ventured northwards and founded Kwa-Gasa in Mozambique, where they introduced their own language and traditions. Honwana states that through "the process of interaction all parties [Nguni, Tsonga, Ndaus] absorbed beliefs

and practices of one another, and many locals became possessed by foreign *vanguni* and *vandau* spirits." (1996:44) Many groups of Zulu migrants continued to infiltrate southern Mozambique in the 1820's. They took over much land belonging to the Tsonga, and the Tsonga inhabitants of the area who joined forces with them, formed the group known as 'Shangaans' (*maChangana*)⁴⁶.

This encouraged an exodus people from southern Mozambique and many Tsonga fled the area and established themselves in the North-Eastern Transvaal and Eastern Transvaal. For example, upon Soshangane's death in 1856, a battle was waged between his two sons over claims to power, which caused many more inhabitants to flee to the Northern Transvaal⁴⁷. The area was taken over by the Portuguese in 1895. (van Warmelo in Hammond-Tooke, 1974:68-71, Harries in Vail, 1989:83)

Gogo Morwadi has referred to the *maChangana* as originating from Zululand and Mozambique. She made further mention of a breakaway group from these people, whom she referred to as the *amashiyangana*. They are reputed to have left (*ukushiya*⁴⁸ - to leave) their children and moved to the area of Swalala, in Mphumalanga (Eastern Transvaal) where they mixed with the inhabitants. Gogo Morwadi is connected to this area, in that it is where she trained to become a diviner, and hence this is where her religious beliefs were formed and reinforced.

From the above anthropological evidence, one may be able to trace the possible historical origins of Gogo Morwadi's beliefs in both the *manguni* and *amandawu* ancestors.

Furthermore, Gogo Morwadi has expressed that the *manguni* seem to be 'closer' to her, whilst she claims that *amandawu* speak a language that she cannot understand, which further suggests their remoteness, geographically and ancestrally. This issue emerged from several conversations concerning the *-femba* ritual which is discussed in Chapter 3, in which Gogo Morwadi claims that *amandawu* spirits were used to exorcise her ("take out dirty things"), after which the *manguni* spirits were consulted through music, in order to interpret what exactly *amandawu* spirits had found and said. (This is substantiated with analyses by members of the same cultural group, including a professional translator.)

Admittedly as an ethnomusicologist, my foremost interest lies in the music utilised in the rituals that I witnessed. However, as my research progressed, I realised that the music performed was highly inseparable not only from the course of action, but from the religious beliefs held by my informants, which were the bare essence of the motivation behind the rituals themselves. The above mentioned *-femba* is a case in point. It therefore becomes necessary to elaborate upon the origins of the *amandawu* ancestors, as expressed in the beliefs of Gogo Morwadi and Chief Gcaleka. To further complicate matters, neither of these two informants are 'textbook' practitioners, and they have individual interpretations of their beliefs and actions, which are not necessarily consistent with evidence suggested in available literature.

Chief Gcaleka gave me an explanation regarding the origins and spiritual qualities of *amandawu*. Initially, he stated that the Ndaus as a nation, are those people who stretch their (lower) lips with plates (he used the word padlock, but subsequently changed it). They stay

in the vicinity of Johannesburg and Pretoria and also live in close proximity to the Shangaana-Tsonga. This corresponds with historical data presented briefly above. As ancestors, *amandawu* reputedly inhabit water environments. Gogo Morwadi has also described that *amandawu* live in the river, and they need to be appeased, because they were the ones who had been killed and thrown into the waters.

One tends to presume that parallels may be drawn between *amandawu* and the descriptions of River ancestors, as found in Xhosa cosmology. It is documented in southern Nguni cosmology (incorporating Xhosa cosmology), that the ancestors are commonly classified into two categories, notably those ancestors who are identified as members of the clan, and are therefore 'close' in proximity to their living descendants. They may also be referred to as "home ancestors" or the "living dead". (Prins, 1996:216; Bührmann, 1984:29) There are also more remote ancestors who are identified with 'the forest', or water environments, who are not directly related to the human element, and are known in Xhosa terminology as the "People/Ancestors of the Forest" (*isihlwele ehlathini*) and the "People/Ancestors of the River" (*isihlwele esemlanjeni*) - as already mentioned in context of David's cosmology. It is documented that of these two categories of ancestors, the second is the more powerful. The River ancestors, who reputedly live in water environments, have an important role in the commencement (bringing on) of the calling in those people destined to become diviners. (Bührmann, 1984:29-30)

Whether or not *amandawu* and *izinyanya zasemlanjeni* are to be acknowledged as one and the same, is a fairly new and debatable issue amongst my informants. Whilst the differences

are documented in literature; also it would seem, according to my informants, that many Xhosa-speaking people do not acknowledge that *amandawu* are synonymous with the more remote ancestors associated with water environments in 'traditional' Xhosa cosmology. They even deem *amandawu* to be foreign and troublesome spirits. This idea was endorsed by Gogo Morwadi, who like Chief Gcaleka, believes that *amandawu* and River ancestors are in fact, *synonymous*, and that the Xhosa people have not yet accepted that "they are all the same spirit" (Gogo Morwadi). David had never encountered *amandawu* when I asked him.

It can be seen that Chief Gcaleka has adopted a concept that is distinct from that which is found in his own cultural cosmology, and through its embodiment in his divination techniques (and subsequently, his ritual music) - he appears to be a *bricoleur*. (Hurst in Prins, 1995:216) This term was used by Prins in context of diviners who use "whatever is handy and accessible - myths, beliefs, traditions...culture in the widest sense of the term - to communicate ideas and convey understandings to others." (1995:216) The diviner "frequently repositions these elements and, in their new use, they become condensed expressions of necessary relations. The diviner thus builds up structures by fitting together the remains of events." (Levi-Strauss in Prins, 1995:216)

Chief Gcaleka stated that the *amandawu* ancestors, like anyone, are recognisable, not through their language, but through their dancing style (*umntu unga bo ku mthelekelela ngolwimi wakhe, mkhanyele ngoku xhentsa kwakhe*). I subsequently found this to be true when I witnessed the *amandawu* dances of diviners with the accompanying music. The

dancing in these instances is prescriptive of the ritual action, as *-hlehla*⁴⁹. Instead of the diviner dancing in an upright position, the diviner goes down on his/her knees and shakes and swings his/her head from side to side. (This is elaborated upon in Chapter 3 and 4, see Plates 12, 13) In Chief Gcaleka's case, he dons a Swazi *lihiya*) around his torso. A *lihiya* (SiS, pl. *ema-*) is a men's traditional loin-cloth (Rycroft, 1981:37) Coppenhall describes that a "*Lihiya* is also the name given to distinctively patterned squares of material, which are worn by men and women alike. The *hiya* is tied in a knot on one shoulder, and draped around the torso, leaving both arms free. Although *amahiya* (sic) have become part of Swazi traditional dress, they are in fact, manufactured outside the country eg. Taiwan and Java." (1990:161-162)

Gogo Morwadi and members of her entourage who engage in *-hlehla*, wear ochre coloured headdresses of synthetic hair, and adorn a cowrie shell headband. They are each covered in a white sheet, which Gogo Morwadi has described as symbolic of the water environment in which *amandawu* live.

Furthermore, *amandawu* are significant in Tsonga *ncomane* exorcism rites, notably through which they are exorcised with ritual and spirit-specific music (set in the hepta- mode of Ndau music, and having characteristic Ndau drum rhythms). A similarity became evident in my own musical analysis of *amandawu* music, which I recorded. I substantiate this in Chapter 3.

It seems that *amandawu* have become significant in Xhosa cosmology via Zulu thought patterns, in which they are equally significant. Chief Gcaleka justified this assumption by stating that, "The spirit of *amandawu* has entered the Xhosa people, via the Zulus because both cultures are Nguni." It is to be noted that Chief Gcaleka refers to this group of ancestors as *ithongo lomNdau*, "Ndau spirit" (or "Spirit of the Ndau")⁵⁰.

Amandawu are considered by Chief Gcaleka as a very cruel nation of ancestors (*khohlekele khakhulu*), and they have been documented as troublesome. (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:127) The reason for this cruelty will come to light in Chief Gcaleka's personal interpretation regarding the myth of Mandawu, the man of Ndau. (translated from Xhosa, N. Faxi and M. Ntleki):

Mandawu was a man who became involved in an adulterous affair with a Zulu woman. The Zulus caught this man and decided to kill him, despite the fact that he wanted to pay the damages (*iindlekho*)⁵¹. But the Zulu's are fools and they killed him. What they failed to realise was that Mandawu was a very strong man (as all *amandawu* are said to be), hence by killing him, they made the spirit of Mandawu (and subsequently *amandawu* ancestors, or the "spirit of the Ndau") more powerful and cruel. The spirit of Mandawu fights a lot when dead, and *amandawu* become more cruel when they are dead.

Chief Gcaleka states that the powerful *amandawu* are constantly searching for strong ancestors (*amadlozi*)⁵² of the Xhosa and Zulu, from whom they can 'take out the power' (*ukupha amandla*). This occurs in the sea, where all the ancestors dwell. For Chief Gcaleka, there is no concept of heaven; hence, when a person dies, his spirit will go to the sea. (Such ideology demonstrates why Chief Gcaleka, on his Cape Town visits, takes many of his clients to the sea in order to perform rituals, as he believes that it is home to all the ancestors.)

People may also possess the Ndau spirits, and when they die, such a spirit seeks out the other *amandawu* ancestors in the sea. If anyone in possession of an Ndau spirit is killed, that spirit will seek revenge with those who were responsible for the murder. It has been documented that the return of such a spirit is intricately linked to the past of the possessed and his/her surrounding family, possibly a "battle in which an ancestor of the patient killed an enemy warrior whose spirit has now returned, and there is thus a strong element of culpability which must be accepted and 'paid for' by the patient." (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:129) Chief Gcaleka stated that he is both an *amakhosi* (referring to his concept of 'African ancestors') and *amandawu* diviner, hence if somebody kills him, "he will come back as a destroying spirit."

Chief Gcaleka continued to explain that once an Ndau spirit has found a "powerful *idlozi*", that is the ancestor of a person who is financially stable with a successful business and homelife, the spirit will capture the *idlozi* and weaken it, by effectively assuming its power. The outcome of such action is devastating, as the living descendant concerned will be dogged by misfortunes, such as bankruptcy, violence and corruption. Hammond-Tooke has described such untreatable illness as the spirit "'pressing down' the patient because it wishes to manifest itself through a human medium." (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:128) Chief Gcaleka stated that the solution for the person concerned is to consult a diviner, who will speak to the angry invading ancestor (*uza kuthetha ithongo*). During the consultation, the diviner will uncover the 'spiritual take-over' with a *-vumisa* session. The only way to subdue the angry *amandawu* in such a case, would be for a member of the person's family

to become a diviner and *-thwasa* in the way of the *amandawu*⁵³.

I asked what the outcome would be if there was apparently nobody who could *-thwasa* and Chief Gcaleka replied that there would always be someone who would undergo initiation and accept Ndaus spirit. By entering into the divination profession, the initiate would be directly responsible for "bringing back the spirit of the ancestors to replace the 'taken over' spirit of *Ndaus*." The initiate must first undergo initiation under *amakhosi* ancestors, before undertaking initiation according to *amandawu* patterns. The spirit-specific training processes involve the regular performance of the songs of *amandawu*.

Chief Gcaleka states that the Ndaus ancestor is extremely powerful, and it always wants to lead. Similarly in a musical context, the songs of *amandawu* are so powerful that when he kneels down to dance in such songs, Chief Gcaleka feels that he would be able to dance for hours without injuring himself. He boasted to me that he could perform the *amandawu* dance on his knees all the way from New Crossroads to the College of Music in Rondebosch without a bruise to show for it!

Furthermore, during my research in Swalala, Mphumalanga a tale of initiation into the profession of divination was related to me (in broken English with many attempts at translation by my informants). It concerned Gogo Lamashigo, a SiSwati speaking diviner who was born in 1924 and resides in Swalala. I was introduced to her by Gogo Morwadi, to whom she was a training diviner. She claimed that she underwent her training to become a diviner in 1933, under the tutelage of a white man. The subject of Gogo Lamashigo and

how she underwent her training came out of a song that was sung around the fire outside one evening. The lyrics were, "You killed me and I am not your nation. So I am here, I'm coming to you. "

From this, a discussion arose regarding the fate of the dead, who have been killed by people. The spirit of the dead person was referred to individually as an *idlozi* and collectively as *amadlozi*, or in English as 'spirit'. Hence, below I will use the terms interchangeably according to what my informants told me.

I ascertained that if somebody murders (kills) a person, the spirit of the deceased will come back through one of the murderer's children or even his/her grandchildren. The spirit will not come through the murderer himself - it will kill the murderer first. It was explained to me that if such ancestors (*amadlozi*) come out in the child of the murderer, the child will subsequently have to undergo *ukuthwasa*. The spirit (*idlozi*) does not dislike the child.

As an inexperienced field researcher, I had at the time, no knowledge of the myth of the Ndau ancestors, and hence I failed to see the important implications of this song until many months later. Its ideology correlated exactly with the information I received from Chief Gcaleka in subsequent fieldwork.

Noting the lyrics of the song, which owing to the circumstances, exist only in English for me (and of which I unfortunately have no recording, the tape recorder had slipped into pause mode!) "You killed me and I am not your nation. So I am here, I'm coming to you,"

one can quite safely assume that Gogo Lamashigo was singing of the Ndaus, who are not of the Swazi nation. As Chief Gcaleka described the Ndaus, they look for powerful ancestors in the sea, which they overtake, and they avenge anyone who kills a person vested with Ndaus, through spiritual control.

Gogo Lamashigo was in such a situation whereby she underwent her training with a white man outside Nelspruit, whose father had killed a black man and buried him under an orange tree. The father took seven cows from the dead man. "That man came out of that body of the (white) boy." (Gogo Morwadi). Gogo Morwadi said:

You see, when they find out that the father of that child killed that man, the spirit comes out in that white man, and then he talks - he will say, 'My father killed a black man and buried him under a *lemoen* tree.' And then that people go to the family and tell them - Masango's (family name of the man who was killed).

In speaking to my informants and witnessing some of their *amandawu* rituals, I began to realise that I was dealing with ancestors that had a connection with spirit possession. Spirit possession is commonly associated with mediums, who in certain African societies, are distinct from diviners, yet in others, a medium may work as a diviner or herbalist. Also, a diviner may work in conjunction with a medium in order to ascertain particular information from the spirit world. Generally, "mediums function in this role only when 'possessed' by a spirit, otherwise they are normal people without specialised abilities." (Mbiti, 1990:167) Collins notes that possession rituals are those in which "gods, demons, and so on, take up temporary residence in human beings, permitting a person to alter his identity." (1978:50) Dr Alcinda Honwana defines spirit possession as "a particular state in which an individual

experiences the temporary dislodgement of his/her own soul which is replaced by someone else's soul, who takes control over his/her faculties and identity." (1996:38)

It is contended that possession cults emerged initially in Zimbabwe, yet now such cults have been recorded amongst the Tsonga, Venda, Ndaue, Pedi, Lovedu, Kgaga and Zulu people, geographically located in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mphumalanga, the Northern Province and Mozambique. The Zulu terminology for one such cult is *amandiki* (or *indiki* spirits). The noun, *indiki* refers to a person "suffering from a hysterical disease (as known among the Tsonga people); or a person possessed." (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:538) Ngubane records that this form of spirit possession developed fairly recently, and it is associated with "African industrial development." (1977:142) Hammond-Tooke also notes that possession cults are a recent development in Nguni world view, and they have probably only infiltrated the religious system since the turn of the century. He attributes such an influence to be a consequence of the ever-changing environment and lifestyle of Africans, who have subsequently broadened their "cosmological horizons", including their belief in "the power of *alien* spirits." (1989:126)

Amandiki have been described and documented as spirits of the deceased, who have not been treated by their living relatives to the *-buyisa* ritual over an extended period of time. Without the enactment of the ritual, the spirit of the deceased transforms into a malevolent *indiki* spirit, permanently capable of great harm. The most harrowing of these spirits are said to be those of Mozambican extraction, especially in the case of deceased migrants' spirits, who have not been returned to their native land. The problem concerning these

migrants is that their families may not even be aware of their death on South African soil. (Ngubane, 1977:142) "Unanchored in the social structure and uncontrolled by the system of sacrificial appeasement, these spirits are undomesticated and wild, hence anti-social and evil." (Kiernan in Prozesky & de Gruchy, 1995:80) *Indiki* possession is therefore linked to the growth of industry and the migrant labour system, and is concerned with male spirits. (Ngubane 1977:142-3)

Both Ngubane (1977:142) and Hammond-Tooke (1989) label *indiki* spirits as *amandawo/amandawe* respectively, ie the same category of spirit. This was verified by Honwana in a personal communication. Marwick, who refers to this category of spirits as *Mandzawe*, relates the following story concerning their origin. Several symbolic parallels can be drawn between the below-mentioned account and Chief Gcaleka's account:

In the time of Mbandzeni an *impi* (army) went into Portuguese territory near the Black Mbuluzi River and came upon a people there with *sibongo* (clan or praise name) Mndzawe. The warriors saw a herd of cattle and seized them and were about to kill them when these Mndzawe people warned them not to since they were *tinkomo temadloti* (cattle of the ancestral spirits). The Swazi scoffed at them and ate the cattle. When they returned home, they were possessed by this peculiar spirit, which made them talk in the tongue of these foreign people (BaThonga). So many people became possessed that Mbandzeni sent for the doctor of the Mndzawe people to come and exorcise the spirits. The means adopted by the doctor to exorcise the spirits was to beat on a drum made of an empty clay pot (*ludziyo*) with a skin stretched over the mouth and tapped with a reed. The spirit is said to be a person who was a Mndzawe doctor in his former existence and who can speak through a person possessed, who is *sishingane*. There are recognised songs which are sung while the drums are being beaten by spectators. People sit in a ring round the patient while the drums are being beaten and the patient must dance with abandon until he falls down exhausted. The spirit is exorcised in this manner. (Marwick, 1966:238-9)

It is documented in Schapera that Shangana-Tsonga diviners believe in definite possession

by ancestors, the latter of which may be from foreign tribes. Also, "the spirits sometimes appear to certain selected persons. Persons of a hysterical disposition, for example, may have visions or fall into trances during which they experience hallucinations, taken as revelations from the spirit world. Or, particularly among the Nguni and Shanga-Tsonga, the ancestor spirits may actually enter into and 'possess' a woman, and far less frequently, men, and use them as mediums." (Eislen & Schapera, 1962:253)

Ngubane describes the onset possession by an *indiki* (*indawu*) spirit as visible derangement in the sufferer, who will start "crying in a deep bellowing voice and speaking in a foreign tongue, usually identified as one of the languages spoken by people in the north." (1977:143) Treatment for this condition must be administered by a diviner who has experienced possession by *amandawu* him/herself. Ngubane mentions that the sufferer will have to undergo a short period of initiation "into the spirit cult, about three months or less. During this period the treatment aims to exorcise the alien spirit and replace it with one of a male ancestor." (1977:143)

During this period, the subject observes several practices associated with an *ithwasa*, such as cleansing with the use of emetics (both red and white⁵⁴), abstinence and by wearing strips of goat skin. The subject must also sing and dance, as an initiate diviner must do. Once again, I draw a parallel to Chief Gcaleka's belief that a person possessed by *amandawu* must undergo initiation (into the cult). Whilst Chief Gcaleka states further that the person must become a diviner, Ngubane mentions that:

The main difference between the *indiki* initiand and the traditional initiand is

that the former attempts to arouse her spirit in order to regain her health, with no intention of becoming a fully-fledged diviner for the rest of her life. The effort to become possessed is made consciously, whereas possession of the traditional neophyte is not induced. It is the ancestors who choose to possess her even against her will. (Ngubane, 1977:143, underlining mine)

Although the initiate becomes a member of the spirit cult for a short period whilst under treatment, this membership slowly subsides and is replaced by a more acceptable form of ancestral possession, which is still useful in several ways. Ngubane notes that, "For instance, if she [the subject] belongs to an independent sect that practises an ecstatic type of worship, such an *indiki* will promote powers of prophecy and healing; alternatively, she may be possessed in the traditional way by ancestral spirits and become a fully-fledged diviner who will have the special ability of treating *indiki* patients." (1977:143-4)

Furthermore, a basic difference between divination practice and possession cults, is that "Nguni divination is an example of *spirit mediumship*, in which the diviner acts as a conduit, as it were, for the ancestors, but in which there is no *possession* by the spirit. In the possession cult, on the other hand, it is believed that the personality of the possessing spirit is not simply being expressed, but rather that the spirit itself has taken over the host's body." (Boersema in Hammond-Tooke, 1989:127) Hammond-Tooke mentions that "the cult...seems never to have penetrated as far south as the Cape Nguni or South Sotho", the reason being that of the "superficial similarity between it and Nguni-style divination." (1989:127) In my own research, I have therefore been surprised to find certain elements of spirit possession penetrating the practices of my diviner informants, and I was further surprised by the reactionary opinions held by my informants, who do not subscribe to these practices.

"The crucial point about possession cults...is that they concern spirits that are either alien, or are *individualised* ancestral spirits - that is, they are not part of the ancestral 'collectivity' that forms the descent group pantheon." (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:127) In the case of *amandawu* possession, the subject is chosen by an alien spirit and not an ancestor. (Ngubane, 1977:143) In the case of Chief Gcaleka and Gogo Morwadi, who profess to use them, it is evident through their opinion that these spirits are remote. Gogo Morwadi has explained that she cannot understand what these spirits "say" and she needs other ancestors to interpret for her.

Gogo Morwadi trained in Swazi divination methods, and it has been implied, but not verified that Chief Gcaleka either did the same, or that he trained with a Zulu diviner despite the fact that he is of Xhosa cultural origin. I have ascertained from my informants and friends that it is generally accepted that Zulu and Swazi diviners may train in *amandawu* divination methods. However, I have already made some mention that presently the adoption of foreign spirits into a diviner's belief system, as is the case with Chief Gcaleka and Gogo Morwadi, is met with mixed feeling, notably by fellow Xhosa-speaking students and my other two informants, David and Makhosi Athobile.

The issue of a Xhosa person, like Chief Gcaleka, training under the direction of a cultural 'outsider' is deemed contentious and unethical amongst many Xhosa, hence Chief Gcaleka is secretive regarding his training, and he was reluctant to elaborate upon it during interviews. He stated that, "You want to know things about people who have undergone the

process of *ukuthwasa* when you have not undergone the process. I cannot tell you everything."⁵⁵ (The issue has repercussions in that his status as diviner remains unrecognised by certain Xhosa-speaking people, yet despite being a controversial figure, Chief Gcaleka continues to enjoy a large following of initiates and clientele alike.)

Makhosi Athobile feels that it is acceptable for a Swazi to 'train under Ndau' (involving the learning of Ndau divination practices), but it is not the place for a Xhosa to do so. This view is held by several of my Xhosa associates. Furthermore, a possible reason for the reactions of many who do not follow him, has much to do with how he has manipulated cosmological concepts (as have several diviners I have met). This influences his music structurally and stylistically and subsequently makes it very interesting.

David goes further to distinguish such diviners from those who train in Xhosa methods, by calling them *oothokoza*⁵⁶, as opposed to *amagqirha*. He described this as follows:

Oothokoza like to do this when they talk to you. [David executed a double clap.] They wear these beads of black and white and a *lihiya*. They may wear these white beads, which I wear as well, but all these red-and-white dressed people, they are all the same. You see white people in this way also - that should tell you that there are two different ways with which we are dealing here. With these people, they slaughter a chicken or something...they have to drink the blood of a chicken. It is completely different, and believe me, there is no way that you can communicate with your *izinyanya* through that. You must use either a goat or an ox, chickens do not bellow!

This way is a short cut. For these people to become *inyanga* [sic -herbalist] it takes about three to six months, whereas with a normal Xhosa *igqirha*, it takes years. This is a quick way out. There is also not much expense involved with this procedure. With me, I had to slaughter a goat the first time and the second time, then it's *inkomo* [ox] and another *inkomo*...With them, they always use chickens, and it is usually a black chicken. That is for the dark side of the spirit. Black goes with the dark side of the spirit. It is mainly the blood that they want, because whatever they [were given] to eat [the medicine eaten

during the training], has got to go with that blood and that will stay in the stomach all the time.

There is a difference between my *ubugqirha* and these people's *ubugqirha* [the *othokoza*]. We did not all go through the same procedure. They have a different way which is very much questionable to us. An *othokoza* training is quite different to mine [training]. Take for instance a Xhosa person who undergoes training with a Swazi or Shangaan - they are very similar. It will take him/her only 3-6 months to train. They have medicines which they use in order to *call*, what they label as *idlozi zakho* [their ancestor]. They call the *idlozi* and say, "Listen, we are not here to wait for ten years until you make up your mind. Come now!" For this, they use a special medicine. Obviously, the answer [of the *idlozi*] would come from them [the trainer - *othokoza*] and not through the initiate. They would then tell the initiate what to do.

K: So these people do not necessarily get *ukuthwasa* and dream?

D: They just learn, and the trainer teaching that person will obviously have to feed that person medicine, in order that he/she will start dreaming about these things. That is how it goes. It is not the right way - but the person will start to see things.

K: I have heard that these diviners work with *indiki* or *amandawu* spirits. Are you familiar with such spirits?

D: No, but I know that these people are also quite good with medicine. I am not exactly sure of this, but some people say that it is actually ants which they use - ants from the graveyard. Those ants can also be used...say, for example, I hate you for some reason, and I want you to suffer, or your parents to suffer. Then I will feed you with those ants, and that will give you a stroke for the rest of your life⁵⁷.

K: That is frightening. Are they not then like *abathakathi*?

D: They are. That is another distinction between an *igqirha* and these people. [The latter] are more of *abathakathi* than *igqirha*. An *igqirha* is *not* allowed - his ancestors do not allow him to use dirty *amayeza* [medicine]. But these people are allowed to, they can use any kind. That is the difference between us and them, because that is how they start to use the dark side of the spirit world, which allows them to do whatever they want to do - a dirty trick or a dirty medicine.

K: Do you believe that all Swazi diviners are evil?

D: Not all of them, but most of them. It has to do with the kind of medicine which they use. The Xhosa, when it comes to medicine...I do not want to say that they are weaker than the Swazi, but we do not use the kind of

medicine which they use.

It is apparent in David's opinion that *oothokoza* diviners are ominous. Although he did not make a connection between these diviners and *amandawu*, he definitely acknowledges the 'foreignness' of the ancestors used by these diviners in training. They are not concerned with using their own paternal ancestors. David stated:

A question I have about this is, "Where does my *ubugqirha* come from?" It comes from the natural, Xhosa *igqirha*, not something that was Xhosa, then Swazi and whatever else. That means that I must go through it *isiXhosa*, and not jump from it to Swazi or to Venda, or another culture. Also, what about my kids? *Ubugqirha* works like this:- anything which I fail to do whilst I am still alive will become the responsibility of someone else, which they will have to take on and do. If I do things the Swazi way, it will result in my kids also doing it that way. According to *amaphupha* [dreams], (which was originally *amaXhosa*), they will not be changed, even if I do things a different way. The original *ubugqirha* will still be there. So my kids will have to go through the process the right way to put right what I did.

You have to realise that you will have to help someone else who may have the same problem that you have today. So if you do not do things the right way, how are you going to help the next person, who will not know what to do? You need to have the experience in doing things the proper way, in order to help the next person. That is how it goes.

This description is echoed by Ngubane, who further substantiates David's feelings on the subject. She mentions that spirit possession, for instance in the case of *amandawu*, "is conceptualised as violation of the principle of patrilineage. A spirit that takes possession indiscriminately outside the patrilineal descent principle is thus regarded as evil. The evilness inheres not so much in the spirit itself as in confusing the categories." (1977:146)

Makhosi Athobile subsequently informed me of similar stories relating to the growing tendency of diviners to train in methods which involve the adoption of foreign spirits. Being

aware that certain diviners use *amandawu* spirits, Makhosi Athobile's evidence confirms David's story, in that she told me that the initiates in question will drink a special medicine during their training which, accompanied by the Ndau dance at *iintlombe*, will make them go into 'trance'⁵⁸, to the extent that they cannot remember what they have said when they come out of it. (As mentioned above.) Moreover, she has noted that an increasing number of novices and diviners are wanting to undergo Ndau training, to allow them to go into trance. The process of training under Ndau spirits seems to be becoming the 'vogue', she says, "People want to *-thwasa lomNdawu* firstly because they say that 'everyone is doing it' and secondly, so that they can go into trance when they dance [at *iintlombe*]." Makhosi Athobile has been horrified when she has been approached by people who want to be trained in this way. Such people have not been called to train under these conditions, nor are they doing it for the right reasons. Her story reads thus:

In August 1996, Makhosi Athobile was walking in the vicinity of Mowbray taxi rank, when she noticed two diviners, a man and a woman, pass by and enter a shop. Being a diviner herself, Makhosi Athobile greeted them with "*'camagu*", however; they did not take notice until they came out of the shop. They stopped and asked Makhosi Athobile if she was a diviner and she showed them her wrist beads. The three of them began to chat and then the two diviners asked Makhosi Athobile if she still trained initiates. Makhosi Athobile replied that she did and then the two diviners told her that they were looking for someone to train them in "Ndau", and could she help them. As a Bhaca-trained diviner herself, Makhosi Athobile was horrified that these two diviners wished such from her, let alone that they seemed to be Xhosa diviners. In addition they were not called involuntarily to train with

aware that certain diviners use *amandawu* spirits, Makhosi Athobile's evidence confirms David's story, in that she told me that the initiates in question will drink a special medicine during their training which, accompanied by the Ndau dance at *iintlombe*, will make them go into 'trance'⁵⁸, to the extent that they cannot remember what they have said when they come out of it. (As mentioned above.) Moreover, she has noted that an increasing number of novices and diviners are wanting to undergo Ndau training, to allow them to go into trance. The process of training under Ndau spirits seems to be becoming the 'vogue', she says, "People want to *-thwasa lomNdawu* firstly because they say that 'everyone is doing it' and secondly, so that they can go into trance when they dance [at *iintlombe*]." Makhosi Athobile has been horrified when she has been approached by people who want to be trained in this way. Such people have not been called to train under these conditions, nor are they doing it for the right reasons. Her story reads thus:

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such techniques. It seems amongst the majority of Xhosa, that for a Xhosa diviner to train under Ndaun techniques is highly unacceptable and controversial. Taken aback, Makhosi Athobile asked them why they wanted to train in such a way and they replied that they wished to undergo trance (when divining) "because everyone is doing it." Makhosi Athobile hastily terminated the conversation and told them that she wanted nothing more to do with them.

Whilst mentioning the *othokoza's* skill in fortune telling, David also said that the medicine during training allows for such talent:

When it comes to telling someone...well this person is like a fortune teller; they tell you your fortune, they are good, as well as anybody. But the way they go through this [*ukuthwasa*] is quite different. I am a Xhosa, and Xhosa do not go through this. It is mostly Zulu...Shangaans, SiSwatis and all those people that side, that part of the world. Otherwise, with Xhosa, we do not follow this. Any Xhosa who goes through this...he is really just studying or learning to become an *inyanga*. Obviously for this person to be able to tell you about yourself, her or she will have to eat something that will stay in the stomach and use that to be able to tell you. Otherwise, that is not the normal way.

David told me that *oothokoza* often profess to owning *amakhosi* ancestors, yet these are not genuine. This is allegedly proven by the fact that after consulting their *amakhosi*, the *othokoza* will have no recollection of what the ancestors said to him/her. He relates two experiences he has had with two *oothokoza*:

There are two kinds of *amakhosi*. What the *othokoza* calls *amakhosi*, are totally different - they do not really use *amakhosi*. It is more a result of that stuff which they eat or drink [when they train]. I would not say that I hate what these people do, but I can say that I do not like it. Some people suffer as a result of the stuff that these people let them use. For somebody to be able to prophesise, what they do...I know because I went to one once. Someone had

told me that this woman was good, so I thought that I would go and find out a thing or two.

I went inside [her place] and I was ordered to be seated. She told me to listen carefully to what I was about to be told. She then took a 'lappie' and she covered her face. She had a whistle and she blew it (it is something that these [type of diviners] use). The whistle was used to bring those things up [the *amakhosi*], so that they could start talking. After she had done that, she started to tell me about all my problems. When she had finished, she was wet with sweat. She asked me whether I was happy [satisfied]. I answered that I was indeed, however, I had a few questions to ask. She retorted, "Did you not ask?" I replied that I still wished to learn more. She told me that there was nothing more that she could do at that point.

The woman then wanted to know what 'they' had said. Confused, I asked her who she was talking about. She replied that she wanted to know what the *amakhosi* had said. It was then that I realised that she did not know a thing. It was not her talking - she did not know a *thing*, because I had to *tell* her, what she told me, supposedly.

Those are the things that I do not like about those *sangomas*. Even with some of them, when they have used their spirit, they will collapse. It will take them a couple of minutes before they can come to their senses again, and believe me, they do not know what happened. That is probably why I do not like the way they [practise divination].

It is because of the medicine which they take. Even you - you can take that medicine and become one. Now some of those people, they use that stuff in the Zion church. Take for instance someone like me, if I am in the church and I come across one of those people using that medicine, if I was not an *amaKrista* [Christian], I would start grabbing them and start beating them. That is the way I would feel in church. Even if they did not have their outfit on, I would just feel...I would say then that the *izinyanya* of the jungle would start coming out!

Once I visited a woman in Khayelitsha. I was told that she was not feeling well. She complained of stomach pain and she asked me to take her to another person in Khayelitsha who would be able to tell her what was wrong. When we arrived there, we took off our shoes and we entered the man's room. The man wore red and white beads on his wrists, so immediately I knew that he was a *sangoma*. He had some calabashes hanging on the wall, and he sat under them. When we started the consultation, he knocked on the calabash with a stick several times. He then bent over as if to listen to it. I heard a faint whispering sound emanating from the calabash. It was these things talking to him [from the calabashes]. They are not real *amakhosi* though.

K: Are you sure it was not just the man making those sounds?

D: No, it was those things talking to him. We could not hear [what they were saying]. He would reply to them, "Yes, mm...Yes?" They do not have a name for those things, so they just call them *amakhosi*. Maybe it

works the same way as real *amakhosi* do. There is imitation in everything these days!

I realised after he had finished that if I had asked him to go over those things, he would not be able to tell me [what had been said]. They call those things *amakhosi*, but they are not. You have to be *born* with *amakhosi*, they are not something that you can just go to the shop and buy.

David's final statement is pertinent to the authenticity of some diviners who profess to use *amakhosi* in divination procedures. Ngubane notes that this technique "is the highest in the graded scale of divination" (1977:103) and naturally in certain circumstances it would prove considerably effective. Therefore it is not surprising that so many diviners would profess to possess *amakhosi*, even if they did not. Ngubane describes the procedure involved in such a consultation, similar to the one described above by David, however, she states that it is the diviner's responsibility to interpret the words of the *amakhosi*:

The whistling sound (ventriloquism?) comes directly from the rafters of the thatched roof, particularly at the upper part of the rondavel hut opposite the doorway...If the clients are unable to understand some of the whistled words she interprets them. The client is free to ask questions of the whistling spirits and the spirits reply. The clients never provide clues. (Ngubane, 1977:103)

In closing the issue on the authenticity of diviners, I refer to a discussion between Makhosi Athobile and a Xhosa colleague of mine. My colleague and his sister had sought the advice of a diviner regarding a dream which they had both experienced. He complained that they consulted three separate diviners, and had spent an enormous amount of money before the third diviner was able to give them a satisfactory answer as to the nature their dream. This brought to mind Ngubane's statement that "In cases of private matters or minor issues the client seeks an assurance from the diviner. He already has an opinion, but he wants it confirmed." (Ngubane, 1997:103)

Finding a consulting diviner is rather like finding a health practitioner in the Western sense: one is faced with a range of options and some practitioners may not be effective in some people's eyes but to others, they may be a blessing. Of course one will always come across frauds in society as well. With regard to my informants, I am fully aware of the opinions held by African friends and several academics at the university, about my informants' authenticity or lack thereof. Fundamentally it is not the purpose of this dissertation to cast judgement over any of my informants - I merely document the tales of their experience. It is to be acknowledged that all of them have a role within their communities, either as a diviner with a consultancy or the *umfundisi* of a church congregation.

NOTES

1. *isihlwele* (Xh) a retinue, band, company; a number of people; a crowd, multitude. (McLaren, 1994:62)
2. *umthunzi* (Z) may refer to a soul or personality (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:809)]
3. *Ukugodusa* (Xh and Z) to bring or send home. (McLaren 1994:46) Also cited in SiSwati as *ukubuyisa lidloti* ('after the death of a man, his 'spirit is brought back'.") (Marwick, 1966:225)
4. *imbeleko* (Xh) literally a present given for attending at a child-birth; a small skin used for strapping a child onto one's back. (McLaren, 1994:10)
5. *inkathazo* (Xh) trouble, annoyance (given), from verb, *-khathaza* (McLaren, 1994: 69) *-khathazo* (Z) worry, annoyance, vexation, pestering, importunity. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:384)
6. *umcimbi* (Xh and Z), a subject or matter to be discussed; an affair or business to attend to. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:121; McLaren, 1994:23)
7. In Swazi cosmology, there are several classes of spirits which are perceived, in a "magical way", to possess people. Amongst these classes are the *Mandzawe* (*amandawu* - Xh), *Mafefenyane* (*ufufunyana* - (Z), *Mandziki* (*indiki* - Z) and the *bagadzi* (*ukugadza*, derived from the English word 'guard') spirits. (Marwick, 1966:239) The latter are said to be used as a replacement and a protective entity/measure following the removal of a *Mafefenyane* spirit from a possessed person. (ibid) (One can see the similarity which arises from the terminology.)
The *Makhosi* form another class, seemingly "a specialised form of the *bagadzi* spirits which are able to speak through a person possessed and to divine for people. The medium may recall the spirit at will and, becoming possessed, he can make divinations. The spirit is of some foreign person who has travelled all over the world and who knows the doings of the whole universe, and can read into the future and diagnose the cause of sickness." (Marwick, 1966:239-240)
8. *Umlozi* (Z) a soft whistling within the hut; ventriloquist. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:45) Also Ngubane, 1997:103. *Abalozi* are also recognised to be ventriloquist diviners.
9. *Umsamo* (Z) The back part of the hut (within), the part opposite the doorway. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:723)
10. From *ihlathi* (Xh) a forest, bush, wood; a hiding place, refuge, shelter. (McLaren, 1994:58)
11. The term *ukufukama* (Xh) means to brood, sit, lie in; digest its prey (of a snake). (McLaren, 1994:40) In her work, Bührmann describes *-fukamela* (Z) Be confined for; sit

(on eggs); give shelter to, aid, defend, comfort. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:215) the term as for "a brooding hen sitting on a clutch of eggs to hatch out chickens". (1984:74)

12. It has been noted by Hammond-Tooke that it is important to understand "the diviner in terms of the perceptions of the people themselves." (1989:116) One should avoid labelling such conditions with western terminology, which may have connotations.

13. Terminology for 'witch' includes: *igqwirha* (Xh) a wizard, magician, sorcerer, one guilty of unnatural crimes (McLaren, 1994:50) or *umthakathi* (McLaren, 1994:156); *umthakathi wesifazane* (Z) (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:564); *umtsakatsi* (SiS) (Rycroft, 1982:186)

Terminology for 'sorcerer' includes: *igowina* (Xh) (Elliot, 1970:106), *umthakathi* (Z) (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:455) Gogo Morwadi uses the term *igehle* (*amagehle* pl.) to describe 'a doctor who uses dirty medicine and sends snakes' to bring people misfortune (no dictionary simile found). She states that, "They *-thakatha* you."

14. Literally meaning "lightning" (Z). (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:89)

15. One such incident occurred during my fieldwork in Swalala, where at a meeting of diviners, a diviner 'fortuned' Gogo Morwadi and told her that some form of evil had been put on our car, so that on our return, we would run the risk of having an accident. The car was to be 'doctored' by the diviners with 'medicine' before we returned home. Gogo Morwadi told me afterwards that the diviner who read her fortune, had not been told about her accident on the way back from Swalala the previous year, but described it in detail to Gogo Morwadi and warned her of a repeat occurrence.

16. From *-khaba* kick, shout. (McLaren, 1994:68)

17. Meaning that the man is good with (in) *uMoya*. (Xh) the/a spirit, ghost, apparition. (McLaren, 1994:90), in context of the Zionist Church faith, sometimes meaning the Holy Spirit..

18. "Her news." *Iindaba* (Xh) news, tidings, intelligence, information. (McLaren, 1994:27)

¹⁹ David described this condition to mean "like a ghost". *Isithunzela* (Xh) a shade, ghost, spectre, apparition. (McLaren, 1994:170) Also *isithunzi* (Xh) the shadow of a man, beast, stick, etc (McLaren, 1994:170)

20. David described these figures in English as 'wizards'. *Igqwirha* (Xh) is a wizard, magician, sorcerer; one guilty of unnatural crimes. (McLaren, 1994:50)

21. *umkhovu* (Z) i) Familiar of a wizard by whom he is used for night bewitching; believed to be an exhumed corpse of a dead person. ii) A goblin, fabulous dwarf. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:497)

22. *inyoka* (Xh) snake, serpent (McLaren, 1994:118)
23. *insila* (Z) dirt; body dirt. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:755)
24. *-lumba* (Z) To do wonders, perform conjuring tricks; make inventions/ to indulge in occult practices; practise witchcraft/ to concoct, fabricate, invent stories ; tell lies. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakzi, 1990:468)
25. *ukuphalaza* (Xh) to pour out, spill out, empty or throw away; make overflow. (McLaren, 1994:123) Also, to clear the stomach by vomiting; take an emetic for health purposes (Z). (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:644) A term used by informants to mean vomit/purge.
26. *ukhumba* (Z) Beast given to a bride to be killed at her new home. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:413.)
27. "Things of witchcraft", from *into* (Xh) a thing, article, object of any kind; a subject matter. (McLaren, 1994:161)
28. To *-xhentsa* (Xh) means to "dance singly, or two together, with violent contortions." (McLaren, 1994:184)
29. *Ihlombe* is an aspect of music making noted amongst the Xhosa as "intense feelings of joyous, exalted excitement [which] are always experienced by people when they sing and dance together." (Hansen, 1981:24) This is demonstrated in the descriptions by my informants, as given in the main body of the text.
30. *camagu!* Pardon! Be gracious! Be pacified! be appeased! (addressed to (it) ancestral spirits, witchdoctors and displeased chiefs (McLaren, 1994:20)
31. *-vumisa* (Xh) agree. (McLaren, 1994:178)
33. "*N/um* is a substance that lies in the pit of the stomach of men and women, who are *n/um k"ausi* - medicine owners - and becomes active during a healing dance. The !Kung believe that the movements of the dancers heat the *n/um* up, and when it boils it rises up the spinal cord and explodes in the brain." (Lee, 1984:139) Lee also states that *n/um* has a variety of meanings, including "medicine, energy, power, special skill, or anything out of the ordinary." (ibid, 1984:139)
34. An excellent illustration of such cultural diversity occurred at an *intlombe* in one of the Cape townships (May, 1996) which was attended by a Zulu diviner, his contingent and entourages of Swazi and Xhosa diviners. The Zulu diviner and his initiates took to the floor first, and began a dance form reminiscent of Zulu *indlamu*, which contained actions of *ukugiya* (simulated battle antics, including kicking and stamping, which are associated with ritual sacrifice). The Swazi and Xhosa diviners did not last very long in this episode, because the dancing was so distinct from that of their own culture, but they took to the

stage with their own entourages.

The change in dance form was notable when the Swazi diviners performed *-gida* with galvanic treading actions. Such an event proved to me the necessity for a diviner to appear with a contingent of other diviners and even family and friends, who will provide the musical backup in singing and dancing for the diviner. An *intlombe* can often host such a diversity of culture, that diviners need an entourage in order to ensure that there will be musical support. Lack thereof is deemed highly detrimental to the diviner, and for some, it becomes an endurance contest to see who can "stamp on the others and *-gida* all night." At the above mentioned *intlombe*, for example, the Swazi diviners were in the minority, and apart from members of their family, no one was very familiar with their songs, and the spectators were not particularly enthusiastic with their singing.

35. *Ubulawu* is synonymous with *imphehlo*, which are known as "medicine specially prepared to build up *izangoma* to divine clearly in their practice." (Gumede, 1990:74) Chief Gcaleka described the medicine as coming from a tree in the forest, the root of which was eaten by "our ancestors, the Bushmen."

I have witnessed Chief Gcaleka making use of *ubulawu* in conjunction with the commencement of an *intlombe*, to effect communication with the ancestors. He has stated that "those who have not eaten the medicine [*ubulawu*] will lack strength of spirit." (Translation from Xhosa, Mcebisi Ntleki)

Makhosi Athobile has made reference to *ubulawu* during her training:

The first day that I went to my teacher, she gave me the date of when she would start to work on me. On that day, they would *-phehla* with *ubulawu* for me. They put [the bucket] on my head and let it foam over me. It came all over me and then I drank [the rest of the mixture]. The foam was also smeared on my body and wiped in my nose and ears. It is necessary for the foam to come out and flow over and then for the *thwasa* to drink it, because it will clear the head. Then the *-thwasa* will understand...she will stop wondering, "Who is this now?", [when she dreams of her ancestors]. Her dreams will become clearer.

36. *-dibanisa* (Xh) mix together, blend. (McLaren, 1994:29)

37. Note that the same adjective, *hlaza* (Xh), is used by the Xhosa to describe green and blue. (McLaren, 1994:59). My interview with David was, however, conducted in English and he did not make reference to the colours in Xhosa.

38. From *umlambo* (Xh) a river, stream, brook; diminutive *umlanjana*, a small river, brook, rivulet.

39. From *ihlathi* (Xh) a forest, bush, wood; a hiding place, refuge, shelter. (McLaren, 1994:58)

40. *Ingwe* (Z) is a leopard, *Felis pardus*. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:566)

41. *Igusha* (Xh) a merino sheep. (McLaren, 1994:52)

42. *ibhokhwe* (Xh) a goat. (McLaren, 1994:14)

43. Chief Gcaleka tends to interchange the terms *idlozi* and *ithongo* frequently in conversational Xhosa and English. This has proven problematic in some cases, where misinterpretation is difficult to avoid, especially considering that *ithongo* is also used by him to describe a "vision" (as opposed to a dream). *Ithongo* theoretically refers to an ancestor in Zulu. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana & Vilakazi, 1990:801) In Xhosa however, it may mean "a trance, a vision, dream" (McLaren, 1994:163), hence Chief Gcaleka is justified in his use of the word. Unfortunately, the lack of knowledge we share regarding the intricacies of each other's languages, coupled by inexperience as a researcher on my behalf, has possibly contributed towards instances of information passing like water under the bridge!

44. Meaning 'small children', from the Xhosa words *umntwana* (a child) and *ncinci* (very small). (McLaren, 1994:112 and 94)

45. *ufufunyana* (Z) is described as a "Rapidly spreading disease, which causes delirium and insanity; type of brain disease; mania; hysteria." (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:214)

46. The 'East Coasters' have been documented as synonymous with 'Shangaans' on the gold fields, yet the latter term "correctly used, should be applied to those people who adopted the material culture of the Gaza Nguni chief Shoshangane. Thus in present day South Africa, only the descendants of the Gaza Nguni immigrants who entered the eastern Transvaal after the second Luso-Gaza war of 1897, are officially classified 'Shangaan' or 'Tshangana' and in this way are distinguished from the descendants of earlier immigrants, the Tsonga, who were in most cases never under Gaza rule. Yet the word 'Shangaan' has become an all-embracing term used to refer to the Tsonga-speaking peoples of southeast Africa and, in a more general way, to all Mozambicans employed on the South African mines." (Harries in Vail, 1989:86)

47. Continued immigration was stimulated by the Gaza Civil war, through the mid-nineteenth century, with refugees settling in areas of the Northern Province, bringing with them new foodstuffs such as fowls, certain grains and maize. "These new foodstuffs, together with their techniques of preparation and cooking, served as cultural markers that defined these displaced people, in the eyes of the autochthonous population, as outsiders." (Harries in Vail, 1989:84) Although local chiefs were attracted to the lifestyle of these refugees, and tried to incorporate them into their own systems, the refugees formed scattered communities in the Northern Province. It was in the early twentieth century that these immigrants were officially designated the 'Tsonga-speaking people' by government authorities. (Harries in Vail, 1989,84)

48. *-shiya* (Xh) leave, leave behind, abandon, forsake, desert. (McLaren, 1994:150)

49. *-hlehla* (Z) 1. Recede, draw back, withdraw, retire, fall back, abandon a position 2. Be postponed, adjourned (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:325) (SiS) 1. To trot or march at 'the double', bearing weapons 2. parade or march past 3. (from Zulu) to retreat. (Rycroft, 1984:39)

50. I choose to describe this set of ancestors collectively as *amandawu*, as I feel that Chief Gcaleka's description is a personal one, whereas mine serves to describe these ancestors in situations which do not only relate to Chief Gcaleka's experience. In the following narrative, I will interchange both descriptions where appropriate.

51. *indleko* (Z) Loss, expense, expenditure, outlay (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:155) For example, in Nguni culture, it is acceptable for a man caught in such a situation to pay the father of the woman compensation in cattle. Following this, the child will be brought up by the woman's parents. (Elliot, 1970:75) Generally, however, it is not acceptable to bear a child out of wedlock amongst traditionalists. In the case of revealed adultery, a fine is payable. (Krige in Schapera, 1962:108-110)

52. Chief Gcaleka uses the term *amadlozi* to describe the ancestors. Ngubane distinguishes between different categories of ancestors, making a distinction between *ithongo*, which is an ancestor more than three generations removed, and *idlozi*, which is under three generations removed. If such ideology is applicable here, one could estimate that the remote *amandawu* take over the less remote *amadlozi*. Through possession, the *amadlozi* become more remote. (Ngubane, 1977: 143-44)

It should be noted that some of the meanings of certain terminology used by Chief Gcaleka do not correspond with definitions found in current academic literature. This has proven problematic in some cases, where misinterpretation is difficult to avoid. Certain words used by Chief Gcaleka that have contrasting meaning include the above mentioned *ithongo*, the latter of which he explicitly told me meant a "vision" (as opposed to a dream). *Ithongo* theoretically refers to an ancestor in Zulu. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana & Vilakazi, 1990:801) In Xhosa, however, it may mean "a trance, a vision, dream" (McLaren, 1994:163), hence Chief Gcaleka may be justified in his use of the word.

53. A distinction is made between initiation by the ancestors of *amakhosi*, as in Chief Gcaleka's case and *abaNguni*, in Gogo Morwadi's case. This is most obvious in the choice of sacrificial animals. I have noted in my fieldwork that ritual sacrifices to *amandawu* involve white fowls, whereas other ancestors prefer beasts - goats and cattle. Chief Gcaleka himself noted that it was a "very cheap" way to *-thwasa* "because *amandawu* do not like *ibhokhwe* [goat], they use chickens."

Another distinction can be made through the differences in prescriptive music involved in the rituals concerning these two categories of ancestors.

54. Ngubane makes mention of the use of both red and white emetics for the possessed subject on alternate days. "For this reason the initiand uses red emetics to remove the alien spirit, and white emetics to arouse her own spirits." (1977:143) Chief Gcaleka noted in this case that one gets white *ubulawu* and red *ubulawu*. The different spirit categories (nations) "eat" different *ubulawu*.

55. This statement was made during an interview between Chief Gcaleka, Ms Nunzia Faxi and myself, held for the most part in Xhosa. Although the statement was directed more towards Ms Faxi than to me, it was a result of the questions we were asking jointly.

56. From *-thokoza* (Z) 1. Be grateful, thankful, be happy, glad; express delight 2. Enjoy good health 3. Praise, express praise or gratitude for; give thanks to 4. Enjoy. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:799)

57. David may be referring to the condition of *ufufunyane*, which is a form of spirit possession. Ngubane mentions that this condition "is primarily due to sorcery, although chance is not ruled out as a secondary cause. A sorcerer is said to add soil from graves and ants from the graveyard to his harmful concoction. In this way the spirits of the dead are said to be captured and controlled by the sorcery." (1977:144) This medicine is laid in the path of the victim, who contracts *ufufunyane* through contact.

58. Blacking states that it would be encouraging if spirit possession and altered states of consciousness "were more widely accepted not as signs of some pathological or rare condition, but as common heritage of the human species." (1995:175)

CHAPTER 2

PROCESSES OF DIVINATION

It's the difficult way, not the easiest way...a lot of people don't want to take that way...but sometimes when it's catching you, it takes you so sick as though you are dead, and you sleep...and then you want to dance ...

Zulu diviner, name withheld.

BECOMING A DIVINER

Although processes of diagnosing, healing and treating various ills, as well as preventing them, are basic to the daily practice of diviners, they themselves have to undergo a 'healing' process when they are 'called' to the profession (*ukubiza*). There is little choice involved in becoming a diviner, and the diviner's path almost always begins with a 'calling' by the ancestors to 'do their work' and to train to become a diviner (*ukuthwasa*). The ancestors responsible for this calling generally constitute the deceased members of the subject's lineage, and they guide him/her through the vocational training. However, I have demonstrated in the previous chapter that in some cases diviners may adopt a more 'universal' approach to their choice and perception of their ancestors, either in the calling, or later on in the profession. (Hunter, 1969:320; Broster, 1982:22; Bührmann, 1984:36; Callaway in Peek, 1991:28)

Published literature on the subject postulates that the majority of diviners are women. My own fieldwork endorses such an opinion, since even in diviners' entourages, there are many more female than male initiates. The reasons for this state of affairs have not been discussed widely; however, although a number of authors have provided information on the matter.

Ngubane's explanations concerning the overwhelming number of women diviners are both intriguing and convincing. She maintains that more women are called to the profession than men because of their psychological and physiological attributes, and the pivotal role they play in situations of life and death. This is illustrated by the fact that the women are the bearers of children and hence they are responsible for bringing human life from the spiritual to the physical world, a process which places them in a marginal and potentially dangerous state. In such a state, a woman has *umnyama*¹ (blackness), in which she is susceptible to malevolent forces. *Umnyama* is therefore associated with stages of conception, childbirth and death and it varies in its intensity.

Umnyama is a term used metaphorically to symbolise death. Translated as 'pollution', it denotes a marginal state between life and death. It is both a state and a supernatural force that exposes a person to illness and misfortune, as it "diminishes resistance to disease, and creates conditions of poor luck...and repulsiveness." (Ngubane, 1977:77-78). *Umnyama* can be contaminative in aggravated states, yet it does not show somatic symptoms.

In the context of the life-cycle of conception, birth and death, a woman participates in all three stages, as a wife, as a mother, and ultimately, as chief mourner for her husband, because she is also responsible for returning the deceased to the spiritual world. Such a thought

pattern underlies Zulu mortuary rites, at which a close relative of the deceased person, who must be a married woman, is the principal mourner. It is the duty of the principal mourner to prepare the corpse for burial and at the graveside, to descend into the grave itself, in order to lay the deceased to rest, thus symbolically returning him/her to the 'womb' of 'mother earth'.² Rites such as these symbolise the entry of a man into the physical world through his mother and his return to the spiritual world upon his death through her. The woman is symbolically the channel through which a person may be delivered into the physical world. The chief mourner is the channel through which the deceased's soul may depart to the "other side".

Similarly, a diviner is thought to be in a marginal state, in that her closeness to the ancestral realm is associated with the transitional point between the life and death. However; a diviner does not have *umnyama*. Being one of the *abantu abamhlope*, ('People of the light'), the diviner remains in a state of purity and she is considered 'at one' with the ancestors. Unlike that of a pregnant woman, this state is not temporary but permanent, yet it is nevertheless a problematic one, since whilst experiencing it, the diviner has to reconcile herself with the 'impure', polluted world she occupies in reality. Her behaviour patterns are geared towards this necessary reconciliation, involving observances of ritual sacrifice and cleansing. Essentially, it is "through a woman [that] the transition of spiritual beings is made. This perception is crucial in that it explains why diviners are women and why men must become transvestites to become diviners." (Ngubane 1977:88)

This sexual ambiguity is also inherent in the act of a ritual killing, which, in most circumstances, is a male prerogative. However; a female diviner, if she is the officiant in the ritual, will take the sacrificial knife or spear and perform the killing herself. One may

question this ambivalent sexual ambiguity:- are diviners really perceived as feminine, or are they effectively above the realm of sexual identity?

In her research, Hansen has experienced a Xhosa male initiate diviner wearing a woman's dress, and in my research I have witnessed a similar phenomenon. (Hansen, 1984: plates 93, 94). Hansen's informants could not or would not explain this. I have noted that the vast majority of the Xhosa, Zulu and Swazi male diviners whom I have met, also wear skirts when attired in their regalia. This may refer to the traditional attire worn by many African men, of skins and short skirts. The deliberate wearing of a woman's dress, however; is a distinct phenomenon. A fellow student, Ms Nunzia Faxi ascertained from a diviner that male initiates wear the dresses of women during their novitiate because, whilst in training they are required by the diviner to carry out domestic duties that would otherwise be the work of a woman. These cases pertained to circumstances in which there was no female *ithwasa* present, which meant that the male *ithwasa* was expected to assume the role of a female initiate and her obligations. In that it is considered highly irregular for a man to perform such duties, the visual aspect of the dress informs those around that the wearer is experiencing a particular 'abnormal' state, hence giving a reason for his actions. Furthermore, Ngubane states that "divination is a woman's thing, and if a man gets possessed [by his ancestors,] he becomes a transvestite, as he is playing the role of a daughter rather than a son." (1977:142) This is attributable to the fact that the ancestors return to the world of the living through their daughters in whom they take possession. (See Plate 14)

The ambiguous sexual nature of diviners is discussed by Hammond-Tooke, who has described diviners' regalia as symbolically representing the androgenous phenomenon. "This

carrying of a spear by female diviners, coupled with the fact that the (few) male diviners wear white skirts, would seem to represent sexual ambiguity in the diviner's role, and it is tempting to see this as a symbolic expression of the more general structural ambiguity of these people who, in a very definite sense, mediate between the ancestors and the witches, between life and death." (Hammond-Tooke, (1975) 1989:107) [Underlining mine]

Thus, according to Ngubane, women, by their very psychological and physiological nature and their sexual function, are predisposed to the call to the office of diviner. My informants hold mixed opinions about women diviners being a majority. For instance, Makhosi Athobile does not feel that women diviners outnumber their male counterparts, however, she remarked that the onset of *ukuthwasa* is occurring at an increasingly younger age with both sexes. David, who did not think that there was a definite link between the lifecycle of a woman and the calling, holds an interesting view regarding why women are prone to *ukuthwasa*:

This is how I see it. Look for instance at my family. I know that my two sisters had the same symptoms [of *ukuthwasa*]. It depends on who the *izinyanya* would want desperately, depending on what they see in the particular person, and in a sense if that person were to go through with it, how he or she would perform. It could have been one of my sisters, but obviously they did not want to go through with this. But somebody had to take it. If that does not happen, one starts having problems in the family. So I would not say that it is more likely that a women will have to go through with this, it can be anybody in the family, the man or the woman. Obviously women always like to jump first, you know!

Regarding the preponderance of women in the divination profession, it is useful to consider the inherent conflicts in cases of *ukubiza* concerning married women. In that married women possess a double set of ancestors, it is necessary for the ancestors responsible for the call to be identified. Ngubane states that "the ancestors that possess a diviner are essentially her own paternal ancestors. If her maternal ancestors, such as her mother's father or mother's mother,

appear to her at all in dreams, they are usually on the fringe. The principle ones are always her paternal ancestors." (Ngubane, 1977:57)

However, taking Ngubane's viewpoint into consideration, in cases where the paternal ancestors of a woman are identified as being responsible for the call, then a clash over the range of ancestors may manifest itself in a situation involving a married woman who is called. This problem is usually resolved by the husband making a sacrifice to his ancestors, in order to permit the "diviner's (as the woman concerned) ancestors to operate within the homestead." The woman may not divine in her homestead without such a ritual being performed. (Ngubane, 1977:57) Hunter documents that a Mpondomise man may be called by both his mother or father's mother's ancestors (*amathongo*) and a woman may be called by the ancestors of her father, husband and her mother. The ancestors of "a man's father or a woman's father are always mainly responsible." (Hunter, 1969:324)

According to Berglund's Zulu informants on the subject, married women are likely to be the majority because they have a double set of ancestors; their own and those of their husband's, who are 'adopted' through marriage, hence the chances of ancestral calling are doubled. Gumede describes the circumstances involving *ukuthwasa ko mlobokazi*³ (sic), his interpretation being "the wife is possessed" (Gumede, 1990:74), the literal meaning, however, being "the *ukuthwasa* state of a close female friend." The actual state of *ukuthwasa* will be described in detail below. Gumede states that when a married Zulu woman experiences *ukuthwasa*, the need to determine the ancestors who are responsible may also be resolved through the enactment of a divination ritual by a diviner. Two goats are purchased as 'food' for the husband and wife's ancestors respectively. The goats are sacrificed and the *umswani*

(sic) (*umswami* -entrails) and *inyongo* (gall) of the two goats are mixed. The wife is expected to drink this mixture and apply it to her body. The remainder is added to *ubulawu*. This mixture is subsequently consumed by the wife, after which she has to *-phalaza*. During this phase of the ritual, the diviner will address the ancestors of the two families, asking them to reveal the one responsible for the possession. After this, the patient must wash her face with "white *ubulawu*⁴, in order that she may 'see' (divine) clearly." (Gumede, 1990:74) At this point, either the patient herself will become possessed by the spirit, who will speak through her, or the diviner will ascertain the ancestor responsible. Sometimes the diviner will 'read' the white *ubulawu*, as a divination technique, to determine the outcome. Once this ritual has been completed, the wife will be in the position to decide whether she wishes to become a diviner. If not, she remains free of the symptoms of *ukuthwasa*.

Literature regarding the identification of specific ancestors who are responsible for the *ukubiza* of a married descendant, states that a diviner identifies the ancestors responsible for the call. The ancestors in question are identified through the sacrifice of a goat of the husband's lineage. The gall of the animal is then sprinkled upon the initiate's head and upper body. The initiate must also drink some of the gall. The outcome is as follows: if the initiate has lucid dreams following the sacrifice, her husband's ancestors are responsible for the calling. If the dreams are still confusing, another goat will be sacrificed, this time from the initiate's father's stock in the hope that the ancestors are from the girl's own lineage. The importance of determining the ancestral lineage is twofold: i) the family (descendants) of the lineage has to provide the financial resources to meet the requirements of the training period; ii) the identified ancestors may not be suitable for such an undertaking, which would result in

the 'barring' of the ancestors responsible and the possibility of resisting the call (as found in cases of persons not wanting to undergo training) is considered. (Berglund, 1989:139).

In my own research, I have encountered several cases in which lineage clashes have had nothing to do with marital relationships, but instead have arisen over the religious circumstances in which the person affected, is involved. Although my findings are restricted to several isolated cases, I have found that all instances have been connected to the influence of the Zionist Church movement. They will be discussed in this context later.

Ultimately, in the case of anyone who is manifested with the calling, the ancestors responsible must be identified. This procedure is important, as the side of the family from which the calling comes, must take full responsibility for the afflicted person. David explained this to me, using his daughter as an example:

Say for instance that this little girl shows symptoms of *intwaso*, and I know that it is not in my family, that it comes from her mother's side. Then, what can I do about it? It is not my affair. In most cases it will come from her mother's side. Then it is the responsibility of her mother's family to look after her problem. I cannot help. I do not have what she needs. It is because it is to do with a different tribe or clan.

Ukuthwasa displays the ancestral presence in different ways. Indicators include hallucinatory visions, called *amaphupharha*⁵ by some. Hansen noted amongst her diviner informants that "These visions or dreams caused them to become completely detached from their surroundings. They only realised this when they came out of these trance conditions, and their friends and relatives told them what had happened." (Hansen, 1981:564) This is discussed further below.

The person with the calling also experiences a tendency towards temporary insanity, accompanied by notably strange behaviour. (Berglund, 1989:128) Many diviners have been institutionalised in general and psychiatric hospitals whilst suffering from this state, before their condition was acknowledged as *ukuthwasa*. This is illustrated vividly through Makhosi Athobile's experience of the calling.

Makhosi Athobile would be on her way to church and her ancestral grandfather would appear to her and "call her". This had such a tremendous effect on her, that she would turn to him and retort reproachfully, "Grandpa, I will fall, I will faint and wake up in the General Hospital [if you call me like this]."

Makhosi Athobile would indeed on occasion awaken in hospital after suffering the effects of her grandfather's appearance. Confused and upset, she refused to speak to the nurses and she demanded to see her daughter, in order that she could be taken home. The doctors would give her an explanatory letter for her to give to her employer. Makhosi Athobile described how she was humiliated and driven mad by the questions she was asked by the doctors in the hospital:

I don't know what they have [against] sex, but they were always asking me whether I had a boyfriend. I don't know why. It was funny. I thought that the blood was rising to my head. They just did not understand what was happening to me.

At certain times during the day, Makhosi Athobile would begin to scream with fright, because she would see a snake. She would also experience hallucinations of chickens and

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At certain times during the day, Makhosi Athobile would begin to scream with fright, because she would see a snake. She would also experience hallucinations of chickens and

guinea fowl which threatened to bite her. Makhosi Athobile was terrified that she was going mad and she questioned why she saw those things.

Whenever Makhosi Athobile worked with a knitting machine, the scratching noises and zig-zagging movements it made, would cause her to see bones [of skeletons]:

I would run [from the machine], screaming. The whole thing was making me scared. At the time, I went to my friend, whose name was Aaron. He was a diviner. He looked at me and told me that despite it being very hard to train as a diviner, I had no choice but to become one.

David told me that, "Anything, *anything* that comes in the form of *ukuthwasa*, has to come through a dream or some way. It is not something which you will go out and find somewhere, because it is not *you* who wants *ubugqirha* [divinership]; you are *told* to become one [an *igqirha*]. This is what you have to do and this is how you have to go through it." The calling of the ancestors may not only be manifested in day dreams, but also through vivid dreams during sleep, known as *amaphupha*⁶ in some cases, but more often *amathongo* (a trance, a vision or dream).

Chief Gcaleka differentiated between a dream and a vision, which he denoted *iphupha* and *ithongo* respectively. He described that for both to occur, one has to sleep; however, a vision is a more powerful form than a dream, because the ancestors talk to the subject during sleep and direct them through the improvement of their own psychic and intuitive abilities. I can see why Chief Gcaleka uses this term of reference, commonly referred to as the term for an ancestor, in that the cause and effect of a vision is linked to departed spirits and the concept of spirituality (heightened awareness). Makhosi Athobile commented that, "*Uyathongile* when you *-thwasa*, you do not have *amaphupha*." David has also made the distinction thus

saying, "An *iphupha* may be an ordinary dream about you running up the mountain or something, but an *ithongo* is a dream with meaning, and something that comes from your ancestors."

The imagery contained in these dreams will often include the sacrifice of goats, diviners in their regalia, snakes and other animals. David put it this way:

D: With dreams, we do not all have the same way with going through *ukuthwasa*. With me and in my way, I started by seeing beads hung over my neck, all these things that I had to wear. Of course, I saw myself with all these things, and obviously a goat as well.

K: What were the colours of the beads that you pictured wearing?

D: Mine were green and blue⁷.

K: It is interesting that you saw those colours, because white is so commonly associated with *amagqirha*.

D: Yes, you are right. Each colour is [connected in a particular way]. Take green - green is more [symbolic] of water and the blue is for jungle. That means that I have spirits in both of those places. I did not know what [the dream] meant - it sounded strange to me. But when I told my father, he told me what it meant. My father was also an *igqirha*.

K: In that your father was an *igqirha*, was it quite likely that you would have such dreams?

D: Yes, because something like that may run in the family:- if your father has been one, then maybe two, three or four children in the family may have the same thing, and so it goes on through the generations.

Hunter mentions that the subject will often picture an *ityala*, a form of a wild animal. This form is essentially the ancestor appearing as an animal. (Hunter, 1969:321) When attired in her divination regalia, Makhosi Athobile wears a t-shirt with a tiger print on it. She also carries a red, black and white *ibhayi*, a cotton blanket (McLaren, 1994:9) which has the design of a snake in its centre. Makhosi Athobile told me that these two animals hold

symbolic meaning for her. Her ancestors appeared to her in this form when she was an *ithwasa*, as they do still do today. David recalls that his ancestors still appear to him in animal form, as described below:

The ancestors can also come in the form of a tiger. That is associated with the ancestors of the jungle. [I asked David for the Xhosa name of the animal and he described it as *ingwe* - a leopard.] Somehow, the way in which one undergoes *ukuthwasa*, is connected to that animal, it symbolises the way in which one acts, when the spirits start to work on one. [This may be illustrated by the following:-

] Suppose now, that you are ill. You are somebody who wants to be told what is wrong, by an *igqirha*. My reaction [as the *igqirha*] will be that my body will start changing, you will not notice it. If it's an animal that does not look one in the face, I will begin to look downwards - that is a sign of animal behaviour. It is strange, it sounds strange. If you see *amagqirha* with beads hanging down over their faces, they are people with the type of *izinyanya* who do not look people in the face. You must not see my eyes, you must not see that I am looking at you.

K: Were there any other animals of which you dreamed?

D: I also dreamed of a puma. [*ingwe 'mnyama* - black leopard]

It has been documented that people in the state of *ukuthwasa* display certain symptoms of illness, or "troubles" (*iinkathazo*) and these may include: i) particular food preferences; ii) persistent pain in certain body areas; iii) convulsions; iv) insomnia; v) excessive nausea and even vomiting; vi) headaches and palpitations. Symptoms such as these, as well as excessive sneezing and yawning (that are not related to influenza or fatigue) are all considered to be activities manifesting ancestral intervention, and are common in *ukuthwasa*. Digestive complaints, including prolonged bouts of hiccoughs and belching, are deemed to be even stronger evidence of *ukuthwasa*. Stomach acidity, for instance, is in some cases attributed to the working of the ancestors in the digestive tract. Other indications of *ukuthwasa* are severe pains in the cervical and thoracic areas of the spine. (Hammond-Tooke, 1969:348-350;

Hunter, 1969:320; Broster, 1982:22; Bührmann, 1984:36; Hansen, 1984:563; Berglund, 1989:137, Callaway in Peek 1991:27-28)

Makhosi Athobile experienced excruciating *iinkathazo*, in the form of an immobilising pain in her legs, which manifested itself as "balls under her knees". She sought help from a "white" Western doctor in Johannesburg, who initially thought that she had contracted cancer, but then they discovered that the problem was related to the muscles in her legs. Makhosi Athobile underwent an operation. However, the surgical procedure made her condition worse, and she became crippled. Makhosi Athobile was forced to spend three years in a wheelchair before her deceased grandfather appeared to her in a dream once more and she reconsidered the idea of training to become a diviner. "I could not walk, because my ancestors wanted to talk to me, to see if they wanted to make me into a diviner."

Apart from the physical symptoms of *ukuthwasa*, mental disturbance may continue with periods of confusion and withdrawal. Bouts of depression are also common. These symptoms may be accompanied by the sufferer's neglect of personal hygiene and daily duties pertaining to his/her lifestyle. (Berglund, 1989:137) *Inkathazo* varies in its intensity from person to person and some potential initiates suffer more than others. Some try to ignore their symptoms. David related how his resistance to the calling and *iinkathazo* affected his social life:

With me, I resisted [the calling] for a couple of years, because I did not want anything to do with this. As time went on, they [the ancestors] started to show me what you are supposed to do when you are 'done'. They start to tell you about your final stages, when you still have to go through with your second, third or fourth stage. But they already show you your final stages, as they had already shown you the previous stages. This means that you have to start pushing to get things done. It took me years...years because I was not conscious of...because in

a way, the whole thing frustrated me. It frustrated me a lot. That's one of the reasons why....

By that time, my father had already died and my sisters were married and I was all alone here with my brother next door. I was all alone here. I even had a problem having a relationship [because of the ancestors]. The ancestors cut you off completely. They just cut you off. Whenever I would go out and see them go [away], I would say to myself, "Okay, I'm going to go up to this girl and talk to her." To me it was just going up to the girl and saying, "Hi, how are you", and all those things. They [the ancestors] would start to play with me. That went on for years - about two years. I even had a problem having a steady relationship.

As the above descriptions reveal, Makhosi Athobile suffered the devastating effects of *iinkathazo* for three years, before she took steps towards training as a diviner and hence, cured herself. David found that his life was socially disrupted for two years by the calling. This is the case for many diviners, where *iinkathazo* are either not recognised, incorrectly identified or even denied by the person experiencing them. Initially, the afflicted person may seek help from other sources, for example, western doctors and clinics or traditional herbalists and church clergy (if the sufferer is a practising or nominal Christian). In some cases, if the troubles persist despite efforts to relieve or even cure them, the sufferer's family or friends may advise him/her to consult a local diviner as a last resort to finding a reason for the symptoms. Once the decision has been reached to consult a diviner, the sufferer's immediate family usually arranges a consultation with an established diviner.

Ukuthwasa must be identified and diagnosed by a diviner, and it is distinguishable from any illness brought on by misfortune sent by an enemy. The symptoms may not initially even be recognised by a diviner, until one or other diviner may see that the subject is "possessed by an *ithongo* [visionary dream]." (Callaway in Peek, 1991:28) Moreover, it may be seen that *ukuthwasa* does not respond to conventional treatment, and generally, the sufferer has to

undergo training to become a diviner, to combat the *iinkathazo*. David explained his symptomatic illness:

It all started while I was very young, whilst I was still at school. I had problems studying, and I always had a headache and I also forgot things. I could not understand the cause of it at that stage, until my parents- my dad took me to an *igqirha* who told me what the cause was, that being the spirit of the *amagqirha*, which was starting to work in me. That's how it all started.

The decision to become a diviner is a difficult one to make, because the vocation is a life long commitment, which involves a change in lifestyle and priorities. David explained that he tried to put off the training and why:

D: [To become an *igqirha*] is a change of life, it is not easy. In fact it was not easy at all, because I knew that through this acknowledgement, somehow it would change my life. I was still young and I still wanted to be free and do whatever I wanted to do. I had no commitments, and anyway, I had to do this now.

K: Where were you when you were diagnosed?

D: I was born in Cape Town, and this was where my condition was recognised...right here at this house. Obviously we had to do something about it. This was done with the slaughtering of a goat, and then you can carry on with your life for some time, until they start working on you again, reminding you of your acceptance [by saying] "This is what we want you to do now."

K: How do they remind you?

D: They remind you in a dream - they come in the form of a dream.

I have already discussed that with women in particular, the calling tends to manifest itself concurrently with major lifecycle changes. To accede to the training and to give up an already established lifestyle with its social and religious routines as a result, can be virtually impossible. Even though there are alternative measures (discussed below) which can be taken

in order that the person in question does not have to undergo training, informants seem hesitant to estimate their efficacy.

I include a brief account of one particular woman, Mrs G-, who attempted to ignore the calling of her ancestors, and the subsequent consequences her action had on her family. Her son, Phakamile will be the focus of an *intlombe* which I attended, to be discussed in Chapter 4. (see pp. 334 ff)

According to the diviner concerned with this case, Mrs G- had experienced particular dreams which are commonly associated with *ukubiza*. She had duly ignored them, and this had resulted in the calling being passed onto her son, Phakamile. He began to suffer *iinkathazo* in the form of madness and other physical ailments. It was a while, however, before he was correctly diagnosed as having *ukuthwasa*, and the problems began to affect family life. Once the problem was identified and Phakamile accepted the calling, an *intlombe* had to be held by his mother, in order to settle with her ancestors the 'debt' she had created in the past by ignoring them. This would also emancipate her from them and the family situation would return to normal. Effectively, she would be shutting down the ancestors for herself, and opening the way for Phakamile's training as a diviner. Therefore, the calling is not something to be taken lightly, as Gogo Morwadi aptly described it, "It is a force. (If) you don't do it, the spirit will spoil all your children - they will get sick."

The above case description also highlights the idea of the calling being passed 'through' a family, as endorsed above by David in his description of his sisters' experiences of the calling. Many diviners and non-diviners alike also hold the belief that the vocation has a

tendency to run in families. I am familiar with many cases of parents and children of the same family being in the profession. For instance, David's father was a diviner and Gogo Morwadi has one son who is a qualified diviner and another who is in training. Makhosi Athobile's deceased aunt (who is one of her 'working' ancestors) was a diviner, and Makhosi Athobile married a man who had six members in his family who were diviners. She believes that the profession runs in families, as recently her sister had to undergo training. Her daughter will also become a diviner one day.

It is common for novices to dream of the particular diviner who is to train them, before they begin their novitiate. If they do not 'see' the diviner in question, they are given landmarks indicating the whereabouts of their trainer or instructions of where to go. The former occurred with Gogo Morwadi (see her case history, pp. 174 ff) The latter occurred with Makhosi Athobile.

Makhosi Athobile was foremostly a Zionist prophet. Her ancestral grandfather in particular, had wanted to restrict her to practising her healing skills and psychic abilities in the church only. He made these instructions clear to her through dreams. Yet she still experienced excruciating *iinkathazo* which was only receptive to training in divination. Makhosi Athobile's deceased mother would also appear to her and tell her that she could not afford to train as a diviner, because it would cost too much money. She used to remind Makhosi Athobile of how on her deathbed, she had instructed Makhosi Athobile that her responsibility lay in looking after her father and her siblings. Makhosi Athobile was only twelve years of age at the time of her mother's death.

Makhosi Athobile experienced crippling *iinkathazo*, as described above. It was at this time that her [ancestral] grandfather came to her in a dream and instructed her to go to Mount Frere, in order to train as a diviner. He told her, "You are not sick, you can walk!"

For three years, Makhosi Athobile ignored her [ancestral] grandfather's instructions. It would have been difficult at any rate, for Makhosi Athobile to take them seriously, after his insistence that she work in the church. When he appeared to her in a dream again, he told her that she had not wanted to listen to him and that was the reason why he had left her alone for so long. Even though he had wanted Makhosi Athobile to work in the church initially, he admitted to her that all her other deceased relatives had wanted her to become a diviner. He told her, "Now they [the other ancestors] must have you and they must do whatever they want [with you]." He instructed her to go to Mount Frere, where a woman would be waiting to train her.

Before she trained and whilst she was still experiencing *iinkathazo*, Makhosi Athobile worked as a domestic servant for a Jewish employer who "could not bear her to work with those things [the ancestors]" and furthermore, did not want her to train to become a diviner. Despite this, Makhosi Athobile departed for Mount Frere, where she met her training diviner. Makhosi Athobile could not afford to pay the training fees and yet the diviner was still prepared to train her free of charge.

As it happened, it still did not seem practical for Makhosi Athobile to train at the time because she needed to look after her children, hence she returned to her work after a week in Mount Frere. Whilst faced with this dilemma, her employer emigrated to Australia and

Makhosi Athobile began to work for Gayle Hansen in Johannesburg. During the time she was working for Gayle, Makhosi Athobile fell sick again with *ukuthwasa*, and Mrs Hansen encouraged her "to do what she was supposed to do" and commence the training. She returned to Mount Frere.

David also dreamed of the diviner with whom he chose to train. His story demonstrates that even with dreams, the choice still must be made carefully:

K: Did you actually dream of the *igqirha* who was to train you?

D: I did. It did not come out very clearly - it was not very vivid. I could not make out who this person was. Eventually, I was told by the ancestors, they told me who to go to. A name was given to me, which I did not want to accept. Somehow, there was an argument about that person. It was a woman that I knew. It's probably the reason that I said "No" in my dream. They came to me twice with the name of the same person and I said "No" twice.

Eventually, after the second time, I went to this woman, because she knows me and I know her. I told her that I was to come to her and she was to help me with this *-thwasa* thing. I told her that I did not even like her, because I did not see her as an *igqirha*.

K: Why was she not an *igqirha* to you?

David continued:

It was in my dreams. That is what I said to her the following morning after the dream. Look...you tend to be too honest sometimes when you are an *igqirha*. You say things straight out - It may not sound nice, but you just say it. That's me, I just say things. I told her that I did not see her as an *igqirha*, so I was not going to go to her.

Then she said to me, "All right, that is fine. If that's the case, there is nothing I can do. But I can give you some medicine that you may use, which may help you." I accepted and she gave me the medicine and I put it in my pocket. When I got home, for some reason I decided not to use it. It was a mixture that I was supposed to put in water and then wash myself with it. But I just did not want to do that. It was a good thing that I did not, because the very same night I found myself, in my dream, being in trouble - the cops were looking for me. Then when I was hiding from people in my dream, someone asked me if I knew why this was happening to me. I replied that I did not know. The person [a woman]

replied that it was because of the chemist which I had visited. I replied that I had not gone to any chemist. She told me that I had indeed, and that was why I was in trouble.

There I was, sitting and thinking about what the woman was talking about, because it did not make sense to me. Somehow then in the dream, I found myself in a big building. I managed to get myself towards the door and a thought struck my mind. "It's that stuff which I got from this woman." I put my hand in my pocket and walked through the door. As I passed through, I threw the medicine away. So when I woke up, I knew that there was a reason why I did not want this woman to help me. I never went back to her.

Then I was told more. I had another dream...It is not easy to become something which you are told to become. You don't want to be what they want you to be, and still, they will let you go through these difficult situations. The next person who came along, was another *igqirha*, a male *igqirha* - I was told of him in the dream. If I had decided to continue with the former *igqirha*, I would have caused some kind of problem, because there was a reason why I said in my dreams that I did not want her to be my *igqirha*. I may not know the reason but there obviously was a reason, besides the medicine which she gave me, it could have been something else.

The training diviner will also be informed that a novice is on his/her way to be trained.

Makhosi Athobile described that:

When someone is coming to me to be trained, my [ancestral] grandfather [will always appear to me and] tell me to clean my room and expect their arrival. My grandfather will tell me that the person who will come to me, is not [ordinarily] sick, but she is sick [with *ukuthwasa*]. Maybe her arrival will take two weeks. My grandfather will sometimes wake me at 2:45 in the morning and tell me that I am not supposed to be sleeping. He will keep me awake until the person arrives the following day.

When the person arrives, I know everything about the person - what they are feeling, what is wrong. For example, I will feel how she is feeling in my own head. I do not tell the person how I feel. Normally, I will just start to cry.

Training to become a diviner currently appears to be an expensive endeavour. Gumede states in the context of tuition fees that "in typical African philosophy of healing the doctor is never paid until he has delivered the goods." (Gumede, 1990:77) This does not seem to be the case at present as in my own work indeed, Gogo Morwadi has turned prospective initiates away until they have returned with the required amount of money! I have come across few exceptions where a diviner would be prepared to train a novice for nothing. Makhosi

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Athobile related a devastating experience in which she paid for a novice. Her ancestral grandfather told her in a dream that a woman would approach her about training. Makhosi Athobile's ancestral grandfather continued to say that the woman had no money and it would be necessary for Makhosi Athobile to train her for nothing.

The woman arrived and commenced her training with Makhosi Athobile. Makhosi Athobile bought all the cloth and beads required to make her novice the clothes she needed. She also funded the ceremony for the commencement of the novice's training. Apparently after this, the novice came to her and told her that her ancestors had told her in a dream that she must have beads of green and not white. For some reason, Makhosi Athobile lost confidence in the woman and did not continue the training. She regrets that she wasted much money and effort.

Makhosi Athobile told me that the cost of the training depends on the training diviner. She told me that she is guided by the set recommendations regarding tariffs, that are given "when you get your certificate". She showed me a herbalist's certificate issued by the Bantu Muti Herbs of South Africa, Kwa Xuma, to one of her initiates. Gogo Morwadi quoted me R3000-00 as a fee for training an initiate over a six month period. This would cover the initiate's instruction in medicine and an obligatory journey to her own trainer's home area (Swalala, Mphumalanga), where she would guide her novice in the collecting of vegetable material for medicinal purposes. The cost of the training depends on the training diviner. Makhosi Athobile charges R300 "too open my briefcase" (*-vula isikhwama*⁸, see p. 306). After that, she charges R2500. "You can't take her home if she does not pay that. Then, she has to buy everything - clothes to wear, a red cloths (*amabhayi*) and beads. She has to buy the cloth for the uniform skirt she will wear when she kills the cow or the goat."

Makhosi Athobile has great faith that the novice's ancestors will help with regard to the financial concerns of the training. She relates how her ancestors worked for her when she needed money to finance her graduation party:

When I was training, I always knew that I wanted my [graduation] party to be very big. I knew, however, that nobody would help me [financially]. So I prayed. I prayed that when I would walk out of the house, I would just see money all over the road.

One day, a Saturday when I was not working, I made some tea for a security guard who was working down the road. I took him the tea, I greeted him and said no more. I could not talk to him because I was training at the time. [She had *umlaza*.]

When I came back, I found money to the value of R300 lying in the road. I turned back and approached the security guard. I asked him whether he had seen anybody walk past. I showed him what I had found.

He was very surprised and he said, "Sjoe, you must go and tell your training mother. Your ancestors have given you this money, because they want you to go on now [with the last part of your training]."

Diviners require an initial deposit before they commence training. This payment is an important affair at which the diviner will *-vula isikhwama*⁹, ie 'open the bag', or as Makhosi Athobile describes it, her 'briefcase'. She said that diviners sometimes kept their *amathambo*¹⁰ (divination bones) and protective medicines in the *isikhwama*. Hammond-Tooke has noted this procedure amongst the Pedi, where in certain cases, "an initial fee of a beast is paid...to loosen the bag of the initiation dice', and the apprentice is treated with medicines to enhance his abilities." (1989:112)

This procedure was demonstrated to me by Gogo Morwadi when we first met. She showed me her *isikhwama*, a medium-sized woven grass basket, wrapped in a red cloth bearing "Morwadi Swaziland" in white beads. As discussed in the Preface, I was treated as a client during our initial interaction and before she would tell me anything, I had to make a financial

contribution to the ancestors. Upon doing this, Gogo Morwadi took her *isikhwama* down from the shelf of medicines and after placing the money in front of it, she conducted a *phahla* session (see pp. 305) to the ancestors, by kneeling down and talking to them in soft phrases, these being punctuated by intermittent and rhythmical double claps. She then took the lid off the *isikhwama*, placed the money inside and indicated to me that she was permitted by the ancestors to open her practice to me.

Once the subject has acknowledged the call and accepted it he/she will place him/herself under the tutelage of an experienced diviner, who will either visit the novice at his/her home regularly, or most commonly, the novice will move to the homestead of the diviner where he/she will receive constant attention and supervision. In this way, the novice is able to give the training process undivided attention. Makhosi Athobile described, in context of her own training, why it was important that she stay with her training diviner:

The training diviners say that when you train, you have to stay with them because you have to be free to do what your ancestors want you to do. You see, if you are working, you will not have much time for [your ancestors]. This makes it difficult, so it is best to be free. You must leave your family and you cannot have a boyfriend, also because of *umlaza*.

Bührmann describes the benefits of an *ithwasa* living with his/her training diviner as positive and healthy. "There is no culture shock. He sees his 'doctor', the *igqira* going about his ordinary duties as head of the homestead, dressed in ordinary clothing, and he gets to know him as an ordinary human being." I must admit that this did not appear to be the case with Chief Gcaleka, who kept as many as five novices in a room at the rear of his New Crossroads house whilst they underwent training. Whenever they entered the main house, they did so on

hands and knees, as a sign of respect. Besides, they seemed to carry out all the household duties for Chief Gcaleka himself, which was quite a task at ground level!

In my own research, I have found that the impact of urbanisation has changed the format of the tuition period. A subject will often resort to the assistance and teaching of a diviner in an urban settlement, in relatively close proximity to his/her own home and therefore he/she will not necessarily live with the diviner during initiation. Hansen has also noted that in certain situations, provision can be made for initiates to continue their daily occupation, and to undergo training at the same time, because the training period may be a very long one - as long as twelve years. (Hansen, lecture notes, Ethnomusicology 2, U.C.T.) This is a common arrangement in urban settlements in which the trainee has to earn a living.

This is exemplified in the training offered by Gogo Morwadi, which will take place in an urban area (Gugulethu), and include an expedition to a rural homestead, usually the one belonging to her own training diviner. The initiate will spend a month to six weeks or more here and he/she will learn about the collection and administration of medicine. The initiate will also dance and confess his/her dreams.

Makhosi Athobile practises a similar training method. Her initiates come from afar to train with her and some of them live with her for periods of time. Before she 'takes them home', they collect medicine in areas of the Eastern Cape, Natal and Rustenburg, in the North-East. This seems to suggest that such an approach is fairly new (and current generation related), and possibly an adaptation introduced to cope with African urbanisation trends. However,

this presumption cannot be thought of as a rule and there are still many initiates who spend their full training period in rural areas.

The training of a novice may take from one to three years, or even longer. (Hansen, 1981:564) One of the novices I encountered during my research, came from East London and he had been in training for nine years. When I voiced with surprise my disbelief, he told me, "There is a lot of medicine to learn."

After several discussions with David on the subject of training, I realised that the possibility of a novitiate of nine years was not uncommon. I ascertained from him that there are several routes that a person with *ukuthwasa* may take and these options often determine the length of the training time, and that they have a cultural base. David defines an individual who takes up to six months to train in divination techniques, as an *othokoza*. He said that he/she are commonly Swazi or Shangaan, and they may be identified by the characteristic double-clapping "when [he/she] talks to you." I have made mention of this distinction in Chapter 1, however, I include David's comment below, as it demonstrates his view on the differences of this novitiate, in the light of his own Xhosa training. He also estimates the protracted length and costs involved in his training:

Othokoza training is quite different to my [training]. Take for instance a Xhosa person who undergoes training with a Swazi or Shangaan (they are very similar). It will take him/her only 3-6 months to train. You see white people in this way also - that should tell you that there are two different ways with which we are dealing here. With these people, they slaughter a chicken or something...they have to drink the blood of a chicken. It is completely different, and believe me, there is no way that you can communicate with your *izinyanya* through that. You must use either a goat or an ox. They have medicines which they use in order to *call*, what they label as *idlozi zakho*. So they call *idlozi* saying, "Listen, we are not here to wait for ten years until you make up your mind. Come now!" For this, they use a special medicine. Obviously, the answer

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[of the *idlozi*] would come from them (the *othokoza*) and not through you yourself. They would then tell you what to do.

Now, the Xhosa way [of training] takes a very long time. This is also because it is very expensive. The first thing you [have to] do...your ancestors have to tell you who will be able to help you. That may take a week, a month, a year or even two years...or twenty years. In most cases, they will come to you whilst you are young, at the age when you are not interested. So they tell you these things, but you do not listen - you are not interested at that age. By the time you come to your senses and ask yourself what they were saying, you have to start waiting for them to come back, to tell you what they have to say, all over again! That can take years. But during that period of time, you are still experiencing problems. You feel [as though] there is something wrong with you. You go to a diviner and ask them what is wrong. This is where the danger lies. You can either wait for the ancestors themselves to tell you what to do in a dream, or you can ask the diviner. They will always tell you that they know how to help you. If you ask a diviner to help you, it will cost you first R100, and then R1000 plus an *inkomo*. Now that person whom you have asked to train you...You have different ways of *ukuthwasa*. One person will train to do things *his* way and not necessarily *my* way.

Once you have spent time at the river, you come back and you slaughter your ox. That step alone will probably cost you something like R1000, so often it means that you will have to go back to work after completing this part, in order to earn more money. It may take you another six to twelve months before you can [afford to] do the second part, by acknowledging the ancestors of the jungle. Once you have done that, you come back and take another six months to learn about medicine. To do this, you go with your training diviner. At this time you are also using medicines yourself, as you are supposed to be able to see things. All of this takes years. You see, you have got to gain the experience. Say for instance that you are a rich person and you can afford all of this in a week...fine go ahead and do it. But then at the end of the day, what have you gained? You have no experience. You cannot help another person who is an *ithwasa*, you must have the experience. In order to be successful in any way, you have to go through a lot. If everything goes too easily for you, you won't learn. The hard way is often the best way, as you learn and you get experience.

You get experience by spending a lot of time with your trainer. While you are doing that, your ancestors will come to you and tell you what they want you to do at that point. This occurs through an *ithongo*, not through an *iphupha*. That is why to graduate in this field takes time. All the time, there you are using all the medicine you need to keep yourself cleansed but you are waiting for a dream. And after that, you are waiting for your next dream.

Take for instance, you have certain *intsimbi*¹¹ [beads] that you wear, but you cannot just go to the shop and buy any beautiful *intsimbi* that you like. You have to wait for a dream in which the *izinyanya* will instruct you to wear that particular *intsimbi*. Then you have to go to your training *igqirha* and tell him/her about the dream. *Umqombothi* [traditional beer] or *-tywala* [beer] must be prepared for *intlombe*, all because of the dream of the *intsimbi*¹². You see, you cannot just go and buy *intsimbi*, put them on and then say, "How do I look?" To wear that *intsimbi* means *intlombe*, which takes money. Then once you have

done that, you wait for another dream. You do not know when it is going to come. That is why I say that to do this the Xhosa way is very hard. It also means money.

Makhosi Athobile trained for five months and she stayed with her diviner in Mount Frere, before returning to her home in Johannesburg in her sixth month. Makhosi Athobile has trained fourteen initiates, and currently she has four novices who need to be "taken home". The training period for her initiates is "very fast" at six months, and she only had one candidate who took one year to graduate, this being attributable to her lack of money. She could not "make her party at home," and apparently her family were not interested in helping her. Makhosi Athobile said that she sat down with the candidate and they spoke to her ancestors. As a result, the woman soon got employment and subsequently she had enough money to finish her training.

Broster mentions three objectives of the training of an initiate diviner; firstly to cure her of her symptoms, secondly, to train her in rituals that are associated with the profession and to familiarize her with her ancestral shades and thirdly to teach her the necessary skills regarding the collection, combination and administration of traditional medicines. (1981:23) Ngubane mentions three phases which the subject will undergo in order to complete the training and thereby graduate as a fully-fledged diviner in the third and final phase. At this point he/she will be cured of *inkathazo*. These phases are concerned with the degree of 'purity' (or contact with the ancestors) she experiences. Through such development, she is "notionally in a process of becoming permanently pure and full of spiritual power." (Ngubane, 1977:87) This explains why the diviner must have as little contact with the outside world as possible, for fear of contracting *umlaza*.

The first stage is classified as the manifestation of the ancestors over the person being 'called' and its associated 'troubles.' The second phase is recognised as the transition into the social context of divination: novices (*iithwasa*) devote their time to obtaining knowledge of medicine and healing. It is during this phase that they must sing and dance to stimulate closer contact with the ancestors. The third phase is recognised in the trainee's graduation as a fully-fledged diviner, and the point at which she has reached maximum contact with the ancestors. This is when he/she returns home (*ukugodusa*) to his/her family and demonstrates his/her skills. (Ngubane, 1977:87-88)

David, who has divulged isolated experiences of his training to me, described an important stage he underwent at the start of his training:

For me to be successful in what I do, I have two ways [to train], because I have *izinyanya* of the jungle and *izinyanya* of the water. I had to go through both when I was training. I had to go to the river and the jungle, because I have *izinyanya* in both those places.

This is endorsed by Bührmann, who documents amongst the Mpondomise the concept of "People of the River" and "People of the Forest". (1984:28) She states that, "Without the blessings of both groups of ancestors, the work for the candidate cannot be successful." (ibid, 1984:70) Bührmann has noted several ceremonies held in acknowledgement of these ancestors, which are integral in the training of an *igqirha*. The first of these are known as the river ceremonies which are related to the "ancestors of the river", as found in David's case. The first ceremony, which has been documented in great detail by Bührmann, involves the brewing of beer at the homestead of the novice and culminates in an offering made to the ancestors of the river, consisting of "a small billycan of beer mixed with *ubulawu*, white

beads, sorghum seeds, pumpkin and calabash pips and tobacco." (ibid, 1984:73) David describes this procedure as follows:

I did not have to go under the water, it is more like going to the water and acknowledging them. It is also not a matter of spending a day there and having a swim either. One always takes some *umqombothi* and *icuba*¹³ [tobacco]. This is because the *izinyanya* are very much alive to us. They need the *umqombothi* to drink and the tobacco to smoke. To you, they may sound like a dream but to us, they are very much alive. We put the offerings by the water and they get taken up by the tide.

When you go down to the river, you spend three to seven days by the water in a hut, totally alone. While you are there you must be totally alone. Only your father may visit you. Normally no woman would be able to go in there. The *izinyanya* work on you in there. This [procedure] is known as *umfukamo*.

Bührmann documents this period of seclusion as the second river ceremony, *-fukamisa*, the duration of which may be 36 hours.

Bührmann summarises that "it can be postulated that through training, the deeper layers of the unconscious which had been activated during *thwasa* and which had at first caused chaos and suffering, are now gradually brought under control and are being integrated as meaningful manifestations of the human state." (1984:75) The procedures involved include the analysis of dreams and the use of medicines, in order to develop the relationship between the novice and his/her ancestors and to cultivate his/her psychic abilities.

Medicines intended for such purposes, such as *ubulawu*, are used from the commencement of training. This is illustrated by Bührmann, who describes the 'purification procedures' which are practically and symbolically important when the initiate arrives for training. She has documented that:

Performing the rite on the patient's arrival is necessary 'to cleanse him of evil things which cling to him'. The whole body has first to be washed with a herbal

mixture. This removes the 'dirt' and the 'evil'. This procedure is followed by washing with *ubulawu*. In addition to the washing, the patient also has to drink of the *ubulawu*, to the extent that it induces vomiting, ie. he has to be clean outside and inside. (Bühmann, 1984:41)

The use of *ubulawu* is not restricted to the training period, but used on many other ritual and ceremonial occasions. Chief Gcaleka uses it at his *iintlombe*. I asked David how an *ithwasa* uses *ubulawu*. He replied as follows:

You drink it. You have to use it more than once to get results, until it tends to stay in your blood. It has to. Your blood has to be used to it, so that it actually becomes dangerous for you to stop using it - you must continue to use it at least once a month. It helps you to learn a new language - you are able to tell people what you see in them. You also get different kinds of *ubulawu*, the red and the white ones, plus several extras which you add to these. The red *ubulawu* is known as *impendulo*, which means "results". It helps you see. However, the white one is more powerful and it cleanses too.

Furthermore, Bühmann notes the function of *ubulawu* as "primarily to induce or clarify dreams and to 'open one's mind to receive the messages of the ancestors'." (ibid) This has been endorsed by Makhosi Athobile. She mentioned that *ubulawu* was used at the commencement of her training, in order to help her 'control' the calling of her ancestors and to assist her in learning how to call on them herself when need be:

The first day that I went to my teacher, she gave me the date of when she would start to work on me. On that day, they would *-phehla* with *ubulawu* for me. They put [the bucket] on my head and let it foam over me. It came all over me and then I drank [the rest of the mixture]. The foam was also smeared on my body and wiped in my nose and ears.

It is necessary for the foam to come out and flow over and then for the *-thwasa* to drink it, because it will clear the head. Then the *-thwasa* will understand...she will stop wondering, "Who is this now?" [when she dreams of her ancestors]. Her dreams will become clearer.

[This applies now that I am a diviner.] During the day, for example, imagine that you are driving your car, you see somebody is here, and you can feel that you are going to be in an accident. Or you see somebody is here and you feel that they will break into the house. The [process of] *-phehla* also makes you [as a diviner] feel that someone is coming, who wants training.

Dreams, as with the initial calling, are an essential aspect of the *ukuthwasa* state and during training the novices must learn to interpret their own dreams. The ability to dream and analyse the content of a dream is an essential part of divination: not only does the diviner analyse the client's dreams, but he/she uses her own dreams to foretell or determine earthly conditions, and to gain knowledge in the administration of medicine. As mentioned above by David, dreams indicate progress during training and they demonstrate the subsequent stages the novice is to pursue. Bührmann states that "This active involvement with dreams is one of the most striking aspects of the healing methods of *amagqira*...(plus) to understand and interpret dreams is not easy and that only some *amagqira* are specially gifted in that way." (1984:49-50)

The ancestors are most active at night and therefore, when a diviner or initiate dreams, it may be described as a communication with the ancestors. In Zulu cosmology, the dreaming person's spirit is said to wander and meet the ancestral spirits, "who also wander on earth by night." (Gumede, 1990:21) Night time, and especially the early morning hours, are considered the best times to communicate with the ancestors.

It has been aptly described by Callaway, that the *ithwasa* "does not sleep, but works constantly with his brain; his sleep is merely in snatches, and he wakes up singing many songs, and people who are near quit their villages by night when they hear him singing aloud, and go to sing in concert." (in Peek, 1991:28) Novice diviners routinely confess their dreams to their training diviners. Confessions are accompanied by dancing, singing and clapping.

Part of the suggested cure for *ukuthwasa* is the prescriptive dancing and confessing of dreams; the characteristic dancing being termed *ukuxhentsa*.

Gogo Morwadi described that as a initiate, "Every morning you must wake up early and -*gida*." It is therapeutic for the initiate to dance every night and morning, whenever she can get people to clap for her. Such dancing may not be done in the sunlight; hence in daylight hours, it is performed indoors (hut or the main room of the house). (Hunter, 1969:325)

Hansen and others have stated that it is imperative for the initiate to dance in order to heal herself of *inkathazo*. In fact, whilst staying in Swalala, one was often woken as early as four in the morning by the sounds of distant drumming for the initiate diviners. Although I was unable to attend such sessions, owing to their private nature, the young resident diviner, Vusi, keenly demonstrated a -*gida* session, which consisted of dancing and confessions, during my stay in Swalala.

Makhosi Athobile attributed her advanced psychic skills to the dancing and dream confessions of her training period, describing these sessions thus:

When you dream at night, you do not tell anyone else your dreams. When you wake up, you go to the drum and you sing your song. When you sing, you awaken the diviner, who will come and hear your dream confessions. In my training group, we had a special song for this:

Balele balele, vukani phantsi.
They are asleep, they must wake up.

Izangoma zilele, vukani phantsi.
The diviners are asleep, they must wake up.

Then she knows...You can wake up whenever, and it does not matter what time you wake her up. She will sit there and listen. All the other *'thwasas* will listen too. You then say *siyavuma*. And then you tell your dream. When you are

finished, you sing again, to thank the *sangoma* for listening to you:

Siyabonga, siyabonga, mama, siyabonga.

We thank you, mother.

When you are finished, another *-thwasa* will sing her song and confess her dream.

As with the original dreams that the novice experienced with the calling, the subject matter of dreams will commonly include indicators of divination:- the slaughtering of goats, diviners dancing, or the acquisition of beads, as mentioned above by David. *Ukuthwasa* dreams are often frightening and confusing, to the extent that they are understood to be very special and therefore different, and thus distinguishable from the ordinary dreams people usually have. In particular, I found the following rendition of a dream by one of Chief Gcaleka's initiates quite interesting.

Elizabeth had been training with Chief Gcaleka for seven months, and still had another ten months before she would "stand for herself". She described that through her eating and washing with *ubulawu* she would dream during sleep. She also made mention of a medicine, *-futha*¹⁴, with which she would steam, that induced dreams:

I have had a lot of dreams, my friend. I sometimes do not know where the dreams come from! In one dream, I imagined that I was in my house in Port Elizabeth. I have two gates in front of the house. I saw two aeroplanes, full of soldiers at these gates. The soldiers told me that they were waiting for me. I was frightened and surprised. I asked them why they were waiting for me. I looked at them through the lace curtains of my windows. I wondered how I could go outside - I was too scared to go outside, because of them.

I decided to leave my house from the back door. I went to my neighbour and told them that I did not know what was going on. She looked at me and told me that the soldiers were waiting for me.

Chief Gcaleka explained that the soldiers who were looking for me, were my ancestors, who had come to protect me from the enemy (*utshaba*¹⁵).

The therapeutic and prognostic value of dreaming and dream recollection has been proven in Western medicine this century. Dreams experienced and related in dream confessions during divination training, serve the same purpose. Bührmann states that "during treatment and training, dreams more or less dictate progress and the timing of rituals and ceremonies to be performed for the index patient and his family; they are also relied on to indicate the point at which the trainee is ready for qualification and for working independently. The healer depends on his own dreams and those of his patient trainee to assist him with the decisions." (1984:50)

Such was the case when Makhosi Athobile's dream of a river ceremony which made her training diviner aware that she may possess *amakhosi*. She was subsequently taken down to the Nkomazi river in Natal. (see Chapter 1, p. 95) Makhosi Athobile spent "only a week" underwater in the river. A week before she left for the river, she confessed a dream to her training mother, concerning "a 'braai' or big party" they were having on the banks of the river. To briefly recapitulate:

[I dreamed that] there were many *sangomas* present and we were singing. A man came to kill the goat and we put half of it in the river. They made *imphehlo*. They put medicine and tobacco in it. They also put lots of silver money into the *ubulawu*. Then they put it in the water. It disappeared deep down into the water and the *sangomas* followed.

I did not know what the dream meant, and when I told my training mother about my dream, she looked at me rather thoughtfully and told me that we would have to go to the river before I went back home to Johannesburg.

Initiates often make up part of the diviner's entourage when attending an *intlombe*. It is here that the initiates learn and practise the diviner's dance. Through this process, the initiate "gradually gets acquainted with the world of ritual which serves as initiation into the world of the ancestors, and therefore also, in some cases, into the world of his future work."

(Bührmann, 1984:43) I have noticed that there are designated times during the course of an *intlombe*, when the initiates take to the floor. At the *iintlombe* I have witnessed, these times are generally early on in the evening, before prominent diviners have made their appearance, or just after the latter, when the excitement is dying down. Initiates seem to practice confession/ *-thokozisa* in between bouts of singing and dancing. Makhosi Athobile stated that there are no fixed times during an *intlombe* when the novices are required to dance.

Once the initiate has commenced training, there are several codes within which he/she must work, owing to his/her transitional status. Visually, the initiate is identifiable by his/her dress, particularly at *iintlombe*, where he/she will wear white clothing (usually a white t-shirt and cotton /calico skirt), white beads (according to status), and apply white clay or ash to the skin. Calamine lotion is the most popular means of creating such an effect. Makhosi Athobile explained that diviners wear white because, "'We are people of white'¹⁶. This demonstrates our clairvoyant capability. This is why the Xhosa [diviners] wear white beads and white clothes."

Makhosi Athobile described how she used red clay on her face when she underwent her apprenticeship. She pointed out that Xhosa generally wear white clay only during *ukuthwasa*, but, because she trained with the Bhaca, "who are like the Zulu and Swazi", she used the red clay as well:

I actually looked a bit silly, because on my left side, I smeared white [clay] and on my right, I smeared red [clay]. This is because I am a Xhosa, but I was training under the Bhacas. So to make her [the diviner's] ancestors train me with my [ancestors], we have to...[Makhosi Athobile clasped her hands together, demonstrating a form of union.]

During their training, novices acquire items of their regalia, such as beads and a switch (*itshoba*) and a spear (*umkhonto*). David informed me that each acquisition requires an *intlombe*:

It might take ten years before you get your *itshoba* or *umkhonto*. You may learn what you need to know all in one year. But it is not up to you or your *igqirha* as to when you have *itshoba*, until the *izinyanya* tell you.

He went on to say that only certain trainees obtain a spear to be used in their divination profession. The spear has important symbolic significance of a particular gift, possessed by certain diviners. David himself has a spear:

Certain people have this type of power [associated with *umkhonto*]. People who have *umkhonto* are those who have the power to dig out that bottle of dirty medicine. It is something which you can touch with your *umkhonto*. You can even dig a hole with *umkhonto* in order to get that thing. You also have the ability to grab it with your hand. You have to be a very strong person to handle this kind of medicine, because it is almost electric [to the touch] and it can shock you because it is so powerful, so dangerous. It could knock you out, and even leave you dead. It cannot be touched by anyone. It is very, very dangerous.

Once, when I was attending church in Section 3. On that particular Sunday, I did not feel like being inside the church, so I stood by the door. I just did not feel like being around people and whilst I was standing there, immediately, the ancestors started to talk to me, so fast, that I could not control myself. This is how it can be - I saw the person who planted it there, spiritually. Now I generally do not like people to go outside the church during a service, but I opened the door and I did not walk, I went down and rolled. The power was working on me. The ancestors told me the *isitofile* [stuff] was under the window. I started digging and it hit me on my right underarm. It felt like a cramp and I could not use this arm for a very long time. I went to a [western] doctor and he diagnosed it as rheumatism in my bones. [David chuckled.] I was given an injection, which helped a little.

Before novices may graduate as diviners, it is customary for them to work for their training diviners. Through this they gain the experience necessary to help them practise independently. Once again, the candidate's graduation is dependent on the indication of the ancestors through a dream. The novice is also reliant upon sanctioning from his/her training

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diviner. David described how the completion of training could become a complex issue, in some cases resulting in the exploitation of the novice:

Whilst you are in training, the money you make [from practising] is not your own, it belongs to your *igqirha*. You may have ten people coming to see you each day, and you tell them what they need to know. You might be good at that. That *igqirha* may try to keep you as long as she can, because you are making money for her. So when you have a dream from the *izinyanya* and you tell her, she will try to put off doing anything about it for a long time. Well, she is making a lot of bucks [from you], you know! So you go on, until you tell her that you had the *ithongo* again. She will continue to delay the process. Eventually, you will either wait through the whole process, or you will leave [and go to another *igqirha*]. This is where the trouble starts. She knows that if you go to another *igqirha*, you will begin to make money for him or her. So, she will either start talking crap about you or set a trap for you. By doing that, she starts to act like *igqwirha*, as she sends you dirty medicine or something, to pull you a little bit back. So, it is a tricky business.

The final graduation ceremony conducted during training, is the *-godusa*, when the diviner takes the novice "home" after his/her period of training. Once it has been decided that the novice may go home, preparations are made at the home of the novice. A Xhosa *-godusa* has been documented in detail by Bührmann. (1984:83ff) I have been to such a ceremony, described to me as *ithwasa egodusa*, in the Cape township, KTC (March 1996), where one of Gogo Morwadi's associates had brought her novice 'home from the bush' as a diviner. The graduation ceremony took the form of an *intlombe*. A goat was bought for slaughter and beer was brewed. Diviners, family and friends were invited for the homecoming ceremony. The occasion began in the morning with the new diviner slaughtering the goat. This time can be quite stressful for the novices and their training diviners alike. Makhosi Athobile explained:

The training diviners did not smile when they took us home, because they were also frightened - scared of what our family would say. They are responsible for you. All these months you had been away, what did they teach you?

The graduation ceremony also involves tests of the graduate's psychic ability, which will be developed further and utilised in the vocation. This is important too because, "the intensity of [ancestral] contact is measured by the extent of her clairvoyance." (Ngubane, 1977:87) Upon graduation, the new diviner must prove her clairvoyant ability through a test set for her by her own diviner, or another diviner present, plus family and friends. This is in the form of finding certain hidden objects. "She must 'see' where they are, and say where they are hidden." (Gumede, 1990:77) Whilst attending this particular graduation of the Swazi trainee, this was illustrated in a game, that was played. Gogo Morwadi and the graduate's training diviner hid a R20 note in Gogo Morwadi's brassiere, whilst the graduate was outside. During the performance of a song, she found it.

Makhosi Athobile described the initial anxiety involved in such a procedure at her own graduation:

I was worried about finding whatever the training diviner hid from me. We were killing cows and goats...and everything was hidden away from us. We had to tell the training diviners what colour [the animal was], everything, before we saw them. That made me really frightened.

In the following section, I include case histories of two diviners' personal experiences of *ukubiza*, namely Gogo Morwadi and her Swazi associate, Gogo Tryfina. For the purpose of continuity, I have decided to keep them as case histories, as opposed to integrating them into the above body of information, which I have illustrated to a large extent with the cases of David and Makhosi Athobile. It is hoped that by these means, the reader will be able to appreciate further the confusion and complexity with which a prospective diviner is confronted, when experiencing a calling.

CASE HISTORIES

Case history 1: Gogo Morwadi

This story of Gogo Morwadi's training and graduation into the profession of diviner was relayed to me twice, the first time in her home in Gugulethu a few week's after I had met her and then later during our trip to Swalala, whilst sitting around an evening fire. The first time I heard the story, I had only a notebook in which to record the details, however, the second time was recorded on audio tape. The second hearing corresponded with the first, and I can judge from the excitement and fluency with which Gogo Morwadi spoke that she was indeed proud of her experience, and that she enjoyed any opportunity of telling me about it.

Gogo Morwadi explained that the first symptoms of the calling of *ukuthwasa* appeared in 1974, when she was approximately twenty years of age. These included feelings of being full of wind, as if something was pumping it through her body. This condition was aggravated in the evenings. Feelings of claustrophobia accompanied these experiences and she often felt as if she was about to "go through the roof". Whenever she experienced the wind, she wanted "to find the drums no matter what time of day". This demonstrates Gogo Morwadi's need to dance - *ukugida*, as she calls it, the Swazi term for the prescriptive and curing *ukuxhentsa* (Xh) dancing of an initiate.

Gogo Morwadi initially attributed such symptoms to an illness that was physical in nature, and she consulted doctors at Groote Schuur hospital, Cape Town. X-rays were taken, but they

showed nothing, as did the barium meal tests. The doctors told her that she was not sick. She related her condition in her own words:

I was very sick. I did not believe what they said, [when they told me that] I must *-thwasa*. I didn't want to *-thwasa*. Sometimes I felt something like a wind in my inside, like *umqombothi*, or water pumping. Then the wind would come up and I just started to shout "Hey! Hey!" I didn't know what was going on with me. And then sometimes the wind came up through my ears and it would say "Phoo-phoo-phoo" [imitating breathy exhalation]. That time I had to jump up - I thought that I would go through the roof. They took me to Groote Schuur. I've got a file in Groote Schuur Hospital, I've got a file in Conradie Hospital, I've got a file in Pretoria Hospital.

Sometimes when this thing came up, I would shout "Hey" and the doctor would reply, "No - I...*ek trek die wind* - I pull this wind." I would start to shout and say, "No, you are not doctors. You can't see what is wrong with me, and I am sick now. But you say you are doctors...you are not doctors!" I fought with the doctors there in Groote Schuur. They put me in the X-ray and they didn't see anything. Before I *-thwasa*, I used to say to them (laughing), "You are not doctors - you say you are doctors but you can't cure me! You say you can heal me, but you can't heal me, I'm sick - you say I'm pulling the wind, you see.

Continuing not to acknowledge her condition as *ukuthwasa*, nor being able to "see the *'dlozi*, Gogo Morwadi went to church to pray, in the hope of finding healing. She apparently tried this for several months. First, she went to a Zetsitsi church in Cape Town [a division of the Zionist Church], and then a church in Morea, near Pietersburg. She said that *sangomas* attended the church. They "fortuned" her and told her that she should be a *sangoma* herself.

Whilst still suffering *iinkathazo*, Gogo Morwadi stayed in Pietersburg for three months where she was approached by an unknown man, who apparently diagnosed her symptoms of wind, despite her never having met him before. He questioned her about her health and habits:

Man: You were smoking before?

GM: Yes.

Man: The spirit of the church and the ancestors do not agree with a cigarette. You must go and do your ancestors' work or you will never come right."

After the man's proclamation, Gogo Morwadi was approached by a woman diviner who had undergone *ukuthwasa* in Swaziland. She had initially experienced symptoms of temporary paralysis, from which she had recovered after undergoing training. The diviner told Gogo Morwadi to stop "wasting her time" in Cape Town and travel to Swaziland in order to train as a diviner.

Gogo Morwadi thought that she would die from her suffering, in fact in her malady, she asked that her children be taken to the police station to be looked after, so that she could go to the hospital and die. Then she was advised by the diviner that "the '*dlozi* knew when she was going to do her job and would not let her die." She related this to me as follows:

Then one day I was going to the Zetsitsi church with the other woman [the above mentioned diviner]. Her '*dlozi* were different. [Gogo Morwadi is referring to her symptoms of *inkathazo*] It made her mad - she was mad. You see most of people, when they get the '*madlozi*'s, they get mad, they run mad. They take them to hospital and they always [give them an] injection. It does not get healed - they must come and -*thwasa*. She was mad, the woman who was going to this church of Zetsitsi. Then one day there were some prophets, fortune tellers in the church. They told her and me that we must go and -*thwasa*.

K: So did you go with her to train?

GM She went and I stayed. Then one day, she came to Cape Town when I was still sick. She was fresh like anything - fat and beautiful. I couldn't believe it.

K: So had she already trained?

GM: Yes, I knew her when she was mad and now she was fine. She [advised me], "Mary, stop wasting your time and come to Swaziland."

Gogo Morwadi was taken to what she calls Swaziland, the area of Swalala, Mphumalanga,

where I conducted my field research with her. When Gogo Morwadi left Cape Town, she was in such pain that she believed she would not arrive there alive. In fact, there were times during the journey, that she thought that she was going to die. Upon their arrival in Swalala, the diviner's sister led them to the place where Gogo Morwadi was to train as a diviner. Once she was there, Gogo Morwadi could not believe that there were others waiting there and suffering from the same condition which she had. She also remembered that earlier on, the *ukubiza* had manifested itself in a dream of the round huts she witnessed upon her arrival in Swalala. It was then that Gogo Morwadi realised that she had come to the right place. She described her dream as follows and how it became a reality in Swalala:

Before I went [to Swalala], I dreamed about the *indumbas* [the place where a diviner will keep his/her pharmacopoeia, and other ritual objects]. I'd never seen *indumbas* in my life before, because I grew up as a Coloured, in a Coloured place, at a Coloured school.

I dreamed one night whilst sleeping. I dreamt that I went there, you see - the place like Swalala. I dreamt that I saw my *thwasanas* [novices], their hair, they had made it like Rasta hairs. They put it in *bhola*¹⁷ [balls]. They call it *ithumana*¹⁸ [possibly meaning clumps of hair]. They use that red, red clay. You put it on the hair. All of this was in my dream, you see - I dreamed of it. Then when I arrived, I realised that I was sitting in Swalala. I heard the others also say, with a breathy exhalation, "Hey, Hey!" I did not want to ask. I looked at Gogo Lamashigo, my trainer, but I asked her nothing. I thought in my heart...I asked myself...but I didn't know, you see.

Then Gogo Lamashigo ordered that all of us were to go into the *indumba*. I followed. Us *thwasanas* had *ingwenyamas*¹⁹ [skins] on. We had to *-hlehla*. The *ithwasa* shook, as I had seen in my dream. I also had dreamt that then Gogo Lamashigo would come to me.

When she had finished to *-hlehla*, indeed she did come to me. She held and worked my knees and she started to "fortune" me. She told me everything about how I felt, how it happened and everything, you see. [For example,] how I felt when that wind came up, how I had felt that I needed to sit alone. And how there were times when this wind would happen in me, how it would start to come up, and then how I would not want any child around me. [She told me that] it felt [as though] I should sit alone, or sometimes [how] I had to climb the mountain and sit alone. She told me all of this.

The most vivid memories of Gogo Morwadi's *ukuthwasa* experience over twenty year's ago,

are the sounds of the drums and the *-hlehla* episodes, which often made her cry. After these episodes, she would be "fortuned by the other people" (initiates and Gogo Lamashigo). After these occasions, she began to feel a great difference in her condition. and she believes that her *inkathazo* was indeed cured through the *-hlehla* sessions and the "fortuning". Within about five months of training, Gogo Morwadi "became a doctor", and then she stayed on to learn "medicine."

Case history 2: Gogo Tryfina

Gogo Tryfina is a Swazi diviner and she lives in *Ezinyoka* (Snake Park), an area in the vicinity of New Crossroads. Gogo Morwadi told me that the diviner's "*amadlozi* name is *Malwane*"²⁰. Gogo Tryfina, who is an associate and friend of Gogo Morwadi, told me this story one afternoon at Gogo Morwadi's house. Gogo Tryfina related the story to me in a mixture of SiSwati and Xhosa. Despite my difficulty in understanding the conversation, Gogo Tryfina did not have the language skills, nor the patience to translate it for me. Matters were further complicated by the fact that I had been unable to borrow the tape recorder which I normally use, so I had to take notes by hand. I am grateful to Jeff, Gogo Morwadi's son, who reluctantly translated the dialogue for me, with the occasional aid of Gogo Tryfina herself.

I wish to include Gogo Tryfina's story, because even though it is somewhat bizarre - involving striking incongruities and sensational contrasts - it has important symbolic significance on the process of *ukuthwasa*. Gogo Tryfina has a flair for the dramatic and her

accounts are graphic, vivid and full of imagery, not to mention compelling. Below is an account of a dream she had before she became a diviner.

"I was sick at night." Gogo Tryfina described her initial symptoms as including the swelling of her feet. She was taken to a diviner where she was diagnosed as suffering from *iinkathazo*. As she experienced *ukubiza*, Gogo Tryfina would frequently lie down and she would feel as if her entire body had swelled up. She began to experience heart palpitations, which were so severe, that she would be kept awake at night.

Gogo Tryfina then described to me a dream that she had. In the dream, she heard a voice say (which she called "the word"), "Stand up and go!" The next minute, she found herself wearing a red blanket and she walked to a crossroads, where she stood and listened. Then "the word" told her to, "Go out this way." She followed the direction and found herself at another crossroads. There was a sign at this point that held a message for her. It said that she was to look for three houses in the vicinity, made of grass.

By the time she arrived at the gate before the three houses, Gogo Tryfina was swollen from head to toe with oedema. This may have had something to do with her blood pressure levels. She entered one of the houses and immediately, the swelling in her stomach began to come down - "the '*dlozis* had begun to come out." She found herself all alone in the house, and Gogo Tryfina began to *-hlehla* and "walk on her knees". Then the '*dlozis* began to *-hlehla* and she started to breathe them out of herself.

Gogo Tryfina's father then entered the dream and put medicine into her mouth. This allowed

her to let go of herself and hear the sound of drums. At this point, her *'dlozi* said, "I want to - *thwasa*." Then suddenly and miraculously, Gogo Tryfina attempted to give birth to a child. She was unable to, as the *'dlozis* "would not let her". Whilst this was happening, her father, "Baba", was "talking" (*ukuphahla*) to the ancestors. It was only once her ancestors had come out of her in the form of expelled wind, that Gogo Tryfina was able to give birth. It was, however; the diviners who had arrived on the scene at the time who told her she had given birth to a child, whose name was Thulisile. After this birth, Gogo Tryfina underwent her *ukuthwasa* period. In reality, she underwent her training to become a diviner.

It is difficult to conclude whether this birth occurred in actuality, but it is quite likely a symbolic reference to the birth of a new state. Gogo Tryfina stated that during her training period, the child's father came to her and she had another child, this time a miscarriage - "They took the bones out." In total she gave birth three times, and the third child died.

One could speculate upon the symbolic significance of pregnancy and birth, as paralleled in stages through which a novice diviner goes, from her calling to her graduation. For instance, in Zulu cosmology, there are three stages noted in the process of birth, which are related to varying degrees of impurity or the above mentioned pollution. The concept of pollution is linked largely to female experiences in society, and it refers to "a 'mystical force'...(its source), essentially a happening associated with "birth on the one hand and "death" on the other." (Ngubane, 1977:77) Pollution may be considered as "a marginal state between life and death." (Ngubane, 1977:78) Naturally, opinion regarding the worlds of the living and dead (the spirit world) has tremendous importance on those who believe in the omniscient ancestors.

At the first stage, from conception, the mother is perceived to be in this marginal state by carrying a foetus that is preparing to arrive in the living world. Pollution is at its height in the second stage during actual birth and it decreases to the third stage with lactation and weaning - as the child becomes less dependent on the mother. As far as potential diviners are concerned, Ngubane notes that the period extending from the illness associated with the novitiate to the graduation of a fully-fledged diviner can also be demarcated into three stages, but they are associated with purity, rather than pollution. She is also considered as a marginal being, a person who stays between the worlds of the living and the spirits, whereas the mother maintains this in an impure way whilst she is pregnant. (Ngubane, 1977:88-89)

With regard to Gogo Tryfina, the concept of pregnancy in her in a dream may be regarded as interesting. In the light of Ngubane's writings, she metaphorically approached her *ukuthwasa* period as pregnant, in a state linked with pollution, when she should have been experiencing a state of purity. She gave birth only after she allowed contact between herself and the helping diviners, once she had "let the *amadlozi* out," and possibly left the pollutive state. The birth process occurred three times, with only the first child surviving.

THE INFLUENCE OF AFRICAN ZIONIST BELIEFS UPON PEOPLE'S RESPONSES TO CALLS TO THE PROFESSION OF DIVINER

The information below is based largely upon biographical evidence. It is not my intention to make an intensive study of African Zionist beliefs, nor my place to draw any conclusions

from my field research in this regard. I do intend to discuss the motivation behind the choice of music used in the context of a particular Zionist-type church's services.

In many instances of *ukubiza*, the person afflicted with *ukuthwasa* may not wish to pursue a career in divination. The calling may be resisted upon the grounds that divination is a very demanding job, and it may not necessarily be congruent with the person's already established lifestyle. The subject may not want to submit to the call because it may come late in life, when he/she is already established in a certain routine, or it may interfere with the religious beliefs that the person already holds. Becoming a diviner also has far reaching effects on the surrounding family members and their social circle.

All my informants, as demonstrated above, attempted in various ways to avoid the ramifications of accepting *ukuthwasa*, and becoming a diviner. Indeed, they were aware of how the acceptance of the calling would irreversibly change their lives. All of them ultimately did undergo initiation to become a diviner as an effective means of healing their *iinkathazo*. In several cases, however, becoming a diviner was still not a 'cut and dried' issue. This became evident through certain incidents that I unwittingly experienced during my field research which have indicated the infiltration of Christian beliefs, adopted to variable extents within the traditional context of the divination practices of my informants.

Particularly, I have found these isolated events to be associated with sects of the Zionist-type church, a recognised African Independent church. In one case, this phenomenon demonstrated an avoidance of *ukuthwasa*, and it provided a complete alternative to that of

becoming a diviner. However, with three of my main informants, the church plays an integral role in their lives, despite their generally recognised status as diviners.

The first and rather extreme case, is illustrated by Chief Gcaleka, whose habit of donning a Zionist prophet's robe and "calling up Jesus" upon ceremonial occasions, including *iintlombe*, proves to be rather startling.

It must be noted that Chief Gcaleka's amalgamation of elements of the Christian faith in his divination practices, is slightly more complicated, owing to the eclecticism of his religious beliefs. I have chosen therefore to restrict my analysis of his actions (elaborated upon below), purely to their context of occurrence, as I have been given reason to believe that he does not follow a specific church doctrine or code. He has been described to me by one of his novices as a prophet and a minister from the Methodist church. He wears the regalia of a prophet from the Zionist Church, however, and this was verified by David, who identified the robes as such in photographs. Chief Gcaleka's novice told me that he had such robes made because he liked them. This was endorsed by Chief Gcaleka, who told me that he had them made before he went to Scotland. The fact that Chief Gcaleka is essentially a *bricoleur* of note, has been revealed in the context of his beliefs in Chapter 1.

The other two informants in question, David and Makhosi Athobile, are prophets (*-profeti*) in the Zionist church. In fact, David is recognised as the *umfundisi* (minister) of his congregation, the Witness Church of Christ in Zion, which meets thrice weekly in the homes of its members, which span the areas from Gugulethu to as far as 'Harare' in Khayelitsha. Several members of his congregation are also concurrently diviners and prophets.

Although a recognised *igqirha*, David is more intensively involved in the church at present. I attempted to ascertain how David became affiliated with divination and the Zionist church. He has been an *umfundisi* for 12-14 years, whilst he became a diviner earlier on in his life. His connection with the two seems to stem from the days of his *ukubiza*, when the dreams he experienced contained symbolic references to Zionism and divination:

In some dreams, I would see a group of *amagqirha* coming towards this house, together with a group of *amaZiyone*. Then what followed, was that I saw myself in a hut, with all the white stuff over my body. Therefore my dreams, when I was young, indicated to me that I had a choice, because when I dreamed of *amagqirha*, I also saw *amaZiyone*. But whatever I do now, I cannot jump. This is the way *ubugqirha* works.

David said that the religious influence of Zionist church beliefs came from his mother, whilst his father was a diviner. David became a diviner before he joined the church, the latter being something which he chose to do, as opposed to his divination training to which he was 'called'. David explained to me that it is not easy for a person to alternate between the two occupations, because of the consequences of their spiritual interaction. I ascertained that the ancestors in question are perceived to be the same ancestors for *both* disciplines, however they have a different manner of communication for each context, which is appropriate only in that *particular* discipline. (In that music is used to initiate communication in both contexts, I found this most interesting, because it influences David's choice and use of songs in the church services he holds.) David describes the communication as follows:

I chose to be in the church. However, I could not just run to the church and join it, because the spirits of *ubugqirha* would start to speak to me. They are rude [when they speak] and there is nothing holy about them. They do not care whether you are in the church or not [when they choose to speak to you].

The reasoning that David's parents were from distinct religious backgrounds, is the contributory factor in the above complication:

With ancestors, this is how it works. You have ancestors on your father's side and you have ancestors on your mother's side. Both these *izinyanya* have to work together because if they do not work together -those from your mother's side will tell you this [something] and those from your father's side will tell you a different story [a conflicting opinion].

David has described the procedure that a person in his position would have to undergo in order to join the church. It involves the placation and acknowledgement of his ancestors, in a ritual he denoted as *ukudibanisa izinyanya/isihlwele* (combine the ancestors):

You can make them [the ancestors] work together. Once you go through the whole [*ukuthwasa*] process, what you have to do after you become an *igqirha*, or even before you become a full *igqirha*, you have to go through your father's side first and then you go to your mother's side. You have to try to bring these two together, by slaughtering an ox, in order to get them to work together.

So you see, it is not a good idea [for me] just to go to church. The best thing to do is to get a goat, *utywala* (beer) and *umqombothi* and ask them [the ancestors who communicate through *ubugqirha*] to allow you to be with the *amaZiyone*. One cannot just reject them.

Once you are on 'the other side', you do the same thing [with the Zionists], but with *igusha* [a sheep, but David says] a lamb. *Igusha* is more tame than *ibhokhwe*, and this means that your spirits will still come to you and talk to you, telling you things, but in a tamer way. Supposing that you do not do this, you become very wild with *isimoyeni ubugqirha* [the spirit of divinership]. That person can easily just grab someone and cause harm.

David thinks that it is problematic for him to be both a diviner and prophet. This is largely due to the fact that he believes that his ancestors are at odds with one another. This situation arose because David has performed just half of the ritual procedure to bring the ancestors of his father's side (*ubugqirha*) together with those of his mother's side (*amaZiyone*).

He explained the conflict thus:

I have only done one ritual, the one for *amaZiyone* side. For some reason, I love both sides, I am really in the middle. One day, I may wake up and feel like *ubugqirha* and not feel like *ecaweni* [(being) in the church]. I do not want to [cut off] either. *Ubugqirha* came from my father's side. I really loved him and to [stop that side] would be like denying him, which I do not want to do. I still have problems. That is why I may be with the Zionists tomorrow and the *amagqirha* the following day. I still have these problems.

Whereas David became a diviner before he became a prophet, conversely, Makhosi Athobile was a Zionist prophet before she trained as a diviner. Makhosi Athobile was twenty years of age when she joined the church, but she cannot remember when exactly she became a prophet. Nor did she elaborate upon how she became one. Makhosi Athobile came from a family of Catholics, and she was married in a Methodist church. However, she began to see visions of a river, with people entering it, and she knew that she should change to the Zionist church. Makhosi Athobile felt the need to pray for her deceased mother and family. The music of the church touched her (it made her "heart feel like a stone inside") and she decided that she would attend church for the rest of her life. Makhosi Athobile still believes in attending church, however, she has not yet found a congregation to join in Cape Town. She expressed an interest in joining David's congregation after hearing my descriptions of the services.

As described above, Makhosi Athobile's ancestors, and her ancestral grandfather in particular, had wanted to restrict her to practising her healing skills and her "psychic abilities in the church only." In describing how her ancestral grandfather had wanted her to be a "clairvoyant in the church", Makhosi Athobile explained that he would appear to her in visions and dreams, and instruct her that she was to prophesy, using the Bible, to "tell them

everything". She was to charge 10c (at the time, a shilling) per consultation. Makhosi Athobile said, "I can tell you everything about the Bible, but I did not ask the people to give me money."

I have already described how Makhosi Athobile, whilst being affiliated to the church, suffered *ukuthwasa* which proved to be unreceptive to any form of treatment. When she trained to become a diviner in Mount Frere, she still continued to practice elements of her Zionist faith. She explained thus:

When I was training, I used to pray. My training mother did not want me to pray. She would say to me, "You cannot have two gods. If you like another one, you will hate another one. So which one are you listening to?" She told me that I had to listen to my ancestors. She would say, "Why did your God not help you [when you were sick *ukuthwasa*] and you came to me?"

So I would break a candle and carry a box of matches. I would wrap them in foil and place them under my blouse in my cleavage, before consulting my training mother [for a *-vumisa*]. I would tell her, "Makhosi mama, I'm going to the toilet", but in the meantime I would go and light the candle and pray, "Help me to find *whatever* [I am supposed to find]. Amen."

I would then take my stick and return. [My prayer] would help me. This is because whenever I have been in the church, I always became ecstatic. Before I put mud on my face [when I became a *-thwasa*], I prayed that God would go to Azina, my training mother and show her who really is the head of mankind. Take my [ancestral] grandfather, for instance, if God wasn't there, he would not be here for me either. Therefore, my ancestors seem to be happy with my choice. My ancestors want me to go to church.

The above description reveals Makhosi Athobile's polytheistical approach to her cosmological beliefs. She recognises the dual significance of her ancestors and the concept of God, the Creator of life. (Makhosi Athobile did not make mention of the Holy Spirit).

Furthermore, Makhosi Athobile is content to be a diviner and a Zionist prophet simultaneously. She describes that when she attends church, she still practices healing, "with

water and medicines". Makhosi Athobile explained how in fact she could not lead a balanced life without these two influences. Indeed, she became ill whilst practising divination to the exclusion of attending church:

Whilst I was working for Gayle, my feet started to swell up. I was making breakfast for the gardener, and my feet started to boil. I could not move. I started to cry like a baby, because my feet were so sore. I could not walk, all I could do was sleep in a chair in my room. I could not lie down...because of *sangomas*.

My [ancestral] auntie came to me and she told me that I had forgotten where I had come from. Reprimanding me, she said that since I had become a *sangoma*, I was earning money every day and I had forgotten the God I had trusted in so much. She asked me why I had stopped going to church and why I did not pray anymore. Was it because since I became a *sangoma*, I did not believe anymore? Who says that a *sangoma* does not pray?

I woke up and my room was full of people - all my friends from the church were there. I asked them when they had come and who had let them in. The madam had let them through the front door. They were drinking tea and they had even cooked some food. I had heard nothing. Then I started to go again to the church. This meant that my ancestors wanted me to go to church.

The above account from Makhosi Athobile reveals that she needs to be affiliated to her church in order to function in a balanced way. However, she is still a practising *sangoma*. David, on the other hand gave up his diviner's consultancy to focus on developing his church. One of the reasons he gave me was that he found it difficult to charge people for the healing work he did. He did not like to take their money. Presently, by being employed in a '9-5 type job', he can afford to run his church at no charge, and still do similar work.

I was particularly interested in how a person in Makhosi Athobile or David's position, was able to accommodate such a transition. Similarities between prophets and diviners in their processes of healing have been discussed in anthropological literature by several authors. "Prophet and diviner both promote health and vitality, recognising witchcraft and sorcery as an important source of illness." (Pauw in Hammond-Tooke, 1974:434) Sundkler notes such a

"parallel in pattern can be followed in minute detail in the following traits: "i) The initial call to become a diviner or to join a Zionist Church and become a prophet, ii) General appearance, behaviour and activities, the Zionists being a modern movement of witch finders. iii) Group pattern of the two associations." (Sundkler, 1961:109)

Other similar, yet not identical attributes of the two agents include the fact that the calling to prophecy is considered a gift possessed by men and women who have developed psychic abilities. Unlike divination, however, the gift of prophecy is "technically open to all", its achievement is through discipline and abstinence in accordance with the Zionist system of beliefs. (Kiernan in Prozesky & de Gruchy, 1995:125)

David explained that by enrolling in a (particular) Zionist Church, a suitable avenue may be provided for a person who is experiencing *ukuthwasa*:

In most cases, people within the Zion church are *amagqirha*, or people who have the [potential] power of being *amagqirha*. Becoming an *igqirha* is a long process and it has its ups and downs. For some people, being in a Zionist church, which operates like *ubugqirha*, is like a waiting room for them - [they wait] for their dreams to come, [in order] for them to know what to do. In order for you to get your dreams, you have to be cleansed [as with medicines, *ubulawu* etc.] This can be done in the church as well. The *umfundisi*, like me, is able to see what to do with the people in the church, and can offer them help.

It must be noted that because of the syncretic nature of the Zionist-type church, different sects adopt various doctrines. "What is important, of course, is the differing proportions of the admixture that underlie the bewildering variety presented in the full range of Zionism, so many being more or less Christian than others." (Kiernan in Prozesky and de Gruchy, 1995:122) For example, Makhosi Athobile has experienced friction by being a diviner in the

church. Even though she heals in the church, she has been hampered under certain conditions:-

When I go to church, some people do not like me to attend because I am a *sangoma*. They give me bad stares. They do not want *sangomas* to go to church. That is why I did not want to become one, as I know that they do not want *sangomas* in the church.

Operations in David's church work differently and his standpoint is this:

Some *amaZiyone* try not to encourage their people to become *amagqirha*. I find that wrong, because whatever you do, if you are supposed to be an *igqirha*, and you decide that you want to be a Zionist, it will not help you, because you will still get the *amaphupha* from your people [ancestors], telling you what they really want you to do. You will have that for the rest of your life until you die. It is something which you have to go through. Even by just acknowledging them [the ancestors] and explaining to them that you would rather be in the church is better, because they do allow you to, as long as you acknowledge them.

I wish to include a short case history I recorded in January 1996 in the Eastern Cape, concerning a woman who, as a Zionist prophet, was attempting to suppress the calling to divination by her ancestors on her mother's side (the Hlomo clan). Her paternal ancestors, the Rhadebe clan, were in favour of her staying with the church. This occurred through her dream experiences, and I shall relate an incident which I unwittingly sparked off. The woman had to carry out a ritual of acknowledgement to her ancestors, with a request that she may stay with the church.

During a fieldtrip to Phelindaba ("End of News") in the Herschel district of the former Transkei in January 1996, I indirectly caused a spiritual upheaval in a woman (described below as X) of the Rhadebe clan, who practised as a Zionist prophet. She was a member of the Zionist church in the area (St Morris), and she attended another Zionist-type church in

Cape Town, where she was employed for most of the year in Camps Bay. In her youth, the woman had experienced *ukuthwasa* dreams, envisaging the slaughtering of white goats. She did not wish to become a diviner, and she became a prophet in the church instead.

My reasons for being in Phelindaba pertained to the invitation I received from the homestead head, to witness an *umcimbi*²¹. One afternoon as the two-day event was coming to a close, a number of the older women of the community had congregated outside the house in order to demonstrate *umngqungqo*²² (See Plates 17, 18) (Xhosa ritual dance for girls' puberty celebrations). In return I bought them two pints of beer, upon the recommendation of my contact, Mzwandile, which he presented to them on my behalf. The women were most flattered by my gesture.

As he introduced me to the women, Mzwandile hinted that I would enjoy a performance of divination music. There appeared to be three diviners amongst the women, and he asked them if they would oblige. The women were most excited about this and in no time they returned to the dancing area. A pair of wooden sticks was found to beat an empty man-sized blue plastic drum, which had been originally used for water storage. The characteristic triple rhythm was started up on this makeshift drum, and the women (diviner and women alike) began to - *xhentsa* in front of my video camera.

The drumming seemed to stop abruptly halfway through the first song (*Onomathotolo*, one of the oldest and best known divination songs), yet the women continued to dance, the level of excitement rising. Upon glancing around, I noticed that the drum stood unused and even its beaters had been removed. Evidently, the drum was not to be beaten further. When the

dancing ended a while later, I enquired as to the reason why the drums had been stopped. Mzwandile explained to me that his sister, X, had been playing the drums and it had begun to upset her tremendously. He had told me on a previous occasion that she had received the calling, but had decided to turn it down. After the drums stopped, a meeting was held between X, Mzwandile and their mother. It was decided that she was to carry out a ritual on the following day to appease her ancestors, in order to ask for their understanding and support in the path she had chosen through the church.

I asked Mzwandile for the name of the ritual to be held, however, he replied that it would be the first time that he would experience such an event, hence he could not give me a name. Mzwandile continued to say that the "experienced people" at the church of St Morris had explained the ritual procedure to X. She was already familiar with the procedure, because her dreams indicated to her what she should do. The ritual subsequently had been confirmed and approved by members of her church.

I was informed that the abovementioned ritual could be held during any time period, indeed it could take place a month or even a year after the subject had experienced the dreams. In many cases, the procedure was dependent on the financial situation of the family, because a sheep was needed for slaughter. Whilst I was in Phelindaba, X had chosen the following day at 9h00 to perform the ritual.

I was initially informed that it would be possible for me to witness the ritual, however, the following morning Mzwandile approached me and said that in the middle of the night, his sister had experienced further upsetting dreams. It was decided during an emergency

discussion between his mother and himself, that it would be preferable for me not to attend.

The ritual was to be witnessed by X's mother, Mzwandile and several close family members.

After the ritual, Mzwandile described the course of events, which I relate in his own words:

We met to have a discussion about this, and we found that the owner of this problem was my sister. My sister always has these dreams and she always gets sick, but when she goes to the doctors, they cannot help her. The doctors say, "No, we see nothing."

Even though they see nothing, she always dreams one dream, many times when she is sleeping. She has good dreams, about what will happen tomorrow. Then especially when she is in the church, she sees a lot of things, even maybe somebody who goes to the church, maybe calls to her [with a] sickness, and then she helps them, by telling them what is the cause of that sickness.

So now, the problem is that she cannot see clearly. We found that the *amadlozi* of *amaRhadebe*, they are pushing her that she can do everything to help the people in church. But the '*madlozis* of the *amaHlomos* where my mother was born, they push her to do things on the side of *sangomas*.

In her dreams, she always dreams about the river. So she poured three small glasses, but not flat glasses, those long glasses, as the '*madlozis* had shown her in her dreams. They also want one bottle of wine - but it has to be white wine and *nqodi* [a drink from King Korn, but not brewed in the same manner as *umqombothi*] and *umqombothi* - but a not very big amount.

Also in her dreams, they show her that she must have a white chicken and she must kill that chicken before she goes down to the river. So we of *amaRhadebe* went there with little food, 3 glasses of wine, *nqodi* and *umqombothi* and *isonka* [bread], because *isonka* is our food here. So when we got there, the river was like this [in a forked position]. She must go in between, so that the water goes that side [to the left] and the water goes that side [to the right]. So there you see, maybe when *sangomas* get their spirit or sing something, she did those things there.²³

K: Was there singing, or dancing?

MZW: No, a little dancing, but not exactly. We found that there was something that was tight in her, and she was fighting it, because the other *amadlozi* of the *amaHlomo* were pushing her to *-xhentsa*. But the other '*madlozi* of the church did not want her to *-xhentsa*. So she wanted to *-xhentsa* but [on the other hand], she could not *-xhentsa*. She also wanted to do the things of the church, all those things, you know. She even fell down. We decided that we must do nothing, we must just watch her. After a few minutes, she spoke. She talked to the river, [stating that] she had come to make a request, because they [the ancestors] always showed her in dreams that the *amaHlomo*...those *amaHlomos* were pushing her to do things on the side

of *sangomas*. They must take the path of church because she likes that path. That is what she requested.

After we finished that, she was supposed to eat, but before she ate, she had to throw a little food down. (We believe that you have to give to the *'madlozis*.) After that, she was able to give the other people, but each and every [piece of] food had to start from her. She had to eat first. After we had finished eating, we went back the house and we had a discussion. She also did the same thing [again with the food]. We ate the last of the food, because when we went to the river, we took just a little food, and the rest of that food must be eaten. The sheep is separate from this.

K: Are you still going to slaughter the sheep?

MZW: We will finish that tomorrow, but that is a separate thing.

K: Where will you slaughter it?

MZW: In the kraal. But that sheep is separate - it is not included [directly in the purposes of the river ceremony]. She must only eat food that she brought to the river, the important thing being that she must go to the river and make that request. When we came back she did the same thing that she did there.

K: So what is the sheep for- when are you going to eat it?

MZW: We use the sheep tomorrow - you know since we are working, you believe you get a lot of trouble. After maybe four years or eight years after you have been working and you have always succeeded in dangerous things, it is good to slaughter a sheep. What is important is when she is giving the *amadlozi* because they have helped her to succeed over many years in which she has worked with dangerous things.

K: Will she have to drink the blood?

MZW: No, only *sangomas* do that. She must taste the meat.

David has stated that:

In my church I have told my people that I love being an *igqirha* and if they are not happy with that, they can walk out, because I have my reasons for loving *ubugqirha*. It is fine to talk about *izinyanya* in my church. I always make it clear to them that I like to use both. If they want to [speak about] God, that is fine, also if they want to pray to *izinyanya zakho*.

I have already mentioned that in David's case, it seemed necessary that his ancestors (which were associated with his divination practices), undergo some kind of transformation, in order that they communicate in an acceptable way in the context of the church. If these spiritual forces are not 'tamed', this would be illustrated through wild and sometimes dangerous behaviour bordering on violence. David described this type of behaviour as 'bad *uMoya*'. He was most concerned that this type of *uMoya* could cause the affected person to inflict bodily harm on another member of the church.

When talking of *uMoya*, David seemed to be describing the semi-ecstatic state into which members of his congregation moved at particular points of the service, the condition experienced by the person being described as *emoyeni* [in the Spirit]. David has likened it to *ihlombe*. The accompanying behaviour is often stimulated by the circular dancing to the songs performed, described by David as *ukubaleka idressi* - to follow in dressage formation and *ukujikeleza* (going in revolving formation, one person behind the other, or individuals taking to the floor and spinning around, usually one at a time). (McLaren 1994:7 and 64) (See Plate 20) Once the person is experiencing *uMoya*, it is indicated for the music to be stopped and that person may begin to speak at a rapid pace. His/her phrases are interjected by the rest of the congregation with "*Hallelujah*". This rendition is remarkably similar to a *-thokozisa*.

Sundkler notes that 'spirit', which may be interpreted as the Holy Spirit, "can be cited as the authority for any subjective fancy or predilection which the particular prophet may have." (1961:109) This focus on the power of the Holy Spirit, is used in varying degrees in conjunction with the ancestral spirits. This power, is not always personified as the above, but is rather a concept, known as *uMoya*. Sundkler states that, "Any Zionist will admit that there

are two distinct aspects of the *uMoya* concept. First, *uMoya* can be understood in terms of piety and good Christian behaviour. Second, *uMoya* in its specific sense is the sum of supernatural gifts, among which speaking in tongues is the most coveted." (1961:244)

When discussing the concepts of God, the Holy Spirit and *uMoya* with David, it was difficult not to get bewildered by complexity. His views are obviously personal, and they influence the way he runs his church. His interpretation of my question regarding the relationship of the three was as follows:

Perhaps one should ask what the connection between the *izinyanya* and God is. I see it as this:- God came first and then the *izinyanya* came. To me, our great-great-grandfathers meant a lot to God, even though they did not worship Him, because they did not know who He was. But for some reason, He loved them and He gave them something. For people to realise that there was a God took centuries. The only way of connecting with God, was through the *izinyanya*, which is what we do today. We pray and all that, but we still have to connect with the *izinyanya* first. Just like [with Christianity,] one can go through Jesus Christ to get to God, we go through *izinyanya*. If you do not pray to *izinyanya zakho*, you are wasting your time. Nothing will ever come right in your life. I know from experience.

K: Is *uMoya* the work of *izinyanya*?

D: To me, yes it is. *Izinyanya* are there and they have always been there. *uMoya* is like *izinyanya*, it can be used as *izinyanya*, like *amakhosi* as well [are a form of *izinyanya*]. In order for *uMoya* to work, you have to cleanse yourself, either as *ubugqirha* or *amaZiyone*, with *ubulawu*. [They use *ubulawu* in the church.]

Hammond-Tooke notes that with Zionism, "There is much evidence that the existence and influence of ancestors is accepted, at least unofficially, by many members, both leaders and laity, expressed in such terms as: 'the Holy Spirit works through the ancestors.'" (1989:142)

David explained as such:

In churches where the words *izinyanya* or *isihlwele* are not allowed to be used, people are being told to forget about the ancestors, and they are just to think

about God and the Angels. So if your spirits tell you something, or show you something, it is actually [recognised as the work of] God. It is merely shifting from the word *izinyanya*. Take the people of the New Apostolic Church, for example, they pretend not to believe in *izinyanya*, but watch them after hours! They go to *amagqirha*, *amaZiyone* and all that, because they *know* that *izinyanya* exist, but to the world, they pretend otherwise. It is the same for people who call themselves "priests of God" and other fancy names - watch where they go after hours!

David continued:

With my way of running the church, it is very important that we realise that we are in church and we are there to praise God. That is important. So when we come to church, we will pray, read the Bible and preach. Once we have done that, we will pray and then we will talk about *uMoya*. I do not want to talk about *uMoya* whilst we are still praying and worshipping. To me, that is wrong, because they are two different things. We have to worship first.

So for somebody who uses *uMoya*, it is very important for them to be in touch with it at all times. For example, take Thursday's service when the ladies preached (which is good for me, as I have removed some of the responsibility from myself and they are in charge of the church). Now whilst that was happening, I used *uMoya* to tell me things. *uMoya* will tell me about the people in the church, for example, that man using his whistle and other things whilst he danced. I already knew that he would do that, because *uMoya* had told me. I also knew where he got his *uMoya* from, he had in fact paid for it.

After attending several church services at the Witness Church of Christ, I noticed that at each event, particularly towards the close of the service, but sometimes in the middle as well, songs with a slower tempo, regulated by drumming, were performed. Some of the participants, particularly the three women and several small children, who generally stood around the drum, and sometimes took turns to play it and the tin rattle, knelt in front of David (*umfundisi*) whilst we sang²⁴. These renditions of song were characteristically choral and strophic, with no evidence of call and response, as with the majority of the other song material.

I questioned David about these songs and he stated what I had obviously failed to recognise. These particular songs were hymns, chosen by him out of a hymnal. He explained that the hymns had a specific function within the service. They were performed at certain points (when needed) in order for people who were experiencing *uMoya*, to "come back to their senses." David believes that it is very important for a person who is experiencing *uMoya* within the service, not to forget that they are in the church and that they are worshipping God. In this context, there are certain behavioural codes which are also adopted from "God's word", the Bible. David feels responsible for the wellbeing of his congregation, particularly whilst they attend the services, therefore, he has to monitor and maintain control over the behaviour of the participants. The hymns serve to remind the people of the context of their situation and to prevent them from "becoming wild." He said that if there were no hymns included in the services, there would be "no difference between the service and an *intlombe*."

David concluded that:

When it comes to [the choice of] songs, I would rather have them singing songs that would touch me spiritually, rather than songs that would send me listening to *izinyanya*. That would confuse me - I would not know where I was then.

The use of a rattle also has an important contextual role in the music of the church service. This was illustrated to me after a service in which there was no rattle and just the drum. David told me that the congregation had complained to him about the absence of the rattle, and that he had to organise one for the next service. This had little to do with the fact that the music was audibly different without the rattle, but rather that the rattle's absence made the music more akin to music performed at an *intlombe*. Therefore the 'grounding' effect provided by the rattle was missing!

Hansen has stated that it is common for Zionist-type churches to use rattles, in particular a sistrum-type rattle called *igonokhwece* (pl. *ama*). The sistrum dates from Mesopotamian days, and therefore, the use of such a rattle is significant, as evidence of a specific musical culture that is archaic and accredited with Biblical times too.

FORMAL AND STYLISTIC ELEMENTS OF DIVINATION MUSIC

Before presenting the first of my musical transcriptions and its accompanying analysis, it is important to make mention of the most important formal and stylistic elements which I have found underlying the divination music presented in this thesis.

This dissertation is concerned with the belief systems of certain diviner informants and the subsequent effects on the symbolism, form, structure and style of the music associated with such enactment of beliefs through ritual. The analysis of the musicological data is therefore based on my own recordings of music performed in context of the rituals themselves, which were carried out by SiSwati- and Zulu-speaking diviners (Gogo Morwadi and her associates) and a Xhosa-speaking diviner (Chief Nicholas Gcaleka). Those in attendance at the rituals were, although ethnically diverse, predominantly Xhosa-speaking.

A large percentage of the song texts under scrutiny here are in Xhosa, however, there are also songs which have Zulu or SiSwati texts - or references through word phrases to them. Gogo Morwadi's *-hlehla* songs demonstrate the use of a language associated with *sindzawe*.

The breakdown of the song texts is as follows:

- 55% Xhosa
- 25% Zulu
- 20% a mixture of languages incorporating *sindzawe*

Analysis of the music in this study demonstrates principles akin to those operating in Xhosa musical tradition, with regard to form, structure and style. Needless to say, after investigation, a percentage of the songs deviate from these principles particularly in their tonal structure, and such distinctive traits merit special consideration. They will be discussed both below, and where necessary, in context of the song analyses themselves. Aspects of form and style in Xhosa divination music have been described and discussed in much detail by Hansen. (1981, 1985) In that they are basic to my analysis, I summarise her findings as follows:

Form

Xhosa divination songs are cyclic in form, ie they comprise a total pattern of fixed length, which is repeated indefinitely. (Hansen, 1981:616) The latter is indicated by a form number, appearing at the head of a transcription: (24) which denotes the number of pulses in the cycle (a pulse is the smallest regular rhythmical unit in African music). All the musical examples in my research reflect this feature.

Patterns of rhythm:

Hansen has documented three distinct patterns of rhythm in Cape Nguni song (1981:622):

- 1) Songs based on a regular beat which can be subdivided into two or four, or multiplied by two or four, ie. equivalent to the beat (♩). (See Figures 1, 10, 13, 15, 16)

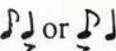

- 2) Songs based on triple beats. According to Hansen, duple meters are far more common than triple meters in Xhosa music. (1981:654) When the latter occur, they may be expressed in terms of qualitative grouping as ♩ or ♪♪, or ♪♪♪. Furthermore, Hansen has stated that, "In all songs with a basic dotted crotchet beat, subdivisions of the beat are 'basically iambic (♩♪) in quantity, but they may or may not be iambic in accentuation.'" (1981:623)


- 3) Songs based on a combination of the above (constituting an additive pattern). No such examples were found in my research.

A song's metrical framework is explicitly "defined by a specific number of body movements and beats", which include clapping, drumming and dancing. (Hansen, 1981:616) In divination music, the drum pattern supplements the clapping pattern and there is no rhythmic contrast between the two (no cross rhythmic relationship exists).

The metrical patterning is commonly divisive, comprising regular pulse groupings into duple or triple beats, and when playing, the drummer will subdivide the main beats unequally, employing a beater in each hand. (Hansen, 1981:581) Examples found in my research

demonstrate this, as well as an equal division of the duple beat. (see Figures 10, 12, 15 and 16)

Iambic drum patterning is prevalent in Xhosa divination music, and the accentuation is either  or . Examples include Figures 7, 18, 19, 20.

All the transcriptions of Gogo Morwadi's Ndau-related songs employ a drumming pattern in which the triple beat is subdivided into pulses (). (See figures 5, 6, 14) This triple rhythm drumming concurs with the rhythmic patterning found by Johnston in *xidzimba* songs (associated with Shangana-Tsonga exorcism rituals pertaining to *amandawu*, which are used to expel Ndau spirits. (Johnston, 1971:324) (Refer to Chapter 3, p. 279)

Drum patterns are specifically aligned to the vocal patterns. It is usual to have 'off-beat' phrasing between the beats of the basic metre (expressed in the drumming and handclaps) and the main accents in the vocal-melodic pattern. This is illustrated by certain vocal-melodic notes which fall in between the handclaps part of the time, but not all of the time, so that the percussive and vocal patterns are staggered. (Hansen, 1981:625, 628, 644) This kind of off-beat phrasing occurred only once in my collected songs, notably in Figure 11.

Patterns of movements executed by the performers also define the metrical framework and cyclic length of a musical item, even though they are visual, rather than audible signals - although the wearing of ankle rattles assists in defining the movement pattern sonically. Patterning may be divisive (comprising regular pulse groupings into duple or triple beats) or additive (comprising irregular pulse groupings of both duple and triple beats). Since

movement patterns are an integral part of the music, they may produce further levels of rhythmic-metrical organisation within the total musical complex, through individual movement styles and body behaviour.

Movement patterns in this study are not subjected to intensive analysis, although they were taken into consideration in the musical analysis. Such investigation and discussion would warrant independent study. I merely describe the general style of movements employed by my informants, notably the associated *-gida* and *-hlehla* movements, and how they fit into a prescribed metrical framework. One exception in which the movement pattern is discussed in relation to the basic metrical framework, is transcription Figure 1.

Structure

Regarding the internal structure of songs:- within the total pattern of a divination song, there is at least one pair of complementary phrases, comprising 'Solo', plus 'Chorus', with different starting points, which are either consecutive or overlapping in occurrence. (Rycroft, 1967:101) Xhosa people describe this relationship in terms of *umhlabeli* as the Song leader who starts a song and leads off the Chorus, known as the *abavumi* or *abalandeli*²⁵ - the Song leader who 'stabs' a song 'for' the Chorus, who then *-landela* ('track' or 'follow') it in response. (Hansen, 1981:616; Dargie, 1988:63).

It is common procedure for a diviner - when ushering in a song - to attempt to present the essentials of the *two* basic phrases which underlie the total vocal pattern, in order to demonstrate the song (refer to Figure 9). (Rycroft, 1967:88) Both phrases usually carry

different texts, the Solo phrases undergoing variation in the course of performance, while the Chorus phrases remain unchanged.

The vocal pattern in most Xhosa music begins on an 'offbeat', ie within the last beat of the preceding cycle. This occurs in my own analyses (see Figures 1, 11, 13, 16, 19) Furthermore, the melody note is often 'tied over' onto the following beat within the vocal pattern. (Hansen, 1981:625)

The two complimentary phrases are antiphonally structured. Most of my transcriptions adhere to, or at least *suggest* such a structure (Figures 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19). In successive repetitions of the pattern, the Solo phrase may recommence towards the end of the cycle, resulting in what is known as 'single-ended' overlap. Extensive overlapping may occur through additional interpolations by individual singers at different points in the cycle, resulting in the inter-linking of all the vocal phrases (known as double-ended overlap). (Rycroft, 1967:92) The latter type of vocal organisation was observed among the Southern Nguni by Hansen in the period 1969-1987, but it is not a common feature of the divination music witnessed and recorded by me, in which the vocal organisation is less complex, being achieved mainly through simple antiphony, and single-ended overlapping. (One example occurs in Figure 11) When interpolated phrases occur, they commonly move in step with one or other of the two main phrases, providing harmonic enrichment, but seldom exceeding the basic, twofold temporal contrast that is characteristic of the music generally.

Another procedure that has been identified by Hansen in certain types of Xhosa music, is when the vocal phrases of the song are replaced by vocables, and the "whole song sounds like

a 'single chorus'...the Solo phrases become subsumed in the overall sound to the extent that they are scarcely discernible to the listener, or, if they are, they seem to 'tag along' as improvisations above the Chorus phrase." (1981:619) At this point, the song is a whole chorus, the singers emphasising the harmonic basis of the song. (ibid, 588)

Such was found by Coppenhall in the context of a diviner's absence from the room after initiating a song. (1990:238) Furthermore, this seemed to be related to the size of the congregation attending the event, who were left to keep up the singing without the song leader - diviner. Her absence affected the quality of the music produced, because the participants tended to shout rather than sing, temporarily without the control of a lead singer. In several *iintlombe* attended by myself, frenetic dancing would frequently prevent a diviner from rendering a constant, strong, audible Solo phrase. (Figure 11) Another situation in which a song becomes a chorus, is when a climax is reached under particular social conditions. (Hansen, 1981:588) Such was the case with transcription Figure 15 (*May' vuk' ingalali*), a song sung during the ritual sacrifice of an ox. At the moment when the beast bellows, the song is taken up as a chorus, with no interpolations. Other examples that demonstrate a 'chorus' pattern will be discussed with the relevant transcriptions, as each one occurred for specific contextual reasons.

Tonality, Melody and Harmony

The tonality of divination music, along with much Xhosa music, conforms with what Hansen has described as, "hexatonic, employing the notes of a pentatonic mode, plus an additional note. This may be conveniently represented in transposition as a descending sequence A - G

- F-sharp - E - D - C - (A)." (1981:665) Such is the case with many of the songs recorded and analysed by me in this work.

However, in some of the songs rendered by Gogo Morwadi and her associates, particularly those which tended to show influences from regions further north, I noticed a tonality that was not entirely in keeping with the recognised Xhosa mode. It is possible that his tonality may be associated with that of Swazi and Zulu music. Rycroft has found in music associated with the Zulu *ugubhu* (or Swazi *ligubhu*) bow, a hemitonic penta mode:- F-sharp D C-sharp A G-sharp, with D and C-sharp forming the two roots, positioned one semitone apart. It has two semitones. (1967:98; 1982:323) The structure of this mode is atypical of Xhosa music, which recognises the two roots as being a tone apart (C and D). Another mode associated with Zulu speakers in Kwa-Zulu Natal is C D E F G - the 'incomplete diatonic fifth', where the roots are a tone apart, which is also bow-derived. (1982:323)

Breakdown of the tonal organisation of the 19 transcriptions in this dissertation:

- Xhosa hexa-based pentatonic mode 9
- Four note penta-based mode (Xhosa-derived) 3
- Seven note diatonic relation of Western mode 2
- Hexatonic (not related to Xhosa mode) 2
- Pentatonic, with 'incomplete diatonic fifth' 1
- Hepta mode 1
- Hemitonic penta mode 1

With regard to the tonal organisation in Xhosa music, "melodies are harmony-based, in that they are capable of being harmonised by any notes - but these must be within the mode on which the melody is based." (Hansen, 1981:684) The majority of the melodies in this work are found to be derived from the harmonic sequence produced within the Xhosa mode, *where applicable*. The notes C and D constitute the root progression and also the tonal foundation of the song, which adheres to the principle of shifting tonality - that is "the root-progressions of the chords which underlie the melody, and which shift from one root-tone (D) to an adjacent root-tone (C) below it." (Hansen, 1981:670; 1982:38)

In some cases, however, the melodies conform to the hemitonic penta mode, demonstrated through the distinctly different root relationship. (Figure 5) (1981:620)

Vocal Organisation

In Xhosa music, polyrhythmic harmony is a characteristic of Xhosa divination music and other musical categories. This is achieved through the additional improvisations of individual singers, whose interpolated vocal phrases are dependent - harmonically and rhythmically - on one of the two main (Solo and Chorus) phrases. These interpolations follow in parallel movement, either using the same notes, or 'harmonically-equivalent' notes (called *izihlobo* by Xhosa informants). (Hansen, 1981:619-620) This did not occur in abundance in the songs recorded by me. (This is discussed on pp.) Improvisations comprising new words added by individual singers, was found to a small extent in this study. (Figure 15)

Regardless of the number of extra variations, which contribute to the complexity of the musical texture, a basic two-fold temporal contrast is retained within the vocal organisation. This principle has been recorded and documented by Hansen, for some Xhosa music and is distinct from other styles of Xhosa music in which the temporal relationship between the vocal parts is greater, resulting in a very complex polyrhythmic musical structure. (Hansen, 1981:632) However, I did not encounter this type of complex polyphonic music during my research. Most of the songs which I recorded, suggest antiphony, with minimal overlapping between parts, and texture enrichment achieved through tonal parallelism. Rhythmic interest was created occasionally through the drumming variation (*-hlehla* songs).

MUSICAL PROCESSES OBSERVED IN A MEDICINE COLLECTION INCIDENT

In the final section of this chapter, I briefly document my experiences of traditional medicine collecting and I include documentation of a divination song which I obtained in these circumstances. I have decided to include this, not only because much of my active field research away from Cape Town involved this activity, but also because I witnessed a rather interesting musical performance in so doing.

An opinion from an old Xhosa-speaking gentleman of the Rhadebe clan, at Phelindaba:

The Bantu doctors were chased away by the government. Do you know what was wrong? The reason is that they can heal someone without a lot of money, because they just dig the things from underneath the ground and [use] the leaves on the trees. They use those things. They do not buy anything. But the government, they have to buy things - everything! *They* must buy and these *amagqirha* do not have to buy anything - they just dig underground and take the leaves and mix the things [in order for] somebody to stand up on his feet. And yet these Bantu doctors were called witchdoctors...

[K: Yes, which is wrong....]

(Laughing) Yes, but because they have not got a certificate, they were called witchdoctors - this name. And as for the government, *they* have got the certificates, yes?

Many practices, rituals and customs that are connected with Southern Nguni cosmology and divination seem in many respects, 'foreign' and perceivably 'estranged' from Western scientific and medical ideologies. The efficacy of traditional medicine in particular, has been viewed with scepticism in the past, as described in conversation by the gentleman above. Furthermore, history reveals that traditional medicine was banned in attempts to impose social change upon Africans and "the *sangoma*, *inyanga* [and] native herbalists were all bundled into a witchcraft wagon." (Vilakazi in Gumede, 1990:170) One merely needs to examine the connotations of the Western term used by the broader-based public - "witchdoctor", for which there is no direct substitute in an African language, the lack thereof being attributable to the confusion of basic African concepts in the Westerner's mind. Yet the use of plants and other non-synthetic products in medical practices has existed since time immemorial. Evidence suggests that many cultures across the world have made use of plant medicine and herbal remedies, from as early as the Ancient Egyptian civilisations. (Pujol, 1993:9)

Traditional medicine has been widely documented in literature, and currently the study of Southern African traditional medicines and practices is rapidly expanding, as more scientists and doctors turn towards the use of natural substances for the treatment and cure of illness. It is not the place in this dissertation to discuss the uses and functions of the medicinal plants which I have helped collect on numerous outings with Gogo Morwadi. Instead, I have passed all relevant samples, photographs and information onto Mrs Gillian Scott of the Kirstenbosch

Botanical Institute, for observation and inclusion in the national database on traditional medicinal plants.

It will suffice to say that medicine in Southern Nguni culture tends to serve both physically curative and psycho-social functions. Frequently, a client who seeks the professional advice of a diviner will be requiring relief from a physical symptom that has manifested itself via a spiritual imbalance, as a result of misfortune induced by witchcraft, or self-imposed wrong doing and ignorance of the ancestors, as discussed before. (see pp. 61ff)

Methods of divination may involve the use of medicine comprising animal, vegetable and mineral material, administered as a curative. Evidence suggests that the occupations of the diviner and herbalist (*ixhwele*) may overlap, in a sense that, like the herbalist, the diviner has a vast knowledge of traditional pharmacopoeia, the essential difference between the two being that the diviner is called to the vocation by the ancestors. (Hunter, 1964:320) The diviner either purchases medicine from a local herbalist or undertakes to collect or dig it him/herself. Diviners are known to be acquainted with the use of medicine to the extent that certain songs sung to them make reference to it, as does the one mentioned above: *uTshaw' uyawaz' Amayeza*. ["The Tshawe person knows medicine"]

I found during the medicine expeditions, members of the party would sometimes sing along the way, as we walked and climbed in search for the correct plants. For instance, Gogo Morwadi's son, Jeff would sing anything from Zionist-type church song to Afrikaans *liedjies* and divination songs as we walked. On one particular occasion, however, I witnessed a song being struck up and performed during the *action* of digging medicine. Considering that Nguni

music is most often performed with a social function in mind, I examine below whether this song was indeed being performed at the given time, for a specific purpose. Furthermore, this type of song's particular social context of performance and the purpose it served with regard to the specific action taking place, is to my knowledge undocumented in ethnomusicological studies.

In the Preface, I made mention of a medicine collecting expedition with Gogo Morwadi in September 1995, to Swalala (Mphumalanga), under the auspices of Gogo Lamashigo. The plant materia collected by us ranged from species of trees to water plants and small shrubs growing in sandy and rocky regions, in and around the towns of Witrivier and Hazyview. Gogo Lamashigo, Gogo Morwadi's teacher and a resident of Swalala accompanied us on our daily expeditions to find medicine, and it was she in fact who initiated the performance of the following song during the action of digging (Musical transcription and analysis overleaf) :

Namhla (m)vulelen' isikhwama sobunyanga.

Today open up the bag of herbalism

*Oogogo (ba)vulelen' isikhwama sobunyanga.*²⁶

Ancestors, open up the bag of herbalism

Today/ ancestors open up the bag of herbalism.trans. N. Mtshabe/M. Ntleki

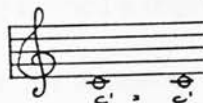
MUSICAL ANALYSIS THE SONG ASSOCIATED WITH MEDICINE COLLECTION

Figure: 1 NAMHLA VULELEN' ISIKHWAMA SOBUNYANGA
(Today, open up the bag of herbalism)

Mode:



Pitch:



Cyclic length: 16 X ♩

Tempo: ♩ = 88 M.M

32

CHORUS

Nam— hla vu-le—le— ni vu-le—le— ni 'skwobun-ya— nga Oo

Go— go vu-le—le— ni vu-le—le— ni 'skwobun-ya— nga

HAND AND LEG MOVEMENTS

R L R L R L R L

1 HARMONISATION

vu-le—le— ni 'so-bun-ya— nga

2 vule 'sikwama so-bun-ya— nga

3 vu-le 'sikhwama so-bun-ya— nga

4 Ye wli'si-khwa-ma so-bun-ya— nga

5 isi-khwama so- bun- ya- nga

6 isi-khwamasobunya— nga

7 i- sikhwama so-bun— ya— nga.

This song accompanied the digging up of plant materia for traditional medicine, described by my informants as *ukugubha*²⁷ (SiS) *amayezalimithi*.²⁸ The digging was done by me and another gentleman, Khosa, whilst Gogo Lamashigo, Jeff and Gogo Morwadi sang and performed simple physical movements (see below). Gogo Morwadi and Jeff explained to me that this song formed a request to the ancestors, by singing it whilst collecting medicine, they would secure the ancestors' presence and attention, and ask them to increase their business and make their divination work more lucrative. The song seems to be associated with the desire for prosperity; for effectiveness in work, which would increase their clientele and ensure professional success.

Gogo Morwadi and Jeff told me (hesitantly) that the song was sung almost exclusively in instances of medicine collection in order to empower the diviners in their use of the medicine in the treatment of clients. Because they (Gogo Lamashigo especially) insisted that the singing was essential during the digging of medicine, I presume that the performance of this song ritualises the action involved, namely that of digging and collecting medicine, because it calls for communication with the ancestors. Indeed, music is not always required to ritualise an action, nor does its performance necessarily create a ritualised action.

Movement patterns

In this song, each movement from R to L involves the dancer's transference of weight from the right foot to the left leg, whilst simultaneously swaying both arms, with the hands dangling loosely from the wrists. This is common practice in many songs, including this one in which the basic metre is indicated by physical movements. These may imply a succession of regular beats which are combined with a contrasting rhythm pattern in the vocal part.

Figure 2 demonstrates the alignment of the vocal and motional pattern of the performers.

Figure: 2



In figure 2, the double beats (\downarrow) denote the steps downward onto the ground, made by the performers' right and left feet alternately. The single beats (\downarrow) indicate the exact movements when the performers shake their hands loosely from the wrists, creating inherent accents on alternate beats. The physical movements define a divisive metrical pattern, which combines with the additive vocal pattern.

Vocal interpolations containing both slight variation (with added pulse movement) and minimal harmonic enrichment were added by the third singer, Gogo Lamashigo within the

last five beats of the cycle. This resulted in a small single ended overlap at the end of the chorus phrase, thus linking it with the initial call phrase at the recommencing of the cycle. Gogo Lamashigo also recommenced her interpolations at different points in the cycle, achieving what is technically called phrase shifting. Antiphony, overlapping and phrase shifting are all characteristic features of Nguni vocal music, about which there is considerable documentation. (Rycroft, 1967; Hansen, 1981) The temporal contrast in this song is basically twofold, existing between the two vocal parts. This contrast is occasionally intensified by Gogo Lamashigo's vocal interpolations.

This song is not obligatory in the process of digging medicine, but it socialises the situation and to an extent, even ritualises it, by making it almost a spiritual experience. Music does play an obligatory role in other forms of ritual action, which in its absence, could not conceivably take place.

NOTES

1. *Umnyama* (Xh) black, dark; *ubumnyama* - blackness, darkness, gloom, ignorance, (McLaren, 1994:90) In this context, however, Ngubane is referring to the term, *umnyama*, in Zulu, which literally means darkness and gloom; a bad omen; redness of the eyes indicating fury, or reddening or darkening of the skin appearing in stripes or patches on limbs or breasts at the time of attainment of puberty. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:619)

Hunter has noted the use of the state of *umlaza* amongst the Mpondo. This may also be considered as a pollutive or ritually impure and contagious state which occurs in conjunction with cycle of birth and death, reproduction and menstruation. The dangers of *umlaza* are particularly connected to the novice diviner, who must avoid such pollution to the extent that she may have to lead a secluded life by avoiding many forms of contact. Even her food may have to be cooked separately. (Hunter, 1969:322; Hammond-Tooke, 1989:92)

Makhosi Athobile has told me that novices are prevented from having any general contact with other people during their training. This includes conversations and any close relationships. Also in my fieldwork experiences, I have encountered novices who feared that the use of a camera (photographic and video) would make them sick, being possibly related to such pollution. At one such *intlombe* I attended, I was prohibited from taking photographs, for fear of making the novices "very sick". I found myself in a difficult situation, as Gogo Morwadi (with whom I went), insisted that I take photographs, and this caused other diviners to walk out in anger.

2. I have encountered one case of an exception to this rule myself, when an unmarried Xhosa woman was asked to be the chief mourner to her ex-boyfriend's South Sotho mother. In that the son was not married, she was perceived as being the closest woman to the unmarried son; and therefore fit for the position as chief mourner. The woman turned the request down for personal reasons, that are to remain undisclosed.

3. *mlobokazi* (sic) - Gumede. Dictionary entry denotes *umhlobokazi* (female friend), from -*hlobo* (Z), I) a friend, acquaintance; ii) relative, kinsman, relation; iii) race (of mankind), nationality. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:330)

4. Chief Gcaleka differentiates between 'white' *ubulawu* and 'red' *ubulawu*. "The red *ubulawu* will help a person with the sickness of *inthwaso* when [he/she] is seized by an *ithongo* of the white nation. All the ancestors of different nations eat different *ubulawu*." (Translated from Xhosa by Mcebisi Ntleki)

5. *amaphupharha* (Xh) is the plural form of *I-phupharha*, which refers to a daydream or reverie. (McLaren, 1994:132) Hansen noted that her diviner informants distinguished between these and *amaphupha*, which were dreams occurring during sleep. Furthermore, she states that, "Three of the diviners used the word *amaphupharha* to describe their dreams, but stressed that the word was not really adequate ('not enough'). They and other

diviners, stated that the dream condition which they experienced was very close to the condition of *ihlombe*, but it was not in fact *ihlombe*, which can only be induced by music." (Hansen, 1981:564)

6. From *phutshwa* (Xh) - dream, *-iphupha* - a dream, *iphupharha* - a day dream, reverie (McLaren, 1994:132) *Phupha* (Z) - dream; to act foolishly or speak nonsense; Lose savour, lose colour, fade, degenerate. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:679)

7. Note that the same adjective, *luhlaza*, is used by the Xhosa to describe green and blue. (McLaren, 1994:59). My interview with David was, however, conducted in English and he did not make reference to the colours in Xhosa.

8. *isikhwama* (Z) i. pouch made of cow's bladder and used for carrying the snuff-box in. ii. Any small bag, purse, pocket pouch. iii. Difficulty. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:420)

9. *isikhwama* (Zulu) I. pouch made of cow's bladder and used for carrying the snuff-box in. ii. Any small bag, purse, pocket pouch. iii. Difficulty. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:420)

10. From *I-thambo* (Xh), a bone, a kernel, a bone-like bead. (McLaren, 1994:157) Also *-thambo* (Z), i. bone, ii. white beads etc. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:783)

11. *intsimbi* (Xh) a string of beads (*intsimbi yomaso*); a necklace, pl. beads (*intsimbi yomqala*). (McLaren, 1994:167)

13. *icuba* (Xh) tobacco (McLaren, 1994:25)

14. From verb, *-futha* (Xh) - puff, blow, snort, breathe forcibly. (McLaren, 1994:41) *Sifutfo* (SiS) - bellows, sprayer, spray-pump; pump. (Rycroft, 1982:27) Priscilla Mafuyeka, when translating the *-femba* ritual, used the noun *sifutfo* (SiSwati)- "having a steam bath, having added *muti* to the water."

15. From verb *-tshaba* (Xh), be silent, morose, malevolent, hostile, come to nothing, *utshaba* refers to an enemy, a destroyer, devastator. (McLaren, 1994:164)

16. Diviners are commonly referred to as *abantu abamhlophe*, "People of the light".

17. *li-bhola* (SiS) means ball, possibly referring to the type of hairstyle. (Rycroft, 1982: 4) Also *bolle*, from Afrikaans.

18. The word *ithumana* may be derived from the root *-thuma* (Xh), meaning 'a smaller kind of Sodom apple' (*intumana*) or 'a clump of (snakeberry) bushes' (*isithuma*). (McLaren, 1994:169) Possibly Gogo Morwadi is referring to the appearance of the hair - notably in 'clumps'.

19. *ingwenyama* (Z) meaning a black leopard. In this context it refers to 'those wearing leopard skins'. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:566)

20. *Malwane* is derived from *silwane* (SiS), meaning "animal". (Rycroft, 1982:117)

21. Mzwandile had just held an *umcimbi* for himself and his father that weekend, which we were privileged enough to have witnessed. The reason for such a ceremony had been twofold: Mzwandile's grandfather had experienced fifty year's in the workplace without being subjected to any dangerous situations, therefore he wished to thank his ancestors for their protection. Mzwandile's reasons were different. He had increasingly become aware of a fear that something dangerous may occur whilst he was working (a bakery in Cape Town), this feeling being born out of a dream in which his ancestral great-grandmother appeared to him to warn him. Two cows were slaughtered for these purposes, a female being sacrificed for Mzwandile because his great-grandmother had appeared to him. He said, "In about eight years, the '*madlozi* they [will] need me to give them something."

22. *Umngqungqo* is a Xhosa ritual dance for girls' puberty celebrations. (Hansen, 1985:65)

23. Mzwandile's account of his sister's discomfort has been well documented in literature. When the ancestors cause such 'illness', often they will "'prick' his body, causing aches and pains so as to make him aware of the error of his ways and urge him to make amends." (Bührmann, 1984:28)

24. David explained to me that it was necessary for several people (usually 3 or 4 women and children) to stand around the drummer. He stated that drumming was a very arduous task, which took much practice, but nonetheless, it would be easy for the drummer to become caught up in the wave of the music and change the tempo of the beat. Those around him/her were there to assist in keeping the beat steady, by showing support (and in some cases, securing the drum). The rattle player was also always positioned next to the drummer, to assist with the production of a constant beat.

26. My informants sang this song directly to the ancestors. From a linguistic point of view, I was advised that suitable prefixes for the verb, *vuleleni* were required. For the line, *Namhla vuleleni, vulelen' isikhwama sobunyanga* a suitable prefix should either be '*m*', meaning 'him/her' (singular) or '*ba*' meaning 'them' (plural). On the basis of the line, *Oogogo vuleleni, vulelen' isikhwama sobunyanga*, the prefix for the same verb can only be '*ba*', since *Oogogo* is decidedly plural. (Mcebisi Ntleki)

27. (*ku*)- *gubha* (SiS) hollow out, scoop out. Excavate. (Rycroft, 1982:33)

28. The Zulu and Xhosa and SiSwati terms used to describe medicine in general, are *umuthi* (pl. *imi*-), *umthi* (pl. *imi*-) and *umutsi* (pl. *imi*-) respectively. (Rycroft, 1982:151). Both the Zulu and Xhosa terms denote 'a tree, shrub, plant, wood timber; drug obtained from a plant etc. The noun stem itself refers to a 'tree', which strengthens the fact that the

majority of medicine used is of vegetable origin. (Krige & Krige, 1943:215, Hammond-Tooke, 1974:339) Another term used to denote medicine which I have encountered in my fieldwork, is *iyeza* (pl. *ama-*) (Xh) meaning "a drug, medicine, cure, remedy" (McLaren, 1994:188)

CHAPTER 1

ETHICAL ASPECTS OF RESEARCH ON INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

The introduction of research on indigenous knowledge is often seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can be a means of preserving and promoting knowledge that is at risk of being lost. On the other hand, it can be a means of exploiting and commodifying that knowledge.

In this chapter, I explore the ethical implications of research on indigenous knowledge. I begin by discussing the concept of indigenous knowledge and the ways in which it has been defined and used. I then discuss the ways in which research on indigenous knowledge has been conducted and the ethical issues that have arisen. Finally, I discuss some of the ways in which research on indigenous knowledge can be conducted in an ethical and responsible manner.

CHAPTER 3

RITUAL ACTION IN DIVINATION PROCESSES

The prescriptive nature of ritual, that it must be done, is recognised in most anthropological definitions of ritual.

J.S. La Fontaine (1985:5)

It is evident that in a substantial number of divination contexts and their incurring ritual processes, the performance of music, which contains communal and dramatic qualities, is an important vehicle of expression. This will be demonstrated in the descriptive accounts and analyses of divinatory processes and attendant actions employed by diviners on ritual occasions, which I have recorded in this chapter, and the one following. (Collins, 1978:34, Thorpe, 1992:21)

In African traditional society, rituals are performed on many occasions, and are directed towards certain ends. Rituals contain prescriptive and morally correct procedures which are followed. However, the routines involved are flexible to the extent that certain procedural adjustments may be made in order to meet particular, unexpected circumstances. This proved to be true in my active fieldwork; for example, when I attended rituals such as

iintlombe and Zionist Church services, I would find that the social conditions and certain practical factors would more than likely dictate the course of events, not to mention the music performed therein.

I illustrate this with informant David's congregation and the services held on Thursday nights at the Witness Church of Christ, Khayelitsha, which I attended. The services have a general regular structure, in which music, Biblical recitation and prophecy build up to a climactic point. The management of the service can be a difficult undertaking, because the responsibility rests in the hands of David, as *umfundisi*, to be sensitive to the needs of particular persons who are experiencing *eMoyeni* (in the spirit). He has to orchestrate an end to the service, with which everyone feels comfortable, and his tool is the choice of songs. With the help of several female members (who have strong leading voices and extensive musical repertoire) he will lead the service up to its climactic point, and then down to its close, which is approximately 2 hours from its start. David will use hymn tunes (originating from several copies of a Xhosa hymnal) to initiate the closing of a service. David will insert as many as are necessary to bring those who are experiencing *eMoyeni*, "down to earth." (Usually, in my experience of these services, not more than three hymns are required.)

Also, David has stated that he preaches almost exclusively during the church service on Sundays. The Tuesday and Thursday night services are meant to provide platforms for members of the congregation to prophesy. On a few selected occasions however, David has preached on the Scriptures chosen for the Thursday service. He explained that he only did

this when he was particularly inspired by the reading, or the prophecy stemming from it. Therefore, one can see that the church services do not adhere strictly to a set of procedural rules, but allow the members leeway for maximum benefit of all present.

In Nguni cosmology, kinship obligations include the satisfying of the ancestors' desire for food - *bafun' ukudla* (they want to eat food) and "to drink" traditional beer (*umqombothi*). (Hunter, 1969:234) The brewing of traditional beer commences approximately four to five days before the enactment of the ritual. Makhosi Athobile mentioned that from the point at which the beer is brewed, the ancestors begin to focus their attention on the sequence of events. In certain instances, rituals concerning gifts to the ancestors may involve the setting aside of foodstuffs, traditional beer and tobacco (for instance, as described by David as '*mfukamo*', in the previous chapter). In rituals connected with rites of passage or other important events, a ritual sacrifice may be included. Whilst the latter contains ceremonial elements, food offerings may still occur without such large-scale acknowledgement.

Commonly, ancestral wrath is requited through animal sacrifice, in which the ancestors are appealed to with cattle or goats. In most cases, one or more animals are preferred. Another adaptation to ritual procedure may concern the choice of animal in the event of a sacrifice; for instance, David has mentioned the symbolic use of certain animal species in ritual killing. He states that a sheep or lamb (*igusha*) will be used in the case of a Zionist church ritual, whereas a goat (*ibhokhwe*) may be used in instances associated with divination. This, he stated, has much to do with the temperament of the two animals, a sheep being the more placid one. David expressed his opinion concerning the use of fowls for slaughter, which is

also common practice, he states, amongst Zulu and Swazi practitioners. For example, Chief Gcaleka and Gogo Morwadi use them in conjunction with *amandawu* veneration. David is doubtful of the efficacy of such a measure, because the essence of a ritual killing lies in the bellowing of the animal upon its death. This marks ancestral acknowledgement. Fowls do not bellow.

Furthermore, whilst David has stated that the chosen beast should always be a goat in cases of divination and a sheep in the context of the church, Gogo Morwadi has used a sheep for slaughter in a divination context (the first *intlombe* which I attended), when a suitable goat could not be found. In this case it was used due to the scarcity of other suitable livestock. This demonstrates what I found in my research, that rituals are really dependent on the strength of the beliefs of their officiants plus the circumstances of the situation at hand, and therefore they are not dependent on a set of unchangeable rules.

Although this study is concerned with the rituals in which the central action is carried out by a diviner; it should be mentioned that there are many rituals in which the officiants are not diviners. In these situations, there may even be no diviner present. This may be illustrated in the enactment of rituals which mark stages in the lifecycle (for example, birth, initiation, marriage and death), that will include propitiatory offerings by senior men and "serve to express publicly the transformation and invoke the blessing of the dead." (Hammond-Tooke, 1974:352)

Historically, certain rites were performed on occasions such as hunting or warring expeditions and rain-making ceremonies. Nowadays rituals continue to be held for ancestral thanksgiving, and as a request for their continuing protection and assistance in daily matters. I witnessed such an example, described in the previous chapter as an *umcimbi* in Phelindaba, Eastern Cape in 1996. In this context, diviners were not obliged to participate in the ritual; in fact the head of the homestead (*umnumzana*¹) or his eldest son acted as the officiant.

Hammond-Tooke states that, "The activities of the diviner are seldom if ever performed solely for purely religious motives; there is always the pragmatic context; the orientation towards practical ends, mainly directed toward the healing of sickness and its diagnosis through the techniques of divination." (1972:256) Rituals may be a preventative measure, as in the case of an *ukubuyisa* as an integration of the deceased into the ancestral realm. I have already made mention of the *ukubuyisa* ceremony, which is connected to a highly pollutive state (that being death). If not treated properly, circumstances may result in misfortune for the living descendants of the deceased.

Rituals may last from one hour to forty-eight hours or more, and they are attended by the officiant's family and invited guests and/or neighbours in the vicinity. I have already suggested that it is difficult to generalise the turn of events, because each ritual caters for an intended purpose which will determine the form it takes. However, common to all such procedures is formalised oratory, which pertains to the aims and objectives of the event itself. (Hunter, 1969:234)

It is significant that rituals are communal in performance, because they bring together members of a community to participate and co-operate under the direction of a main officiant. Within societies where relationships between people are defined in social terms and in fundamental norms and values, rituals are social occasions for the symbolic expression of these norms, since they promote and consolidate social harmony and solidarity. Also, "the relationships between men expressed in the rituals and symbols of their society, make living in that society a meaningful experience." (Berglund, 1989:130-131)

For those who partake in the action, rituals provide not only some form of routine, but also a platform for psychological release, through the expression of emotion. My experiences in the field have shown me that this is particularly the case with rituals that incorporate music in their action.

Although music plays a significant role in many divinatory processes, it is not employed in all action involving ritual; in fact it may be deliberately excluded. Rather, a ritual without music may consist of the use of ritual objects and/or the incantation of particular words (which do not qualify as music) and other dramaturgical elements. As far as ritual objects are concerned, Nguni diviners carry and use switches (*itshoba*²), but do not make use of totems or carved figurines³. Objects of ritual include *amathambo*⁴ (bones, including dice, amulets and other objects), which seems to be a growing trend amongst Nguni diviners and derived from Sotho, Tsonga and Venda divination practices. (See Plate 23)

A particular illustration of a ritual without music is *ukuvumisa*⁵, a 'consenting' method of divination which may or may not accompany the casting of *amathambo*. Hunter documents amongst the Mpondo, that through this method, the diviner is expected to ascertain why the patient has come for a consultation, and from what symptoms the patient may be suffering. The diviner makes statements, with which the client either agrees or disagrees, implicated by his/her answering '*Siyavuma!*' (we agree!) or '*Asiva*⁶!' (we do not hear'). (Hunter, 1964:329; Margaret Shaw in Hammond-Tooke, 1974:104; Collins, 1978:18) Similarly, certain rituals of cleansing and protection may involve the use of powerful medicines but incorporate no music, as practised frequently by Gogo Morwadi, for instance.

Below, I briefly note several rituals that are central to divination processes, which are documented and described in this dissertation. These rituals also include music and a series of actions definitely with a specific purpose.

- 1) *kufemba* (SiS) rituals of exorcism, practised by SiSwati-speaking diviners.
- 2) *Ukuphahla*⁷ (SiS) and *ukuthokozisa* (SiS) rituals for honouring the ancestors, Swazi and Zulu in particular. (This is discussed in the following chapter, pp. 305 ff, 319)
- 3) Rituals and music associated with the recruitment to the profession of diviner, and the transitional state (*ukuthwasa*) of the recruited person (*umkhwetha* or *ithwasa*, novice, trainee diviner). This includes the 'confessional dance song', *ingoma yokuvumisa* (Z), or

ritual dance, *umxhentso wamagqirha* (Xh), the learning of which is obligatory during the training period. (See Chapter 2)

4) Rituals of divination: the music and procedure involved in *iintlombe* (seances) of diviners (Si-Swati, Xhosa and Zulu case studies), including the practice of *ukuvumisa*, *ukunuka*, which are central to the foretelling and interpretation of misfortune. Music used to 'excite' the ancestors and invoke their aid in these divination contexts. (Chapter 4)

5) The prescriptive collecting (*ukukhupha*⁸ [Xh], *ku-gubha*⁹ [SiS]) of medicines, and the suggested prescriptive use of music in this context. (Chapter 2)

CASE STUDY 1

A RITUAL CLEANSING IN APPEASEMENT OF *AMANDAWU* ANCESTORS

If you have the spirit of Ndau, you will sing the songs of Ndau.
(Chief Nicholas Gcaleka)

In African societies, the deceased is specifically afforded burial rites and other associated rituals, which eventually allows him/her access into the spiritual realm as an ancestral spirit. As an ancestor, the deceased will have a role of continuing influence over the living members of the lineage. Such has been demonstrated to me in my field research many times over. What I have found of particular interest, however, is the growing acceptance of the concept of spirit possession amongst my diviner informants. I have also mentioned that two out of the three of my main informants acknowledged the power of

'foreign' ancestral spirits, of both helpful and detrimental natures, these diviners being Gogo Morwadi and Chief Gcaleka, both of whom incorporate *amandawu* into their system of beliefs in various ways.

Apart from the associated *-hlehla* dancing style performed at *iintlombe* (which will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters, see pp. 360 ff), I witnessed two rituals performed by Chief Gcaleka and Gogo Morwadi respectively, which propitiated, or involved *amandawu* ancestors. These rituals made use of music that was aimed specifically at communicating with *amandawu*, which in many respects proved most interesting and in striking contrast to Xhosa divination songs.

Chief Gcaleka mentioned that in some instances, an African person's own ancestors may be taken over by the powerful *amandawu*. The following case study involves a ritual of appeasement, conducted by Chief Gcaleka for a man who was experiencing trouble with (foreign) *amandawu* ancestors, who had allegedly possessed his own *amathongo* (ancestors). As a result, the man was experiencing considerable misfortune. Chief Gcaleka described the 'spiritual takeover' as follows:

The [man's] spirit is *esilatshiweyo* (wounded or destroyed)¹⁰. When it harms you, it is because it is sick; when it is sick, it steals money, makes people sick, whores, insane etc, because it is fighting. It wants to be *silatshwe*. It is sick because it is possessed by the *ithongo lomNdawu*. It does not know what to do at this stage. It wants to be saved. (translation from Xhosa, M.Ntleki, with interpretation, N.Faxi)

On the evening of 20 March, 1996 I was able to accompany Chief Gcaleka to a small informal dwelling in Khayelitsha in order to witness a cleansing ritual associated with

amandawu ancestor cult. It was about 21:00 and the five people seated in the room gave us a warm welcome. This ritual involved the sacrifice of two white fowls to *amandawu* ancestors, plus ritually prescribed music for purposes of appeasement. It is interesting to note the parallels in ideology between Gogo Morwadi and Chief Gcaleka - both use white chickens in rites of *amandawu*.

From the ritual procedures enacted that night, I ascertained that the man who officiated in the sacrifice might have been in trouble for 'killing people' (possibly manslaughter?). I was unable to pursue my questions, but my informants told me that it is quite likely for a person to commit such a crime whilst under a negative spiritual influence; it is merely considered a characteristic sign of misfortune¹¹. In such cases a man should be pitied because he is a victim of extreme bad luck. Although I could not ascertain the man's symptoms (or even his name), literature on the subject suggests that such a condition includes physical ailments of swelling in the legs, chest pain, hiccoughing and the psychosomatic loss of weight. *Amandawu* also induce frenzied bouts of crying and shouting in the living descendant. (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:128, Kiernan in Prozesky & de Gruchy, 1995:81)

I learned that the man had previously consulted Chief Gcaleka about his unfortunate predicament, and Chief Gcaleka had found that the man's ancestors included *amandawu*. Although I cannot come to any conclusions about this matter, I was able to ascertain that in this case the man did not have to *-thwasa*, as the person or people he had killed did not have ancestors of *amandawu*, who were likely to seek revenge. Rather, the crime seemed to be an outcome of the man's own ancestral activity - his *amandawu* ancestors who would

have to be appeased (just as any African has to placate the ancestors through ritual sacrifice and libations of beer).

The procedure of the ritual was as follows. Everyone took seats on the wooden benches which lined the three walls of the dwelling. I was told to sit next to Chief Gcaleka, who had a bench to himself. I was initially hesitant to do this, as I felt that I might become a focal point of the ritual, something I prefer to avoid, in order to get an unbiased version of a ritual. I also did not wish to witness too close a view of the ritual sacrifice. However, Chief Gcaleka pulled me down by my wrist and I realised that it was recognised as a great privilege to be seated next to him.

The officiant of the ritual squatted on his haunches in front of Chief Gcaleka, securing two squawking fowls under his feet. With his head lowered and hands clasped, Chief Gcaleka began to communicate with *amandawu*, asking that the man be delivered from their wrath. One fowl was slaughtered, by having its neck severed with a knife, and its blood was collected in a plastic basin already one third full of water (to stop the blood from clotting).

The officiant promptly drank some of the mixture and wiped it over his bare chest, arms and legs. The rest of the contents was flicked and splashed onto the walls of the dwelling (this action caused everyone seated to bend frantically in all directions to avoid the splatter of blood!) The mixture was then taken outside the house by the man, who sprinkled the outer walls and the roof with it. The ritual action of splashing was in order to fulfil the

purpose of cleansing the house, in which evil things were believed to lurk - in the corners, in the yard outside, and even upon the roof.

Chief Gcaleka commented in Xhosa about the way in which the second dead fowl lay and indicated that the cause of misfortune was the spirit of Ndau. (Interpretation, N.Mtshabe) As the officiant drank the blood, Chief Gcaleka addressed *amandawu* and begged them to clear the man of misfortune and to enlighten his way. The dead fowl was then put outside and another ritual sacrifice was carried out with the second fowl. The other fowl was brought inside subsequently, to be put in the cooking pot with its deceased partner.

After the sacrificial rite, Chief Gcaleka remained seated and began to sing. Soon, he stood up to dance, being accompanied by the singing of the seated participants. Throughout the song, Chief Gcaleka begged *amandawu* to restore harmony and good fortune to the man, who was unable to make contact with *amandawu* himself because they are too powerful to be approached directly. However, Chief Gcaleka was there as a mediator between the officiant and his Ndau ancestors and as such, he had the right to perform *iizinto zamandawu* (things concerning *amandawu*); these being the ritual slaughter and the direct communication with them.

When the ritual had ended, Chief Gcaleka bade farewell to the officiant and instructed him to sing a ritual song on the the following day (*Khaw' hlehl' ndawu*.- 'Just draw back, Ndau'). In addition, the man was to show his gratitude by buying some brandy for his

friends who had supported him in the singing during the ritual. Chief Gcaleka said that this would make them drunk and then there would be no problems about singing the song well!

From what I observed, Chief Gcaleka did not deliberately attempt to 'possess' the malevolent Ndau spirit during the above mentioned ritual, nor did he 'exorcise' it; he was more intent on placating the spirit through negotiation. This substantiates Hammond-Tooke's above mentioned distinction between possession cults and divination processes: in the latter, the diviner does not essentially become involved in possession. Chief Gcaleka was dealing with a person whose ancestors had been overtaken by a malevolent Ndau spirit, the outcome being that the descendant had become possessed. Hammond-Tooke mentions further (in relation to Tsonga ritualistic practices) that the "only cure is for the spirit to manifest itself. This is effected by calling in a cult leader ...skilled in dealing with possession, to cure the patient. This is achieved not by exorcism, but by exhorting the indwelling spirit to come out and express itself in a dance-induced trance." (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:129)

Indeed, Chief Gcaleka did dance, during a song - that I was told, communicated his 'begging' to *amandawu* to withdraw their anger - called *Mndawane*. Bearing in mind what has been stated by Hammond-Tooke above, one could say that in his own work, Chief Gcaleka is embracing certain concepts that are borrowed from foreign ritual practices (namely possession cults) and incorporating these aspects into his processes of divination.

Chief Gcaleka remained seated and before he began to sing the song, he described it thus:

This is the song of uMndawu, the *ithongo* of this man. UMndawu should come to this man's *ithongo* and through his acceptance, everything will be fine. *Umindawane* [as in the song] is the *ithongo* we are trying to win over, which lives in water (the river). We are entreating uMndawu so he can set everything right - that's why we make you [the man] eat blood. (Translation from Xhosa, M.Ntleki, N.Mtshabe)

I refer to the song as *Mndawane* - the text is based upon this word. This is also a title of convenience, and it is justified since the Xhosa people themselves are not so much concerned with exact song titles as with song types. Furthermore, the music of diviners - *iingoma zamaqgirha* (diviners' songs) - constitutes a particular category of Xhosa music, being classified emically on the basis of its social function. (Hansen 1981:563, 577) The song, *Mndawane*, is classified by Chief Gcaleka as one of his *iingoma*¹² *zomNdawu* (songs of Nda).

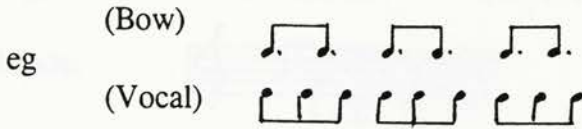
John Blacking has stated that, "Because music is humanly organised sound, there ought to be relationships between patterns of human organisation and the patterns of sound produced in the course of organised interaction." (1995:56-57) In this context, I have found that Chief Gcaleka's adoption of foreign concepts into his system of beliefs, is clearly reflected in his Nda song repertoire.

A comparative study of Nda spirit music (as found with the Shangana-Tsonga) and Xhosa divination music was needed to prove this point. *Amandawu* are significant in Shangana-Tsonga exorcism rituals (*mancomane*) - in which either Zulu or Nda spirits are exorcised

with the help of spirit-specific music. In cases of Ndau possession, the music is set in the hepta mode (of Ndau music) and is accompanied by characteristic drum rhythms. (Johnston, 1971:312) A musical study of Ndau spirit songs was done by Thomas Johnston in 1971, who based his analysis on ten songs performed in Shangana-Tsonga exorcism rituals. He identifies three different types of *mancomane* songs used to expel spirits, two of which pertain to *amandawu* possession 1) *mandhlozi* pentatonic songs in 'foursquare' drum rhythms to expel Zulu spirits; and 2) *xidzimba* hepta songs with triple rhythm drumming to expel Ndau spirits. 3) In stubborn cases of the latter, quadruple rhythm is employed in the songs, known as *xiNdau*. (1971:324)

Indirectly through the study of Shangana-Tsonga music, a similarity became evident in my own musical analysis of Chief Gcaleka's song, *Mndawane*, and indeed other music associated with *amandawu*, as recorded at the ritual events of Gogo Morwadi. This was further confirmed by a comparative analysis of two *-hlehla* songs of Gogo Morwadi and her contemporaries, associated with the Ndau ancestors, as documented by Coppenhall. The two songs are in triple and quadruple rhythm respectively. (1990:274-275)

Arguably, these twelve songs present relatively little data for comparative studies with Xhosa divination music, which has been well documented, but they are the only examples of Ndau spirit songs and musical transcriptions available to me. With one exception (in Coppenhall, 1990:273), the songs are designed with drumming and vocal patterns in which groupings of two pulses (in the vocal phrases) are aligned with groupings of three pulses (in the drumming).



Although this type of rhythmic alignment is found in certain styles of Xhosa music (eg Bow songs between the vocal and bow note patterns), and in walking songs (between vocal and metrical patterns generated by physical actions) and Sounds (between vocal and clapped patterns) - it has not been reported for Xhosa divination music. (Hansen, 1981:656-8)

Since Chief Gcaleka's Ndau song demonstrates certain structural and stylistic features of both Xhosa divination music, and Ndau ritual music (as identified by Johnston and Coppenhall), I feel that a discussion of these features is justified, even though the amount of Ndau musical evidence is comparatively small.

Figure: 3 *MNDAWANE* Audio Extract 2

Mode:



Pitch:



Cyclic length: 16 X ♩.

Tempo: ♩ = 132 M.M.

SOLO INTRODUCTORY PHRASE

Mndawane, Mnda-wa-ne, Mnda-wa-ne Mndawa-ne Mndawa-ne Mnda-wa-ne Wo! Mndawa-ne

SOLO

Mndawe nango Mndawenango MndawaWem Mndawenem Mndawe nem Mndawneyem Mndawenem Mndawe nem

CHORUS

Mndawane, Mndawa ne Mndawane Mndawane Mndawa ne Mndawane Mndawane Mndawa ne

CLAPS



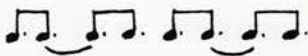
There are three versions of this Ndaun-related song, of which Audio Extract 2 is represented in Figure 3. All these versions show relatively small variations, which are mostly apparent in the tempo (the second and third versions being extremely rapid), and in the melody (the third version, which contains a slightly varied text). All three versions demonstrate the same metrical framework - 16 X ♩, which is audibly defined by clapping (figure 4, version 1) and drumming (versions 2 and 3).

The vocal pattern is based on a melodic process of sequential repetition that is a "deep structure of Xhosa music" - the repetition of a phrase on two degrees of the Xhosa hexa mode. (Hansen. 1981:738)

In version 1, the song was sung entirely by Chief Gcaleka, with hardly any participation from the other participants. The diviner's procedure here is reminiscent of a common procedure followed by an individual singer:- when asked to demonstrate a song, he/she attempts to present the essentials of the *two* basic phrases which underlie Nguni multipart music. (Rycroft, 1967:88) In the other two versions of this song, chorus participation was more positive, though it 'tagged' along as harmonic enrichment of Chief Gcaleka's vocal pattern.

Although there is no real antiphonal exchange (between Solo and Chorus) in this particular song, the *balance* of phrases, and the concluding character of the short after-phrase, constitutes *antiphony* in effect.


After Chief Gcaleka initiated the song and established the song pattern, the participants (five in number) entered *softly* and *hesitantly*, within the first beat of the fourth cycle. It was as if they did not know the song. They sang fragments of the main vocal melody (carrying the text, *Mndawane*), whilst Chief Gcaleka maintained it, with minor rhythmic variations (accompanying textual modifications), for example, *Mndawanango*, *Mndawanango*, *Mndawandwem Mndawane/ Mndawane, Mndawane, Wangen' uMndawane*.

ie  changing to 
and 

Divination songs are accompanied by clapping¹³ and Chief Gcaleka introduced clapping only after the song was underway, this also being taken up by the chorus of participants. The performance was a short one (nine cycles in all), and throughout it, the participants' singing was subdued, and even inaudible at times. This type of response is highly unusual in such a ritual context, and may have been due to 1) the singers' unfamiliarity with the song, or 2) their reluctance to sing a song that belongs to Ndaun ancestors, who are 'foreign' to Xhosa cosmology - or both. As Chief Gcaleka himself said, "*Amandawu* are a different race from the Zulus and the Xhosas."

There is no evidence of polyrhythmic harmony (as achieved through the additional improvisations of individual singers, whose interpolated vocal phrases are dependent - harmonically and rhythmically - on the Solo or Chorus phrases). (Hansen, 1981:619-620)

Furthermore, a basic two-fold temporal contrast within the basic vocal organisation (the number of differing vocal parts), as recorded and documented by Hansen in her research (1981:632) does not feature in the performance of this song. Also, the performance of *Mndawane* at the ritual cleansing did not have an accompanying drum pattern, which is a common feature in Xhosa divination music.

I will include a description of another performance of this song, *Mndawane*, which occurred at the preparations for an *intlombe* to be held at Chief Gcaleka's home in New Crossroads, in June 1996. On this particular occasion, there was a drummer and drum at hand, and she subdivided the beat iambically - . However, it was interesting to note that the drummer was unable to synchronise her drumming pattern with the vocal-melodic pattern. At the same time, I noticed that the majority of participants did *not* seem to be familiar with the song, or if they were, they still sang with distraction, almost as if ill-at-ease with it.

I have already mentioned in Chapter 1, that the incorporation of *amandawu* as ancestral spirits into Nguni ritual practices is a recent development and Chief Gcaleka's adoption of these spirits into Xhosa rituals is a source of contention among some Xhosa. Yet with this adoption I believe, a special style of *music* has developed, and *this* could be the real reason behind my informants' uncertain performance. This conclusion was validated with the help of my supervisor, when we uncovered a particular principle operating in the rhythmic organisation of the song, that has not been observed in 'traditional' Xhosa music before.

As stated earlier, in Xhosa divination songs, 'off-beat' phrasing is a common feature, as is iambic patterning. (Hansen, 1981:644) In the second performance of *Mndawane*, the drummer attempted to combine her iambic drum pattern with the triple rhythm of the vocal phrases:


ie

A		Tempo ♩ = 144 M.M.
B		

Theoretically, this alignment is possible, since the aspects of staggering vocal and drum beats and the near-miss relationship between the two patterns, do exist in Xhosa voice and drum combinations. Furthermore, viewed in isolation, pattern A and B above occur in certain styles of Xhosa music. However, the *combination* of the two patterns is foreign to Xhosa musical practice, because this kind of rhythmic alignment does not conform with principles of timing and cross-rhythms in Xhosa music. In fact, there is no documentary evidence of its occurrence. Evidently, the drummer was unable to perform satisfactorily, although she tried several times to adjust to the tempo and rhythm of the music. I believe that her failure to do so was because such a rhythm is totally alien to Xhosa musical practice.

Then too, in *Mndawane*, the rhythm of the vocal pattern (type A) conforms with the patterning traits of known Ndau song melodies. (Johnston, 1971:312-322) In Xhosa music, this patterning has been identified in the vocal parts of - 1) *indlamu* dance songs, in relation to clapped triple beats)

ie




voice

clap

(Hansen, 1981:641)

2) in Sounds, for example, *Ziphi zinkomo*, in which a basic metre of 8 X ♩ is varied to 16 X ♩, but the sequence of triple pulse groupings is aligned with a vocal-melodic pattern that is additive in structure.


ie






voice

claps,

becoming



(Hansen, 1981:656-7)

According to Hansen, duple metres are far more common than triple metres in Xhosa music. (1981:654) When the latter occur, they may be expressed in terms of qualitative grouping as  or , or . When such patterns are accompanied by clapping, the beat is subdivided iambically:-

ie



or equally



However, to reiterate, there is no evidence of the *alignment* of iambic patterning with the triple rhythm patterning, as was attempted by Chief Gcaleka's drummer. This alignment is not part of the established Xhosa divination song repertoire, let alone Xhosa music generally. Furthermore, whereas the iambic drumming pattern is a standard pattern in Xhosa divination music, it does not seem to be a characteristic feature of Ndaun ritual

music. Above all, the *combination* of the two patterns is alien to Xhosa musical practice and consequently the Xhosa drumming pattern is at odds with the Ndau song's vocal pattern.

Stylistically, Ndau spirit songs represent a deviation from the traditional style of Xhosa ritual music, and the 'foreign' influence is most obvious in the vocal-melodic rhythm and the song's fast tempo. In this respect, John Blacking's observations on foreign influences in Venda possession cult music are thought-provoking. He notes that it is in the *rhythm* and the *tempo* of the *drumming*, rather than in the context of the words and singing style, that there is evidence of foreign origins in the dance. (1995:182, italics my own) In Chief Gcaleka's Ndau song, it is the rhythm of the *vocal* pattern which conforms with Ndau spirit song musical traits, but this pattern should be combined with the triple rhythm patterning which identifies Ndau spirit songs.

The other song to be sung at this ritual event, and subsequently at other *iintlombe* I attended, is also categorised by Chief Gcaleka as one of his *iingoma zomNdawu* (songs of Ndau) - *Khaw' hlehla Mndawu, Uhlehlel' amandawu*, meaning, "Stand back (make space) for Ndau/*amandawu*". (translation from Xhosa, M.Ntleki, N.Mtshabe) (Refer to Audio Extract 4)

Once more upon this ritual occasion, there was no drum accompaniment, however, Chief Gcaleka did rise to dance, his vigorous steps changing the rhythmic organisation of the vocal pattern (elaborated upon below). Nonetheless, I draw a comparison between this song

and a subsequent performance of it at the above mentioned *intlombe*, in which it followed the failed attempt at drumming in the song, *Mndawane*. (Refer to Audio Extract 3) In this case, the drummer was able to meet the musical requirements, and she added a standard Xhosa drum pattern (iambically divided). This pattern was possible, because it concurred with the vocal rhythm. The fact that both vocal and drum rhythm patterns were *identical* in their internal organisation (with no cross-rhythms occurring), meant that the musical content was still structurally and stylistically *atypical* of much Xhosa divination music.

I have already discussed that possession cults are not a 'traditional' concept, nor have they been particularly associated with the Xhosa-speaking people. Furthermore, the incorporation of *amandawu* to various degrees, as ancestral spirits into Nguni ritual practices, is a recent development, and Chief Gcaleka's adoption of these spirits into Xhosa rituals is a source of contention among some Xhosa. Yet with this adoption of 'foreign' beliefs, comes a special style of *music*, and I believe that *this* is the real reason behind my informants' uncertain performance.

CASE STUDY 2

THE -FEMBA RITUAL (This ritual is presented in full on Video Extract 2)

When you have dirty things (done) to you, when they *-femba* you, they chase it away.

Gogo Morwadi

The *-femba* ritual which I witnessed in the company of my other main informant, Gogo Morwadi, is another divination rite which I am reluctant to define categorically as an exorcism, yet at the same time, it appears to demonstrate evidence of foreign influences, particularly regarding the nature of the action and dialogue, the music and the ancestral spirits which it incorporated. It too, may be considered by some as merely an attempt to exhort a possessing malevolent spirit in order that it reveal and express itself. It is one of a number of ritual treatments employed by diviners to be covered in this work. The term *ku-femba* denotes to "sniff; divine, smell out as a diviner." (Rycroft, 1981:25) The ritual shed light on the source of perpetration by utilising theatrical spectacle, and question - answer techniques (as elaborated upon below).

Coppenhall states that:

The *ku-femba* ritual is thus synonymous with the -Zulu and -Xhosa *uku-nuka* (lit. 'to smell out'), which was (and is) associated with the identification of witches and sorcerers. Music is always used for *ku-femba*, which includes also the *-vumisa* method. Music 'helps the ancestors to come through' (communicate with the diviner, and so makes for the success of the *intlombe*.) I was told that there is a special repertory of songs for *ku-femba*, in which the evil actions of the witch are personalised in the texts." (Coppenhall, 1990:125)

Similarly in his autobiography, James Hall, a white American who trained under a Swazi diviner and currently practises traditional medicine in Swaziland, has described '*kufemba*' as a "'sniffing out' divination ritual performed by the Bandzawe spirits through a *sangoma*...(in which the diviner will) symbolically "sniff out" a patient's ailments with special medicines and an ox-tail brush." (Hall, 1994:Preface & 207) Such action is indeed what I witnessed myself in the *-femba* ritual, where medicine was applied to the patient at the start of the ritual, and then she was brushed with an *itshoba inkonkoni*, a water buffalo switch.

Furthermore, Coppenhall has referred to *-femba* in his work with Gogo Morwadi as "a way of lifting a very bad spell, with the help of the ancestors and their *amandawo* (items of clothing, ornaments worn by the diviners)." (Gogo Morwadi in Coppenhall, 1990:124-5) Although Coppenhall did not witness or document such a ritual in his research, he states that:

In *ku-femba* rituals, the cause of evil is first interpreted, and then the treatment is prescribed by the ancestors (through *-vumisa*). After this, the diviner applies some form of medicine to the patient, or else burns it, and then orders the evil spell to *-hlehla* (lit. to withdraw, retreat, Zulu, Xhosa). SiSwati meaning synonymous. (Coppenhall, 1990:125)

Gogo Morwadi's apt explanation was that it was a procedure concerning the "sniffing out" of evil, in which the assistance of the 'foreign' (Hammond-Tooke) *amandawu*¹⁴ ancestors was involved. In a sense, the evil *was* 'exorcised' through this ritual. This was endorsed by Gogo Morwadi herself, who, on several occasions, spoke about *-femba* as a ritual of 'taking out dirty things '. Lukkie Matsabe, who interpreted the ritual for me, described *kufemba* as

a process of "casting out of the evil spirits within [the patient] which are a cause for illness."

Initially, I was under the impression that spirit possession took place during *-femba*, because the officiant diviner seemed to work himself into a particular mental state through a specific style of dance action known as *-hlehla*, before he took on the role of (or acted out) the perpetrator of evil during the "sniffing out" procedure. This was effected by the diviner acting out particular traits belonging to the one responsible for the witchcraft, whilst talking in the first person. Gogo Morwadi explained that by this procedure, the diviner was giving her clues as to the identity of the perpetrator. Symbolically, this could be viewed as an enactment of spirit possession, by definition that a person becomes possessed by the soul of another, possibly this remaining at a hypothetical or symbolic level only. It is difficult to classify this ritual as one which employed exorcism and/or spirit possession. Needless to say, I believe that the influence of these two seems applicable to varying degrees in this context.

It is part of my aim to examine the social and physical setting of the ritual, which I believe is essential for the analysis of the total ritual action - the people attending it, the allocation of roles in its enactment, the words, the songs, objects, gestures and other aspects of the ritual. To my knowledge, Swazi exorcism rituals have not been subjected to an in depth analysis and no ethnomusicological studies of them exist.

The opportunity to witness such an event came about unexpectedly, shortly after I accompanied Gogo Morwadi to the home of her trainer, Gogo Lamashigo in Swalala (a large rural location between the towns of Witrivier and Hazyview, Mpumalanga). I have already mentioned that my fieldwork in Swalala was of three week's duration and entailed, amongst other things, daily outings to areas within a 50km radius of Swalala to collect medicine. The research stint was preceded by an *intlombe* in Gugulethu to 'open the way' (Gogo Morwadi) for our journey, as documented in the following Chapter (see pp. 303 ff). Another *intlombe* was held at some point during our stay in order to ensure our safe return to Cape Town. Prior to leaving for Swalala, I had no knowledge that a *-femba* ritual was to take place, indeed it replaced the *intlombe* which had been scheduled for the same day. The latter had to be postponed, owing to the unavailability of a goat for sacrifice. Despite the turn of events, several diviners attended the *-femba* ritual, although they had initially travelled to Swalala to attend the *intlombe*.

The day upon which the *-femba* ritual was to be held was spent digging for herbs, roots and other plants. At that stage, I had no idea as to the identity of the *-femba* patient. Gogo Morwadi's son, Aubrey, seemed to be a likely candidate. He had travelled up with us from Cape Town and participated in the medicine collecting expeditions. From the very beginning he showed a reticent aloofness which sometimes bordered on rudeness. It soon became evident from his behaviour, which was often anti-social, that he had not been invited by Gogo Morwadi to Swalala to help her dig up medicines; rather, he had come up for reasons which concerned some deep personal problems he harboured, and for which he sought treatment. Gogo Morwadi insinuated this, and she did not offer further information

except to say that she could not help her son, because she was his mother. As she put it, "If you are a (white) doctor, you send your children to another doctor if they get sick."

I could not help wondering whether Aubrey¹⁵ had initially joined the journey to Swalala, in order to undergo a ritual cleansing in his mother's own 'training ground' and second home, and had subsequently changed his mind because he feared that his problems and the *-femba* ritual would become the focus of my research. The latter was one of the main reasons we went to Swalala in the first place. The other reason concerned Gogo Morwadi - for her it was an opportunity to 'go home' and collect medicines (something which diviners do regularly).

Prior to leaving Cape Town, it was agreed that I would be permitted to witness and film freely. As it turned out, the sole incident I was *not* permitted to film or photograph, was a consultation held between Aubrey, his mother, brother (Jeff) and Gogo Morwadi's father's cousin, who was the diviner consulted (known as Fangoma, Sangoma or 'Ngoma - a title referring to his status as diviner). Since that this was a private family affair, I was quite happy to be no part of it, although I was subsequently allowed to witness the latter part of it.

I eventually learned that the subject of the *-femba* ritual was to be Gogo Morwadi herself, a fact which surprised me. Even more surprising - startling even - was the identity of the diviner to carry out the ritual: he was a very young diviner, twelve years of age and Vusi by name. Vusi was the grandson of Gogo Lamashigo, Gogo Morwadi's trainer. He lived on

the property with his grandmother¹⁶. It is interesting that a young boy was entrusted to perform such an important ritual, in the presence of a minimum of six or seven other experienced diviners, who were more than triple his age. Gogo Morwadi described Vusi as having powerful spirits and both she and Gogo Lamashigo were in total agreement, and expressed no reservation about him carrying out the ritual. Seemingly, it would also add to his collective experience as a diviner. From what I could gather, Vusi may not have carried out such a ritual before, however, he was fully aware of the elements of ritual action and the procedures involved, and in fact he proved to be a most able and effective officiant.

For several months following my return from this excursion, I pondered the authenticity and efficacy of this ritual, in view of the young age of the officiant. Xhosa-speaking friends advised me that in general such a phenomenon was rare, and more likely unheard of, and I was on the brink of dismissing the ritual altogether, for fear of upsetting anthropological theories regarding traditional religion and culture, and its perceived norms.

About a year after the ritual, I took Makhosi Athobile and her novice to Gogo Morwadi's house. I happened to be in the area with them and they wished to meet her. Gogo Morwadi took out the video of the *-femba* ritual (and other events) which I had given to her and with a certain amount of pride, she allowed the two women and me to watch it. This melted the ice considerably, as I believe that Gogo Morwadi is rather protective of me, and the video demonstrated my relationship with Gogo Morwadi to the two newcomers. In front of Makhosi Athobile, I asked Gogo Morwadi why she had allowed such a young boy perform the ritual on her, when in fact she could have chosen one of the older diviners to carry out

the ritual. She looked me straight in the eye and said, "He may be young, but his ancestors are old." I felt that all that was needed had been said.

In the car on the way home, Makhosi Athobile and her novice seemed most impressed with Gogo Morwadi, indeed she was a powerful diviner and their comments displayed much respect and admiration. Moreover, Makhosi Athobile was not concerned about the age of the young diviner either. In fact, she remarked that in her hometown of Soweto, she had begun to notice that child diviners were becoming a common occurrence. This opinion was endorsed by my supervisor, Dr Hansen and another student, Ms Nunzia Faxi, whose study also concerns divination.

Still feeling perplexed, I queried Vusi's youthfulness with my informant David, and his reasoning was very convincing. He stated that the calling to divination commonly manifests itself at a very young age (and it often concurs with the onset of adolescence). Under such circumstances, it must be decided whether the individual is to undergo training, or wait until the dream episodes associated with the calling, recur at a more mature age, and then take action. Presently, many parents make the decision for the child to undergo immediate training. David stressed that this choice can be detrimental to the child, as divinership carries heavy responsibilities, which a child may not be able to contend with, particularly on an emotional level.

I have therefore decided to include the *-femba* ritual in my thesis, despite any possible claims to its authenticity being to the contrary. I have already stated that as a researcher in

a foreign cultural genre, my aim is only to document what I see in an objective fashion. I certainly believe that the ritual I witnessed was a valid event, this being displayed in Gogo Morwadi's serious intent in undergoing it, and the respect which she gave the ritual action. As a diviner, Gogo Morwadi takes her religious beliefs seriously, to the extent that they shape and even dictate her lifestyle¹⁷. Therefore she would not undergo such a ritual without a full understanding of the procedure, accompanied by her faith in the ritual itself. I am also aware that my presence during the ritual process must have had some influence on the action taking place. This was most blatantly shown to me in our discussions following the ritual, in which Gogo Morwadi obfuscated some of my questions. By maintaining the secret and mystery behind this ritual, one does not strip it of its spiritual power and the impact it has on those whom it is enacted.

Not only was Gogo Morwadi the focus of the *-femba* ritual, she was also my chief informant and one of the interpreters of the ritual. On one of my visits to Gogo Morwadi's home in Gugulethu, I asked her why she was treated by Vusi in the *-femba* ritual. She replied after some consideration, that she had "picked up 'dirty things'" through treating her clients. The ritual cleansing of an afflicted person is a serious and solemn affair. It is so awe-inspiring that it is ultimately fatiguing, both physically and mentally. For these reasons, Gogo Morwadi declined to discuss the event until we were back in Cape Town. It was virtually impossible to get an opinion from Gogo Lamashigo, as she could only speak SiSwati¹⁸.

In retrospect, I realise how much I did not know as a field researcher, yet at the same time,

I appreciate how much I learned from this experience. Not only was it subsequently difficult to obtain information about the ritual, but the actual filming of it was a challenge. Working in a very small environment, with little light and no readily available electricity made it a challenge to handle the video camera which relies extensively on light to power its capturing of imagery. Gavin had kindly rigged up a spotlight which we had purchased prior to the trip, to the car battery. He had managed to direct it into the doorway of the shed in order to throw a single beam of light on the scene. The room still maintained a characteristic darkness. During the ritual, I had to become so involved in the camera work (any movement away from the light demanded concentrated re-focussing) that I feel that I possibly missed out terribly on the course of action. Owing to the poor light conditions, the camera battery packs were being rapidly used up, which was another cause for concern, considering that I could not get them recharged fast enough! The whole exercise was quite exhausting and frustrating.

As already stated, I filmed the entire ritual in very poor light and once I was back in Cape Town, I made a copy of the tape and took it to Gogo Morwadi for viewing and possible discussion. The timing of my visit could not have been worse! The diviner was having alterations done to her house, and the noisy labour and talking of the builders, who repeatedly interrupted our discussion with questions regarding their work, made it impossible to maintain continuity of thought and at times, even threatened to swamp it. Gogo also had a client and despite the presence of Gogo Tryfina, (with whom I found it difficult to communicate) and Jeff (who had been present at the *-femba*), they were all too hesitant, and they avoided my questions.

Fortunately, upon subsequent visits, discussions and explanations were uninterrupted and more successful. Gogo Morwadi quite patiently and carefully explained certain aspects of the ritual which I queried. However, there were other elements which she refused to explain, and I soon became aware of this and stopped forcing questions onto her. It is possible that she may reveal those facts which she refused to divulge, at a later stage. Occasionally I am under the impression that she thinks that it is futile to tell me certain things, because I am a young, white and inexperienced female researcher, who is obviously naive, with a very limited spiritual awareness and knowledge of the African worldview.

I think that it is useful here to refer to a discussion we had concerning the contents of the *femba* ritual, specifically the type of medicine which was applied to Gogo Morwadi's body at its start, before the commencement of the music. I believe that it will highlight the contention that certain symbolic acts are esoteric, and must remain the exclusive knowledge of those initiated into the group. Gogo Morwadi also has the right to protect certain secrets which should be harboured by those who have followed the path of divination. This is a particular difficulty that all fieldworkers encounter, and it must be accepted. This is a transcript of the tape-recorded discussion between Gogo Morwadi (GM), Gavin Coppenhall (G) and myself (K):-

G: How does the *femba* work? How does Vusi clean those things out of you?

GM: (Hesitant response) With that medicine... *femba* medicine.

G: From what is it made?

GM: That medicine, we dig it.

K: Did we dig it when we were there?

GM: No.

K: Why did Vusi put it on you?... (Pause) What does it make him do?

GM: The stuff? You see the same, when you are sick, the doctor gives you medicine or tablets. Now you can't ask *why* he gives you those tablets, or what those tablets do, you see? It's the same like that. [Suggesting that one has faith in one's doctor.]

G: But you know what medicine was used there.

GM: Yes, I know it.

G: It was a mixture of things? Now, what mixture?

GM: (with a wry smile) No, it's medicine. We just say that it's for *-femba*.
It's medicine to *-femba*.

Hence, the account of the *-femba* ritual is ultimately drawn as objectively as possible from my own experience of the action, plus the conversations I conducted with Gogo Morwadi and her son Jeff, following the event. I have twice watched the video footage of the ritual with these two people and their friends, during which I received the broad reasons and motivations behind the actions taking place. Being such a sensitive topic, Gogo Morwadi has naturally been evasive with certain questions. This probably has much to do with the fact that she was not the officiant diviner in the ritual, but indeed the patient, as stated above. I am also aware that the analysis of ritual is problematic, because there are different dimensions to consider. There is the ritual action to which I have referred, which is highly visible and purposive. However, there is also the interpretation of this system of action in relation to the nature of the society or community in which it is enacted. It is this aspect of

my investigation which could present problems. However, as stated earlier, Gogo Morwadi is my chief informant and given her social status, her knowledge of ritual and general sensitivity towards such matters, I believe that I will be able to provide an accurate and satisfactory explanation of the ritual, without becoming too entrapped in the kind of thinking which imputes meanings borrowed from my own culture.

I hoped that some of the complexities of such a ritual would be revealed through translation. This was achieved with the help of three students from the University of the Western Cape, namely Mr Sipho Kenneth Mokoena, Mr Dumisani Wonderboy Mokoena and Miss Reginah Inama, who analysed the video footage at great length with me. Despite the fact that one of the students came from an area close to Swalala and claimed to be the nephew of Gogo Lamashigo's son (the owner of the property upon which I had stayed), all three students found it virtually impossible to understand the language employed in the ritual.

They explained to me that diviners tend to communicate in a special language amongst themselves, and only an individual who has undergone such a training with the group, will be able to recognise what is being said in general dialogue - "These people are communicating amongst themselves. They are singing Nguni (a mixture of tongues) and they do not stick to one language even in a single song - so only the ancestors can really understand!" At one point when there was communication between Vusi and Gogo Morwadi, one of the translators noted that Gogo Lamashigo intercepted in Sesotho to explain to Gogo Morwadi what her grandson was saying. This seems to indicate that Gogo

Morwadi may not have understood the dialogue entirely herself. The students deduced that the language spoken during the ritual seemed to contain references in the SiSwati, Tsonga, Zulu and Sesotho languages.

In a second endeavour to furnish this documentation with a complete transcript of the vernacular, I contacted Xhosa linguist Dr S. Zotwana, explained my situation and asked him for advice. He referred me to Ms Priscilla Mafuyeka, a SiSwati expert, from the African Languages department in Parliament. She agreed to assist me by taking a copy of the video up to Kabokweni, a settlement in the vicinity of Witrivier (close to Swalala), where her sister's fiance, Lukkie Matsabe stayed. Although teacher by profession, Lukkie is a *nyankwabe*¹⁹ (the main assistant of a diviner) to his mother, and he was taught by her to speak *sindzawe* - "the language of the ancestors" - with which the dialogue of the *-femba* ritual turned out to be concerned.

Despite promises of a transcription of the vernacular, Ms Mafuyeka returned with the news that she had been unable to obtain one. Lukkie had, however, been able to make a very successful written interpretation of the action, based upon the fact that he, as a *nyankwabe*, is familiar with the language and ritual procedures used in *kufemba*. Ms Mafuyeka stated that:

We could not make a transcription of *sindzawe* as requested, because we could not trace any source of its written form. According to Lukkie Matsabe, *sindzawe* originates from somewhere in Mozambique. It is said that [the use of] it is becoming extinct, because it seems to be verbal only, and the people who can speak it are becoming increasingly harder to come by. No-one seems

to know how to write it. Lukkie can speak *sindzawe*, however, he does not know how to write it. His mother, a *sangoma*, can neither read nor write.

Thus despite my attempts, I cannot furnish my documentation with a complete transcript in the vernacular, which I realise is essentially needed for this kind of research. I can only provide a basic account of the ritual as I witnessed it, and as substantiated by my informants and those who helped me translate and interpret it. At the end of the chapter, I include the full version of Lukkie Matsabe's interpretation. (See pp. 291 ff)

According to Gogo Morwadi, a diviner will *-femba* a person to "take out dirty things". Such a ritual seems to be held when a person is under the impression that he/she is being dogged by misfortune, owing to bad intentions directed at him/herself by another person or a supernatural evil force. Anyone who believes that they have reason to undergo a cleansing, pays a sum of money to the diviner of their choice, who will carry out the ritual. This ritual was held for Gogo Morwadi, the purpose being firstly, to ascertain the cause of the evil (the human perpetrators or supernatural forces) and then to cleanse her of evil, by getting rid of it. This was dramatically demonstrated by the diviner's 1) dusting and "sniffing" of the subject's body 2) sneezing and expelling the 'evil' at the entrance to the shed, both of which were accompanied by music and 3) the dialogue between the 'head' diviner - Gogo Lamashigo, the officiating diviner - Vusi, Gogo Morwadi - the patient, and Jeff her son.

I asked Gogo Morwadi why it was necessary for her as a diviner herself, to undergo such cleansing. Gogo Morwadi replied that in her profession she is continuously working with

sick people, who 'have dirty things'. When she works with them to heal them, she takes on some of those things inadvertently, hence she has to undergo a ritual cleansing from time to time to purify herself. The frequency of such a cleansing seems to depend on the intensity and frequency with which she as a diviner comes into contact with such evil. I suggested to Gogo Morwadi that a cleansing would perhaps need to occur every year and she agreed.

The inclination of people to "take on" misfortune or 'dirty things', as described by Gogo Morwadi can be linked to the belief behind the creation of 'tracks' (*imikhondo*). Ngubane states that, "it is believed that certain types of disease can be taken out of a patient and be discarded as a definite material substance; having been discarded it may hover around in the atmosphere or remain localized until it attaches itself to someone else." (1977:26) Ngubane continues to say that such harmful 'tracks' disrupt the environment in general and may be contracted by unsuspecting individuals who step over the 'tracks' and transport the substances away with them. Sorcerers are also protagonists who lay harmful substances in the paths of people. (1977:24-25)

A small payment for the work to be done was needed. Gogo Morwadi did not have any money available, and she asked us for whatever I had, stating that one had to pay at least something for any treatment by a diviner. In that I had just been shopping for the proposed *intlombe* that morning in Witrivier, I did not have much money on me, hence I donated all my change, consisting of about R4-00.

The ritual was held at sundown, approximately 18:30 and the music continued until about 22:30. The *-femba* ritual itself lasted less than an hour (the aspect concerning *amandawu* was about forty minutes in duration), yet because there were a number of diviners who had arrived under the impression that there was to be an *intlombe* that evening, they took the opportunity to hold a small-scale '*intlombe*', during which the *umqombothi* (which had also been prepared for the intended *intlombe*-proper) was consumed. The diviners then stayed the night, as it seemed as though the majority of them had travelled some distance to attend the evening's event.

Prior to the event, one of the rooms in a small shed adjacent to the main house had to be cleared out. Gogo Lamashigo had two *iindumba* situated in front of the main house. One was filled with her medicines and the other one was set aside as a sleeping space, which had been cleared for me. The ritual would otherwise have probably been held in the latter one. It was imperative that the *-femba* be held indoors: this was necessary for the expulsion of evil, which had to be contained indoors and then disposed of outside the door of the dwelling²⁰.

There was a piece of tin upon which some hot coals had been placed. I do not believe that this had ritual significance, as I did not see anything being burned before, during or after the ritual. However, Coppenhall documents in the context of the *-femba* ritual that "an important feature of such 'sniffing out' rituals is *kuphemba* [SiS] ie the burning of a ritual candle, or a special powder; this appears to be obligatory in seance cases of *ubuthakathi*, and optional in less serious cases." (1990:125) Four to five double-membraned drums of

varying sizes were initially warmed and tuned outside by the fire, and then placed inside the room. Two plastic woven *amacansi* (mats) were placed on the mud floor, and the scene was dimly lit by about three paraffin lamps.

All of us were requested to take off our shoes before we entered. The scene was set: the spectators lined the two walls of the room, whilst the drummers (Gogo Lamashigo, one to two other women lined the third wall. Two drummers, notably Gogo Lamashigo on one drum and a woman who was said to be training with her, on two drums, played for the duration of the ritual. Vusi occupied the far corner of the room, between the two drummers. He was dressed in a *lihiya* (a decorative cloth worn as a piece of clothing), which was wrapped around him to chest height. He also donned bandoliers which seemed in the very dull light to be made from thick bands of goatskin. On his head, Vusi wore a 'wig' of synthetic hair (consisting of reddish coarse twine), to which several looped, single strands of white beads were attached. This was firmly secured with a headband of cowrie shells. According to Gogo Morwadi, the latter headgear is peculiar to the context of Ndaу ancestral veneration and ritual²¹. Vusi had a *lihiya* draped over his back, which is not uncommon practice in Ndaу rituals I have seen performed amongst Gogo Morwadi and her associates, however, Gogo Morwadi uses a white sheet.

Before the ritual commenced, "*-femba* medicine" (an ointment of some kind) was applied by the assistant drummer to Gogo Morwadi's ears, hands, legs and feet (this may have been heated on the coals). It is said that the medicine is used "in order to weaken the power of the potential evil spirits about to be sniffed out." (Lukkie Matsabe) Gogo Morwadi sat with

her legs stretched out on one of the mats, the lower half of her body clad in a *lihiya* and the beads which she wears as a diviner (a necklace and bracelets). (See Plate 24) Her clothes and a few other possessions lay in a pile to the side of the mat. She and Jeff explained to me that her clothes had to be taken off in order to administer the *-femba* medicine. This scenario was compared to a visit to a western doctor, where one has to take off one's clothes for examination:

K: Gogo why do you take your clothes off?

GM: Yes, I must take all the clothes off.

K: Why do you *have* to take your clothes off?

GM: Yes, I must do it - I cannot *-femba* with clothes on. With the clothes, they [cannot] put medicine on your body. Like a [western] doctor - when you visit him, you must take the clothes off - you see, he [Vusi] is like a doctor.

The event began with a *-phahla* (SiS - 'prayer') session, in which the people involved 'prayed' to *amandawu*, effectively so that "they would give Vusi power to heal." (Gogo Morwadi) This was led by Gogo Lamashigo, her phrases being acknowledged by the characteristic double claps, which punctuate the session. My translation assistants ascertained that Gogo Lamashigo was introducing the group to the ancestors and then calling the names of the ancestors, for example, Khumalo, Hluphula etc. She ended with the interjection, "Ndawu". Lukkie Mutsabe explained that:

Before the actual task begins, *gobela*, the head *sangoma*, who has trained the *sangoma* [Vusi], calls and invites by name, and praises the ancestral spirits, asking them to bless the task about to be performed so that it can be a success. This is accompanied by the intermittent clapping of hands.

At this point, Vusi was doubled over on his knees, with his head turned down to the floor.

Gogo Morwadi explained it thus:

K: Gogo what are they doing now? Does he *-phahla* to *amandawu* or to *manguni*?

G: They pray to *amandawu*.

K: Why do they pray to *amandawu*?

G: *Amandawu* must give him power to heal me.

The music began with the first song, *Wena uya bayiwa*²², meaning according to Gogo Morwadi, "You are sick." The term was interpreted by my translators as, "You are beaten." The root *-wa* in Zulu, Xhosa and SiSwati may be translated 'fall, or make a mistake', which could be a metaphor for 'being sick.' The phrase could well be Xhosa-derived.

K: What is the song that is being sung about, Gogo?

GM: *Wena uya bayiwa* means, "You are sick."

K: Now Vusi is dancing for *amandawu*?

GM: Yes, it's different to the dance of the *manguni*.

K: So he must dance before he can heal you - why?

GM: So [that] the spirit can come up.

Three songs in total were sung during the *-femba*, and although their performance was sporadically interrupted by dialogue, the music did seem to be an integral part of the overall form of the ritual and played a necessary part in its content. In this respect, the

format of this ritual event was much the same as an *intlombe*. Gogo Lamashigo, who sat in one corner with her drum, seemed at times to control the musical procedure, by starting up a song or terminating it. The music invariably accompanied Vusi's brushing of Gogo Morwadi with his switch. An analysis of the music follows after the description of the sequence of events (see pp. 279 ff).

The song at the start of the ritual, accompanied Vusi's *ku-hlehla* movements under the *lihiya*, an action associated with *amandawu*, which involves the subject to be doubled over, whilst producing fluid and rapid shaking movements with the shoulders and circular movements with the arms on the ground, whilst the head loosely swings up and down like a pendulum. (See Plate 20)

The ritual itself was to involve *amandawu* in the exorcism of evil, after which the music and dance would change to the style associated with *manguni* ancestors, as the latter had the ability to interpret what *amandawu* had found and said. Gogo Morwadi explained to me that diviners like herself are unable to understand what *amandawu* say, so the *manguni* ancestors are used in conjunction with them in order to interpret the action. Hence two styles of music, each incorporating a different dance are employed in such instances. Both dance types are carried out in order that 'the spirit can come up" (Gogo Morwadi), these referring in this case to the two categories of spirits for which Gogo Morwadi accounts. This was explained by Lukkie Matsabe thus:

The ancestral spirit is invited to join them through the *sangoma* by the beating of drums and singing. The *sangoma* is now possessed by the ancestral

spirit, which is referred to as *kuvukwa lidloti*. (This is evidenced by the shaking of his body which is a form of a dance to spirits.)"

The contention that Gogo Morwadi cannot understand the communications of her Ndaу ancestors may be paralleled to Makhosi Athobile's views of Ndaу ancestor veneration, particularly amongst Xhosa diviners (Chief Gcaleka). I have mentioned that Makhosi Athobile believes that diviners who employ Ndaу techniques in their practices, and go into a trance when they perform the *-hlehla* movements, do not understand what they are saying in the process. Makhosi Athobile states that she does not go into a state of trance when she dances for the ancestors and establishes contact with them. Possibly this is a personal view, as the state of altered consciousness in diviners has been the subject of great discussion, yet I still feel that Makhosi Athobile has a valid point.

This song was followed by a short greeting session held by Vusi. Lukkie Matsabe explained that:

Speaking in *sindzawe*, (which is said to be the language of the ancestors), the ancestral spirit greets all present. They respond verbally and by clapping hands, and welcome the spirit in their midst.

A song, which Gogo Morwadi described as a greeting song, followed. At this point, Vusi attempted to restart the previous song after the greeting, however, his effort was thwarted with an interjection by Gogo Lamashigo, who ushered in the new song. This song still pertained to *amandawu* and likewise its subject matter continued to focus on bewitchment - *Bana bam' rhyoyile chinga ponko* (see pp.284ff), a song which is melodically and thematically comparable with an Ndaу song documented by Coppenhall, *Barhoyile*,

bam' rhoyile. (1990:273) This song which left my translators nonplussed, was interpreted by Gogo Morwadi to mean, "They witchcrafted me" - in "the language of Ndau."

During the song, Vusi continued with the *ku-hlehla* movements before gradually rising from his kneeling position. The draped *lihiya* was removed from Vusi by the woman drummer, who was to assist him at points throughout the ritual. Vusi then crawled around Gogo Morwadi and starting with her legs, he began to rub her body with his right hand, closely watching his actions. Vusi moved to Gogo Morwadi's arms, neck and back and then, whilst kneeling in front of her, he raised his clenched hands above his head, before acquiring the small switch which lay behind her.

Crawling back to her, Vusi brushed Gogo Morwadi's body swiftly with small light movements, his nose and mouth in close proximity to the switch he used. (See Plate 27) At intervals, Vusi would hold the switch to his nose and ostensibly sniff it, before facing the doorway and sneezing over the switch. The music stopped, and Vusi was asked if he was feeling hot. He then fell from his kneeling position to the ground, where he lay before he was guided to the doorway. A woman gently but rapidly flicked the switch under his nose, exclaiming as she did it, *ptsha-ptsha-ptsha*. My translation assistants described these as non-lexical syllables with implicated meaning, and the word *pfho* arose in their minds. *Pfho* means 'burning' in Tsonga which can be connected to the word *ukutsha*, which also means 'to burn' in Xhosa.

This action made Vusi sneeze, "*Yashoo, yashoo*" (in an accented triple rhythm which coincided with the beat and re-commencement of the above song!) I ascertained from Gogo Morwadi that after being stimulated by the switch, Vusi sneezed out the 'dirty things' which he had drawn from of Gogo Morwadi with the switch. Vusi took the switch himself and facing the doorway, he sneezed over the switch. (See Plates 28, 29)

I asked Gogo Morwadi for an explanation of the actions:

K: Gogo, why did he roll out to the door?

GM: You see, when they [have] finished [taking] it out of you, he *tyji-tyji* [simulated sneezing sound].

K: He sneezes it out?

GM: Yes.

Lukkie Mutsabe stated that:

The diagnosis begins. This is done by moving *lishoba*, that is the bushy tail end of a buffalo, all over the patient's body. Suddenly the *sangoma* drags himself on the floor, emulating a snake. (This suggests that a snake was used to bewitch the patient, and now it has been sniffed out.) The snake is chased out of the door.

The music recommenced and Vusi continued the brushing action. He then assumed a seated position with his legs folded in front of him. (See Plate 30) Gogo Morwadi questioned him as to what he wanted, after which Vusi began to whistle. Gogo Morwadi told me that the whistling was a clue to identify the perpetrator of evil, ie "Sometimes, your enemy - gives you a sample [example]. So somebody who hates you, likes to whistle." Gogo Morwadi

knew who the person was. She told me that the ancestors showed her who it was, through Vusi.

Lukkie Matsabe explained that:

The second diagnosis reveals a "witch", as demonstrated by the *sangoma's* behaviour. The whistling suggests that the "witch" is male. (At this stage the patient, including anyone else in the *indumba*, is supposed to question the "witch" so as to determine his identity and the reason why he is bewitching the patient.)

The fact that, "during this ritual, the *sangoma* takes on the persona of whatever evil spirit that is plaguing the patient" (Lukkie Matsabe), *could* imply that Vusi may have been in a state of possession by the Ndau ancestors throughout the enactment of the ritual. Indeed, he was not himself, but acting under the influence of the ancestors, and revealing the identity of the evil perpetrator. "At this stage the patient, including anyone else in the *indumba*, is supposed to question the "witch" so as to determine his identity and the reason why he is bewitching the patient." (Lukkie Matsabe) This occurred, and is displayed in the following metaphorical dialogue between Vusi, Gogo Morwadi, Jeff and Gogo Lamashigo, which unfolded with the help of my translators (Gogo Morwadi did not interpret it for me herself):

GM: What is your problem/What do you want? (*Ukhalangani?*)²³

Gogo Morwadi had to repeat herself before Vusi replied by whistling. Upon Gogo Morwadi's third attempt, backed by Gogo Lamashigo, Vusi (the "witch") replied that he wanted bones (*tinhlola* - Z, with SiS prefix)²⁴. This was treated with great mirth by Gogo

Lamashigo in particular.

GM: If you want bones, are you here to sleep in my house?

Vusi's delayed response prompted Gogo Lamashigo to ask, "Are you shy? Do you know these people from whom you are asking for the bones, and how to ask for bones?"

V: You are witchcrafted (*uyaloya* - SiS)²⁵. What is that which runs over your roof at night?

GM: Is it you who is doing that?

Vusi nodded in agreement.

GM: Then why are you doing that?

V: I do it for sweets.

GM: From what are you going to benefit by doing this for sweets - at the end of the day, how do you benefit?

V: I need money.

GM: Who promised you money?

V: I need money from you because you claim to be a diviner. That's why I want money from you.

Lukkier Matsabe described the dialogue as follows:

The patient then asks the witch what he wants. The "witch" says he has come to, "ask for bones", meaning that he wants to consult the patient. (This suggests that the patient is herself a *sangoma*, which is verified by the patient's dress - the beads around her neck, wrists and ankles, and the cloth she is wearing as a skirt. The "witch's" request is obviously sarcastic, and is greeted by laughter from everyone.) "I am responsible for the snakes and cats that often haunt your house, and the noise you hear on the roof at night", continues the witch.

According to my translators, it seemed that at this point, Gogo Morwadi was not understanding what Vusi was saying. Gogo Lamashigo stepped in to interpret in SeSotho for her.

Vusi continued by asking about a child who would hit cats if they came into the vicinity of Gogo Morwadi's house. He said that a witch is "witchcrafting" the cats and sending them to the house, therefore the child who hits the cats will die. The child must keep quiet and not run out to hit the cats:

Jeff (J): It is me, Gogo (*Ndim lo Gogo*)

Gogo Morwadi told me that witches use cats to witchcraft people. They 'water' the cats with bad medicine and when the cats arrive at the intended person's home, the person will become ill, and feel as though he/she is choking. "At this point, the patient's son [Jeff] confirms that he has seen the snakes and cats, and has heard the noises on the roof of their house. The patient asks the "witch" what she has done to deserve all this. The "witch" replies that he wants to kill her son, so as to hurt her." (Lukkie Matsabe)

V: When I come [as a familiar in the form of a cat], you [Jeff] spy on me (*uyatjopola*)²⁶.

J: Why are you doing this?

V: Just for sweet(s), so that your mother can cry, because you are a king.

GM: Please do not kill my son.

J: If I am a king, why am I suffering like this? (*Ngiyinkosi ngiyisokolela kangaka?*)

Gogo Lamashigo (as the head *sangoma*) instructed Vusi to stretch Gogo Morwadi's feet and hands:-

...to remove the spell that he has cast on the patient. This ritual is called *kwelula*²⁷(SiS), a word that literally means 'to stretch'. The "witch" complies by stretching the patient's limbs, fingers, toes, ears and neck. It is believed that the best person to heal or treat a patient is the one who has caused the person's affliction in the first place. (Lukkie Matsabe)

At first, Vusi would not do this - he started to whistle again. Gogo Lamashigo told Vusi to stop whistling, because she regarded this as something to be used as a form of communication at night, when witchcraft was being performed. She repeated her request for Vusi to stretch Gogo Morwadi's feet and hands. He declined.

V: Initially when I came here, I asked for bones and then you agreed.

GM: He once came at night.

V: Okay, I will show you that I'm the great witch. I will send you lightning.

GM: You cannot bring any harm to me.

V: I will show you - I will send snakes at night. You will hit them, but they will not disappear [They may go away, but they reappear.]

J: I have been hitting snakes, and they did not disappear. Are you the one sending them to us?

Both Gogo Morwadi and Vusi nodded in agreement.

V: I will send a baboon, you will find it sleeping under Gogo Morwadi's bed.

After this statement, Gogo Lamashigo instructed Vusi to stretch Gogo Morwadi's feet. She also said, " You [Vusi] have been expelled from this place, because of the witch."

Although this may seem ambiguous, my translation assistants explained to me that Gogo

Lamashigo was referring to the place at which the diviner/witch had previously been. It must be remembered that the witch is coming through Vusi, so to speak. Vusi rose and pulled Gogo Morwadi's feet and then, taking her right arm, he pulled each of her fingers and then her arm, steadying it at the shoulder. (See Plate 31) This was repeated with the left arm. Then from behind, he lifted Gogo Morwadi under her arms slightly, pulled the tips of her ears and pressed one hand down on her crown. The 'witch' was then ordered to leave, by Jeff, and Gogo Lamashigo and the others in agreement, in saying, "*Hamba!*" ('Go!') to Vusi, who promptly moved towards the door.

At the door, Vusi was again treated by the woman who brushed his nose with the switch. The music started and Vusi continued his brushing of Gogo Morwadi with the switch. He then started to make noises reminiscent of a cat. My translators suggested that an attempt was being made to bring Vusi back in the capacity of a diviner once more. However, the consequent noises he made, those of a mewling cat, insinuated that the witch possibly had not left entirely. A little girl from the audience came forward and assisted him to the door. She brushed his nose and he sneezed, whilst the drumbeat continued. Lukkie Matsabe noted that the diagnosis was not finished:

The next diagnosis discovers a cat as demonstrated by the mewling, and which is also chased out of the door. After the cat, a dead person is sniffed out, which is also dragged to the doorway and put out.

Vusi returned to brush Gogo Morwadi's body once again, before he collapsed on the ground, inert as if dead. (Plate 32) The music stopped and several people rolled him over.

Jeff and the woman then half dragged Vusi to the door, where more brushing and sneezing occurred.

After returning to Gogo Morwadi and going over her with the switch once again, Vusi sat with his legs outstretched, facing Gogo Morwadi. He started to rub his hands together whilst falling backwards onto the floor and 'passing out' again. This action was greeted with the word, "*Imali*²⁸!"(money) by Jeff and Gogo Lamashigo. Once back in Cape Town, I asked Gogo Morwadi why Vusi had insinuated money through his actions:

GM: The others [other diviners], when they hate me, they see I make money, so they hate me and then they witchcraft me.

K: You mean they hate you because you are making money?

GM: Yes, they are jealous, so they witchcraft me²⁹.

K: So what do they do - do they send you money?

GM: No, [giving me an example] say you do some work for some money .and I'm getting jealous of you, then I hate you. Now when I go to a doctor, a *sangoma*, he will see that I am jealous of you because you have money.

This was endorsed by Lukkie Matsabe:

Yet another "witch" is sniffed out, here he is seen counting money. This suggests that the "witch" is bewitching the patient because he is jealous of her money/wealth, or that someone has paid him to kill that patient.) Lastly, a "witch" or evil spirit tries to strangle the patient, but someone comes to her rescue.

Indeed, more brushing and sneezing occurred and the music recommenced. Vusi continued to brush Gogo Morwadi. Suddenly, he grabbed her from behind, as if to strangle her. He

was forcibly removed by the woman and Jeff and he collapsed again. The music had stopped and he went through the brushing and sneezing procedure. Whilst the music continued Vusi again went on to brush and sniff Gogo Morwadi, intermittently taking himself to the door to sneeze. Then facing the doorway, he knelt, eyes closed and breathed deeply.

Gogo Morwadi got up and made space for Vusi to clean the mat upon which she had been seated. After this, Vusi went through the items of her clothing, her snuff and her toilet paper (used in conjunction with the snuff), sporadically brushing his nose and sneezing in the direction of the doorway. As each item was cleaned, it was flung over his shoulder and returned to Gogo Morwadi. Gogo Morwadi explained to me that it was necessary for Vusi to 'clean' the clothes, because they also would contain 'dirty things', which he would need to find, as she had worn them:

K: Why does Vusi brush your clothes?

GM: Yes, to find dirty things, because I wear them.

Lukkie Matsabe interpreted the action as follows:

The patient is then moved from where she is sitting (so that the mat on which she has been sitting can also be rid of evil spirits. Next, her clothes are also searched. This is done to make sure that any evil spirits that might have escaped from the patient's body during *kufemba* and hid in the mat and those that might have remained in her clothes when she took them off, do not get away.) Another snake and dead body are discovered and cast out.

At one stage, Vusi collapsed again, and he was subjected to the brushing and sneezing action by two little girls. When Vusi came upon the shoes, he sat down on top of them, as if hiding them out of sight. A little girl with the switch in hand, attempted to prize them out of Vusi's grip, but he resisted by pushing her away.

The withholding of the shoes was interpreted by Gogo Morwadi and her associate diviner and friend, Gogo Tryfina, as a symbolic act of stealing. Whilst watching the video, Gogo Tryfina exclaimed, "*Uyantjontja! (SiS)*³⁰ *Uyantjonjya leshlangu (Z)*³¹ *saGogo.*" Jeff translated that Vusi was demonstrating stealing, by hiding and holding onto the shoes. Again, this was a clue regarding the identity of the evil perpetrator.

Vusi collapsed again and the little girl brushed him with the switch. He moved to the door, where he brushed his nose and sneezed. Vusi returned to the mat and dusted the remaining shoes and the mat. He went to the door again and brushed and sneezed. This action occurred a few times. Jeff explained to me that Vusi was 'cleaning the dirty things on the mat' and then he cleaned himself as well.

The song, *Subura kwenda katjiwe tekani sikara saMatente uja ekhaya* was struck up. The language of this song is "Ndau", according to Gogo Morwadi, and my translators could not decipher its words. However, Gogo Morwadi told me that it meant "Today, take the chair of Matente." This song was sung at the *intlombe* in Gugulethu, as well at more informal music sessions in Swalala. Jeff told me that the song was associated with him - Matente is his "*dlozi* name". It is a *kuhlehla* song (associated with *amandawu*).

The song did not even last a cycle, before it was replaced with another, *Bingelela gogo umhlaba uyamlinga*, "Greet grandmother, life is challenging". I was furnished with the literal translation by Siphso Mokoena, and Gogo Morwadi told that it was a greeting song, without further elaboration. Upon a subsequent visit, I asked her whether the translation given by Siphso was correct and she agreed.

This song and its accompanying dance movements demonstrated the changing from the Ndaus ancestors, who were required to exorcise the evil from Gogo Morwadi, to the *manguni* ancestors, who would interpret what the Ndaus ancestors had found. Whilst watching the video rendition of this, Gogo Morwadi stated that the *-femba* was essentially over, and that Vusi would then '*-gida*' (dance) for the *manguni*, before explaining what *amandawu* ancestors "got from my body". (Gogo Morwadi) Initially, Gogo Morwadi would not explain the necessity for such a procedure; only after several months, did she divulge that diviners like herself were unable to understand the communication process of the Ndaus ancestors and therefore a medium was needed to interpret it. As Lukkie Matsabe put it:

After [the mat has been cleaned], the ancestral spirit bids farewell to give way for another ancestral spirit who will interpret or supplement the diagnosis, and prescribe treatment. The head *sangoma* thanks the spirit for its work, and wishes it well.

Before the second ancestral spirit makes its appearance, the *sangoma* puts on a different attire. He walks out of the *indumba* and returns to dance to the ongoing drumbeat and singing. The spirit makes its appearance. It introduces itself and greets everybody in the *indumba*. The head *sangoma* welcomes the spirit, praising it and calling by name all the descendants in the family. All the people respond, thanking the spirit and wishing it success in its work.

Vusi removed his *lihiya* and stood upright. He began to disrobe with the help of one of the drummers. (See Plate 33) The singing of the song continued despite minor disruptions in the drum patterns as Gogo Lamashigo, and the other woman who was drumming, began to help Vusi change into the regalia associated with the *manguni* ancestors. This included a new 'wig' of synthetic hair without the beads, bandoliers made of strung beads, a black tiered skirt lined with white beads and secured to the waist with a *lihiya*, and a larger switch, which was held in the right hand. Vusi proceeded to the doorway and knelt down briefly before he departed outside and re-entered. I ascertained from Gogo Morwadi that he was 'fetching' the ancestors outside, which she told me was "a rule."

Vusi danced and then the music ceased and he began to *-thokoza*. He first entered into dialogue with Gogo Lamashigo, followed by Gogo Morwadi. The session seemed to take the form of a greeting. Although inaudible to my translation assistants, Gogo Morwadi told me that Vusi was introducing himself and talking about his apprenticeship into divination. From then onwards, Vusi began to describe what *amandawu* had found. I only have scant interpretations of this, so I will present it as dialogue, in order not to form any speculative conclusions regarding the material. It is often impossible to translate and understand the rapid peech of a diviner in this type of session. Peek has commented as such, "Often the speech initially produced, whether through spirit-mediumship or mechanical means, is not simply metaphoric or archaic but is intelligible only to the diviner and must be translated. Although the uniqueness of divinatory speech is often observed, seldom have the languages been analysed. Sometimes glossolalia occurs, or the language of a neighbouring people may be heard." (Peek, 1991:200) The dialogue was described by Lukkie Matsabe as follows:

The spirit approaches the patient, [and] starts interpreting and supplementing what has been demonstrated and said by the first spirit. The spirit mentions the snakes, cats and noises on the roof of her house. It tells the patient that there is a certain creature that steals groceries/food from her house. It says that despite her attempt to kill the creature, it always comes back and is often seen by patient at the doorway of her *indumba*, glowing in the dark. (The fact that the patient has an *indumba* is yet another proof she is a *sangoma*.) The spirit says that it is actually the patient's neighbour who is responsible for this witchcraft.

Gogo Morwadi explained it thus:

GM: He gets a snake, a cat.

K: Gogo does he say they want to kill you?

GM: The thing I kill has got four legs.

K: The mouse?

GM: Yes, it's got four legs.

GM: He says [that] I hit a mouse. I kill it. It was eating my mielie meal, sugar and things in the house, and then I kill it.

K: What was the mouse...was it from the witch?

GM: Yes, and then I kill it.

K: Did you really kill a mouse before you came to Swaziland?

GM: Yes.

Lukkie Matsabe continued:

The spirit then prescribes treatment for the patient. She must communicate with her ancestors, *kuphahla*. (Usually, this is how the *kuphahla* ritual is carried out. The patient, kneeling in private, appeals to his/her ancestors for protection from enemies and to bestow good luck upon him/her.) The spirit also prescribes *sifutfo* (SiS), that is having a steam bath, having added *muti* to the water. It also prescribes *kuhlanta* (SiS), that is to vomit using *muti* and

taking *libaso* (SiS), which is inhaling smoke from burning *muti*.

Gogo Morwadi continued:

GM: He says I must get a medicine - that I must steam with it.

K: What is he saying now, Gogo, in this *-thokozisa*?

GM: He's finishing up now.

Lukkie Matsabe explained:

The spirit sings a song and dances, and bids everyone farewell. (After this process, the *sangoma* does not remember anything that happened whilst he was possessed by spirits.)

The event changed to much music and dancing, each of the diviners taking to the centre of the shed in turn to dance and *-thokozisa*. What transpired at the close of the event (22h30) was a 'fortuning' of Gogo Morwadi, whereby one of the diviners, according to Gogo Morwadi spoke of her car accident caused by witchcraft the previous year. The diviner advocated that we should doctor the car with protective medicine, because we were at risk of being witchcrafted once more. Gogo Morwadi was openly astounded at this diviner's perceptive capabilities, as she expressed to me that she had never met nor spoken to the diviner before. The car was doctored with medicine and despite gearbox problems, we arrived back in Cape Town safely.

MUSICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SONGS FEATURED IN THE -FEMBA RITUAL

(Please refer to Video Extract 2)

The participants included four to six children, several adult spectators and diviners, who joined during the course of the event, Jeff, Gogo Morwadi's son and Isaac from Cape Town. Aubrey had chosen not to attend the ritual. These spectators, along with Gogo Morwadi as the patient, formed the chorus for the songs. Gogo Lamashigo was the Solo in the songs. She and her initiate were the drummers.


Vusi began to shake his head and torso in the style associated with the *-hlehla* dance. The fact that Vusi started with the correct lyrics without any prompting, tends to indicate that this song is prescriptive at this point in the ritual. Gogo Morwadi has motivated similarly. She stated that the translation of *Wena uyabayiwa* is "You are sick". These lyrics are highly appropriate and dramatic, as they set the introductory "scene" of the ritual, which involves the sick patient (Gogo Morwadi) and the healer (Vusi).

Gogo Lamashigo seemed intent on guiding the musical and ritual content of the event. She tended to direct the performance of music by beginning with the drum pattern or ceasing the drum pattern, whilst at the same time showing great sensitivity towards Vusi's ritual actions and allowing him to take the lead into a new song.

Figure: 4 WENA UYABAYIWA (You are sick)

Video Extract 2

Mode: 

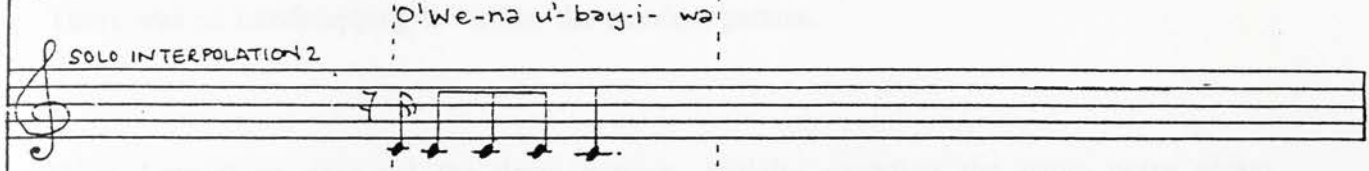
Pitch: 

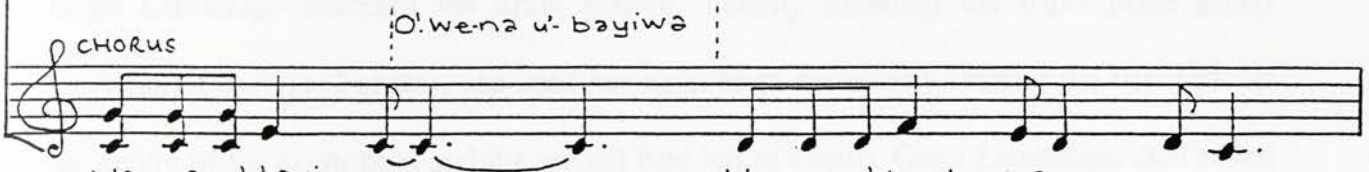
Cyclic length: 8 X ♩.

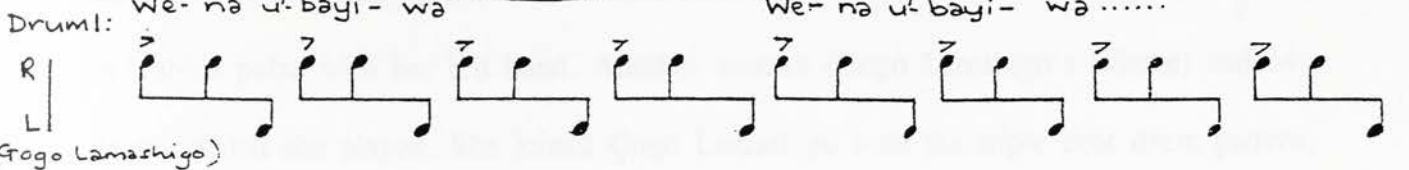
Tempo: ♩ = 64 M.M.

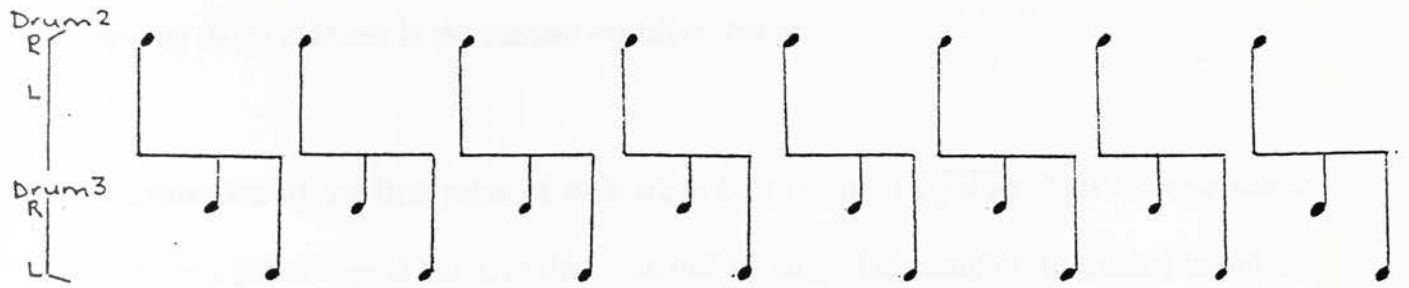
24

SOLO INTERPOLATION 1 

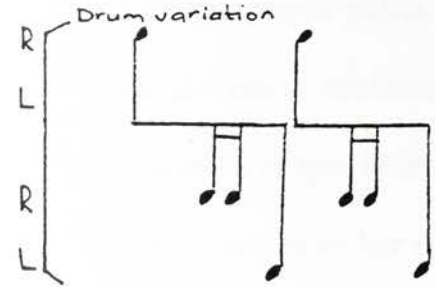
SOLO INTERPOLATION 2 

CHORUS 

Drum 1: 
 (Gogo Lamashigo)


Drum 2 


(Gogo Lamashigo's initiate)


Drum variation 


(lasting 2 triple beats only, at varied points in the cycle)

This was the first song to be sung during the commencement of the *-femba* ritual. It occurred after a *-thokozisa*, in which Vusi, after being enrobed in a *lihiya*, beads and a cowrie shell headband, knelt with his body doubled over and his head to the floor.

The metrical length of this song is defined by the drum pattern, as performed by Gogo Lamashigo (8 X ). The metrical patterning is divisive (comprising regular pulse groupings into triple beats) and the drum pattern sub-divides the beats equally into pulses. There was no handclapping to outline the metrical pattern.

Gogo Lamashigo executed the drum pattern, initially sounding the triple pulse group iambically (ie ). For this, she used her right hand exclusively, hitting the first beat on the centre of the drum head and the second beat left of centre. Gogo Lamashigo then added in a third pulse with her left hand. Another woman (Gogo Lamshigo's initiate) had two drums which she played. She joined Gogo Lamashigo with the triple beat drum pattern, beating the two drums in the manner explained below.

Accentuation of the first pulse of each triple beat occurred (). This impetus has an important physiological basis, as demonstrated by Gogo Lamashigo's drumming technique, where she played pulses 1 and 2 with her right hand, adding pulse 3 with the left hand. This movement continued throughout the cycle. The other woman with two drums also displayed a unique drumming style. She would beat the right drum with her right hand on pulse 1, and move her right hand over to the left drum for pulse 2. Pulse 3 would also be played on the left drum, with the left hand. This technique proved most intricate when the

woman introduced half pulses with her right hand on pulse 2, as a variation (ie ). The woman continued with this technique for each *ku-hlehla* song.

The metrical pattern was not supplemented by any particular audible movement pattern of dance. Vusi, however, did perform actions associated with *ku-hlehla*, in which at times his head rose and fell once to each triple beat. This movement was not consistent enough to form a regular rhythmic pattern.

The main vocal pattern consists of the repetition of two similar phrases on different degrees of this penta mode, which concurs with the melodic process of sequential repetition so common in Xhosa music, and discussed earlier (see p. 207) This is sung by the Chorus, with two interpolations by Gogo Lamashigo, between the third and fifth beats of the metrical framework. So there is, effectively, an antiphonal basis to this song. The Solo and Chorus phrases might contain the same or similar material, but they *are* there!

The song proceeded as follows:- after Gogo Lamashigo had initiated the song with the drum pattern, Vusi, who was rubbing his hands together in an action similar to *ukuphehla* (to twirl a firestick), attempted to sing the first 2 beats of the vocal pattern. However, Gogo Lamashigo stopped him fairly abruptly, and began the second half of the vocal pattern in the second cycle of the song.

Then Gogo Lamashigo rendered a Solo interpolation. The chorus (comprising about five or six children and the company of adults) entered in the following cycle. Gogo Lamashigo

immediately took to singing the Solo interpolations. There were two of these interpolations. One version (no. 1) contained distinct melodic pitches (G E D C), and provided the melodic foundation for the vocal pattern of the chorus. The second version (no. 2) was rendered in virtual monotone.

The entire vocal pattern was repeated 17 times by the chorus, whilst the two melodic interpolations alternated (not strictly). Renditions of interpolation 1 occurred in cycles 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13 and 15. Interpolation 2 occurred in cycles 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16 and faded out in cycle 17.

Gogo Lamashigo's directed the close of the song, by ceasing the drum pattern and another *thokozisa* was held. Then Vusi began to sing a melodic phrase, reminiscent of this song, however, Gogo Lamashigo cut him short.

This song is also thematically comparable the previous one. It has the same metrical framework, but it is slightly slower. The drumming is the same, being expressed in 8 groupings of three pulses. The internal structure is antiphonal. A short interpolation by the Solo part anticipates beat 7 and 'tags' along with the Chorus phrase. What is more, the total vocal pattern consists of the repetition of two similar phrases - carrying the *same* text, on two degrees of a hepta- scale. In fact, the 'deep structure' of Xhosa music has been applied within a hepta tonality.

Furthermore, this song is thematically similar to an Ndau song documented by Coppenhall, *Barhoyile, Lompongo bana bam' rhoyile*. (1990:273) In this rendition, the text as sung by Gogo Lamashigo undergoes variation, accompanied by rhythmic variation however, I was unable to make out the words.

This was the second song to be sung during the commencement of the *-femba* ritual. It was rendered during the actual brushing and sneezing process, indeed central to the ritual. The song was sung in an intermittent manner, with nine interruptions in all. During each interruption of this song, the dialogue and ritual action occurred, as documented above.

During the ritual, both drummers continued to drum with their respective techniques, the initiate stopping from time to time to aid Vusi, by removing a large pot and other utensils out of the way, in order to give him more space to *-hlehla*. Midway through the song, Vusi crawled from the corner of the room towards Gogo Morwadi on his hands and knees, at which point the initiate removed the *lihiya* which had been draped over him for the *-hlehla*

actions. After moving around the diviner (Gogo Morwadi), Vusi took his small switch and began to make brushing motions on her body, this being one aspect of the ritual action that was to continue for the main body of the event. The other aspect was the induced sneezing.

During the first performance of this song, the participants sang in a desultory manner (ie seemingly disjunct, with Solo and Chorus phrases having no order or musical connection). The participants were more interested in focussing on the ritual action that was taking place, and commenting upon it.

The second performance of the song was interrupted by a bout of enforced sneezing (Vusi). Gogo Lamashigo improvised new word phrases during each cycle. The third performance was stopped when Gogo Morwadi and Gogo Lamshigo began to question Vusi. The fourth bout of singing commenced during Vusi's second sneezing bout. This rendition ended when Vusi began to imitate the mewling of a cat. The song recommenced for the fifth time after a third bout of sneezing, but was of brief duration, being interrupted by more dialogue, after which Vusi was made to sneeze some more. A sixth performance of the song was interrupted by exclamations of '*imali!*' (money!), and then resumed for a time, during which Gogo Lamashigo and the other woman drummer interpolated vocal phrases. At this point, Gogo Morwadi stood up and vacated the mat in order that Vusi could brush it, along with her possessions. The ninth and final performance commenced with more sneezing by Vusi, and towards the end more people joined briefly for the close of the song.

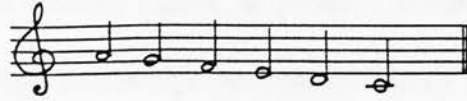
Once the main action of the ritual had ceased (the exorcism), the work with the *amandawu*

was complete and it was necessary to involve a second set of ancestral spirits, known to Gogo Morwadi as the *manguni*, who according to her, would furnish Vusi with an interpretation of the work of *amandawu*. Musically, this meant the use of spirit-specific music, with its distinctive rhythm and tempo, marked by the drum pattern and accompanying dance movements. The song, *Subura kwenda katjiwe tekani sikara saMatente uja ekhaya* - Today take the chair of Matente - was begun by Gogo Lamashigo. Gogo Morwadi and Jeff told me that this is an Ndaui song (it contains a characteristic triple pulse drum pattern), which has particular personal associations with Jeff, as he states that his "*dlozi*" name is Matente. This song was sung at the *intlombe* in Gugulethu, prior to our departure for Swalala. It was stopped before it had completed one cycle, with wild cries from Vusi, who rose to his feet. The drum pattern was swiftly changed to an iambic one, signalling a change of song and also song-style (elaborated upon below).

Figure: 6 BINGELELA GOGO UMHLABA UYAMLINGA

(Greet grandmother, life is challenging) (text transcribed and translated by Sipho Mokoena)
(Video Extract 2)

Mode: derived from a hepta- scale



Pitch:



Cycle Length: 16 X ♩.

Tempo: ♩ = 80 M.M.

48

SOLO

Bin-ge-le-la Go-go na!

CHORUS

Bin-ge-le-la Go-g' Binge-le-la Go-go 'hla-ba uyam-lin-ga

Drum 1

Gogo Lamashigo

variation

Drum 2

Drum 3

Gogo Lamashigo's initiate.

As visible on Video Extract 2, this song was initiated by Vusi, who began to shriek as he stood up to dance in the *manguni* style - associated with an upright stance, with the movement patterns of the legs (often wearing rattles, to produce audible rhythmic patterns) supplementing the drum pattern. Gogo Lamashigo recognised Vusi's desire to change the style of song, and she changed the drum beat from the slower pulse pattern to a faster iambic pattern (♩♩), and Vusi ushered in the song.

This song shows the combination of two kinds of triple rhythms: ♩♩ and ♩♩♩ - which had proved to be so troublesome for Chief Gcaleka's drummer. Possibly, these people are well acquainted with the combination.

The metrical pattern of this song comprises 16 triple beats. It has been noted that Gogo Lamashigo's drum pattern changed with regard to the triple pulse grouping, from an equal (♩♩♩) to an unequal pulse pattern (♩♩♩), and increased in tempo. She varied this pattern rhythmically. Whilst Gogo Lamashigo kept to the iambic pattern (♩♩), another contrasting drum pattern transpired, notably ♩♩♩, as played by her initiate. This was kept up for several cycles, until the initiate fell into Gogo Lamashigo's beat.

Vusi began the song by singing the first half of the vocal-melodic pattern, *Bingelela Gogo*, (beats 1 - 4), after which the participants responded with their entry at the commencement of the second cycle. This was balanced by a vocal interpolation by Gogo Lamashigo, on beats 5 - 8 of the cycle.

The complementary phrases of Solo and Chorus, which occur antiphonally, are regular

features of Nguni polyphonic music, but in this song, their entries and positions within the cycle have been changed. In fact, it is questionable as to whether there is a Solo phrase at all, or just a Chorus with Solo interpolations. That is to say, the song cycle may actually commence with the entry of the Chorus phrase, Vusi's initial vocal phrase serving as an 'introductory signal'. Thereafter, repetitions of the cycle commence with Chorus phrases, followed by a Solo interpolation, and a concluding Chorus phrase (beat 9) within the entire cycle. This procedure has been identified by Hansen in certain types of Xhosa music, in which entire vocal phrases of a song are sung in sequence by the Chorus. Whilst the "whole song sounds like a 'chorus'...the Solo phrases become subsumed in the overall sound to the extent that they are scarcely discernible to the listener, or, if they are, they seem to 'tag along' as improvisations above the Chorus phrase. It then becomes even more difficult to assess where the strophe begins and where it actually recommences." (1981:619)

INTERPRETATION OF THE *-FEMBA* RITUAL BY LUKKIE MATSABE AND THABISILE MAFUYEKA (PRISCILLA MAFUYEKA - Ed.) All italicised 'foreign' words are SiSwati.

The people we see are in the *indumba*, a rondavel used as a consultation room, and sometimes as a storeroom for 'muti', gear and other related equipment. The person sitting on the mat in the centre is the patient [Gogo Morwadi]. She is about to be diagnosed so as to cast out the evil spirits within her which are a cause for her illness. This process is called *kufemba*.

The preparations begin. *Nyankwabe*, which means the main assistant of a *sangoma*, starts performing certain rituals, ie applying some ointment on the patient's ears, hands, legs and feet (in order to weaken the power of the potential evil spirits about to be sniffed out).

Before the actual task begins, *gobela*, the head *sangoma*, who has trained the *sangoma*, calls and invites by name, and praises the ancestral spirits, asking them to bless the task about to be performed so that it can be a success. This is accompanied by the intermittent clapping of hands.

The ancestral spirit is invited to join them through the *sangoma* by the beating of drums and singing. The *sangoma* is now possessed by the ancestral spirit, which is referred to as *kuvukwa lidloti*. (This is evidenced by the shaking of his body which is a form of a dance to spirits.)

Speaking in *sindzawe*, (which is said to be the language of the ancestors), the ancestral spirit greets all present. They respond verbally and by clapping hands, and welcome the spirit in their midst.

The diagnosis begins. This is done by moving *lishoba*, that is the bushy tail-end of a buffalo, all over the patient's body. Suddenly the *sangoma* drags himself on the floor, emulating a snake. (This suggests that a snake was used to bewitch the patient, and now it has been sniffed out.) The snake is chased out of the door. (During this ritual, the *sangoma* takes on the persona of whatever evil spirit that is plaguing the patient.)

The second diagnosis reveals a "witch", as demonstrated by the *sangoma's* behaviour. The whistling suggests that the "witch" is male. (At this stage the patient, including anyone else in the *indumba*, is supposed to question the "witch" so as to determine his identity and the reason why he is bewitching the patient.)

The patient then asks the witch what he wants. The "witch" says he has come to, "ask for bones", meaning that he wants to consult the patient. (This suggests that the patient is herself a *sangoma*, which is verified by the patient's dress - the beads around her neck, wrists and ankles, and the cloth she is wearing as a skirt. The "witch's" request is obviously sarcastic, and is greeted by laughter from everyone.) "I am responsible for the snakes and cats that often haunt your house, and the noise you hear on the roof at night", continues the witch.

At this point, the patient's son, confirms that he has seen the snakes and cats, and has heard the noises on the roof of their house. The patient asks the "witch" what she has done to deserve all this. The "witch" replies that he wants to kill her son, so as to hurt her.

The head *sangoma* instructs the witch to remove the spell that he has cast on the patient. This ritual is called *kwelula*, a word that literally means "to stretch". The "witch" complies by stretching the patient's limbs, fingers, toes, ears and neck. (It is believed that the best person to heal or treat a patient is the one who has caused the person's affliction in the first place.)

The next diagnosis discovers a cat as demonstrated by the mewing, and which is also chased out of the door. After the cat, a dead person is sniffed out, which is also dragged to the doorway and put out. Yet another "witch" is sniffed out, here he is seen counting money. (This suggests that the "witch" is bewitching the patient because he is jealous of her money/wealth, or that someone has paid him to kill that patient.) Lastly, a "witch" or evil spirit tries to strangle the patient, but someone comes to her rescue.

The patient is then moved from where she is sitting (so that the mat on which she has been sitting can also be rid of evil spirits. Next, her clothes are also searched. This is done to make sure that any evil spirits that might have escaped from the patient's body during *kufemba* and hid in the mat and those that might have remained in her clothes when she took them off, do not get away.) Another snake and dead body are discovered and cast out.

After that, the ancestral spirit bids farewell to give way for another ancestral spirit who will interpret or supplement the diagnosis, and prescribe treatment. The head *sangoma* thanks the spirit for its work, and wishes it well.

Before the second ancestral spirit makes its appearance, the *sangoma* puts on a different attire. He walks out of the *indumba* and returns to dance to the ongoing drumbeat and singing. The spirit makes its appearance. It introduces itself and greets everybody in the *indumba*. The head *sangoma* welcomes the spirit, praising it and calling by name all the descendants in the family. All the people respond, thanking the spirit and wishing it success in its work.

After that, the spirit approaches the patient, starts interpreting and supplementing what has been demonstrated and said by the first spirit. The spirit mentions the snakes, cats and noises on the roof of her house. It tells the patient that there is a certain creature that steals groceries/food from her house. It says that despite her attempt to kill the creature, it always comes back and is often seen by patient at the doorway of her *indumba*, glowing in the dark. (The fact that the patient has an *indumba* is yet another proof she is a *sangoma*.) The spirit says that it is actually the patient's neighbour who is responsible for this witchcraft.

The spirit then prescribes treatment for the patient. She must communicate with her ancestors, *kuphahla*. (Usually, this is how the *kuphahla* ritual is carried out. The patient, kneeling in private, appeals to his/her ancestors for protection from enemies and to bestow

good luck upon him/her.) The spirit also prescribes *sifutfo*, that is having a steam bath, having added *muti* to the water. It also prescribes *kuhlanta*, which is to vomit using *muti* and taking *libaso*, which is inhaling smoke from burning *muti*.

After that, the spirit sings a song and dances, and bids everyone farewell. (After this process, the *sangoma* does not remember anything that happened while he was possessed by spirits.)

 NOTES

1. *umnumzana* (Xh) the head of a village; a person of quality, a gentleman. (McLaren, 1994:113)
2. *itshoba* (Xh) the tuft of hair at the end of the tail. (McLaren, 1994:166) This is attached to a stick (sometimes elaborately beaded) and carried by the diviner.
3. The ancestors are not generally represented by forms of totems/paraphernalia; rather, ritual activity is moulded around the propitiation of live or trivial objects, for example, the sacrifice of livestock is common practice.
4. From *ithambo* (Xh) a bone, a kernal, a bone-like bead. (McLaren, 1994:157)
5. From *ukuvuma* (Xh) to consent, agree, accede, assent to, admit, confess; agree with, suit; assent, with louder or quieter humming, to the varied suggestions of the witch-doctor when smelling out. (McLaren, 1994:178)
6. From *ukuva* (Xh) perceive by sense; hear, taste, feel; understand. (McLaren, 1994:175)
7. *kupahla* (SiS) to offer libation (Rycroft, 1982:78) Gogo Morwadi defines it as being "to pray to your ancestors", often when a request is being made and the ancestors need to be consulted.
8. *-khupha* (Xh) to take out. (McLaren, 194:77)
9. *kugubha* (SiS) hollow out, scoop out, excavate. (Rycroft, 1982:33)
10. No dictionary entry of this word exists. According to an informant, in this case it means that the spirit has been 'destroyed' or 'wounded'. It is derived from the Xhosa term - *lapho*, to be restored (McLaren, 1991:80), or in this context, to be made well. (trans. N. Faxi)
11. Such a view was expressed to me in context of *ufufunyane* possession. *Ufufunyane* spirits are thought to be of mixed cultural extraction, and they attack in large groups. The person who becomes possessed by such spirits, is said to suffer from bouts of hysteria and accompanying madness, which virtually 'comes up' out of the stomach area. *Ufufunyane* spirits are distinct from *amandawu*, in that the former are connected intricately with sorcery. It has been described to me that (a sorcerer) will make a medicine from plant materia growing on a grave and slip it to the victim, who will ingest it. The state of *ufufunyane* will result, which can only be treated by a diviner - a depiction of the war waged between the forces of good and evil. (Kiernan in Prozesky & de Gruchy, 1995:81)
12. In my research, Chief Gcaleka is the only diviner who has used the word *iingoma* [songs]. (McLaren, 1994:100). I have found that diviners tend not to classify their songs

unless prompted. I have on occasion heard the word, '*cula!*' [*culela*], meaning 'sing for'. (McLaren, 1991:25)

13. Hand claps are an important structural device, as indeed stated by Hansen that, "a basic principle of Xhosa music is that *all* music is accompanied by some form of physical activity, whereby the basic metre and tempo of the music is expressed or at least indicated...The presence of the hand claps permits a continuous creation of melodic/rhythmic vocal patterns within the prescribed limits of the basic metrical pattern." (1981:617, 649)

14. Gogo Morwadi uses the term spelt '*mandau*', however, for the sake of continuity and to avoid confusion, I will continue to use the Zulu-derived term *amandawu*.

15. As my research continued, I heard stories of Aubrey's health declining, or his problems intensifying. He went to Pretoria to seek help from a woman there, and he finally accepted *ukuthwasa*, and I believe that he went to train in Zimbabwe. When I met him in February 1997, he seemed much happier and content.

16. The property was owned by Gogo Lamashigo's son, Fanie, who is a teacher at a local school.

17. This was verified when Gogo Morwadi was offered an opportunity in 1996 to appear on an internationally-claimed television programme, in the capacity of a diviner. However, she declined after throwing the bones, which upon reading, told her that it was not a good idea.

18. I communicated with Gogo Lamashigo through the use of pictures and my own scant knowledge of Xhosa. For example, on the fieldtrip I had taken a copy of Jean Pujol's *The Herbalist Handbook*, which contains excellent illustrations of cross-sections of traditional medicinal plants and their names. With a method of 'show and tell', I managed to ascertain the names of many types of the plant material collected during our digging expeditions from her. I wish now that I had been more forthright in my attempts to communicate with Gogo Lamashigo. However, effectively in my fourth-or-so week of practical fieldwork, I was still learning the art of interviewing. Gogo Morwadi also was very possessive in her manner at times, and she would go out of her way to interrupt or divert any conversation I was having with Gogo Lamashigo.

24. In fact, Lukkie referred to Vusi as *nyankwabe* (SiS) - "the main assistant of a *sangoma*", in his interpretation. Gogo Lamashigo was perceived as the head *sangoma* in the ritual.

20. The holding of rituals in or out of doors has symbolic significance. Hunter has noted, for example, that amongst the Mpondo, a initiate diviner must perform the ritual dancing (*ukuxhentsa*) indoors, specifically to avoid the sunlight. (Hunter, 1964:325) In my own experience, I have witnessed the ritual killing of two animals indoors, at an *intlombe*. The officiant of the *intlombe* was Chief Gcaleka, who had previously expressed great anger at

unless prompted. I have on occasion heard the word, '*cula!*' [*culela*], meaning 'sing for'. (McLaren, 1991:25)

13. Hand claps are an important structural device, as indeed stated by Hansen that, "a basic principle of Xhosa music is that *all* music is accompanied by some form of physical activity, whereby the basic metre and tempo of the music is expressed or at least indicated...The presence of the hand claps permits a continuous creation of melodic/rhythmic vocal patterns within the prescribed limits of the basic metrical pattern." (1981:617, 649)

14. Gogo Morwadi uses the term spelt '*mandau*', however, for the sake of continuity and to avoid confusion, I will continue to use the Zulu-derived term *amandawu*.

15. As my research continued, I heard stories of Aubrey's health declining, or his problems intensifying. He went to Pretoria to seek help from a woman there, and he finally accepted *ukuthwasa*, and I believe that he went to train in Zimbabwe. When I met him in February 1997, he seemed much happier and content.

16. The property was owned by Gogo Lamashigo's son, Fanie, who is a teacher at a local school.

17. This was verified when Gogo Morwadi was offered an opportunity in 1996 to appear on an internationally-claimed television programme, in the capacity of a diviner. However, she declined after throwing the bones, which upon reading, told her that it was not a good idea.

18. I communicated with Gogo Lamashigo through the use of pictures and my own scant knowledge of Xhosa. For example, on the fieldtrip I had taken a copy of Jean Pujol's *The Herbalist Handbook*, which contains excellent illustrations of cross-sections of traditional medicinal plants and their names. With a method of 'show and tell', I managed to ascertain the names of many types of the plant material collected during our digging expeditions from her. I wish now that I had been more forthright in my attempts to communicate with Gogo Lamashigo. However, effectively in my fourth-or-so week of practical fieldwork, I was still learning the art of interviewing. Gogo Morwadi also was very possessive in her manner at times, and she would go out of her way to interrupt or divert any conversation I was having with Gogo Lamashigo.

24. In fact, Lukkier referred to Vusi as *nyankwabe* (SiS) - "the main assistant of a *sangoma*", in his interpretation. Gogo Lamashigo was perceived as the head *sangoma* in the ritual.

20. The holding of rituals in or out of doors has symbolic significance. Hunter has noted, for example, that amongst the Mpondo, a initiate diviner must perform the ritual dancing (*ukuxhentsa*) indoors, specifically to avoid the sunlight. (Hunter, 1964:325) In my own experience, I have witnessed the ritual killing of two animals indoors, at an *intlombe*. The officiant of the *intlombe* was Chief Gcaleka, who had previously expressed great anger at

the participants for slaying the first animal in the driveway of the house, as this was not 'containing' the ancestors and their appreciation, but letting it be dispersed into open air. The action of killing inside may be attributed to a peculiarity of Chief Gcaleka's ways, as I have found this action to be at variance with normal procedure.

21. Gogo Morwadi first showed me her headband after 'opening the bag' (-vul' *isikhwama*) in acknowledgement of a monetary payment I made to her prior to the field trip. She stored this headband, along with a white sheet, which is also worn in rituals concerning Ndau ancestors in her *isikhwama* (a woven basket). Gogo Morwadi did not explain the symbolic significance of this headband, apart from describing it as being worn 'to *-femba* with', as though it was part of a uniform.

22. *ukuwa* (Z) means to fall, or to make a mistake. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:847) Also *kuwa* (SiS) to fall, drop down, make a mistake, similarly *-wa* in Xhosa. (Rycroft, 1982:107; McLaren, 1994:180)

23. *Ingani* (Z) refers to a child, infant.

24. From *inhlola* (Z) meaning "one used by diviner for divining." (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:332)

25. From SiSwati, *kuloya*, 'bewitch, hypnotise'. (Rycroft, 1981:58)

26. I found no translation for this word phrase, the closest term being *-hlola*, meaning (to) spy, look suspiciously (SiS and Z) and also, 'predict evil, warn of coming danger, act as an evil omen' (Z). (Rycroft, 1982:172; Doke Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:332)

33. *Kwelula* (SiS) stretch (Rycroft, 1982:174)

28. *imali* (Xh, Z, SiS) money. (Rycroft, 1982:60; Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:478; McLaren, 1994:86)

29. The topic concerning jealousy over Gogo Morwadi's success and her lucrative business had been discussed earlier in our relationship. On the first day I had met her, not on her home ground, as she had been visiting some friends, there was a certain man present, who wore the beads of a Swazi diviner (name withheld). In the car back to her home, Gogo Morwadi described how this man had tried to kill her. On the way back from medicine collecting in Swalala the previous year, Gogo Morwadi, Jeff and their driver were involved in a terrible car crash, in which a gigantic "wind" swept them off the road, made the vehicle roll and they all narrowly escaped death. Gogo Morwadi has insinuated that it was the *impundulu*, in lightning bird form who was sent by the above mentioned male diviner as an attempt on her life. Gogo Morwadi's explanation of the failure of the offence was that her "spirit is too strong." When Gogo Morwadi speaks of such "spirit", she is referring directly to the powers she has within as a diviner. Such power, however, comes from "the ancestors". Gogo Morwadi will often refer to the "spirit coming up", in times when diviners are dancing at a seance and to other unfamiliar noises she occasionally makes, such

as guttural interjections and belching, during normal conversation.

30. *kutjontja* (SiS) -to steal. (Rycroft, 1984:173)

31. From *isihlangu* (Z) a sandal, shoe, boot. (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:320)

CHAPTER 4

MUSIC AT A SEANCE OF DIVINERS (*INTLOMBE ZAMAGQIRHA*)

The importance of the ancestors and the need for a favourable relationship between them and their descendants has already been discussed in my introduction. However, to reiterate, in order to appease the ancestors and to gain their favour, certain propitiatory rites must be practised by African people and their surrounding families, as a means of ensuring continued safety and prosperity during life on earth - through the "brooding" of the ancestors. Such rites are commonly performed in the cattle byre by rural Nguni, whilst it has been noted that the Venda and Tsonga have shrines. In urban settlements, rites are performed in the home environment, both inside or outside - the various areas of the house and surrounding exterior taking on particular functions of varying importance. This is to be discussed in greater detail in my following accounts of urban *iintlombe* (seances). (Berglund, 1989:127, Margaret Shaw in Hammond-Tooke, 1975:104)

It must be noted that an *intlombe* is a musical event, and it is distinguishable from other divination techniques that do not involve ritual music. Hence I have concentrated the largest

portion of my musical transcription and analysis in this chapter. The material is presented as two case studies, in which I describe the dramatic and musical action taking place. The analysis of the musical content can be located at the end of the case studies, and is followed by a musical analysis of Chief Gcaleka's songs and my conclusions.

In divination contexts, the *intlombe* (seance) is convened for a variety of reasons, the most important and obligatory one being communion with the ancestors. I was once questioned by a university academic about my use of the term seance, and whether it was indeed appropriate in this context. I found that this term is used to explain the word *intlombe* (pl. *iintlombe*) by Hammond-Tooke (1989:108), Hansen, (1981:563,586) and subsequently Coppenhall (1990). It seems therefore to be more succinct and fitting than the literal Xhosa dictionary translation of *intlombe* into English as, "a meeting for singing and dancing, held especially on moonlight (sic) nights." or "a party for singing and dancing." (McLaren, 1994:161, 60) It is true that *iintlombe* always contain a large proportion of music making. I have already mentioned that this term is also used to denote the post-initiation Xhosa youth group and the name of their social dance. (See p. 4)

An *intlombe* is generally convened in cases of illness or other misfortune (and held in conjunction with a *-vumisa*¹), when a prediction is required, or upon the graduation of a novice diviner. The occasion may also be referred to as an *umgidi*² - described by Hammond-Tooke as 'the multitude', in context of the culmination of a diviner's initiation period - specifically in circumstances when a large meat and traditional beer feast accompanies the event. (Hunter, 1964:325; Hansen, 1981:567; McAllister, 1981:4-5;

Hammond-Tooke, 1989:107; Coppenhall, 1990:209) Makhosi Athobile told me that in Gauteng, diviners refer to *any* seance context as an *umgidi*, however, the majority of my informants who are associated with divination in the Western and Eastern Cape areas, seem to use the word *intlombe*. It is common for an event such as this to be referred to in several ways, in accordance with the different angles from which it is perceived.

In most instances, an *intlombe* is held at the home of the person who has called for it, this being a diviner, or a person who requires the help of a diviner. In cases of the latter, the person will request a diviner to officiate the *intlombe*. Hansen has mentioned that a diviner need not necessarily call for an *intlombe* at his/her own homestead, or that of the client involved. Indeed, the location may be one of personal choice, and it may have no connection to either party. (in communication) Diviners are always invited to *iintlombe*, whereas the general public attend on their own account. In urban areas, I found that *iintlombe* began on Friday or Saturday nights and continued for some forty-eight hours.

Preparation for an *intlombe* is a costly and lengthy process. In ancestor veneration the brewing of traditional beer and the ritual killing of a beast is necessary, these being customary obligations which must be fulfilled in order to satisfy the ancestors' desire for food and traditional beer. (Hunter, 1964:234) I have already mentioned how activities such as brewing beer and preparing dough for the bread of the *intlombe* are thought to attract the attention of the ancestors even before the event itself. (Makhosi Athobile)

CASE STUDY 1

AN ACCOUNT OF AN *INTLOMBE* HELD BY GOGO MORWADI TO 'OPEN THE WAY'

This was the first *intlombe* which I attended. Although I was at the time an inexperienced and naive researcher, I was able to record the event almost in its entirety on video camera. Strangely enough, despite my finding this *intlombe* the toughest from the active research point of view, I subsequently was never able to record an *intlombe* as successfully. Upon ensuing occasions I faced various problems, such as the lack of recording equipment or equipment failures. Even at times, permission for recording the event or parts thereof, was withheld. On this particular occasion, I had funded the entire ceremony and therefore I was permitted to film freely. I have also been fortunate in viewing the video recording of this *intlombe* with Gogo Morwadi and her family, plus several friends (including Gogo Tryfina, who attended the ceremony). They were prepared to answer many of my questions and interpret the action and songs therein in retrospect. This process of 'fieldbacking' took many hours and a considerable amount of their patience. It was not easy to undertake such process with other diviners who were the hosts of *iintlombe*, and with whom I had not been able to build up such a relationship of trust, as I enjoyed with my main informants.

The *intlombe* was held in September 1995, prior to our departure for Gogo Morwadi's training ground - Swalala, where we were to assist with the digging and collecting of traditional medicine. The objective of the *intlombe* was to 'open the way' - or announce this departure to friends and associates, and more importantly, to Gogo Morwadi's ancestors, who would offer protection against any misfortune during our journey to

Swalala. Another *intlombe* was to be held at our destination before we were to return to Cape Town, in order to ensure a safe journey home. Before the *intlombe* could occur, several formalities had to be observed, including a *-phahla* (prayer) session to the ancestors, which would serve as a thanksgiving and an introduction of myself to the ancestors. The days leading up to the *intlombe* proceeded as follows.

On Monday, 4 September 1995, I went to Gugulethu to ascertain what I needed to buy for the *intlombe*. I was responsible for the purchasing of the food, beverages and sacrificial animals for the event. A shopping list was given to me with the ingredients, and recommended quantities for brewing the traditional beer, *umqombothi*, which had to be done at least five days before consumption. The purchasing of other foodstuffs such as samp, milk powder, sugar, tea bags and firewood was done at a number of cash and carry stores in Gugulethu, under Gogo Morwadi's direction, with the assistance of her son, Aubrey. The beverages were purchased at a bottle store and a local shebeen. The trip to find the sacrificial goat on Friday 8 September took over four hours and resulted in a journey far beyond Stellenbosch, in order to find one suitably large enough to feed many guests at the *intlombe*. Being a Friday, the farms were busy and the choice of animals was limited. During this excursion, we managed to purchase two chickens, which were to be slaughtered for Gogo Morwadi's *amandawu* ancestors. That evening, a sheep, instead of a goat was eventually purchased, as it was thought that the sheep would feed more people than the skinny goats that were available.

By the following day, preparations were under way for the *intlombe*. During the course of the afternoon, a *-phahla* session was to take place, in order to give thanks to the ancestors (*amadlozi*). The *-phahla* ritual is an important occasion upon which the diviner can inform the ancestors of forthcoming events (our trip to Swalala and the *intlombe* to be held before it), and "invoke their assistance and favour in this regard." (Coppenhall, 1990:23-24) It may also be described as "a true act of veneration in which the ancestors are 'prayed to'." (ibid, 1990:279) During this session, Gogo Morwadi would introduce me to the ancestors, and state her intentions in going to Swalala: to "show me her medicine" She would also ask that "the way would be opened for us" (the main reason for the arranged *intlombe*). According to Gogo Morwadi, I would also be given the opportunity to "*-phahla* to the *amadlozi* - to ask them what you want; what (they must) do for you."

I followed Gogo Morwadi into her *indumba* - the room that she uses for consultations and as a storage space for medicine, gear and other related equipment. It was at the back of the main house, looking onto the yard. The floor was carpeted and there were piles of dried medicine lining the walls, on the floor. In the far corner was a set of shelves, upon which were placed numerous bottles of medicinal powders. (See Plate 34)

Eight of us gathered inside the *indumba*, the group including four small children and a young man, Phakamile, whom Gogo had been treating for illness caused by *abathakathi* who were operating in his workplace. (I was to meet Phakamile the following year as a novice diviner, under the tutelage of another diviner.) Gogo Morwadi had ordered a plastic bucket of *umqombothi* to be brought into the *indumba*. It was placed beside Gogo

Morwadi's basket, which she referred to as her "*umthundu ochoba*" or *isikhwama* (a bag often associated with financial transactions and the ancestors). She had removed from the top shelf of her "medicine chest". Gogo Morwadi told me that, "The *amadlozi* live in there." The basket was covered with a red cloth, embroidered with beads forming the words "Morwadi, Swaziland". This cloth was used upon subsequent occasions as a *lihiya* (a decorative cloth, worn as a piece of clothing) for various diviners at the ensuing *intlombe*, including Gogo Morwadi herself. She now proceeded to explain the following *-phahla* procedure:

GM: When we *-phahla* for the '*madlozi*, I tell them about the work we do, that they must open our road. Then I must tell them that you learn some medicine...what else do you want - to learn to *-gida*?

K: Maybe.

GM: Then you must put something down to tell them to open the bag, and so you can learn the medicine. They must open the road so you must go. Saturday is your work here. [The *intlombe*]

I placed the *inkhwamo* (money) in front of the *isikhwama*, thereby paying the *amadlozi*, in order to learn more, so that the basket could be opened (*vula isikhwama*). Gogo Morwadi had already said, "When we teach, we open the bag (*-vula isikhwama*) and we pay our *inkhwamo* to learn more."

We then prepared ourselves for the *-phahla* session by kneeling down and crouching on the floor. Gogo Morwadi took some snuff from a small container placed in front of the *isikhwama* before she began to *-phahla*, beginning with the two customary double claps and she introduced us to the ancestors and informed them of the coming events. Then, Gogo

Morwadi opened the basket and displayed its contents, which included her *-femba* headband and a white sheet, both items being associated with *amandawu* ancestors. Then after spending an entertaining afternoon with Gogo Morwadi and one of her associates, Gogo Tryfina, who had come to visit, I returned home.

I arrived at Gogo Morwadi's house at about 17:30 on Saturday 9 September, for the *intlombe*. The front lounge area and adjoining dining room had been cleared of all furniture; even the wall cabinet and beaded curtains were removed and placed in Gogo Morwadi's bedroom. Her family members, including her two sons Jeff and Tony, and the girls were in the kitchen, involved in various stages of food preparation. Wooden benches were placed along three sides of the lounge area, and inside the bedroom were two barrels of foaming *umqombothi* and the "hot" stuff (spirits), plus several crates of cooldrink.

Gogo Morwadi led me into the *indumba*, where she had laid down an *icansi* (traditionally a reed mat, but in this case, a piece of carpet) on the floor in the right-hand corner. Upon this *icansi*, was the *isikhwama* covered in a red cloth with two *emahiya* cloths neatly folded on top of it. A bucket of *umqombothi*, a bottle of Smirnoff vodka, two large calabashes, and a small quantity of snuff, was laid in a saucer. (See Plate 35) An *igubu*³ (drum) was placed next to the mat. Behind the mat and on the wall, Gogo Morwadi had hung the red beaded cloth which had originally covered the *isikhwama*. In the left-hand corner of the room next to the diviner's medicine shelf, was a paraffin stove with a pot containing boiling portions of steamed bread, wrapped in plastic bags. Pointing to this, the diviner explained, "You see, we put it in the Checkers [bags] and we cook it like that for three hours." The bread is

eaten with *amathumbu*⁴ (sheep tripe/offal). Gogo Morwadi told me that both the *umqombothi* and the snuff were to be used "to *-phahla* for the *amadlozi*", adding (XX indicates the claps):

GM: We do like this (taking a pinch of snuff), we put it on the floor and we talk to the ancestors. We say *-thokoza gogo*. XX We are doing some work today XX You must be happy XX It's your feast today XX And Kathy is here XX She comes to *-phahla* for you today.

Gogo Morwadi was dressed in her diviner's regalia, wearing two *emahiya* of red, black and white, associated with Swazi and Zulu diviners in particular. One was worn around her waist and the other was tied across the right shoulder. She also wore a headpiece of reddish-brown hair, made from strands of a synthetic substance similar to coarse twine. (See Plate 34)

As the sun was beginning to fade, the time came for the sheep to be sacrificed. The men dragged it on its back into the *indumba* and a quick *-phahla* session took place, conducted by Gogo Morwadi. The fowls, the snuff and vodka, and the *umqombothi* was placed by the animal's side. The sheep was then dragged into the yard and placed on a piece of corrugated iron and its throat was cut by Tony, one of Gogo Morwadi's sons, using a special sacrificial knife. Overcome by the experience of witnessing my first sacrificial rite, an intense wave of nausea curtailed my filming and I ran inside the house to recover. (See Video Extract 3) By the time I returned, the sheep was being skinned and the dog was licking at the blood, which had spilled out into the yard. A bowl was placed next to the carcass to collect the innards. Later, the open carcass of the sheep was laid in front of the

icansi, with the offal to one side of it in a bowl in Gogo Morwadi's *indumba*. (See Plate 36) The meat from this sacrifice was to be served much later in the evening, and had to last until the following day. Gogo Morwadi explained to me that there was no need to capture the blood from the throat of the sheep, as there were no *thwasanas* (initiate diviners) present to drink it. Only those who are training as diviners need to drink the blood of a sacrificial animal, once one becomes a fully-fledged diviner, one does not drink the blood.

Inside, festive preparations were taking place in the kitchen. Ready-made bread dough was being prepared for frying. Amidst the chattering and laughter, the fowls were being beheaded in the yard by diviners Morwadi and Tryfina. During this procedure, the fowls' frantic squawks were intermingled with ululating screams from the two diviners, who danced around the poultry. This marked the commencement of the *intlombe*.

The house was steadily filling up with people, both in the front rooms and the kitchen. The drums had been placed in the lounge area. There were three drums in all, and they were typically divination drums: large double sided *izigubu*, with their membranes laced over cut sections of metal barrels. The array of sticks included pieces of garden hose pipe and a range of wooden beaters varying from 5cm in diameter to 2cm in diameter, all of different lengths and weight. (See Plates 37,38) I ascertained that the drums had not been tuned by having their skin heads (membranes) exposed to an open fire, which is a traditional method of tuning drums. (See Plate 39) The drums had been left in the sun all day to heat up in preparation for the evening. This was in contrast to practice at Swalala, where the drums were placed by the fire at least an hour before they were to be used.

Inside the front room, the singing and playing of drums had begun, the song, *He'thongo lam* (see pp. 347ff) being led by Gogo Tryfina. Clad in a *lihiya* and a white head wrap, she danced, holding a wooden spear. People were following her dance and clapping, whilst one of Gogo Morwadi's sons, Boysie played one of the drums. At this stage, the dancing appeared to be without order, and furthermore, open to all present. Yet Gogo Tryfina was clearly bent on stirring up the activities and increasing the volume of sound, and she began to sing and dance in an exhibitionistic manner, her voice becoming increasingly louder and more piercing.

The song *He 'thongo lam, owulele* is a popular song and I have witnessed its performance in several unrelated *intlombe* contexts. Gogo Morwadi interpreted this song as meaning, "My dream...your spirit must lead you". *He 'thongo lam* was repeatedly sung, with different women participants taking the lead role. This song seems to be most often performed in certain contexts within the *intlombe*, when the tension has been lowered and with different female singers taking the role as lead singer. Its performance provides a platform for participants, who are not necessarily diviners, to dance on this occasion. I have also witnessed it being sung in the context of several of David's Zionist Church services. The festive singing continued unabated until the entrance of Gogo Dubulamanzi, at which point it faded out.

The drumming changed and the singing stopped at approximately 21:30, when Gogo Dubulamanzi made her entrance, partly attired in her divination regalia: a *lihiya* was

wrapped around her head and served as a temporary turban, being subsequently replaced by baboon skin head-dress, with a few long single strands of white beads hanging and protruding on either side of her ears against the cheeks to mid-waist. She was greeted with thunderous shouts of applause and she did a swaggering dance before the drums in acknowledgement, before moving into the kitchen, where Gogo Morwadi was supervising the preparation of food. Because the function was taking place at her house, she seemed to take responsibility for the supervision of the cooking, which was done by her daughters and their friends.

The sheep was being roasted outside in the back yard and it was cooked and served at certain times during the evening, with the steamed bread. This being my first *intlombe*, I did not observe the exact distribution of the meat, that is to say whether or not the diviners received meat before other guests, or if there were any specific portions of it that were exclusively reserved for the diviners or the elders⁵. Nor was the gall bladder of this animal retained. This probably had much to do with the sacrificial animal being a sheep and not a goat. (At the *intlombe* held in Swalala, Gogo Morwadi saved the gall bladder of the goat, which was slaughtered. She gave it to Gogo Lamashigo as a gesture of respect. Gogo Lamashigo fastened it to her 'wig' and Gogo Morwadi informed me that it would be worn for the duration of three months).

At this stage, the only diviner who had been present in the front room with the rest of the participants, was Gogo Tryfina, setting herself up as the catalyst for excitement by taking the opportunity to initiate the songs. Gogo Morwadi had remained elusively in the kitchen

and bedroom areas. Gogo Dubulamanzi vanished into a crowd of people spilling from the kitchen to the backyard. (Attempts to follow her were almost impossible, owing to the congestion.) Gogo Tryfina had moved into the bedroom, the door of which was continually being shut off to the general guests. This room was kept as a storage room for the barrels of *umqombothi*, and the alcohol and other beverages. It also served as a dressing room for the diviners. In it, Gogo Tryfina knelt on her haunches by the bed, shaking her thighs and swinging her arms up and down, whilst making loud vocal sobbing sounds, which lapsed occasionally into an utterance of, "*Mayebabo!*" ("Woe is me!"), thereby ushering in the song, *Bingelela, nonk' emzini kababa* (Z)- I greet you all in my father's home. (see pp.^{350ff}) This song is also documented and transcribed in Coppenhall. (1990:252) Her vocal phrase was promptly answered by some people in the bedroom and the front room, comprising mainly friends and family of Gogo Morwadi, who were also close and supportive associates of Gogo Tryfina. Further repetitions of "*Mayebabo!*" led to clapping and drumming by Gogo Morwadi's sons and daughters.

The bedroom soon transformed into a scene of intense activity as the perspiring and screaming diviner's display of energy reached almost frenzied proportions. (See Plate 6) Apparently in a state of quasi-ecstatic transcendence, Gogo Tryfina was dressed by Gogo Morwadi and three other family members, who draped three *emahiya* cloths around her hips, and shoulders, placed beaded bandoliers about her upper torso, and attached strung rattles around her ankles. Once the song was under way, with the phrases being sung by the people in the front room in response to the diviner's wails of "*Mayebabo!*", Gogo Tryfina burst out of the bedroom, armed with a switch (*itshoba*) and a wooden spear (*umkhonto*) in

each hand respectively. She entered the front room, where she knelt dramatically in its centre, the rest of the people making a large space around her. Gogo Tryfina then took a number of slow calculated steps and disappeared into the kitchen. As the song continued, some of the participants began to dance. This was then interrupted by Gogo Tryfina's reappearance in the room, where she took to the centre stage once more, allowing Tony (Gogo Morwadi's son) to tie up her ankle rattles, which had become undone.

The song, *Bingelela, nonk' emzini kababa*, which Gogo Morwadi herself interpreted it as "I greet you all in my father's home", seems to be a popular song with diviners, which is sung frequently and at great length, particularly at *iintlombe* attended by Gogo Morwadi and her associates. I did not find this song being sung at other *iintlombe* in which the majority in attendance were Xhosa-speaking diviners and guests. The fact that diviners have their own repertoires of divination music, which are shared amongst small groups of their associates, is an important factor in the success of a diviner's musical performance at an *intlombe*. Musical support (*uk-ombela*) is essential in the dance of diviners, hence a strong backing team of singers, with a knowledge of the songs, is necessary for any diviner's performance. This particular song was also documented by Coppenhall, as sung by Gogo Morwadi and her associates in 1990. In my own recordings of this song, I have found slight textual variation, which is discussed in my analysis of it.

The diviners (Gogo Dubulamanzi, her husband, a few others and Gogo Morwadi) then entered the front lounge area and took their places in the far corner of the room. Space was made for them and Gogo Morwadi signalled to the people to keep closer to the walls, in

order to provide a dancing space for the diviners. Gogo Tryfina turned to face them and began to dance. She did not dance continuously, but she preferred to interrupt the dancing with bouts of parading movements up and down. Her ankle rattles fell off continuously, which impeded her dancing. She was repeatedly helped by members of the audience, who secured the rattles as she remained standing still, flapping the switch as she waited. The singing was in full force by this stage, with exclamations from the participants and the occasional solo phrase interpolated by Gogo Tryfina.

Gogo Tryfina knelt down and the song changed to *Angilalanga sebekhuluma ngami, lamadoda lelizwe*, translated as "I did not sleep - they talk (gossip) about me, the men of this world, they hate me"⁶, or conversely, "They talk (gossip) about me and they hate me. I did not sleep." (See pp.352ff) Gogo Morwadi and Jeff elaborated upon the meaning of this song, saying that "They" refers to "all the men of the world", who do not only talk, but "hate me" as well. She continued her sporadic marching adding a few double jumps in between. Then a *-thokoza* session occurred, conducted by Gogo Tryfina towards the group of diviners.

This session consisted of dialogue in the manner of formalised speech, intended to serve to introduce the diviner, and her statement of intent regarding the ritual. Gogo Morwadi described it thus, "We *-thokoza* [a person]." She then tried to translate it into English, and after hesitation, she described the action as 'fortuning', however, this is not a blanket term. Such oratory is directed at those the diviner chooses, and the ancestors. It is punctuated by the double claps of those in attendance. I have already noted that according to my

informants, the double claps are characteristic of Zulu- and SiSwati-speaking diviners, who are labelled as *oothokoza*⁷, particularly by other diviners who distinguish themselves as *amagqirha*. A diviner will generally select a participant - a diviner, a novice, the person for whom the event is being held, or even a member of the audience, to engage in dialogue, that person must respond at intervals, "-thokoza" or "thokoza khehle", amongst other interjections (see pp. 319ff).⁸ As a sign of respect to the (often) kneeling diviner the respondent will also fall to his/her knees.⁹ (See Plate 40)

The dancing continued, accompanied by singing in a Chorus style, ie the harmonic basis of the music was emphasized. The second *-thokozisa* session was led by Gogo Tryfina, this time directed at the drummers on the opposite side of the room. She then turned around and continued to *-thokoza*, facing the diviners. Then she ceased to *-thokoza* and the music resumed with two songs in a faster tempo. These songs, which I had not heard previously, contained texts which I have been unable to comprehend. The proceeding became more lively as Gogo Tryfina repeated her dance sequence, punctuating her steps by blowing her whistle.

Gogo Tryfina's performance was followed by the entrance of diviners Dubulamanzi and Morwadi, who stood up with a male initiate. The latter had been given a *lihiya* to wear earlier in the evening, as had I. He repeatedly approached me and asked in a virtually inaudible slurred voice if he could exchange his *lihiya* for mine. He was highly dissatisfied with his *lihiya* and at times, he seemed to be under the impression that the picture of the tiger's head on it would devour him, whereas mine had the picture of a rooster and hence,

seemed much safer. The three began to dance in the centre of the room, but it was not long before Gogo Dubulamanzi became involved in instructing the drummers how to drum. She condemned their drumming in the most blatant of terms by telling them that they were "all up to"

The performance of correct drumming is an aspect of *intlombe* music with which diviners are greatly concerned. I have noticed this time and again, where a master drummer will be replaced, even twice, if he/she displays insufficient technical expertise during the performance of a specific song. This happens frequently in urban *intlombe* contexts, where the drumming can be poor, due to the inconsistency of its performance and the participants' unfamiliarity with the music.

This was illustrated in the following song, started by Gogo Dubulamanzi, and entitled *Andilal' endlini yilenyoka*, translated by Gogo Morwadi as, "I do not sleep in the house, (because) there is a snake. (See pp. 355 ff) The song did not continue for long time, and there was little part-singing. It was evident that not many people were familiar with the song.

What followed, was a period in which none of the prominent diviners seemed to dance, but in which members of the audience took to the floor. The song *He 'thongo lam* was sung once more, and Jeff and another diviner began to dance. This rendition was performed with more gusto, resulting in a louder overall performance.

As the activity became more informal, a member of the crowd began to emulate Zulu *indlamu* style dancing, more as a form of amusement than anything else. This gentleman was thrown out of the door by Gogo Morwadi later on during the diviners' dances, for not co-operating with the dancers generally. He attempted to come back indoors but Gogo Morwadi physically threw him out again and firmly slammed the front door closed. Gogo was fulfilling her role as a host, and also demonstrating that a certain code of behaviour is expected from those who attend an *intlombe*: the food and drink is provided in return for disciplined singing, clapping and dancing. If a participant does not fulfil those requirements or acts inappropriately, he/she is literally thrown out!

At this stage in the proceedings, the course of events took a more serious turn. As yet, none of the prominent diviners had made an official appearance, and this had still to happen. The song, *Bingelela* was initiated hesitantly, but its performance seemed to be more important than before. Gogo Morwadi emerged from the bedroom and signalled to everyone to stop singing. She then restarted the song "conducting" it with claps, whilst ululating with excitement. It was as if she was visibly structuring the song. It became evident that Gogo Morwadi was indeed trying to co-ordinate Gogo Dubulamanzi's Solo phrases coming from the bedroom, with the Chorus phrase provided by the people in the front lounge area. This had also occurred in the previous rendition of this song, when Gogo Tryfina had been in the bedroom. Antiphony is such an essential structural feature of the music, that it is retained even when the performers are in different rooms. Single beat drumming was prevalent, defining the basic metre of the music. The other diviners (Gogo

Dubulamanzi's husband and another diviner) came out of the bedroom and took their places with Gogo Tryfina at the opposite end of the room where the drummers were located.

The reason for organised, forceful and enthusiastic singing was to mark Gogo Dubulamanzi's entry from the bedroom. Majestically clad in full traditional divination regalia, that was obviously Xhosa in style - evident from the baboon skin head-dress, decorated with strands of white beads, and a skin skirt and bandoliers - Gogo Dubulamanzi emerged from the bedroom on her knees, waving her *itshoba* above her head. She then rose to her feet and virtually catapulted through the open front door. Within seconds, she was back inside the front room, and then she disappeared through the kitchen entrance. (See Plate 41)

The participants appeared to be performing in an undisciplined and therefore unacceptable fashion, which caused Gogo Dubulamanzi's husband to move from the diviners' corner to the other side of the room. He ordered the people to sing with more conviction and in so doing, he clapped loudly and frantically, as if to urge them to clap. The people responded by clapping and singing more loudly, accompanied by jumping up and down in their seats.

At this stage, Gogo Morwadi's ex-husband, Mike frantically signalled to me to leave the room and make my way outside to the *indumba*. This was no easy task, because it involved clambering over two rows of rowdy guests and disconnecting the video camera from its electricity source - a very dubious socket indeed, which kept on shorting the oven in the kitchen and hampering the cooking of the steam bread!

A *-phahla* was being held in the *indumba*, between Gogo Morwadi and Gogo Dubulamanzi, both of whom who spoke in rapid phrases, punctuated by mutual excited exclamations and guttural shouts. In attendance with diviners Dubulamanzi and Morwadi were the latter's *-thwasa* candidate (Gogo Dubulamanzi's daughter) and Brenda, who is Gogo Morwadi's daughter. They were seated on the *icansi* around an assortment of divination objects, with the open carcass of the sheep (minus the already cooked entrails), taking up much of the space between the *icansi*, the diviners and the doorway. This was the most important *-phahla* session, and indeed one of the climactic points of the events leading up to our departure to Swalala in Mpumalanga. (See Video Extract 4) The text of the *-phahla* between Gogo Morwadi (GM) and Gogo Dubulamanzi (GD) went as follows:-
(transcription and translation by Thembeke Shange)

GM: *Thokoza gogo, siyjabula.*
Be happy gogo, we are happy

GD: *Kakhulu*
Very much

GM: *Thokoza gogo, makube njalo*
Be happy, let it be so.

GD: *Kakhulu*
Very much

GM: *Thokoza gogo, ujabule.*
Be happy gogo, be happy

GD: *Yebo gogo*
Yes, gogo

GM: *Sifuna ukuthi ujabule kuze kuse.*
We want you to be happy until the next morning.

GD: *Yebo gogo.*
Yes, gogo

GM: *Ugiyise¹⁰ amadlozi.* Let the ancestors (dance and) become happy.
Amadlozi akwaMorwadi waLikgoro [SeSotho, can also be spelt *Dikgoro*]
The ancestors of Morwadi Dikgoro

GD: *Yebo gogo.*
Yes, gogo

GM: *Thokoza gogo, siyabonga*
Be happy gogo, we are happy.

GD: *Kube sekunjalo*
Yes, it's like that.

GM: *Thokoza khehle*
Be happy

GD: *Ozigidle. Siyakubonga kakhulu*
[This is the name of the people] We give thanks to you.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *O! Ngobe sengithe gogololo*
We shall be relieved.

GM: *Thokoza khehle*
Be happy

GD: *O! Siyakubonga ngamagama*
We give thanks to you about the names.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *Amagama esakhulo ngawo.*
The name with which we grew up.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *Kobe sekunjalo impela.*
It will be like that in reality.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *Kobe sekunjalo.* It will be like that.

GM: *Thokoza khehle, siyabonga.*
Be happy, we are happy.

GD: *Sekunjalo*
It will be like that.

GM: *Makubonga thiza mathehla.*
Let us thank our ancestors.

GD: *Sekunjalo*
It is like that.

GM: ---- *bukile*
(to be allergic to)

GD: *Sekunjalo*
It is like that

GM: ---- *mamulwana*
(name of someone)

GD: *Kobe sekunjalo impela zigogo.*
It will be like that in reality.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: ----

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *Kobe ngabe kungalahla ugojane kuphela.*
It will be as if they only throw away (*ugojane*)

GM: *Thokoza khehle*
Be happy

GD: *Koba ngathi ngigasoloko ngikuthinte gogwana impela.*

It will be as if we can always keep in contact with you.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *Koba ngathi ngigakulahli gojana.*
I do not wish to throw you away.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: ----

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *Koba ngathi kukhona lapho singafikalela kuwena kakhulu.*
It is as if there is a place where we can reach you.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *Ngoba uwena owasifundisa umthetho kakhulu.*
You taught us the rules.

GD: *Yebo sashiya umthetho lapha eWestern Cape kakhulu.*
We even left the rules here at the Western Cape.

GM: *Thokoza khehle.*
Be happy

GD: *Kobe sekunjalo sigedle*
It will be like that (father)

GM: ----*Thokoza gogo.*
Be happy

GD: *Kakhulu*
A lot

GM: *Thokoza gogo.*
Be happy

Gogo Dubulamanzi started the song, *Bingelela* and she rose, exiting rapidly from the *indumba*, with such excessive energy that I barely had the opportunity to move out of her way. With the others quick on her heels, she returned to the main house. In the front room, the two singing diviners then joined the rest of the participants, who provided the Chorus to the song. Essentially, the diviners had made their formal entry, and what was to follow was the most solemn part of the *intlombe*, when the communication between the diviners and the ancestors was due to take place.

Having entered the front room, Gogo Dubulamanzi strutted majestically up and down, admonishing people whom she felt were not singing up to standard. She then danced to the people singing and added Solo phrases, punctuated by rhythmic blasts of her whistle¹¹. The drumming gradually increased in tempo and the diviners' dancing became more frenzied.

Gogo Dubulamanzi then conducted a *-thokozisa*, facing the diviners' corner. As she snapped her fingers, Gogo Dubulamanzi's rapidly delivered phrases consisted of a shout, followed by a descending phrase-pattern of vocables. Her delivery was answered by enthusiastic double claps and responses from diviners Morwadi and Tryfina. This continued for about five minutes and the rest of the party began to get restless. It was around 22:00 and they had been singing for over three hours. The general murmur became louder when Gogo Morwadi, playing her role as host and using her influence as one of the powerful diviners, left the diviners' circle and addressed the problem. She physically hauled up two semi-slumbering people by their armpits, remarking "Vat om!" and similarly instructed a few more people sitting in the kitchen doorway to get up. Thereafter, Gogo Dubulamanzi

arose and the song *Andilal' endlini yilenyoka* (I do not sleep in the house, there is a snake) was resumed. This song requires an almost frenetic drumming accompaniment and Gogo Morwadi reprimanded the drummers at the beginning of the song for their slackness.

Gogo Dubulamanzi interrupted the song for a bout of *-thokozisa*, and upon its recommencement, the song *Andilal' endlini yilenyoka* was performed with more support from the participants. However, the singing was inconsistent and after another *-thokozisa* session, Gogo Morwadi made a plea to the participants in Afrikaans - to clap their hands for Gogo Dubulamanzi. If they did not clap their hands whilst they were singing, the dancing diviner would not have the power to dance¹². Gogo Morwadi repeated the request in SiSwati, saying that the diviner needed clapping because "*imoto ihambi gepetroli!*" (a motorcar does not go without petrol)

Gogo Dubulamanzi continued to dominate the stage for a good half-hour, her dramatic energetic dancing accompanied by the swooping of her arms and the waving of her switch and part of her *lihiya*, which she grasped with one hand. The music frequently lapsed into bouts of drumming alone, to which she would execute elaborate dance steps. The music came to a grinding halt, with Gogo Dubulamanzi hitting one of the drummers with her switch, after which she engaged in another *-thokozisa* with the drummers and Gogo Morwadi. This was followed by a rendition of *Angilalanga sebekhuluma ngami, lamadoda lelizwe*.

Gogo Dubulamanzi was joined in song by her husband, also a diviner. It was now close to

23:00, and the male *ithwasa* began to experience *ihlombe*. With a contorted face, he held his stomach as Gogo Tryfina clung to his neck. Later on his knees, he leaned forward, whilst Gogo Dubulamanzi and her husband seated themselves in front of him.

Amidst this, two large coffee tins of *umqombothi* were brought out and placed on the floor in the section of the lounge where the drummers were seated. This was a signal that the speeches were about to begin. Approximately five to eight people spoke, mainly directing their conversation towards Gavin and myself. Gogo Morwadi's son, Brian opened the proceedings, which were continued by her ex-husband, Mike. It was difficult to follow what the two of them said, because they spoken in rapid Xhosa, however, the general sentiment was concerned with thanking us for facilitating the *intlombe*. At this point, I felt it inappropriate to film the speeches, because they were directed at me.

I was most touched by the things that were said to me - a woman commented about my blood 'being one' with theirs. Gogo Dubulamanzi's husband came and sat in front of us and spoke partly in English, thanking me for all I had given them and wishing me a safe journey. Gogo Morwadi was praised for letting us into the community. Several women stood up and spoke partly in Afrikaans and English:

I wish you as we are together right now. When I see you together with us, I feel so happy, my children. You are my children because you are not my brothers - you are very small - but I say thank God for you.

Brian then took over once more and organised the drinks. He announced that the time had come to *-sela utywala* (drink the beer). Cases of beer were brought out to the two areas of

the room and certain individuals were designated to distribute the beverages (spirits, wine and beer) for the participants. The *umqombothi* was passed around from person to person.

At 23:30, with the formalities over, I was invited to dance with Gogo Morwadi's initiate (Gogo Dubulamanzi's daughter). I joined her in the bedroom, where I was given leg rattles, beads for bandoliers, and a *lihiya* to wear around my waist. The *-thwasa* wore a short skirt with Gogo Morwadi's red *lihiya* underneath it, a white t-shirt and leg rattles and bandoliers. I was given the communal wooden spear and she held the switch. These ritual objects belonged to Gogo Morwadi, but had been used by diviners Dubulamanzi and Tryfina. It seemed as though there was a general pooling of regalia at this particular *intlombe*.

We waited in the bedroom for the drums to start before we entered the front room. Admittedly, I was quite nervous about dancing, I felt I ought to do it because the people expected it of me. The initiate had instructed me to follow her movements and she showed me the two basic dance steps which we would be required to do in the bedroom. I danced with the initiate for about ten minutes, accompanied by the drums and excited exclamations by the party members. Dancing was interrupted by bouts of kneeling down next to Gogo Morwadi for *-thokozisa* sessions, the initiate kneeling opposite me. The noise levels were high with exclamations and cheers. Gogo Dubulamanzi's husband then approached us and took out his purse. He gave us each what he termed a "reward"- a 20 cents piece. Exhausted and with sore bare feet, I withdrew from the dancing and let the *ithwasa* take the centre stage.

An interlude followed, indicated by the ceasing of the music. Gogo Dubulamanzi had removed her impressive headgear and skins, and the presence of the diviners in the front room had diminished. Members of the participating crowd chatted lightly and several women sang and danced.

The proceedings were interrupted by Gogo Morwadi, who spoke to one of the women in the circle, indicating that they should be seated in order for the diviners to reappear. Gogo Tryfina emerged from the bedroom amidst the strains of *Bingelela, nonk' emzini kababa*, which faded rapidly. It was well past midnight and the participants were beginning to feel sleepy. However, Gogo Morwadi continuously attempted to boost the morale of the guests, by encouraging them to sing and clap whilst Gogo Tryfina danced. Gogo Morwadi's daughter, Brenda initiated another song (consisting of vocables, Yo-yo-yo), which continued successfully for a length of time.

Another rendition of *Sebekhuluma ngami Angilalanga* followed after a *-thokozisa* between diviners Tryfina and Morwadi. Gogo Morwadi's son Jeff (also a diviner) joined Gogo Tryfina in the dance, after draping himself in a *lihiya*, removing his shoes and rolling up his trousers.

Intent on maintaining some crowd spirit, despite the late hour (02:45), Gogo Morwadi began to teach the crowd the words of the song *Uyanaban' elwandle*, translated by her as, "Are you going (with them) to the sea?" Gogo Tryfina stepped in to help, using her hands

to 'conduct'. Gogo Morwadi's son, Tony took over the drumming, as the former drummer was unable to play the drum beat at the required tempo. Eventually Gogo Morwadi took over the drumming herself in a new song, started by Gogo Tryfina, but this song too, faded out fairly quickly.

Gogo Morwadi was still to make her appearance as diviners Tryfina and Dubulamanzi had done. Until this moment, she had merely made informal appearances by facilitating the atmosphere for other diviners to dance and *-thokozisa*, or by accompanying them in their dancing. Gogo Morwadi retreated to the bedroom where she seemed to be experiencing what she terms her "*amadlozi* coming up" - this being expressed in her vocal sighing and moaning and closed eyes. Gogo Tryfina and Tony helped Gogo Morwadi to put on her divination regalia, whilst she began to sing a solo phrase for the song, *Andilal' endlini yilenyoka*, with the chorus being carried by family members occupying the bedroom with her - Mike and her sons Boysie, Tony and Aubrey. In this particular rendition, the phrase *umfaz' wam* (my wife), as interpreted by Jeff, is prominent. (See Video Extract 8)

In the front room, Gogo Tryfina was attempting to maintain some sort of musical order, and instructing the drummers to beat the drums. Further attempts were made to start up another song, *Bingelela nam, Bingelela sephuma kwamagwasa amathongo* ("We greet you. We came *amagwasa* spirits") for Gogo Morwadi's entrance.

Gogo Morwadi was attractively clad in two skirts of different lengths, a white top and beaded bandoliers. She also wore her head-dress of red synthetic 'hair' and she carried a

to 'conduct'. Gogo Morwadi's son, Tony took over the drumming, as the former drummer was unable to play the drum beat at the required tempo. Eventually Gogo Morwadi took over the drumming herself in a new song, started by Gogo Tryfina, but this song too, faded out fairly quickly.

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spear in her hand. She began to *-gida*, then stopped and knelt and initiated the song, *Sebekhuluma ngami Angilalanga*.

By 03:00, the participants seemed to experience a second wave of energy and sang with more gusto, accompanying Gogo Morwadi's rigorous dancing. A *-thokozisa* between the diviner and the drummers followed. Evidently everyone was beginning to feel the lack of sleep in different ways - whilst the participants revived somewhat, Gogo Dubulamanzi had left the room with her husband, as had Gogo Tryfina. Gogo Morwadi therefore conducted her *-thokozisa* sessions with the drummers, her sons and her ex-husband.

Two more songs followed: *Kuyasa (Kwasa) ndisele baleni*, meaning "It gets light and I am in the 'veld' (ground)". According to Gogo Morwadi, this refers to digging medicine. (see pp. 357ff) This was followed by a rendition of the song, *Yebo ndikulekela amadoda, ninsaba umgena apha emzini kababa* - "I am greeting men. I am afraid to go into my father's house."

After a *-thokozisa*, the music was started once more with the song *Umkhetho lezindawo uyabaleka* - "The person who spoke is now running away." (see pp. 359ff) Gogo Morwadi sat crosslegged on the floor, whilst Gogo Tryfina draped two more *emahiya* about her: one around her shoulders and the other over her crossed legs. These were "for the '*dlozi*'s", who "wanted them". Seated on the floor, with a spear in her right hand, Gogo Morwadi began to shake her shoulders and arms violently. Her eyes were closed and her face was contorted. She described this action as *-hlehla* - the "dance you do when you are still

training, before you *-gida* on two feet." I asked Gogo Morwadi whether the song and its associated movements was Ndaui in origin, and she stated that it was distinct from Ndaui (the actions of which are also termed as *-hlehla* by her); and it was actually an "Nguni" song that was being performed. I asked her why she had sat down to *-hlehla*, and she replied that she had felt like it, and even though she is a fully-fledged diviner, she is still able to choose to *-hlehla* in such a way.

The music was brought to a close and Gogo Morwadi stretched out her legs, letting Gogo Tryfina manipulate her toes and feet. This became a common practice at subsequent *iintlombe*, whereby the diviner's feet would be attended to, in order to relieve them. Gogo Morwadi pointed out that, "When you are finished to *-gida*, you get cramps in the feet."

Another short interlude followed Gogo Morwadi's exit, before music associated with *amandawu* ancestors was performed at about 04:00. This began with Gogo Tryfina, kneeling in centre of the floorspace, with a white sheet wrapped around her. On her head, she wore a band of cowrie shells, belonging to Gogo Morwadi. (See Plate 42) With her head facing downwards, Gogo Tryfina made small quivering movements with her arms, often drawing circles on the floor with her hands, under the white sheet. The song was sung in what Gogo Morwadi termed "Ndaui" language (*sindzawe*), *Wo - famba uyo thekha, Nyankwabe huma*, which she translated as, "Go and fetch, *Nyankwabe* (a name of a spirit) must come out." (see pp. 363ff) This apparently was nobody's spirit in particular. The SiSwati term, *nyankwabe*, actually refers to "the main assistant of a *sangoma*." (Priscilla Mafuyeka)

The music began with a markedly different drum rhythm, in a slow triple pulse rhythm. This was accompanied by a drumming technique that was distinct from previous songs that I had witnessed, also to be a technique associated with *amandawu*. One player hit the drum for the first two beats of each cycle, each beat on an adjacent drum, whilst the player seated opposite her filled in the third beat of the cycle. (Resultant rhythm shown on transcription, see p. 363) The melody was sung by the participants in a far quieter way, demonstrating an attempt at unison singing. The form of the song was cyclic, with call and response recognisable in an echo-like form. Gogo Dubulamanzi reappeared behind Gogo Tryfina and demonstrated a double hand clap accompaniment, in time to the first two beats of the cycle.

Gogo Tryfina shook her arms under the sheet, with her chin tucked into her neck. Covered by the white sheet, her shaking body made the sheet ripple and I wondered whether Gogo Tryfina was emulating the Ndau ancestors who lived underwater in the rivers, in an attempt to invoke and appease them. The white sheet is significant, white being associated with the ancestors, who are 'people of the light'. The ritual killing of the white fowls for the Ndau ancestors earlier in the evening, also was symbolic of the affinity of the ancestors with the colour white. I have already mentioned that Gogo Morwadi explained that the Ndau needed to be appeased through the slaughter of the fowls, as they were the ancestors who had been killed and thrown into the waters.

When the music faded out, a session similar to the *-thokozisa* followed, the word "*'ndawu*" replacing the previously heard *'-thokoza Gogo'* answering phrase. Gogo Tryfina's half-

whispered slurred words and gurgling, shivering voice were inaudible, as she maintained her position with her head lowered and hands wrapped tightly in the sheet. Gogo Morwadi answered with " *'ndawu*" and double hand claps every so often, bent over and rested on her elbows and knees. The rest of the party attempted to clap too, but this was tricky as no one knew when exactly to clap, owing to the inaudibility of Gogo Tryfina's speech. Whilst she murmured, she rocked back and forth on the *icansi*, sporadically making anticlockwise circular movements with her clasped hands.

The song *Subura kwenda katjiwe tekani sikara saMatente uja ekhaya* - "Today take the chair of Matente" was begun by Gogo Tryfina and taken over by Gogo Morwadi, who conducted by slapping her hand on her leg to indicate the beat, and enunciate the words for the remaining participants. Although several individuals were still singing with enthusiasm, many of the participants had withdrawn by this stage.

About a quarter of an hour later, Gogo Morwadi took her place under the sheet, with the shell headband around her head, on which she wore a red wig of knotted hair. The song *Nadja umthombongwi diring nyanga* ("We eat one medicine as doctors") proceeded, accompanying Gogo Morwadi's *-hlehla* movements. Gogo Dubulamanzi conducted a *-thokozisa* with Gogo Morwadi, before a short rendition of *Wo - famba uyo thekha Nyankwabe huma* was performed again. Gogo Morwadi's body movements became more rigorous, particularly the shaking of her head. This was followed by the final song, *Subura kwenda katjiwe tekani sikara saMatente uja ekhaya*, after which I was told that the formal procedure at the *intlombe* was over.

I returned to Gugulethu around 16:00 that same day, and I was considerably surprised to be welcomed by the sound of drums, emanating from within the house. My entrance was enthusiastically met with shouts of delight, from members of Gogo Morwadi's family and guests, who had remained at the house after the night's festivities. Meat was being cooked on a fire outside and nobody (except I) seemed to feel the effects of a sleepless night!

CASE STUDY 2

THE *INTLOMBE* IN WHICH PHAKAMILE 'PAYS ON HIS PARENT'S ACCOUNT'

I attended an *intlombe* in Gugulethu where the family of Phakamile G- were hosting what they described as an *isiko* (custom), qualifying it with the English term, 'tradition'. Apart from this description, which I obtained from three sources:- the sister of Phakamile, and two diviners, including the officiant diviner, I was unable to derive a label for the function. However, the reasons for it taking place later came to light.

According to literature and oral sources, such a term (*isiko*) is usually qualified further, to make the event more specific. For example, it could pertain to *isiko lentambo*, literally meaning "the ceremony of the rope or band," this often being the first ritual sacrifice made for the initiate, in which the initiate kills a white goat and receives bandoliers, made from its skin. (Hunter, 1964:576, Bührmann, 1984:77-78) However, on this occasion, my informants were quite adamant about not qualifying it, yet from what I could gather, the event was related to - and even a continuation of such a ceremony. Phakamile was already endowed with this special regalia: a single strip of goatskin on each wrist and a goatskin bandolier. (See Plate 43) According to my informants, a goat had been slain the night before (Friday). Whether the incident was related, to *isiko lentambo* remains uncertain.

Phakamile referred to this ceremony as his mother paying 'credit' to him, for something which she should have done years before, that if dealt at the right time, may not necessarily have had repercussions on him. In the light of his explanation, I asked Phakamile whether the event had any connection with *imbeleko*, a ceremony held for a child after it is born. He

replied that it had not; rather this ceremony was putting something right within the family context of *ukuthwasa*. According to Makhosi Daniel Mzizi, Phakamile's chosen trainer and the officiant diviner, Phakamile and his mother came to him about a month ago as they were experiencing 'problems'. (See Plate 44) Phakamile had been ill *iinkathazo* (troubles) since 1991. In fact, I had previously met him myself upon two occasions whilst he was staying in Gogo Morwadi's *indumba*, recovering from an illness. At that time, I was under the impression that he was being treated for witchcraft, possibly from the workplace. Makhosi Mzizi said that Phakamile had even been treated at the 'hospital in Pinelands' (Valkenburg or Alexander Hospital, which specialise in mental disorders). Only this year, did Phakamile begin to *-thwasa*. His sister told me that he began to dream of *izinyanya*, "The people who died a long time ago," she explained.

Makhosi Mzizi continued to tell me that the problems which Phakamile and his mother were experiencing were not of their own doing, but sent by Phakamile's great-grandmother, of the Rhadebe clan. The sacrifice was made that night as a 'credit' to his great-grandmother, in order that he could commence further with his training 'for the ancestors'. In his own words, Makhosi Mzizi said, "They do that credit for the grandmother, for Phakamile to go straight forward, without the [destructive] disturbance of the *amadlozi*'s of Phakamile, and now they collect this *isikhwama*."

I enquired about the *isikhwama*, having heard of it in the context of my own experience of 'opening the bag' (see pp. 306ff), and I asked Makhosi Mzizi whether it had to do with

Phakamile and his mother paying something in the form of a beast, in order that the path for Phakamile would be opened. Makhosi Mzizi agreed.

Makhosi Mzizi mentioned that the ancestors came via a dream to Phakamile's mother, but she did not respond to the dream. Makhosi Mzizi said, "She [thought] say it wasn't '*madlozi*, so they leave that '*madlozi*. So now it [the ancestor] comes through Phakamile...so Phakamile gets problems - nervousness, mental disturbance. So the mother of Phakamile came to me, 'Makhosi, we have problems!'" Makhosi Mzizi illustrated the situation further for me, "If I have '*madlozi* from my [great] grandfather, I get it because my grandfather did not want it, so I get it. It's difficult!"

Knowing that Phakamile had previously been treated by Gogo Morwadi, I asked Makhosi Mzizi how he had been approached by the family. He replied that Phakamile's mother had dreamt of him before she made a consultation. It is an established fact that a person affected by *iinkathazo* (troubles) will dream about the diviner under which he/she will train. This has been stated by my main informants David, Makhosi Athobile and Gogo Morwadi. In this case, however, the mother was also experiencing 'troubles', along with her son, therefore she dreamt of the diviner. However, Phakamile envisaged the beast in his dreams, symbolizing the sacrifice which had to be performed. Makhosi Mzizi also suggested that the visualisation of a sacrificial beast in a dream means that, "the ancestors are alive." This re-emphasises the twofold purpose enacted out in the ritual killing performed: the shutting down of the trouble for both individuals, and the redirection of the influence of the ancestors towards Phakamile and not his mother.

I arrived at the house a few minutes before 18:00, and I was hastily directed into the backyard, where some 25 people were tightly gathered in the corners. Taking up the centre of the yard was a huge ox, which was tethered by four men. Makhosi Daniel Mzizi, a Zulu diviner was circling it. In his right hand, he held a long-handled *umkhonto* (sacrificial spear). The onlookers were singing a song referring to the action that was taking place. (See pp. ff)

Mayivuk' ingalali
 (It must rise, it must not lie down)
inkomo kabawo
 (My father's beast)
inkom' ayilali phantsi
 (It does not lie down)

translation from Xhosa, M. Ntleki

In that I had just arrived, I was obligated to introduce myself to Phakamile's mother and make my way through the crowd of people, who seemed surprised and excited to see me. In these circumstances, it was difficult to ascertain whether or not Makhosi Mzizi, with the spear in hand, was actually running the spear over the perimeter of the cow's body, as an informant had described to me previously as ritual behaviour - this is customarily done before it is stabbed. Makhosi Mzizi then placed the spear upon the neck of the beast, his intention being to find the correct spot of penetration, known as the *isingqoloma*¹³ (situated below the medulla).

Makhosi Mzizi withdrew the spear and gently stroked the beast's head, before ramming the spear into its neck. (See Plate 45) The spear pierced through the *umqonqo*¹⁴ (spinal cord)

of the animal and it began to *xhuzula* (struggle in convulsion). The beast had not bellowed, and before it could overpower the men, they pulled it to the ground onto its left side. Literature suggests that the cow would have been pulled down onto its right side, however, the space provided did not allow for such manipulation. Hammond-Tooke states that the latter occurs in such a case of a goat, before it is slain. (1989:110) Makhosi Mzizi then hastily cut its throat with another knife. The cow let out a roaring bellow and the crowd broke out into exclamations of '*camagu!*'¹⁵ The above mentioned song ceased for a few minutes, but was resumed once again after the excitement had subsided slightly. The blood was swiftly caught in a large bowl and subsequently, the mother of the home and her son, Phakamile came forward and knelt in front of Makhosi Mzizi, who smeared blood on their foreheads respectively.

Makhosi Mzizi described the killing to me in retrospect, saying that he had learned to kill beasts seven year's ago, and there was definitely a knack involved in the ritual act. He learned initially through observation, and when it was his turn to perform the act, he called upon his own ancestors - '*makhosinkane*' for guidance¹⁶. Makhosi Mzizi informed me that it was a tremendous responsibility to slay a beast, as the beast had to bellow and the blood was to "pour out" of the wound, in order for the meat to be "very, very good." There is also a certain amount of prestige involved. "So if they cry and the blood flows out into the dish, it means my hand is very good." If this does not happen, Makhosi Mzizi told me that the participants who eat the meat will become ill. This is why the beast was entrusted to Makhosi Mzizi's hands and not to Phakamile, as the former was more experienced and it was important upon this occasion that everything in the ritual went according to tradition.

The fact that the sacrificial beast was a bull had further bearing on the 'blood' connection. A fellow SeSotho-speaking student, upon listening to my recording, explained to me that male and female beasts are used on particular ritual occasions and it would have been most incorrect to sacrifice a female beast in this context, whereas the latter are used in traditional marriage rites, to ensure fertility. If a female beast was to be used in this context, the blood that flowed would have been incorrect, the ramifications hence leading to misfortune. I witnessed the slaying of a cow at an *umcimbi* (this term being unqualified by the informants), in Phelindaba, Eastern Cape where the officiant had dreamt of his great grandmother, therefore the female ancestor had to be acknowledged with a cow.

I asked why Makhosi Mzizi smeared Phakamile and his mother's foreheads with blood (he smeared the mother first). He replied that usually the *ithwasa* will drink the blood of the animal; but this was more a matter concerning the whole family. Hence, Phakamile did not drink the blood because this sacrifice was made with a twofold intent - and with two people in mind - to indicate to the ancestors that Phakamile was going to continue his training, hence ensuring their presence and participation in it, as well as an offering to the ancestors on the mother's behalf, in order to free her of the troubles she had experienced. By 'closing' her *inkathazo*, she would be able to continue the lifestyle she wished to lead. In his own words, Makhosi Mzizi stated, "[Phakamile] would say, 'it's me, I am open now, [whilst his mother would say], 'just leave me and go to Phakamile and give Phakamile the way'."

The blood was collected in two other bowls, and the beast was prepared for skinning. The above mentioned song continued throughout this procedure - without flagging. In fact, this song continued unabated during the skinning of the animal and the cutting up and dividing of the meat. At times, the song would show signs of fading out, but the two female diviners present, plus initiates who subsequently joined in, kept on unabated, and took turns in beating the drums. Considering that the process lasted from before 18:00 to 20:00, the same song was rendered for approximately two hours - a phenomenon which was in contrast to any previous ritual killing I have witnessed.

After what seemed like a great length of time, the song began to fade, and the men who were dismembering the carcass indicated to us to sing for "5 more minutes!" and then they would be finished with the procedure. I then realised that the song obviously had a significant bearing on the work that was being done, and was essential to its completion. Even though the singers were exhausted by the singing, nevertheless it seemed important for them to sing until the last part of the ritual sacrifice had been completed - the preparation of the meat. This is demonstrative of the importance of music within its social context of 'traditional' African belief systems.

The skin of the beast was hung on the washing line, and I was told that it was to be used by Phakamile to make drums and a belt. The meat filled eight large pots and the men then took a spade and collected the spilt blood and placed it to the side. By 20:00, a fire was built and the men began to cook the meat. Everyone continued to sing and the atmosphere was jubilant.

It was not until after this incident that I was able to ascertain the significance of the song. It was definitely ritual-specific and a Xhosa friend advised me that the text had bearing on the ritual sacrifice itself: in this case, the beast had to be slaughtered standing up. By standing almost to 'attention', the beast would appear to the ancestors as a fit, strong animal, which apart from being a pleasing sight, would reflect the degree of their honorification. The beast also formed the link between the ancestors and the subjects for which the sacrifice was being performed. Therefore, it was felt by those partaking in the sacrifice that the song was necessary in the meat offering meat to the ancestors, right up to the end of the ritual. (Interpretation N. Mtshabe)

I have already emphasised the importance of singing for the ancestors, and the fact that these people persisted in singing this song, demonstrates that it was an integral item of music in the ritual procedure. Hansen has stated that Xhosa music has always been described by its exponents along the lines of its:-

...utilitarian function: it is always 'done on a special occasion'; 'it goes with that event'; 'it belongs to it'; 'it is for it' and etc. Music is therefore classified according to its social function. (Hansen, 1982:43)

Apart from its religious function, music attached to divination has an important social role to play within cultural traditions. Music intensifies a situation and socialises the people therein, who receive enjoyment and satisfaction from collective music making.

At 20:35, Gogo Morwadi arrived with a small contingent of Swazi associates, including

two female diviners who were visiting from Swaziland, plus members of her family. They requested drums to be played outside the house upon their arrival.

An entrance song, *Thokoza sangoma* was followed by a *-thokozisa* conducted between Gogo Morwadi and another diviner, with Phakamile kneeling to the side and looking on. A *-thokozisa* was held in the presence of eight diviners, between Gogo Morwadi and Phakamile. Sixteen people were squeezed into a small room that was detached from the main yard. When I entered the room, I recognised the familiar smell of burning *imphepho* (a type of Everlasting flower, which is dried for burning, see Plates 46,47). I noticed that Makhosi Mzizi was seated in the doorway of another room, in which the carcass of the beast had been laid, it too taking up most of the space. It was there that I had managed to conduct my interview with him, whilst perched almost on top of the carcass!

For the following hour, the meat that had been cooked on the fire in the yard was passed around on plates to the people. By 22:00, the majority of the people had finished eating their meat. At this stage, I was seated on the mattress in the small room in the yard, with Gogo Morwadi, her two female diviner friends and members of her family. Although this area had presumably been set aside for the children to sleep in (there were babies and children asleep on the bed with us), or for the diviners to relax in, Gogo Morwadi showed signs of restlessness, and she ordered that the drums be brought into the room, despite there being little space in which to put them.

By 22:15, the song *uyanaban' elwandle* was struck up by Gogo Morwadi and her

contingent, with three drummers providing rhythmic accompaniment. I was seated next to Aubrey, Gogo Morwadi's son. His body started to go into spasm and once or twice, he raised his arms up high above his head. The first time this occurred, one of the diviners took his wrists and pulled him down. Aubrey's trembling intensified, and subsequently his jacket, jersey and shirt were taken off, along with his shoes and two *emahiya* were wrapped around his body. Aubrey sat with his legs sprawled out in front of him and he continued to tremble furiously. His feet were pulled and the singing and clapping intensified.

As this session ended, the people in the room reverted to relaxed conversation. I left the room in an attempt to avoid a photo session that was being demanded of me. Outside, I sat with three other girls about my age and we chatted and sang songs, including *He thongo lam*. (See p. 347)

At 23:00, ten diviners made their way from the room at the back of the yard through to the front lounge, which had been cleared of its contents. The rest of the participants were seated there, waiting for the arrival of the diviners. The drums had already been moved into this room. Makhosi Mzizi led the procession, with Phakamile behind and then Gogo Morwadi and her contingent and finally, three Zulu diviners and another *ithwasa* named Gladys. At this stage, Phakamile's mother had become a bystander: the evening's focus was upon her son, the new *ithwasa*, who was to *-xhentsa* into the early hours of the morning. After some intricate dancing, a *-vumisa* was held in which the two *iithwasa* knelt down and Makhosi Mzizi whilst pacing the floor, uttered phrases in a high pitched

rhythmical fashion, to which the participants replied '*Siyavuma!*'¹⁷ (we agree!) (See Plate 48)

A song was struck up, and the diviners and the *iithwasa* began to *-xhentsa*. The contingent danced in a linear formation, as in Zulu *indlamu*¹⁸ style, and at certain points after a number of cyclic repetitions, Makhosi Mzizi would raise his finger to indicate the anticlockwise turn to the side, hence the contingent danced in a four-sided manner. Intricate dance steps were used and it was obvious that Makhosi Mzizi was a highly accomplished dancer. Phakamile was positioned next to him - in order to learn from his trainer. Phakamile kept a close watch on the repeated foot movements of Makhosi Mzizi, and tried to emulate them. This is how he would master *-xhentsa*. The session lasted for approximately 45 minutes. It would also be through such lengthy dance routines (at an incredibly fast tempo) that Phakamile would be able to heal himself of his trouble (*inkathazo*) and then obtain the stamina required in the profession of diviner.

Hunter describes *-xhentsa* as a solo dance in the context of *ukuthwasa*, that is traditionally held indoors and away from the sunlight. It has been documented by Hansen that the *ithwasa* need no longer remain indoors to *-xhentsa*, and in my own experience, I have seen a diviners themselves dance in the open sunlight. Hunter says that such dancing outside the hut will only occur at the final (graduation) ceremony of the *ithwasa*. This is true in my own research findings, whereby I have witnessed a Swazi *ithwasa* move from outside to the inside of the house at her *ukugodusa* ceremony (the coming home ceremony), this repeated action seemingly (I conclude) being associated with her re-integration into her society, with

new found knowledge and hence, a changed status. (Hunter, 1969: 325, Gumede, 1990:76)

(See Plate 49)

During the 45 minute rendition of this song, one of the diviners began to get *ihlombe* (feelings of joyful excitement) and with the help of Makhosi Mzizi, her thrashing was controlled and she was taken to the kitchen, where she eventually collapsed. (See Plate 7)

The following song was struck up by one of the drummers, a *sangoma* herself. Once again, the song was ritual specific, in that the words were pertinent to Phakamile's situation as an emerging novice, which was translated by the girl standing next to me as "It is hard to be a diviner" - *Kubuhlungu ukugula vumelani uma isangoma*¹⁹ (see p. 368)

This song was stopped and restarted after a short break. Another *-vumisa* session followed, between Makhosi Mzizi and the participants, in which he ended his phrases with the question, "*akasiyabonga?*"²⁰ ("Do we not praise?") with participants' replies, "*siyavuma!*" ("We agree")

By 24:30, the song *Isitimela siya Natale sidabula amazwe*²¹ - "The train is going to Natal, It crosses the land" (translation Gogo Morwadi) was rendered. Makhosi Mzizi continued to teach the two *iithwasa* to dance, whilst the other diviners had either sat down for a rest, or helped with the drumming. Makhosi Mzizi displayed agile footwork, accompanied by simulated battle antics. He moved his head from left to right every four pulses. The three dancers got down onto their haunches. As Phakamile continued, with perspiration streaming down his face, Makhosi Mzizi went behind him and pummelled his spine

between the shoulder blades, before boxing him on the ears. After another 30 minutes, Makhosi Mzizi curtailed the dancing and calmly conducted another *-vumisa* session. This was followed by another song, *Mayibuye*²² - "Let us return".

The diviners retreated from the room for some time. It was about 01h00, and the adventures of the night were beginning to take their toll, so I enquired whether Gogo Morwadi and her contingent were going to present themselves. As it happened, they were preparing to make an entrance. The following hour consisted of *-xhentsa* sessions between Gogo Morwadi and her companion, Sindi Mhluli from Manzini, Swaziland. Gogo Morwadi also conducted several *thokozisa* sessions with Makhosi Mzizi and Phakamile, plus members of her family. It seemed as though Gogo Morwadi preferred to communicate with members of her contingent - possibly due to their familiarity with SiSwati, however, it was obligatory for her to communicate with the officiant diviner and the *ithwasa*.

The two songs that were sung by Gogo Morwadi included ones from her repertoire, already mentioned Case Study 1, notably *Angilalanga sebekhuluma ngami, lamadoda lelizwe* (see p. 352) and *uyanaban' elwandle*.

After this, the diviners left the front room and retired to the rooms beyond the yard. I was told that the formalities for the evening were completed. I stayed to socialise for a while, before returning home.


THE SONGS OF CASE STUDY 1

(Translations by my informants verified by Sbongile Soga)

Figure: 7 HE THONGO LAM (Z)
 My dream...your spirit must lead you - Gogo Morwadi
 (See Video Extract 5)

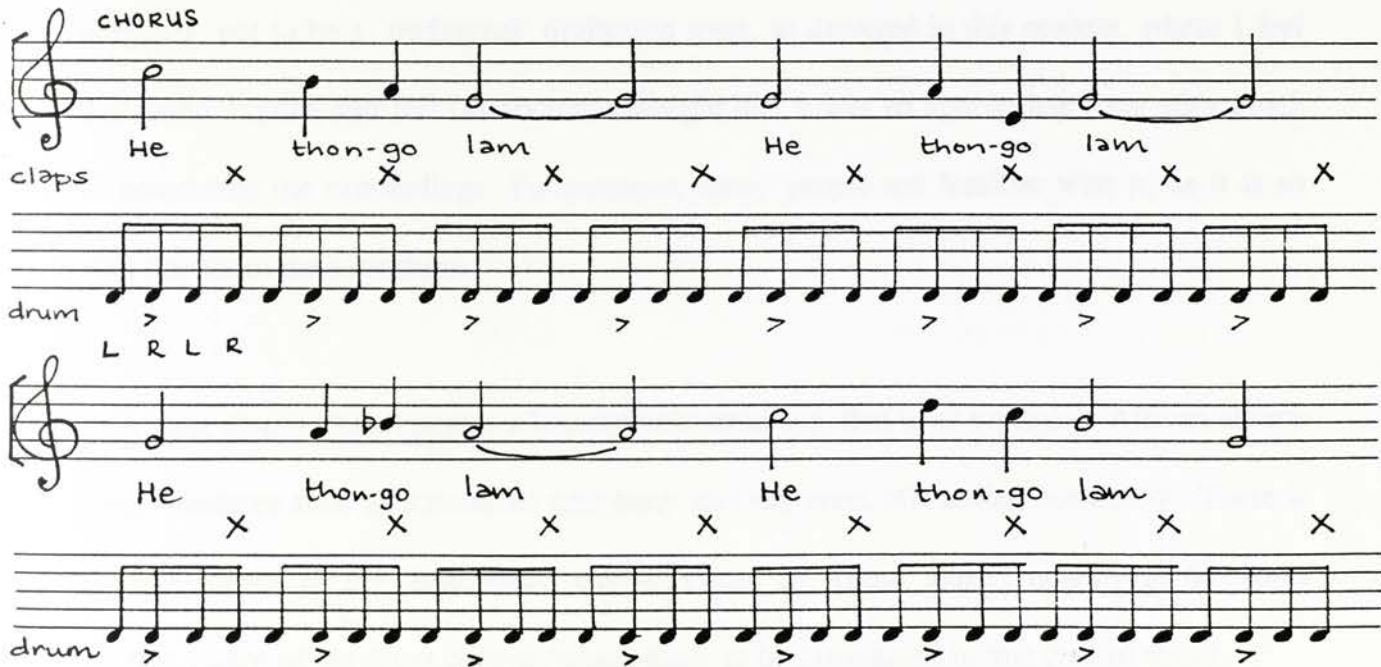
Mode: 

Pitch: 

Cyclic length: 8 X 

Tempo:  = 144 M.M.

CHORUS



claps He thon-go lam He thon-go lam

drum L R L R

He thon-go lam He thon-go lam

drum L R L R

The full text of this song (Zulu), as relayed to me by an informant at Phakamile's *intlombe*, correlates with the text given to me by David's wife after one of the church services. Although performed at Gogo Morwadi's *intlombe*, this song is an influence from the church, indeed I have heard it being sung in context of David's Zionist church services, and at other *iintlombe*, including those of Chief Gcaleka.

<i>He thongo lam</i>	Hey, my spirit
<i>Wena thongo lam</i>	You, spirit of mine
<i>Yi thongo lam</i>	This spirit of mine

(Translation Sbongile Soga)

He thongo lam is also mentioned in context of Phakamile's *intlombe*, as sung by several young female participants more as a means of recreation. It would seem to all intents and purposes, not to be a 'traditional' divination song, as depicted in this context, where I feel that Gogo Tryfina and Jeff (as diviners) thought that it was an appropriate song with which to commence the proceedings. Furthermore, many people are familiar with it, as it is so well known in the townships.

This song clearly demonstrates a homophonic structure, that is so typical of African church song. Features such as structured antiphony and rhythmic off-beating are absent. There is some evidence of the 'traditional' characteristics of Xhosa music, notably in the triple rhythm figure of the drum pattern (which tends to be maintained in this type of song).

Coppenhall found three such songs performed in the context of *iintlombe* in his research, and he noted that "many of my diviner informants had themselves attended church at one

time or another (some of whom continue to attend church regularly) and therefore the intrusion of church songs at a diviner's seance is perhaps understandably inevitable."

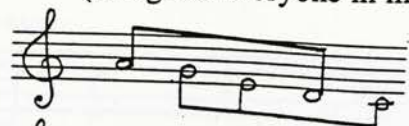
(1990:239)

Figure: 8 BINGELELA NONK' EMZINI KABABA (Z)

(We greet everyone in my father's home)

(See Video Extract 6)

Mode:



Cycle length: 16 X ♩.

Pitch:



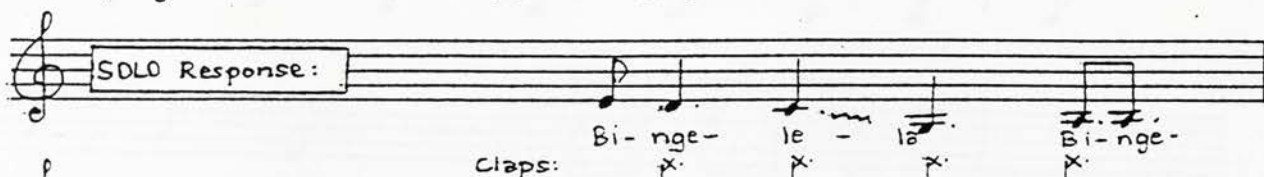
Tempo: ♩ = 144 M.M.

48

INTRODUCTION: SOLO call



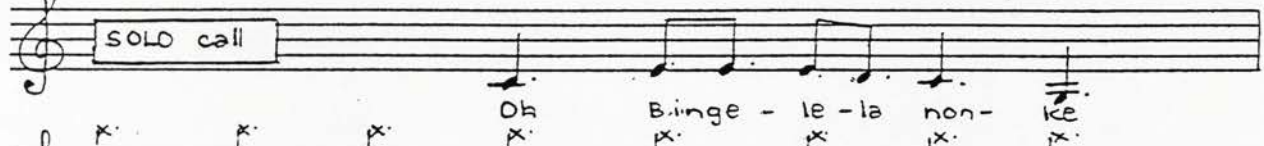
SOLO Response:



'Silent' cycle of Claps



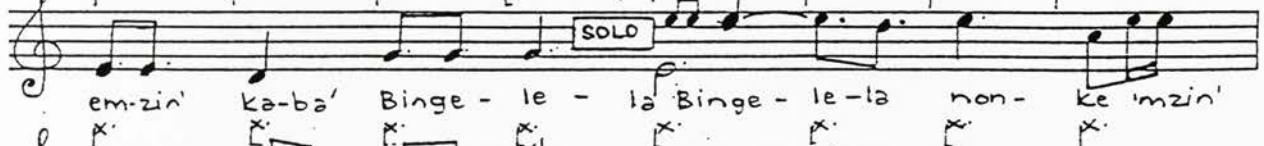
SOLO call



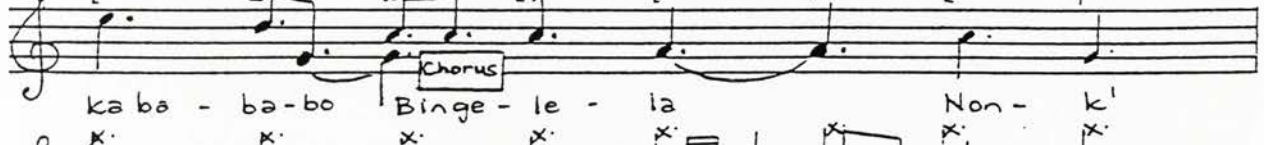
CHORUS established



SOLO



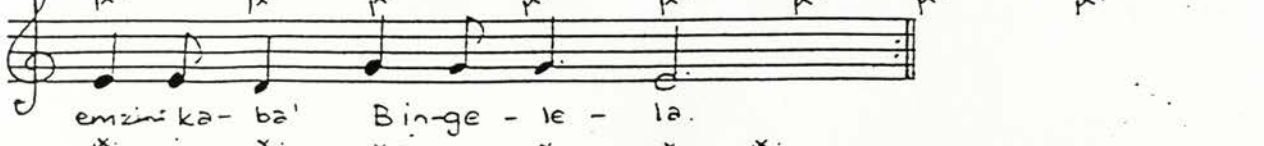
Chorus



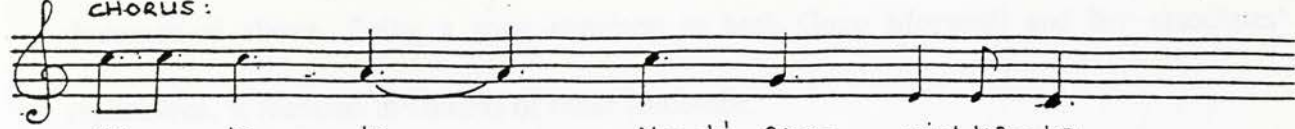
SOLO



Chorus



CHORUS:



Binge - le - ia Nonk' em - zin' ka - ba _

claps: x. x. x. x. x. x. x. x.

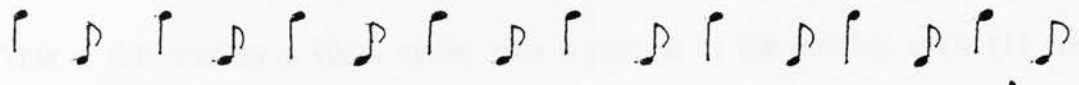


SOLO INTERPOLATION:



Bin-ge-le - ia Binge - le - ia non - ke!

x. x. x. x. x. x. x. x.



This song was sung several times by different diviners at Gogo Morwadi's *intlombe*, as documented above. Being a song common to both Gogo Morwadi and her associates' repertoires, it featured in context of other *iintlombe*.

The song is transcribed from its first rendition at the *intlombe*. Its internal structure is antiphonal, but this is established by degrees:- the first half of the vocal pattern is outlined by Gogo Tryfina, and this becomes the Solo phrase, which is then completed by a responding phrase, sung by a participant, which then becomes the Chorus phrase. The phrase pair is structured according to the well known Xhosa melodic 'formula', evident in the previous diviners' songs.

This is followed by a silent cycle, plus a portion of the ensuing cycle (11 triple beats - delineated by claps). Gogo Tryfina then concludes with a short vocal phrase in the fifth cycle, outlining the constituent notes of the Chorus - to which the participants respond - and the performance of the song is underway.

The song continues with an antiphonal structure, the Solo vocal pattern eventually being taken on by several participants. Ultimately, the whole song progresses into a Chorus, the vocal pattern of which consisting of 12 triple beats, with the ultimate 6 beats of the cycle being filled by a solo interpolation (one of the participants).

Figure: 9 ANGILALANGA SEBEKHULUMA NGAMI, LAMADODA LELIZWE

(Z)

(I did not sleep, they talk about me, the men of this world, they hate me)
(See Video Extract 7)

Mode:

Cycle Length: 12 X

Pitch:

Tempo: = 132 M.M.

24

INTRODUCTION

SOLO se-be-khuluma-ngami lo - Ho se-be-khulumanga - mi

CHORUS An-gi-lal'

S. O se-be-khuluma-ngami se-be-khulumanga - mi

Ch. An-gi-lal' An-gi-lal' se-be-khulumanga - mi

S. O la-ma doda lelizwe - An-gi-lal' se-be-khulumanga - mi

Ch. An-gi-lal' An-gi-lal' se-be-khulumanga - mi

S. An-gi-lal' se-be-khulumanga - mi

Ch. An-gi-lal' se-be-khulumanga - mi

claps:

drum:

drum variation:

Text: *Angilalanga sebekhuluma ngami, lamadoda lelizwe.*

I did not sleep - they talk about me, the men of this world, they hate me.

(Gogo Morwadi)

Also: I did not sleep, these men (of this nation) were gossiping about me.

(Sbongile Soga)

I have noted that the lyrical content of this song was also documented (but the music not transcribed) by Coppenhall, with slight textual variation, as sung by Gogo Morwadi and her then associate diviners. For in this rendition, Gogo Morwadi added the phrase, *Angilalanga*, translating it as "I did not sleep", as opposed to the phrase, *Halela* which was documented by Coppenhall. I have heard the latter substituted in certain instances.

(1990:315) The melody is hexa-based pentatonic. Harmonisations occur in the Chorus part according to the principle of harmonic equivalence (*izihlobo* tones). (See Hansen, 1981:665)

The metrical length of this song is defined by the hand claps (12 X ♩) and patterning is divisive (comprising regular pulse groupings into duple beats). The drum pattern subdivides the beats equally, also supplementing the hand claps.

The time background is also supplemented by the physical movement of Gogo Morwadi's dance patterns, which are made audible by the rattles worn around both of her ankles. The movement pattern of left and right leg coincides exactly with the movement pattern performed on the drum. (Hansen, 1981:617; Coppenhall, 190:232)

The total vocal pattern consists of a pair of complementary phrases, (Solo and Chorus), which are initially antiphonal in structure, with a single-ended overlap between the two parts. However, as it progresses, the Solo phrase becomes inaudible and eventually falls away, and the song becomes a chorus at times. This has been documented by Coppenhall, in context of a diviner being absent from the room after initiating a song. (1990:238) In this case, Gogo Morwadi did not leave the room, but frenetic dancing prevented her from rendering a strong, audible solo phrase periodically.

The two complimentary phrases carry different texts. A textual variation²³ occurs in the Solo part, and is evident in the video transcription when Gogo Morwadi initiates the song.

Figure: 10 ANDILAL' ENDLINI YEZA, ANDILAL' ENDLINI YILENYOKA (Xh)
 (I cannot sleep in the house - there is a snake - Gogo Morwadi)
 (See Video Extract 8)

Mode: 

Pitch: 

Cycle Length: 8 X ♩.

Tempo: ♩. = 160-168 M.M.



SOLO

wa-mi m-fazi wa-mi yemfazi

CHORUS

lal' end-li-ni ye-za An' la-'end-li-ni yi-'yo-ka An-

claps: x x x x x x x x

(24)

Text: *Andilal' endlini yeza, andilal' endlini yilenyoka*

I cannot sleep in the house - there is a snake (Gogo Morwadi)

Also: I do not sleep in the house because of this snake. The term *yeza* appears to be meaningless. (Sbongile Soga)

A textual variation was provided by Jeff, that included the words, *umfazi wam* (my wife)²⁴, which is particularly clear in Gogo Morwadi's introductory solo phrase in this rendition.

This was used by Gogo Morwadi as an entry song, which she initiated in the bedroom adjoining the front room, in which she was to dance. She initiated the song as family members in the bedroom helped her enrobe. They subsequently supported her by singing the Chorus pattern.

The total vocal pattern, marked by eight triple beats, is sung by the Chorus, with interpolated phrases by the solo diviner (Gogo Morwadi) within beats 3-4 and 7-8. The interpolations link the two phrases with a double-ended overlap. Gogo Morwadi's interpolations emphasise the tonal shifting underlying the complementary phrases, which are based upon the Xhosa melodic process. However, these interpolated phrases tend to fade, once she has entered the room and begins her dancing sequence and the Chorus takes over. The clapping expresses an equal subdividing of the triple beat. Subtle 'off-beating' occurs between the vocal pattern of the Chorus (basically grouped in triple beats) and the hand claps (triple beats subdivided equally.)

Figure: 11 KUYASA (KWASA) NDISELE BALENI²⁵ (Xh)
 (It gets light and I am in the 'veld' - Gogo Morwadi) (See Video Extract 9)

Mode:



Pitch:



Cycle length: 16 X

Tempo: = 144 M.M.

(16)

SOLO

Kuy — a — sa ndi — se — le ba — leni

CHORUS

claps:
 (initially
 diviner's
 click of
 fingers)



drum:



SOLO

Kuy — a — sa ndi — se — le ba — leni

CHORUS

Text: *Kuyasa (Kwasa) ndisele baleni*

Also: It gets light and I am in the ground (Sbongile Soga)

The tonality demonstrates a pent-based tetra mode, A - G - F - C. Since there is no harmonic enrichment, it is difficult to assess the tonality. The melodic structure is also atypical of Xhosa music.

The antiphonally structured phrases are identical, and shared between the Solo and Chorus. The basic metrical pattern is noticeably delineated into duple beats, as dictated by the syllables in the text. The antiphonal structure is retained, as even when Gogo Morwadi ceased singing the Solo phrase, her ex-husband, Mike took it over for her. This strengthened the general structure of the song. The diviner initiated a rhythmic pattern of finger clicks, which was taken up by the chorus as hand claps.

Figure: 12

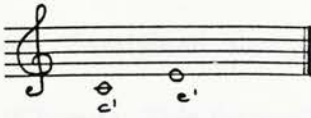
UMKHETHO LEZINDAWO UYABALEKA (Xh)

(The person who spoke is now running away) (See VideoExtract 10)

Mode:



Pitch:



Cycle length: 8 X ♩

Tempo: ♩ = 132 - 138 M.M.

16

SOLO

khet'lez in-daw'u ya-ba-le' um-

CHOEUS

claps

drum

SOLO

khet'lez in-daw'u ya-ba le' um-

CHORUS

claps

drum

Text: *Umkhetho lezindawo uyabaleka* The person who spoke is now running away

The melody comprises two identical phrases built on descending fourths, and this is treated as an ostinato throughout the performance, and by the Soloist and the rest of the participants (Chorus). This feature has been documented and described by Coppenhall, who found it to be an element of change concerned with urbanisation and the "size of the congregation in relation to the size of the main action area," (1990:283) which had a limiting effect on the quantity of the music produced, particularly when the diviner had left the main room. Hence, "the technique of Call and Response is temporarily abandoned when diviners leave the room and Solo and Chorus interaction is broken." (ibid, 215, 283)

THE -HLEHLA SONGS OF CASE STUDY 1

I have already discussed in the introduction that as well as being song leaders, diviners are expected to be exceptional dancers, their dance being described as *ukuxhentsa* (Xh) or *ukugida* (SiS). (Hunter, 1964:325; Hansen, 1981:565) I have also mentioned that such dancing is characterised by the galvanic pounding of the feet alternately, whilst shifting the body weight from the ball of each foot to its heel. An upright posture is maintained by the torso and the diviner will invariably carry a switch and a spear. Another movement pattern, which is associated with divination song and executed at *iintlombe* by Gogo Morwadi, her associates, and Chief Gcaleka as an accompaniment to Ndau-related songs, is that of *-hlehla* (as described by Gogo Morwadi). Coppenhall, who also encountered *-hlehla* in his research, describes it as "a special activity employed in rituals of exorcism which are referred to as rituals of *-femba* (to withdraw) in which evil is literally 'drawn out', or 'away

from', an afflicted person." (1990:209, 280) Indeed, *-hlehla* was encountered in the *-femba* ritual documented by me.

Although I have witnessed *-hlehla* exclusively in the context of Ndaus-related songs, it may not necessarily be defined as a style of dance, but rather as a dramatic action. This may be attributed to the fact that *-hlehla* actions do not constitute a *regular* movement pattern executed by the performer's feet. Rather, *-hlehla* requires the performer to double over in a kneeling position on the floor, and shake his/her head loosely from side to side, or more commonly, up and down, in no specific rhythmic pattern it would seem. Individual variations include the circular motion of the performer's hands on the floor, as demonstrated by Gogo Tryfina. (see Plates 12,13, 42)

Sessions of *-hlehla* are performed individually, or in pairs, as I witnessed at the *intlombe* held in Swalala. In Gogo Morwadi's case, the performer wore an ornate headband of cowrie shells (which according to her, are associated with *-femba*). (See Plate 12) The performer was covered by a white sheet. I have also witnessed Chief Gcaleka and his initiates performing this action, where Chief Gcaleka would wrap a *lihiya* around his upper torso, and fasten it with a knot behind his neck.

It has already been stated by Makhosi Athobile that those who undergo Ndaus training, drink a medicine which, accompanied by the Ndaus dance in *intlombe* conditions, makes them experience a particularly deep state of altered consciousness. Indeed, the *-hlehla* actions of these diviners (particularly in the head shaking) could assist in inducing a state of altered consciousness. Gogo Morwadi insists that, in her rituals, her '*manguni* ancestors

have to interpret what the *amandawu* have 'said'. In fact, Gogo Morwadi states that she cannot understand what the *amandawu* say. This was demonstrated in the *-femba* ritual in which the Ndausongs with their *-hlehla* actions, which were used in the 'exorcism' were followed by 'manguni'-related songs, and a *-thokozisa* in which the details of the preceding action were interpreted. This suggests that on the one hand, *amandawu* are symbolically distant as ancestors, but on the other that the state into which the diviner enters with these songs, is too deep to allow for any memory of it. This is my conclusion; I already have presented the opinions of David and Makhosi Athobile on this matter in Chapter 1. I present the analysis of one of the *-hlehla* songs performed at the Gugulethu *intlombe* - namely *Wo - femba uyo thekha, Nyankwabe huma*.

Text: *Wo famba uyo thekha, nyankwabe huma (Sindzawe)*
 Go and fetch, *nyankwabe* (a name of a spirit) must come out.

The text is spelt phonetically and translated from *Sindzawe* by Gogo Morwadi and Jeff. However, the term *nyankwabe* is SiSwati, and refers to “the main assistant of a *sangoma*.” (Lukkie Matsabe and Priscilla Mafuyeka)


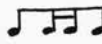
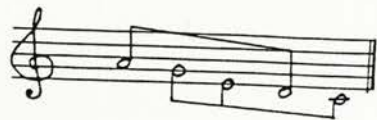
The mode of this song is hexatonic, in convenient transposition A - G - F - E - D - C. In the performance of this antiphonally structured song, the text was rather indistinct and it was sung in a subdued and gentle manner. In fact, all that was audible was the Solo text, *Famba uyo thekha*, followed by the Chorus, who sang *Wo!* The rhythmic structure was provided by the drum alone (there was no clapping), which articulated the pulses of the cycle, with occasional variation:  becoming . The triple rhythm drumming employed concurs with the rhythmic patterning found by Johnston in the *xidzimba* songs (associated with Shangana-Tsonga exorcism rituals pertaining to *amandawu*), used to expel Ndau spirits. (Johnston, 1971:324) Ndau music has already been discussed in Chapter 3 (see pp 279 ff).

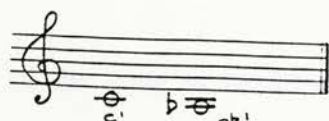
Figure: 14 MAY' VUK' INGALALI

It must rise; it must not lie down (Audio Extract 5)

Mode:



Pitch:



Cycle length:

16 X \downarrow

Tempo:

\downarrow = 76-80 M.M.

32

SOLO:

in koma kaba wo.

CHORUS:

inkom' a' laliphantsi.

DRUM:

May- vuk' in - ga - la - li..

chorus harmonisation

May- vuk' in - ga - la - li..

Text: *May' vuk' ingalali* It must rise; it must not lie down
inkomo kabawo My father's beast
inkom' ayilali phantsi It does not lie down

(Trans. M.Ntleki)

The tonality of the song is hexa-based pentatonic. In this song, comprising a pair of overlapping Chorus and Solo phrases of unequal length, sung by participants and devotees respectively, the cycle is repeated with harmonic enrichment of the Chorus phrase.

At the point after which the beast bellowed, the song was taken up as a chorus, and for a time it remained as such. This is often the case when a climax is reached in particular social conditions. (Hansen, 1981:588) Possibly the solemnity of the social context permitted no clapping in this song, and there was very little dancing, which was intermittently contributed by the two diviners. Otherwise, everyone stood stationary.

Regarding the harmonisation in this song, it demonstrates chordal progressions that are typical of Xhosa hexatonic music. Moreover, there is a 'non-harmonic' note in the Chorus phrase (in the first beat of the cycle) where tones A and G coincide. This feature has been noted by Rycroft and Hansen, who notes that, "because singers are concerned with the 'pattern' of the melody, they often sing tone combinations which clash to Western ears," for example major seconds. (Hansen, 1981:684) This is evident in the Chorus, in the first beat of the cycle with the notes A and G forming a major second.

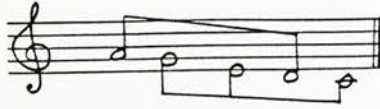
The sonorous sound and harmonic texture of the music was enriched by one vocal interpolation from an old man, who sang, "*Vuk' iinkathazo !*" ("Wake up, troubles", those associated with the novice diviner) in synchrony with the Chorus phrase.

It is a bad thing (painful and sore) to be sick - to agree to be a diviner.

(Sbongile Soga)

(Audio Extract 6)

Mode:



Pitch:



Cycle length: 16 X

Tempo: = 138 M.M.

32

SOLO
hlu-n-guku-gu- Ku-by

CHORUS
vu-ma ni uma san-go - ma

CHORUS
vu-ma ni uma san-go - ma

CHORUS
vu-ma ni uma san-go - ma

SOLO
hlu-n-guku-gu-la ku-by

CHORUS
vu-ma ni uma san-go - ma

CHORUS
vu-ma ni uma san-go - ma

CHORUS
vu-ma ni uma san-go - ma

SOLO
hlu-n-guku-gu-la

CHORUS
vu-ma ni uma san-go - ma

CHORUS Interpolation 2
ma si san-go -

CHORUS Interpolation 3
ma si san-go -

Claps:

drum:
L
R

Text: *Kubuhlungu ukugula vumani uma isangoma*

It is hard to be a diviner. (A Xhosa-speaking informant who attended the event with me)

Also: It is a bad thing (painful and sore) to be sick - to agree to be a diviner. (Sbongile Soga)

This song conforms structurally and stylistically with Xhosa divination songs:- antiphony (without overlap); a metrical pattern of duple beats expressed in drumming, with accents on the first pulse of every beat. Motional patterns (from dancing) also contributed to the time background, being audible through the use of leg rattles, the sounds of which concurred with the drum beats.

The mode of this song is hexa-based pentatonic. The vocal organisation is simple; three interpolations were made by members of the chorus, the first one filling in the final four beats of the metrical pattern (beats 13-16), and occurring infrequently throughout the performance of the song. It creates a single-ended overlap with the recommencing of the solo phrase on beat 16.

The second and third interpolations are more harmonically-bound, and occur with the Solo and Chorus phrases respectively. Interpolation 2 harmonically embellishes the total vocal pattern, while Interpolation 3, which occurs in the second rendition of the song, is in fact a staggered entry, commencing on beat 13. This creates a single-ended overlap with the Solo part on beat 1 of the cycle.

THE SONGS OF CHIEF NICHOLAS GCALEKA

The songs described and analysed below are have been extracted from the *intlombe* held by Chief Gcaleka in March 1996. The opening proceedings, including the speeches and ritual killings of three livestock, have been described in the Preface (see pp.33 ff). Each song will be described in context of its occurrence at the event:-

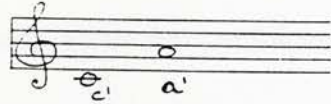
Figure: 16 UTSHAW' UYAWAZ' AMAYEZA (Xh) Tshawe knows medicine

"Tshawe" refers to the *isibongo* (clan name) of Chief Gcaleka.
(See Video Extract 12)

Mode:



Pitch:



Cycle length: 16 X ♩.

Tempo: ♩ = 120 M.M.

CHORUS

ma-ye A-ma-ye - za A-

ma-ye A-ma-ye - za A

claps
drum: x. x. x. x. x. x. x. x.

CHORUS

Tshaw' uyawaz' A-ma-ye-za U

SOLO INTERPOLATION

A-ma-ye A-ma-ye - za -

x. x. x. x. x. x. x. x.

CHORUS

Tsh-aw' uyawaz' A-ma-ye-za U

SOLO INTERPOLATION

A-ma-ye a-ma-ye - za

x. x. x. x. x. x. x. x.

This song was used as a procedural song, headed by a man with a megaphone, who walked through the neighbourhood surrounding Chief Gcaleka's residence in New Crossroads, in order to make people aware of the impending *intlombe*, and to summon them to the event.

I have already mentioned that participants are not specifically or formally 'invited' to these events, and anyone may attend at their own will. The use of the megaphone was a novel way of drawing attention to the event, and is rather in keeping with Chief Gcaleka's outgoing personality. For instance, Gogo Morwadi informed me that one generally lets people know about events in a more subtle manner: people (other than diviner associates and close friends) will either be drawn to attend a ritual event from the singing they hear emanating from a house, or they may pass by and see benches being put outside the front of the house, along with *umqombothi* and/or other ritual objects. I witnessed the latter in the case of a *-phahla* session in Khayelitsha, at the home of a man who wished to inform his ancestors of his decision to become a *-thwasa*, under the tutelage of Gogo Morwadi. The slaughter of two chickens, plus the placing of seating outside the dwelling for the men, attracted visitors from close by, who upon arriving, introduced themselves and explained that they had noticed the proceedings, before enquiring about the nature of the occasion.

In this instance, the metrical pattern of 8 triple beats is explicitly defined by the hand claps *and* the drumming. The latter does not imitate the iambic patterning, that is typical of so much Xhosa divination music, and which would have matched the rhythmic structure of the total vocal pattern. The drum was carried on the back of one of the woman participants with a sling, whilst another walked behind her with the beaters. The drum beats occurred as

triple beats, sporadically rather than regularly, owing to logistic factors such as cramped and crowded conditions, plus the constant snaking movement of the throng from down the street, through the garage and into the main room of the house.

The song's total vocal pattern consists of two identical phrases (of 8 triple beats), repeated upon different degrees of the mode, so an element of antiphony is present:- but the pattern is sung by the Chorus, which carries the greatest functional load (musically), while interpolations occur ad hoc by the song leader. Despite the rather restricted tonality, it is clear that the two vocal phrases are based on the Xhosa melodic process within the a hexamode. This is demonstrated on beats 1-3 and 9-11 of the total vocal pattern, the note E (beats 1-3) being harmonically equivalent to the root tone, C.

Interpolations from several individuals were off pitch, and I attribute this to the conditions under which they were singing: the voice of the song leader (the man with the megaphone) was remarkably directional, distorted and nasal, added by the fact that the small crowd was dispersed in linear fashion over a fair distance. Consequently, the form and structure of this song is an outcome of the circumstances under which it was performed - the constant moving of the performers ultimately affected the quality of singing.

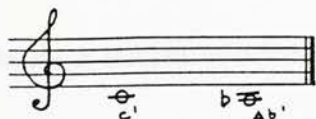
Figure: 17 WENA NKOSI KA PHALO SIBINGELELA (Xh)

We are greeting you, King Phalo (See Video Extract 13)

Mode:



Pitch:



Cycle length: 1 ̂ X ♩

Tempo: ♩ = 138 M.M.

32

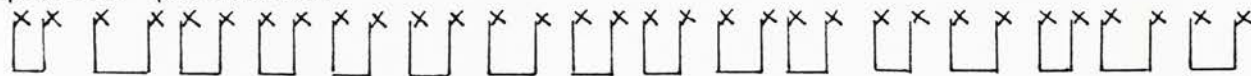
SOLO

Wen'n - kosi ka Pha - l' si-bi-nge-le- la Wen'n-kosika Pha - l' si-bi-nge-le- la

CHOEUS

Wen'n - kosi ka - Pha - l' si-bi-nge-le- la

Chief Gcaleka's -phekha stick:



claps:



drum:



Text: *Wena nkosi ka Phalo sibingelela*

We are greeting you, King Phalo

This song was initiated by Chief Gcaleka, whilst he knelt down over the ritual objects - a bucket of *umqombothi*, two pints of beer, a bottle of Smirnoff vodka and *imphepho*, and he began to *-phehla* a bucket of *ubulawu*. (See Plate 1) I have already noted the particular use of the latter in connection with rituals of initiation, and the ancestors.

The cycle was initiated by Chief Gcaleka, who sang unaccompanied, before the Chorus entered halfway through the the second cycle. Initially, the total vocal pattern was maintained for several cycles, in antiphony. However, as the song progressed, became a chorus, the singers emphasising the harmonic basis of the music.

Figure: 18 SICELA UKUBA KULUNGE - HE THONGO LAM
 We request that everything must go well (with the spirit). (Sbongile Soga)
 (See Video Extract 14)

Mode:

Pitch:

Cycle length: 16 X
 Tempo: ♩ = 138 M.M.

(48)

CHORUS SOLO

Drum

Claps

Text: *Sicela*²⁷ *ukuba kulunge*²⁸, *He thongo lam* We request that everything must go well (with the spirit). (Sbongile Soga)

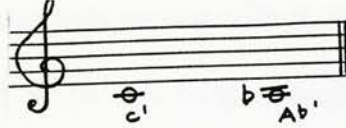
This song was started up by Chief Gcaleka's niece, who was attired in Zionist robes. This song is indeed associated with Zionist sect-churches, and I recollect that it has been sung in David's church services. I am not sure why it was initiated in the context of this particular *intlombe*, especially after a serious moment in which the *ubulawu* was being stirred and frothed. However, I can say that it seemed acceptable, in light of the fact that Chief Gcaleka incorporates a form of Christianity into his system of beliefs.

Figure: 19 O! UYAWAZ' INDABA (Xh)
O! You know the news (See Video Extract 15)

Mode:



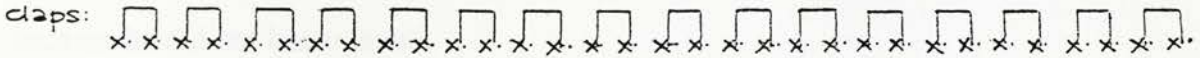
Pitch:



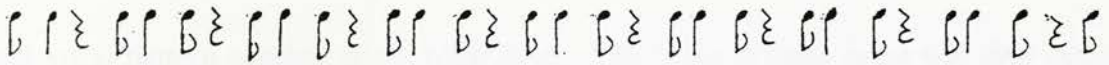
Cycle length: 16 X ♩.

Tempo: ♩. = 200 M.M.

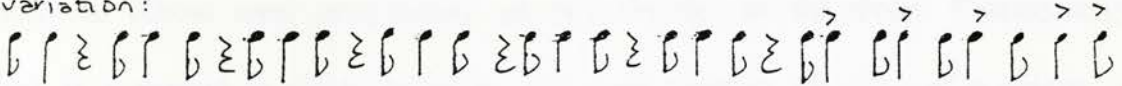
48



drum:



drum variation:



Text: *O ! Uyawaz' indaba*

O, you know the news

This occurred once the *intlombe* proceedings were well underway. The sacrifices had been made, and songs relating to the Ndaus had been sung. Now, Chief Gcaleka donned a Zionist Church robe, and conducting an *ukulawula* session with his niece as she knelt before him on the floor. She began what seemed to be this song (though too inaudible to transcribe), which was subsequently taken up by other participants. This song has been sung in context of David's Zionist services, and will be compared accordingly. During the rendition of the song, Chief Gcaleka performed the spinning *-jikeleza* action, associated with Zionist-type churches and the inducement of the '*emoyeni*' (in the spirit) condition (See Plate 20). As he turned, he raised his right hand to his ear. One diviner informant (name withheld) commented candidly that Chief Gcaleka was trying to listen for the words of the song - because he did not know them!

The total vocal pattern consists of 16 triple beats. The verse is sung twice and they outline the traditional Xhosa tonal progression, on two degrees of the mode. Consequently, antiphony is suggested in effect, however, this song takes in the form of a chorus, as common in church music of the townships.

In the rendition recorded at one of David's church services, the harmonic basis, the solo interpolations and the rhythmic accentuation was more interesting. (Refer to Audio Extract 7) This had much to do with the vocal organisation of this performance, which was slick and well-rehearsed. In fact there was a startling difference in the quality of this song performed in either ritual context. Indeed, it is not my intention to examine Zionist church

music in this dissertation, however, in the case of this song, as sung in context of a church service and at an *intlombe*, several observations can be made with regard to the *quality* of the music performed on either occasion.

In the light of her research in rural areas, Hansen comments that divination music "constitutes a music that is on a different level from the ordinary music performed by people as a form of recreation...the bulk of the music is produced by highly trained devotees, who perform the music every time they gather for ritual purposes. Since this happens frequently, one can regard divination music as one of the *most rehearsed* musics in the Xhosa musical tradition." (1981:580, italics my own.) Coppenhall's findings with regard to divination music in the townships serve as a contrast to this; he states that such music was not performed as frequently, and the groups of participants, or support groups for the diviner were ever-changing. This resulted in a general unfamiliarity with the songs and subsequently divination music "cannot be regarded as 'well-rehearsed' music." (1990:218)

Such can be said in the case of Chief Gcaleka's song, when compared to the rendition of the Church service.

Structural features of the latter included:

- A stronger rendition of the total vocal pattern, with full harmonisation, according to principles of harmonic equivalence found in 'traditional' Xhosa music.
- Solo interpolation

- Faster tempo
- More proficient drumming, with added rhythmic variation. This is also demonstrated in the clapping accompaniment, which features accentuation towards the end of each cycle.

In this rendition, a basic iambic drum pattern variation was played by the drummer. Occasionally, towards the middle of the song, as it was building to a climax, she would fill in the extra silent beats, accenting them as she went, particularly on beats 13 - 16. This was supplemented with accented clapping.

Although this song definitely shows features of being a Zionist church song (in its chorus structure), it is interesting that in context of an *intlombe*, it was not performed to the same standards of quality found in the church service.

CONCLUSIONS

The *Intlombe* and Music

Music continues to remain an integral element in the practices of diviners, yet it has been documented by Hunter, Hansen and Coppenhall that music is not always used in divination rituals, for example, certain consultations, including divination with bones and *-vumisa* (meaning 'agree'; a 'consenting' method of divination). (Hunter, 1964:329; Hammond-Tooke, 1974:356-7; Hansen, 1981:569-570; Coppenhall, 1990:210) However, in the context of *iintlombe*, Hansen's research revealed that (according to the diviners with whom she spoke) music and dancing were obligatory procedures. Furthermore, with regard to the necessity of music in this context, Makhosi Athobile retorted:

You sing because you are making *intlombe*. You *cannot* do it without music; it will be dead [and therefore] you do not make *intlombe*. [Moreover, if you do not sing,] the ancestors will see that nothing is happening, and they will not be happy. When you sing, you are happy and they will then be happy.

The Ritual Event

I reiterate that an *intlombe* is a musical event, and it is distinguishable from other divination techniques which do not involve ritual music. Furthermore, in context of its other meaning - applied to Xhosa post-initiation groups, it also denotes musical action. Non-musical methods of divination, such as *-vumisa* may be included within the context of an *intlombe*. Although I have attended a *-vumisa* with Chief Gcaleka, I personally have never witnessed such a technique in the context of an *intlombe*. In fact, I have attended a majority of Swazi *iintlombe*, in which I have found a format which is similar, yet not equivalent to the *-vumisa* method, however, in a sense, may in some contexts, serve to replace the latter, in an *intlombe* situation.

Whilst *-vumisa* is based upon a 'hot' and 'cold' technique, through which the diviner may ascertain the root of an issue, such as the source of misfortune (Hansen, 1981:571), my Swazi diviner informants use a method known to them as *-thokozisa* (Z - to give thanks), which I have witnessed at *iintlombe*, as a dramatic form of acknowledgement, in between renditions of music. Gogo Morwadi hesitated before describing in English, precisely what occurs when, "we *-thokoza* someone." She initially equated the diviner's enactment to 'fortuning' the other person. Ironically, this would be applicable to the term *-vumisa*,

however, judging by its literal translation and the content of the discourse, this description is more symbolic. Subsequently, Gogo Morwadi has described *-thokozisa* as the ritual action concerned with "greeting the ancestors". Such sessions have been recorded and described by Coppenhall, in his research on *iintlombe*, concerning Gogo Morwadi and her associates in particular. (1990:294 ff) Such sessions are not to be confused with the ritual action of *-phahla*²⁹, as already mentioned - which Gogo Morwadi defines as being "to pray to your ancestors", often when a request is being made and the ancestors need to be consulted.

Specific Ritual Actions in an *Intlombe*

-Thokozisa sessions are marked by the rhythmic clicking of fingers, double clapping and/or the flicking of a switch (by the diviner as he/she speaks), whilst the attending figure from the audience responds at intervals with double claps, executed with the diviner in between phrases. The claps are accompanied by the response, "*-thokoza gogo*" (a respectful phrase denoting thanks to the diviner), delivered by the person, sometimes accompanied by the rest of those in attendance. I have already made mention that my informant, David, identifies such actions with those of what he (and others) call *oothokoza* (diviners who are not of Xhosa origin and/or training). He claims that these actions are not associated with the Xhosa *igqirha*.

The Locale of the Event

In urban areas, as has been noted by other writers, the main component of music making at

the *intlombe* occurs indoors, usually in the area of the sitting room. Furniture is replaced by benches for seating, around the room's perimeter. The centre of the floor is kept clear for the diviners' dancing. Coppenhall records that the proceedings at an *intlombe* "were not confined to one room only, as is commonly the case in rural areas." (1990:281) Furthermore, I have found that particular areas are designated for various participants and activities, for example, the front room/lounge area would be provided as the main activity arena, where diviners performed sessions of dancing and *-thokozisa*, whilst the (commonly adjoining) bedroom area is restricted to diviners only, and to be used as a dressing room and area for them to be seated before entering the lounge area, indicated by their initiating a song from within the bedroom. Coppenhall states that people are assigned to different areas of the house according to "their social status, these rooms being areas for special activities during the seance event." (1990:282)

I attended an *intlombe* in Swalala with Gogo Morwadi, at which I noticed that the proceedings carried on outdoors (even though it threatened to rain). I believe that this was due to a logistic factor: that there was no indoor space large enough to house all the participants in a comfortable fashion. The procedure was, however, similar to the one described above, despite the external location of the dancing area, in that the diviners used an outside room adjoining the house as a dressing room and place from which to enter the dancing area.

Symbolic Meaning and Context

I became aware of the symbolic meaning attached to holding a ritual event in - or out of

doors. For instance, the *-femba* ritual necessitated an indoor environment, so that the evil could be contained and then expelled 'out the door'. Similarly in Chief Gcaleka's case, I found an individual preference for sacrificing of animals indoors, upon one occasion, when he had 'invited all the ancestors of South Africa' to partake in the *intlombe*. After one sheep had been sacrificed in the driveway of his home, Chief Gcaleka stated that it was imperative that the two remaining animals (a sheep and a goat) be sacrificed *inside* the house, in order to keep the ancestors in the house during the main body *intlombe* - that involving the music making and thanksgiving speeches. This *intlombe*, the proceedings of which have been already described in more detail in the Preface (see pp. ff), demonstrates how Chief Gcaleka's personal predilections towards his religious beliefs are reflected in his ritual procedures.

The *intlombe* has been documented as a night event. (Hansen, 1981:569; McLaren, 1994:161) The only instance in which this precedent is not adhered to, is upon the graduation of an *ithwasa* (novice), in which case the *intlombe* is held during the day. In this context, the ceremony is called an *umgidi* (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:108) or an *umphumo* (Hansen, 1981:566), and it is the only occasion upon which the *-xhentsa* dance is performed in sunlight. Up until this event, the candidate has had to dance indoors. I had the opportunity of attending such an event one morning in March, 1996, in KTC with Gogo Morwadi. It concerned a woman (a nursing sister by profession), who had been under the tutelage of one of Gogo Morwadi's more distant Swazi associates. Gogo Morwadi called it a '*-thwasa egoduswa*'. I arrived after the goat had been sacrificed, and the graduand had begun her *-xhentsa* sessions. As stated already by Hammond-Tooke, the initiate performed bouts of solo dancing out of doors in the sunlight, making a point of entering the front

room, where the diviners, guests and the drummer were, in order to conduct *-thokozisa*.

(See Plate 49)

I witnessed an isolated incident of a 'daylight' *intlombe* in Phelindaba, Eastern Cape. It was held indoors, at the homestead of Manduna - 'on the spot' - without much preparation, besides the diviners eagerly rounding up members of the neighbourhood and donning their traditional divination regalia, and it lasted just over an hour. No beer or beast was acquired and divination music alone was performed. I doubted that this occasion constituted an *intlombe* proper, however, I was told in no uncertain terms by my host in the village that it was an *intlombe*, held to mark the arrival of new-comers (my team) to the area. He added, "Here, they use any reason to make *intlombe*."

The Convening of the *Intlombe* and its Music

The responsibility for calling up an *intlombe* rests in the hands of diviner, or he/she will advise a client as such. The diviner will decide to hold an *intlombe* for a specific reason and he/she will officiate at it by performing the required ritual sacrifice and other activities. The event may or may not be held at the home of the diviner. Indeed, it may be held at the home of the client, or at an unrelated homestead chosen by the diviner, purely out of personal preference. (Hansen, in communication)

Furthermore, the diviner is the keeper of a vast repertoire of divination music, which is acquired during the training, through dreams and attending *iintlombe*. According to Hansen, the diviner is the one responsible for choosing the music for the event, and "when

preparing for a seance, the 'chief' diviner draws up a programme of music which is to be performed...and [with the help of the song leader and assistant leader], establishes the order and sequence in which they are to be sung." (1981:585)

My findings have demonstrated that whilst one diviner called for an *intlombe*, several diviners would attend it, and even though the officiant diviner would play an important musical role in the structural development and musical content of the *intlombe*, the other diviners present were also permitted to call up their own songs. This concurs with Coppenhall's findings, and he documents that "the presence of several diviners at a seance has been noticed. In such circumstances, each diviner has the opportunity to present songs during the course of the seance." (1990:281)

This suggests that in urban areas it is not the responsibility of a single diviner to provide music for an *intlombe*. This is in contrast to Hansen' findings, which state that the convenor is exclusively the one to conduct the musical proceedings. In urban areas, the fact that more than one diviner - those other than the officiant, played a prominent role in the musical development of the *intlombe*, by calling up their own songs in turn, suggests a move towards more independence.

In the case of there being more than one diviner in attendance, a hierarchical system seemed to exist, whereby the least important diviners would take to the floor first (in solo), culminating in the official performance of the host diviner once the evening was well underway. (see Coppenhall, 1990:283) At least, this seemed apparent at *iintlombe* that I attended with Gogo Morwadi. Chief Gcaleka on the other hand, preferred the more

'traditional' approach, in that he in general, controlled the turn of events at his *intlombe* and the songs, by acting as the song leader for most of the time.

Standards of Excellence and Musical Performance

Nevertheless, diviners still seem to be concerned about the quality of the music and its performance. This is connected to a vital aspect of divination music at an *intlombe* - known as *uk-ombela*³⁰, which refers to the joint effort of music making - the singing, clapping and drumming for the diviner's dance by the participating audience and diviner(s) present. (Hansen, 1981:571, 584) Those attending an *intlombe* do not do so by invitation, but out of voluntary support for the cause of the *intlombe*. They participate in the eating of the ritual meat and they drink the traditional beer and other alcoholic beverages and are expected to *-ombela*.

The Role of the Participants

The spectators form the backbone of the music, the basic structure of which is antiphonal. Even though the diviner is the song leader, he/she is reliant on the whole-hearted support from the bystanders, who constitute the musical chorus. The behaviour code in music making is strict for members of the audience, in that they must stand to the side of the performance area where the diviners dance, and whilst wholeheartedly singing and clapping, they must not dance and constrict the diviner's space in the centre of the room. I was told that this is out of respect for the ancestors, who will convey their message through the chief diviner. I have witnessed diviners (Gogo Morwadi in particular) literally throwing

participants out of the event or hitting them with their switches, admonishing them for drunken behaviour or inadequate singing.

Lack of musical support by the onlookers seems to be an ever-increasing problem for diviners at *iintlombe* in urban areas. This has been discussed at fair length by Coppenhall, one of the most prominent points of which may be summarised as follows: "Most of the people who attend seances are not always the same people, and thus most of them are not familiar with all the songs introduced by the officiating diviners...(and) this explains why people as a rule do not know what to sing at a given ritual occasion." (1990:283-284)

It has been documented by Coppenhall and subsequently endorsed by me in my research; that although the diviners and their associates may regularly attend *iintlombe* together; the 'lay' participants constitute a frequently ever-changing support group in urban areas. Notably this occurred in my research which concerned both Gogo Morwadi, who was an informant of Coppenhall, and Chief Gcaleka, who has not been subject to research. "Consequently, seance congregations tend to be unfamiliar with many songs and so tend to sing unsatisfactorily to the extent that they are reprimanded by diviners for not singing well, or harmonising correctly." (Coppenhall, 1990:284) Diviners will frequently initiate a song, which will 'fall flat', in that few or none of the participants will be able to take it up. This results in the diviner having to start up another song. This has been documented by Coppenhall, who comments that a diviner may have had to introduce "even a third [song] which all present knew, or could participate in because of the relative simplicity, repetitiveness and tonality of the music." (ibid, 218)

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I would continue to say that a similar scenario occurred at the *intlombe* in Swalala in September, 1995. Gogo Lamashigo had invited several diviners from surrounding and further environs, however, each diviner had her turn to dance and *-thokozisa*, however, I would not declare the participatory vocal support in the songs particularly strong. Even though Gogo Morwadi, as 'visitor', said that she knew all the songs that were sung at the event (this seemed true, when she was able to make out the words from the poor soundtrack on a video playback!), there was still not overwhelming support from the participants. All of the above evidence is therefore contrary to Hansen's findings in the rural areas, where "seance music, together with the particular dance it accompanies, and its drum rhythms, constitutes a music that is on a different level from the ordinary music performed by people as a form of recreation. Although spectators do participate in it, the bulk of the music is produced by highly trained devotees, who perform the music every time they gather for ritual purposes." (1981:580)

Another observation I made with regard to poor musical support at not only *iintlombe*, but other ritual events, was the effect of cross-culturalisation. For instance, I have mentioned that *iintlombe* are attended by more than one diviner, and I also found that particularly in cases where an *intlombe* constituted Zulu-, Xhosa- and SiSwati-speaking diviners, a definite cultural differentiation occurred amongst the diviners and the participants, resulting in a general lack of knowledge of the different diviners' repertoires and their respective dialects. This was exemplified once at an *intlombe*, when Gogo Morwadi was engaged in one of her divination songs in SiSwati. I noticed that members of the audience around me were not singing; in fact they seemed to be behaving rather distractedly. I asked a Xhosa-speaking bystander for an interpretation of the lyrics - she had previously been able to translate the

songs sung by preceding Xhosa and Zulu diviners for me. However, she shrugged her shoulders and laughed, retorting, "I don't know this language!" This may be a reason why Gogo Morwadi is so insistent upon attending an *intlombe* with several Swazi associates and her family. Not only would they provide her with moral support, but they would also accompany her in the performance of her repertoire of Swazi divination songs - thereby offering 'cultural support'.

Musical Repertory

The problem of language and cultural differentiation became a focal point in my research, particularly with regard to songs regarding *amandawu* ancestors of Gogo Morwadi (and Chief Gcaleka). This was exemplified during the translation attempt of the *-femba* ritual, which has already been described.

Furthermore, through my attendance of rituals with Gogo Morwadi both in her home and elsewhere, evidence demonstrates that she and her associates *share* the same standard repertoire of music (also found by Coppenhall amongst all of his informants), or at least, several songs which they regularly perform at *iintlombe*. In the above mentioned *intlombe*, Gogo Morwadi as officiant diviner and several of her associates, one even notices the frequency with which several songs were sung repeatedly - with up to three different diviners initiating the same song on separate occasions. This has been noticed by Coppenhall, who states that diviners in urban areas "interact a great deal in their profession and occasionally attend the same rituals, [this] is probably a main reason why their choice of songs for seances is fairly uniform." (1990:281) I suggest that diviners tend to stick to a

core repertoire in order to support each other at *iintlombe* and other ritual events.

Logistically though, Gogo Morwadi has pointed out that her close associates trained in the same area as she did, so they learned the same songs during training.

Furthermore, my findings have confirmed that diviners (with whom I have attended more than one *intlombe*) have used the same songs from their basic repertoire, regardless the reason for holding the *intlombe*. Therefore, the music which I found seemed less context-specific, and rather an emphasis lay in the specific concepts related to the categories of ancestors utilised by my informants. For instance, I have noticed that Gogo Morwadi's song repertoire is fairly consistent at each *intlombe* she attends, which suggests that her choice of songs is not related thematically to the ritual context, but to principles operating in her system of beliefs - notably the two categories of ancestors (*amadlozi*) she uses in her divination practices. This is the case with Chief Gcaleka, whose songs seem more ancestor-specific, than ritual specific.

I have already described them in the introduction as the Nguni (*amanguni* - pronounced "'manguni" by Gogo Morwadi) and the Ndaui (*amandawu*) ancestors respectively. Subsequently, Gogo Morwadi is preoccupied with songs which relate to the two categories, rather than the performance of ritual specific music in general. (An exception is found in the *-femba* ritual, in which the text obviously relates to the action which is taking place.)

The contents of these song types are noticeably distinct in the language of their texts, and the mode and accompanying drum patterns which are employed. According to Gogo Morwadi, whilst the *manguni* songs are sung in SiSwati (I have noticed some Xhosa

derivations); the Ndaub-related song texts are in Sindzawe.

This is in contrast to Hansen's findings with regard to rural *iintlombe*, where diviners tended to choose songs that were *appropriate* to the *intlombe*:- "If the seance is part of a joyous occasion, then this must be reflected in the music, especially that which is to open a seance...All the songs performed during the seance have a meaningful relationship to the social situation." (1981:585) Bührmann notes this too - that the choice of songs is not haphazard, but "each has symbolic meaning to the 'work' in hand." (1984:59) This underlies the basis of 'traditional' African music; that it has a utilitarian function, and in rituals of divination, the procedures or functions to be carried out will indeed "ensure that certain songs are performed." (Hansen, 1981:572) For instance, "if an evil-doer is to be 'smelt out', then the song *umhlahlo*³¹ will most certainly be performed...Similarly, *-qubula* songs are sung at seances wherein the diviner employs the *-qubula*³² method." (ibid, 572)

Consequently, I have only found one instance in which the songs sung at an *intlombe* were ritual specific - notably the *intlombe* of Phakamile, as officiated by Zulu diviner, Makhosi Mzizi (mentioned above). Although evidence suggests that diviners still tend to choose particular songs that suit the purpose of the particular *intlombe*, I have found with Gogo Morwadi and Chief Gcaleka (with whom I attended the majority of *iintlombe* during my active research), tend to have a set repertoire of music, or at least, several songs which they regularly perform at *iintlombe*.

Could one consider Gogo Morwadi and Chief Gcaleka as an 'exception to the rule', or is the general trend in divination methodology changing, with regard to the nature of its songs

? What I find particularly interesting in Chief Gcaleka's case, is his attitude towards the contextualisation of songs. In light of his expanded ancestral realm, as incorporated into his system of beliefs, he acknowledges more than two categories of ancestors. As demonstrated overtly in his statement, "(ancestral) spirits of different types come with songs of different types" - he performs particular songs associated with the respective categories.

The songs associated with *amandawu* are a case in point. Although their texts are in Xhosa, and the mode and (in some cases) the metrical patterns of the accompanying drumming and clapping parts conform to those found in 'traditional' Xhosa music, the rhythm of the vocal-melodic pattern in combination with the former, is 'foreign' to Xhosa divination music.

The incorporation of *amandawu* spirits into Nguni worldview is a recent development and with such adaptation, its associated music - classified by Chief Gcaleka as *iingoma zomNdawu* - will also undergo change. Furthermore, it has been stated that "musical change...is not 'caused' by 'contact among people and cultures' or the 'movement of populations': it is brought about by decisions made by individuals about music making and music on the basis of their experiences of music and attitudes to it in different social contexts." (Nettl and Blacking in Blacking, 1995:160) This is further postulated by Bascom and elaborated by Kubik, that ultimately, stability and change in musical style rests in the hands of the individual. In the light of innovation in cross-cultural exchange; "without invention, neither acculturation nor diffusion could take place. Every idea has its origin, ultimately, with some individual living at some time in some society, even though we may never know who, when or where." (Bascom in Kubik, 1986:57)

In divination music, the idea and composition of a song will be the responsibility of an individual diviner. The diviner will then convey the musical idea and its text to people in the community. "Like a political leader...he needs the response of others...he invites friends, relations to hear his idea, and to teach them what they should do and how they should respond." (Kubik, 1986:57) Diviners as chief officiants of ritual action, are powerful instigators of musical variation (within musical continuity) and innovation, implying musical change. During my research, I discovered that each of my informants were unique with regard to their divination practices. Certainly none of them have fitted entirely into the stereotypical image of a diviner, as provided by current literature. The same may be said for their changing musical practices, which show the adoption of new elements. This idea is verified by Blacking, who states that, "music is the best equipped of the performing arts to express both the ever-changing realities of biological and social life and the continuity of the concepts on which human societies depend for their existence." (1995:153)

 NOTES

1. *-vumisa* is a consent method of divination, "a hot-cold technique in which the diviner gauges whether he is close to the right solution by observing the way the audience responds." (Hansen, 1981:571) Also see Hunter (1964:336) and Hammond-Tooke (1974:356).
2. *umgidi* (Xh) a marriage party; a drinking party; *umgido* (Xh) a very large number; a myriad; ten thousand; a million. (McLaren, 1994:45)
3. *igubu* (Xh) musical instrument made from a calabash; drum. (McLaren, 1994:50)
4. *-thumbu* (Xh) the gut or small intestine of animals. (McLaren, 1994:169)
5. It is customary in some ritual contexts for the sacrificial meat to be apportioned formally out to those attending the event. The different age sets and hence social status seems to dictate the type of meat to be apportioned to an individual. I have witnessed this in rural context, during an *umcimbi* in the Eastern Cape, where the different age sets and sexes also had specifically defined eating areas. In subsequent *iintlombe* that I attended with Gogo Morwadi in the Cape Township areas, I noticed that the diviners were always served their meat first.
6. The lyrical content of this song was also documented (but the music not transcribed) by Coppenhall, with slight textual variation, as sung by Gogo Morwadi and her then associate diviners. (1990:315)
7. *Oothokoza* means literally "those who *-thokoza*."
8. According to informants, the term *-khehle* in this context refers to male lineage ancestors or 'father' ancestors. Gogo Morwadi, however, informed me that *khehle* is synonymous with *amadlozi* (ancestors). Its suggested derivation by Hansen, is from the Zulu term, *-khehla*, denoting "to adopt a head-ring (as a married man)." (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:386)
9. Coppenhall has described *-thokozisa* in context of an *intlombe* which he witnessed as thus: "When all the diviners had entered the lounge, Gogo Nomayeza proceeded to deliver a number of lengthy speeches, interrupting the music to do so. Upon her conclusion, each diviner then took it in turns (according to status) to perform *-thokozisa*. Each performance of *-thokozisa* alternated with sessions of group dancing (*-xhentsa*)." (1990:179)
10. From the word, *-giyi*, (Zulu), meaning "expert in warlike antics." (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:250)
11. The addition of such a whistle is definitely a Swazi phenomenon, according to a Xhosa diviner informant, who told me that whistles are not used when *amagqirha* dance, because

it "upsets their heads" and prohibits the communication between the ancestors and themselves. This was substantiated by an informant who said that a whistle may be a negative influence on the *amakhosi* (ancestors which appear with a characteristic whistling sound in the recipient's ears). No authors report the use of a whistle amongst Xhosa diviners.

12. *Luister hierso! Sy vra asseblief dat elkeen van julle - as jy nie sing nie - dat jy net jou hande klap en dan kan sy dans. As julle nie hande klap nie - dit maak haar kragteloos!*

13. From *-nqolo* (Xh) back of the head. (McLaren 1994:109)

14. *umqonqo* (Xh) spinal cord of the animal. (McLaren 1994:109)

15. According to a fellow student, Ms Nunzia Faxi, the Xhosa term *camagu* is related to the word '*enkosi*' (thank you), or *ukubulela* (to thank). Often, the term is qualified as in *camagu livumile*, roughly meaning, 'the ancestors are acknowledging.'

16. Makhosi Mzizi told me that he was born on 25 May 1969, and he was from Qwa Qwa. After completing Standard 9, he realised that he would never be able to enjoy a 'nine to five' job, and that his talent lay in helping other people with their problems. Makhosi Mzizi underwent his *-thwasa* period with a Zulu diviner in 1989 at Thembisa. He graduated in 1990 and has worked in several areas around South Africa. He was unable to work in his own home because his grandfather became jealous and the family began to expect him to work under them. Makhosi Mzizi stated that it was good to move around, as he believed that working in different areas, such as Cape Town at present, tested his talent for divination and helped him ascertain whether his powers were still strong.

17. From *-vuma* (Xh) - to consent, agree, accede, assent to, admit, confess etc. (McLaren, 1994:179)

18. *Indlamu* is a stamping dance developed by Zulu migrant workers and performed by all Nguni nowadays.

19. Component Xhosa words: *Hlungu (ubu)*- (Xh) pain, grief, sorrow; poison, venom; cure, medicine, antidote (McLaren, 1994:61); *-gula*, turn aside; moan, groan, be ill (McLaren, 1994:51); *u-vumelana*, agree with, contract. (McLaren, 1994:178)

20. *-Bonga* (Xh) praise, celebrate (McLaren, 1994:15)

21. From *-dabula* (Z) pass through, cut across (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:134) From *-zwe* (Z) Nation, tribe, clan; State. (Ibid, 1990:902)

22. *-buya* (Z) return, go back, come back, return from (Doke, Malcolm, Sikakana, Vilakazi, 1990:94) Also, *-buya* (Xh)- come back, go back, return. (McLaren, 1994:19)

23. Textual variation is also documented by Coppenhall, the first variation being the one I encountered in this rendition:

Variation I: *O lamadoda lelizwe* (The men of the world)

Variation II: *O zezondaba zezwe* (The news of the world)

24. *umfazi* (Xh) a woman, a married woman, a wife. (McLaren, 1994:38)
25. From *ibala* (Xh) an open space, clearing, a forest glade (McLaren, 1994:6)
29. *-hlungu* (Xh) pain, grief, sorrow; poison, venom; cure, medicine, antidote. (McLaren, 1994:61)
27. *-cela* (Xh) to ask for, request; beg (McLaren, 194:22)
28. *ukulunga* (Xh) goodness (McLaren, ,1994:84)
29. *kuphahla* (SiS) to offer libation. (Rycroft, 1982:78)
30. The term *uk-ombela* was not used by any of my informants, who seemed to on occasion, use the word, *-culela* (Xh), sing for. (McLaren, 1994:25)
31. *umhlahlo* (Xh) a meeting held for divination. (McLaren, 1994:56)
32. *qubula* (Xh) smear a patient with cow-dung (of a witchdoctor). (McLaren, 1994:140)

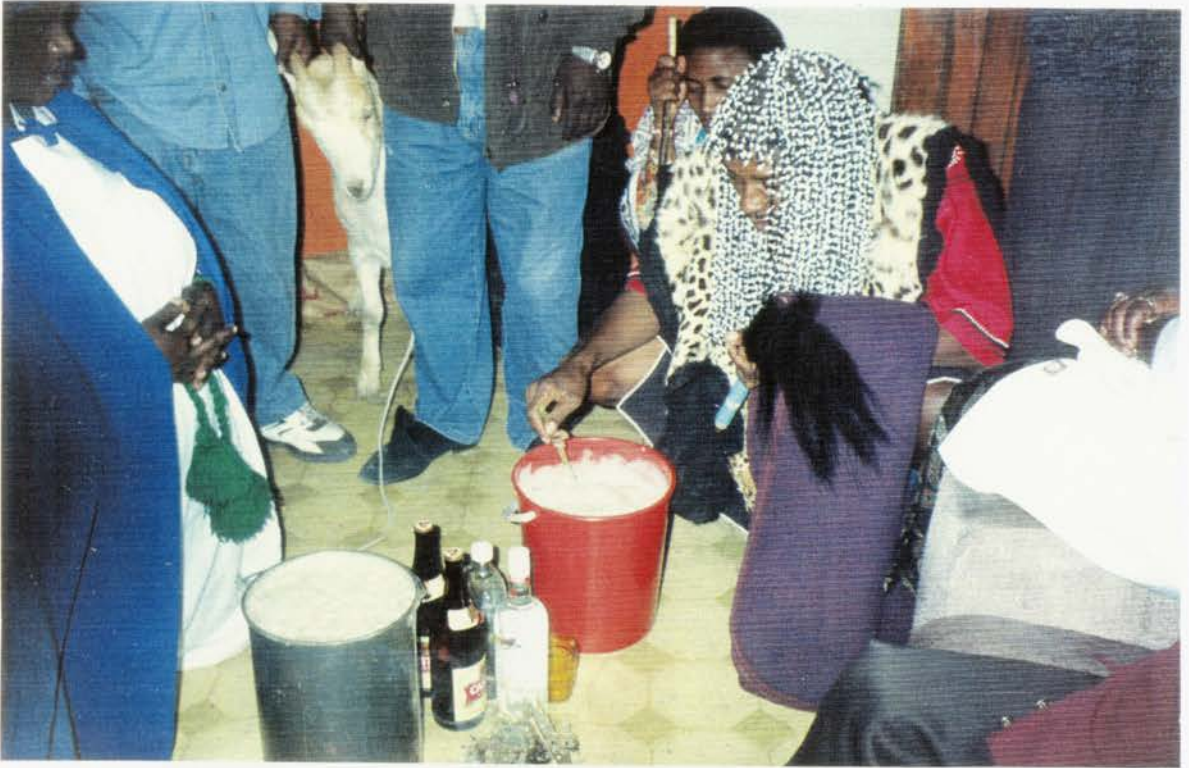


Plate 1:
Chief Gcaleka performing
-phehla.



Plate 2:
The first sheep is sacrificed
in the driveway of the house.



Plate 3:

A Reflexology treatment being performed on Gogo Morwadi's son, Aubrey.



Plate 4:

Jeff performing *ukugida* Swalala.



Plates 5, 6 & 7: Various diviners experiencing states of *ihlombe*.

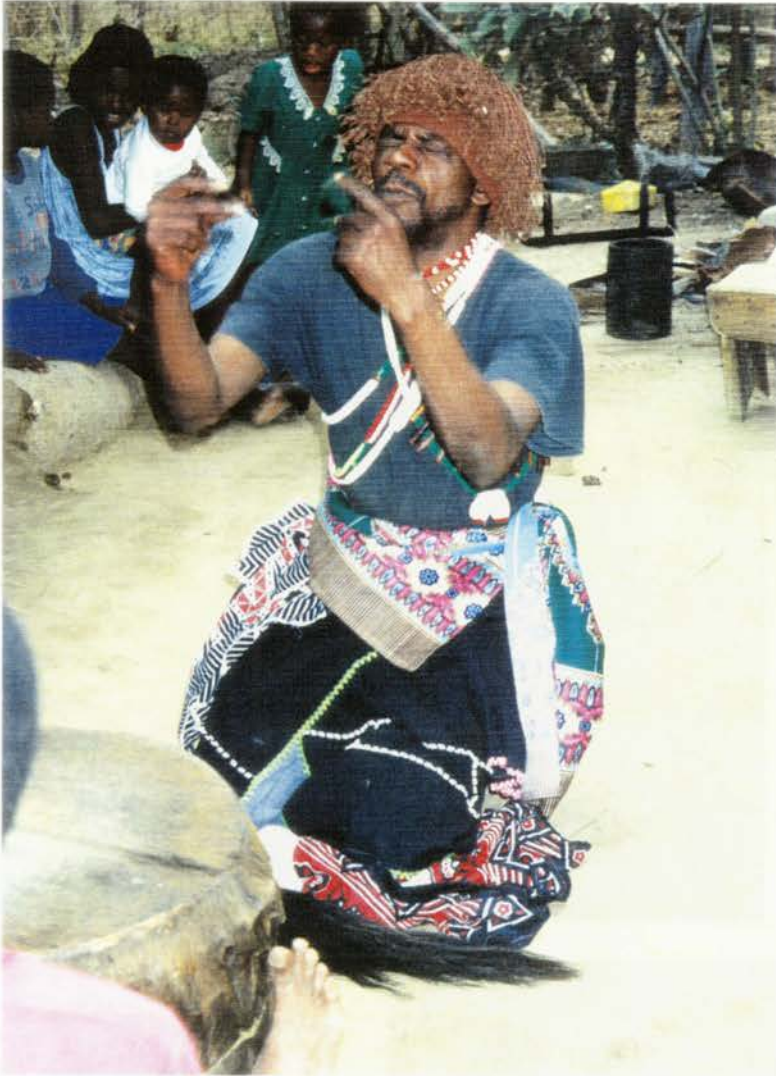


Plate 8:
Jeff performing *-thokozisa*,
Swalala.

Plate 9:
Gogo Dubulamanzi conducting
-thokozisa with Gogo Morwadi,
Gugulethu *intlombe*.





Plate 10:
Chief Gcaleka donning
Zionist robes.



Plate 11:
Chief Gcaleka donning
Zionist robes.



Plate 12:

-Hlehla actions at an *intlombe*, Swalala.



Plate 13:

-Hlehla actions at an *intlombe*, New Crossroads.

Plate 14:

A Xhosa male initiate
in typical regalia.

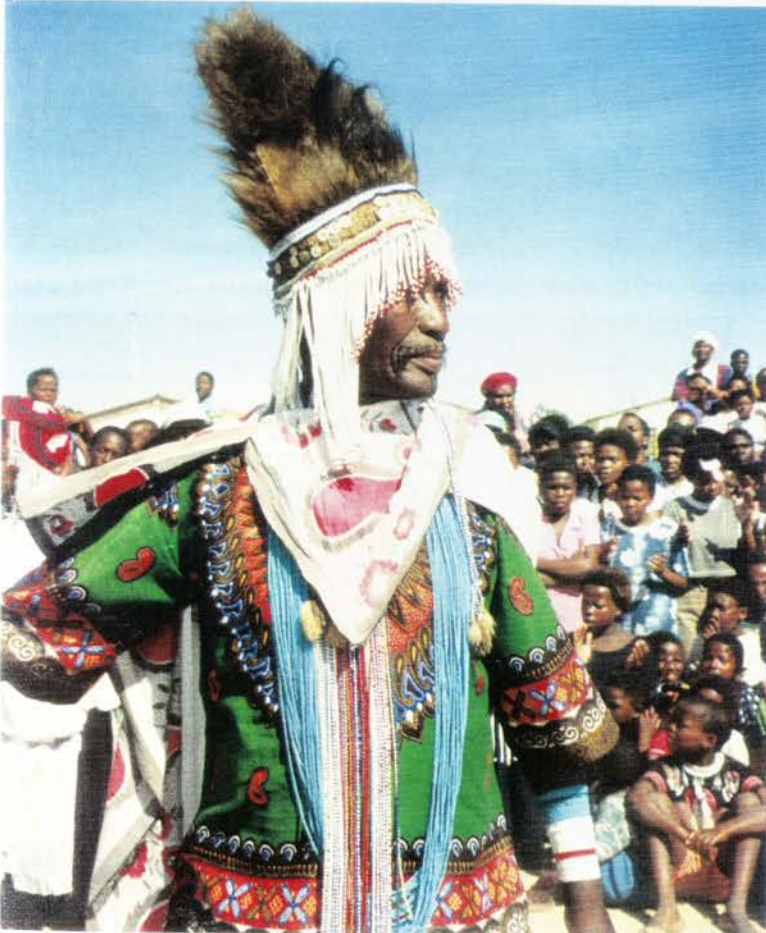


Plate 15:

A Xhosa diviner displays a
beadwork headress that covers
his eyes.



Plate 16: Two initiate diviners wearing white beads, their skins whitened with calamine lotion.



Plate 17: Ritual killing in the kraal - an all male affair. (*umcimbi*, Phelindaba.)



Plate 18: Food preparation in the kitchen - the women take time off to sing a song.



Plate 19:
Women performing *ukuxhentsa*.
PHELINDABA.



Plate 20:
Chief Gcaleka performing
-jikeleza.

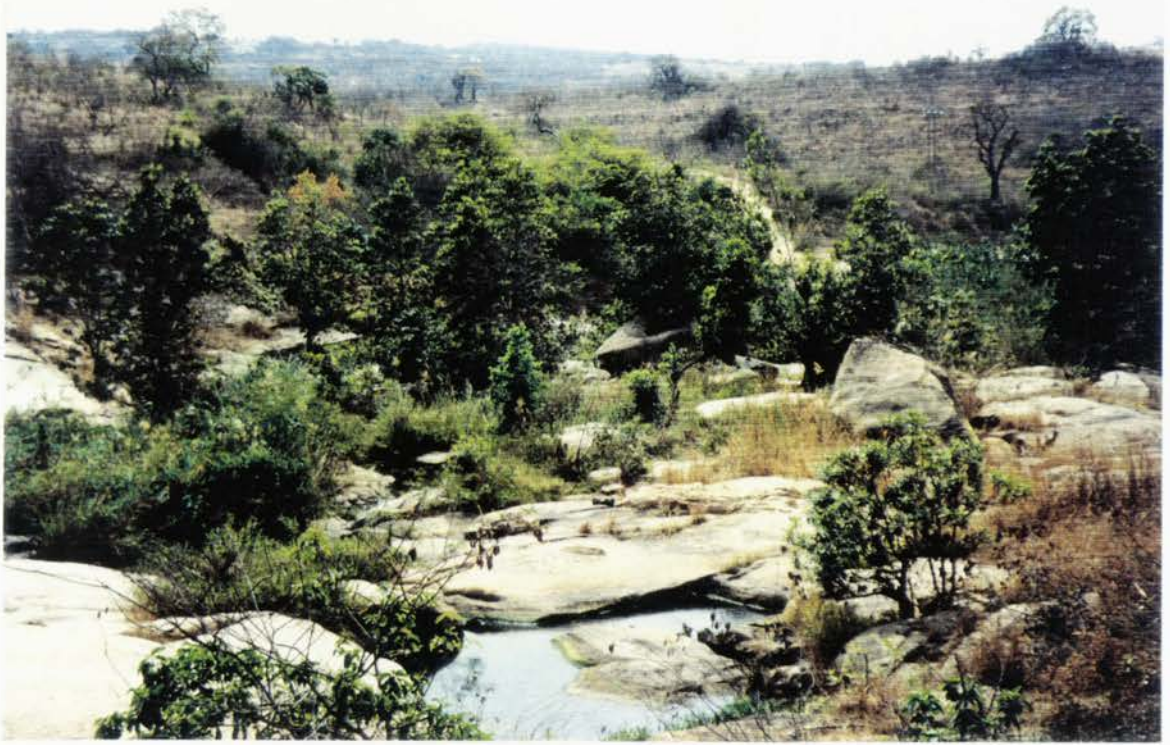


Plate 21:

A collection area for medicinal plants near Swalala, Mpumalanga.



Plate 22:

Collected medicinal plants. Swalala, Mpumalanga.



Plate 23:
Gogo Lamashigo's *amathambo*.



Plate 24:
Medicine being administered to Gogo Morwadi's body at the start of the *-femba* ritual.



Plate 25: The *-femba* commences with a *-phahla* session.



Plate 26: Vusi performs *-hlehla*.



Plate 27: Vusi employs a switch on Gogo Morwadi's body.



Plate 28:
Inducing sneezing at the door.



Plate 29:
Vusi sneezing at the entrance of the room.



Plate 30:
Vusi whistles.



Plate 31:
Vusi 'pulls' Gogo Morwadi's feet.



Plate 32:

Vusi lies on the mat as if dead.



Plate 33:

Vusi takes off the *emahiya* and puts on the regalia associated with the *Manguni* ancestors.



Plate 34:
In Gogo Morwadi's *indumba* stands her medicine chest, with the *isikhwama* on the top shelf covered with a red cloth.



Plate 35:
Gogo Morwadi performing *-ganda* (crushing medicine) in front of her *cansi*, laid out in preparation for the pending *intlombe*.



Plate 36:

The sacrificial carcass is laid in front of the *icansi*.

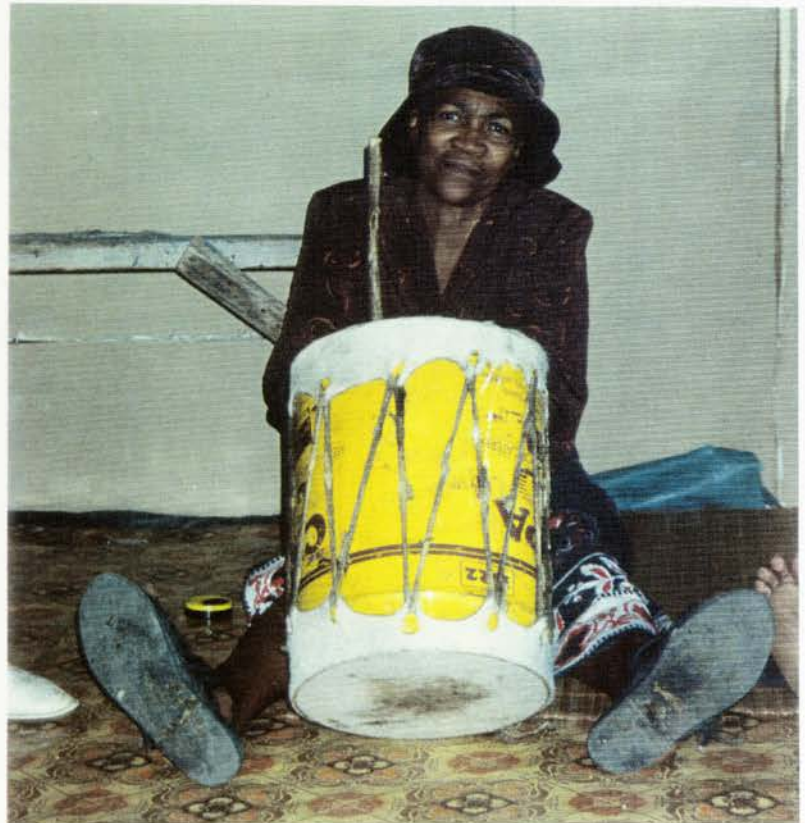


Plate 37:
Gogo Morwadi demonstrates the playing of an *igubu* drum.



Plate 38:

Jeff demonstrates the performance of an *igubu* drum.



Plate 39:

The traditional method of placing drums in front of a fire in order to tune them.



Plate 40:

Gogo Morwadi performing
-thokozisa with Makhosi
Mzizi, a Zulu diviner.



Plate 41:

Gogo Dubulamanzi shown
majestically attired in her
ceremonial regalia.



Plate 42:
Gogo Tryfina dressed in
regalia associated with
amandawu.



Plate 43:
Phakamile - an *ithwasa* in
his regalia.



Plate 44:
Makhosi Mzizi, Phakamile's
training diviner.



Plate 45:
The sacrifice -
Makhosi Mzizi pierces the
animal's spinal cord with
the sacrificial spear.



Plate 46:

Imphepho (*Helichrysum
miconiaefolium*).



Plate 47:

Phakamile inhales burning
imphepho before commen-
cing with *-xhentsa*



Plate 48:
Makhosi Mzizi conducting
-vumisa.



Plate 49:
A Swazi *ithwasa* dancing
outside in the morning
sunlight during her
ukugoduswa ceremony.

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