

**AN EVALUATION OF SOME STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES
IN ZULU MUSIC AND POETRY**

BY

NAKANJANI GOODENOUGH SIBIYA

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NAKANJANI GOODENOUGH SIBIYA

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PROMOTER: PROF. L.F. MATHENJWA

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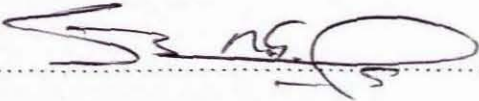
DECLARATION

I declare that this research project entitled:

AN EVALUATION OF SOME STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES IN ZULU MUSIC AND POETRY

is my own work, that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and
acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature.....



Date.....

20.07.2007.

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SUMMARY

We propose to approach this study in the following manner:

- Chapter 1 introduces the study.
- Chapter 2 gives the theoretical outline of the approaches that will be used in this study.
- Chapter 3 looks at the plot and how artists have handled its elements in their compositions.
- Chapter 4 deals with characterization and illustrates how music and poetry display unique features of characterization.
- Chapter 5 discusses theme and indicates various issues that Zulu musicians and poets address in their artistic expressions.
- Chapter 6 focuses on stylistic features and how style impacts on the stories that we find in Zulu music and poetry.
- Chapter 7 deals with performance and its role in storytelling.
- Chapter 8 is a conclusion that also suggests possible future research projects.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 PREAMBLE

Storytelling plays a very significant role in the daily activities of human beings. With regard to the significance of storytelling, Compton's Encyclopedia (1994:636) explains:

Storytelling is as old as man. People were telling stories to one another, around campfires and waterholes long before written language developed.

Like many nations around the world, Zulus are renowned for their storytelling abilities that date back to time immemorial. A look at their folktales, riddles, praises, songs, etc, reveals a rich heritage of unsurpassed storytelling techniques. In this chapter we are going to illustrate why we feel that there is need for an evaluation of how Zulu artists use music and poetry as a platform for communicating messages through stories. We are going to define some concepts that will be used in this study and indicate their relevance in elucidating the storytelling aspect of Zulu music and poetry. We are also going to look at some studies that have been undertaken in Zulu music and poetry and clarify how we intend to tackle this study.

1.1 AIM OF STUDY

This study has been prompted by a realisation that scholars in Zulu oral and written literature seem to have overlooked the role of music and poetry in conveying stories that are rich in meaning and message. The main focus of many scholars always falls on folktales, novels, and short stories as narrative manifestations of artistic expressions in Zulu.

A lot of research has been undertaken in Zulu poetry and music. Praise poems, particularly those of Zulu kings, have attracted a lot of interest. Scholars like Cope

(1968), Finnegan (1974), Gunner (1984), Nyembezi (1995) and many others have analysed and applauded the beautiful and impressive creative style that is the trademark of *izibongi* in Zulu. Little mention, however, is made by these scholars with regard to the role of *izibongo* as a storytelling medium. We have various examples of how portions and sometimes the whole of *izibongo* are used to tell a story. Let us look, for instance, at the story that Dingane's *imbongi* tells in the following lines:

Izibuko likaNdaba,
Elimadwal'abushelelezi
Lashelel'uPiti nendodana.
Owadl'uPiti kumaBhunu,
Wamudla wamtshobotshela...
(Nyembezi, 1995: 48)

(The ford of Ndaba
Which has slippery rocks
That caused Piet and his son to slip.
He who devoured Piet among the Afrikaners
And swallowed him with ease...)

In most cases, when comments are made about the above lines, emphasis falls on the imagery, repetition and rhyme that are found in these lines. But what we observe in the above lines is that the bard is very skilful and innovative with regard to the style that he uses in telling this story of how Dingane plotted the demise of Retief and Maritz. The bard alludes to the extensiveness of this massacre by mentioning many Afrikaners, whose names seem to have been his own creation. In this case the bard shows that Dingane did not only kill the well-known Afrikaners such as Piet and Maritz, there were also many unknowns who were killed.

The above excerpt from Dingane's praises is one of many examples that show how Zulu poets have been skilful storytellers for many years. It does not surprise us therefore to note how even today, many poets still use poetry as a storytelling medium. In praise poetry we find various examples of how incidents in the lives of people are used by poets to tell stories. With regard to this, Gule (1990:112) maintains that:

Characters and incidents are indivisible in praise poetry. The poet refers to incidents which revolve around the character... Poets refer to incidents in poetry in order to enliven their poems and add vigour and a better comprehension of the praised personality.

Many scholars who have written volumes of literary analysis of the poetry of great Zulu poets such as B. W. Vilakazi, D.B.Z Ntuli, C.T. Msimang, J.C. Dlamini, etc. have only offered superficial comments on the commendable storytelling abilities of these poets. Some scholars have commented, albeit in passing, about the narrative style that is prevalent in some poets' compositions. Zulu (1994: 69), for instance, alludes to the narrative qualities of C.S.Z. Ntuli's poetry:

His poems are generally characterised by the presence of an introduction, followed by exposition, which in turn is followed by a conclusion of some kind. In most cases the sting is in the tail of the poem.

It is also only in passing, for instance, that Ntuli (1984: 98) comments on the narrative qualities of Ugqozi by B.W. Vilakazi when he says:

The poem contains properly ordered narrative. This is a beautifully streamlined story which works smoothly towards the climax when the mission of the poet has proved to be a great success.

In this study, we will try to take a closer look at how these aspects as mentioned by scholars such as Zulu and Ntuli as cited above, permeate other poets' literary works because we believe that Zulu poets have deliberately as well as unconsciously used poetry as means of portraying amusing, informative and heart-rendering stories. This has prevailed even in poems that are not necessarily classified as epics or narratives. We feel that it is an injustice on the part of our scholars to overlook the various narrative techniques used by Zulu poets to depict stories that preserve our cultural outlook and way of life.

The storytelling abilities of Zulu musicians have also suffered the same fate. Scholars have emphasised the structure, form and socio-cultural role of Zulu music without explicitly pointing out how songs are used to convey stories that depict the history and aspirations of the Zulus through the storytelling techniques of the musicians. Recent

studies have shown that our scholars are becoming aware of the literary value of traditional music like *amahubo*, *isicathamiya* and *maskandi* music. We note, however, that scholars like Msimang (1987), Ntuli (1990), Mathenjwa (1995) only focus on the literary qualities of *maskandi* music and overlook the storytelling abilities of the numerous talented storytellers who are prolific practitioners in this unique genre of music. Donda (1999) and Biyela (2000) give a detailed analysis of *amahubo* and *isicathamiya* respectively but only make cursory comments about the role of these musical genres as storytellers' mouthpiece.

In *amahubo*, for instance, we find fine examples of storytelling. Let us look at the following *ihubo*:

We ndun'uhamb'uqamb'amanga
 Ukhulum'amaganyan'aziswana
 Ingani wabaleka nje;
 Wabaleka kunzima kuliwa.
 We nduna wawubalekelani?
 Washiy'umunt'efile
 Kwagijim'iveni!

(Hey headman, you spread lies
 And make sarcastic comments
 While you in fact ran away;
 You ran away when the battle was on.
 Why did you run away?
 You left a dead man behind
 And the police were all over the place.)

Although details are quiet scanty in the above *ihubo*, there is no doubt that it tells a story of a cowardice, yet big mouthed *induna* who ran away when the battle was raging on, leaving a dead person behind. With regard to the role of *amahubo* as a storytelling medium, Mabuya (1988: 27) comments that:

Kufanele sikhumbule ukuthi amahubo avamise ukuqondaniswa nemikhosi ethile. Amanye ahutshelwa ubumnandi bawo. Amanye axoxa indaba ethile.

(We must remember that *amahubo* coincide with certain celebrations. Some are sung for their aesthetic qualities. Some tell a certain story.)

Isicathamiya music also has many examples of storytelling. Let us look at the following example of a song by Ladysmith Black Mambazo that tells a sad story about a woman who abandons her family:

Bantu bakwaMafuze
Buyisan'izinkomo zikababa
Umakot'uhambile
Washiy'izingane.

(People of the Fuzes
Bring back my father's cattle
The wife has gone away
And left the kids behind.)

Interestingly enough, during an interview with Joseph Shabalala on 14 September 2002 in Durban, he indicated that this song tells a true story about what happened to one of his brothers who used to work in Durban and therefore had to spend a long time away from his wife and children. When he returned home one day, he found that his wife had gone away, leaving children, fields and household chores unattended to. This song is only an example of many *isicathamiya* songs by various artists that are used to tell both real and fictitious stories. We feel that such stories deserve closer inspection from scholars.

We believe that *maskandi* artists have been undermined with regard to the message they communicate through storytelling in their music. In an interview with Bhekumuzi Luthuli on 23 January 2002 in Durban, he indicated that his song entitled Khokha, is about a Mr Mkhize, a producer who ripped him off royalties from one of his albums. Luthuli, who is one of the famous *maskandi* musicians, points out that he regards his music as a vital tool for storytelling:

I use my music as a weapon to deal with problems, frustrations and anger. Through my songs I also relate stories of people around me.

If we look at the praises that always accompany a *maskandi* song, we note with immense admiration that *maskandi* artists weave a beautiful story and entrench it in their music. Let us look, for instance, at what Mfiliseni Magubane says when he praises himself:

Mina nginguMqabulasheshe...
 UMalobola ngeshek'ekhwini lakhe kwaNongoma
 Kuze kuse umkhwe wakh'engalele
 Eth, "Ngekabani le ngane elobol'ingane yami ngesheke?"
 Ngathi mina, "Cha Mkhwe wami,
 Ngizolobola ingane yakho ngoba ngiyayithanda."
 Wathi yena, "Suka le nkinselana yaseNgudwini,
 Uhlushwa wubucebi, uhlushwa wubugwili!"

(I am the one who kisses with swiftness...
 He who pays *ilobolo* by cheque at his in-laws at Nongoma
 Making his father-in-law stay awake until sunrise
 Saying, "Who is paying *ilobolo* for my child by cheque?"
 To which I said, "No, my father-in-law,
 I've come to *lobola* your child because I love her."
 And he said, "Go away you rich man from Ngudwini,
 Your riches are giving you airs!")

There is no argument about the story that is being told in the above praises.

Choral compositions also indicate that Zulu composers and choristers cannot be left behind as avid storytellers. Let us look, for instance, at R.T. Caluza's song:

Kwathi belele kwelaseGoli
 Kwafik'abaseshi kanye nonongqayi.
 Kwathi bephaphama kwase kugcwele
 Abasesh'endlini bezofun'imbodlela.

(While they were asleep in Johannesburg
 Detectives and policemen arrived.
 By the time they woke, the house was full of
 Detectives searching for liquor.)

We can mention a host of other fine examples that display beyond reasonable doubt how Zulu musicians and poets have used their incredible talents to relate stories that have touched millions of hearts from time immemorial.

The aim of this research therefore is to highlight the storytelling function of Zulu music and poetry. We feel that musicians and poets do not only make compositions with the sole aim of entertaining, but that they also want to tell stories that do not only

appeal to their audience but also have didactic value. We will make an attempt to evaluate the literary techniques that are used by poets and musicians to tell stories.

The aim of this study is also to evaluate how novels and short stories compare with poetry and music as vehicles for transmitting stories among Zulus.

1.2. THE SCOPE OF STUDY

In this study, our focus will be on various types of Zulu poetry and music. As we all know, poetry among Zulus dates back to many centuries ago. For the scope of this study we are going to evaluate storytelling techniques in both traditional and modern poetry. We are going to look at different types of traditional poetry such as *izibongo*, *izigiyi*, *izihasho*, etc. to ascertain how they are used by Zulu poets to tell their stories.

Our focus will also fall on modern poetry in which we will deal with lyrics, ballads, epics, modern praises, etc. that are found in Zulu poetry. The aim will be to ascertain the storytelling elements that are found in these modern forms of poetry in order to see how Zulu poets have adopted Western poetry forms and how this has affected their storytelling endeavours.

We will use the same approach in evaluating storytelling in music. We are going to look at traditional music and analyse the narrative techniques that feature in certain traditional songs. With regard to modern or popular music, our scope will cover *maskandi*, *isicathamiya*, *umgqashiyo*, *umbhaqanga*, *kwaito*, jazz, etc. in order to determine how musicians of recent times have preserved the storytelling techniques of their forefathers through music. Our study will also point out the overlap in traditional and modern or popular music forms. In other words, we will highlight how *maskandi* music, for instance, comprises features of both traditional and modern music and how this has a bearing on stories that artists narrate.

Zulu musicians and poets have been extremely prolific and have produced thousands of materials, both traditional and modern. With regard to the abundance of music in modern times, Grunfeld (1994: 143) comments that:

Never before has there been so much music available to so vast an audience, or such multiplicity of ways for human beings to express their musical impulses.

The same abundance is found in poetry as well. This makes it impossible for one to evaluate all the storytelling techniques found in various forms of Zulu poetry and music. This study is merely a humble attempt at highlighting some narrative techniques that have been adopted by our artists to convey stories. It must be emphasised that this study does not in anyway whatsoever have pretensions of being exhaustive. To that end, we will make a random selection of songs and poems with the aim of highlighting the storytelling techniques found in them. Our focus will be on those songs and poems that are commonly known because of their popularity and that best illustrate the main points of our research.

1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

We feel that before we embark on the discussion of the various aspects of our study, we need to define and clarify some terms that will be used throughout this study. Our definition and discussion will be confined only to the terms that are relevant for this study, in other words, terms that apply to examples that we have chosen as those that best depict the storytelling role of music and poetry in Zulu.

1.3.1 STORY

According to Shipley (1970: 312) a story is:

The general term for a narrative or recital of events. In fiction, a story is usually regarded as the presentation of a struggle involving two opposing forces in conflict, and a goal.

Forster (1974: 42) defines a story as:

...A narrative of events arranged in their time sequence-dinner coming after breakfast, Tuesday after Monday, decay after death and so on.

Qua story, it can only have one merit: that of making the audience want
To know what happens next.

The difficulty associated with defining a story is best displayed by Garcia & Patrick (1974:80) who offer a rather amusing view of a story:

What, if anything is a story? Well, frankly, I do not exactly know, and believe no one exactly knows and if anyone does exactly know, I believe this knowing is not so terrifically important.

In most cases stories are transmitted orally. This necessitates the presence of a storyteller and an audience. The audience can only enjoy the story if a storyteller is endowed with skill and deftness to keep the story as interesting as possible and to end it in a manner that will satisfy the audience and make it want to hear more of the storyteller's tales. Stories are also told for entertainment and didactic purposes. This makes them an integral part of a society. With regard to the role of storytelling, Ntuli (1996: 7) explains:

Storytelling is a necessary activity that functions as a uniting force, a record of history and a springboard for future actions...Storytelling is innate in man irrespective of his oral or literary education.

1.3.2 MUSIC

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1992: 781), music is:

The art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) to produce beauty of form, harmony and expression of emotion.

The Webster's Family Encyclopedia (1994: 785) defines music as:

The art of organising sounds, which usually consist of tunes of definitive pitch to produce melody, harmony and rhythm.

The above definitions emphasise the fact that music is an artistic expression that demands great creativity on the part of the composer and the performer. In other words, music appeals more to the ear and the heart because in most cases it is

produced and performed by gifted individuals who have a lifetime commitment to entertaining us through music.

In this study we are going to be primarily concerned with African music and we are going to classify it under two groups, i.e. traditional and modern. We will confine ourselves to defining concepts that will be used in this study because of their narrative qualities.

1.3.2.1 TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MUSIC

This relates to music that is purely African, with no evidence of any Western influence. In most cases voices are used without any instrumental accompaniment while in other cases innovative instruments such *umakhweyana*, *ugubhu* are used. The scope of this study will only allow us to mention one type of traditional music, *ihubo*.

1.3.2.1.1 IHUBO

According to Mthethwa (1979: 40):

This type of indigeneous song which is recognisable by its slow tempo, is known as *ihubo*, (plural, *amahubo*).

Ntombela et al. (1997: 52) explain that *amahubo* are performed for various reasons: for celebrations, wars, religious rituals, funerals, etc. With regard to the role of *ihubo* during a battle, Krige (1950:339) explains:

Even when the enemy proved to be stronger than they were, the warriors would sing this song and finally succeed.

Sithole (1968: 16) contends that in the traditional Zulu setting, *ihubo* played a very crucial role in the transmission of the cultural heritage from generation to generation. Even today, *ihubo* is used as a means of recording and preserving vital historical information details of the nation, clan or family.

According to Donda (1999: 26) in composing *ihubo*, Zulus show that they derive inspiration from various sources: folktales, wars, witchcraft, etc. This means that there is a wide range of themes that are covered in *amahubo*.

1.3.2.2 MODERN AFRICAN MUSIC

With regard to modern African music, Xulu (1995: 74) says:

This consists of the musical styles which came about as a result of the secularisation of the Missionary Christian hymn and the fusion of the Western and African musical elements. These are *isicathamiya*, *maskanda*, choral music, wedding songs, *mbhaqanga*, choruses, and Zionist Church music. Name tags differ in various African cultures.

In this study our main focus will be on *isicathamiya* and *maskandi*, with of course some cursory comments on modern popular music forms such soul, kwaito, choral, etc.

1.3.2.2.1 ISICATHAMIYA

When defining *isicathamiya*, Msomi (1975: 57) says:

It is the traditional music which is the unconscious expression in melody of the real feelings, character and interests of a people.

Nkabinde (1997: 56) explains:

Isicathamiya is a musical genre which is named after the choreography of the male choirs. It is one of the music genres that came into being as a result of acculturation and inculturation after the discovery of gold in Johannesburg where migrant workers flocked to industrial areas to seek fortune.

Buthelezi (1996: 6) clarifies about the origin of this name:

Lo mculo wathola elithi isicathamiya ngoba kuyaye kuthi laphe seziyimunyunga ingoma izinsizwa, zinyakaze kancane sengathi ziyibona ngamehlo enyama, ziyayicathamela, zifuna ukuyibamba

ngesandla.

(This music got the name *isicathamiya* because when men sing, they move as if they see the song with the naked eye, approaching it stealthily as if to hold it by the hand.)

With regard to how the name of this music was derived, Mthethwa (1979: 18) elaborates:

In the early sixties, Alexius Buthelezi was a SABC Radio Zulu announcer who played this music and he called it cothoza. This word means a slow, rather cat-like movement which the groups performed on stage. The word Sicathamiya is derived from the verb cothoza.

Although we agree with Mthethwa's views about how the word *isicathamiya* came to be commonly used, another view may be that *isicathamiya* is derived from the verb *cathama* which seems to explain the manner in which these musicians '*cathamela*' or approach the song quietly and elegantly when they sing on stage.

According to Mthethwa (1979: 103):

Zulus who were converted to the Christian faith, as well as those who were not, interacted with the Western hymn in many ways resulting in what is known today as *isicathamiya*.

Nkabinde (1997: 11) further explains the origin of *isicathamiya* music:

...Among the many groups that sing this type of music the Ladysmith Black Mambazo have, within a short time, proved to be the best in the field. For this music is not only popular, but very old indeed.

1.3.2.2.2 MASKANDI

Ntuli (1990: 302) explains:

The word maskandi is taken from the Afrikaans word (musikant) and it refers to a musician who plays traditional tunes to a guitar.

The concertina is the second most popular instrument used by this musician, but the violin is also sometimes used.

Mathenjwa (1995: 2) avers:

This is a traditional type of music which contains both music and poetry.

Mthethwa (1979: 107) agrees with Ntuli and adds:

The word is used in Zulu to refer to the self-accompanying soloists on a guitar or concertina. The present trend shows a great tendency towards the guitar.

1.3.3 POETRY

The Concise Oxford dictionary (1992: 919) defines a poem as:

a metrical composition, usually concerned with feeling or imaginative description.

Mathenjwa (1994: 35) gives this elaborate definition:

Inkondlo ingamazwi aphilayo asetshenziswa ukweneka imizwa, imicabango kanye nendlela imbongi ebona ngayo izinto. La mazwi sithi ayaphila ngoba kunokuthile akwenzayo kulowo owafundayo nalowo osuke ewalalele. Ayakwazi ukungena emizweni yakhe agcine naye esezizwa esesimeni eyayikuso imbongi ngenkathi ibhala inkondlo.

(A poem comprises living words that are used to bare feelings and how a poet perceives things. We say these words are alive because they do something to one who reads or listens to them. They are able to penetrate feelings until he or she feels what the poet felt when writing the poem.)

According to Myers & Simms (1989: 235):

Most critics and writers agree on its (the poem) power to move its readers with its depth of penetration but few agree upon a specific definition.

According to Shaw (1972: 290) a poem is:

A composition in verse that is characterised by highly developed artistic form, the use of rhythm and the employment of heightened language to express imaginative interpretation of situation or idea.

Poetry therefore is concerned with the work or art of a poet. Ngidi (2001: 31) says:

Poetry is the highest expression of creative inspiration. Poetry uses creative language in a special way for a special purpose. The usual form is achieved by the use of repetition in various guises, such as alliteration, rhyme and the unusual concentration and emotional effect by the use of imagery reinforced by repetition.

There is of course general agreement that poetry is difficult to define. According to Shaw (1972: 292):

Poetry cannot really be defined because it involves many differing aspects of subject matter, form and effect.

There are various types of poems that are found in Zulu oral and written poetry. In this study we are going to divide poetry in two categories, i.e. oral or traditional and modern or written poetry.

1.3.3.1 ORAL OR TRADITIONAL POETRY

Oral or traditional poetry refers to poems that were composed and committed to memory and passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. There are various forms of such poetry in Zulu but we are going to confine ourselves only to those that are relevant for this study.

1.3.3.1.1 *IZIBONGO*

Izibongo are complimentary compositions to praise, honour and elevate the status of the object of praise. The vital function or role of *izibongo* is mentioned, amongst others, by Derwent (1998: 134) who clarifies:

An important part of any traditional Zulu ceremony is the saying of praises (*izibongo*) acknowledging the ancestors and the male members

of the family or anyone closely involved in the ceremony.

Izibongo can be used to praise kings, ordinary people, both male and female, animals and objects. During various ceremonies and celebrations, *izibongo* play an important role in adding an authentic African flavour to the occasion.

1.3.3.1.2 *IZIGIYO OR IZIHASHO*

Most people say that *izigiyo* or *izihasho* are used for people other than kings and prominent figures in the society. Ntuli (1992: 5) says:

...Lokhu (*izibongo nezihasho*) kuthi akufane ngoba ngokwejwayelekile kuye kuthiwe yizibongo nje konke. Kodwa umahlukwana ukuthi elezibongo lisetshenziselwa izibongo zamakhosi ohlanga noma izinduna kanti izibongo zabanye abantu nje kuthiwa yizihasho.

(...This (*izibongo* and *izihasho*) are more or less the same because they are usually collectively called *izibongo*. But a slight difference is that *izibongo* is used for praises of the kings or headmen while praises for commoners are simply called *izihasho*.)

Gunner (1984: 62) concurs with Ntuli and explains:

For those who have no bards to sing their praises in their lifetime, the business of composition and of performance is carried on by the bearers of *izibongo* themselves, by their family and their companions, in particular their peer group.

Thwala and Maphumulo (1991:39) do not give any distinction between *izibongo* and *izigiyo*. They elaborate:

Izibongo insizwa ibiyaziwa ngazo uma ihlezi nezinye izinsizwa. Bezigcina sezifana negama layo, igama layo langempela selikhohlakele lingasaziwa... Uma isibizwa kanjalo bekuthi cosololo enhliziyweni. Izigiyo zona bezishiwo uma izinsizwa kade zibusa zidla inyama. Izigiyo zivamisa ukuba zimfishane kakhulu.

(A young man was known by his praises among his peers. They ended up being used as his name, his original real name forgotten and no longer known... When called in that manner, he would feel a very deep satisfaction.

Izigiyo were used when men had been eating meat. Usually *izigiyo* are very short.)

The above definition gives us the function of *izigiyo* or *izihasho*. We are worried, however, about the emphasis on the past tense which creates an impression that the practice of *ukugiya* is no longer prevalent these days. *Izigiyo* or *izihasho* are still used even today. We must also stress that females also have their own *izihasho* or *izigiyo* which are used during various ceremonies and social gatherings. It is wrong to always emphasise that men eat '*inhloko*', drink beer and celebrate by *ukusina* and *ukugiya*. When there is a feast, women also have their own meat and beer and also celebrate through song, dance and *ukugiya*.

With regard to the performance of *ukugiya* by women, Gunner in Clayton (1989: 16) clarifies:

In the performance of a praise poem, an individual leaps to her feet and in the centre of a circle begins to dance. She leads with a song which may either be well-known or composed by her to accompany her praise poem. There is usually a short and simple refrain that is taken up by the seated women around her.

To illustrate the still widely prevalent use of *izigiyo*, Derwent (1998: 134) explains:

An important part of many Zulu ceremonies is the *ukugiya*, a dance to entertain the crowds during which the man who is dancing receives affirmation from his friends and relatives. He puts on a comical display or fights an imaginary foe, while his friends call out his praises, which often contain astute observations on his character.

Makhanya (1997: 10) has this to say about the role of *izihasho*:

Izihasho are a form of oral history of the ordinary man. This record imbues a man with pride... Sometimes they are recited to honour an individual or to admonish a person for his unacceptable behaviour.

Izihasho or *izigiyo* are therefore a reflection of how a person is perceived by the society. In most cases he may be given *izihasho* that may not be acceptable to him. Unfortunately there is no room for rejecting the praises that have been bestowed upon an individual by the society. In other words, when a person *giyas* his performance may

include praises that he was initially uncomfortable with, but has to accept because that is how people perceive him. Turner (1990: 112) agrees:

The oral person identifies himself with what people say about him, this is his personal yardstick to measure his own value in the society.

1.3.3.2 MODERN OR WRITTEN POETRY

Modern poetry refers to the poetry that is composed by modern poets and committed to written form. This poetry is largely influenced by Western forms in terms of structure and content. We must mention, however, that Zulu poets have, to a very large extent, adapted these Western requirements to produce poems that manifest a rich African traditional flavour that still displays close affinity to and conformity with oral techniques and forms of traditional poetry as discussed above.

Broadly speaking, there are three 'genres' or categories of poetic conventions, i.e. the narrative, the lyrical and the dramatic. The latter is usually found in plays in the form of the soliloquies and dramatic monologues and will not be covered in this study. In this study we will confine ourselves to definitions of the types that will be the focus of our research. In other words, definitions that will be given underneath pertain to types of poems that best illustrate the storytelling role of Zulu poets. We must emphasise, however, that poems do not always fit neatly into one category or another. A narrative, for instance, may have lyric elements.

1.3.3.2.1 NARRATIVE POETRY

Maphumulo (1993: 66) defines narrative poems in this way:

Izinkondlo ezilandayo zivame ukuxoxa indaba. Le ndaba ixoxa
ngezinto esinokuzibona kanye nalezo ezisemcabangweni yethu.
Izehlakalo okuxoxwa ngazo kuyona kudingeka ukuba zivumelane.

(Narrative poems usually tell a story. This story relates to real as well as imaginary events. Events that are covered in it should be meaningful.)

Let us look at some of the 'sub-genres' of narrative poetry:

1.3.3.2.1.1. EPIC

Khumalo (1995: 85) defines this type of poetry with a detailed elaboration:

Lolu hlobo lugxile ekwelukeni indaba ende eyake yenzeka noma eyifa lemicabango. Le ndaba ingagxila esehlakalweni esake senzeka noma kube ngesiqutshulwe lusikisiki nosinga engqondweni yembongi. Kwesinye isikhathi ingaba nesiqalo, indikimba nesiphetho. Nakuba ilanda kepha izinze esakhiweni esingqumo waso umathe nolimi nokunkondloza.

(This type focuses on weaving a long factual or fictitious story. This story can focus on an event that once took place or one that is a product of a poet's inspiration. In some cases it can have a beginning, body and conclusion. Although narrative in nature, its main thrust is a structure that has close affinity to poetic expression.)

Makhambeni (1989: 102) gives this definition about epic poems:

Lezi izinkondlo ezixoxa indaba ethile eyake yenzeka. Kuvame ukuba inkondlo le ibe nomlingiswa othile okuxoxwa ngaye. Lena yinkondlo ecishe ifane nenkondlo elandisayo. Kulolu hlobo lwenkondlo siye sithole umlingiswa okunguyena obhekene nenkinga ethile enkondlweni.

(These are poems that tell a certain story that once took place. Usually this poem has a character who is the subject of the story. This is the poem that is almost similar to a narrative poem. In this type of poem we find a character who is faced with a certain problem in the poem.)

According to Msimang (1997: 104) there are similarities between *izibongo* and an epic. He explains:

Bukhulu ubudlelwane phakathi kwezibongo ne-ephiki. Empeleni ziyatholakala kakhulu izimpawu ze-ephikhi ezibongweni. I-ephikhi phela yinkondlo endekazi esikhinikela ngomlando wamaqhawe amakhulu. Kungaba amaqhawe omlando noma kube amaqhawe asezinganekwaneni.

(There is close relationship between *izibongo* and an epic. In fact *izibongo* display many characteristics of an epic. An epic is a very long poem that relates history about great heroes. These can be heroes from history or from the world of fables.)

The above definitions emphasise the fact that an epic relates a story about characters and events. It is surprising that in Zulu very few epics have been written in spite of Zulus being renowned for their storytelling abilities. As far as we are aware, only three fully-fledged epics have been produced in Zulu, i.e., *Inyathi KaNdaba* by M.S.S. Gcumisa, *UNodumehlezi KaMenzi*, by C.T. Msimang and *Madiba!* by E.S.Q. Zulu. There are also some attempts at epics by B.W. Vilakazi, Z.L.M. Khumalo, etc. but the glaring shortcoming of these epics is that they are not long enough to satisfy the requirements of an epic as elucidated in the definitions we cited above.

The scarcity of Zulu epics can largely be attributed to the fact that Zulu poetry anthologies have always been produced according to strict and rigid school curriculum requirements which have never encouraged prescription of poetry books in epic forms. In most cases, anthologies that have been published for the school market had to include various poetry genres by various poets, all crammed into one book, thus leaving no room for a lengthy epic narrative.

On the other hand, Finnegan (1974: 110) comments that the scarcity of epics is not confined to Zulu poetry:

All in all, epic poetry does not seem to be a typical African form. Certain elements of the epic come into many other forms of poetry and prose...But in general terms, epic seems to be of remarkably little significance in African oral tradition.

1.3.3.2.1.2 BALLAD

Miller and Greenberg (1993: 160) say:

The heart of the ballad is the story, with incidents taken from the supernatural, from the folklore, from political and family histories. The story is usually presented from a neutral, impersonal point of view and with a minimum of descriptive detail.

Most scholars agree that there are three types of ballads. The traditional is orally transmitted and is in most cases the product of illiterate composers. The literary is written by learned poets who largely derive their inspiration from the traditional one.

The third type is the popular one, which is characterised by its sharp contrast to the traditional one in terms of content and delivery. While the traditional is heroic and tragic in tone, the popular is unheroic, realistic and displays a sharp sense of humour on the part of the composer.

According to Pretorius and Swart (1982: 51) there is also a national ballad. They define it as:

A narrative poem recounting a stirring, dramatic episode. The story often centres around love or bodily courage and is usually of a tragic nature... The story jumps from one main moment to the next, leaving gaps in the narration.

With regard to the storytelling role of the ballad Ehrenpreis (1986: 11) says:

Storytelling is afterall, the oldest preoccupation of literature and the way the ballad tells a story has long been admired. It deals with a single situation revealed dramatically, with little intrusion on the part of the storyteller.

1.3.3.2.3 LYRIC POETRY

Lyric poems also tell a story but from the point of view of the poet and with the aim of expressing his emotions and feelings about his or her surroundings. With regard to the lyrical poem, Mathenjwa (1994: 38) says:

Lolu uhlobo lwenkondlo olweneka imizwa yembongi. Le nkondlo isuke iveza imizwa yembongi ngalokho ekucabangayo nendlela ebuka ngayo izinto.

(This is the type of poem that bares the feelings of the poet. This poem reveals how the poet feels and perceives things.)

Let us look at some of the lyric poems:

1.3.3.2.1.3.1 SONNET

Structurally the sonnet is mainly characterised by its fourteen lines format. There are two main types of sonnets, viz the Italian and the English. A sonnet usually expresses a single, complete thought or view as felt by the poet. The content is divided into first eight lines, which are followed by six lines that 'wrap up the story'. This poem demands unity of idea and expression and is justifiably regarded as the highest form of poetic expression.

There is a lot of debate regarding whether there is a sonnet in Zulu if one considers the definition of a sonnet, which puts emphasis on a demanding rhyme scheme and iambic pentameter, aspects that don't fit neatly in the Zulu language.

1.3.3.2.1.3.2 ELEGY

The elegy is a poem in which a poet expresses his or her feelings about death of a beloved one or about death itself. In most cases a poet apostrophises and personifies death. With regard to the elegy Khumalo (1995:71) says:

I-eleji wuhlobo lwenkondlo lapho imbongi iphimisela khona imizwa yayo ngokufa. Ezinhlungwini zokwelekwa yifu elimnyama, imbongi iyabalisa, iyadabuka ngeshlo ukuba lowo oyizwayo ancindisane nayo ukuze ibhodle.

(An elegy is the type of a poem where a poet expresses his or her feelings about death. Amidst the pain of being overshadowed by a dark cloud, a poet grieves so as to be consoled by the addressee.)

1.3.3.2.2 MODERN PRAISE POETRY

Modern praise poetry refers to praises that are composed, written down and later published in book form. These may be praises of prominent individuals such as politicians, academics and ordinary people who have inspired a poet. In most cases, even when these praises are performed, they are read straight from the book in which

they are published. Modern praise poetry displays many features of the traditional praises. According to Pretorius and Swart (1982: 43):

Technically, the modern praise song is in many respects the same as the traditional praise song insofar as praise names, repetition techniques etc, are concerned. However, the modern praise poem is characterised by a greater subjectivity (although it shows epic and descriptive characteristics) which brings it into alignment with lyrical poetry.

Subjectivity in the modern praise poem is evident in that the poet praises according to how he feels about the person he praises, unlike in the traditional *izibongo* where *imbongi* expresses the views and feelings of the whole nation. Another obvious difference is that the modern praise poem is a product of a formalised learned activity, which is usually confined to book form without any opportunity for public performance and enjoyment.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Scholars have recommended various research methodologies and approaches that can be applied in the study of music and poetry. These methodological approaches are necessary for effective appreciation and analysis of creative literary works at the critic's disposal.

This study will make use of three approaches: the stylistic, the narratological and the communicative. In Chapter Two we will deal with them in detail by comparing them with some other approaches and indicate why we have chosen them as relevant in this study.

1.5 COLLECTION OF DATA

Wherever possible, we are going to use recorded interviews with various artists in order to get conclusive evidence about the role of storytelling through music and poetry in Zulu. We are also going to attend various music festivals and traditional ceremonies like, *umemulo*, weddings, etc. with the aim of getting first-hand information about the way musicians and poets use performance as a storytelling

medium. We will also attend cultural festivals and awareness campaign projects that focus on poetry readings and reciting in order to gain insight into the use of poetry as a communicative tool as well as a storytelling medium.

We applaud the painstaking and diligent efforts of many scholars who collected invaluable material in oral literature and preserved them in books and archives for the benefit of future generations. Their passion about and commitment to indigenous Zulu artistic expression played a vital role in exposing our cultural gems to an international audience. We are going to make use of such resources, especially the Killie Campbell museum that houses recordings made by ethnomusicologists like Tracey, Rycroft, Gunner and many others.

Technological advancements have made many songs and oral poems easily accessible to many people for study and entertainment purposes. This will also be a vital source of information when we use video recordings of performances like those of Nomashizolo Msimang who thrilled his audience during IsiZulu Language Board meeting in 1992. Television programmes like Ezodumo, Ezimtoti, Jam Alley, etc, that focus on local music will also be used to a very large extent. Radio programmes like Ezidla Ubhedu, Uyadela UMakhasana, etc, that focus on *maskandi* and *isicathamiya* music respectively, as well as numerous other programmes will be used to ascertain the role of storytelling in music.

Inevitably, poetry books will be used as many poems that will be the subject of our study are available in book form. This will be very useful, especially with regard to *izibongo* of the late Zulu kings. Books that have *izibongo* that were collected by Cope (1968), Nyembezi (1995), etc. will be used as our primary source of information with regard to this unique and interesting form of storytelling.

The views of many literary critics that will be relevant in this study will be used so as to substantiate our comments and also weigh our findings against the opinions of those scholars who have written various informative articles and books on the field of this study.

We are going to translate the Zulu texts that will be used as examples in this study. We are, however, not going to be poetic in our translation. In other words we will only provide loose translations that will merely indicate the narrative aspects of the text concerned.

1.6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to give an introductory exposition of our study. We indicated why we feel that there is a need for an evaluation of storytelling in Zulu, with specific emphasis on music and poetry.

We pointed out how we intend to approach this study and how data will be collected from various sources so as to validate as closely as possible, the comments that will be made in our study.

The definition of various terms in this chapter shows that music and poetry is part and parcel of the daily lives of the Zulus. We also noted that sometimes there is no watertight distinction between some of the terms that were defined. In some cases there is an overlap in the use of certain terms and this will be evident when these terms are used in this study. This chapter also pointed out that the relevance of the terms that were defined will become clearer when they are discussed in greater detail in the chapters to follow.

CHAPTER TWO

APPROACHES TO BE USED IN THIS STUDY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate some of the approaches that have been adopted by scholars as crucial in the analysis of literary compositions. With regard to this necessity, Nkumane (1995: 21) comments:

It has become a rule in the academic circle, rather than a choice these days, to apply a particular literary theory when analysing a literary piece of work.

In other words, when evaluating a literary work of any genre, a critic has to take certain theoretical views into consideration in order to make his comments, suggestions and recommendations as convincing and valid as possible. One cannot even attempt to make an exhaustive analysis of all the critical approaches that have been put forward by various scholars as indispensable in literary criticism. We can only afford to look at only a few that we regard as most appropriate and relevant for this study. In most cases these approaches are relevant in music as well, as we are going to indicate when we comment on the three approaches that will be the focus of our study, namely, narratology, communicative and stylistic approaches.

2.1 NARRATOLOGY APPROACH

Narratology is the systematic study and analysis of narratives. According to Groden & Kreiswirth (1994:524):

Narratology is the theory of narratives. It examines what all narratives, and only narratives, have in common and what enables them to differ from one another qua narratives and it aims to describe the narrative-specific systems of rules presiding over narrative production and processing.

The above definition implies that narratology as an approach is not only confined to prose form as many people often assume. We can therefore use narratology to analyse the narrative qualities of poetry and music by applying the rules that are used in evaluating narratives in novels, folktales, short stories, etc. The fact that narratology accommodates comparative evaluation of narratives suggests that it can enable us to determine the genre that best serves as an effective storytelling medium for a Zulu artist specifically when we compare and contrast the storytelling techniques between music and poetry as demonstrated by Zulu artists.

We must, however, take into consideration a comment by Culler (1986:171) who warns:

To make a narrative an object of study one must distinguish narratives from non-narratives, and this invariably involves reference to the fact that narratives report sequences of events. If a narrative is defined as the representation of a series of events then the analyst must be able to identify these events, and they come to function as a nondiscursive, nontextual given, something which exists prior to and independently of narrative presentation and which the narrative then reports.

The above elaborate exposition clearly defines the point of view that serves as the starting point of narratology. We feel that in Zulu music and poetry, artists do portray 'sequences of events' that are reported in a manner that makes a meaningful message to the audience. This convinces us therefore that narratological approach will be relevant in this study that is aimed at pointing out why we believe that Zulu music and poetry embody a rich storytelling heritage that spans generations.

Cortazzi (1993: 2) highlights the significance of the narratological approach when he explains:

Narrative analysis can therefore, be seen as opening a window on the mind or if we are analysing narratives of a specific group of tellers, as opening a window on their culture. With this recognition of the importance of narrative as a major semiotic mode, it is perhaps not surprising that some scholars have come to regard narratology as an independent discipline studying the theory of narrative text.

In the above definition, we are particularly interested in the fact that narratology as a field of critical study, opens for us a window that enables us to have a glimpse on the cultural outlook of the storyteller. In this study, narratology will help us understand how Zulu poets and musicians depict cultural values and norms through stories that are narrated in their artistic expressions and compositions. We will be able to see how this cultural element as portrayed in various modes of narratives has been carried on through generations and how Western influences have impacted on the cultural dynamics of the Zulus as seen through Zulu musicians and poets.

Narratology does not confine itself to literature. Currie (1998: 2) contends that:

Commonly cited examples of narratives in everyday life are films, music videos, advertisements, myths, television and newspapers, journalism, paintings, songs, jokes, stories of our holidays and accounts of our day.

This highlights the fact that human beings make use of various expressions as vehicles to convey narratives that depict daily life experiences. We wholeheartedly concur with Currie who mentions songs as narrative forms and feel that Zulu artists have been able to use this medium as an effective narrative tool. Currie's contention that narratives manifest themselves in various forms in our daily lives convinces us that we need not expect narratology to be a misfit if applied in the analysis of Zulu poetry and music as means of storytelling.

The definitions that we have cited above clarify beyond doubt that narratology can be of vital use in the critical evaluation of both oral and written narratives. At this stage, however, we feel that it is inevitable that we attempt to define a narrative or story in order to indicate how narratology is indispensable in a study of this nature.

With regard to what a story is, Rimmon-Kenan (1987: 3) explains:

"Story" designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with participants in these events.

Many people have agreed that although a story is a commonly known aspect of our lives, it is often very difficult to define. We therefore concur with Garcia & Patrick (1974:80) who feel that a story defies definition. They argue:

What, if anything, is a story? Well, frankly, we do not exactly know, and believe no one exactly knows, and if anyone does exactly know, we believe this knowing isn't so terrifically important.

In line with the above concluding statement, we feel that we need not bother ourselves much about how a story is defined but should rather move on to the next crucial question that narratology seeks to examine: what then constitutes a story or narrative? According to O'Neill (1973: 17):

Events of some sort are necessary if we are to speak of a narrative: "event" or "change of state" is the key and fundamental of narrative.

Scholars suggest certain minimum requirements for a narrative. Genette (1972) is happy with a single event as a minimum requirement for a story or narrative. With regard to the suitability of a single event O'Neill (1973:18) illustrates:

One can certainly see how a single event can at least imply a narrative. 'The king died', for example, is a single event but it clearly refers to two separate states of events in the first of which the king was still alive and in the second of which he is no longer so.

While some are satisfied with one event, Rimmon-Kenan (1987) is happy with 'any two events' arranged in chronological order. Prince (1973) demands 'three events, linked by three different principles of organisation: chronology, causality and closure.'

Some narratologists have suggested necessary minimal conditions for a narrative which are seen as combining to form a minimum plot structure. In other words the presence of such features enables a composition to qualify as a plot component of a narrative. These minimal conditions are temporality and causation.

2.1.1. TEMPORALITY

A narrative has to embrace a sequence of events that occur in time frames. This chronological feature has been in existence since Aristotle's definition of a plot with a beginning, middle and end. Temporality necessitates that such a minimal narrative involves at least three conjoined events: the beginning state, a state of equilibrium which prefigures a change where a character (or the audience listening) envisages what is likely to happen next and plots to intervene in order to offset the outcome; a middle action which sets up tension or disequilibrium through character action as events unfold, and a final state; the resolution or outcome which is the inversion of the first. All these events are linked by conjunctive features of time, which is regarded as one of the most fundamental characteristics of a narrative.

2.1.2 CAUSATION

The middle state and the final state are linked together by causation: the middle action causes the final state. According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983:17):

Temporal succession, the 'and then' principle is often coupled with the principle of causality-'that is why' or 'therefore?'

Cortazzi (1993:86) explains:

At the final state, the audience refigures what led to the outcome. The earliest events are reconnected to take on new meaning; they act as causes only because of the later events.

We cannot however, always define minimal narratives in terms of plot structures because there are stories which still have characteristics of conventional stories although they lack any clearly discernable plot structure. Concerning this, we concur with Cohan & Sheris (1988:58) who caution:

...Readers often expect every story to have a plot, but it is not always the case. Plot and story are therefore not interchangeable terms.

Gerhardt (1998: 204) further explains:

In all stories but the briefest, there is a plot...that leads from the beginning to the end of a narrative.

From the above view we can deduce that 'briefest' stories can still be regarded as stories that are worthy of our analysis and evaluation. This premise will form part of our argument throughout this study. In other words, we will be trying to point out that Zulu music and poetry embody an abundance of stories that are unfortunately disregarded by many people simply because they do not depict elaborate plot structures that most people are familiar with in prose narratives.

It is obvious, however, that there can clearly be no definition of the maximal narrative. In this regard, Iser in Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 127) clarifies:

No tale can be told in its entirety. Indeed it is only through inevitable omissions that a story will go in its dynamism. Thus, whenever the flow is interrupted and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections for filling gaps left by the text itself.

The most fundamental concept of modern narratology is that of narrative levels. Scholars distinguish a two-level model of a narrative which basically deals with the 'what' and 'how' of the narrative. Story is 'what' in a narrative and discourse is 'how' of the narrative. These views date back to Aristotle's exposition of *logos* (the events represented or the story) and *mythos* (plot, rearrangement and discourse).

In this study we are going to make use of Gerard Genette's narrative model as the basis of our evaluation. We have chosen this scholar's model because it has been widely accepted by scholars and critics all over the world as an ideal model that best illustrates how narratology can be implemented to evaluate and appreciate narratives in their various manifestations.

Genette (1980) formulated a narrative model that comprises the following elements:

2.1.3 TIME

Time is, according to Genette, a basic category of human experience. The categories of **order**, **duration** and **frequency** are set up to account for differences between event time and narrative time.

Order refers to order of occurrence and order of presentation in a narrative. In other words, in a narrative, events are portrayed according to when they occurred and when they are reported. With regard to order in a narrative Chatman (1978: 63) contends that:

The discourse can rearrange the events of the story as much as it pleases, provided the story sequence remains discernible. If not, the plot fails in 'unity'.

Genette distinguishes between normal sequence, where story and discourse have the same order 1234 and 'anachronous' sequences which are a rearrangement of the normal sequence of events and the narration thereof. This means that order in a narrative comprises anachronics which are analepsis and prolepsis.

Analepsis, according to Cortazzi (1993: 94) is a flashback or expository return to an earlier period of time either outside the existing narrative time span or inside it. This usually gives past information about characters or events, filling in omissions resulting from lapses in the narrator's memory or through design to change the audience's interpretation of what has been narrated so far. In the case of flashbacks or analepsis, discourse breaks the story flow to recall earlier events thereby forming, for instance, a 2134 sequence.

Prolepsis refers to a situation where the storyflow jumps ahead to later events. This is also called flashforward or foreshadowing wherein the narrative order is rearranged to form, for instance, a 2351 sequence.

Duration measures the length of story time against discourse time. Orally this is the amount of time it takes to narrate or tell a story or sequence of events compared with the time span of the original occurrence.

Duration is also defined as summary and scene. In summary the pace is accelerated by compressing storytime into shorter telling time. According to Chatman (1978:68), in summary:

The discourse is briefer than the events depicted. The narrative statement summarizes a group of events; in verbal narrative, this may entail some kind of durative verb or adverb ("John lived in New York for seven years"), including iterative forms ("The company tried time and time again to end the strike but without success")

In scene the story and discourse are considered to take the same time. This is where we find ellipsis where the discourse halts, though time continues to pass on in the story. In other words narration deliberately omits a point in story time. With regard to scene Chatman (1978: 72) explains:

The scene is the incorporation of the dramatic principle into the narrative. Story and discourse here are of relatively equal duration. The two usual components are dialogue and overt physical actions of relatively short duration, the kind that do not take much longer to perform than relate.

Frequency refers to the number of times an event or occurrence is mentioned in the narrative discourse. Sometimes an event occurs once and gets mentioned once in a narrative discourse. This is called singular frequency. In some cases an event may occur once but be mentioned several times. This is repeated frequency. In other cases an event may take place on several occasions but is mentioned once in a narrative discourse. This is iterative frequency.

2.1.4 MOOD

Genette uses the term mood to refer to the narrative point of view or perspective. The narrator may tell a story from various points of view. He may know more than the

characters, less than them, etc. In this case we make use of terms like omniscient point of view, limited omniscient point of view and the dramatic point of view.

Genette also uses the term focalisation and distinguishes between external focalisation where a narrative is presented by an observer who focusses on a character and internal focalisation where the narrative is focussed through the consciousness of a character.

Genette also refers to distance in a narrative. In this regard he uses Platonic terms of diegesis and mimesis. Diegesis, which is the telling of the narrated events, relates closely to summary that we referred to when we discussed duration in a narrative whereas mimesis, which is the showing of events, refers to the direct representation of what occurs in a narrative and is closely related to scene as discussed under duration in the preceding paragraphs.

2.1.5. VOICE

This is referred to by scholars like Chatman (1978) as scales of authorship. Chatman cites real/implied narrator, narratee and real/implied audience. This suggests that the voice refers to the manner in which the narrative is presented and how it is aimed to be perceived and received by the narratee or audience.

According to Genette (1982: 212) the voice refers:

Not only to the person who carries out or submits to the action but also the person (the same one or another) who reports it and if need be, all those people who participate even though passively in the narrating activity.

Degrees of intrusiveness, according to Cortazzi (1993: 97) can range from the impartial description of setting and identification of character, through the more involving temporal summaries and definitions of characters and reports of characters' speech and thoughts by the narrator.

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983) the high profile end of this scale includes the teller's interpretation and judgement of events. Sometimes there is distinction between direct and indirect speech as used by the narrator. When using the direct discourse, the narrator omits any verbs of saying (she said/told/asked, etc) apparently conveying immediacy and accuracy of the narrative.

Genette's narrative model will be very useful when we evaluate the various aspects of storytelling techniques in Zulu music and poetry. We are going to rely on it, for instance, when we look at the narrative point of view that is adopted by artists when they convey stories through song and poetry. It will also be taken into consideration when we look at how, for instance, Zulu artists employ techniques like flashbacks, flashforwards in order to provide effective exposition and suspense in their narratives.

2.2 THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

The act of storytelling is primarily concerned with communicating messages and themes through narration. The storyteller has to possess effective skills and an ability to choose an appropriate medium through which to deliver his theme and message about the narrated events as effectively as possible. The receiver or addressee on the other hand also has to possess certain qualities so as to be able to enjoy and benefit from the didactic value of the narrated story or enjoy the story if it is told for entertainment purposes.

The vital link that exists between the storyteller and his or her audience is the basis of the communicative approach. The communicative approach analyzes the message that is conveyed by the sender and how the receiver interprets it. In this study, we are concerned with how the Zulu musicians and poets deliver messages through storytelling activities in their songs and music.

In this study we are going to use Roman Jakobson Communication Model as the basis of our discussion. We believe that this communication model will be appropriate in this study and in our attempt at elucidating how storytelling in Zulu music and poetry carries with it meaningful messages that are interpreted by the audience and readers

and result, in most cases, in the nationwide and even worldwide popularity of the composers concerned.

According to Jakobson in Sebeok (1960:355) there are three fundamental aspects of an effective literary communication process. These elements are the addresser, the text(s) and the addressee. In this study these three elements will be the Zulu musician or poet, the song or poem and the listener, reader or audience respectively. The latter receives and interprets the songs and poems in various ways depending on how they are transmitted.

Roman Jakobson postulated his communication model in an article that appeared in Sebeok's "Linguistics and Poetics" (1960: 350-377). With regard to Jakobson's views concerning the communication process, Dlamini (1995: 23) explains:

As Jakobson insisted on investigating language in all its functions he emphasised the need to survey the constitutive factors found in any act of verbal communication. He said the addresser or sender sends out a message for a particular purpose. This purpose can be derived from his or her attitude towards the message.

According to Jakobson the message is transmitted for the benefit of the addressee who receives it and interprets it depending on the need which determines his or her response to the message. In other words, if, for instance, the addressee receives the message for entertainment purposes, he or she will respond by clapping hands, dancing, whistling, etc. If, on the other hand, the message is received and interpreted for study purposes, the response will be in the form of evaluation and comments by the addressee concerned. If the message has didactic connotations, it is believed that the addressee will heed the lesson that is conveyed in the song or poem and adjust his or her actions and viewpoint accordingly.

Another factor identified by Jakobson is the message sent by the addresser. Jakobson in Sebeok (1960:353) comments:

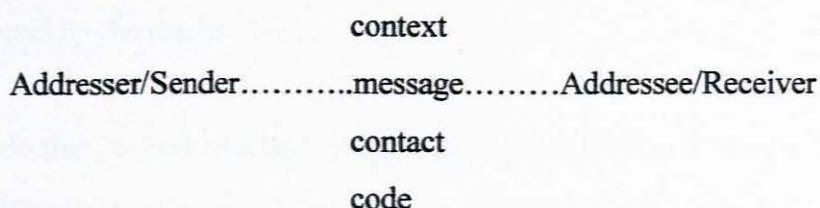
To be operative the message requires a content referred to...seizable by the addressee and either verbal or capable of being verbalised.

This means that the addressee should be able to assign meaning to the text. In other words, the text, in this case the song or poem, should be relevant to the addressee. The addressee must also be able to identify with the language as well as the theme or subject matter in the text. It is for this reason that artists, particularly poets, always make use of symbols and metaphors that are familiar to the audience and enhance effective portrayal of theme and characters in the story.

As we mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the addresser uses a text as a means of communicating with the addressee. Jakobson also includes context as another crucial factor which is indispensable if the message is to be operative. An artist, for instance, is not expected to compose a song or poem with death as a theme aimed at entertaining the audience. The context in which the text features should be relevant. When the text is for didactic purposes the mood and tone thereof should reflect the seriousness of the message.

Another factor is a code which must be partially or fully common to the addresser and addressee. The last factor is the contact between the addresser and the addressee, which, according to Dlamini (1995: 23) should be both a physical channel and a psychological connection. Such a contact will eventually facilitate the communication between the addresser and the addressee as active participants in the message sharing venture.

Jakobson's communicative model can be diagrammatically illustrated as follows:



The six elements that are found in Jakobson's communication model can be interpreted and implemented to evaluate the extent to which Zulu musicians and poets

convey messages through storytelling in their songs and poems that are going to be studied in this research.

As we have pointed out, the addresser in this study will be the Zulu musician or poet who conveys his or her message to the receiver who may be the reader, the listener or the audience. The message may be in the form of a song that is composed and performed for the receiver to interpret, enjoy and derive a relevant lesson where necessary. On the other hand the message may be in the form of a written or recited poem through which a poet tells a story from which the reader or the audience expects a meaningful message to be transmitted by the poet.

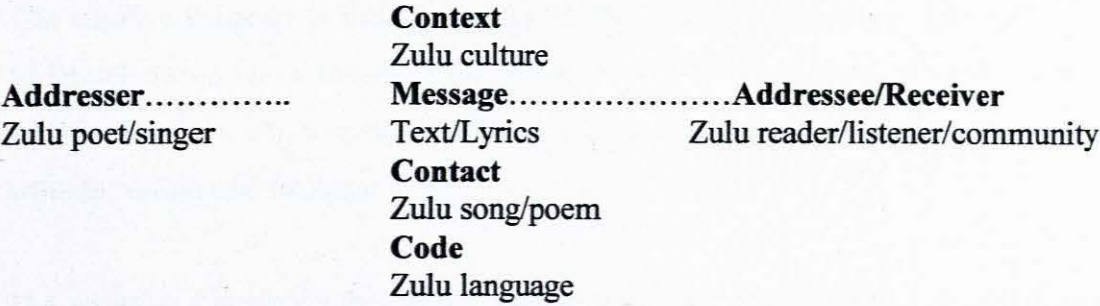
The artist composes a song or poem in order to convey his or her views regarding a particular issue. This will be evident in the choice of words and tone that will be used in transmitting the message. This message which is in the form of a song or poem will need a context in order to be fully appreciated by the addressee. The context in this case is the socio-cultural disposition of the Zulu audience which involves certain beliefs, values and attitudes which the addresser must take into consideration if his or her message is to serve its purpose.

If the message is to be conveyed effectively and successfully, there must be a contact. In other words there must be a means of conveying the message. This may be in the form of an oral, visual or auditory contact. In the case of Zulu music and oral poetry, the singer or poet uses his or her voice and body movements to establish contact with the audience who will receive the song or poem through eyes and ears. With regard to written poetry the contact may be in the form of the written word that is read and interpreted by the reader.

The code that is used to effect and sustain communication between the addresser and the addressee is language and should be common to both parties. In this case, Zulu language can be regarded as the code that is used to facilitate communication of the message in storytelling. We must point out, however, that Zulu language as a code may be affected by other influences that may be deliberately or unconsciously employed by the artist in transmitting the message. In some cases, for instance, an

artist may use slang, archaic words, foreign words, etc. in his or composition. In this study, we will consider how this affects effective encoding of the message by the receiver.

In this study the communication model with its six elements as pointed out in the Jakobson communication model can be diagrammatically illustrated as follows:



Jakobson also elucidated that each of these factors influences to a very large extent, the various roles and functions of the language as used in the communication process. With regard to this Hawkes (1977:85) emphasises:

Jakobson goes on to argue that each of the six elements involved in the communication event has a distinct functional role. The nature of the message is finally determined by the fact that it takes on the functional character of whichever of the six elements involved happens to be dominant.

According to Hawkes this indicates that a message can undergo some changes from its point of inception to its point of reception. According to Dlamini (1995: 26) this instability is caused by the fact that:

One of the six elements involved in the transmission process is dominant to a greater or lesser extent in each event. The communication may, consequently, find itself orientated towards the code in one instance and towards the context in another.

The functional dimensions of Jakobson’s communicative model may be diagrammatically illustrated as follows:

	Referential	
Emotive.....	Poetic.....	Conative
	Phatic	
	Metalingual	

An emotive function reflects an artist's ability to arouse feelings and emotions in the addressee. If the text conveys a sad message, the addressee may be moved to tears. The emotive function is usually evident in live performances where the artist as an addresser comes into a face-to-face encounter with the addressee. An artist therefore makes use of the emotive function as an effective medium for expressing his or her attitude, values and feelings.

The conative function refers to the addresser's volition to initiate a communication process. When we discuss theme in this study we are going to consider factors that may suggest reasons why an artist makes a composition. In some cases, an artist observes some unbecoming behaviour in the society. This then inspires him or her to compose a song or poem in order to communicate with the society and draw its attention to the issue.

The referential dimension takes into consideration the context in which the communication process takes place. During the apartheid period in our country, many artists, particularly poets, lamented the hardships that Africans endured under racist and discriminatory laws. Such compositions were relevant in the context of the situation that prevailed at that time. The recent tendency among artists is to focus on issues such as crime, abuse, reconciliation, AIDS, etc. which are more relevant in the context of the problems and challenges that face our country at present.

The phatic and the metalingual dimensions focus on the code as a stylistic manner of expression that the artist uses in the communication process. Artists are renowned for their impressive command of the language that distinguishes them from ordinary folk. This of course does not suggest that artists use a code that is foreign to the addressee but rather that the everyday language is manipulated in such a way that the stories are vivid and full of decorative language that leaves a lasting impression on the addressee.

Izimbongi, for instance use everyday language in the form of rich metaphors and beautiful symbols to tell stories that heighten the status of the praised personalities.

With regard to the poetic function, Jakobson (1987: 69) clarifies that it is not only confined to poetry. He says:

Any attempt to reduce the sphere of the poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to the poetic function would be a delusive oversimplification. The poetic function is not the sole function of verbal art but only its dominant determining function whereas in all other verbal activities it acts as a subsidiary, accessory constituent.

Commenting on the above six elements Dlamini (1995:26) explains:

What is important about these functions is that while they are always present in a communication act, their predominance varies in each event. If, for instance, the poetic function is dominant, then the message can be described as dominant in that event.

Whiteside in Makaryk (1993:12) also elaborates on some of the above elements:

The emotive function dominates when the addresser or sender expresses his emotions, as in the first person narration or lyric poetry. If contact is being established, tested or maintained without there being any substance to the message, then the phatic function dominates. Such is the case when we say 'hello', 'how are you?' or when we make comments about the weather. We are primarily establishing or maintaining contact, rather than wanting to communicate any message.

The communication model as briefly outlined above will be used in this study to determine how storytelling by Zulu musicians and poets serves to transmit meaningful messages to the Zulu audience. We hope that the Jakobson communication model will enable us to evaluate all the factors that are at play when Zulu artists convey messages in their compositions. Most importantly, this widely accepted communication model will help us illustrate and elucidate beyond reasonable doubt that Zulu artists are highly skilled and endowed with immense talent that can be analysed by using any evaluative yardstick that has been adopted to applaud the merits of the so called 'superior' Western artistic compositions and expressions.

In conclusion we concur with Gule (1990:41) who avers:

The communicative approach makes it possible for the researcher to describe a text of poetry on the semantic level and also to ascertain the relationship between text and context...The advantage of the communicative approach lies in the fact that it identifies all the various communicative entities as structures and also looks critically at the interrelationship and interdependence of various communicative structures.

We feel that the above view is relevant in this study. Even though Gule's comments are specifically aimed at poetry, there is no doubt that they can also apply to musical compositions as will be further illustrated in greater detail in various chapters in this study.

2.3 THE STYLISTIC APPROACH

The stylistic approach looks at how language is used in a literary or creative work. This approach emphasises the close relationship between language and literature and its function is to display that any form of artistic composition and expression uses language. Emphasis and focus, however, fall on how language is used by artists in a creative way, that is, in a different manner from how language is used in everyday conversation.

As the name suggests, the stylistic approach deals with style in a creative work. Style is an ambiguous term than can refer to the idiosyncratic manner of an individual or group. It is also a kind of cultural decorum that is used by artists as an indelible stamp on any creative work in order to highlight some distinctive and unique cultural features of the society from which artists come. This is evident in various styles of musical and literary expressions that are unique to specific cultures.

The stylistic approach focuses on style in a literary work. There is, however, always a problem with regard to the exact definition of style. According to Crystal & Davy (1982:69):

'Style' is certainly a familiar word to most of us; but unfortunately to say simply that stylistics studies style doesn't clarify matters greatly because of the multiplicity of definitions that the word 'style' has.

This means that style can be defined in various ways, depending of course on the background and unavoidably, the subjective viewpoint of the scholar concerned. Ohmann in Freeman (1978:15), for instance, simply defines style as 'a way of saying it.' This means that we cannot expect artists to express themselves in the same manner even if they share a common socio-cultural background. There is, however 'the way of saying it' that commonly applies to the same genre of creative work. In *isicathamiya* music, for instance, there are standard or uniform styles of introducing the song, as well as those of rounding off the composition or performance. In such cases, the style ceases to be assigned to a particular group of singers but rather becomes commonly expected of any participant in that particular type of music.

In this study we are also going to discuss style as the manner in which artists express themselves in a literary work. In other words, style will display *how* artist tell stories in music and poetry.

With regard to the significance of style, Spitzer in Freeman, (1978:21) argues:

Since the best document of the soul of the nation is its literature, and since the latter is nothing but its language as this is written down by elect speakers, can we perhaps not hope to grasp the spirit of a nation in the language of its outstanding work of literature?

We concur with the above statement because language is the fundamental means of expressing style and depicting the soul and spirit of the nation through creative work. A study of style can therefore enable us to look at the literary works of a nation, evaluate the language of the artists that is used in expressing thoughts, ideas and values and thus be in a better position to understand the cultural dynamics of the nation from which the artists come.

In highlighting the role of stylistics in literary criticism Birch and O'Toole (1980: 202) say:

The first aim of stylistics is to provide as detailed a description as possible of the transmitted text of the work in question. No other form of literary criticism engages in the actual text so closely or attempts to apply a coherent analytic and consistent descriptive vocabulary.

Goodman in Lambropoulous and Miller (1986: 254) illustrates the following aspect of style:

Obviously, subject is what is said, style is how...Plainly, when something is said, some aspects of the way it is said are matters of style. So far as the descriptive, narrative, or expository function of literature goes, variations in style are variations in how this function is performed by texts.

Not all what is said and how it is said can be considered as style. In other words, to be considered as style, an utterance, performance or text has to meet and satisfy some requirements in order for us to consider it as a form of some stylistic expression. It is therefore through the use of the stylistic approach that a critic can be able to evaluate how and what aspects of the artist's creative work can be regarded as style.

With regard to the role of language in determining style, MacLaughlin (1996:80) argues:

Literary study teaches us to pay close attention to language. With poetry especially, we base our interpretive efforts on the assumption that the closer we look at a poem's language, the fuller it will come into its force.

This means that a closer look at the language that an artist employs in his or her composition will enable us to get into the depths of what the artist tries to portray through his or her artistic composition.

Stylistics contends that an artist should not necessarily be shackled by rules of language or grammar. Coyle et al. (1990:1090) feel that:

A writer can break one of the fundamental tenets of good communication behaviour in not providing his reader with enough information. Hence the reader is invited to ask the question 'why?' and infer some reason based upon the evidence available.

With regard to poetry, a stylistic approach plays a crucial role in pointing out the use of language by the poet in his compositions. Since music and poetry are closely related, stylistics uses the same approach in determining the use of language in both these genres.

Poetry and music use language to display distinct features that act as unique characteristics. The artist may use language at lexical, phonological and syntactical levels. Such linguistic features enable us to categorise music and poetry into different types and classes. Traditional music and poetry, for instance, is characterised by features such as repetition, parallelism, linking, rhythm, etc. These features are the product of the artist's use of language to convey message and information to the audience. Modern poetry which has Western influences is characterised by features such as rhyme, assonance, alliteration, etc. It is interesting to note that *kwaito* music makes use of Western stylistic features although it is commonly regarded as the music of the less formal artists who are least expected to worry themselves about elaborate rhyme schemes. This is evident in a song by Mshoza, entitled Kortes which has the following impressive rhyme scheme:

Ngakubona *for the first time*
Ngezwa kuth'angihlanye,
Ngakubona *for the second time*
Ngezwa kuth'angizule:
Ngakubona *for the third time*
Ngabhalel' abazali bam'incwadi
Ngath'abanginik'imali
Khona ngizothola le mbali.

(I saw you for the first time
And felt like going crazy
I saw you for the second time
I felt like roaming around aimlessly,
When I saw you for the third time
I wrote my parents a letter
And asked them to give me money
So as to get myself this flower.)

There are common features in traditional and modern music and poetry with regard to the use of language as a stylistic element. Imagery, for instance, is used by artists as a

decorum to add flavour to their compositions and to paint a vivid picture that conveys a message in a convincing manner. The stylistic critic is therefore interested in seeing how a poet or musician uses features like personification, simile, humour, symbolism, etc, as elements of style in a composition.

The stylistic framework that will be used in this study will draw from the views of Jakobson (1960), Freeman (1970), Enkvist (1973), and Ngara (1982). These scholars are renowned for their profound contribution in the field of stylistics and their views are considered as relevant in the context of our study on the various devices that are used by Zulu artists in their storytelling endeavours.

Jakobson (1960) Freeman (1970), Enkvist (1973) regard style as a deviation from the norm, a recurrence or convergence of textual patterns and a particular exploitation of a grammar of possibilities. In defining style as a deviation from the norm Freeman (1970:6) elaborates:

Style is the language that is an aesthetically purposeful distortion of the standard language: to varying degrees, different kinds of literature make a business of violating the rules of grammar. Poetic language, for instance breaks the rules in order that a given passage 'be noticed' as a language.

As a recurrence or convergence of textual patterns, style is a manifestation of what Jakobson (1960) calls the principle of selection and combination and what Spencer and Gregory (1971) calls set and collocation. Freeman (1970:10) explains:

Poetic language, Jakobson argues, seeks in its chain or combinatory relationships-its syntatic elements-the same properties of close coherence that are to be found among individual members of a choice of relationship or paradigm.

With regard to style as a recurrence of textual patterns, Mngadi (1983: 55) explains:

At the syntactic level, the recurrence of textual patterns can be seen in groupings of descriptive categories organised around the lexical and grammatical means of unifying literary text...At the phonological level, poets systematically exploit paradigms or classes of sounds at different points in the syntagmatic pattern and interrelate them in an

extraordinary complex way, which may result in alliteration.

As a particular exploitation of a grammar of possibilities, stylistics look at language as characterised by two levels of representation that can be used by an artist in a poetic or musical composition. These levels are the deep and surface structures. According to Freeman (1970:14) and Buthelezi (1993:12) these two levels are related and co-linked by a set order of transformations which are meaning preserving. In other words, an artist's typical exploitation of certain types of transformations may contribute to his or her syntactic style that can set him or her apart from other contemporary artists.

Style as an exploitation of a grammar of possibilities means that an artist may use language to denote various meanings depending on the context in which words are used. This poses problems to non-mother tongue users of the language who sometimes fail to grasp and appreciate the artist's style simply because of an inability to understand the language in its contextual use. On the other hand, speakers of the language are able to appreciate and applaud an artist's stylistic expression even if he or she uses difficult words that may seem redundant and meaningless to those not familiar with the language.

Ngara (1982) advocates a stylistic model that can accommodate all types of artistic expressions. He contends that an ideal critical literary theory should arm a critic with a framework of analysis, a method of evaluation and an analytical source with a range of concepts. The artist, on the other hand selects lexical items, grammatical structures and symbols to discuss a particular subject and thereby depict theme. Ngara calls this an artist's linguistic format that enables an artist to manipulate language so as to convey content and message as effectively and convincingly as possible.

In storytelling, the artist is concerned with relating some personality traits of people and informing his or her audience about how these habits and experiences occur in daily lives of a particular society as chosen by the artist for depiction in the story.

Ngara contends that a creative artist should always consider the linguistic possibilities that his or her language provide and use them with sensitivity and creativity so that the

reader or audience can be in a position to appreciate the unique features of the language. With regard to Zulu language, for instance, an innovative artist can make use of ideophones, which, according to Ngcongwane in Nkabinde (1988: 141) are used more frequently in Zulu than in any other African language in the whole of southern Africa. There are, however, some language limitations that an artist should be aware of and handle with sensitivity. In Zulu poetry, for instance, pre-occupation with rhyme scheme is often disastrous because Zulu language does not have stressed and unstressed syllables.

Ngara also maintains that an artist should consider the uniqueness of each genre and the demands thereof on his or her creative abilities to use language in an effective manner. With regard to this point Mngadi (1993: 67) clarifies:

A creative writer should be sensitive how he handles elements of the language in different genres...using devices and concentrated language of poetry in prose discourages the reader...the poet on the other hand is expected to use poetic language to enhance the aesthetic quality of poetry.

Artists always have a specific audience in mind when they make their compositions. The language as a stylistic expression in a composition should therefore appeal to and be comprehended by the audience. In a live performance, gestures and attire play a vital role in enhancing the ability of an artist's audience to decode the message that an artist portrays in a composition or performance.

According to Ngara, artists should always bear in mind that their artistic compositions have a social function in moulding the norms and values of the society. In the traditional African setting, songs, folktales and praise poems have an invaluable social function both in entertaining and educating the society. The contemporary artist also has a social role to fulfil and should, through his or her composition, address the relevant social issues in general and African daily concerns in particular. This of course impacts on how he portrays characters and theme through which he addresses relevant social issues that prevail in the community.

In summarising the above evaluative criteria, Ngara emphasises that the theory of stylistic criticism he proposes is that which postulates that matters of linguistic format are inseparable from content and that the style of an artist cannot be divorced from his or her ideological and cultural concerns.

We are convinced that the stylistic approach will enable us to gain insight into how artists in poetry and music make use of language as a storytelling medium. We will be able to appreciate how poetry and music have common as well as distinct features in terms of language as used by artists as practitioners in these genres. When we discuss the use of language as a stylistic feature in Chapter Six, our focus will be on the theoretical framework of the stylistic approach. In other words, we would like to see, for instance, how Zulu poets and musicians deviate from the norm with regard to the use of language in storytelling.

The stylistic approach will also help us a great deal when we analyse how non-verbal expressions as manifested in performance can be regarded as a form of style that artists use as a storytelling device. In this regard Ngara's views about the need for an African artist to address himself to the social issues of his African audience will be considered and used as a yardstick to determine how an individual artist's style influences the effectiveness of a storytelling exercise.

2.4 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to look at some of the approaches that are regarded as effective evaluation tools in literary criticism. We considered the three approaches that we feel will be relevant in this study. When we discussed the narratological approach, we indicated why the Genette's narrative model will enable us to evaluate the various narrative techniques that are used by Zulu artists in their storytelling attempts.

We also illustrated how Zulu poets and musicians are engaged in the transmission of messages through storytelling. With regard to this we indicated that a suitable approach will be the communicative one in which Roman Jakobson's communication model will be implemented. We also illustrated how we are going to use the six

elements in this model in evaluating communication in the oral and written narratives that will be the focus of our study. The manner in which Zulu artists use language and other unique stylistic devices will be evaluated by using the stylistic approach which concentrates on how an artist delivers his or her creative work to the reader, listener or audience.

CHAPTER THREE

PLOT

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to look at the portrayal of plot in Zulu music and poetry. In other words we want to see how events are depicted in the stories and the devices that storytellers employ in order to keep us 'glued' to their stories. In this chapter we are going to define plot and see how various scholars analyse and view this concept. Our attempt will be to indicate the relevance of effective plot construction in a good story. With regard to plot we are going to look at the various kinds of plot, how artists delineate plot and how this manifest itself in Zulu music and poetry. We are also going to indicate why some compositions can be regarded as stories even if they do not necessarily comprise plot elements that are commonly found in many prose narratives.

3.1 PLOT DEFINED

According to Abrams (1981: 137):

The plot in a dramatic or narrative work is the structure of its actions, as these are ordered and rendered toward achieving particular emotional and artistic effect.

This means that actions in a narrative should display order and be aimed at evoking some emotions on the reader or audience. In other words, when the narrative starts, the audience or reader should be introduced to characters who are involved in some action or situation that arouses interest. The actions that unfold should be in a logical and easy to follow sequence that enables the reader or audience to identify with characters and theme in the story. When a narrative ends, the reader or audience should be moved by the turn of events and find no loopholes in how events that were portrayed in the story were rounded off to eventual conclusion.

Mafela (1996: 55) emphasises the unifying aspect of plot in a narrative. He explains:

Plot in a narrative or dramatic work denotes the way in which a literary work moves from its first word to its last. A story is inconceivable without plot, which functions as an organising and unifying principle in a story. Plot is a series of related incidents or events in a story.

Mafela's definition proposes that a plot is a backbone of a narrative. It is what holds the story together from the beginning to the end. Mafela contends that every story must have a plot, otherwise, it defies being regarded as a story. This means that before telling us a story a narrator has to work out how events will follow each other in a logical and convincing order.

There is an ongoing debate with regard to a clear distinction between a story and a plot. There are various arguments that are put forward to support these views. The most outspoken on this contentious issue is Forster (1974: 60) who adamantly stipulates the difference between a story and a plot by indicating that "The king died and the queen died" is a story but that "The king died and the queen died of grief" is a plot. He further elaborates:

Consider the death of the queen. If it is in a story we say: "And then?" If it is in a plot we ask: "Why?" That is the fundamental difference between these two aspects...A plot cannot be told to a gaping audience of cavemen or to a tyrannical sultan or to their modern descendents, the movie public. They can only be kept awake by "And then...and then..." They can only supply curiosity. But a plot demands intelligence and memory also.

There is no doubt that Forster regards a story as far inferior to a plot. He is adamant that a story is not the same as a plot. As far as he is concerned the story may only form the basis of a plot, but the plot is the premise of the more intelligent and analytic human beings. We feel however, that Forster is rather too harsh when he regards curiosity as the lowest level of the human mental faculties. Another view in this regard may be that a good plot need not arouse curiosity on the audience. In fact we consider curiosity as a decisive factor in a plot and therefore concur with Burnett (1979: 34) who argues that any literary work of high quality should arouse curiosity. He explains:

It is difficult to arouse our interest in a work of literature without also stirring our curiosity and our interest in what happens next.

The above statement supports our view that a good plot should also arouse curiosity. In other words we need not differentiate between plot and story on the basis of the ability of each concept to arouse curiosity. In fact we think that the only difference between the story and plot is that the latter adds an element of surprise and suspense in the story. It makes the story less predictable and displays the creative ability of the author or narrator in weaving events that arouse interest in the audience. The plot therefore cannot stand on its own without forming an integral part of a certain story.

Cassirer (1979: 4) also advocates the use of the two terms as mere synonyms:

When we ask what is the plot of a book or a film we are asking about the story. When we ask, "What is the story?" as a slang way of inquiring into what is happening in a given situation, we are asking about more than mere happenings: in effect we are concerned with the *plot* of what is happening.

In this study we are going to use story and plot interchangeably because we are not convinced that the slight difference on what the two terms emphasise warrants a separate treatment of the terms as unrelated and only suitable for minds of varying intelligence levels. What we would like to emphasise is that we agree with Boulton (1985: 45) who regards plot and story as almost one and the same thing. She argues:

A plot is a story, a selection of events arranged in time and one reason why we go on reading....is to see what happens next. A true plot however, is rather more: it has causality, one thing leads to another; and another reason why we go on reading a novel is we are interested in why things happen.

3.2 KINDS OF PLOT

There are three basic kinds of plots that can be found in narratives, i.e., plots of action, thought and character.

3.2.1 PLOT OF ACTION

In this type of plot, the sequence of events is the main concern. According to Crane in Dipple (1970: 15) in the plot of action:

The synthesising principle is a completed change, gradual or sudden in the situation of the protagonist, determined or affected by character and thought.

The main focus in this type of plot is on what happens next and how that will affect the situation of the protagonist and eventually determine his or her fate in the narrative. The interaction between thought and character determines and influences what will happen to the protagonist as the story unfolds. In this kind of plot, character and thought are portrayed minimally, comments are restricted to the basic and important details necessary for the depiction of events in the narrative.

Plot of action seems to dominate stories in Zulu music and poetry. This can be attributed to the fact that space constraints do not allow elaborate exposition and portrayal of character and thought. Artists seem to concentrate on what happens to the main character and how this will determine his or her circumstances by the time the narrative ends.

As we have mentioned, plot of action is concerned with what happens next. In other words the plot of the story is such that actions in the narrative result in some changes to the main character. Emphasis on what happens next creates suspense and concern about how actions will affect the main character or protagonist. The storyteller must therefore make sure that the problems and conflicts that face the protagonist arouse enough interest in the audience so that there is concern and curiosity about the fate of the protagonist. If the action that is introduced at the beginning of the story is not gripping enough, no one will be interested in finding out how the story ends.

In most cases, plot of action is more plausible and convincing if the protagonist is in a crisis or dilemma and the audience is concerned that the result of his or her actions will spell doom for him or her. Mbhele in Zulu (1989:33) depicts a protagonist who is

faced with such a problem. MaNgcobo is a grass widow who is struggling to feed her family. She has just cooked what is evidently the last morsel she had:

Walicosh'isaka uMaNgcobo ngethemba,
Walithintitha lalandula
Nokh'imvushwana yokulandula yavela,
Inkeshezana yagcwali'inkomishi,
Ithemba lempilo kubantwana labuya,
Hasha ebhodweni wayithela;
Kwantanta kuyaluz'emanzini,
Kungenakuzika kuntul'isisindo.

(MaNgcobo picked the sack with hope
She shook it empty
Nevertheless, there was a morsel left,
And that filled a cup,
A hope of life was rekindled,
She threw the mealie meal into the pot;
And it floated above the water,
Being weightless and unable to sink.)

When her children are about to eat, something disturbing happens:

Izigameko zihlala zenzeka,
Gulukudu umfokazi emnyango...
Futhatha phambi kwephalishi:
"Isisu somhambi asingakanani..."
(Mbhele in Zulu, 1989: 34)

(As fate may have it,
A stranger entered the house...
He stood before the porridge
And pleaded for food.)

The arrival of this stranger raises suspense. What is MaNgcobo going to do? Will she refuse to give the stranger something to eat or will she sacrifice her children's survival in order to help a total stranger? This is answered when MaNgcobo responds:

Yabuy'impundul'emnandi kuMaNgcobo
Ikhashwa umoya wokuthula nenkululeko:
"Dlana lokho okuncane muntu weNkosi
Impuph'iyathengwa ibe zindodla,
Umphefumul'awunasitolo nantengo..."

(Mbhele in Zulu, 1989: 35)

(MaNgcobo gave a nice reply
Accompanied by a spirit of peace and freedom:
"Eat the little we have, poor soul,
Milliemeal can be bought in abundance
But there is neither shop nor price for the soul.)

The stranger eats with incredible alacrity:

Wakhothuluza ngomunwe wabonga;
Sasala simsulwa isitshana leso...
(Mbhele in Zulu, 1989: 35)

(He licked with his fingers and thanked her
Leaving the bowl empty...)

There is no doubt that MaNgcobo's magnanimity has left her and her children in a desperate situation. No one, however, is prepared for the surprise that comes at the end of the story when it becomes apparent that MaNgcobo's predicament will be resolved in an incredible manner because of the blessings that have resulted from her hospitality:

Indlala yanyamalala okomhwamuko
Usizan'olusele lwavalelisa kokaFuze
Umdudla wesaka sewumile mpo,
Sabuy'isithunz'emva kwesivalo
Amehlo kubantwana aqhakaz'impilo.
(Mbhele in Zulu, 1989: 36)

(Starvation disappeared like vapour
And strife said goodbye to the Fuzes
When a large sack stood against the wall
And dignity returned behind the door
Making children's eyes brighten up with life.)

We are surprised by the sudden and dramatic change in the situation of the protagonist or main character in this story. This shows that the poet has succeeded in depicting the plot of action.

We also find an example of a plot of action in a song by Vusi Ximba and Ntombinkulu. Gatsheni goes to collect a long overdue debt from Ndlovu. When he arrives at Nyambose's home, a big, fierce dog blocks his way. This causes suspense as listeners await what will happen next. The storyteller explains:

Hhayi, wafika-ke wema ngasesangweni
Wacabanga kabili kathathu,
Waliphendula kabili kathathu iwisa lakhe
Wajikijela enjeni.
Wayishaya, hhawu yawushiya umhlaba.

(He reached the gate and stood still
He thought for a while,
Turned his knobkerrie a few times
And threw it at the dog.
He struck it and it died.)

Because the listeners have been told that the dog is very big, there is concern that it may kill Gatsheni. There is relief when we are told that he manages to kill the dog. He then proceeds to the house. Upon seeing him, Nyambose's wife starts to panick and asks Nyambose to lie on the grass mat and pretend to be dead. She lights candles and covers herself with a blanket as an indication that she is in mourning. We are curious about what will happen when Gatsheni knocks at the door. Is he going to fall for the deceitful trap? The singers elaborate:

"Qoqo nkosikazi.
Sengiyibulele-keinja yenu,
Uph'uNyambose?"
"Awu Nkosi yami,
Nang'ulele lapho phansi.
Njengob'ubona ngembethe itshali
Usishiya khona nje ekuseni."

("Knock knock madam.
I have already killed your dog,
Where is Nyambose?"
"Oh my God,
He is lying over there.
He passed away this morning,
As you can see that I'm wearing a blanket.")

Gatsheni is adamant and insists on getting his money:

“Angafa kanjan’engawukhokhil’upondo wami?
Ngizokhokhisela kuwena-ke nkosikazi.
Ngizokushaya ngaleli wisa emhlane.”

(“How can he die without paying my money?
I will revenge on you then
I’ll beat you on your back with a knobkerrie.”)

Nyambose’s wife pleads with him to beat the deceased instead of her. Gatsheni is more than happy about this arrangement. He is not prepared, however, for what happens at the end of the story. The ‘deceased’ wakes up and fights with him. Gatsheni is sure that this is a ghost and runs away. This is a drastic change from the person who had arrived furious wanting to kill Nyambose if he does not get his money.

3.2.2 PLOT OF THOUGHT

In this kind of plot, change is evident in the viewpoint and mindset of the protagonist in the narrative. His or her feelings, views and beliefs are affected by character and action thus resulting in a drastic shift in how he or she thought and felt when the story began. According to Crane in Dipple (1977: 15) in the plot of thought:

The principle is a completed process of change in the thought of a protagonist and consequently in his feelings, conditioned and directed by character and action.

With regard to the plot of thought Mafela (1996: 62) explains:

It usually involves a positive change in the protagonist’s conceptions, beliefs and attitudes. However, sometimes the opposite is true, when a protagonist has complete faith in a set of ideas, but loses it after some kind of loss, threat or trial.

Most Zulu artists have been able to portray this in their narratives. In some cases the protagonist feels guilty about his actions and eventually seeks forgiveness. In Lafika

Izwi, Nxumalo tells a story of a son who erects a memorial tombstone for his father. There is great festivity on this day and everybody applauds the son's manly deeds:

Zahamb'izinsuku zambili zantathu,
Yaphindel'emsebenzini indodana kaGumede,
Bababaza njal'abantu ngetshe
Elesabekayo, bayibongela yaze yayoshona;
Bambongela nomufi indod'eyayiqotho
Eyayizisebenzele ngokwethembek'izikhuphule phansi:
"Ukuzal'ukuzelula nina bakithi,
Kalihlal'iqhaw'endlin'enhle,
Iyisindil'indodana, yayicakul'iyabukeka..."
(Nxumalo, 1968: 54)

(Two or three days passed
And Gumede's son went back to work
People were still amazed about the wonderful stone
And applauded the son until he was no longer in sight
They were also happy for the deceased, an honest man
Who had risen from humble beginnings through honest work:
"Childbearing is beneficial
Let the hero rest in peace in his beautiful home
That has been beautifully decorated and polished by his son...")

The son does not get peace, however. Nxumalo (1968:56) explains:

Zafik'izinsuk'ezilukhun'endodaneni,
Yacimez'abafik'ubuthongo kwasa,
Yasindwa yindlu yavus'unkosikazi, Lash'izwi
Kezwanga lutho wazezelela wazilalela;
Balandelan'ubusuk'ingabuthi qothu,
Ngelesin'ilanga yabon'ukukhanya,
Yaval'amehl'ingafun'ukubona,
Yamemez'unkosikazi kavukang'ebuthongweni
Lash'izwi lagcwal'indlu:
"Kangilifun'itshe lokwebiwa kimina."

(The son went through difficult times
The house became unbearable and he awoke his wife
Who heard nothing and kept on sleeping;
He couldn't sleep even on successive nights,
On the fourth day he saw the light
He closed his eyes and didn't want to see
He called his wife but she didn't wake up
The voice shouted and filled the house:

“I don’t want the stolen stone.”)

The son tries to run away from his father and even decides to change his surname so that nothing will associate him with the voice that torments him. Unfortunately, the voice keeps following him even if he goes to far away places. The voice insists that the son must destroy the controversial tombstone. The son is stubborn. It is only at the end of the story that he eventually changes his mind after being convinced that there is no place to hide:

Wabon’umfo kaGumede akusasizi lutho,
Wayalela kunkosikaz’uyoligqibul’itshe...
Laphum’ilanga yaphashanyiswa ngabantu,
Yabatshela, bayilekelela balibus’itshe.
(Nxumalo, 1968: 58)

(Gumede’s son realised that all was in vain
He told his wife that he would demolish the stone...
The sun rose and the son was awakened by people
He told them and they helped him remove the stone.)

We get another example of a plot of action in Ingodusi by Gili kaNobantu. This poem tells a story of a fiancée who has been waiting patiently for her beloved boyfriend who has been gone to Johannesburg for many years. This is a sorrowful exercise for her:

Phakathi elawini
Ihlezi emunywini;
Izwainja ikhonkotha,
Nomuntu enyonyoba;
“Akuyena othandwa yimi,
Kuphela umlamu wami:
Way’eGoli wayosebenza”,
Isho zigobhoza izinyembezi.
(KaNobantu in Matsebula, 1958: 14)

(Inside her room
She is in grief;
She hears a dog bark
And somebody walking on tiptoe;
“It is not my beloved one
But only my sister’s lover:
He went to work in Johannesburg,”
She said, tears flowing from her eyes.)

At the end of the narration, the fiance has changed her mind about her lover. She is convinced that she will never see him again:

Ebusuku kwamabili,
Phansi kwezingubo ezimbili
Iphuphe lifikile,
Yavuka lisukile
Yabona ibiphupha.
Kakhulu yalingoza:
“Way’eGoli wayosebenza,”
Isho kugobhoza izinyembezi;
“Kungcono uhambe njalo,
Uz’ugugele eGoli.”
(KaNobantu in Matsebula, 1958: 15)

(In the middle of the night,
Undeneath two blankets
She met him in her dreams
But had disappeared when she awoke
And realised that she had been dreaming
She was emotionally ruined:
“He went to work in Johannesburg,”
She said, tears flowing from her eyes:
“Rather go forever
Until you reach old age in Johannesburg.)

In some cases a character is exposed to some facts of life that he was not familiar with when the story began. This revelation may change his total outlook in life. Artists express this by telling a story about a naïve, ignorant person who experiences new truths in life, thus effecting a dramatic change in the way he thinks. In UPhangisa, Mkhize tells a story about a young man who finds work as a domestic servant in the city. He seems to be a diligent, hard working person. This is caused by his desire to get money so as to marry his girlfriend back home. Problems arise when he has to clean his madam’s bedroom:

Amehlo wawaphonsa odongeni
Wethuka eny’insizwa eyibona...
Umbuzo kule nsizwa wawuphonsa
Nayo le nsizwa yamphonsa umbuzo...
(Mkhize, 1973: 47)

(He looked at the wall
And was frightened when he saw another young man
He directed a question at the young man
Who also asked him back...)

The altercation between the two lasts a long time until Phangisa decides to fetch his fighting sticks to teach this man a lesson of his life:

Wagulukudel'umfo wakwaZulu
Wabuya nezimbili izikhwili,
Wasikaza wagalela kabili,
Wakhal'uMaqumban'engesigwili,
Esebon'umonakalo omkhulu.

Ngalelo langa wethwas'uPhangisa
Wafuman'iqinis'eliphelele,
Wakumbulul'ukwaz'okusithele,
Kwakhanya njengelanga libalele
Ukungazi kwephuz'ukumedusa.
(Mkhize, 1973:48)

(The chap from KwaZulu rushed outside
And returned with two fighting sticks,
He struck the mirror twice
And the poor White madam cried out
On realising the extent of the big damage.

It dawned on Phangisa on that day
He realised the plain truth
And discovered deep knowledge
It became clear like a sunny day
Ignorance ceased leading him astray.)

This revelation results in a change in the way Phangisa thinks. This affirms a view held by Mafela (1996: 63) who contends that:

Sometimes, a character changes his mind or outlook upon discovering a truth previously unknown to him.

3.2.3 PLOT OF CHARACTER

This kind of plot suggests a completed process of change in the moral character of a protagonist. The artist may portray a protagonist in such a way that there is enough evidence of a remarkable change for the better on the part of the moral disposition of the main character or protagonist. In other words a positive attitudes replaces all the bad or undesirable traits that have been dominant in the behaviour of the protagonist, so that by the end of the story, a completely changed person emerges.

J.C. Dlamini depicts the plot of character in his version of the famous Biblical narrative about an encounter between a Samaritan woman and Jesus. When INDODA, as Dlamini refers to Christ, approaches this woman, he finds her haughty, obstinate and hostile. This is how Dlamini (1981: 20) puts it:

Ezinkalweni zaseSamariya
Yadabula ngeqholo INDODA...
Ngqwamangqwa nenkosikazi...
Nakho ukuzigqaja,
Nanso inkulumo yombhinqo
Ngenhlukano yobuzwe;
Ngokubukelana phansi
Ngenhlukano ngombango...
(Dlamini, 1981: 20)

(In the valleys of Samaria
THE MAN walked proudly
And met a woman...
She was full of haughtiness
And spoke with sarcasm
About racial differences;
About prejudice
About differences and factions.)

INDODA ignores the woman's pride and preaches to her, convincing her of the need for repentance and accepting the 'water' and the truth that is generously offered to her. At the end of the poem we see a completely changed person:

La mazwi adabul'amadwala
Enhliziyi yenkosikazi,
Ngokomela usindiso ingazi.
Leyo nkosikazi yadabula
Izinhliziyi zabanye

Ngosindiso lwaleyo NDODA
(Dlamini, 1981: 21)

(Those words tore apart
The rock-like heart of the woman
And being ignorant of her thirst for salvation
The woman went around
And penetrated other people's hearts
With that MAN's salvation.)

There is evidence of a dramatic change in the moral behaviour of this woman. Whereas in the past her main interest was to accumulate as many lovers as possible, her concern now is to offer other people the water of salvation that INDODA has given her free of charge.

3.3 PLOT COMPONENTS

The plot structure of a narrative is a complete unit that gives details about the sequential arrangement of events. This unit comprises a beginning, the middle or the body and the end. The beginning forms the exposition that introduces the problem or conflict that faces the main character, the body develops or intensifies the problem. In some cases this is where we find characters involved in a search for a solution to the problems that were introduced when the story started. The end sees the conflict, problem or dilemma being resolved.

In clarifying the basic structural elements of a plot, Abrams (1981: 138) explains:

The order of a unified plot, Aristotle pointed out, is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle and end. The beginning initiates the main action in a way that makes us look forward to something more; the middle presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow; and the end follows from what has gone before but requires nothing more.

In Zulu music and poetry, narratives do not necessarily follow the order that is often adhered to in prose narratives such as novels, short stories and folktales, etc. This is caused by the fact that in most cases the stories that are found in music and poetry are merely 'inserted' by artists to illustrate a point or to convey a moral lesson to the audience. We can, for instance, take an example of J.C.Dlamini's *Yini?* where a story

is evidently used to point out the evils of alcoholism. This is how Dlamini (1981:29) tells a story that paints a picture about the bad effects of alcoholism:

Kusemini yasekuseni
Ngqwamangqwa, nesimilamongo
...
Bunginduluzele ubuso mntanomuntu,
Bufusekile busho ngamehlokazi
Aqhunsulile kuhle kwalo iboni...
...
Sasukuma isimilamongo-umhlola!
Amadodlwan' abhidiswa nguVeezela
Izinyawana zidlala 'ishalastoni';
Wadidizela uNomadidizela, wawa,
Wagaqa ngamadolo, wavuka, wawa,
Walala, wavuka, wabhayibhayiza
Wadwanguza waya kwaMsangano;
BUHAMBALAPHO-KE
BONA BANSONDO!

(It was early in the morning
I met a funny looking person
...
The face starred at me
It was black and had big eyes
That protruded like those of a locust...
....
He stood up and what a sight!
His knees were shaking
His feet trembled uncontrollably;
He staggered and fell
He was on his knees, stood up and fell,
He slept, he woke up, he fumbled about
And entered the land of the crazy;
THAT IS HOW IT IS
WITH ALCOHOL)

The fact that sometimes stories are 'inserted' and used as illustrative elements in songs and poems results in narratives that do not necessarily display the rigid plot pattern that has the beginning, the middle and the end. This discrepancy, however, does not in any way suggest that the absence of a rigid plot structure in Zulu music and poetry render the narratives of the musicians and poets unstory-like and therefore inferior.

In Zulu *izibongo* and epics, the concept of a plot with a beginning, middle and end indicates the major events in the life of the hero. In most cases the beginning is when the hero is born, the middle is when he ascends the throne or attains public recognition and elevation in status and the end focuses on the events that surround his reign. This pattern is observed in E.S.Q. Zulu's epic, *Madiba!* which traces Mandela's life from birth right up to his involvement in the political struggle that resulted in his imprisonment. The epic ends with a narrative account of his release from prison.

In Zulu's epic we can see that the beginning does not indicate the introduction of a problem or conflict as is often the case in prose narratives. This epic starts when Madiba is released from prison:

Waphuma kanjal'okaMphakanyisw'umntwana,
Ephuma ngezimpundu zamasango eVikitha Festela

...

Waphuma ngesango qede wafingq'isibhakela,
Washo ngendlakadla yengila wathi,
'Ama...ndla!'

(Zulu, 1999: 3)

(That's how the son of Mphakanyiswa came out
Through the gates of Victor Verster Prison

...

He went out the gate and clenched his fist
And roared in a loud voice,
'Ama...ndla!')

After this exposition Zulu retraces Madiba's life from birth right up to his involvement in the freedom struggle that culminated in his imprisonment.

In Msimang's epic about Shaka, the exposition does not introduce us to a crisis or conflict that has to be resolved as soon as possible. Instead of this Msimang introduces Shaka to us. This is how Msimang (1990:53) illustrates the events surrounding Shaka's arrival on earth:

Ilembe lehla ngezilulu
Zabaphansi nabaphezulu...
Abaphansi banyenzeza

Belul'izandla neminwe
Badob'inhliziy'emnandi
KaNandi ongumnandi weNguga

...

Kwasuk'ikloba lothando
Lavuth'ubuhanguhangu lamhangula;
Wab'esalale waphuph'okaJama

...

Abasonga amathongo ngenkatha yothando
Abembes'amathongo ngesiphuku sothando,
Bekuleso siphuku laqhibuk'ikhowe
USishaka ophikwe ngabasekhaya,
Bath'ulishaka kanti yikhon'ezobashakazisa.

(ILembe descended from the storage baskets
Of the ancestors and those above...
The ancestors whispered
And stretched their hands and fingers
To touch the sweet heart
Of Nandi, the sweet one from Nguga

...

A big fire of love started
And burned fiercely and scorchingly
Whenever she slept, she dreamed about the child of Jama

...

Ancestors wrapped them with love
And covered them with a blanket of love
While they were in that blanket a mushroom emerged,
Shaka who is rejected by the family members
Saying he is *ishaka* whereas he was about to torment them.)

We have cited the above examples in order to show that in Zulu music and poetry artists do not approach their narrative in the same manner as prose narratives in respect of plot structure. There are, however, many examples where the elements of plot are evident in music and poetry as we are going to see in the following examples when we take a closer look at the elements or component parts of plot, which are the exposition, rising action, climax and resolution. Let us look at each of these parts.

3.3.1 EXPOSITION

Exposition is the introductory part of the narrative. According to Danziger and Johnson (1978:22) exposition can be simply defined as the explaining of the situation in which a main action is to occur.

This indicates that the narrator should give us details that will enhance our understanding of the events that will take place in the story. In other words exposition has to come before an action takes place so as to avoid confusing the audience. This, however, does not suggest that the exposition should tell us how the events are going to unfold in the narrative.

Cohen (1973: 69) says this about the exposition:

It establishes the setting, creates the basic atmosphere, provides information about the pasts of characters and delineates vital contexts for the events which will soon begin to unfold.

We concur with Cohen with regard to a need for the establishment of setting, atmosphere and provision of contextual information. This helps the audience to understand why the characters will act in a certain way in the story as events progress.

In Uyazi Wena Nkosi by N.F.Mbhele, the story takes place on a Friday afternoon. The poet tells us that birds are flocking home to feed their young ones. Men are heading home with parcels and money for their families. This makes us understand the plight of MaNgcobo who has no one to take care of the family because her husband was 'swallowed' by Johannesburg. Mbhele in Zulu (1989: 33) provides these informative details:

Nankayan'amadod'edlathuzela,
Ngezandl'alengis'imingenandlini,
Kuqhilik'izihlathi kubantwana,
Kubhakuz'izinhliziyi komame,
Keph'ekaMaNgcob'igay'izibozi
Eyakh'indoda kayibonwa ngalukhalo,
Kayibonwa nangancwadi yeposi,
Ngezemihl'izinyembezi kuMaNgcobo,
Eyakhe yayogqwabela abantwana,
Yathi iyogqwab'iGoli layigola.

(Men are walking in a hurry
Carrying parcels for their families
Children will be happy)

And the wife's hearts will jump joyfully
But MaNgcobo is very angry
Her husband is nowhere to be found
He doesn't even write a letter home
MaNgcobo cries daily
About her husband who went to find work
But instead was ensnared by Johannesburg.)

In Ngempi YaseNcome, Gcumisa in Kheswa and Mthiyane (1996: 27) provides these details that shed light on what has happened and help us understand how characters behave in the events that occur after the exposition:

Izingqaphel'umkhosi zawuhlaba zawulawula
Ukuth'uZul'usahlab'ikhefu nje
AmaBhunu asemi ngezinyawo,
Abuthana ngaphesheya komful'iNcome.
Njengob'izinhlozi zabe seziwuhlabe zawulawula
Lowo mbiko wafinyelela-ke
Ezindlebeni zikaDingane.
Wabiz'oNdlela kaSompisi, uDlambedu, iNgwegwe
UMdlenevu, namany'amabutho.
Wath'ekaZul'ayiphume
Ngemizila yonkana
Ikhankas'imikhal'iyibhekise
Khona phesheya kweNcome.

(The sentries spread the news
That while the Zulus are having a break
Boers are on their feet
And have converged across the Ncome river.
As the sentries had spread the news
The message reached Dingane.
He summoned Ndlela of Sompisi, the Dlambedu, Ingwegwe
Mdlenevu and other warriors
And said the Zulu army
Must go out from every direction
And head across the Ncome.)

This information gives a picture about what had taken place before the battle started. Ntuli also gives details about the mood or atmosphere that prevailed before masses took to the street in Imbedumehlwana eFulansi in Ntuli & Ntuli (1973: 52):

Sabon'inkinsel'edla kusale

Iqobovula ngenkab'efosi
 Iqhub'usakabhudu lwamachalaha
 ...
 Ingidi yamahhashi namachalaha
 Yadabul'esifeni kwaNgced'omhlophe
 Ngabona kukutuka thangana
 ...
 Ngabon'umame wakwaNgced'omhlophe
 Ephum'efokozaneni lendlwana
 Ngambon'ethwal'imikhon'ekhanda
 ...
 Inkinsel'edla kusale ngayibona
 Imbheka umam'omanikinikana
 Ngabon'inkinsel'ihlekel'eceleni...

(We saw a very rich man
 Riding his fawn stallion
 Driving a pack of dogs
 ...
 The wild sound of horses and dogs
 Went past the gardens
 Destroying pumpkins in the process
 ...
 I saw a poor woman
 Emerging from her room
 I saw her cry in despair
 ...
 I saw the richman
 Looking at the poor woman
 And he laughed to himself.)

These details prepare us for the eruption of violence that later unfolds in the story. We are able to sympathise with the oppressed and despised poverty-stricken masses who have no option but to resort to violence in order to address injustices in the society. If the narrator had merely plunged into the centre of events, we would not have been able to contextualise the anger of the people. This indicates that a good exposition has to provide such essential details that enhance the audience's enjoyment and appreciation of the story and at the same arouses enough interest to hear more.

We have already mentioned that poets and musicians tell stories as an illustrative measure to drive a point home. This results in an exposition of a different kind. Instead of giving details about the events that are to unfold, musicians and poets sometimes depict exposition in the form of views and comments that prepare the

audience for the events and characters that will be portrayed in the story. This usually happens in the poems or stories that have overt didactic connotations.

In Lafika Izwi, by Nxumalo (1968:54), the exposition is in the form of the narrator's comments that prepare the audience for the events to unfold:

Makube kumnand'ukuba ngundabizekwayo
Umunt'uthola nesizathu sokuqhenya
Azibon'ezibheka macala onke,
Aqalaz'abone nabaning'abedlulayo;
Nokho kuhl'ukugawul'ubheke-
Inde iyaphilis'inkululeko yomphefumulo,
Kunentokozwana eyedlulayo yokukhukhumala ngenkohliso...

(Perhaps it's nice to be popular
One finds reasons to be haughty,
Ponders from all angles
Looks around and see many passing by;
But it's wise to be cautious-
Freedom of the soul lasts longer
Than short-lived joy of faked pride...)

These details do not necessarily give information about the plot but rather serve as an exposition about what the story is very likely to centre on and the direction that the story may take as the narration progresses. We find the same kind of exposition in Vusi Ximba's song that tells a story about a man who goes to a family planning clinic. Ximba starts his song with the following lines:

Isono lesi
Yisono lesi,
Ukungazi lutho,
Yisono lesi.

(This is a disgrace,
This is a disgrace,
To be ignorant
Is disgraceful.)

We must hasten to emphasise that the role of the exposition in the story is not to tell us what the story is about but rather to attract us with information that will make us

eager to learn more. This is evident in the examples that we have cited above to show how artists prepare us for the stories by giving us their views or thematic allusions.

Msimang (1986:41) contends that exposition has two dimensions to it: the state of equilibrium and the state of disequilibrium. In the former state, characters and in most cases their relatively peaceful environment, are introduced to the audience. In the latter the problem confronting them is introduced. In most cases the state of equilibrium is disturbed by an introduction of a problem or conflict that faces a character and disrupts the calm conditions that prevail in the setting. We find this in Mzolo's poem:

Ngihleli kahle esicelwini
Ngithamel'ilanga lobusika
...
Ukubhavumula kwenja ngokwethuka,
Kwangiphakamisa ngaphikelela
Kulelo sango lokukhonkotha,
Izinyawo zami zaphakama,
Ngalibamb'ichalaha lakwethu
Ngabona phambi kwami sekumi
Uphuhlalala lwemihezohezo...
(Mzolo in Nyembezi, 1963: 70)

(I was sitting nicely in the basking spot
Enjoying the winter sun
...
The frightened barking of the dog
Made me stand up and go
To the gate where the dog was barking
My feet were fast
I restrained our dog
And saw in front of me
A tall *sangoma*...)

The arrival of *isangoma* marks the start of the narrator's problems in the story. This exposition serves to arouse interest in the reader who will now want to know the outcome of this development. Ximba depicts the same scenario in one of his songs:

Ngangizihlalele kahle
Ngizothela ama-heater,
Ngiziphuzel'amatiye.

Nakho-ke sekufik'eny'insizwa:
"Hheyi Mavusana asambe siy'ekhaya mnganami."

(I was enjoying myself
Warming myself with a heater
And drinking tea.
And then a certain chap arrived:
"Hey Mavusana my friend, let's go to my place."

The arrival of this friend creates a state of disequilibrium in Mavusana's peaceful surroundings. When Mavusana accompanies this friend, he finds things unbearable: he has to sleep on a small worn out studio couch because his friend does not have a room of his own, let alone a bed. In fact he goes to his father and borrows a blanket. When they go out the following day, the friend is involved in a fight and Mavusana has to intervene on his behalf and regrets having agreed to his friend's invitation.

In some cases we are introduced to characters who lead a happy life but are at the same time faced with a major problem that makes it impossible for them to find peace and satisfaction in life. This is found in Inkosi uMnikwa in Nxumalo (1965:62):

Ukuhlaselwa ngeny'impimpi kwakungenkathazo,
Indlala yayiliphuph'elingaphushwa,
Kuphela kuny'okwakukhathaz'inkosi
Ubusuku nemini ilwa nesu;
Kuphela kuny'okwakujabhis'abantu
Bayo, imihla namalanga bebopha
Findo beqaqabula; bakha lisu bebhidliza...
Emakhosikazin'aman'uMnikwa ayenawo
Kavelang'umfana phezu kwemizamo.

(There were no faction fights,
Food was in abundance,
Only one thing troubled the king
And he sought a solution every day;
Only one issue disappointed his people
And every day they devised various plans...
Out of Mnikwa's four wives
A boy did not emerge despite many attempts.)

This exposition reveals the major problem that faces the king. The reader is now eager to know if this problem is going to be resolved. We find the same approach used by

Ximba in his exposition when he tells a story about a man who has been wasting money in the city:

Yasebenz'insizwa yayidl'imali
Kant'uzophel'umsebenzi:
"Eyi, ngiyofika ngiphethen'ekhaya madoda?"

(A man worked and wasted his money
And then he was retrenched:
"What will I bring home?")

This exposition creates suspense in that the listeners are eager to know how this man is going to solve the problem that faces him. The introduction of a problem that evokes sympathy in the audience is vital in keeping the audience glued to the story. In this case Ximba's ability to evoke such emotions in the listeners is in harmony with the view by Griffiths (1989: 24) that:

Suspense requires sympathy with the characters. If we do not care for them, it does not matter if they suffer a severe reversal.

From the preceding discussion it has become obvious that exposition should arouse the audience's interest in the story and make them eager and look forward to the next phase of the story. Let us now look at the rising action that follows immediately after the exposition or introductory part of the story.

3.3.2 RISING ACTION

In the quest of the characters to solve the problems and conflicts that they were faced with in the exposition, stumbling blocks tend to block the way and complicate matters even further. This exacerbates the character's dilemma and compels him to seek further solutions to his problems. In his comments about rising action in a narrative, Mafela (1996:70) explains:

The rising action starts to unfold with the first event of the story and builds up to the climax. It presents increasing difficulties encountered by characters in the movement towards stability... The events in the rising action are related because one event gives rise to another, the

conflict deepens and tension increases. The story becomes interesting as characters encounter resistance in their efforts to reach their goals.

The above statement supports the view that in the rising action the character's attempt to solve a problem gives birth to even more problems. We see this in Ximba's song that tells a story about a man who spends money with girlfriends, is retrenched and returns home empty handed. Before he reaches his home he has to cross a river. This makes him come up with a plan that may solve his problems:

Athi uma esewela emfuleni
Abone inguzunga yetshe.
Ayigalele epotimendeni.

(When he was crossing the river
He saw a big stone.
He then threw it inside the suitcase.)

When he arrives home, the family is excited about the heavy suitcase that he is carrying. His child comes running and offers to carry the suitcase:

"Awuthi ngikuphathele baba"
"Ngek'ulunge, biza abadala."

("Let me carry it for you, father"
"You won't manage, call those who are older.")

Although this man's problem of arriving home empty-handed has been solved, we are now eager to know what will happen as soon as the family finds out that there is only a big stone in the suitcase. This of course complicates the character's problems even further.

Nxumalo does the same thing in *Inkosi uMnikwa*. The king seems to have found the solution to his problem of having no son that will assume kingship when he dies. An *inyanga* advises him to call one of his grandparents who must beseech the ancestors to provide him with a son. The old man arrives and performs the necessary rituals. This seems to be effective because the narration provides the following details:

Zahamb'izinsuk'ezimangalisayo,

Kwaphuma langa kwagqolozelwa uKabani,
Suku luthize wazibik'uKaNgomane

....

Zabhem'azadel'izalukazi zigqolozele;
Yakhal'ingane yethuk'umhlaba
Waphum'unina kaMnikwa wakikiza
Umfana wayesezelwe, inkosi yamaNtungwa.
(Nxumalo, 1965:64)

(Wonderful days passed
Everyday they stared at daughter of So-and-So,
And one day daughter of Ngomane announced her pregnancy
...
Midwives partook of their snuff and watched;
The baby cried in fear of the world
And Mnikwa's mother came out ululating
A son had been born, the king of the Ntungwas.)

The arrival of the long awaited son seems to have solved the king's problems. But a further issue still has to be resolved: the king made many promises when he pleaded with the ancestors for a son. Is he going to keep his promises? This obviously complicates matters for the king and results in suspense on the part of the reader who wants to know the fate of the characters that will be decided by the king's decision concerning the vows and promises that he made to the ancestors and the nation.

We have already indicated that suspense is the vital ingredient that a narrator depends on in his attempt to keep the audience hooked to the story. We concur with Perrine (1988:43) who explains:

Suspense is the quality in a story that makes readers ask, 'What is going to happen next?' or 'How will this turn out?' and impels them to read on to find the answers to these questions.

In the above examples the audience has been supplied with information that makes them eager to know the outcome of the events. In the case of music, the singer as the narrator extends this suspense by interspersing the narration with a chorus or refrain of the song. In other words when the listeners are, for instance, anxious to know what will happen when the wife opens the suitcase in Ximba's song, the next action is delayed by the narrator's singing.

Dramatic irony is also used as an effective device for creating suspense. In the case of Ximba's song, the wife does not know that there is nothing but a big stone in the suitcase. Her excitement makes us feel pity for her:

“Awu baba, lasinda kangak'ipotimende?
Uthi kawusibuyele nedayimane nje eGoli?”

(Father, why is the suitcase so heavy
Is it because you brought us diamond from Johannesburg?)

All this makes us want to hear more. This also necessitates that a story must move on to the next phase, which is the climax of all the events that have been relayed by the narrator and kept us hooked to the story.

3.3.3 CLIMAX

The climax is the highest point in the narration or in the events that take place in the story. All what has been holding us in suspense is brought to the boiling point. If the character had devised a strategy to solve his problems, we want to know if that plan is going to work. In some cases, we already know that the plan is not going to work, all we are interested in is to see how other characters are going to react to the manner in which the events have turned out in the narration.

In Ximba's song that we have been using as an example, the wife opens the suitcase. We already know what awaits her and are eager for her response. She is devastated and demands an explanation from her husband. Her husband pleads innocence and blames people back in Johannesburg for having swapped suitcases. In Inkosi uMnikwa by Nxumalo, events come to the apex when the king's son gets ill. The reasons for the illness are given:

Ukunyakaza komqondo kwayiland'inkumbulo
Yezinsuku zenhlupheko, izinsuku zokucela
Izikhathi zemizamo, izinyanga namakhambi
Wakhumbul'izethembis'uMnikwa
Kazange nakany'akufez'ayekufungele;

Kazange nasephushen'akhumbul'izithembiso...
(Nxumalo, 1965:66)

(The mind's restlessness brought back memories
Of days of misery, days of beseeching
Moments of attempts, doctors and medicines
Mnikwa recalled his promises
He had not honoured his vows;
Not even in his dreams had he remembered promises.)

In most cases, the climax marks the end of the story in many songs and poems. This is often due to the brevity of the medium which necessitates that only the essentials are included in the narration.

3.3.4 DENOUEMENT

This forms the conclusion of the story. Sometimes the story ends with a twist that defies what we had expected as the ultimate turn of events. We find an interesting twist in Uyazi Wena Nkosi by Mbhele. In this poem a hungry stranger arrives while MaNgcobo is about to give her kids the last morsel of the only food she had. When the stranger pleads with her for food, she gives him, thus forcing her kids to sleep on empty stomachs. We expect the story to have a very sad ending, considering the plight of this very poor family. We are surprised, however, to learn that a miracle happens at the end of the story: MaNgcobo's bag of maize meal is filled to bursting point. This is a surprising but happy ending indeed!

Sometimes the story ends without any obvious changes to the character's circumstances and determination. In Uyeza, the main character awaits the arrival of a beloved one. A lot of effort and energy is spent on making preparations for the arrival. Sadly, the lover never turns up. When the story ends, we expect the narrator to give up but he reaffirms his determination in the following lines:

Ezinsukwini eziyisikhombisa
Ezakha isonto, elakha inyanga,
Inyanga eyakha unyaka,
Ngisahleli ngilindile
Ngoba ngisamthanda.

(Gumede in Zulu, 1989: 32)

(In the seven days
That make a week, that makes a month,
A month that makes a year,
I am still waiting
Because I love her.)

Sometimes the end of the story shows characters coming to terms with the situations which have been facing them throughout the story. In Lafika Izwi, Gumede's son has been trying to defy his father's demands that the tombstone that the son erected in his memory be demolished. The father's voice torments him even though he tries to ignore it and even relocates to a far away place. At the end of the story the son succumbs to his father's demands:

Yethembisa kul'iphupho...
Laphum'ilanga yaphashanyiswa
Yabatshela, bayilekelela balibus'itshe.
(Nxumalo, 1968: 59)

(He promised in the dream...
The sun rose and he was roused from sleep
He told them, and they helped him remove the stone.)

In this story the narrator does not tell us whether this will be the solution to the young man's problems. It is left to the reader to make his own conclusion about what later happens in the story. An ending like this one is always commended because the reader's intelligence is not insulted and undermined by the narrator's unnecessary description of the events that happen after the story has been neatly concluded.

In some cases the end of the story does not tell us what happens as the direct result of the character's actions in the story. In UPhangisa, the reader is expecting to know as to what will happen after Phangisa has smashed the madam's mirror. The narrator does not tell us whether the madam sacks Phangisa but rather concentrates on the effect of the action on Phangisa's outlook in life after this incident:

Wagulukudel'umfo wakwaZulu
Wabuya nezimbili izikhwili,

Wasikaza wagalela kabili,
Wakhal'uMaqumban'engesigwili,
Esebon'umonakalo omkhulu.

Ngalelo langa wethwas'uPhangisa
Wafuman'iqinis'eliphelele,
Wakumbulul'ukwaz'okusithele,
Kwakhanya njengelanga libalele
Ukungazi kwephuz'ukumedusa.
(Mkhize, 1973: 47)

(The chap from KwaZulu rushed outside
And returned with two fighting sticks,
He struck the mirror twice
And the poor White madam cried out
On realising the extent of the big damage.

It dawned on Phangisa on that day
He realised the plain truth
And discovered deep knowledge
It became clear like a sunny day
Ignorance ceased leading him astray.)

3.4 UNITY OF PLOT

Unity of plot refers to how the storyteller has depicted the events in the narrative with regard to how, when and where they take place. Such unity has vital effect on how the audience understands the content and the theme of the story. In most cases, the maturity and creativeness of the artist is determined by the ability to handle unity of plot in a convincing manner that leaves a lasting impression on the minds of the audience to whom the story is delivered.

There are three aspects of the unity of plot, i.e., the unities of action, time and place. Let us look at each of these unities and ascertain how some stories satisfy their requirements.

3.4.1 UNITY OF ACTION

A well-constructed story has to display unity and compactness with regard to the events that are covered in the narrative. The main emphasis and focus in the unity of

plot is on the most relevant details that best illustrate the events and how they affect characters in the story. The narrator has to confine the story to one main event in the lives of the characters so as to avoid unnecessary details that may confuse the audience or render the narration irrelevant and unattractive.

This is obviously not easy to achieve in *izibongo* where *imbongi* touches on various heroic episodes in the life career of the praised figure. These acts of bravery often span decades, from the birth of the hero, to the day on which the praises are sung. This means that to talk of unity of action in *izibongo*, one has to consider the events in isolation. It is then that we realise that even though the poet mentions various heroic acts, each act is relayed in a manner that shows impressive unity in that the poet confines his narration to the events that are essential to the episode covered in a particular portion of *izibongo*. In Dingane's praises, for instance, *imbongi* says:

Izibuko likaNdaba,
Elimadwal'abushelelezi;
Lashelel'uPiti nendodana.
Owadl'uPiti kumaBhunu
Wamudla wamtshobotshela.
Odl'uMzibhelibheli kumaBhunu,
Wadl'uPhuzukuhlokoza kumaBhunu...
(Nyembezi, 1995: 48)

(The ford of Ndaba
Which has slippery rocks
That caused Pieter and his son to slip.
He who devoured Pieter among the Boers
And swallowed him with ease.
He devoured Mzibhelibheli among the Boers,
And devoured Phuzukuhlokoza among the Boers...)

In the above excerpt, *imbongi* has confined himself to the event when Dingane killed the Boers. There is no mention of unrelated events. This helps in enabling the audience to appreciate the extent to which the carrying out of this plot was executed. In *izigiyo* and shorter praises of ordinary people, unity of action is manifest in that events that are covered are also treated in isolation so as to avoid confusion. Mfiliseni Magubane praises himself as:

Umalobola ngesheke ekhweni lakhe kwaNongoma

Kuze kuse umkhwe wakhe ethetha
 Ethl, "Ngekabani le ngan'ezolobola ingane yami ngephepha?"
 Ngathi mina, "Cha Mkhwe wami,
 Ngizolobola ingane yakho ngoba ngiyayithanda."
 Wathi yena, "Suka le nkinsenyana yaseNgudwini,
 Uhlushwa wubucebi, uhlushwa wubugwili!"

(He who pays *ilobolo* by cheque to his in-laws at Nongoma
 Making his father-in-law stay awake until sunrise
 Saying, "Who is paying *ilobolo* for my child by cheque?"
 To which I responded, "No, my father-in-law,
 I've come to *lobola* your child because I love her."
 And he said, "Get out of here, you richman from Ngudwini,
 Your riches are giving you airs!")

We are only told about what happened when the young man went to negotiate *ilobolo*. No reference is made to incidents that are not related to the issue that resulted in the artist getting such unique praises. This shows that the artist is aware of the importance of focusing on one event so as to be able to highlight its importance.

Epic poetry can hardly be judged in terms of satisfying requirements for the unity of plot. The poet in an epic is confronted by the same impediments as those found in *izibongo* because an epic covers a wide range of events that illustrate the heroic exploits of the praised personality. We note, however, that in an epic, the poet uses the same approach as in *izibongo*, the events are grouped according to highlights in the hero's life. E.S.Q. Zulu in his epic on Madiba, for instance, displays compactness when he relates how Mandela was arrested near Howick. We find the same unity of action when Zulu covers the events on the famous Rivonia trial and the subsequent imprisonment of Mandela.

Modern poetry suggests that poets are more familiar with requirements for unity of plot in their narratives. This may be attributed to the obvious desire to conform to Western formal ways of compositions. In defending this tendency, Masuku (1973: 2) claims:

Gone, forever, are the days when we could grandiloquently speak of African poetry without a deep study of form based upon the classical or European pattern. This form gives us the basic tools with which to work in our modern era.

Although we view things differently from the way Masuku expresses them, we feel that he has been able to portray unity of action in his poem entitled UShaka Nohlanya. This poem tells a story of how Shaka killed a lunatic who had caused much havoc in the community. The poem starts when news of the madman's menace is brought to Shaka's attention:

Waphum'elawini lakhe
UShaka ethukuthele;
"Yini?" washo ngezwi lakhe:
"Yin'okusivimbezele?"

"Konakele entabeni!
Izinkomo zebiwe
Wuhlanya esigangeni-
Nezimbuzi zishaqiwe!"
(Masuku, 1973:74)

(Shaka was angry when
He emerged from his room;
"What is it?" he asked:
"What is besieging us?"

"There is trouble at the mountain!
Cattle have been stolen
By a lunatic at the mountain
Goats have been confiscated as well.")

This news infuriates Shaka who then sends out a group of men to kill the mad man. These men, however are unable to kill the mad man:

Lwema uhlanya, mamo!
Lwazibheka izinsizwa;
Kwase kukubi, habo!
Zasondela izinsizwa.

...

Bhoklo! lwakhala ugodo!
Yawa futh'eny'insizwa;
Muklu, kaningi ugodo-
Zafa, zining'izinsizwa!
(Masuku, 1973:75)
(The lunatic stood still and alas!
He glanced at the men

The mood was tense!
The men got closer.
...
The log fell with a bang
Another young man collapsed,
The log smashed them several times
Killing many men.)

The few survivors flee and report to Shaka about their failure. Shaka then takes it upon himself to confront the lunatic. He kills him instantly:

Lwabhavumula uhlanya,
Lwathatha ugodo lwalo;
Ho, lwagalela uhlanya-
Lwagadla ngomshiza walo!

Mamo waphepha uShaka
Ngokweqela eceleni!
Habo, walugwaz' uShaka!
Lwafela khon'entabeni.
(Masuku, 1973:76)

(The lunatic roared with anger
He picked his log
And struck a heavy blow
With his big stick!

Shaka survived
By jumping to one side
And stabbed the lunatic
To death at the mountain.)

This poem deals with only one event. All the details that are involved pertain to one issue, the killing of the madman and how this was carried out. We feel that although Masuku's preoccupation with rhyme has resulted in some contrived and somehow meaningless words, the story that he tries to narrate has been effectively conveyed to the audience.

There are many other poets who have been able to treat plot structure in a convincing manner in terms of unity of action. In Siwela iMoretele, Msimang tells a story about the day on which Mamelodi residents went to Municipal offices to protest about rent

increases. The residents crossed the Moretele river peacefully. All seemed well until heavily armed policemen confronted them:

Yasithibel'inkomo kaHaga ngenganono,

...

Zawela izigagayi kwababaza ibhuloho
Amadwala phansi abamba ongezansi...
(Msimang, 1990:15)

(The whitemen confronted us with guns

...

The masses crossed while the bridge exclaimed
And the rocks below were left speechless...)

The story ends on a sad note when protesters are killed in the altercation between the masses and the police. In a highly poetic language, Msimang sums up the events of the day and the tragic loss that was the result of the violent brutality:

Izigagayi zaphenduka isanhlaka senhlakanhlaka
IMoretele zayiwela amanhlukanhlukano,
Abaningi kabayiwelanga okwesibili,
Balibona liphuma, abalibonanga lishona,
Nanamuhla amanzi asalila leso sililo.
(Msimang, 1990: 15)

(The masses dispersed in chaos
And crossed Moretele from different directions
Many did not cross it the second time
They saw the sun rise, but never saw sunset
Even today the waters are still lamenting.)

We also find fine examples of stories with impressive unity of action in music. If we take Caluza's song, Kwathi Belele, for instance, we get a story about people whose houses are raided by the police at dawn. The police wake them up and search for illicit beer. There are attempts by the occupants to hide whatever may land them in jail. This is in vain, however, because they are taken to the notorious Marshall Square.

The story that is told in this song involves one incident in the lives of the characters. The song only mentions the details that are relevant to the raid and the subsequent arrest of the characters.

3.4.2 UNITY OF PLACE

It is easy and enjoyable to follow a story if events that are covered occur in one place. A good story has to be brief and confined to one setting. This requirement is often impossible to satisfy, especially in the case of *izibongo* where events take place in various locations depending of course on the hero's expeditions. In fact, lack of unity of place is not regarded as a weakness but rather as an indication of the hero's greatness and the proof of the respect and fame that he commands.

Most of the stories that are told by modern Zulu poets and musicians often lack any specific indication of the setting or place where the events in the story occur. The artist merely tells a story and makes very little or no mention at all of the exact setting or place where events take place. Rather than looking at this as a failure on the part of the artist, we can conclude that this shows universality of the stories that Zulu artists tell in their compositions.

In most cases, stories that are told by Zulu artists involve a journey. A character moves from one place to another, mostly in search of a solution to his problem or in an attempt to resolve the conflict confronting him. On other occasions a character may move from one place when he is trying to run away from his problems and responsibilities or in search of greener pastures. Such journeys make it difficult for the artist or narrator to satisfy requirements for the unity of place in the plot construction.

In *Lafika Izwi*, for instance, Nxumalo tells a story that starts at late Gumede's home when his son erects a tombstone during Gumede's unveiling ceremony. After the ceremony the son returns to his place of work, which is not identified or disclosed in the story. Gumede's voice follows the son, reminding him of the abominable crime that the son committed by erecting a stolen tombstone for his father. The son tries to run from the voice. Although the destination is not specified, the poet indicates that the son travels very far indeed in his attempt to escape the threats of the voice:

“Kungcono ngithuthe ngiy'ezizweni,

Ngizomedukel'ubaba ngek'angithole,
Ngizoguqula nesibongo sam'ekuhambeni
Kangisafun'ukubizwa nangezithakazelo zakhona."
Yathath'imithwalo yayo yajokola,
Yawel'imifula yadundubal'izintaba.
(Nxumalo, 1968:57)

("It's better if I relocate to a strange land
I'll get lost and my father won't find me,
I'll change my surname in my travelling,
I don't want to be called by my clan names."
He took his loads and departed,
Crossing rivers and climbing mountains.)

By the time the story ends, the son has returned home where he decides to listen to the voice's commands. He eventually demolishes the tombstone that has been the contentious issue and caused him great pain and misery. The foregoing does not, however, indicate that Zulu musicians and poets do not take into consideration the need for unity of place in their compositions. In most cases stories occur at two places or points: the point of departure and the point of arrival. The narrator confines the story to the events that take place between the two points, without deviation and inclusion of unnecessary details. This is evident for instance, in Umthandazi Ejoyintini by Vusi Ximba. The song starts when the wife travels to town to demand food and money from her husband and ends when she finds her in a shebeen dancing with girls although he had told his wife that he has become a preacher. In UMajazi by Khansela NoJBC, the story starts at Majazi's home and ends when his wife finds him hiding at his brother's place in Denver hostel.

3.4.3 UNITY OF TIME

A good story is the one that covers events that take place within a remarkably shorter period of time. An ability to satisfy this requirement demonstrates the skill and resourcefulness of the artist or storyteller who is able to stick to relevant details, to start and end the story only where it matters the most.

As we have pointed out on several instances in the preceding discussion, *izibongo* do not portray unity of plot because of the nature of events that are covered and often span many decades and occur at various locations. Temporal aspects of the plot, however, are sometimes used to denote the urgency of the events and the alacrity with which the task at hand is executed. All this serves to magnify the stature of the hero. In *izibongo* of king Dinuzulu, for instance, we find the following lines which indicate unity of time:

UMphangela langa lingakaphumi kwaNdunu
Lithe liphuma laliphuma nezingazi zamadoda.
(Nyembezi, 1995: 106)

(The Rusher who rushes before the sun rises at Ndunu
So that as it rose, it rose with men's blood.)

The above lines show that the king's armies went for the attack before dawn and by the time the sun rose, many warriors from the opposition side had already been massacred. In this case the bard confines the narration to aspects that reveal the time factor in the unfolding of events in the story. In other words he does not tell us about events that take place before the battle. In modern literature genres such as the short story, an author is regarded as highly creative if he or she is able to master unity of time in a story.

Modern poetry gives us many examples of unity of time. In Mbhele's *Uyazi wena Nkosi*, the story starts at sunset when MaNgcobo cooks food for her hungry children. A stranger arrives immediately after MaNgcobo has put a large basin of porridge in front of the hungry children. When the stranger pleads for food, MaNgcobo shows generosity and sacrifice by giving him food that was not even enough for her and her children. This heart-rendering story ends at night after the stranger has departed. In *Kwathi Belele*, by Caluza, the story in the song starts at dawn when the police raid the characters' dwelling places and ends when they are taken by police vans to Marshal Square for imprisonment. The obviously takes place within a couple of hours.

3.5 PLOT AND ORDER

Order refers to how events and the chronology thereof are presented in a narrative. Order enables us to see how events follow each other in their occurrence and how this is reflected when the narrator presents the story to us. With regard to this, Chatman (1978: 63) explains:

The discourse can rearrange the story as much as it pleases, provided the story sequence remains discernible. If not, the plot fails in 'unity.'

Order in a narrative comprises three elements analepsis, prolepsis.

3.5.1 ANALEPSIS

According to Cortazzi (1993: 94), analepsis is a flashback or expository return to an earlier period of time either outside the existing narrative time span or inside it. Mafela (1996: 68) contends that:

Flashback is a useful technique which takes readers back to events which have happened before the story unfolds. Because of this technique, the reader is in a position to gain a better understanding of the relationship between events and why some actions take place the way they do.

The above comment suggests that events that are recalled in the form of flashbacks have to be vital in our understanding of the current state of affairs. In Ngamanga, the narrator mourns the sudden death of his beloved friend. He then uses flashbacks to tell us about events that took place before his death:

Bangikhohliselani bethi usedlule?
Basho ngoba leli sonto ebesesibhedlela?
Baningi bengqubuzeka emgwaqeni la
...
Ehhe besimlindele isonto lonke
Sithi uzophumula nje abuye abuye...
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973: 24)

(Why do they lie and say he has passed away?
Is it because he was in hospital this week?)

Many people get involved in road accidents
...
Indeed we were expecting him the week
Thinking he would rest a while and return...)

By using flashbacks, the narrator is able to take us back to events that took place before the death of his friend. This enables us to know the cause of death and how his friend was expecting him to recover soon. Seemingly, this friend was involved in a minor accident, hence the shock that grips the narrator on hearing that he has suddenly passed away.

In most cases something triggers the narrator's memory and prompts him or her to provide us with past events. In Msakazi, the narrator looks at a beer container and is immediately reminded of what took place in the past:

Lesi sitshod'esiphambi kwam'ekhathonini
Singikhumbuza mhla ngikhwela ngibuyel'eSilungwini
Wayengiphathel'umshumb'osamancintshana
Okwath'um'ugad'eyishay'impempe yakh'okokugcina
Ngawubethel'ekhanda ngamjejeza kanye
Qede wasikhihl'esikaNandi.

(The beer in the carton
Reminds me of the day I departed for the city
She had brought me a small beer container.
When the guard blew his final whistle
I gulped it down and looked at her
And she cried sorrowfully.)

3.5.2 PROLEPSIS

Prolepsis is a term used for prospective displacement of events in a narrative. In other words prolepsis is the opposite of analepsis. Ngcongwane (1987: 38) explains:

In a prolepsis, on the other hand, the narrative previews certain facts and brings them out in the sequence before their actual turn.

This means that a narrative may jump ahead to future events. This is also called foreshadowing. Nhlanhla (1990: 9) makes an interesting observation:

In a prolepsis the narrative privileges certain facts and brings them out in the sequence before their actual turn...Such facts may be inferred in the meaning of a name given a particular character.

This means that the name of a character may hint at how events will unfold late in the story. In one of Juluka's songs, for instance, the name of the character is Dumazile (she who disappoints). When the story unfolds, Dumazile disappoints her lover in many ways:

Ngaqabul'intombi ngathol'umkhuhlane
Ngathimula ngakhwehlela
Ngavuza namakhala
Kwashis'isiphongo sami
Kanti le ntomb'injani?

(I kissed a girlfriend and caught a flu
I sneezed and coughed
My nose was running
My forehead was hot
What kind of girlfriend is this?)

The lover forgives Dumazile but disappointments still continue:

Ngamxolel'uDumazile, wangiye'emahhashini
Ubeth'uzongikhethel'inkunzi yehhashi
Wakheth'unamba 17 ngafak'imali yami
Wasal'unamba 17 wangen'unamba 1.

(I forgave Dumazile and she took me to the racecourse
And said she would pick a winning horse for me
She chose number 17 and I placed a bet with my money
Number 17 did not win, instead number one came first.)

Epics also make frequent use of foreshadowing. In his epic on Madiba, Zulu (1999: 12) says:

Lakhula lakhephezel'elakoKaNkedam'ithole
...
Kant'okukhulu ngokusazawubonwa ngamehlo!

(The calf of KaNkedama grew rapidly

...

But great things were still to come!)

In this part of his epic Zulu tells us about Madiba's childhood and how he proved to be a brave young man. We become aware, however, that there are still many heroic deeds that await us as the epic continues. Zulu therefore uses foreshadowing to prepare us for future events. We are aware that in an epic about a renowned figure, readers are familiar with the order of events that are narrated. The use of prolepsis, however, raises suspense. We are eager to find out how the narrator will handle the depiction of future events in the hero's life.

As we have pointed out, foreshadowing provides us with information about events that will take place later in the story. In Umthandazi Ejoyintini, Vusi Ximba tells us:

Wamkhohlis'unkosikazi
Wath'uwumthandazi, usekholiwe
Kant'unkosikaz'uzombamba.

(He lied to his wife
Saying he is a faith healer and that he has become a convert
But his wife was going to find out the truth.)

After Ximba has provided us with this information, he tells us that this man's wife goes to the city to visit her husband. This raises suspense as we are now eager to know how the wife will find out the truth and how that will affect future events in the story. This shows that foreshadowing can play a crucial role in arousing interest about the outcome of events in the story.

There are cases where skilful artists are able to use both analepsis and prolepsis in one story or better still, in one stanza. In Ngimfunge EkwaNzuza, Ntuli executes this feat with remarkable deftness. In this poem, Ntuli tells us about his friendship with Buhlebuni. He uses flashbacks to provide past events and also foreshadows what will happen when he eventually meets his beloved friend:

Mzukwana ngimshiy'eSiqhomaneni
Ngimbamb'ithambo udadewethu

Ngathi ngizoquba ngale ndlela

...

Ngayo siyohlangana phambili
La sesiyohambisan'unomphela:

...

Sokhumbul'igugu nokududana
Mhla ziyishaya kwaNongoma
Siwel'aMatigulu noMlalazi

...

Yeka ukuthululelan'izifuba
Yeka ukubhalelana izincwadi
Ezazincwadi-mbili iyinye!
Ngikhumbula mhla unginganda,
Uthi, "Kahle fan'ukuphang'umdaka."
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973: 60)

(When I left her at Siqhomaneni
I shook her hand
And promised to stick to this path

...

Through it we will meet at our destination
Where we will walk together forever:

...

We will reminisce about friendship treasures
When there was a wedding at Nongoma
When we crossed Matigulu and Mlalazi rivers

...

We confided in each other
We wrote each other letters
That we were two letters in one!
I remember when you restrained me
Saying, "Don't hurry young chap..."

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have focused on the depiction of plot in Zulu music and poetry. Our definition of plot indicated that there are arguments regarding the nature of plot and how it differs from the story. We pointed out, for instance, how Forster (1974:60) stipulates that a good plot need not necessarily arouse curiosity on the part of the reader or audience. We also indicated how some scholars such as Boulton (1986) comment that the story and plot are interwoven and cannot therefore be discussed as separate entities.

Our discussion also highlighted how Zulu artists have depicted various kinds of plot, which shows that storytelling in Zulu music and poetry is not inferior to plot structures that are found in prose narratives such as folktales, novels and short stories. We also mentioned how plot structures such as exposition, rising action, climax and resolution manifest themselves in many stories that artists tell in Zulu music and poetry. Our discussion also indicated the fact that inability to satisfy certain requirements like unities of plot in genres such as *izibongo* and epics need not be regarded as an artist's failure as a capable storyteller but rather as the deftness of an artist to depict events that magnify the praised hero's greatness.

There are many other examples that we tried to give in order to indicate that plot in Zulu music and poetry is tangible evidence that our artists should be accorded the honour they rightly deserve as ingenious storytellers. Although some stories do not conform to rigid requirements of plot construction, we note that the stories being portrayed are still interesting enough and the artists realise the vital role of ingredients such as suspense and surprise in keeping the audience on its feet.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHARACTERISATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to look at characterisation and its relevance in storytelling. We are going to discuss various views that are expressed by critics with regard to the nature of characterisation and how it manifests itself in narratives. Our discussion will also highlight how artists portray characters in music and poetry and how characterisation as used in Zulu music and poetry displays distinct and unique features.

4.1 CHARACTERISATION DEFINED

Abrams (1981: 33) has this to say about characters:

Characters are the persons represented in dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual and emotional qualities by inference from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it-the **dialogue** and from what they do-the **action**.

The above definition emphasises the fact that characters are included in a literary work for a particular reason. They have to be actively involved in the story so that through what they say and do, readers and audience can appreciate the story and the theme that the artist conveys through plot and character.

Msimang (1986: 99) defines characterisation as:

The sum total of techniques employed by an artist in presenting characters in a literary work of art so that such characters are perceived by the audience/reader as persons endowed with moral and dispositional as well as physical qualities.

This means that characters should be convincing and resemble people that we meet in real life situations.

Ntuli (1993: 23) argues:

We can go on and on quoting various experts on characterisation but the fact of the matter is that almost, if not all authors, in simple terms, regard characterization as the revealing of characters or imaginary people in a work of art.

The role of characters in a story is very significant. In fact it is almost impossible to talk of a story without characters. With regard to this, we concur with Boulton (1985:71) who contends that:

The creation of characters is probably the most remarkable achievement of most great novelists. Few people can recite the plot of a novel in detail shortly after reading it; most readers of novels can remember numerous characters. We make allusions to literary characters in ordinary talk.

Characters that are found in Zulu narratives are not an exception in this regard. Many Zulus are quite familiar with Ndebenkulu, a character from Inkinsela yaseMgungundlovu. MaMgobhozi, a character in Hlala Kwabafileyo enjoys enormous popularity among South Africans of various backgrounds. This is evident in the fact that it has now become common to refer to any gossip-monger as MaMgobhozi. This character has also been immortalised by Brenda Fassie in the lyrics of her popular song, Vulindlela.

This shows that a character plays a crucial role in enhancing the popularity of the story. This, however, depends on the ability of the artist to portray convincing and lifelike characters that will stand the test of time. This must be done in a manner that makes the audience or the reader forget that characters are a product of the narrator's imagination. With regard to this, Acosta in Hoover (1990: 33) comments:

No matter how much pride we take in the originality of our characters or the creative process that brings them to life, they must be anchored in the reality of human experience, or the reader will not recognise them.

In other words characters must be endowed with recognisable qualities and personality traits that are a true reflection of what happens in our daily lives. Msimang (1986: 99) emphasises the need for characters to be convincing:

Perhaps the most important point about characterisation is that the artist must present lifelike characters. In order to be convincing, his imaginary persons must be grounded in reality. They must be true, not so much to our world, but to their world, i.e. the world that the artist has created for them.

The fact that characters should be lifelike is highlighted by Abrams (1981:34) who points out that:

Characterisation is the author's revelation and development of believable human qualities, words, thoughts, influence and actions in fictional beings.

Shaw (1972:71) also points out that:

In effective narrative literature, fictional persons through characterisation become so credible that they exist for the reader as real people.

Ntuli (1993: 24) further explains:

The character must be true to the world of art. Characters must be experienced by the reader as "natural" or "life like". This does not however mean that we must expect the people in the novel to be similar to the people in real life.

In most cases stories that artists tell are not about people who once lived and events that are true. An artist creates fictitious events and makes use of fictitious people who will be part of the events that take place in a story. The daunting challenge is then to make these events and characters as plausible as possible. In other words we as readers or audience must be able to identify with events and characters in the story so that they become so convincing that they sound real and possible to occur and enter our lives.

4.2. LEVELS OF CHARACTERISATION

As we pointed out in Chapter Two, three narrative levels are identified in narratology. When it comes to characterisation, narratologists cite two levels at which characterisation occurs, viz the story level and the text level. They are referred to as the first and the second level respectively. Bal (1985:92) elucidates the difference between text and story by explaining:

Text is a finite, structural whole composed of language signs. A narrative text is a text in which an agent relates a narrative. A story is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner.

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:3) clarifies the difference between the two concepts:

Story designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in the events. Whereas the 'story' is the succession of events, 'text' is a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling. Put more simply, the 'text' is what we read. In it, the events do not necessarily appear in chronological order.

The above assertion that a narrative text is the one in which a story is related, implies that a text is not a story but the medium through which the story is presented to the reader or audience. Texts can manifest themselves in various versions depending on the choice of the storyteller. In other words, there are different texts in which the same story is related. The story of the assassination of Shaka, for instance, can be told in a poem, novel, song, orally, etc. The narrator may choose to approach it from different angles, depending of course on the medium chosen.

4.2.1 STORY (FIRST) LEVEL

In narratology, the story is regarded as the first level where characterisation occurs. At this level, characters are grouped together according to how they feature in the story and the role they play in conveying the theme and plot of the story. Narratologists apply different terms to refer to characters as we normally know them. According to Genette (1983) and Bal (1985), at the story level characters or actors are grouped

together into classes or categories called actants. An actant is a class of actors or characters that portray similar or common characteristics in terms of the role they play in the story.

Greima (1983) makes a distinction between *acteur* and *actant*. He argues that both are conceived as accomplishing an act and both can include not only human beings but also inanimate objects (e.g. a magic ring). This means that if an *isangoma's* stick, for instance, has some powers that influence events in the story, it can therefore be regarded as an *acteur*. He also states that these concepts may also include abstract concepts (e.g. destiny). In other words, abstract concepts such as bad luck, fate, etc. may also be regarded as *acteurs* depending on their role and impact on the direction of the events in the story.

There are six actants in Greima's model. He argues that actants are found in all narratives whereas acteurs are endowed with specific qualities depending on the narratives in which they feature. Our discussion will be based on the actants according to Greima's model, namely:

Sender.....>object.....>receiver

Helper.....>subject.....>opponent

The main character in the story is the **subject**. The story centres around him or her. There may be one or many main characters depending of course on the nature of the story. The goal towards which the subject or character strives is the **object**. This is the main cause of the events in the story. This is also what motivates the audience or reader to know the outcome of the events in the story. What motivates the subject to attain his goal or object is called the **power**. This is abstract and may be in the form of bravery, hatred, jealousy, etc. Concerning this aspect, Rimmon-Kenan (1985:28) argues:

The intention of the subject in itself is not sufficient to reach the object.
There are powers who either allow it to reach its aim or prevent it from

doing so...One may consequently distinguish a class of actors consisting of those who support the subject in the realisation of its intentions, supply the object, or allow it to be supplied.

Obviously, there are often hurdles that obstruct the subject in his attempt to reach his object. This is caused by an **opponent** who may want to overcome the subject and foil his attempts at attaining his goal. This makes it necessary for the subject to summon help from outside sources. The subject is assisted by a **helper**. The common objective between the helper and the power sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish between the two. Bal (1985: 31) indicates the following differences between the subject and the helper:

1. While the helper helps only the subject, the power controls everything in the story.
2. The power remains abstract while the helper is always concrete.
3. The power is in the background while the helper is always in the foreground.
4. There is only one power but there can be many helpers.

Let us take a poem entitled UMahlaleshushu by Shabangu and see how the above can be applied in a practical way. This poem tells a story about Mahlaleshushu. He is therefore the **subject**. He has been in Johannesburg for twenty years now and wants to return home. This desire forms the **object** or the goal towards which he strives. The **power** that motivates him is the regret, remorse and nostalgia that he feels about the wrongs he did when he left home and never wrote or visited his parents again:

Wakhumbul'ekhaya uMahlaleshushu,
Wahlala yedwana wacabanga akaqeda.
Idlulile iminyaka engamashumi mabili
Ekhaya ahamba amasolokohlo, lokho lokho-
Akabhala ngisho kwancwadi encane,
Akathumela ngisho okokuthiba indlala,
Bababhale, akathinteka nakancane,
Wathalalisa, waba ongekho ekhona.
(Shabangu in Zulu, 1992:53)

(Mahlaleshushu became homesick
And sat alone with endless thoughts.

Twenty years have passed
Since he left home for good.
He didn't write a letter,
He didn't even send food
When they wrote letters, he was not moved,
He ignored them and was like a dead one although still alive.)

There is an obstacle that prevents the fulfilment of Mahlaleshushu's wishes. He is broke:

Akanalutho, uhlubule uMahlaleshushu,
Uphila ngezinto zokwembulelwa;
Leli dix a le ovaloni ayifakile
Wayembulelwa, akasazi kwakunini!
(Shabangu in Zulu, 1992:54)

(Mahlaleshushu is broke and clotheless
He depends on hand-me-downs
The dirty overall that he is wearing
Was given to him by someone long ago!)

Destitution and poverty is the **opponent** that prevents Mahlaleshushu from attaining his goal. In other words, the opponent can also be abstract. To overcome this opponent, Mahlaleshushu must summon help. He approaches his home boys. They sympathise with him and give him train fare and a suit to wear when he returns home. This is the **helper**.

The **subject** becomes the **receiver** if the former succeeds in attaining his goal. In this story, Mahlaleshushu has been given a suit by his home boys. He wants to arrive home wearing this suit so that he can appear a bit presentable to people who last saw him twenty years ago. He boards the train while still wearing his dirty old clothes, planning to discard them on the way and change into the new suit. Unfortunately there is a mixup of bags on the way. Mahlaleshushu only realises this when he has taken a bath and thrown his old clothes out of the window:

Waqonda egunjaneni lokugezela,
Wangena qede wazikhiyela.
Hlwi, hlwi amadixa emzimbeni,
Ntshingiyani konke ngefasitela!

Angathini ukufika kwezakubo izinkalo
Namadixa akwaMagidasibhekane?
Wasuka lapho waphondla
Maqede wavula isikhwanyana

...

Wathi nhla phakathi-isudi do.
Kunamanabukeni kapotingana kuphela!
Sekukude emuva, sekukude phambili
Amanikiniki asele kwezikud'izinkalo.
(Shabangu, S. in Zulu, 1992:55)

(He went straight to the bathroom section
And after entering, he locked himself inside.
He ripped off the dirty clothes from his body
And threw all of them out of the window!
How can he arrive home
Wearing dirty rags of Johannesburg?
After that he washed his face
And opened the small bag.

...

When he peeped inside, there was no suit!
There were only an infant's napkins.
There was nothing he could do
His rags were left behind in far away valleys.)

It is obviously evident that the brief nature of poetry and music does not allow all the aspects of Greima's model to feature in each and every story. The rapid development of plot and the restriction on the number of characters to be included in the story, often excludes the **helper** and the **opponent** in the narrative. In music and poetry, artists tend to 'insert' stories that defy the inclusion of the **object** and the **receiver**. This happens in most cases when such 'stories' are merely there to illustrate a point. Let us take for instance a poem entitled KuSibusiso Nyembezi by D.B.Z. Ntuli. The poet tells this story:

Ngangingakwazi, ngangingekwazi
Ukuba akuthanga ngelus'amathole kababa
Eduze nehlathi leqele lakwethu
Ngezwa isililo: "Umntanami! Umntanami!
Wapheshulelw'eGoli ngumoya wezikhova,
Wakhalakathela esijwini samahlongandlebe,
Wagaxwa iminyezane yobunswelaboya,
Waze wakhiph'umoya enhliziyweni emsulwa..."
Kwehla izinyembezi emehlweni alo mame,
Kwaw'izindukwana zami, ngaqal'ukuciphiza.

(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973: 48)

(I did not and would not have known you
Had it not occurred that while herding my father's calves
Next to a forest in our neighbourhood
I heard a lament: "My child! My child!
He was blown to Johannesburg by evil winds
And fell in the midst of obstinate people,
He graduated as a hardened criminal
Until he eventually killed an innocent soul."
Tears fell from the eyes of this woman,
My sticks fell and I started weeping.)

This is of course a heart-rendering story but as we all know, it is only used by the poet to refer to Mntanami! Mntanami! which is one of Nyembezi's novels. Although this is done in a form of an interesting narrative, it simply does not meet the requirements for Graime's model.

4.2.2 TEXT (SECOND) LEVEL

The role of the characters in the story depends on their appearance, how they act and what they say. All this affects the direction of the events in the story and reveals personality traits that influence to a very large extent the events and the outcome thereof in the story.

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1985) characters can be described in terms of a network of character traits. The first type names the trait by an adjective (e.g. 'he was goodhearted'), an abstract noun (e.g. 'his goodness knew no bounds'), or possibly some other kind of noun ('she was a real witch') or part of speech ('he loves only himself'). The second type on the other hand, does not mention the trait but displays and exemplifies it in various ways, leaving to the reader or audience the task of inferring the quality they imply.

Our ability to observe personality traits in characters depends on how characters are portrayed in the story. This basically depends on who the characters are and the role that they play in the story. Characters should be portrayed by emphasising traits that

have impact on the plot and theme in the story. This means that the storyteller should be very selective with regard to what features and traits to highlight in the story. The overall aim of the author or narrator is to create a clear and convincing image of the character.

There are four factors that are involved in the creation of a character's image. *Repetition* plays a vital role in this regard. In the course of the narrative the characteristics and traits of a character may be repeated so often that they emerge more clearly and the audience or reader is able to understand and appreciate fully how the characters act and behave in the story. Although the brief nature of stories in music and poetry does not allow much repetition of character, we are able to find some instances of repetition that emphasises a character's personality. In Indod'ethand'inyama by Vusi Ximba, for instance, the main character's personality is highlighted by various actions that he performs during a feast at his neighbour's house as well as how he behaves when it is his turn to slaughter a beast at his home.

Accumulation of characteristics causes odds to coalesce, complement each other and then form a whole which is the image of the character. In other words, what may seem puzzling to us as readers and audience at the beginning of the story, gradually makes sense as we come to understand the character more because of the accumulation of new evidence and traits.

Relations with others also determine the image of a character. There may be similarities and contrasts that we observe in the characters through which we are able to ascertain and come to terms with understanding the make up of the character. The character may portray such traits consciously or unawares in the manner he handles himself among other characters.

The fourth point is *transformation*. Characters may change as the story progresses. Such changes may give a clear image of the character, especially with regard to his approach and attitude towards forces that cause such changes. The image thus created will influence how the audience responds to the character's changed circumstances.

Let us look at the methods of character portrayal that are at an artist's disposal:

4.2.2.1 EXPLICIT (DIRECT) METHOD

In this method the narrator gives an explicit description of the characters in the narrative so as to make them as life-like as possible. In some cases the narrator lets other characters in the story discuss another character, thereby highlighting some personality and physical traits of a character. This is of vital importance if the exposition of the character concerned will have a bearing on the action and direction of events in the story. Such exposition is also essential in making the audience or the reader anticipate the action or events that will follow in the narrative. This, however, does not mean that characters should be described in such a way that we are able to predict the outcome of the events in the narrative.

The expository method seems to be used to a very large extent, particularly by poets. In *izibongo* of king Senzangakhona, *imbongi* paints a clear picture for us:

Obemzimba muhle nangendlal'enkulu.
Obebuso bungenandawo yokusolwa;
Obemehlo angenandawo yokusolwa;
Obenyawo zingenandawo yokusolwa...
(Nyembezi, 1995:11)

(He whose body was beautiful even in great famine
Whose face was without defect,
Whose eyes were without defect,
Whose feet were without defect...)

In some cases *imbongi* uses beautiful imagery to describe a character:

Uvemvane lukaPhunga noMageba
Uvemvan'olumabal'azibhadu.
(Nyembezi, 1995: 52)

(The butterfly of Phunga and Mageba
The butterfly with broad spots.)

Modern poets also display great skill in expository techniques of portraying characters. In Dlamini's poem entitled Yini? we are given a vivid picture of a character:

Nabo ubuso buzibhidi
Nabo ubuso bunyukubele...
Nabo ubuso bulwa nokuphaphama
Buvunyelwa umlom'odedelekile.
(Dlamini, 1981:29)

(His face is murky,
His face is wrinkled
His face is struggling to remain awake
The drooping mouth makes things worse.)

The above description does not only provide details about the character's current state of affairs but also portrays a story about the past deeds of the character. *Izibhidi* suggests a dirty thing which shows that the character was once a handsome person but now he is an unpleasant sight.

In Buzani kuMkabayi, C.S.Z. Ntuli gives a clear description of Mkabayi from head to toe:

Umdondoshiy'umntakaJama
Umqala mude umntakaJama
...
Selokhu alamba umntakaJama
Uthanga kalibhekeki umntakaJama.
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975:60)

(The child of Jama is tall
She has a long neck
...
She has always had a slender waist
Her thigh is awe-inspiring.)

The above lines give a clear picture about how the character looks. This makes us anticipate the events that will later unfold in the story, especially when Ntuli adds another dimension to Mkabayi's physical attributes:

Ukhuluma ngeliqandayo okaJama
Ubeka abe mbalwa zwi okaJama.
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975:61)

(The child of Jama has a cool voice
She only says a few words.)

The fact that Mkabayi is a taciturn person creates suspense as the reader wants to know how she will handle her suitors. This shows that a skilful artist will only describe details that will enhance the quality of the story or those that will be relevant to the development of action in the story.

The description of a character should not be for its own sake but must have relevance in the development of the plot in the story. In other words the features that have been emphasised by the narrator must have a bearing on the events that will unfold later in the narrative. In the above poem for instance, Mkabayi's eyes are described as *izimbokode*, which denotes fearsome and awe-inspiring qualities. We are therefore not surprised when the poet relates what later happens when Zwide arrogantly approaches Mkabayi:

Waphum'evunule uZwide kaLanga,
...
Waphum'egabaze ngefa nangodumo,
Wayeth'uzofik'abeke libe linye,
Ngelesibil'akhophoze okaJama
...
Wajuluka kungabalele langa
OkaLanga, wesul'eziqandayo;
Wath'uzokhuzela kwaqin'imihlathi;
Wath'uyawahlohla lawo mehlo
Ahlanjwe ngomkhando wamakhosi,
Ahlanguzana nezimbumbulu ezimhlophe,
Kwangath'ubhekwa nguNomkhubulwane.
...
Imisebe yelanga yamxhoph'okaLanga,
Ephum'emehlweni omntakaJama.
Wezwa imiban'imsakaz'ubuchopho...
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975: 62)

(Zwide, son of Langa came out in his splendid attire

...
He came out boasting about wealth and fame
He thought he would say one word
And Jama's child would succumb easily

...
He started perspiring although it was not hot
He wiped cold perspirations
He failed to utter a courting salute
He tried to stare at her with the eyes
That had been fortified by medicines;
His eyes met Mkabayi's white big ones
It was as if Nomkhubulwane was starring at him.

...
The son of Langa was blinded by the sun rays
That came from the eyes of Jama's child
He felt the rays piercing his brains...)

In Zulu music, explicit exposition of character's physical attributes is usually quite minimal. This is obviously attributed to time constraints. There are, however, cases where a song gives a vivid picture of how a character looks. In Isigqebhezana Mbongeni Ngema says:

Ithang'elingaka lenzan'estradini?

(What is such a big thigh doing on the street?)

Mfiliseni Magubane is even more precise and gives the size of the dress that the character wears in order to hint at how the character looks:

Le ntombi ngayific'igqok'uSize 36.

(When I met this lady, she was wearing size 36.)

The physical structure of the character is often associated with his or her moral disposition. Ximba, for instance, uses this to emphasise the extent of the character's undesirable personality traits in Umthandazi eJoyintini:

Uthetha nj'unkosikaz'udansa nesid'isigebengu sentokazi.

(While the wife was fuming, he was dancing with a tall lady.)

This seems to suggest that crooks or izigebengu vary according to height. In other words, the taller the person is, the worse the behaviour. To describe this lady in this fashion seems to emphasise her extreme lack of morals. We are therefore not amazed if she ends up fighting with his lover's wife at the end of the story.

We feel, however, that the description of a character should not concentrate on the features over which a character has no control because physical attributes do not imply a prescribed behaviour. It is commonly known that certain skin complexions are unjustifiably associated with certain behaviour and personality traits. A very dark-skinned person is often associated with witchcraft. A thin person is usually associated with stinginess. We believe that the story assumes a higher level if the character's description focuses on aspects that have been added by the character, preferably to influence the direction of the events in the story. This may include, for instance, a character's dress code, hairstyle, make-up, etc. For maximum effect, of course, this should ideally be related to the events that are portrayed in the story.

From the preceding discussion we have been able to see that the expository method of characterisation is very effective in creating a clear picture about the characters in the story. If used properly, this method enables an artist to portray his story in a convincing manner, thus making his audience forget that the story is merely a work of fiction. Using this method to portray characters has the advantage of having them imprinted forever in our memories.

We also concur with Shipley (1970:41) who comments:

Direct method of character portrayal has the advantage of instant clarity: though sometimes it is used cumulatively, gradually building up a full portrait.

Another advantage of this method is its economy and its ability to enable a storyteller to convey his message about a character as simply and clearly as possible. This

eliminates confusion and allows the reader to understand and appreciate why a character behaves in a certain manner and ascertain the role of the character in the story.

The shortcoming of this method is that when using it, some artists tend to be subjective and impose their views and attitudes on the audience or reader. In Noseyishayile Akakayosi by E.T. Sithole, Mazibuko's daughter has finally fallen in love after shunning many suitors. The problem arises when *abakhongi* are sent to Mazibuko's home to negotiate *ilobolo*:

Indaba yoniwa isiduphunga somkhongi
Esabon'insizwa sayethemba
Sabuz'indlel'ey'eMazibukweni
Yasikhombis'enyakatho seduka.
(Sithole, 1981: 39)

(The affair was marred by a foolish *mkhongi*
Who, upon seeing a young man, trusted him
And asked for directions to the Mazibukos
He showed him to the north and he got lost.)

It would have been more commendable if the storyteller had allowed the reader to draw his own conclusion about *umkhongi* in this story. This is very subjective because we believe that the audience should exercise its maturity and intelligence by making its own judgement about the character and must not be forced by the storyteller to adopt a somehow biased view about the character in the story. Vusi Ximba also shows subjectivity in portraying a character in this song:

Naso-k'isilima sendoda
Sibhalel'umfaz'incwadi
Sithi siyashayela eThekwini.

(And there is this foolish man,
He writes his wife a letter
Saying he is employed as a driver in Durban.)

Ntuli (1998: 102) contends that the descriptive method of characterization imposes restrictions on the reader. He elaborates:

It may discourage the reader's imaginative participation. Stated differently, the reader is not encouraged to react directly to the characters so that he may make up his own mind about them.

An artist however, is not confined to this method, he may opt for other methods that we are now going to discuss in the following discussion.

4.2.2.2 THE DRAMATIC METHOD

In this method the narrator lets the characters introduce themselves to the reader or audience. This method is also called the showing method because the characters are shown in action and we deduce their personality traits from their action and dialogue.

With regard to this method, Abrams (1981:34) explains:

In showing, (also called "the dramatic method") the author simply presents the characters talking and acting and leaves the reader to infer motives and dispositions that lie behind what they say and do. The author may show not only external speech and actions but also a character's inner thoughts, feelings and responsiveness to events.

The above statement suggests that the audience comes to its own conclusions about what the character is. This necessitates great artistic ability on the part of the narrator with regard to making characters as convincing as possible through what they say and do in the story.

Let us look at how characters are portrayed dramatically in a narrative.

4.2.2.2.1 CHARACTER'S ACTIONS

We can deduce a character's personality traits by looking at his or her actions in the story. Because a story is based primarily on what characters do or how they act, this is the most convincing method that helps readers or audience identify with a character and the role he plays in their enjoyment of the story.

In Sonta, J.C. Dlamini portrays a character whose actions leaves us with no doubt about his personality:

Ungqwazi lwakwabo lusho ngamagwagwa
Lugqoka kahle, lucuthoza kahle;
Esontweni lwehla lwenyuka
Luhlel'abantu ngoba behlelekile.

.....

Nantuyana ungqwazi lwakwabo
Lukhuluma nomfundisi ngenhlonipho...
Isikhwishikhwishi senyoni kayiphumuli
Phakathi esontweni uyayaluza

.....

Nantuyana selukhuluma namakholwa
Lugcizelela iziyalo zomfundisi.
(Dlamini, 1981: 14)

(He is tall and has big ears
He dresses well and swaggers gracefully
He moves up and down in church
Arranging people because they are orderly.

...

Behold the tall one
He talks to the minister with respect...
A hard worker who never rests
Inside the church he moves around

...

There he is talking with fellow worshippers
Emphasising the minister's words.)

The actions of this man tell us a lot about him. There is no doubt that he is a person who likes high positions and wants to be envied by everybody. His hypocrisy and haughtiness is clearly indicated by the way he walks and addresses members of the congregation, even to the extent of repeating what the priest has already said. The mood of the narration suggests that he repeats the sermon in order to impress on fellow worshippers that he is always attentive to what the priest says and maybe add his own version of how the sermon should be interpreted and applied in real life situations.

Ximba also describes a character through how she acts in the story:

Asukum'umakoti madoda-
 Bagcwel'indl'abantu.
 Uyom'ajamel'indod'emehlweni

 Uyodans'agxume
 Agijim'ayovulel'umsakazo kakhulu
 ...
 Khona manjal'usemile, khimilili
 ...
 Nezindab'ezixoxwayo nguye phambili
 ...
 Gwiquqi usesemnyango
 "Asambe wena," esh'endodeni.

(The woman would stand up-
 The house is full of people.
 She would stare her husband in the face
 ...
 She would dance and jump
 And rush to switch the radio on
 ...
 All of a sudden she stands still
 ...
 She leads in all the gossiping
 ...
 She is now at the door
 "Hey you, let's go," addressing her husband.)

In Isigqebhezane by Mbongeni Ngema, this is how a character's wife behaves:

Umfazi wam'uhamb'ama-club ubusuku bonke
 Ngithi ngiyamkhuz'uyangihlinel'udons'amakhala
 Ukhal'avuk'uhlanya
 Kujike mina ngimduduze.

(My wife spends the whole night at clubs
 When I scold her she defies me
 And becomes hysterical
 Until I end up consoling her.)

This indicates that this is a good-for-nothing wife. She is rude and stubborn. She is so manipulative that she resorts to tears when confronted about her immoral behaviour. Sadly, it is her husband who ends up apologising and consoling her.

Dingane's *imbongi* uses apt imagery to describe king Dingane:

Isizib' esinzonzo sizonzobele;
Siminzis'umunt'eth'uyageza
Waye washona ngesicoco.
(Nyembezi, 1995: 46)

(The pool that is silent and unfathomable
It drowned someone intending to bath
And he vanished headring and all.)

These lines indicate that Dingane is a treacherous person who seems harmless from the outside but whose actions deceive those who cross his path. The symbolic use of *isiziba* is used to disclose Dingane's cunning ways which show us the kind of character that he is. With regard to the above lines Nyembezi (1995:53) elaborates:

Akukho lutho olwalungenza umuntu acabange ukuthi angaze abulale umfowabo. Kanti naye umfowabo, uShaka, owayenamehlo abukhali kangaka, akazange aze acabange ukuthi uDingane angaba yingozi kangaka. Isimo sakhe sasikhohlisa, umuntu aze alutheke.

(Nothing could make one think that he could kill his brother. Even his brother, Shaka, who had such sharp eyes, never thought that Dingane could pose such threat. His character was quite deceptive.)

Such actions indicate that he always took people by surprise. When one crosses a calm river, one hardly expects to drown. This is further illustrated by how Dingane took the Boers by surprise and killed them:

Izibuko likaNdaba
Elimadwal'abushelelezi
Lashelel'uPiti nendodana.
(Nyembezi, 1995:48)

(Ford of Ndaba
Which has slippery rocks
That caused Piet and his son to slip.)

With regard to the use of water imagery to depict Dingane's personality traits, Msimang (1991:51) comments:

The praise-poem is dominated by an imagery which depicts Dingane as an introvert; someone who concealed his true self and preferred to work in secrecy. Thus he is often associated with deep unfathomable pools, tangled growth, slippery rocks, all of which are inherently dangerous just as he was inherently dangerous and treacherous.

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1985: 61):

A trait may be implied by one-time (or non-routine) actions.... and by habitual ones... One-time actions tend to evoke the dynamic aspect of the character, often playing a part in a turning point in the narrative. By contrast, habitual actions tend to reveal the character's unchanging or static aspect.

This means that one-time actions are more dramatic and reveal traits that have more impact on the plot or story than habitual acts. Stories that are perceived to be interesting and capture the reader's or the audience's attention are those that are dominated by one-time actions. Ideally, a one-time action is introduced right from the beginning of the story and is the main cause of all the events that unfold thereafter. In this way we are able to ascertain the traits of the characters right from the beginning of the story.

Habitual acts make characters predictable and tend to have no dramatic effect on the development of events in the story. We must add however, that if used effectively, habitual acts may add flavour to the story, regardless of how predictable they may seem to be. In the case of humorous habits, the reader or audience is not bored if the narration goes back to the character that depicts habitual acts that may not necessarily contribute to the development of the plot. In a poem or song, however, stories are presented in brief and all that is said must be minimal but have dramatic and effective impact.

Predictability of habitual acts may make them even more interesting, particularly if they are humorous or reveal an interesting personality trait in the character. In Vusi Ximba's song entitled Indoda Ethand'inyama the character traits are revealed right from the beginning of the story. The narrator first tells us the habitual action of the main character:

Uhlek'az'aqethuk'emzini yabantu.

(He laughs loudly when he is at other people's homes.)

To illustrate his point about the character's personality traits, the narrator tells us a story in two parts. In the first part the narration focuses on what happens when this man goes to a neighbour's house where a beast has been slaughtered. We must remember that the narrator has commented that this man always claims to be a relative at any house where there is a feast: If the Mkhizes slaughter a beast, he says his surname is Mkhize. If Mhlongo has a feast, he also becomes Mhlongo:

La kuhlatshwe khona yikubo:
KwaMkhize yikubo,
KwaMhlongo yikubo...

(He claims membership to any family that has a feast:
At Mkhize's home he becomes Mkhize
At Mhlongo's home he becomes Mhlongo...)

It is during a feast at a neighbour's house that this man's personality is best portrayed. He immediately acts like a member of the household, barking orders at everybody and reprimanding those he feels are not performing their chores as speedily as he would like them to do:

"Yikithi lay'ikhaya
You're too slow nina bo makoti
Le nyama ngabe kad'ivuthiwe
Lolu khun'enilufakile luwu *oversize*
Laph'ebhodweni
That's why umlil'unhlinhla:
Lethan'imbaz'enkulu."

("I'm also a family member
You sisters-in law are too slow
This meat would have long been ready;
You have put an oversize log
In the fire place
That's why the fire is weak
Give me a bigger axe.")

This version has illustrated all we need to know about this character's habitual behaviour. This, however, does not deter us from wanting to know how he will behave when it is his turn to slaughter a beast. In fact the habitual actions of the character draw us to the second part of story when the main character has slaughtered a beast. When he sees many people in the yard he complains:

“Yehhen'izinkumb'ezingak'ebaleni kwami,
Incane kabi le nkom'engiyihlabile
Ayikh'ikhona, ingangegundane
NeBhunu lingibulele ngemali;
Akusal'abant'engibaziyo:
Angiyihamb'imizi yabantu mina.”

(“Oh no, such multitudes of people in my yard,
The beast that I've slaughtered is very small
It is small like a mouse
The Boer also charged me a lot of money
Let only my acquaintances remain here:
I never visit other people's homes.”)

Both one-time and habitual acts belong to one of the following categories:

4.2.2.2.1.1 ACT OF COMMISSION

This is when a character commits a decisive act in the story. In most cases this act sets all the events of the story in motion. In a song or a poem that is by nature characterised by brevity and compactness, the act of commission is the main and central event in the story. In a poem entitled UZanani noGobhoza by Mkhize (1973: 62), the act of commission is when Zanani chases away a stranger who arrives at night begging for food and shelter.

This abominable act reveals that Zanani is a very cruel person.

4.2.2.2.1.2 ACT OF OMISSION

In some cases a character may fail to do what is expected of him in the context of the events and conditions that prevail in the story. This may be deliberate or unintentional.

This may also be a sign of strength or weakness on the part of the character, depending on the circumstances in the story. In the case of Zanani and Gobhoza, two years after Gobhoza was chased away from Zanani's home, a stranger arrives and asks for food and shelter. Zanani welcomes the stranger:

Wasemukela kepha enokumangala
Wasisondeza ngakuso isibani.

...
UZanani eseyidelisile inhliziyo
Ngalesi sitetelegu esabe singumhambi
Kwakhanya ukuthi ngumuntu amaziyo...
(Mkhize, 1973: 63)

(He received him, though slightly surprised
And moved the lamp closer to him.

...
When Zanani had satisfied himself
About the obese visitor
It became clear that it was somebody he knew.)

At this stage we expect Zanani to revenge by throwing Gobhoza out. On the contrary, Zanani offers Gobhoza food, beer and shelter:

Waphakelwa ngoba wayeyisilambi,
Washaya esingeqiwa ntwala,
Wehlisa ngamanzi amponjwana,
Walaliswa wahuqa obudala
Ecimezile emise amadodlwana.
(Mkhize, 1973: 64)

(He was given food because he was hungry
He helped himself to the food,
Washed it down with beer,
And went to a deep sleep
With his eyes closed and knees pointing.)

This is obviously an act of omission because Zanani does not do what is expected of him under the circumstances.

4.2.2.1.3 CONTEMPLATED ACT

This refers to an unrealised plan or intention of a character. A contemplated act may both imply a latent trait and suggest possible reasons for its remaining latent. In some cases a character may appear strongwilled and display integrity as an explicit trait. But when he tries to commit suicide, for instance, this may reveal a latent trait of being a coward who is not brave enough to face challenges in life.

In Isigqebhezana by Mbongeni Ngema, a frustrated man is fed up with the loose morals of his wife who leaves him at home and fool around with young lovers in nightclubs. He vows that when she arrives home he will beat her up and send her to her parent's home:

Wo, um'ebuy'ekhaya
Ngifung'amaNgema ngizomkhahlela.

(When she returns home,
I swear by the Ngemas, I'll kick her)

His intentions are not realised, however:

Uma ngivul'isibhax'ubiz'abafowab'amabhoklolo:
Ash'amavelemanane,
Sash'isimbambamba.

(When I beat her up she summons her bully brothers
And they beat me up with their fists
They beat me all over the body.)

There is no doubt that this is a weak man, despite his earlier claims that he is a no-nonsense guy who can discipline his wife. He is beaten up by his brothers-in law and forced to take his wife back.

4.2.2.3 DIALOGUE

The dialogue of the characters can play a very crucial role in portraying personality traits in a story. What the character says and how he says it can reveal attitudes,

convictions, and many other qualities that may have an impact on the plot and theme of the story. All this information comes to the audience in an indirect manner. Commenting on this, Cohen (1973:38) explains:

What the character does and says provides enormous insight into their make-up. For example, if a character tells a series of lavishly embroidered lies, the author thus establishes a basic trait or characteristic. At the same time the language which the character uses while telling the lies may be an index to his background, his education, his home environment and his social class.

With regard to this method Wilkes, et al. (1988:120) elaborate:

Isu elaziwa kakhulu yilelo lokwenza abalingiswa baziveze bona, ngenkulumo yabo. Ingxoxo yenza indaba iphile, ibe mnandi. Nokho nayo ingxoxo kufanele isetshenziswe ngokonga ukuze ingalahlekelwa ngumsebenzi wayo.

(A widely used method is that of letting characters reveal themselves, through their speech. Dialogue makes the story lively and interesting. Dialogue, however, should be used sparingly so that it doesn't lose its objective in the story.)

We feel that dialogue is the most effective method of character portrayal because it shows us how characters feel and react to events and how they interact with one another in the story. Dialogue is also free of any bias that may influence the narrator when he describes characters in an expository manner. We as readers or audience are able to judge for ourselves as to why a character behaves in a certain way, basing our judgement on how he speaks and addresses other characters in the story.

Regarding how dialogue reveals character, Ntombela (1992: 33) says:

A speech of a character can indicate a particular trait or traits both through its content and form. This occurs whether the speech is in a conversation or as a silent activity of the mind.

This means that even the thoughts of a character may reveal a lot about a character. A skilful narrator will therefore draw our attention to the thought patterns of a character

so that we are able to relate them to how they impact on the events as they unfold in the story.

It may look like dialogue is the easiest aspect to master in a story as many characters are by definition endowed with speaking abilities. On the contrary, dialogue in a narration demands great skill and expertise on the part of the narrator. Characters must be assigned dialogue that will suit their status and role in the story and portray real life situations in a very convincing way. We expect, for instance, a king to speak in a manner that befits his status. We expect an angry character to speak in a manner that will express his feelings and also move the story forward. In Vusi Ximba's song entitled Indod'ethand'inyama, the main character is very angry when dogs come near the pots that are full of meat:

Adons'izikhun'ajikijel'izinja
"Ngizoyisakaza ngiyichith'ubuchopho
Anginay'inhliziyoy mina ngiyathunukala."
"Hhayi bo we muntu, leyo nj'eyala ngenzansi kwamfowethu."
"Hhayi, hhayi ayocabanga,
Nath'asikaze siyithi mbib'inyama
Ilokhu kusile sidikadikana nenkomo
Bese kuzoqhamuka lokhu nobuswan'obucijile sengathi...
Hhayi, hhayi..."

(He pulls out firewood and throws it at dogs,
"I'll smash it and spill its brains
I'm impatient and sore."
"No, that dog belongs to my brother..."
"No no, it must also watch out
We also haven't eaten anything today
This beast kept us busy all day
And then this dog comes, having a pointed face like...
No, no..."

We can hear from this man's words that the dog has made him so angry that he can hardly speak and this is how he will behave in the events to unfold later in the story. This means that dialogue should not just be there for its own sake, but must have a role in the plot development and arouse the interest of the reader or audience.

As we have mentioned above, dialogue must give us a very clear picture about a character's personality to such an extent that there is no need for an interpretation of the dialogue concerned. In UZanani noGobhoza by E.E.N.T. Mkhize we get a story about Zanani who is stranded at night. He goes to Gobhoza's home and asks for overnight accommodation. This is how Gobhoza responds:

"Eyaphi leyo nja engiphazamisayo
Ngisaziphumulele emzini wami?
Anginakho ukudla okuphisanayo!
Dlula ngisale nomuzi wami!"
(Mkhize, 1973: 63)

("Who is this dog that disturbs me
While I'm resting in my home?
I have no food to hand out
Go away and let me remain with my family.")

Gobhoza's utterance reveals a lot about him. There is no doubt that he is a very cruel, stingy person. In UMthandazi eJoyintini, Ximba tells a story about a woman who goes to town to fetch money from her husband. She finds him in a shebeen:

"Ngakutshela yise kaJazi ukuthi ngiyokubamba ayophel'amaqhinga...
Yikhon'ukusont'owawungitshela ngakho lokhu?"

("Jazi's father, I told you that I'll catch you and you will run out of tricks:
Is this the churchgoing you told me about?")

This reveals her as no-nonsense woman who often threatens her husband. She uses strong language when addressing her husband. She says she is drunk. This is in sharp contrast with Zulu customs that demand that euphemism be used when referring to a husband's drinking habits. One would have expected her to use words like *umnandi*, *ukhothakhothile*, *uhabulile*, etc. to indicate that although she is not happy about her husband's behaviour, she still respects him.

We have mentioned that a character's dialogue should reveal his or her personality and suggest how she is likely to behave as the story progresses. This woman's words create suspense in that we are eager to know how she is going to treat her husband

who insists that he is not drunk. It therefore comes as no surprise when she is involved in a fight at the end of the story:

“Ake ningibambel’ingane ngikudumele lokhu.”

(Please hold my baby while I attack this thing.)”

This shows that she is a fearless person who does not care about fighting in public, even if she is carrying a child on her back. The fact that she calls another person *lokhu*, ‘this’, indicates her rudeness and that she looks down upon others. Her dialogue has indeed revealed a lot about her personality.

In Isigqebhezana by Mbongeni Ngema, a man complains about his wife’s short dresses. His rude wife responds:

“Dal’uyathand’awuthandi
Soze ngishintshe bo!”

(Darling whether you like it or not
I’ ll never change!”)

4.2.2.4 LOCALE

The surroundings of the characters can also be used to paint a picture about the characters that appear in a story. With regard to this, Mafela (1996:146) comments:

Another indirect way of presenting characters is by describing the character’s environment...The narrator will extensively describe a character’s house, clothes or furniture to portray some of the character’s traits. From these descriptions, a reader can deduce the type of character who lives in the house.

This means that if the character’s immediate environment is described as undesirable, we can expect the character to behave in an unbecoming way. On the other hand, if a character’s home is described as warm, neat and attractive we can expect desirable personality traits that will be shown by the character as the story unfolds. One,

however, should guard against stereotyping as one's environment can be deceiving or can have no bearing on the character's personality trait. We may find that a character's clothing and housing are described as clean and attractive only to find that actions betray all the good qualities that are manifest in the character's possessions and immediate environment.

The character's environment as a means of expressing personality traits should not be considered in isolation. Ntombela (1992:37) also argues that:

A character's physical surrounding (e.g. room, house or cave, town or farm) as well as his human environment (social class) are also often used as trait - connotating metonyms.

The above comment suggests that a character's social standing can also have an impact on how he or she behaves in the story. This may be true to some extent. If for instance, a character is illiterate and hails from a rural area, we are likely to see him or her failing to come to terms with the demands of the urban environment on his intellectual as well as moral behaviour. In most cases he or she abandons the good behaviour and adopts undesirable lifestyles in order to be accepted by his or her peers. In UMahlaleshushu by Shabangu, we are told about a young man who comes to work in Johannesburg and how the new environment changes his personality:

Baze basuka bonke babheka kweliDumayo,
Eliqeda umuntu limyenga ngendaba,
Lafike lamyenga naye wayengeka;
Zamlutha ezishushu uMahlaleshushu,
Eziphekwa zivuthwe khona manje,
Ezishelwa ziqome khona manje,
Ezibizwa zisabele khona manje,
Umuntu zimbhungula khona manje,
Ize idlule iminyaka emashumi mabili.
(Shabangu in Zulu, 1992:53)

(They all departed for the Rambling city
That destroys a person while luring him with stories
It lured him and he fell for the tricks
The hot ones doped Mahlaleshushu,
Those that are cooked and are ready in an instant,
Those that are courted and fall in love in an instant,

They lure a person in no time
Until twenty years have gone past.)

This shows that an environment can have a very remarkable effect on the character's personality traits. This means that it can be the direct cause of certain personality traits that are evident in the behaviour and attitude of a character. This is why in most cases a character from Johannesburg, for instance, tends to think he is clever, streetwise and therefore superior to other characters if they happen to come from a different background. In Isigqebhezana, a character is convinced that the environment is the cause of his wife's loose morals:

Yo, kwenzenjani?
Yimihlola yami na?
Ngaganw'eMkhumbane
Kanti lo mfaz'unjani?
Ugqok'isigqebhezana
Uphazamis'abafana
Aphind'agqok'iveza
Hhayi, *this is too much.*

(Oh, what has happened
I married a girl from Mkhumbane
How is this woman, really?
She wears a short dress
That disturbs young lads
She wears a revealing dress
No, this is too much.)

In some cases however, a character's environment can be caused by a character's personality. A depressed character, for instance, can be found in a neglected, dirty environment that is a direct result of the character's mood and behaviour in the story. This also reminds us of the famous Zulu proverb: '*indlu yegagu iyanetha*'. Literally, this means that a talkative person spends a lot of time idling around without devoting time and effort to attend to responsible activities such as thatching his own leaking roof. The environment therefore is a result of his or her indolence.

An overall observation is that there is scanty evidence of the musicians' concern with physical description of a character's locale. Even if this does happen, it has very little to do with the role of the locale in the development of the story. This lack of such

descriptions may be attributed to the brevity of the stories that are told in many compositions. It is interesting however, to note that even in longer forms such as epics and *izibongo* of the kings, no direct link seems to be found between the character's personality traits and the physical locale that surrounds him or her. One may come to a conclusion that artists simply regard such descriptions as deviation from their main objective of telling a story by including the most relevant details that are necessary for plot and theme portrayal.

4.2.3 NAME-GIVING TECHNIQUE

Names are sometimes used to describe characters' actions and personality. This can be achieved through both the dramatic and the expository techniques. In most cases artists choose names that indicate the role of the character in the story. With regard to this, Bal (1985:84) comments:

When the character is allotted its own name, that determines not only its sex/gender (as a rule) but also its social status, geographical origin, sometimes even more. Names can also be *motivated*, can have a bearing upon some of the character's characteristics.

The relevance of the name is often emphasised by using it symbolically in the story. This often happens in poetry because poets are more inclined to using lofty expressions. In Okwami Okwezandla, Langa is a responsible head of the family. His name symbolises the sun that brings life and hope to his family. This is supported by the words of his wife who expresses her admiration:

NguLanga wami, ilanga lami
Insika yami, inqaba yami!
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973:69)

(It is my Langa, my sun
My pillar, my fort.)

Sometimes a name is used to allude to the behaviour of a character. In a song by Juluka, the name of a character is Dumazile, she who disappoints. The song tells a

story about a man who falls in love with Dumazile but is disappointed by Dumazile's behaviour:

Ngaqabul'intombi ngathol'umkhuhlane
Ngathimula ngakhwehlela
Kwavuza namakhala
Kwashis'isiphongo sami
Kanti le ntombi injani?

Hamba wena Dumazile
Ntomb'eyangiqabula kabi
Umuhle njengelanga wena
Kodwa ngiyakwesaba mina.

(I kissed a lady and caught a flu
I sneezed and coughed
My nose was running
My forehead was hot
What kind of girl is this?

Go away Dumazile
Lady that kissed me badly
You are as beautiful as the sun
But I'm afraid of you.)

This man seems to be head over heels in love with Dumazile because in spite of the heartache and suffering that he has endured, he still forgives Dumazile, hoping that she will never disappoint him again:

Ngamxolela uDumazile, wangiysis'emahhashini
Ubeth'uzongikhethel'inkunzi yehhashi
Wakheth'unamba 17 ngafak'imali yami
Wasal'unamba 17, wangen'unamba 1.

Hamba wena Dumazile
Ntomb'eyangidlis'imali yami
Umuhle njengelanga wena
Kodwa ngiyakwesaba mina.

(I forgave Dumazile and she took me to the racecourse
And said she would pick a winning horse for me
She chose number 17 and I took a bet with my money
Number 17 did not win, instead number 1 came first.

Go away Dumazile
Lady that made me lose my money
You are as beautiful as the sun
But I'm afraid of you.)

The name of the character in this story seems to influence her behaviour and personality. We are sure that her name was already Dumazile even before he met the lover who complains about how she has disappointed him. In other words she was not given this name simply because of what she does to her lover.

We find the same approach in Ndabambi and Ndabezinhle, the twins in a poem by E.S.Q.Zulu. Needless to say, Ndabambi is a bad person who takes Ndabezinhle's fiancé by force and goes to a distant land. This causes great heartache to Ndabezinhle who believes that his brother and the fiancé were killed by a wild animal:

Nsuku zonke uNdabezinhle elingoza,
Ebalisa ngoNdabambi, ebalisa ngoNokwenela,
"Leso silokazi esakusobozela Ndabambi
Anginakuphumula ngiphile sisaphila;
Ngawe Nokwenela umhlab'awusenantokozo,
Ngiyise lapho wafela khona, ngife nami kube kanye."
(Zulu, 1989: 73)

(Everyday Ndabezinhle cried longingly
Grieving about Ndabambi, grieving about Nokwenela,
"The monster that swallowed you Ndabambi
I will not rest while it still lives
Without you Nokwenela, the world has no joy,
Take me to your death place and let me also die once and for all.")

Unfortunately the fiancée is killed by a lion on the way and Ndabambi comes back, declares his guilt and pleads for forgiveness. Ndabezinhle kills him and commits suicide. This is indeed a tragic end which emphasises Ndabambi's abominable deeds that seem to be caused by the ominous name that was given to him at birth.

There are cases, however, where a character's actions defy the qualities that are alluded to by his name. Let us take, for instance, a poem entitled UNdoda by S.S. Shabangu. The name of the main character in the story is Ndoda (man). This suggests that his

parents were confident that their son was going to be a man indeed. This is evident in the words that are uttered by his father on his deathbed:

“Yinye inkosana yami nguNdoda.”
(Shabangu in Zulu, 1990:29)

(“I only have one heir, Ndoda.”)

Ndoda does not behave according to his name. He leaves his parents to work in Johannesburg and never returns. His parents are heartbroken:

Abazali bakhala zaze zoma
Bafa izinhliziyi zifulathele
Zifuna emadolobheni ngamadolobha

...

Abanye bamkhomba ezidakaneni
Bethi wabulawa ngodukanezwe
Abanye bathi usezinkomponi,
Lagcina lenziwe nehlambo lakhe;
Lutho uNdoda ukubuya
EGoli kwaNdonga-ziyaduma.
(Shabangu in Zulu, 1990:29)

(Parents cried until tears went dry
They died with hearts bent backwards
Searching in many cities.

...

Some said he was in the trenches
Saying he was killed by immoral girls
Some said he was at the compounds
Eventually his *ihlambo* ritual was observed
But Ndoda never returned
From Johannesburg, place of rambling walls.)

As an only son, his parents have no one to leave their heritage to. The cattle multiply but Ndoda never returns home. This shows that he is not a trustworthy man that his parents were hoping for when they named him. It takes many years before he returns:

Nyaka thile kungasazi muntu
Seladliwa ifa lomuntu ephila,
Qhamu ikhehla elidonswa ngenduku.

NguNdoda. Ubuyele ukuzokufa.
(Shabangu in Zulu, 1990:30)

(One year, out of the blue
When his inheritance had been swindled while he was alive
An old man appeared, being drawn by a stick.
It is Ndoda. He has returned home to die.)

Using namegiving as a characterization technique is often a sign of weakness on the part of the artist because in real life people do not necessarily act according to their names, whether such names are good or have negative connotations. If we expect characters to be life like, we believe that their names should not reveal how they will behave in the story because that is not a true reflection of real life situations.

There is some justification, however, if it is evident that a character has been given a name after observing his behaviour. In this case the name that is used in the story is not the one given by the parents, but the one that has been used after the character has shown certain personality and behavioural traits. In UMahlaleshushu, by S. Shabangu, for instance, Mahlaleshushu (he who is always hot) is the name of the main character. We believe that this is not his original name but has been used in the story to allude to his personality and behaviour. This is evident in the following lines:

Zamlutha ezishushu uMahlaleshushu
...
Akaganwanga uMahlaleshushu,
Wayengaganwa kanjani eshushu?
(Shabangu in Zulu, 1990:30)

(The hot ones doped Mahlaleshushu
...
Mahlaleshushu never got married,
How could he get married when he was always hot?)

Musicians do not seem to bother themselves a lot about using names in their compositions. In most cases general terms are used to refer to characters, hence the prevalence of words such as *inkosikazi* (woman), *indoda* (man), *isithandwa* (lover), *umthakathi* (witch), etc. In other cases, the character is addressed by using the name of the child. Hence *yise kaJazimani* (father of Jazimani) in Umthandazi eJoyintini by

Vusi Ximba and *baba kaMdudu* (Mdudu's father) in the song with the same title by Sikhakhane. This is understandable because among conservative Zulus, a woman is not supposed to use her husband's name. In connection with this Ntuli in Ntuli (1986:57) emphasises:

Ayenzeki kwaZulu le nto yasesilungwini yokuba abantu abaganene babizane ngamagama.

(In kwaZulu, the urban tendency for married couples to address each other by first names, is unheard of.)

This is also confirmed by Koopman (1986:18) who elaborates in detail:

Avoidance of personal names is still very much the case among Zulus today. Although most of my research was conducted in an urban area... the vast majority of husbands and wives did not use each other's personal names. Those few who did were invariably the much younger and very well educated people and even these only used personal names until the birth of their first child; thereafter the terms 'mother of...' and 'father of...'

In some cases collective nouns like *isixuku* (crowd), *iqembu* (group), etc. are used. This shows that emphasis falls on the story rather than the names that are used for the portrayal of the action in the story. This is how Msimang describes the masses that crossed the Moretele river in protest against rent increases in Mamelodi:

Uquqaba olugqishelene lwaqoqana phezu kwalo mfula

...

Isikhonyane sasisitheka sisindana
Ngevuso lengebhe yomsizi wabasizili
Baningi osondonzima ababemadolonzima,
Ithemba selibashiyile sebeyinkundla yetwetwe
Baningi abananga ngezinsapho ezisele emuva,
Eziyosala dengwane sebesele kwaSaha.
(Msimang, 1990:15)

(The crowd assembled and faced this river

...

The swarm of locusts moved steadily,
Anxious about the gunpowder of the enemy
There are many heavyweights who were reluctant,
They had lost hope and were filled with fear

Many thought about children left behind
Who would be orphaned when they had perished at Saha.)

We applaud Msimang's choice of words to denote collectivity. He uses *uquqaba*, *isikhonyane* to indicate the unity and the multitude of the marchers. This shows that it would not have been possible to single out each character by name. All this emphasises our view that characters cannot always be denoted by their names when alternative methods can be used or when the events in the story are such that a group or crowds are involved in the events that are narrated to the audience.

In other cases titles such as *umthandazi* (diviner), *umemu* (madam), *umfundisi* (pastor), etc. that denote the status of the character, are used. We feel that the artist chooses such titles because the audience is familiar with what is expected of people with such attributes. This somehow makes us have certain expectations about how the characters should behave themselves in the story. It also enables the audience or the reader to identify with such a character in the story.

In *Ingoduso* by Gili kaNobantu, the main character's name is not given, she is only referred to as *ingoduso*, the fiancé. The narrator seems to know that the real name is not necessary for us to understand the story. *Ingoduso* is enough for us to sympathise with this lady who has been dumped by her lover. Among the Zulus, a fiancé is expected to wait, regardless of the amount of time that her lover is away. It therefore does not surprise us if in this poem the fiancé keeps waiting, hoping that her lover will return one day. At the end of the story however, the waiting becomes unbearable for the lady and she gives up in frustration:

Ebusuku kwamabili
Phansi kwezingubo ezimbili
Iphuphe lifikile,
Yavuka lisukile,
Yabona ibiphupha.
Kakhulu yalingoza:
"Way'eGoli wayosebenza,"
Isho zigobhoze izinyembezi:
"Kungcono uhambe njalo,
Uz'uguele eGoli."
(KaNobantu in Matsebula, 1958: 14)

(In the middle of the night
 Underneath two blankets
 She dreamed that he had arrived,
 But had disappeared when she woke up
 And realised that she had been dreaming.
 She was emotionally ruined:
 "He went to work in Johannesburg,"
 She said tearfully:
 "I'd rather you were gone forever
 Until you reach old age in Johannesburg.")

The fiancée is not to blame for her feelings at the end of the story. Her behaviour can be expected from anyone who has been dumped by a lover. We also note that the story has portrayed her in a favourable light, she has not done anything that is not acceptable for an engaged person. She has not found herself a new lover simply because her lover has not kept his promises.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the character and the artist. This happens when the story is told in the first person and there is no direct mention of the character's name. In Ku-Ellias Ntshangase, for instance, the poet tells a story of the tragic death of a friend and uses the first person narrator. We then assume that the events that are related in the poem are the personal experiences of the poet.

It is interesting to note that in *izibongo*, *imbongi* sometimes uses the names of the king's siblings to denote the actions of the king. In *izibongo* of Dinuzulu we find this:

Ngob'uDinuzul'indab'uyenzile
 Ulile ngomkhonto kwelakubo kwaZulu
 Ngob'udadewabo uSililo;
 Wagwaz'impimpi yema
 Yanjengegama likadadewabo uSimiso
 Wagwaz'umuntu wameya
 Ngob'udadewabo enguMeyisile.
 (Nyembezi, 1995:108)

(Because Dinuzulu has caused a stir,
 He lamented with assegais at Zululand
 Because his sister is Sililo,
 He attacked an army and it came to a halt

Like his sister's name Simiso
He stabbed a person and despised him
Because his sister is Meyisile.)

The bard seems to infer that the actions of the king are caused by the names of his siblings.

In some cases, however, the poet may use a character's name to denote further implications and relevance of the name in the story. In *izibongo* of Shaka it is said:

USishaka kasishayeki.
(Nyembezi, 1995: 19)

(Shaka who is impossible to defeat.)

The poet has added new dimensions to Shaka's name by playing around with words which seem to suggest that Shaka's conquests are somehow connected with his name. This indicates that even if the name is not of the poet's creation, he is at liberty to emphasise somehow that the name is relevant in the story that the poet tells in *izibongo*.

In other cases an artist 'renames' the person that he uses in the story. This often happens when a renowned figure is being praised. J.C. Dlamini (1981: 22), for instance, in a poem entitled Dabula Mdabuli, does not use Christ or Jesus when he tells a story about the encounter between the Samaritan woman and Jesus, instead he uses INDODA. The capital letters seem to emphasise that this is no ordinary man but one who is endowed with supernatural powers, bravery and many other above average personality traits. All this seems to augur well with how the story unfolds.

Many Zulu poets make use of the 'renaming' technique to denote personality traits of a character in the story. This adds to the name further dimensions that have an impact on the story that the artist tells. Dingane is called Mgabadelo to denote how he killed Shaka. The poet seems to associate this with all the scheming that Dingane will later be involved in as the story unfolds.

It is quite interesting to note that 'renaming' is done right from the beginning of the praises. The first word in *izibongo* of Shaka is uDlungwane. Nyembezi (1995:19) elaborates on the meaning behind the name Dlungwane:

Yibizo elithathelwa esenzweni –dlunga. Ukudlunga kusho ukukhankasa ngolaka njengomuntu onolaka.

(It is a noun derived from the word *dlunga*. To *dlunga* is to rage around in a ferocious manner like a bad tempered person.)

This indicates that to *imbongi* Shaka is a fierce person. Dingane's praises start by calling him *Vezi*, which according to Nyembezi (1995:45) refers to the fact that the bard is convinced that Dingane was building the nation or causing a germination of the Zulu nation when he assassinated Shaka. Many other examples in other praises abound.

There are also cases where characters change their names in the story if they feel that their names are a source of embarrassment to them. If a character has assumed an 'elevated' status, he adopts a name that will suit his new identity. In most cases, this does not surprise us at all, especially if his behaviour and personality traits have revealed that he is a person who possesses questionable attitudes. In *Ngixoleleni Mathongo Ohlanga* by T.M.Masuku, Junjuluzi Makhubu is a young man who shuns his culture and traditional beliefs because of his educational qualifications:

Ngigqoke izimpahla ezinhle:
Ngibophe ifindo lekati entanyeni;
Ngithwele isigqoko esikhulu,
Ngifuquza ugwayi emgwaqeni.
Angincengi muntu: angisizi muntu.
(Masuku: 1973: 27)

(I'm sprucely dressed:
I'm wearing a tie,
I have a big hat on
And smoke cigarettes on the street
I beg from no one: I help no one.)

His status makes him scorn his traditions and all that has to do with his upbringing. We are therefore not surprised when he decides to change his name:

“Hheyi, letha ugwayi wena-*be quick!*
Angisiye uJunjuluzi Makhubu-*shut up!*
Sengingumlungu mina, uMr. Jones MacCube!”
(Masuku, 1973: 27)

(“Hey, give me cigarette, be quick!
I’m not Junjuluzi Makhubu, shut up!
I’m a whiteman, Mr. Jones MacCube!”)

This indicates that naming can go a long way in showing us how a character feels so that we are able to understand his behaviour in the story.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to define characterisation and clarify its relevance in storytelling in Zulu music and poetry. Our discussion was mostly from the point of view of narratology. We were able to see how narratology treats characterisation and puts its emphasis on the distinction between text and story and how that influences and affects character portrayal.

This chapter also highlighted the various approaches and methods that are used by artists to present characters to the reader and audience and how such attempts affect the image of the character in the story and how the events will unfold depending on the extent of the character’s role in the story. We were also able to see how each method can be most effective if used skilfully by the storyteller.

Above all, this chapter brought to our attention the fact that Zulu musicians and poets are as good as many authors of prose narratives with regard to the ability to handle characterisation effectively in storytelling. This dispelled the myth that songs and poems are not suitable to be regarded as effective storytelling medium.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEME

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to look at the thematic distribution in Zulu music and poetry. Our attempt will be to analyze theme and evaluate its significance and relevance in storytelling. We are also going to group themes according to various categories in order to highlight how Zulu artists have managed to use their compositions as a means of commenting on various issues that affect readers and audience on a daily basis. Above all, this chapter will consider how artists use theme as a means of effecting communication between the artist, text and audience or reader and how this impacts on the parties involved.

5.1 THEME DEFINED

According to Perrine (1983: 105):

The theme of a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the unifying generalization about life stated or implied by a story.

Mafela (1996: 21) says:

All actions, even the technique used to bring out the elements of a narrative, are geared towards theme. This means that theme must account for all the details of the story from the beginning to the end of the narrative. Whatever happens in a narrative must have a bearing on theme.

Abrams (1981: 111) offers a detailed definition of theme by elaborating:

...The term theme is more usefully applied to an abstract claim or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader...Some critics claim that all nontrivial works of literature including lyric poems involve an implicit conceptual theme which is embodied and dramatized

in the evolving meaning and imagery.

The above definitions suggest that theme can be regarded as what motivates an artist to compose a song or poem. The theme is therefore the reason behind a story that is depicted in a song or poem. In this study, theme will be regarded as both the message and the content of the story in a song or poem. We believe that an artist first's objective is to convey a message through a text. He then sets out to find a most appropriate and relevant content that will best put the message across and serve the objective of the artist. If, for instance, the aim of the artist is to reprimand an addressee, a story with a didactic theme will be chosen so as to illustrate why the artist feels that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Bosman (1991: 140) illustrates the vital nature of theme by saying:

Every writer has got, lying around somewhere in a suitcase or a trunk, various parts of a story that he has worked on from time to time and that he has never finished because he hasn't been able to find out how the theme should be handled.

This suggests that even if an artist can have an excellent idea, an appropriate theme will still be necessary before that work of art can be suitable for the audience or reader.

5.2 TECHNIQUES OF THEME DELINEATION

There are many techniques that can be used by an artist to delineate theme in a story. In some cases, the title of the story may reveal enough information about the theme of the story that is going to be told. E.S.Q.Zulu (1990), for instance, has the title Imfene Yomthakathi in one of his poems. This title indicates explicitly that the theme of the story will be witchcraft. There are also instances where artists use commonly known proverbs and figures of speech as titles that reveal the theme of the story. E.K. Sithole (1981) uses this technique in a poem entitled Noseyishayile Akakayosi. Zulu readers are quite familiar with this proverb and know that it is applied when love rivalry is the

issue. There is no doubt therefore that the theme of the story will be love and the implications thereof on the characters in the story.

The theme can also be explicitly declared in the story. In other words, the artist may come to the fore and reveal reasons behind the story that is going to be told. Nxumalo does this in Lafika Izwi. He says this before he tells his story:

Makube kumnandi ukuba ngundabizekwayo,
Umunt'uthola nesizathu sokuqhenya,
Azibong'ezibheka macal'onke,
Aqalaz'abone nabaning'abedlulayo;
Nokho kuhl'ukugawul'ubheke-
Inde iyaphilis'inkululeko yomphefumulo
Kunentokozwana eyedlulayo yokukhukhumala ngenkohliso.
(Nxumalo, 1968: 54)

(Maybe it is good to be popular
One finds reasons to be haughty
And congratulates oneself and looks at all angles;
One glances around and sees others passing by;
Nevertheless, it is wise to be cautious-
Freedom of the soul is worthy and endless
Than short-lived joy through deceitful arrogance.)

The above lines are then followed by a story about Gumede's son who is praised by the community because of a great feast and a beautiful tombstone that he erects in memory of his deceased father. What people do not know is that this deceitful son has used stolen money for the unveiling. His father later torments him by coming in a dream on numerous occasions to demand that the tombstone be demolished. The way in which the story unfolds is in line with what Nxumalo revealed at the beginning as the theme of the story. We are indeed convinced that a clear conscience is far better than short term glory derived from deceit and treachery.

Theme, particularly in music, can also be delineated by making use of popular choruses that are associated with certain events. Ntomb'nkulu and Vusi Ximba employ this method in one of their songs entitled IBhayibheli. The song starts with this chorus:

Nyathela kancane,
Nyathela kancane,
Nyathela kancane,
Uy'ekhay'ezulwini.

(Step slowly,
Step slowly,
Step slowly
And go home to heaven.)

This chorus is popularly sung during funerals. The artists in this case have used it to indicate that the theme of the story will be death. Indeed, in the story, the main character later dies of starvation and exposure because of his misconception that by merely praying, all his financial problems will be resolved.

Theme is not always explicitly denoted in the story. In most cases it is left to the reader or audience to deduce from the composition as to what the theme is. The artist in this case does not come to the fore and suggest the theme of the story in explicit terms but rather lets the story be interpreted by the reader or audience. This is essential as the theme of the story can differ according to each person's perception and understanding.

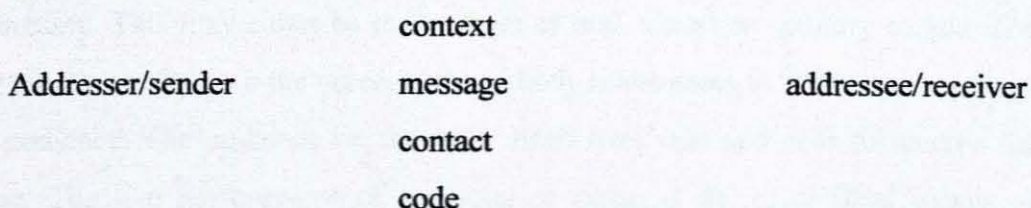
The mood of the composition can also be used as an effective means of theme delineation. This is particularly more evident in the performance of a song or poem. A sad voice will always be the most suitable form of depicting a sorrowful story. *Maskandi* artists even refrain from including their praises in a song with death or any other painful predicament as a theme. This is evident, for instance, in a song entitled Wakhathazeka Umoya Wami, in which Bhekumuzi Luthuli tells a sad story about the tragic death of his brother. In Ngangenzeni? Mfiliseni Magubane tells a story about a man who laments the pain that has been caused by his cheating wife. In this song Mfiliseni does not praise himself as he always does on numerous other compositions. This is a clear indication that when artists handle a sensitive issue, the mood changes to indicate the theme of the story in a composition.

5.3 THE COMMUNICATION ROLE OF THEME

Theme serves to convey meaning in the story. The artist uses the theme of the story to convey thoughts, beliefs and values to the audience. Generalizations about life issues such as love, death, politics and many other integral parts of our life are addressed to the audience by means of the story that the artist tells in the poem or song.

As we pointed out in Chapter Two, we are going to rely on Jakobson's communication model to determine the extent to which theme conveys message and communicates relevant issues to the reader or audience.

Jakobson's communication model can be diagrammatically represented as:



The addresser or sender in the communication process is the Zulu artist who composes a song or poem with the aim of conveying a message either for didactic or entertainment purposes.

The message is the song or poem through which the artist tells a story, thereby transmitting a message. The addressee or receiver of the message is the reader or audience that comprise various sectors of the community. The receiver of the message will enjoy or derive a lesson from the song or poem according to its own interpretation, depending of course on the nature of the song and the type of the receiver involved.

The addressee or receiver of the message uses a code that will enable them to understand and appreciate the message of the song or poem. In this case IsiZulu is the code. We must emphasise that the code may manifest itself in various forms: slang, dialects, archaic variations, etc, depending on the background of the artist and his

intentions or the demarcation of the audience. If, for instance, the story in the song or poem is aimed at a younger audience, slang or *tsotsitaal* is very likely to be used. This is the case in Mshoza's song entitled Kortes. In this love story, the artist is very young and the message in it is evidently aimed at an audience that understands the slang used.

The context is quite essential in successfully conveying the message that the artist intended the story to depict. It is against this contextual background that the audience is able to fully appreciate the meaning and message in the story. In our case the context is the Zulu socio-cultural system and experiences that enable the Zulu audience and readers to ascertain the relevance of the message in the story.

The contact refers to the means through which the message is relayed and received by the addressee. This may either be in the form of oral, visual or auditory means. The poet or singer usually uses the voice, text and body movements to deliver the message to the audience. The audience on the other hand uses ears and eyes to receive the message. The live performance of the song or poem is the most ideal means of conveying message as it allows the use of the combination of expressions that are vital in the maximum appreciation of the story and message and creates intimacy and proximity between the addresser and the addressee.

5.4 TYPES OF THEMES

An artist can convey a message in a piece of literary work by using various kinds of themes depending on what he intends to put across by means of the story in a song or poem. This makes it possible for us to classify themes according to different categories. Firstly, themes can be classified in terms of place and time in which the story in the song or poem takes place. With regard to this factor, there are two categories under which themes can fall, i.e. topical and universal types of themes.

Topical themes are those themes in which events take place in specific geographical and social context. This means that the relevance of topical themes only applies to a specific place and time. An example that can be cited in this regard is that of a story

that is told by Gcumisa in a poem entitled Uphaphe Lwendwa. This story takes place in rural KwaZulu during the tenth commemoration of King Zwelithini's reign. The poet is delegated by the king to look for this precious feather:

"Indlondl'enophaph'ekhanda"
Yangijub'uphaphe lwendwa
Yathi gijima mfana igazi lakho
Liyakuceba ngiyakucela
Uyongifunela olwefuze
Olwaluthwalwa yi "Ntethe"
Ukuze ngigubhe ngalo
Eminyakeni eyishumi yokubusa kwami.
(Gcumisa, 1985: 26)

("The Viper with a feather on its head"
Assigned me a bluecrane feather
And said run boy, your blood
Gives you away, I beg you
To find me a feather that resembles
The one used by "Ntethe"
So that I use it to celebrate
The tenth anniversary of my rule.)

The story ends with the narrator successfully carrying out the will of the king. It is obvious that the story portrays a topical theme that specifically applies to Zulu kingdom during a specific time in king Zwelithini's reign. During an interview with M.S.S. Gcumisa on 8 July 2002, he indicated that this was a daunting task indeed. The bluecrane is an endangered species and very difficult to get. Gcumisa was able to get the bluecrane through the generosity of a Durban medical practitioner who made special arrangements with a reliable contact in Gauteng, thus making it possible for the king to get his prized adornment.

During apartheid, topical themes that only apply to a South African context during the turbulent times of apartheid were quite prevalent among Zulu artists who were justifiably moved by current events that took place around them. They therefore felt duty-bound to compose stories that truly reflected the disturbing conditions of the day. There were protest songs and poems, for instance, that told stories about the plight of the people under humiliating apartheid laws and white domination. Gray (1996: 56) comments:

Even in modern music, written primarily for entertainment, musicians and composers were clearly determined to use music as a weapon to fight apartheid.

Masuku (1973:18) in a poem entitled Mbambeni! Mbambeni! tells a sad story of Manqondo, a young man who is beaten to death by a group of Boers. The reason for such a horrendous deed is that Manqondo beat up a rude white boy who was calling him names. Manqondo tries to explain but all is in vain:

“Wo, belungu, sengenzi
Seningibulala njena?
Maye babo! sengereni
Seningidukluza njena?
Le ngane ingethukile
Ngenhlamba-ingeyisile!”

“Asikhathali ngalokho:
Ngab’awumshayang’umlungu;
Uyikhafula ngalokho
Fana ngob’ushay’umlungu.
Unesikhumb’esimnyama!
Unebala elimnyama!”
(Masuku, 1973:18)

(“Oh Whitemen, what have I done
Now that you kill me?
What wrong have I done
Now that you beat me up?
This child insulted me
With vulgar, he insulted me.!”

“We don’t care about that
You shouldn’t have beaten a white man
You are a kaffir
And must die for beating a white man.
You are black-skinned.
You have black colour!”)

There is no doubt that these Boers were never apprehended for this beastly incident because such deeds were condoned by apartheid laws of that time.

In Imbedumehlwana Efulansi, C.S.Z. Ntuli (1973:51) tells a story about how oppressed masses revolted against a cruel regime, thus setting in motion events that culminated in the storming of the Bastille. A story like this indicates that artists are not confined to topical issues that take place in their own country but can also transcend socio-cultural and geographical boundaries and effectively and eloquently depict and comment on topical issues that prevail in other countries but whose message is relevant to the local audience.

Musicians have also made numerous comments on topical themes. Mbongeni Ngema, for instance aptly depicts the brutality that was a common occurrence during apartheid times. He tells a story about a woman whose husband is hounded by the police for not carrying a pass as was expected of Africans during that time. The police speak a foreign language that can hardly be comprehended by the obviously illiterate Zulus, hence, '*isiwiliwili*':

Isiwiliwili samaBhunu
AmaBhun'ayawiliza
Amthath'umntanomuntu
Ngenxa kadom'pasi.

...

Ngathi ngiyabuza kula maBhunu
Kawanginaka nokunginaka
Ayithath'indoda yami
Ayoyivalel'evenini.

(*Isiwiliwili* of the Boers
Who speak a foreign language.
They arrested my beloved husband
Because of dompass.

...

When I enquired from these Boers
They just ignored me
They took my husband
And locked him up in a police van.)

There are many other examples of topical themes that are portrayed by Zulu artists in the stories that they tell through music and poetry. With regard to reasons for artists to focus on topical themes, Nkabinde (1997: 9) comments:

A universal theme is what the term implies; it is the one that applies to all people in all ages and in all times.

Love is a universal theme that poets and musicians focus on now and again. Love issues that are universally relevant are commented on in the form of moving stories that reflect how love affects people and how they respond to the demands of various situations and expectations that they experience in pursuit of love. There are numerous stories about jealousy, dejection, divorce, etc, that depict various forms of love. Sometimes artists comment on hurdles that face lovers, such as the parents' objections to lovers getting married.

Zulu artists also address universal issues such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Khumbula in Sibali, for instance, tells a story about a brother-in-law who sexually abuses a small girl:

Kuyodabuk'ibhulukwe sibali
Ikukhombil'ingane,
Yaphinde yakukhomba futhi.

(Your trousers will be torn, brother-in-law
The child has accused you
On numerous occasions.)

In this song the artist tells a story that reflects a universal problem of very young girls who fall pregnant as a result of being sexually abused by fathers or close relatives.

The ability of Zulu musicians and poets to tell stories that have a universal appeal indicates that they rightly deserve international recognition as storytellers of distinction whose stories transcend borders. Death and crime are also universal problems that are tackled by Zulu artists in their stories that describe how crime and death affects people, not only in South Africa but also around the world. In Okwami Okwezandla, D.B.Z. Ntuli (1973) comments on the themes of death and crime simultaneously. In this poem he tells a story about a woman whose husband is killed by *tsotsis* on the way from work. What is more saddening is the fact that the woman later finds out that it is her only son who is responsible for the gruesome murder:

Amehlo ami abheka uThemba wethu,
Amehlo akhe abheka uphahla lwethu,
Izinyawo zakhe zaqal'ukuhlehla,
Wavul'umnyango waphum'ehlehla.

...
Laklwebha, labhodla, ngabheka phansi...
Sengingedwa.

...
Yizindunduma,
Ngamatshe,
Yizimbali,
Yimina.
(Ntuli& Ntuli, 1973: 71)

(My eyes looked at our Themba
His eyes looked at our roof,
His feet started retreating,
He opened the door and went out reversing.

....
It struck, roared and I looked down...
I was on my own.

...
It's mounds,
It's stones,
It's flowers,
It's me.)

Zulu musicians and poets also tell stories about political themes that are universally relevant. This is often against the backdrop of racial and social discrimination. Although an artist may make use of South African examples, one can observe that such issues are universally prevalent and transcend temporal and spatial restrictions. In Mnanayi, J.C. Dlamini (1981) tells the story of the arrival of Indians in South Africa, the racial discrimination they suffered, how they were scorned, rebuked and looked down upon by Zulus, how they attained freedom from laws that were aimed at preventing their full citizenship in this country and their meteoric rise from humble beginnings to affluence as well as lofty intellectual and academic prestige:

Ngikukhumbula ngomsubelo,
Ngikukhumbula ngomshuqulo;
Ngikukhumbula ngoqalo ehlombe
Olufuze amagwegwana akho

...

Ufike ngakokha ngensini ngamagwegwe
Kanti angibuzanga elangeni umceb'owakho.

...

Kwaphela insini kimina, ngankema,
Isichaka sikagilimithi saqubuka ngezitolo,
Isichaka sikagilimithi sangibiza ngebhoyi.

....

Imisebenzi yonke kaNgqondo-nkulu uyithathile,
Inhlabathi ibuswa nguwe, izitolo zibuswa nguwe.
(Dlamini, 1981:7)

(I remember you by the loincloth
I remember you by the turban,
I remember you by the bamboo on your shoulder,
The bamboo that resembled your bandy legs.

...

When you arrived I laughed at your bandy legs
Little did I know that riches are yours

...

I stopped laughing and gaped
The poor one now owned shops
The poor one now called me a boy

...

You have monopolised academic posts
The land is yours, shops are yours.)

Zulu artists also address themes such hospitality and showing kindness to strangers. In Uyazi Wena Nkosi, Mbhele in Zulu (1990) tells a story about a poor grass widow who gives food to a hungry stranger who comes to her home at night. Such unselfish generosity is remarkable because this woman has to part with the last morsel of food that she was about to give to her kids. In E.E.N.T. Mkhize's poem entitled UZanani NoGobhoza, we get a story about a frugal, cruel man who chases a stranger away:

Phakathi komnyango omncane
Indoda eyisideku yavela
Seyithukuthele sekuthi kayisangane
Amathe phansi yawafela:
"Eyaphi leyo nja engiphazamisayo
Ngisaziphumulele nomuzi wami?
Anginakho ukudla okuphisanayo!
Dlula ngisale nomuzi wami!"
(Mkhize, 1973:62)

(In the middle of a small door

A huge man appeared
He was very angry
He spat on the floor:
"Who is this dog that disturbs me
While I am resting with my family?
I have no food to hand out!
Go away and leave me in peace!")

The lesson that the poet conveys in this story is evident when Gobhoza gets stranded a few years later and is warmly welcomed by the very same man that he treated cruelly one day. The theme of the story and the lesson we get from it is of universal relevance and shows beyond reasonable doubt that Zulu artists deserve recognition as international storytellers.

Another method of categorizing themes is by considering the issues that are addressed in the stories, irrespective of whether such themes are topical or universal. In this regard, what is specifically taken into consideration is the action of the characters and the issues that influence and determine such actions and behaviour.

For the purpose of this study we are going to use three categories under which the themes that we are going to discuss will be grouped, i.e., social, religious and political aspects. Let us now look at each of these categories in order to ascertain how Zulu musicians and poets handle them.

5.4.1. SOCIAL THEMES

Social themes cover stories that are told by artists in order to depict social conditions and experiences of the people and convey their thoughts, views and messages about such conditions. The positive and negative way of life, thoughts, beliefs, behaviour of the human society are represented by characters and their actions in the stories that Zulu poets and musicians tell for didactic and entertainment purposes.

We decided to focus on just a random few of the social themes that are revealed through storytelling in poetry and music by Zulu artists. We must emphasise that we

have taken only a few among a wide range of social issues that are addressed by artists in the stories that are going to be mentioned hereunder.

5.4.1.1 LOVE

Zulu artists, like anybody else in this world, are also affected by love and its implications on human beings. It comes as no surprise therefore that in Zulu music and poetry, one finds an abundance of love stories that are told by artists so as to portray how love affects us as human beings. In prose narratives, the most common story on the theme of love is that in which a young girl meets an eligible young man, fall in love and later get married. We come across an abundance of such stories in Zulu music and poetry. Mshoza's song entitled Kortes is a fine example of a 'boy meets girl' scenario. When the young lovers get crazy about each other, marriage proposals and negotiations are entered into and they eventually get married:

Ngakubona for the first time

...

Ngabhalel'abazal'incwadi

Ngath'abanginik'imali

'Khona ngizothola le mbali.

(I saw you for the first time

...

I wrote my parents a letter

Asking them to give me money

So as to get myself this flower.)

This is indeed a story with a very happy ending. There are some cases, however, where things are not as smooth as in the above example. The suitor may not easily be accepted by the beautiful lady to whom he proposes love. We find this in UBathandekile by O.E.H. Nxumalo (1968) where a guy has to overcome many hurdles in pursuit of being accepted by a lady that has captured his heart:

Ngaphetha ngakho

Ukuzibika ngilahlela

Zabuya zaphika izimpendulo.

Ngaqhubeka, ngabekezela ngabelesela

Noma ithemba ngangingenalo

Ngathokozi swa yikho ukubona
Lapho ayelobe khona.
(Nxumalo, 1968:62)

(I ended up
Making proposals without much hope
And there were replies of refusals.
I continued, persevered and persisted
Although I had no hope
I was just happy to see
Where she had written.)

Some evil means can be used to soften a woman's heart. Caluza relates such an incident in Guga Mzimba Sala Nhliziyiyo:

Kwakukhon'insizw'eyayiziqhenya
Ngokuth'ayehlulwa lutho yona,
Ithi akukho ntomb'engamelana nayo.
Kwath'emva kwesikhashan'esincane
Yabon'intokazi kabab'emhlophe,
Yathi kobe sengiphuzile kule ntombi.
Yath'isuka yayiqond'ekhaya
Yalungis'umandangaphakathi.

(There was a young man who boasted
That nothing defeated him,
Saying no woman could resist him.
After a very short while
He met my beautiful sister
And wanted to have her for himself.
He went home in a hurry
To prepare a strong love portion.)

In some cases we find rare incidents where a lady expresses her failure to control overwhelming feelings about a young man. In Princess Magogo's song we find a story about a lady who begs others to restrain her because she can't resist a charming young man:

Helele, helele, awu, helele
Wayemuhle lo mfana, yeyeni
Ngibambeni, ngibambeni bomama
Usebayathe uyangibheka ngamthanda
...

Ngathokoziswa yikho ukubona
Lapho ayelobe khona.
(Nxumalo, 1968:62)

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And there were replies of refusals.
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Helele, helele, awu, helele
Wayemuhle lo mfana, yeyeni
Ngibambeni, ngibambeni bomama
Usebayathe uyangibheka ngamthanda
...

Wagibel'amahhash'amfanela!
Wagibel'elinsundu lamfanela
Wagibel'elibomvu lamfanela

...

Sengimuka nomoya
Ngibambeni, ngibambeni, ngibambeni!
(Princess Magogo in Rycroft, 1963: 49)

(Oh, oh...
That guy was handsome
Hold me, hold me mothers
When he looked at me, I loved him!

....

When he rode on horseback, it suited him
When he rode a brown one, it suited him
When he rode a red one, it suited him

....

I am being swept away by the wind
Hold me, hold me, hold me!)

The fact that the suitor has been accepted does not guarantee an end to waves of problems that put the affair to the test. In most cases, lovers have to part ways due to a number of reasons, the most common of which is employment in the cities. Such separation, no matter how temporary, causes great pain and floods of tears. In UBathandekile, we can sympathise with the lovers who have to part ways and are evidently saddened by this obviously unavoidable situation:

Ngamkhweza esitimeleni waphindela
Emsebenzini, sabambana ngezandla

...

Zahlegezela kithi sobabili

...

Ngama njengesiduli kangacwayiza
Ngasijamela sinyobozela siyoshona
Simumethe igugu lami.

...

Ngathi lapho nginyakaza
Lwawohloka nakimina unyembezi
Lwahlala eduze kolukaBathandekile.
(Nxumalo, 1968:66)

(I accompanied her to the train station
On her return to work, we held hands

...

Tears fell from both of us

...

I stood like a molehill, unblinking
And stared at the train disappearing slowly
Carrying my precious one inside it.

...

When I eventually moved
A tear also fell from me
And dropped next to Bathandekile's.)

Johnny Dimba relates the same sad story in Msakazi. He tells us about the sorrow and pain that lovers have to endure when they have to bid each other farewell:

Ngamuthi jeqe kanye
Qede wasikhihl'isililo sikaNandi
Kwaye kwenanela ngisho nezihosha
Nanamuhla ngisasizwa isilokozane
Nesibibithwan'enhliziyweni yami
Yingakh'inhliziyam'isiyaba nomgodi
Ongafung'ukuthi wambiwa ngogezazembe.

(I glanced at her once
And she wept sorrowfully
Until it echoed everywhere
Even today I can still hear
Her lamentation in my heart
That is why my heart has a hole
As big as one dug with a big hoe.)

The sad reality is that in most cases such departure of a loved one is often a prelude to the break-up of the love affair. In most cases, the lover who departs for the city never returns due to being 'swallowed by the big cities.' In Ingoduso, by Gili KaNobantu (1958), the fiancée waits in vain for a lover who went to work in the city. She eventually decides to give up on her lover who will apparently never return:

Ebusuku kwamabili
Phansi kwezingubo ezimbili
Iphuphe lifikile,
Yavuka lisukile,
Yabona ibiphupha.
Kakhulu yalingoza:
"Way'eGoli wayosebenza,"
Isho kugobhoza izinyembezi:

“Kungcono uhambe njalo,
Uz’ugugele eGoli!”
(KaNobantu in Matsebula, 1958:14)

(In the middle of the night
Underneath two blankets
She dreamt that he had arrived,
But was gone when she woke
And she realised that she had been dreaming.
She lamented sorrowfully:
“He went to work in Johannesburg,”
She said, tears falling from her eyes:
“I’d rather you went for good,
And reach old age in Johannesburg!”)

Not all stories depict lovers who have to endure strains in their love affairs because of separation and distance. Sometimes mere jealousy interferes and causes lovers to part ways much against their will and intentions. In UNdabambi NoNdabezinhle by E.S.Q.Zulu (1989), Ndabezinhle and Nokwenela are head over heels in love with each other. Ndabambi, who is Ndabezinhle’s brother, is jealous about his brother’s conquest and wants to have Nokwenela for himself. He cunningly devices a plan, which unfortunately results in Nokwenela’s death. Ndabezinhle eventually finds out about his brother’s cruelty and jealousy. The story ends sadly when Ndabezinhle kills his brother and subsequently commits suicide as he cannot face life without his beloved Nokwenela:

“Ngawe Nokwenela umhlaba awusenantokozo,
Ngise lapho wafela khona, ngife nami kube kanye.”
Wasikhokha uNdabezinhle isijula,
KuNdabambi wasiphisela kwaphel’amankemfu;
Wasihosha, wasimisa sabheka phezulu,
Phezu kwaso wazilahla, wafa naye kwaba kanye.
(Zulu, et al., 1989:73)

(“Because of you Nokwenela the world has no joy
Take me to your place of death and let me die once and for all.”
Ndabezinhle took an aim with his assegai
And stabbed Ndabambi to death;
He pulled it out and pointed it upwards,
He threw himself on top of it and died instantly.)

Most stories show that love affairs are supposed to end in marriage. Lovers promise each other to live together as husband and wife, have children and live happily until death separates them. The affair is usually terminated when offers of marriage are not forthcoming. The Manhattan Brothers tell a story of a young lady who has had enough of her lover who is reluctant to make marital commitments:

“Lo mfan’uyangibambezela
Intanga zami zendile
Ezinye zinabantwana
Ulel’ulova.

...
Ngiyamwashela
Ngiyamphekela
Ulel’ulova.”

(“This boy is wasting my time
My peers are already married
Some already have children,
This loafer is not serious.

...
I wash for him
I cook for him
This loafer is not serious.”)

This lady seems to have done all she could to deserve recognition as a potential wife but her lover does not seem to be bothered. Interestingly enough, when the song starts the lover is talking in *tsotsitaal* with his friend, thus creating an impression that he is a good for nothing gangster who obviously has more urgent matters to attend to than a woman’s plea for marriage.

In some cases obstacles are avoided or overcome until lovers are ready to get married. It is at this stage that problems arise. *Ilobolo* seems to be the cause of conflicts that hinder the progress of many love affairs. In Mfiliseni Magubane’s *izibongo*, we get a story about a man who is rejected by his in-laws when he comes to pay *ilobolo*:

UMalobola ngeshek’ekhweni lakhe kwaNongoma
Kuze kus’umkhwe wakh’engalele
Ethi, “Ngowaphi lo mfana
Ozolobol’ingane yami ngephepha?”

(He who pays *ilobolo* by cheque at his in-laws at Nongoma
Making his father-in-law stay awake until sunrise
Saying, "Who is this boy
That uses a paper as *ilobolo* for my daughter?"

In contrast, Robbie Malinga tells a sad story of a lover who encounters problems when *ilobolo* issues have to be settled with his in-laws who do not want to accept cattle as a form of *ilobolo* for their daughter:

"Ngathumel'umalume kumkhwe wami,
Wabuy'ekhal'engashaywanga
Ethi, 'Ngibon'imihlola namhlanje.'
Sebefunani kini ngawe S'thandwa sami?
Ishumi lezinkomo nezinkom'ezinhlanu
Kabalifuni..."

("I sent my uncle to my father-in-law,
He came back complaining
Saying, 'I had a nasty experience today.'
What do your parents want my darling?
They don't want
Fifteen cows.")

Some lovers are luckier because their affairs run smoothly up to the wedding day. This day, however, comes with painful surprises to some. In Noseyishayil'akakayosi, E.K.Sithole (1981), for instance, tells a sad story of a bride who deserts her lover on their wedding day:

Langen'ikhetho lilindelwe
...
Banikezw'indl'eqhelile
Umakoti wacel'ukuya ngaphandle
Zemuka nay'izinsizwa zaseMambatheni
Yasala njal'insizwa yasebaThenjini.
(Sithole, 1981:39)

(The bride's party arrived

...

They were given a distant room
The bride asked to go out and relieve herself
Men from the Mbathas abducted her
And the Mthembu guy was dumped, just like that.)

Some lovers get happily married, but then problems arise and result in the marriage going sour and eventually, divorce and separation become unavoidable. Infidelity seems to be the major cause of such painful situations. Otty Nxumalo (1989) relates a heart rendering story of the pain a man feels when his wife dumps him, obviously for another lover:

Uph'engamthandayo kwabaningi?
Uph'engimshiy'ekhaya?
Uhambe washishimba nezimoto
Wasongwa zinkungu zamahlathi
Washay'uhlek'oluhlebezayo-
Lapho bemphefumulel'endlebeni
Igama lami liyisaga.
(Nxumalo, 1989: 37)

(Where is the one I chose amongst many
Where is the one I left at home?
She left in fast cars
Was wrapped by the mists of the forests
And laughed softly-
When they breathe in her ear
My name is a joke.)

It is sad that in some cases the reasons for infidelity are absolutely trivial and downright absurd. In Mfiliseni's song entitled Ngangenzeni? for instance, a woman is lured into an illicit affair by a local *mahlalela* or loafer who promises the woman sweets and cakes:

"Ngangenzeni mhl'ungishiy'endlini ngedwa?"
"Wawungenze lutho."
"Wakhohliswa ngubani pho?"
"Ngakhohliswa yibo lab'omahlalela
Bangithembis'amakhekhe."

("What had I done when you left me alone in the house?"
"You had done nothing?"
"By whom were deceived then?"
"I was deceived by these loafers
They promised me cakes.")

The husband is not prepared to forgive her:

“Usuyazisola s’thandwa sam’angithi?”
“Yebo sengiyazisol’ukuthi ngangingenwe yini.”

...
“Nami ngiyinono kab’angiyifun’int’engalungile
Hamb’ushon’ufane nojazi.”

(“You are now sorry darling, are you not?”
“Yes, I’m sorry and don’t know what possessed me.”

...
“I for one am a clean person, I can’t stand nonsense
Just leave me in peace.”)

In Mbongeni Ngema’s song a wife is caught red-handed:

Uma ngifik’endlini kunuk’ugwayi
Ubugunqugunqu ngicing’indlu yonke naphansi kombhede:
Nank’amadevana!

(When I arrive home there is cigarette smell
I search the whole house:
A man under the bed!)

The husband in this story finds it possible to forgive his wife despite her immoral behaviour.

Husbands are obviously also involved in illicit extra-marital affairs and they can also offer flimsy excuses for not having slept at home. The most common excuse is that a car broke down, thus compelling the husband not to return home. Ximba and Ntombinkulu tell such a story in a humorous manner. A man did not sleep at home and returns the following morning, claiming that his car broke down:

“Njengoba-ke namhlanje
Usubuya ugezile, ugezephi?”
“Ngigeze ngamanzi kaladiyetha.”
“Ak’agez’amanzi kaladiyetha?
Wesula ngani?”
“Ngesule ngama-wiper emoto.”
“Hhayi bo, mus’ukungenz’isilima!
Wazibuka kuphi?”
“Ngizibuke kuyona iwindiskilini.”

“Kawungitshele kahle-ke wena
Njengoba usushefile, usukamile,
Lesi sihluthu sakho usikame ngani?”
“Ngikame ngonamba 17, isipanela.”

(“As you arrived clean today
Where did you bath?”
“I bathed with water from the radiator.”
“Has radiator water ever been used for bathing?
How did you dry yourself?”
“I dried myself with the car wipers.”
“Hey, don’t play games with me!
Where did you get a mirror?”
“I used the car windscreen.”
“Just tell me,
As you have shaved and combed
How did you comb your long hair?”
“I combed myself with number 17, a spanner.”)

In Baba KaMdudu, a song by Mpume Sikhakhane, a woman complains about her husband who leaves her behind at home to stay in a flat where he indulges in an extra-marital affair. When she gives him a surprise visit she finds damning evidence that there is a lady who shares the flat with her husband:

“Ngific’izimpahla zakho zi-ayiniwe,
What’s going on?
Nank’amagqomoza phansi kombhede
Kanti nguban’ohlala lapha?
Nans’i-cellphone ikhala sengizoyiphendula,
Kukhon’ongqongqozay’emnyango sengizomvulela...”

(“I found your clothes ironed,
What’s going on?
There are female shoes under the bed
Who is staying here with you?
And the cellphone is ringing I’ll answer it.
Somebody is knocking at the door, I’ll open it...”)

We feel that the few examples that we cited above show how Zulu poets and musicians try to tell stories that depict various real life aspects of love, that prevail not only among Zulus but are experienced all over the world by lovers of different ages

and races. These are indeed real-life issues that have captured the attention of many dramatists, poets, novelists, etc, throughout the ages.

Zulu artists seem to convey the important nature of love and how it affects us in real life. As we pointed out in our definition of theme, artists offer a generalization about love and what should be expected of it, depending of course on individual circumstances. The overall message that stands out in the love stories that we discussed is that love should be treated and handled with the utmost care it rightly deserves. One should also be prepared for the numerous obstacles that may impede the smooth progress of the love affair. Faithfulness in love affairs is highly recommended. Infidelity often, if not always, results in tragedy and much pain on the deceived spouse. Artists do show, however, that there is always room for forgiveness and reconciliation regardless of the amount of heartache caused by the straying partner.

5.4.1.2 WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft practices prevail among Africans and almost every nation all over the world. Despite many people's argument that this practice does not exist or that they are immune to its influence, there is enough evidence that multitudes are affected by witchcraft on a daily basis. In a recent letter to the Editor that appeared on *Ilanga*, April 29-1 May, 2002, S. Ncane complains:

Safa ngabathakathi. Ubuthakathi busimele ngenhla. Ngifisa noHulumeni aphawule ngalolu daba. Ngiyazi ukuthi abantu abaningi bakuthatha njengensambatheka lokhu....Ngicabanga ukuthi kungangcono nabo abathakathi kube nesijeziso sabo esinzima uma sekutholakele ngempela ukuthi bayathinteka ezigamekweni ezithile...Ngeke phela madoda, siyaphela.

(Witches are giving us a tough time. I wish the government could comment about this. I know that many people regard this as a myth... I think it would be better if witches got a tough sentence if there is enough evidence of their involvement in certain atrocities... We really can't stand this.)

Zulu artists show the same sentiments in their compositions. Witches are portrayed as heartless people who derive pleasure and satisfaction from inflicting pain on innocent victims. People spend sleepless nights in fear of the witches. In Ximba's song we get a story about a man who experiences a great deal of pain in his attempt to catch a witch:

Yenzek'indab'insizw'ihlushwa yimfen'ingalali
Yayilol'imbazo yaphum'ebusuku
Yayolala phandle yamis'amadolo.
Ebusuku 'mayiphaphama,
Yayidons'imbazo, kant'umlenze wayo,
Yalihlahlel'idolo:
"Awu, ngafa bo!"

(It happened that a man was troubled by a baboon
He sharpened an axe and went out at night
He proceeded to sleep outside with knees pointing upwards.
When he woke up at night
He pulled out the axe, unfortunately it was his leg,
He struck the knee:
"Oh, I've injured myself!")

Witchcraft may not affect the one who practices it but those who are close to him or her may be emotionally traumatized by this abominable evil. E. S. Q. Zulu (1989) tells a story of a woman who is married to a witch and is very frustrated by watching helplessly as her husband constantly bewitches innocent people, resulting in much suffering and death. She eventually approaches her brother who devices a plan to expose the husband's evil deeds. He tells his sister to brew some beer and invite local people to her home. It is during this feast that the husband's baboon is found and the owner is mercilessly killed.

The common impression and belief is that witches are hardened murderers who feel no remorse about their evil deeds. C.S.Z. Ntuli paints a different picture however, in Ngeke Baxole Nkosi where we find a witch who feels guilty about his deeds but is sure that the society will not forgive him. The witch tells us how the society responds and in the process we get a clear picture about the extent of the damage that has been caused by the witch:

Noma sengikhal'ezimaconsi
Bakhumbul'omakoti babo
Engababulala bekhulelwe
Inyanda yemuka nesibopho.

...
Ngishweleza ngiyazithanqaza
Kepha bangibuz'oyisemkhulu,
Bathi kangikhiph'oninakhulu
Engabasakaza ngomphezulu.

...
Angiphiki ngawaphehl'amanzi
Ngalumba nenhlabathi yamathuna.
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975: 55)

(Even if I cry
They remember their young wives
That I bewitched while they were pregnant,
Killing both the mother and the baby.

...
I plead with them sincerely
But they ask me about their grandfathers,
They say I must produce their grandmothers
That I killed with lightning.

...
I don't deny it, I whipped the water
And bewitched the soil of the graves.)

In Otty Nxumalo's Akamxolelanga, Gxabhashe does not forgive the witch who pleads for forgiveness on his deathbed:

...Umthakathi wansond'usezinhlungwini
Isiphongo simfoma sibanda
Umlomo ushunqa womile.
Phakathi kwamabili wazikhalela
Wazikhalela waphelekezelw'amawa:
"Ngisizeni ningibizel'uGxabhashe,
Makangixolele uGxabhashe weNkosi
Ngangingaz'ukuthi ngenzani..."
(Nxumalo, 1989: 45)

(...The witch was in great pain
His cold forehead was sweating,
His dry mouth was smoking;
He cried out in the middle of the night
He cried and it echoed in the ravines:

"Please call Gxabhashe for me,
Poor Gxabhashe should forgive me,
I didn't know what I was doing..."

Gxabhashe finds it difficult to forgive a person who killed his only son. Even after being summoned to the witch's home, he still insists that before he can forgive, the witch must specify what he did so that everybody will know the truth:

"Ngisize ungixolele Gxabhashe
Ngisize ungixolele ngangingazi."
"Wenzani, yisho wenzani?"
Gengelezi, nya, du.
(Nxumalo, 1989:46)

("Please forgive me Gxabhashe,
Please forgive me I didn't know."
"What did you do, say it, what did you do?"
He fell back in silence and died.)

It is only afterwards that Gxabhashe feels guilty but unfortunately it is too late, the witch is already buried and can no longer hear any words of forgiveness from Gxabhashe.

In Ntuli's poem that was cited above, the witch also reveals how witches are initiated into this evil practice:

Ngeke baxole noma ngibatshela
Ngithi kukho konke bengingazenzi
Ngithi konke ngakwenziwa ngubaba
Owangigcab'uhlanga wafak'insizi.
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975: 55)

(They won't forgive even if I tell them
That in all these it was not my fault,
That I did all because of my father
Who made incisions on my body and rubbed in *muthi*.)

Umhlahlo is used to 'smell out' witches. A meeting is called out in which a sangoma points out the person responsible for the death among the family members who have come to enquire from *isangoma*. If *isangoma* points out the culprit, there are no

doubts that his fate is sealed as there is no room for appeal. The accused person will either be exiled to a distant land or be immediately executed with his whole family and his home and belongings burnt down. Sadly in some cases a *sangoma* is wrong and an innocent person suffers the wrath of the society for crimes he did not commit.

Witches do not always succeed in carrying out their evil deeds. In Nomashizolo Msimang's song entitled Ukugula Kukamfowethu, a jealous man tries to kill his brother. He puts *muthi* in his tea. Somehow the drinks are swapped and the witch drinks the one that has poison in it and is killed instantly. This shows that even well planned and thought out plans can go wrong.

We feel that by using witchcraft as a theme in their stories, Zulu artists try to convey a message that witchcraft should be rooted out in the society because of its tragic results on both the witch and innocent victims. We are also warned that there are innocent victims who are wrongly accused of witchcraft and have to face dire consequences merely because of wrong and unfounded accusations.

The theme of witchcraft as used in some songs and poems seems to indicate and highlight the fact that many witches are not necessarily to blame for their actions. The blame should rather fall on the parents who inculcated witchcraft in the child from infancy. The stories that are told by artists also reveal that not all witches are hardened murderers who feel no remorse about their evil deeds. Some feel guilty and seek forgiveness only to be scorned, ostracized or sentenced to death by the society that revenges the suffering and death of the beloved ones.

One also does not have to carry *umuthi* in order to be regarded as *umthakathi*. One's actions and words can label one as a witch. This is evident in a poem by N.Z. Mkhize entitled UNkonko LweNkolombela. This poem tells a story about witches who are burnt to death because they are a menace and a threat to the society's well being:

Luyesabeka lolu nkonko,

...

Lugququzel'omkhul'umkhankaso

Lwath'akuqoqw'abakhunkuli ngothi lwabo

Lwath'abaqoqwe nezikhwama zabo

...

Lwazijub'ukuqoq'abathakathi,

Lwanuka nabangenaz'izikhwama

Lwathi bathakatha ngezenzo...

(Mkhize in Ntuli, et.al.1990: 48)

(The tall one is fearsome

...

He spearheaded a huge campaign

He said that all witches should be gathered together

He said they should be brought together with their medicine bags

...

The tall one volunteered to round up witches

He accused even those without medicine bags

And said they are witches through their actions...)

5.4.1.3 DEATH

Death and its inevitability is a reality to all of us. Zulu poets and musicians reflect the impact of death on human beings in the stories that are told in their numerous compositions. The theme of death in these stories conveys various messages, ranging from how one should accept death, how to avoid activities and habits like crime and alcoholism that result in senseless and premature death, etc.

Death of a loved one features prominently in most stories. Not only does an artist lament death but he also tells a story that paints a clear picture about how death occurred. Otty Nxumalo in a poem entitled Ku-Elias Ntshangase, tells a sad story about how he lost a dear friend in a tragic and fatal accident. This happened during school holidays while the two young friends were employed as casual workers by a local church so as to get school fees for the following academic year. They were carrying hammers and axes with which to demolish a very high wall. Then tragedy struck:

Wezwakal'umsind'ongakholakali,

Noma ngilele ngiyawuphuph'ungethuse,

Lwaw'udonga lwathi *mba!*

Ngaqalaz'u-Elias ngimfun'angimbonanga

...

Ngesikhashana saphangalal'isihlobo sami

Ithemba lokuth'uzophaphama laqina,
Kepha kaphindang'awubon'umhlaba...
(Nxumalo, 1968:19)

(An incredible noise was heard
Even in my sleep I dream about it and get frightened,
The wall fell with a bang
I looked around for Elias but couldn't see him
...

My friend passed away in no time
There was hope that he would gain consciousness
But he never saw the world again...)

Zulu artists also use the theme of death to indicate how we are left astounded and incredulous when death strikes its heavy blow, thus finding ourselves in a state of denial that a loved one has really left us for good. D.B.Z. Ntuli (1973) depicts such a scenario in Ngamanga. In this poem a friend cannot believe that his loved one has passed away. This sad story is told in the form of a series of questions that the narrator asks himself in disbelief. We are told that the deceased has been in hospital for the past week after being involved in a car accident. The narrator seems positive that his friend will soon be discharged from hospital as it normally happens to people who are admitted after an accident. It is therefore very difficult to accept the reality of death of a close friend:

Zifunani izihlwale kwamakhelwane?
Zifakelweni izevatho ezimnyama?
Ngeyani ingoma yesilokozane?
Ngeyani bantu le nqola emnyama?

...

Kufunwani manje kwelezisele?
Bangungeni abantu bantu?
Phinde alinalutho leli bhokisi.
Uma bethi ngabe linotho,
Banamanga.

(Ntuli& Ntuli, 1973:24)

(What are crowds doing at my neighbour's place?
Why are people dressed in black?
Why is there a sad song?
What is the hearse for?

...

What is happening at the graveyard now?

Why have people formed a circle?
No, there's nothing in this coffin
If they say it has something
They are telling lies.)

Sometimes artists lament the unfortunate and untimely death of many people in national tragedies. In 1917 the Mendi sank with thousands of Africans aboard. E.S.Q. Zulu tells the story of this catastrophe in Ngokucwila KweMendi. He, however, shows another aspect of human nature: the ability to face death with bravery. The poet is also able to tell this sad story as if he was in the ship too, witnessing all that occurred on that fateful day:

Zawela nengqungquluzi engangomhlaba,
iMendi inikela kweYokuqala yoMhlaba,
Wavunguz'umzila weNgilishaneli
Washanela, washanela, washanela.

Kancane, kancane yacwila,
Kancane yehla iMendi yagwila,
Zagadlela zisina izidlakela,
Zigadlela, zigadlela, zigadlela...
(Zulu & Mbhele, 1982: 74)

(They crossed in a huge ship
The Mendi heading for the First World War
The English Channel blew
Sweeping, sweeping, sweeping.

Slowly it sank
Slowly the Mendi went down and drowned
Able-bodied men started stamping their feet in dance
Stamping, stamping, stamping...)

Many artists, particularly poets, narrate the story of the Coalbrook mine disaster in a moving way. D.B.Z. Ntuli (1969), for instance, uses a series of vivid ideophones to relate the sad events that culminated in the loss of many lives. Train crashes are also a source of tragic deaths. The Effingham train disaster evoked sympathy and sadness in many artists. Mbongeni Ngema relates how ordinary women who had been carrying out their daily activities such as buying groceries, fruit and vegetables from the city, met with death. Their body parts were found scattered at the scene of the accident:

Sabona ngezinyawo, amakhanda nobhasikidi
Omama bethu, bephum'eMakethe.

(We saw the feet, heads and baskets,
Our mothers returning from the Market.)

With regard to how artists are affected by national tragedies, Ntuli (1973:132) explains:

Events of national concern result in the simultaneous writing of poems on the subject. The best examples of these are catastrophes like the war and other disasters.

Crime is often the cause of many deaths. In Okwami Okwezandla, D.B.Z. Ntuli (1973) tells a sad story of a woman whose husband is accosted and killed by thugs on the way from work. We feel sorry for this woman and her son Themba. We are, however, very surprised to learn that the son is responsible for the death of his father. E.K.Sithole also visits the same theme when he tells a story of a father who is murdered by his criminal son:

...Babehleli komkhulu umnyama,
Imimese icwebezela,
Kwaqhamuk'umnumzan'ohloniphekile
Abafana bamgqokis'uthay'obovu,
"Awu, uBaba! Salani senimbulala."

...
Kwafunw'imbudembude,
Muny'umunt'owayaz'ababulali
Engakafi wathi, "Nawe Ndodana pho?"
"Uma sisebenza siyasebenza..."
(Sithole, 1981: 23)

(...They were sitting in darkness
With glittering knives
A respectable man approached
And the boys dressed him in a red tie,
"Oh no, it's Father! Just finish him off."

...
They searched in vain
Only one person knew the killers
Before dying he said, "And even you Son?"
"If we work we mean business.")

In some cases death is self-inflicted. A character may simply be ignorant or his foolish actions may be the cause of death. In IBhayibeli, Ximba and Ntombinkulu tell a story about an ignorant, indolent man who reads the Bible and concludes that if he prays, food, shelter and money will be miraculously provided without any effort on his part. He eventually dies of starvation after spending many weeks praying continuously without eating. In Angingcono, J.C. Dlamini (1981) tells the well-known story about Judas who commits suicide after betraying Jesus.

The theme of death sometimes goes beyond the grave. There are many stories that feature characters that return from death and live to tell the story of their unique experiences. The plausibility and possibility of this is of course closely connected with the religious convictions of the narrator and even the audience or readers concerned. In Ngiyabonga Thabile, Otty Nxumalo narrates a story about what happened to him when he had 'died' when he had to be operated on at Edendale hospital. He set out on an adventurous and joyous journey on which he met a friend who had died by drowning a few years back. This amazing experience is short-lived, however, as the narrator meets his sister Thabile who is obviously not thrilled at seeing him:

Ngabon'izingan'ezintathu zidlala
 Zihlezi phansi zingagqokile zinqunu
 Enye yacish'ukumangala ingibona,
 Yayek'ukudlala yangibhekisis'ingacwayizi:
 "Ufunani lapha, phindel'emuva."

...

Wasithel'uThabile phambi kwami
 Ngawo lowo mzuzu ngazizw'izinhlungu,
 Ngaleso sikhathi kwangikhanyela kahle,
 Ngase ngingokad'ehambile esevalelisile,
 Ngacabanga ngoThabile ngafikelwa zinyembezi.
 (Nxumalo, 1968:75)

(I saw three children playing
 They were sitting down and naked
 One was almost surprised to see me
 She stopped playing and stared unblinkingly at me:
 "What do you want here, go back."

...

Thabile disappeared in front of me
 That very moment I felt the pains

At that time it became clear
That I had departed and said goodbye,
I thought about Thabile and felt tears.)

Well, we have no intentions of debating about the credibility of such stories, our focus is on pointing out that artists sometimes tell stories that give a glimpse of what they regard as real experiences of life beyond the grave.

5.4.1.4 ABUSE

This is also a theme that artists often comment on, especially during these days when human rights issues are being brought to the fore. The stories that are told through music and poetry reflect disturbing and painful experiences that people endure at the hands of fellow human beings.

Physical abuse is the most common issue that is addressed by Zulu musicians and poets. In Ubukisa Ngami, Izintombi ZoMa, for instance, tell a sad story of a man who beats up his wife. The wife complains that this only happens when the husband has slaughtered a cow and invited many people to the feast. This creates an impression that the husband abuses his wife with the intention of showing off to friends and relatives how he treats her.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo also tell a story about a woman who is subjected to physical abuse and threatens to leave her husband:

“Isigcino uyosala wedwa
We yise kaThoko ngob’ungishaya njalo.”

(You will eventually be left alone
Thoko’s father because you beat me daily.)

This story depicts a prevalent tendency for outsiders to interfere in family affairs. In this song we do not hear what Thoko’s father has to say. Instead we hear the views of people who feel that Thoko’s father is doing a good job when he beats his wife. The community as represented by the commentators in the story feels that Thoko’s mother has no right to complain about her husband’s behaviour:

“Ufunani?
Ufun’ukuba yedw’endodeni
Lo mfaz’onesikhwel’akahloniphi:
Mkhulule!”

(“What does she want?
She wants to be the only wife
This jealous wife is undesirable:
Divorce her!”)

There are instances, however, where men are victims of physical abuse and punishment meted out by their wives. Khansela And JBC tell a sad story about Majazi, a man who is beaten up by his wife. He tries all he can to solve his problem, including beseeching his brother to intervene on his behalf. This is in vain. When he reports the matter to the police, his torture is exacerbated:

“Akangishayang’ucishe wangibulala.”

(“She almost beat me to death.”)

Sexual abuse is also addressed, especially by musicians. Khumbula tells a story of a brother-in-law who sexually abuses a very small child. This story is vividly depicted in the video version of the song. The girl that has been abused falls pregnant and accuses the young man as the culprit. The story ends when the culprit is being chased by angry residents and eventually arrested by the police. This serves as a warning that culprits who commit such atrocious deeds on defenceless children should be severely punished.

Emotional abuse also features in the stories that are told with the aim of highlighting the sufferings of the people. In most cases, this abuse is caused by the unbecoming behaviour of a marriage partner. In Ximba’s song entitled Ematshwaleni, a man is emotionally traumatized by the behaviour of his wife who drinks heavily and embarrasses her husband in front of many people. Ximba points out the emotional effects of this on this man who is evidently ashamed of his wife:

Iyothul'indoda ibheke phansi
Ivul'omagazin'abadala bo-1970
Kayikh'int'eyifundayo:
Yenziw'amahloni Nkosi yami.

(The man will look down in silence
And open old magazines of 1970's,
He's not reading anything
It's because he is overcome by shame.)

In Mbongeni Ngema's Isigqebhezane, a man is ill-treated by his wife who is always scantily dressed and attends all-night long parties. When the husband complains about her dress code, she stubbornly and rudely refuses to mend her ways:

"Dal'uyathand'awuthandi,
Soze ngishintshe bo!"

(Darling whether you like it or not
I will never change!"

Later on her husband catches her red-handed with a lover. When he confronts her, she summons her brothers who beat him up. This is of course emotionally painful. The evil practices of a spouse may also result in great emotional burden on the aggrieved innocent partner. This happens in E.S.Q. Zulu's poem, Imfene Yomthakathi. This poem tells a story of a woman who endures emotional pain because of a husband who is involved in witchcraft. The woman has to abide by her husband's demands despite her objections against mass killing of innocent people by her evil husband:

UNozizwe wayebalis'imihla namalanga,
Ekhalel'ubugqila bokuphakele'indangala,
Ekhalel'asebabhujiswa yindangala;
Umkhunkuli wansond'akagqizanga qakala.
(Zulu in Zulu, 1992:50)

(Nozizwe complained daily
About the hardship of feeding a baboon
Mourning those who had perished through witchcraft;
The witch was not even bothered.)

Zulu artists also comment on various forms of elderly abuse that cause emotional stress. The aim of such stories is to warn against ill-treating old people. The didactic role of such stories is evident in the following popular nursery song:

Kwakukhon'ikhehla elase ligugile
Lalihamba lithi uma selijahile
Walihlek'umfana waphenduk'ikati.

(There was an old man
He walked like this when in a hurry
A boy laughed at him and he turned into a cat.)

When commenting about this song, Ntsihlele (1982: 27) explains:

The characters in this song are ordinary, simple and everyday human creatures that the child meets in his interactions and he would best understand the moral if retribution to the transgressor is meted out. The moral of this song is that one should not belittle others, lest misfortune strikes.

5.4.1.5 MISCELLANEOUS

The scope of this discussion does not allow us to cover all the social themes that are addressed by Zulu musicians and poets. We can only manage to mention those themes that seem to be dominant in the artists' creative compositions that are used as vehicles through which storytelling is carried out.

Ignorance, for instance, seems to be a common feature in many narratives that address social experiences of the people. Ximba, in particular, renders humorous stories that depict people in various conditions and circumstances that result from their ignorance. In *Akuhlelwe Umndeni*, a man receives a letter from his wife who asks for permission to attend a family planning clinic. The man views this as a very good idea, grants permission to his wife and immediately goes to the nearby clinic himself. He meets many women who have queued to be attended to by the doctor. They find the presence of this man amusing and openly laugh at him. When his turn comes, he goes inside, explains himself to the doctor who turns him away. Ironically this also reveals the

ignorance of the doctor because he insists that men are not supposed to attend a family planning clinic.

In E.E.N.T.Mkhize's poem, Phangisa's ignorance results in him smashing a mirror when he sees his reflection on it and thinks that the image belongs to a rude man who is playing tricks on him.

'*Ukubhunguka*' is also a common feature in many stories. Many stories are about young men who leave for the big cities in search of employment, leaving wives, children and elderly parents behind. Once the young man is settled in the city he abandons the family, only to return when circumstances such as retrenchment, illnesses or old age compel him to come home. Soul Brothers, for instance, tell a story of a man who is afraid to return home empty-handed after spending many years in the city without providing for his poor parents:

Uma ngihleli ngedwa ngicabanga,
Ngicabanga ngabazali bami
Ngizwa ngifikelwa yizinyembezi
Ngixoleleni bazali bami
Ngixoleleni ngizobuya,
Ngixoleleni ngisazam'imali.

(When I sit alone thinking,
Thinking about my parents
I feel like crying.
Forgive me, my parents
Forgive me, I will come back,
Forgive me, I'm still trying to get money.)

Important historical data of the society is aptly recorded by artists in their stories. In most cases they tell stories about how present state of affairs came into existence. Mbongeni Ngema, for instance, tells a story about how Kaizer Chiefs was founded. Although this story seems to be an ego trip that showers praises on the Ngema clan, it does reveal the invaluable contribution of the late Ewert Nene on the establishment of Kaizer Chiefs from humble beginnings up to world acclaim and repute.

Themes like these are aimed at instilling pride in us, so that we become aware of where we come from and strive at reaching lofty heights in future.

Some stories are aimed at providing biographical details of certain illustrious personalities. The stories told in this manner illustrate events before or after birth as well as how the person concerned rose to stardom, together with a detailed enumeration of his or her achievements. In *Sinembali*, C.S.Z. Ntuli, for instance, uses rich imagery and personification to tell a story that indicates the inclement weather and the events that heralded the birth of his brother:

Izikhumukane lezi zombili
Zazifike zingasadle nkobe

...

Zafic'intombi yakwaNzuza lapho,
Yazithi janti nje yaval'umlomo.

...

Isithunzi senkosikazi sazisinda;
Dica, bohloholo, zanyobozele.
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973:56)

(The two dignitaries
Arrived in extreme fury

...

They met the lady of the Nzuzas there
Who just gave them a quick glance and kept quite.

...

The dignity of the woman overwhelmed them
Their anger abated and they were filled with shame.")

The achievements of a famous personality can also be told in the form of a story. This story may be an inspired fictitious imagination of the storyteller concerned, but told in a highly convincing manner. This is how D.B.Z Ntuli, for instance, tells a story so as to enumerate Sibusiso Nyembezi's literary achievements:

Ngangingase ngingakuqondi
Ukuba kakuthanga ngiklabis'ezikababa
Kwaqhamuk'isichwichwichi sikachwepheshe:
"Ngiyisithunywa seNkosi esiphakeme kakhulu
Yebo esiphakeme kakhulu impela.
Ithi letha kimina lezo zinkonyana

Ukuze uthole umcebokazi wanamuhla wetshe.”
Sengithathekile sezemuk’ezikababa,
Kwamemez’inyoni phezulu kwelenyoni:
“Itshe limi ngothi Nkombose kababa!”
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973:48)

(I might not have understood you
Had it not happened that while herding my father’s cattle
A flamboyant highly educated man approached me:
“I’m a respected messenger of the king,
A highly placed one indeed.
The king says you must give me those cattle
So as to get today’s wealth.”
When I was lured and the cattle were about to go
A bird from the top of the tree shouted:
“There is imminent danger!”

5.4.2 RELIGIOUS THEMES

Religion forms an integral part of people’s daily lives. Man has used religion in order to come to terms with daily occurrences, to find answers and comfort during many dilemmas that are a daily reality. We are therefore not even slightly surprised that Zulu artists devote so much of their storytelling techniques to provide us with enchanting stories that have religion as the main springboard.

Let us look at some of the religious aspects in the stories that we find in Zulu music and poetry.

5.4.2.1. ADAPTATIONS FROM THE BIBLE

Artists often tell us stories that are adapted from the Bible. In some cases such stories from the Bible are just taken as they are and adapted into music or poetry without any slight changes. The Dark City Sisters, for instance, tell the story of Samson and Delilah in one of their songs. Even though they confine their narration to the basic essentials, the plot of the story is still the same as the one rendered in the Bible version.

There are, however, stories where enough room for adaptations and improvisation is accommodated. In Dabula Mdabuli, J.C. Dlamini (1981), for instance, tells the story about Jesus and the Samaritan woman. In this story, Dlamini does not stick to the chronological order of events as they occur in the Bible, but chooses those that will best illustrate his point. In Angingcono, he confines his narration on Judas' actions before and after he betrayed Jesus. This is obviously not how the whole story is depicted in the Bible. We do believe, however, that Dlamini does justice to this story and adds his own viewpoint and impressive poetic expressions on how events turned out on that historic day:

Wathuthumela, wabhayiza,
Yasinda imali yesono!

...

Waphaphatheka, waphuphutheka,
Wacacisa, WALIVUMA ICALA
Sakaziyani imali phansi;
Waphuma waphuphutheka;

...

Thushu, laqhamuka
Iqhingana lemfihlo

...

Walenga wangqashangqasha.
(Dlamini, 1981:38)

(He shook with fear and moved in agitation
The sin money became unbearable!

...

He staggered, he swayed around
He explained, HE PLEADED GUILTY
He threw the money down
And went out in a hurry

...

Alas, a clandestine plan
Revealed itself

...

He hanged himself to death.)

In other cases, an artist seems to be influenced by a story in the Bible and tells us a story that reminds us of the Bible version. N.F. Mbhele (1989) does this in Uyazi Wena Nkosi. In this poem we get a story about a very poor woman who generously accommodates a stranger and gives him food even though it means that she and her

children will have to sleep on empty stomachs yet again. The man eats hungrily, departs and a miracle happens soon thereafter: the woman's food is replenished to bursting point. This of course reminds us of the story about the prophet Elisha and a poor widow.

5.4.2.2. RELIGIOUS CHARACTERS

Artists often use characters that are deeply devoted to religion in an effort to convey certain messages to the audience. The most common message seems to offer a warning to the audience to be on the alert about people who pretend to be Christians but conduct themselves in an embarrassing manner. Such a message is explicitly conveyed in UMthandazi Ejoyintini by Ximba. This song tells a story about a self-proclaimed priest who is caught by his wife smoking dagga, drinking liquor and dancing with young girls in a shebeen. In Ukuleba, by Ximba again, we get a story about a Christian who gossips about fellow churchgoers. When the truth is discovered, he is forcibly removed from the area as he has proved to be an undiserable member of the congregation and the community at large.

In Mab'amanga, Vusi Ximba gives us a humorous yet serious narrative about how a pastor undermines his religious responsibilities by indulging in illicit behaviour that taints the image of his church in the community:

Naso-k'isilima somfundisi
Owayethand'ugavini *too much*
Uyoshumayela, kant'udakiwe.
Akhale-k'amakhosikazi
Ngob'angothathekile.

(There was this foolish pastor
Who was an alcoholic
He would preach, while drunk
And the women would cry
Because they are easily moved.)

In Sonta, Dlamini (1981) tells a story about a haughty, pretentious member of a congregation who shows off in church, trying to create an impression that he is

bestowed with more spiritual powers and attributes than others. The message is clear in this story: such bad behaviour should be avoided. The tone of the poem attests to this view:

Ungqwazi lwakwabo lusho ngamagwagwa
Lugqoka kahle, lucothoze kahle,
Esontweni lwehla lwenyuka
Luhlel'abantu ngoba behlelekile
...
Lukhuluma nomfundisi ngenhlonipho
Yesigqili sesigqiki sesikhundla
Phakathi esontweni kuyathandazwa, uyayaluza
...
Nantuyana selukhuluma namakholwa
Lugcizelela iziyalo zoMfundisi
Phela lusonta ubusheshelengwane.
(Dlamini, 1981:8)

(The tall one has big ears
He dresses well and walks slowly
In church he walks up and down
He organises people because they are orderly
...
To the pastor he talks with the politeness
Of the slave to higher positions
While others pray, he moves around
...
There he is talking to other churchgoers
Emphasising the pastor's words
In fact he goes to church so as to be favoured for positions.)

With regard to how songs can be used to reprimand disgraceful behaviour of Christians, Ntshinga (1993:103) comments:

It is for example an understood social rule that a Christian has to adhere to certain norms of behaviour. If then she behaves in a manner that does not befit a Christian, she is corrected by song.

In Ngimfunge EkwaNzuza, C.S.Z. Ntuli convinces us through beautiful flashbacks how devoted Buhlebuni was to his religious beliefs:

Mzukwana ngimshiy'eSiqhomaneni

Ngambamb'ithamb'udadewethu,
Ngathi ngizoquba ngale ndlela,
Wath'angiqinise ngayo njalo
Sathi sesohlangana phambili.

...
Ngomkhumbul'eyintombi ziphelele,
Ngomuzwa ehlab'ihubo ziphelele
Elisho ngomtshing'opholile wephimbo:
"Ngingeke ngilishiye lel'ithemba lami."
(Ntuli and Ntuli, 1973: 62)

(When I left her at Siqhomaneni
I shook hands with her (my sister)
And promised to stick to this path
She encouraged me to be committed to it
And we promised each other to meet at our destination.

...
I will remember her as a beautiful lady
I will hear her sing amongst crowds
Singing with a melodic voice:
"I will never forsake my hope.")

Religious characters that we find in many stories leave a lasting impression on us and can be very influential in reaffirming one's determination to honour one's faith and religious obligations. This, for instance, happens in Brenda's song, Ngiyohlala Nginje. This song tells a story of a devoted churchgoer who is committed to her faith. It is on a Sunday and she meets a person who discourages her about going to church and insists that one should only go to church when there are problems that need divine intervention. On hearing this the main character in this story pronounces her resolution to remain steadfast in her faith:

"Mina ngiyohlala nginjena
Mina ngiyohlala njena
Ngiyohlala ngidumis'iNkosi yami."

("I will always be like this
I will always be like this
I will always praise my Lord.")

5.4.2.3 BELIEFS AND RITUALS

Artists display various religious beliefs and rituals in the stories that they tell. The aim is always two-fold: to confirm the vital role of the ritual or to despise it and indicate how useless or ineffective it is if some rules that accompany it are not adhered to.

The most common belief that features in most stories is the African traditional belief in and adherence to ancestor worship. Many stories reveal that Zulus have always believed that ancestors are a very reliable source of protection from various dangers. With regard to this, Zwane (1986:7) offers an elaborate explanation:

Traditional Zulus were concerned about danger because they led a life of constant wars and were subjects of cruel chiefs who punished them with a death sentence for minor offenses. They needed protection from such danger and since they were seldom given fair judgement from tribal courts, they relied on their ancestral spirits for protection. Ancestral spirits were their lawyers and their shields.

Ancestors are always shown as the driving and guiding force behind the character's actions and behaviour. When a family encounters problems, ancestors should be consulted through relevant means so as to appease them and qualify for their favour. With regard to ancestor worship, Sibiya (2002: 24) clarifies:

Contrary to what we Africans may want to believe- that worshipping ancestors or through them, is way of worship unique to Africans, it is common among many nations of the world. You find some form of it in most nations.

The above comment suggests that the stories that are told by Zulu artists in which ancestor worship features have relevance to many people around the world and confirm a world wide phenomenon.

In Inkosi uMnukwa by Nxumalo, the royal family as well as the whole nation are worried that there is no heir who will perpetuate the kingdom's interests. After many futile attempts, the king summons an *inyanga* who suggests that cattle be slaughtered

to appease the ancestors. The king delegates messengers to fetch an old man as suggested by *inyanga*:

Izithunywa zahambela phezulu, nalukhothe
Kaziludlanga; zatheleka nempunga emiqwebu,
Kwakhonjwa izinkabi zikanokusho zifehlezela
Kwathiwa ayiwasho ngothi lwawo;

...

Labalandelanis'okobuhlal'obutshutshiwe
Lashweleza lakhihliz'amagwebu.

(Nxumalo, 1968: 62)

(The messengers left in a hurry without any provision
And returned with a grey-haired wrinkled man.

Fat oxen were chosen

And he was asked to plead with ancestors.

...

He called them in their strict sequence

And apologised until his mouth frothed.)

The performance of this ritual bears fruit because soon thereafter one of the king's wives bears a son who will assume kingship after the king's death. The message in the story is that ancestors are able to intervene and resolve one's problems provided that the appropriate rituals are performed and promises are kept. The reality of this is proved beyond reasonable doubt when the king's son dies because the king fails to fulfill the promises he made to the ancestors when he begged them for a son.

Some stories also reiterate the belief that when a person dies in an accident or away from home he or she should be fetched from the spot of death so as to be brought home and dwell among the ancestors that preside over the homestead. Amatshitshi Amhlophe tell a story of a son who performs this ritual but still complains that his dead father does not seem to recognize his efforts as bad luck still haunts him. This story confirms that in some cases all the necessary rituals can be carried out but that does not in any way suggest that problems will be sorted out immediately and automatically.

There are also religious beliefs that are not ancestor based. In Ku-Elias Ntshangase, the priest sprinkles holy water on the injured Elias's forehead and gives him the 'last baptism.' This religious ritual has meaning, particularly to those of the Catholic faith and is closely connected to the belief that one should undergo certain rituals that will ensure much needed guidance and security on the long journey after death.

This brings us to the most commonly held belief of life after death. We must hasten to mention that in this discussion our aim is not to support or dispute such beliefs but rather to indicate what many stories tell about the beliefs of the characters and the message they are aimed at conveying to the audience. As we have indicated, many stories support the belief subscribed to by many people that one goes to heaven after death, some say immediately after, and others believe that certain stages have to be satisfied before one ascends to heaven. In Ngiyakubonga Thabile, O.E.H.M. Nxumalo (1968) tells a story about his journey to heaven up until his sister tells him to return to earth as his time has not yet come.

Some artists create an impression that those who have passed away will enjoy normal life after death and continue from where they ended before death. The belief that the righteous will live in heaven is evident in Ngimfunge EkwaNzuza where the poet tells us what will happen when he goes to heaven as well as reveals to us events that took place during his platonic love with Buhlebuni:

Le ndlela ingiphathele lukhulu:
Ipheth'uBuhlebuni kababa
Owathi mangiyigubhe njalo
Ngayo siyohlangana phambili
La sesiyohambisan'unomphela:
Lapho sovuselan'amagugu
...
Sikhumbul'amancoko nezijulile
Esasizibhunga phezu koMombeni.
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973:62)

(This path has great things in store for me
It will give me my sister Buhlebuni
Who said I must be steadfast in this path;
Through it I will meet her at the destination

Where we will walk together forever
Where we will rekindle precious memories
...
We will reminisce about jokes and serious matters
That we discussed facing Mombeni river.)

The day of judgement is also mentioned by artists in their stories. In Umphefumulo, Ximba tells a vivid story about what happens to a man on that day:

Yabuzw'imisebenz'endodeni
Yathi, "I was very kind,
Ngapha abant'imali, badansa
Bangishayel'isipansul'esivuthayo."
"Imisebenzi leyo? Buyel'eceleni!"

(Deeds were requested of the man
And he said, "I was very kind,
I gave people money and they danced
Performing impressive *isipansula* dance."
"Are those deeds? Move aside!")

Not all people suffer the same fate because Ximba further illustrates what happens to another man:

Yathi, "Nampa Nkos'engifika nabo
Ebengibahambisela iVangeli."
"Feel at home, ngen'embusweni,
Yiyona misebenzi efunekayo leyo!"

(He said, "Lord, I've arrived with these
To whom I delivered the Gospel."
"Feel at home, enter into the kingdom,
That's the type of works expected.")

While in Ximba's song the destination of the man who has been rejected in heaven is not specified, Chisimba's Mina Ngizoshonaphi? tells a story that illustrates a belief that evil doers are destined for eternal punishment in hell. This is how the story goes:

Nakhu ngibona iWundlu
Lim'esangweni lobucwebecwebe,
Selufikil'olungaliyo
...

Habe! Ngubani lowaya?
Nang'u-Abrahama-
Nang'uMose noJoshuwa-
Ngiyambon'umam'eceleni kukaYisaka.

...
Nami ngifis'ukuya kubo
Ngifulathele njalo ikloba nesililo...

...
"Mina nani kanginazi,
Dedani kimi."
(Chisimba in Msimang, 1979:75)

(Now I see the Lamb,
Standing at the gate of splendor,
The big day has arrived

...
Look! Who is that one?
Here's Abraham
Here is Moses and Joshua
I can see my mother next to Isaac.

...
I also wish to go to them
And turn my back to this fire and wailing...

...
"I in turn do not know you,
Move away from me.")

Some stories show Satan being merciful to some and capable of showing justice, contrary to the widely accepted belief that Satan is a cruel tormenter. In Insimb'edl'ezinye by Vusi Ximba, Satan is portrayed in an unusual manner:

Nangok'unkosikazi uMaDlamini
Ngezono zakhe wangen'esihogweni.
Wadonsa, wazikhalela kuSathane,
"Bab'uSathane, sengicel'intethelelo Baba."
"Uzowuyek'umona?"
"Ngizowuyeka Baba."
"Ngiyakuthethelela hamba."

(And then there was MaDlamini
She got into hell because of her sins,
She climbed up and pleaded with Satan,
"Father Satan, I beg for forgiveness Father."
"Are you going to stop being jealous?"
"Yes, I'll stop Father.")

“I forgive you, go.”)

On her way from hell, MaDlamini meets a woman who asks her to plead with Satan on her behalf so that she can also be forgiven. MaDlamini rudely refuses, emphasising that *‘ixoxo liyazigxumela, alikho eligxumela elinye,’* one has to fend for oneself. On hearing MaDlamini’s words, Satan calls her and sends her back to hell:

Wabuk’uSathane bekhuluma,
“MaDlamini, buyani, wozani la.
Kant’usenomona? Shona khona, phakathi, phakathi.”

(Satan was watching as they talked,
“MaDlamini, come back here.
So you still have jealousy? Go back to hell.”)

There are also numerous other beliefs that can be mentioned to illustrate what people in general believe and how such beliefs influence their actions and behaviour. Religious beliefs are commonly expressed through prayer. It is disturbing, however, to note that there are stories that depict people who take prayers for granted. In Umkhuleko Wesiphoxo by B.W. Vilakazi, we get a story that depicts what borders on blasphemy. During a feast, an obviously inebriated, highly respected man commands a jester to entertain guests with a prayer:

Umgido ongandile wawusuzophela
Isikhulw’esithize sesifun’insini
Sabiz’isinteli thize sazontela
Sath’isikhulu: “Thandaza siphoxo ndini.”
(Vilakazi, 1993:130)

(An unusual ceremony was about to end
A certain dignitary was longing for mirth
And called upon a jester to provide entertainment
The dignitary said, “Pray, you despised one.”)

This is a shameful display of extreme disregard for the sanctity of prayer.

We also get a similar story that conveys how people show disrespect about the role of prayer, especially with regard to what should be asked for in a prayer. In one of Ximba’s songs entitled Imfene, a woman decides to leave her husband because of

being always subjected to harsh physical torture and abuse. When her husband complains to his mother about how he misses his wife, his mother tells him to pray so that his wife can return. We are embarrassed, however, when we hear that in his prayer the man only focuses on his carnal needs. This is of course unacceptable and is probably used by Ximba to indicate how people ask for irrelevant and embarrassing things in their prayers.

The themes in these stories and many others that the scope of this discussion does not allow us to mention, indicate that there are beliefs that shape people's lives and influence their thoughts, decisions, actions, whether intentionally or unconsciously.

5.4.2.4 MISCELLANEOUS

There are many other manifestations of religion as the theme in the stories that are found in many songs and poems by creative Zulu artists. In some stories one finds that the whole story may not necessarily centre on religion but that there may be aspects of it that allude to religion.

There are cases where religion is suggested by the setting used in the story. Ximba's song entitled Esontweni has a church as the setting. In this song a lady and her boyfriend attend a church service. This is obviously the first experience for the boyfriend:

Lathelek'isoka nentombi yal'esontweni,
"Mntakwethu buyela ngale,
Abesilisa bahlala bodwa,
Nabesifazane bahlala bodwa."
"Anginakuya lapho mina,
Ziyeke zihlale zodwa izishimane."

(A lover arrived in church with his girlfriend,
"Honey, please go and sit over there,
Males are supposed to sit together,
And females are supposed to sit together."
"I'm not going to sit there,
Let those without girlfriends sit together.")

When the service proceeds the boyfriend seems more perplexed by the proceedings:

“Kade ibelesele ngoMatewu le ntshebe,
Ngumfo kabani yena lo Matewu?”

(“The bearded man has long been talking about Mathew,
Who is this Mathew?”)

In other cases, the speech of the characters may have religious connotations. In yet one of Ximba’s songs, a female character accepts her suitor by saying:

“Sengize ngakuzwela-ke we muntu weNkosi.”

(I have decided to be your lover, you person of the lord.)

In Mshoza’ song entitled Kortes, a couple meets and falls head over heels in love. This is how the young man bares his feelings:

Ngakubona *for the first time*
Ngezwa ngomel’amanzi
Ngathi ngiyaphuza, dlozi lami...

(I saw you for the first
I felt thirsty and wanted water
When I tried to drink it, my ancestor...)

This young man’s exclamation about his ancestors indicates that the young man is a traditionalist who attributes his response to ancestral interventions. He swears by his ancestors in almost every action and utterance.

5.4.3 POLITICAL THEMES

Zulu artists, like anybody else in the world, have been directly or indirectly embroiled in political conflicts and confrontations that have been a very sad reality in our country over the years. This is evident in the wide range of stories that have been told in order to record the political experiences of the people, particularly how they survived turbulent political conditions.

Racial segregation and discrimination have always been a thorny issue that resulted in much suffering and loss of many lives. Masuku, for instance, tells a sad story about Manqondo who retaliates and beats up a rude white boy who had ridiculed him. This results in confrontation with the Boers (who are obviously not even related to the white boy). Manqondo remonstrates in vain:

“Wo belungu, sengenzi
Seningibulala njena?
Le ngane ingethukile-
Ngenhlamba-ingeyisile!”

...
“Asikhathali ngalokho:
Ngab’awumshayang’umlungu;
UyiKhafula, ngalokho
Fana ngob’ushay’umlungu,
Unesikhumb’esimnyama!”
(Masuku, 1973:18)

(“Oh Whitemen, what have I done
Now that you kill me?
What wrong have I done
Now that you beat me?
This child insulted me
With vulgar, he insulted me!”

“We don’t care about that
You shouldn’t have beaten a White person
You are a kaffir
And must die for beating a Whiteman.
You are black-skinned.
You have black colour!”

Manqondo later dies when the Boers stab him mercilessly.

There are cases where even the way the characters speak indicates that they are racists and discriminate against other people. In Vusi Ximba’s song entitled Yes Madam, a white racist woman meets an African lady on the street, gives her an English name even before she offers her employment:

Nango-k’umesisi womlungu neVW:

*"Halo Emy, do you speak English?
Can you work in the kitchen?"*

(Here comes a white madam in a VW:
"Halo Emmy, do you speak English
Can you work in the kitchen?")

During apartheid times, certain laws were implemented in order to suppress Africans and to restrict their freedom and movement in the land of their forefathers. The notorious Group Areas Act was one of such inhumane laws that resulted in many Africans being displaced and forcibly removed from their areas of birth to pave way for white settlements. Khumalo tells the story of such tribulations in Inkulanka:

Inhlabamkhosi yawuhlaba yawulawula
Ikhwela lakhoth'amawa neziqongo
Isahho sananelwa ngamagquma nemifula,
Yisahho sofuduko emanxiweni.
(Khumalo, 1995:46)

(The clarion spread the news
The call reached every place
And was echoed by the hills and rivers,
It was a call for people to leave their homes.)

This was carried out with brutal force on many people who were defenseless against heavily armed forces who were not prepared to show mercy:

Zangen'ezembokod'ebomvu!
Kwakhala guzu, kwakhala maguduveyisi,
Kwakhala nkaliyasi, kwakhala sambokwe.
...
Bazithela ngamabhansi namankentshane,
Bazifusa ngomsizi kwancan'indawo
Zaze zayolahlwa kwelaBetswana...
(Khumalo, 1995:48)

(The police arrived
People were kicked and beaten with fists
They were whipped and sjamboked.
...
They were hounded with fierce dogs,
They were shot at with guns
And dumped in the land of the Tswanas.)

Protest has always been used to show resistance and discontent against discrimination and the brutality of the system. Zulu artists have also expressed and recorded such experiences. In most cases such stories are not fictitious but rather relate real life incidents where people took to the streets to express anger and dissatisfaction.

In Imbedumehlwana Efulansi, C.S.Z. Ntuli narrates the famous story of how the oppressed masses revolted against the French regime and toppled it overnight:

Dukuduku, kwaleng'imbazo phezulu,
Izembekaz'elibukhali bensingo
Lehla kwaqhasha khanda lenkosi,
Kwaqhasha khanda lendlovukazi

...

Yenyuka yehla insingozembe
Ngapha kwagingqik'izinqukuza
Zamakhand'angasenamzimba!
Ngapha kwatikiz'izimpukuza
Zemizimb'engasenamakhand:
Izinkulungwane ngezinkulungwane!
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973:54)

(Soon thereafter an axe hovered above,
A big razor sharp axe
It fell and cut the king's head,
The queen's head also jumped out.

...

The razor like axe went up
On this side rolled
Big heads without bodies!
On this side lay
Naked torsos without heads:
Thousands upon thousands!")

In this story the will of the people is fulfilled because the French ruling class is brought to its knees by the oppressed masses. Ntuli narrates this story to convey a message that oppressed people should not be afraid to challenge their slave masters about conditions which they experience daily. On the other hand he tries to convince the reader that one should not grumble about one's plight in life which may seem too trivial if compared to what other people have to face in other countries under different but very taxing conditions. The triumph of the oppressed in this story serves as a

warning to the oppressors that the oppressed will not take the pain and suffering lying down. The ruling class should be warned that people cannot tolerate to be oppressed forever: they will fight and overcome the enemy.

Msimang, however, tells a different story in Siwela IMoretele. In this poem Mamelodi residents are fed up with ever-increasing municipal rents and taxes. They decide to march to the municipality offices to express their anger. Sadly, on their way to the offices they are confronted by the police whose brutality results in the death of multitudes:

Qiz! Qiz! Laduma!
Bani! Lamthatha! Phazi! Lamsonga!
...
Izigagayi zaphenduka isanhlaka senhlakanhlaka,
IMoretele zayiwela emanhlukanhlukano,
Abaningi kabayiwelanga okwesibili,
Balibona liphuma, abalibonanga lishona,
Nanamuhla amanzi asasilila leso sililo.
(Msimang, 1990:15)

(There was thunder!
There were gunshots and people got killed!
...
The masses dispersed in chaos
And crossed Moretele from different directions
Many did not cross it the second time
Many saw the sun rise, but never saw sunset
Even today the waters are still lamenting.)

In this story the poet seems to show that there will always be brave martyrs who are prepared to die for their freedom and rights to be treated as equals regardless of social and economic standing.

Musicians also express their disenchantment with politicians. Phuzekhemisi, for instance, often complains about how politicians behave and how their actions impact on the lives of the ordinary people who voted them to power. In Ngo-49, Phuzekhemisi tells the story about the violent confrontation between Indians and Zulus in Durban that took place in 1949. He feels that Zulus were able to endure such

political turmoil because of their unity and do not have to kill each other because of differences that are caused by politicians.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The main focus of this chapter was to look at the themes that Zulu poets and musicians address in their compositions. By using the Jakobson's communication model, we were able to see how themes are used by artists as means of conveying vital information, message and entertainment to the reader or audience.

We also divided themes according to various categories. This highlighted the fact that Zulu poets and musicians are incredibly talented in commenting on topical issues that have local or national relevance as well as on universal themes that touch on events and issues that have a universal appeal.

The various types of themes that we discussed showed that Zulu artists are creative and can come up with interesting stories that show human beings under various circumstances. We applauded how artists are able to tell stories about love, death, crime, discrimination, religious beliefs, etc. We also commend them for avoiding explicit didacticism even though their stories display evidence of being aimed at conveying lessons to the audience, reader and the nation as a whole.

Our discussion highlighted how poets are particularly endowed with lofty imagination and impressive mastery of the language to weave stories that are high above the mundane and the ordinary. This is evident, for instance, in a story that Vilakazi tells in Ugqozi where we find the poet on a spiritual journey to KwaDukuza. This story of course supports the belief that when heroes die, they proceed to live forever '*kwelabaphansi*', land of the dead and are able to influence lives on earth and bestow inspiration on those they favour. Vilakazi shows this by including Mkabayi in his story to indicate how the visit to KwaDukuza enriches him. With regard to the narrative elements of this poem, Ntuli (1984:98) comments:

This poem contains properly ordered narrative. This is a beautifully

streamlined story which works smoothly towards the climax when the mission of the poet has proved to be a great success...It is interesting to see how a poet who gets to Dukuza empty-handed ends up with such plenty.

We strongly feel that our discussion on theme, although not exhaustive due to space and time constraints, was able to reinforce our conviction that Zulu poets and musicians really deserve recognition as storytellers of high calibre.

CHAPTER SIX

STYLE

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The effective depiction of the story depends a lot on how the narrator tells the story and how the elements in the story such as characters and setting are enacted and made real and plausible by the narrator. This entails a style that in most cases displays the unique creativeness of an artist and helps in setting him or her apart from other contemporary artists. We regard style as one of the main ingredients of a successful storytelling activity.

This chapter is aimed at showing the role that style plays in effective storytelling through music and poetry. We are going to point out the various elements of style and how artists have used them in order to render interesting and enjoyable stories that appeal to a very diverse audience.

6.1 STYLE DEFINED

Style has aroused a lot of debate among various scholars with regard to its nature, its role and its manifestation in a literary work. As we pointed out in Chapter Two, style is an ambiguous term that can refer to the idiosyncratic manner in which an individual or group's creative abilities are expressed. Crystal & Davy (1982: 69) admit that style has a multiplicity of meaning. Goodman in Lambropoulos and Miller (1986: 254) offers a simplified definition of style. He comments:

Obviously, subject is what is said, style is how it is said. Plainly, when something is said, some aspects of the way it is said are matters of style.

Some scholars confine their definition of style to the language that an artist uses in a creative work. Some scholars such as Abrams (1981) regard style as the ability of an artist to manipulate language in order to express ideas and views through a literary work. Language is obviously a crucial feature of any stylistic expression in a literary

work. A close look at language as an expression of an artist's style enables us to appreciate what the artist is trying to convey to us through his or her creative work.

Murray in Msimang (1986: 177) identifies style as a manifestation of personal idiosyncrasy of expression. This refers to an artist's unique and peculiar manner of expression. In this case there are various stylistic ingredients that are at the artist's disposal. Some of such ingredients are imagery, symbolism, humour and many others. The effect of an artist's style will therefore be determined by the successful use of such stylistic flavours in a literary work.

Scholars such as Jakobson (1960), Freeman (1970) and Enkvist (1973) who are regarded as authorities on stylistics as a literary aspect, view style as primarily a deviation from the norm. Freeman (1979: 6) explains that style is a language that deliberately breaks and distorts rules of language and grammar. This happens a lot in poetry where metaphors and symbols are commonly used in a manner that usually defies rules of grammar that occur in daily communication.

When we discuss the role of style as a storytelling technique, we are going to take into consideration some of the definitions that have been mentioned above. We are going to discuss style as the manifestation of personal idiosyncrasy. In this regard we shall point out how poets and musicians as individuals as well as groups display unique and peculiar features in their storytelling endeavours. In consideration of style as a deviation from the norm, we are going to look at how poets and musicians deliberately violate normal grammatical and literary rules and standards in order to tell moving and interesting stories.

As we have already indicated, style is the evidence of the artist's mastery of the language to create vivid pictures and evoke emotional response on the reader or audience. We are going to illustrate how musicians and poets display excellent command of the language when they tell fascinating stories that make us appreciate the rich heritage that we have in the Zulu language.

6.2 ELEMENTS OF STYLE

As we have indicated, storytelling can comprise various stylistic elements, depending on the scholar's view of the concept style.

If we consider style as an indication of universal as well as personal idiosyncrasy, we realize that storytelling in music and poetry displays unique features that are not prevalent in other prose narratives. This also indicates the tendency on the part of Zulu musicians and poets to deviate from the norm. Another vital element of style is the ability of an artist to manipulate language in order to enhance the quality of the story and to elevate the talent of the artist as a storyteller above the normal level of the ordinary members of the society.

Let us look at some of these stylistic elements. Firstly we will consider how stories that are found in music and poetry display idiosyncrasies and deviation from the norm.

6.2.1 IDIOSYNCRASY AND DEVIATION FROM THE NORM

Zulu musicians and poets seem to have their own style of telling stories. This makes their stories differ from the usual stories that we find in prose narratives. Unfortunately, some unique stylistic features of such stories have made many people disregard musicians and poets as storytellers in the strict sense of the word. We feel, however, that such misconceptions result from the failure of many people to realize that musicians and poets are unique, creative and innovative masters of the storytelling tradition. Let us look at how Zulu musicians and poets employ some stylistic devices in their storytelling endeavours.

6.2.1.1 INSERTION

In Zulu music and poetry, artists tell stories by merely 'inserting' them in a poem or song. This is done for various reasons, most common of which is to convey a lesson to the audience. The story is then inserted in the composition as an example through

which the artist wants to drive a point home. Miriam Makeba and The Skylarks warn against the evils of alcohol and insert a story as supportive evidence:

Ijini madod'iyabulala
Ijini madod'ichith'imizi:
Wafik'umakot'ekuseni
Wafik'umakot'edakiwe
Ekhuluma izindaba
Engabuzwanga muntu.

(Gin really kills
Gin destroys marriages:
The young wife arrived in the morning
The young wife arrived drunk
Spreading gossips
Without being prompted.)

The story that has been inserted to accompany this warning shows that alcohol can result in serious marital problems. No husband can tolerate a wife who does not sleep at home, but returns the following morning drunk.

In Imfuluwenza, Caluza tells a story about the Influenza of 1918 that killed many people. He then inserts a story about the hardships that faced the Israelists when they left Egypt for the promised land. It is only at the end of the song that we realise the relevance of the story that has been inserted in the narration about the influenza epidemic. Caluza says the following to show why the story of the exodus to Canaan has been used in the song:

Siyaniyala nsizwa
Siyaniyala ntombi
Musan'ukuvumel'inhliziyiyo
Ngoba ayigcwali.

(We implore you young men
We implore you young ladies
Refrain from succumbing to the heart's desires
Because the heart is never satisfied.)

Caluza seems to believe that the youth should not grumble and complain like the Israelites who perished in the desert because of grumblings, defiance and

remonstrations with Moses. He uses the story to illustrate that the heart can be misleading and one should guard against following it.

Artists also insert stories in their compositions in order to support an argument. C.S.Z. Ntuli, for instance, argues that his readers should not complain about what he regards as trivial and mundane issues:

Mntanesichaka!
Ukhal'esemisebenz'ebiyelwe?
Ukhal'esamaholo angalingani?
Ufun'ukuzikhulumel'emkhandlwini?
Ufun'ukwakha laph'uthanda khona?
Uth'indukwenhl'igawulw'ezizweni?
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973:51)

(Child of the poor one!
You bemoan work restrictions?
You bemoan unequal wages?
You want a voice in parliament?
You want to a home where your heart pleases?
You are in favour of inter-racial marriages?)

Ntuli supports his argument by telling a story about the storming of the Bastille in France. The events in the story prove Ntuli's argument that peasants were living under very harsh conditions that were more traumatising and unbearable than racial and employment equity issues that many people often complain about.

Poets in particular have the tendency of inserting stories in order to highlight heroic deeds and achievements, particularly in literary circles. In enumerating the creative works of a praised personality, a story is inserted in a poem. In most cases, a character in one of the hero's literary works is chosen and a story is weaved around that famous character. Gcumisa does this when he applauds Nyembezi's literary achievements. He includes Ndebenkulu, a character in Nyembezi's famous novel, Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu:

Wangilethela isikhumukane
Safika sibeke isigqoko emehlweni
Sisho ngezinyo laso elicamele odebeni,

Ngasizwa qede ngethuka,
Kanti angazi nje ngihleli neSikwaya,
Inkinsela yaseMgungundlovu uqobo...
(Gcumisa, 1981:95)

(You brought me a richman
He arrived wearing a hat over his eyes
And sporting a tooth that leaned against his lip,
I heard him and got frightened
Little did I realise that I was sitting with an Esquire
The richman of Pietermaritzburg indeed...)

There are instances, however, when there is no obvious justification for insertion of a story. In such cases we find an artist telling a story that does not display any relevance to the song or poem. Mfazomnyama seems to go out of his way to insert stories in his songs in spite of their irrelevance in the song. In one song entitled Kukhon'okuzovela, for instance, he pleads with Thabo Mbeki to also visit rural areas such as Nongoma so as to implement development programmes, and all of a sudden inserts a story about what took place when he visited his mother at home one day. It was on a Saturday. When he asked his mother for coffee, she refused and explained that she has now converted to the Shembe faith and no longer eats hot food on Saturdays. The singer complains that he cannot afford not to drink coffee.

This is an amusing story indeed but has no relevance in the song. We feel that cases like this reaffirm that Zulu artists always have plenty of stories to tell and are prone to being tempted to include such stories in their compositions even if there is no justification and relevance for such stories.

6.2.1.2 ALLUSION

This seems to be the most common stylistic feature that artists use in poetry and music as storytelling devices. By using allusions, artists tell stories but do not provide all the essential details that would have been accommodated in a prose narrative. The narrator seems to take it for granted that the audience is quite familiar with the background information behind the theme and content of the story and will therefore be able to fill the missing gaps and details.

Izibongo make regular use of allusions as a stylistic device. The bard merely uses praise lines that allude to certain events without furnishing full details as would have been expected in a normal narrative. In Dingana's praises, for, instance, we get the following lines:

UMgabadel'owagabadela
Inkundla yakwaBulawayo.
(Nyembezi, 1995: 45)

(Usurper who usurped
The court of Bulawayo.)

The above lines allude to events that took place before Dingana assumed kingship. He had to assassinate Shaka first before he could claim the throne. The bard therefore alludes to how Dingana assassinated Shaka. In doing this, many details are not provided as the bard presumes that his audience knows who 'iNkundla yakwaBulawayo' is and how the assassination was executed.

Allusions are often used to illustrate a point that the artist is trying to emphasise in the song or poem. The events that will be alluded to are obviously those of prominence and are generally known to the audience. They are therefore not repeated or alluded to for no apparent reason. The aim is to paint a brighter picture about the hero's role in them and their significance in the current state of affairs.

Modern artists use the same device in their compositions. Gcumisa alludes to the same events in Amagade Ahlabayo. In this poem, Gcumisa makes use of rich metaphor to allude to events and participants in order to tell a story about the events behind the assassination of Shaka and the consequences thereof:

Yaphuma, baphum'inqinambumbulu
Basisusa isiphunzi esasimiswe amathongo
...
Laqhwakela-ke igamanxandukwana
Lathi liyabhinca umutsha lawuhlanakezela...
(Gcumisa in Ntuli, 1975: 35)

(The army departed and they absconded
They uprooted the post that was erected by ancestors

...
The novice then assumed kingship
He put on the loincloth the other way round...)

In the poem Gcumisa does not mention Mkabayi, Shaka and Dingane by names. He uses *ubabekazi* (aunt) *isiphunzi* (post), *igamanxandukwana* (novice) to refer to them respectively. Dingana and Mhlangana had left with the army that had gone to attack Mashobane in the hinterland, but absconded on the way and came back to assassinate Shaka. Gcumisa only alludes to this and assumes that the reader is quite familiar with the events surrounding the assassination of Shaka. With regard to the failure of Dingana to rule effectively, the poet likens this to a person who fails to dress properly, hence '*umutsha lawuhlanekezela*'.

As we have mentioned, artists allude to certain events because the story behind such events is necessary to support what the artist wants to say in the composition. Gcumisa, for instance, makes allusions in the above poem because he wants to support his argument that the present plight of the Zulus was caused by the assassination of Shaka and the failure of Dingana to rule properly after Shaka's death. This is how Gcumisa puts it:

Namuhla bayizigqil'ezweni lawokhokho
Namuhla bangomahamba nendlwana
Kulo elezizalo zabo.
Bona banje nje nguwe Mkabayi KaJama.
(Gcumisa in Ntuli, 1975: 35)

(Today they are slaves in the land of the forefathers
Today they are restless wanderers
In the land of the forebearers
They are in this condition because of you Mkabayi, child of Jama.)

The use of imagery as a technique to allude to events is very common in poetry, particularly in *izibongo*. In the praises of king Zwelithini, for instance, the bard uses *imvukuzane* (mole) as a metaphor in order to allude to events that took place before king Zwelithini assumed kingship:

Allusion only becomes a problem when the artist chooses strange and unfamiliar material with which the audience hardly identifies. We are consequently left in the dark about the relevance of the story in the composition and find it very difficult to appreciate the message that the artist is trying to convey in a song or poem. We concur with the view expressed by Msimang (1991: 53) with regard to allusions in *izibongo*. He comments:

It is common knowledge that, due to their allusions to historical events and personalities, praise-poems are not always intelligible to people unfamiliar with the relevant history.

6.2.1.3 SUMMARIZATION

Storytelling by summarization is also another stylistic device that artists make use of in their compositions. Instead of telling the whole story, an artist merely summarizes the whole story and provides only the essential details that he feels are relevant for the portrayal of plot, character and theme.

There is a very close link between summarization and allusion but the difference is that in summarization an artist tells the whole story in brief summary while in allusion the story is only hinted at and is often not narrated at all. While in allusion the audience or reader has to be familiar with the events and personalities that are left out in the story, summarization does not demand any familiarity with what is depicted in the story.

In most cases a line is enough to summarize the whole story or a series of events. Let us consider for instance what Nxumalo says in one of his poems about his friend:

Sengathi bekuyizolo Mdimma
Sihlangana kwandonge zibomvu
...
Kubo ngafika kwakwethu
Kithi wafika kwakwabo
...
Sadudana ngamaphupho okukhula
Sathekelisana ngamasu okonga

Sashiyelana ugwayi wokufunda

...

Ugasele oNgoye wagadlisisa
Ngangikhon'umayikayika yimiyezane.
(Nxumalo in Ntuli, 2002:76)

(It seems like yesterday Mdimma
When we met in Pietermaritzburg

...

At his home I was accepted as a member of the family
At my home he was accepted as a member of the family

...

We shared dreams of self-empowerment
We shared saving skills
We shared academic experiences

...

You went to Ngoye and excelled
I was present on your graduation day.)

This is indeed a summarization of many events, starting from the friends' first meeting, marriage, children, academic and career achievements and the ultimate death of Sipho Shange. The poet has been able to summarize events that would have needed more details in a prose narrative but which are portrayed vividly enough in this poem despite the brief nature of the summarization.

In a song entitled Kortes by Mshoza, we get a good example of summarization. The song tells a story of lovers who meet and fall head over heels in love:

Ngakubona *for the first time*
Ngezwa kuth'angihlanye
Ngakubona *for the second time*
Ngezwa kujuluk'umzimba
Ngakubona *for the third time*
Ngabhalela abazal'incwadi...

(I saw you for the first time
And went crazy
I saw you for the second time
And felt my body sweating
I saw you for the third time
And wrote my parents a letter...)

This song merely summarizes what took place and how the narrator reacted to the lady with whom he fell in love at first sight. Had this been a short story, for instance, the narrator would have given details about the setting, dialogue etc. Even though such details are not provided in this song, we are still able to grasp the whole story that relates all the events that took place and the wedding that was the result of this interesting encounter.

Artists often make use of proverbs and idiomatic expressions as effective tools and techniques in summing up events and portraying characters. Ladysmith Black Mambazo use this device to tell a story in the following song entitled Imbongi:

Imbongi yethu ngumfo kaNkosi
Wasuka lena eGoli
Wakhiph'amandl'ebhubesi
Wafika laph'eThekwini
Wakhiph'amabal'engwe.

(Our poet is Nkosi
He left Johannesburg
And produced strength of a lion
He arrived here in Durban
And displayed spots of a tiger.)

Nkosi seems to possess power and influence that enable him to bring various music projects into fruition. *Amabala engwe* suggest beauty and decorum. We feel that this refers to Nkosi's keen and very selective eye in recognising musical talent. His efforts seem to have been successful because Ladysmith Black Mambazo say:

Washay'utheleloni
Wathi, "Ngibatholil'abafana."

(He made a phone call
And said, "I have found the boys.")

Thwalofu uses the same device in telling us a story about an obstinate person in Ngiyakwembesa Uyazembula:

"Sengikhathele mina nguwe:

Ngiyabhala, uyacisha
Ngiyakwembesa, uyazembula
Kanti ngumnt' onjani lona?"

("I have had enough of you:
When I write, you erase
When I cover you, you uncover yourself
What kind of a person is this?")

Artists often make use of figurative language that enables them to tell stories by merely summarizing. An apt metaphor is usually all that an artist needs to cut a long story short. This is how Mfazomnyama, for instance, uses a metaphor to summarize events in Akujolwa Kanje:

Ngavele ngabona ukuthi
Yibhasi likaLoliwe leliyana,
Hhayi, ngavele ngalehla.

(I realised that
This is a Railway Service bus
And disembarked.)

This is a summary of many events that are involved in the above story. The girlfriend in this story is compared to a bus that carries many people. The artist does not tell us how he found out about his girlfriend's many lovers. We are sure that this did not happen on one occasion. The artist also does not explain how he terminated the affair. Maybe he confronted the lady in person, maybe he wrote her a letter, maybe he phoned her. All we are sure about is that the artist has given us a summary of many events that could have otherwise been narrated in a very long story.

The most effective device that is used in summarization is the ideophone. In this case one word is enough to describe a series of events. Ngcongwane in Nkabinde (1988: 142) regards the ideophone as 'a unique device that has a telling power which cannot be readily equalled by a simile, a metaphor or any other conventional figure of speech.' With regard to the effective role of an ideophone in a composition, Wainwright (1987: 264) comments:

The ideophone, that strange yet indispensable tool which in the hands of a

skilled poet stimulates many different sensual responses.

Msimang uses a series of ideophones to summarize a long story about how protesters were killed in a confrontation with the policemen in Siwela IMoretele:

Qiz! Qiz! Laduma!
Qiz! Qiz! Laphindelela!
Bani! Lamthatha! Phazi! Lamsonga!
Phazi! Lamsonga! Bani! Lamthatha!
(Msimang, 1990: 15)

(There were thunder like sounds
That roared repeatedly
Fire came out of the guns
And people got killed immediately.)

In some cases a question may be used to tell a story in a summarized form. D.B.Z. Ntuli does this in Ngamanga:

Bangikhohliselani bethi usedlule?
Basho ngoba leli sonto ebesesibhedlela?
...
Zifunani izihlwale kwamakhelwane?
Zifakelwani izevatho ezimnyama?
Ngeyani ingoma yesilokozane?
Ngeyani bantu le nqola emnyama?
...
Kwenziwani manje kwelezisele?
(Ntuli & Ntuli, 1973: 24)

(Why do they lie and say he is gone?
Do they say that just because he was in hospital this week?
...
What are crowds doing at my neighbour's place?
Why are people dressed in black?
What is the sorrowful song for?
What is the hearse doing there?
...
What are people doing at the cemetery?)

The above is a summary of events that began when the deceased was involved in an accident and had to spend time in hospital where he eventually passed away, and end when he is buried at the cemetery. The poet has summarized all this in a very few lines.

This would have been frowned upon had the author used another genre such as short story or novel.

J.C. Dlamini also uses rhetorical questions to tell us a story in Kunjalo-ke. In this poem we find a young alcoholic man whose life has been torn apart by alcohol abuse. Instead of narrating many events to illustrate the past deeds of this pathetic young man, the poet simply asks the following questions:

Iph'injabul'okwayiqhakaza?
Luph'udum'okwalubaneka?
Iph'imali okwayisobozela?
Iph'imiphefumul'eyaphuhluzwa?
Iph'iminden'okwayingcwaba?
(Dlamini, 1981: 11)

(Where's the joy he displayed?
Where is the fame he projected?
Where's the money he consumed?
Where are the souls he destroyed?
Where are the families he killed?)

The above questions are an indication that there are many horrible things that were committed by this man that obviously resulted in great suffering and presumably death of other people. The full details with regard to how all these events took place are not given.

To some people summarization may seem to be the easiest storytelling method but a closer look shows that it demands great expertise on the part of the storytellers who must be very selective with regard to what to omit and what to include in the narration. We therefore commend the artists who are able to use summarization and yet succeed to tell a very good story that leaves us not complaining about its brevity and scantiness of details.

6.2.1.4 SEQUELS AND EPISODES

Some artists, particularly musicians, demonstrate a unique sense of responsibility to their listeners and audiences. They often make a follow up on the story and later relate

it further in order to tie up the loose ends that often prevail when a story ends. This results in sequels of the story and can also be regarded as a stylistic feature in music and poetry.

In prose narratives, when the story ends, it is the end of the story, full stop: no further update is provided with regard to what later happens to the characters that were introduced to us in the story. In literary analysis of prose narratives such as short stories and novels, stories that are left hanging are regarded as tangible evidence of the narrator's dexterity. We argue that in some cases this does not show any sympathy for the curious reader who wants to know the outcome of all the events in the story.

Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu, for instance, ends with a question that the narrator deliberately leaves hanging. When Ndebenkulu has been apprehended, Mkhwanazi returns home to face his wife who has all along been against the impulsive and unquestioning trust that has been placed on Ndebenkulu by her husband and some members of the community. The reader is eager to know how MaNtuli will respond to the news about Ndebenkulu's arrest. Instead of providing this vital piece of information, the narrator simply winds up the story with a question:

Kazi uyothini uMaNtuli?
(Nyembezi, 1999: 204)

(We wonder what MaNtuli will say?)

Musicians and poets feel differently about this. They seem to believe that a good story must have a sequel. This enables characters in their stories to be more dynamic and resemble real life human beings whose lives are not as static as portrayed in many narratives.

About thirty years ago, in a song entitled Mama KaSibongile, Soul Brothers told a sad story about Sibongile's father who is emotionally traumatized by the immoral behaviour of his wife. He complains:

"Mama kaSibongile

Awuyek'ukuth'um'usuphuzile
Bes'uyangiphoxa.
Min'angifun'ukuth'omakhelwane
Basibone sixabana."

("Sibongile's mother
Stop embarrassing me
When you are drunk.
I don't want neighbours
To see us fight.")

A few years later, Soul Brothers give an update on the story in a song entitled Sibongile. Sibongile has grown up now and is causing problems of her own. Her father reprimands her:

"Sibongile, awuyek'ukuhamba ebusuku
Mntanami ngiyakukhuza.
Izolo lokhu bengikhuz'umama wakho
Namhla sekuqale wena."

(Sibongile, stop roaming around at night
I'm warning you my child.
Just yesterday I was reprimanding your mother
And today it's you.)

We feel sorry for this father and hope that his complaints will be attended to so as to create a peaceful environment in the family. We are saddened, however, when, a few years later we learn that the relationship between the father and the family has deteriorated. Sibongile's father has had enough:

"Sengikhathel'ukukhuzana nawe Sibongile
Nomama wakho kodw'anifun'ukulalela."

"I'm tired of reprimanding you Sibongile
And your mother too, but you don't want to listen.")

We immediately feel sorry for and sympathise with Sibongile's father who has to contend with the behaviour of two obstinate women. It is even sadder to learn that Sibongile's father has been forced to leave the family and seek peace of mind at a single men's hostel:

"Kungcono nginishiye nalo muzi

Ngiyohlal'ezimpohlweni."

("The best thing is to leave you with this home
And stay at a men's hostel.")

When the song ends, there are many questions that are left unanswered: will the family ever reconcile? Will Sibongile's father eventually find another wife? How will Sibongile's behaviour be in future? Soul Brothers provide answers few years later when they update us about the state of affairs in the family in the song entitled Baba KaSibongile. It is remarkable that in this song, Soul Brothers rope in a female vocalist to add a dramatic flavour to the story and make it as plausible as possible. Sibongile's mother seems to have eventually felt guilty about the pain that she has inflicted on her husband. She begs her to come back home:

"Baba kaSibongile, ngicel'uxolo kuwe
Lokh'engakwenza kuwe, ngangingaqondanga
Ngicel'ubuy'uze kimi sibonisane."

"Sibongile's father, I'm asking for forgiveness from you
I didn't mean what I did to you
Please come back so that we sort things out.")

We are aware of the heartache and humiliation that Sibongile's father has endured all these years and are eager to know if he is going to reconcile with the family. His wife's words of repent do not seem to soften his heart. He reminds her:

"Bengithi uma ngikukhuza
Uthi kangindoda yalutho
Kodwa namhl'usuyangikhumbula.
Ukukhala kwakho akusasizi
Sengihleli kahl'ezimpohlweni."

"Whenever I tried to reprimand you
You would say I'm a useless man
But today you miss me
Your tears are in vain
I've settled well at men's hostel.")

This song leaves us with many unanswered questions. We are curious to know whether Sibongile's father will succumb to her wife's pleas for reconciliation. What

will happen if he comes back? Will Sibongile also feel guilty and repent or will problems arise again and force Sibongile's father to go back to the hostel?

As recently as 1997, more than twenty years after the initial story was told, we learn that there is now joy, peace and love in this family whose story has fascinated us over the years. Soul Brothers provide this heart rendering update in a song entitled Sesihleli Kahle. Sibongile's father tells us:

Sengihleli kahle nomama kaSibongile
Akasahluphi useyazithulela nje
Ngisola ukuthi nokuguga sekumficile
NoSibongile naye useyazisontela.

(We now live peacefully with Sibongile's mother
She's always quite and is no longer troublesome
I suspect old age has caught up with her
And Sibongile is now a churchgoer.)

We believe that a story with a happy ending like this brings relief to the listeners who have been following the story of the family for so many years. All the questions that worried the listeners when the characters were first introduced to them, have been answered in a very satisfying manner. This is how a good story should be concluded if the storyteller cares about the feelings and anxieties of his reader, listener or audience.

Khansela NoJBC tell a sad, yet humorous story of Majazi who is physically abused by his wife. When his wife beats him up he reports the matter to the police. This does not help. He even contemplates divorcing his wife but this results in more beatings. Even his brother fails to help him. When the song ends, we feel sorry for this man. We feel more worried when we get an update in the next album. Majazi's wife is still beating him up. He flees to his brother who stays at Denver hostel. His wife follows him and drags him back home:

"Ubani owangishada?
Ngiyabuza, ngubani owangishadayo?
Asambe siy'ekhaya, asambe
Ngizokukhombisa,
Ngizokuvala leli eliny'iso."

(Who married me?
 I'm asking you, who married me?
 Let's go home, let's go.
 I'm going to show you,
 I'll beat you until the other eye can't see.)

In the latest album, the group provides more details about what happens afterwards. Seemingly, when they get home Majazi's wife beats him up and refuses to take him to the doctor. Fortunately Majazi manages to escape and consult an Indian doctor who happens to be his friend. While the doctor is attending to Majazi's injuries, Majazi's wife arrives and beats up both Majazi and the doctor.

When Mfiliseni Magubane first emerged as *maskandi* artist, he told us this story in his praises:

Mina nginguMalobola ngeshek'ekhwani kwaNongoma
 Kuze kus'umukhwe wakh'ethetha
 Ethu, "Ngowaphi lo mfan'ozolobol'ingane yami ngesheke?"
 Ngathi mina, "Cha mkhwe wami, ingane yakho ngiyayithanda."
 Wathi yena, "Suka le nkinseyana yaseNgudwini
 Uhlushwa ubugwili!"

(I'm the one who pays *ilobolo* by cheque at his in-laws at Nongoma
 Making his father-in-law furious until the next day
 Saying, "Who is this boy that pays *ilobolo* by cheque?"
 I said, "No, father in law, I love your child."
 And he said, "Get out of here you rich one from Ngudwini
 Your riches are giving you airs!")

In his recent album, Mfiliseni makes a follow up on this story and tells us how he tried to resolve the dispute between him and his in-laws:

Ngahamba-ke mina ngaya le eMelika
 Ngafike ngabuya namadola
 Ngathi ngiyamlobolel'umkhwe wami wangixosha
 Ngahamba ngaya eGermany
 Ngabuya namaDeutschmark
 Ngathi ngizomlobolela futhi
 Wangishaya wangiqunya ngesagila
 Kwaze kwatheth'umkhwekazi wami
 Wathi, "Hawu kodwa Baba,
 Singamxosha kanjani umkhwenyana

Ezolobola ngent'ephambili kangaka?"

(I then went to America
And came back with dollars
When I paid *ilobolo*, my father-in-law chased me away.
I also went to Germany
And came back with Deutschmarks
But when I tried to *lobola* once again
My father-in law beat me with a knobkerrie
Until my mother-in law intervened
And said, "No, Father,
How can we turn back our son-in-law
When he pays *ilobolo* through such advanced means?")

It seems as if the intervention of the mother-in-law solves the matter. We hope that Mfiliseni is still going to provide further details about how events unfold after this incident.

Mfazomnyama also uses the same technique in his praises. In his previous albums he used to say he drinks water from Mona river. This is an update we get from his latest album:

Kangisayiphuzi nhlob'iMona
Sengiphuz'iVuna
Laph'emanxiwen'obabamkhulu kwaMinya.

(I no longer drink from Mona river,
I now drink from Vuna river
Here at my grandfathers' former homestead at Minya.)

The above information seems to be an indication that he has relocated to a different place and feels that his fans should be told this.

We hope that the above examples indicate that musicians and poets are aware of their obligation to satisfy the natural curiosity of their fans who feel cheated when a story is left hanging. While we agree that it is impossible to make a sequel of each and every story that an artist tells, we believe that there is always a moral obligation to do justice to certain stories that warrant a follow up.

6.2.1.5 DRAMATIZATION

In some cases artists take a back seat and let the characters in the story do the storytelling. The events in the story unfold without any intervention from the narrator. The advantage of this to the audience is that there is no room for subjective comments that are often made by the narrator who is sometimes prone to abuse his privilege as the sole source of information regarding events and character action in the story.

Artists seem to regard dramatization as an effective technique for arousing suspense and drawing the reader or the audience's attention to the events that will unfold in the narration. Dramatization is therefore used right from the very beginning of the story. B.W. Vilakazi employs this technique in order to capture the reader's attention in Ngombuyazi eNdondakusuka, a poem that starts with a dramatization of how Mbuyazi commands his warriors to fight bravely:

“Phambili maqhaw’ amakhulu!
Neno Mantantashiya!
Sondela kimi mnewethu!
Khona Zigqoza!”
(Vilakazi, 1993: 192)

(“Forward great heroes!
This side Mantantashiya!
Come closer to me, big brother!
Attack them, you Zigqoza!”)

It is only after this dramatization that Vilakazi later reverts to narrating the events that took place during the battle between Mbuyazi and Cetshwayo. We are sure that he uses dramatization to create suspense and prepare the reader for the narrative details of the brutal battle that will be the focus of the story in the poem.

The whole story may also be in a dramatized form. In L.B.Z. Buthelezi's I-V.I.P. YakwaGimbisele Township, we get a fine example of how storytelling can be effectively done through dramatization. The story takes place during a funeral service of a flamboyant socialite. Buthelezi uses three characters: the Master Of Ceremonies who introduces the speaker, the speaker who tells us how the deceased attained wealth

through unscrupulous and cruel means, and the brother of the deceased who interjects during the speech in objection to the speaker's revelations:

"*Silence please, yehlisani imimoya*
Umlando uzokwethulwa
Isikhusungu esaziwayo..."

...
"E, ngimazi kahle hle
Umfowethu lona olele lapha namhlanje

...
Ngiyadabuka ukuthi ngangikhona
Equmba phansi ngombhulelo wamazizimbane
Insizwa yomSuthu."

"Hheyi, umfowethu lona
Okhuluma ngaye kanjena wena!"
(Buthelezi, 1982:7)

("Silence please, calm down
The obituary will be provided
By a renowned dignitary...")

...
"Well, I am well acquainted
With this brother who is lying here today.

...
I am sorry that I was also present
When he bewitched
A Sotho guy to death."
"Hey, this is my brother
That you are talking about like this!")

In a song entitled UMajazi by Khansela No-JBC, the story is dramatized. The song opens with a muffled cry by Majazi who explains tearfully to his brother that he has come to his brother's place to escape from his wife who has beaten him once again. His brother sympathises with him but at the same time rebukes him for being a coward. In the meantime the wife is furious and has followed Majazi to the hostel where he is hiding. She meets her neighbour on the way:

"We MaDlomo
Wagijima kangak'ekuseni uyaphi?"
"Ngiyoland'uMajazi ehostela."
Hawu, akekho'uMajazi?
Kuyoze kube nini wena ushay'indoda?"
"Ehhe akekho, uhamb'izolo

Bezisusene, wadonsa
Wath'uya kumfowab'eDenver Hostel."

("Hi, MaDlomo
Where are going, running like this in the morning?"
"I'm going to fetch Majazi from the hostel."
"Is Majazi not at home?"
How long will you keep beating your husband?"
"Of course, he went away yesterday
We had an argument, and he fled
And said he was going to his brother at Denver Hostel.")

When she arrives at the hostel a security guard refuses to open the gate, but she overpowers him, finds Majazi and takes her home by force:

"We Majazi
Asambe siy'ekhaya
Ngizokukhombisa, ngizokukhombisa."

("Hey Majazi
Let's go home
I'm going to give you a good hiding.")

The song ends with Majazi crying with touching sadness:

"Awu wo
We namhlanje kazi ngizoba yini?"

("Pity me
I wonder what will become of me today?")

In the above song, everything is dramatized by means of effective dialogue that provides all the necessary details. We learn from the characters' dialogue that Majazi has gone to hide at Denver hostel, that the beatings have been on-going for quite sometime and that the neighbours are worried about this, etc. This shows that the use of effective dialogue plays a very crucial role as a stylistic aspect in storytelling through dramatization. As we have indicated, the story is told in dialogue form without the narrator's intervention. One may argue that the absence of a narrator suggests that the poem or song can no longer be regarded as a narrative, but a closer

look may reveal that the artist does this deliberately to display his creative abilities. The story is still there despite the absence of the narrator.

Dialogue should not be used for its own sake but should be effective and contribute to character and story development. In other words what a character says and does in the story should have some bearing on the events that later unfold in the story. There are cases where artists, particularly poets, have been obsessed with rhyme scheme and resorted to including meaningless dialogue that does not contribute to effective development of events in the story. Dialogue should also reveal essential personality traits of the characters.

The mood of the story is often shown by the character's dialogue. In Inkelenkele YakwaXhosa, people await the fulfilment of Nongqawuse's prophecies. When this does not happen, anger and impatience prevail. This is evident in the utterances of the characters:

Kwavel'ishing'elithize lathi:
"Ngikhombise, uphi uNongqawuze,
Ngincame ngizizwele ngesijula?"
Kwahlokom'izwi labadala bathi:
"Thul'umsindo mfana kaNobani
Uxosh'amathongo..."
(Vilakazi, 1993: 42)

(Then a certain rude man appeared and said:
"Show me, where is Nongqawuze,
So that I assail her with my assegai?"
There was a tumultuous dissent from the elders who said:
"Shut up, you boy of So- and So-,
You are chasing the ancestors away...")

In music, dialogue is more effective because an innovative singer may be able to act out different characters in the story. If, for instance, the story involves a wife and husband, the singer can change his voice to play the parts that are necessary to denote the words that are spoken by the wife or husband. Ximba does this in most of his songs by changing his voice to speak like a wife, a young girl, a child, an old lady, etc., depending on what the story requires.

Backing vocalists are also used to dramatize the story through effective dialogue. If the singer is a male in a story that involves a wife and a husband, a female backing vocalist is chosen for the role of the wife in the story. Consider the following song by Mfiliseni Magubane:

“Ngangenzeni, ngangenzeni S’thandwa
Mhla ungishiy’endlini ngedwa?” (Mfiliseni)
“Wawungenze lutho, ngazihambela
Namhla sengiyazisola.” (Female backing vocalist)

(“What had I done Darling
When you left me alone at home?” (Mfiliseni)
You had done nothing, I left on my own
Today I’m regretting.”) (Female backing vocalist)

This makes the story more interesting and life-like to the listener who is able to get dialogue from the characters that participate in the story. This would have been impossible if the narrator had just summarized the story in an indirect speech.

To make dialogue even more convincing, the mother tongue of the character in the story is sometimes used. In Ximba’s song a white madam addresses a maid in English. This happens after a newly recruited maid has been asked to make a cup of tea for the madam. Unfortunately she brings the tea without using a tray. The madam is furious:

“Hey you stupid,
Why do you bring my tea with your hands
Isn’t there a tray here?”

In Khansela NoJBC’s song, the Indian doctor addresses Majazi, who is apparently illiterate, in Fanakalo:

“Majazi kalo mina, mina zosiza wena.”

(Majazi, my friend I am going to help you.”)

Majazi's wife arrives and attacks both the Indian doctor and Majazi. Then we hear the doctor calling out to his maid:

"Mariya, Mariya
Biza lo maphoyisa!"

(Maria, Maria
Please call the police!")

In some cases addresses are used as a means of telling a story. With regard to this method, an artist addresses himself to another person or a personified inanimate entity or abstraction and tells the story in the process. Again, the absence of the narrator does not impede our enjoying and understanding the story that the artist tells.

Storytelling by addressing the subject is very common in music and poetry. This tends to be subjective because we always get a one-sided version of the story-the addressee does not respond to accusations, praises and pleas, etc. that are revealed when the story is told in this fashion.

In *izibongo* the bard may tell the story about the king's deeds and personality by addressing the king directly. In *izibongo* of king Zwelithini, the bard tells the story by addressing the king:

Udaxe wadaxa mntaka Ndaba
Ubhaxabul'ukuka wakh'ekuphekela.
(Hlongwane, 1995: 109)

(You have used a sjambok now and again son of Ndaba
You even sjamboked your own cook.)

In *Mnanayi*, J.C. Dlamini uses an address to tell us the 'rags to riches' story of the Indians:

Ufike ngakokha ngensini ngamagwegwe
...
Kancane, kancane wasombuluka umsubelo
Ngenxa yesikhwishikhwishi oyisona.
...

Kwaphela insini kimina, ngakhexa
Isichaka sikagilimithi saqubuka ngezitolo.
(Dlamini, 1981: 7)

(When you arrived I laughed at your crooked legs
...
Gradually, the loincloth relaxed
Because of the hardworking person that you are.
...
I stopped laughing and gaped
The poor man now owned many shops.)

Addressing seems to be more effective when used for reprimanding. Mahlathini does this in Zama Isimilo, a song that tells a story about a daughter whose loose morals cause a lot of heartache to her parents:

“Izolo bekumi emhlophe imoto
Namhlanje ngebomvu imoto
Kusasa eluhlaza imoto
Kanti uzwa kanjani wena?”

(“Yesterday a white car was parked here
Today it’s a red one
Tomorrow it will be a green one
Do you ever listen?”)

In Ngeke Baxole Nkosi, a character addresses himself to God in the form of a prayer in which he confesses and asks for forgiveness. This prayer of course tells a shocking story about this man’s atrocious deeds:

Noma sengikhala ezimathonsi
Bakhumbula omakoti babo
Engababhulela bekhulelwe
Inyanda yemuka nesibopho.
...
Nguwe wedwa nobaba, Nkosi
Owazi obekwenza ngingalali
Ngingathanga ukubandabanda
Ngezintango zemizi yabantu.
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975: 55)

(Even when I cry
They remember their young wives

That I bewitched in pregnancy
Killing both the mother and the child.

...

It is only you and my father, Lord
Who know what made me not fall asleep
Without going to people's homes
And perform acts of witchcraft.)

In a prayer to Shaka, T.M. Masuku also uses an address that reveals a moving story about a person who has been deceived by education and so-called civilization and discarded his traditional beliefs and culture. He goes to the city where he lives by emulating the whites and despising his own people and cultural heritage. He even changes his name from Junjuluzi Makhubu to Jones MacCube. When things go wrong and problems engulf him, he realises his wrong doings and pleads with Shaka and all the ancestors of the nation to forgive him:

"Inkungeni isidangukile, Ndaba
Amehlo ayizolo kade ebona kaluvindi
Ngokwedelela kwami kwakuthangi, ngiyazisola."
(Masuku, 1973: 31)

("The mist has disappeared, Ndaba
Yesterday's eyes could not see clearly
I regret yesteryears' rudeness.")

In this poem Shaka seems to respond to the man's supplications. Although we do not hear him we can infer what he says from the narrator's words:

"Wena Nkomo ekhale eMthonjaneni,
Ngonile kuPhunga noMageba
Ngishwelezele Shaka kashayeki...

...

Ngihlabhe inkabi emhlophe?
Yebo, ngiyalizwa izwi lakho, Ndaba.
Ehhe! Ngenzeni ngenyongo yayo?
Yebo, Ndaba, ngiyoyiphuza, ngigcabe ngayo.
Umswane? Ehhe, ngowugqiba esibayeni
Emva kokuba ngigeze umkhonto wami ngawo.
E, Ndaba! Sala kahle, Zulu!
Ume njalo! Bayede! Uyizulu!"
(Masuku, 1973: 31)

("You Beast that lowed at Mthonjaneni
I have wronged Phunga and Mageba
Plead on my behalf, Shaka who is unbeatable...

...
Must I slaughter a white bull?
Yes, I hear your voice, Ndaba.
What must I do with its gall?
Of course, Ndaba, I'll drink it.
Yes, I'll bury it in the kraal
After having washed my spear in it.
Goodbye Ndaba, Keep well, Zulu.
Long live! Bayede! You are the heaven!")

In some cases artists tell a story by addressing inanimate entities. Death, poverty, loneliness, love, education, etc. are some of the issues that are often personified and addressed particularly by poets as if they have human qualities. In Umnkenenezo D.B.Z. Ntuli uses personification to tell a story by addressing adversity:

Waba nesineke sokungilandela
Ngibhul'amazolo ngiyokha amanzi
Wankeneneza endlebeni yami.
Waba nenkani yokungivimbela
Ngithwele inyanda ngiphuma kotheza...
(Ntuli and Ntuli, 1973: 30)

(You had patience to pursue me
When I braved the dews to fetch water
You echoed in my ear.
You blocked my path stubbornly
When I carried firewood that I had collected...)

This shows that artists are aware of the impact that a story has in illustrating how a person feels. To weave a story around such emotions creates a more vivid picture about how the poet feels about the abstract addressee.

We feel that the use of an address is a unique way that is commonly used in music and poetry with remarkable effectiveness. The only disadvantage of this technique is that it tends to be too subjective because the addressee does not get a chance to respond to the story that is told about him in the composition. We believe, however, that if effectively used, this technique enhances the quality of the story in the song or poem.

6.3 FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Artists are endowed with excellent command and mastery of the language that enables them to employ rich and appropriate expressions that paint vivid pictures and enhance effective depiction of theme and character in the story that they tell through music and poetry.

The use of figurative language such as imagery, symbolism, personification etc. often creates a lasting impression on the mind of the audience. It also enhances the narrator and the audience's ability to recall the essential aspects of the story that are magnified by the figurative language as employed by the artist in a narrative. Zondi (1995: 14) says the following about how *imbongi* uses figurative language in enhancing memory:

To facilitate memory, he has at his disposal mnemonic devices such as repetition, parallelism of ideas, linking and figures of speech such as antithesis, hyperbole and figurative language. These factors render poetry memorable.

We concur with Zondi in this regard. In fact we believe that the use of such figurative language also enhances memory on the part of the audience. Many people are able to commit to memory *izibongo* of the kings in which lines with rich imagery, for instance, are used. This helps a lot in recalling with great ease various kings such as Uvemvane lukaPhunga NoMageba, Izul'eladum'obala, uBhejane phum'esiqiwini, etc. In most cases the original name of the person is usually replaced by the name derived from the figurative language in the praises, hence king Zwelithini is popularly known as Bhejane, king Cyprian, Bhusha, king Cetshwayo, Hlamvana bhul'umlilo, etc. Thwala and Maphumulo (1991) contend that *izigiyo* and *izibongo* often replace the original name of the subject. It is for this reason that people like Thokozani Nene and Zibokwakhe Mnyandu, for instance, are popularly known as Gxabalembadada and Phuzekhemisi, respectively.

Let us now look at some of the features of figurative language that we find in Zulu music and poetry as used by artists in storytelling.

6.3.1 IMAGERY

Imagery refers to creation of images by an artist in order to describe and compare in the poem or song. Heese and Lawton (1978) define imagery as the use of concrete objects to refer to something else. This shows that imagery is useful when comparisons have to be made as the best way of description. Nzama (1992: 33) elaborates:

Imagery is a significant poetic device for intensifying, clarifying, enriching and giving the readers an insight into what is being described.

Imagery is also used as a yardstick to determine the extent to which an artist is able to use language in a manner that is quite different from normal everyday usage. This, according to Corbett (1965: 149) must be done in a manner that displays imagery as an artful deviation from the ordinary way of communicating through language. The ability of an artist to employ effective imagery in a composition is what sets him or her apart from ordinary human beings who use language for communication purposes. Lanham (1968: 52) contends that imagery is "any striking or unusual configuration of words or phrases, any departure from normal usage." Mlondo (1994: 123) argues:

Imagery makes one to imagine something more than the factual reflection of an object.

There are four types of imagery: simile, metaphor, personification and symbolism. We must point out that imagery seems to be the premise of poetry as poets are more inclined to use rich language in their compositions. Most of the examples that will be provided in this discussion are therefore most commonly found in poetry. We are going to focus on how artists use imagery not only as a decorative feature in the compositions but as an effective storytelling technique. We want to see how various forms of imagery enhance the effectiveness of the stories that artists tell in their compositions.

6.3.1.1 PERSONIFICATION

An outstanding feature of storytelling, particularly in poetry, is the recurring use of personification. Personification refers to the attribution of human qualities and actions to inanimate and abstract entities. This is how Lee and Grote (1982: 95) define personification:

Personification is used when a writer takes an object or an abstraction such as love or death and endows it with human qualities. Personification is a form of comparison because a non-human object or abstraction is said to be a person so that its appearance, action and other qualities can be described in terms of sense imagery.

In poetry, personification can be used in the whole poem or in part of the poem to clarify how events occur in the story. If used skilfully, personification is very effective in describing how events unfold in the story. This may, however, prove to be a very daunting task to an artist who has to be very selective in deciding on relevant and appropriate entities that will be personified and to be able to use them as a basis for creating a plausible narrative.

In Ayithi Nyaka, M.S.S. Gcumisa tells a story that involves a driver whose car seems to be fraught with mechanical problems. The driver jumps down and runs to fetch some water so as to stop the car from overheating. This is how Gcumisa tells the story:

Athule du, ngqibithi
Ayivul'umlomo gengelezi.

...

Awavonxe ngaphesheya ayihabulise
Ayival'umlomo, izithont'abesekuyo,
Aphind'ayinyathel'izamule...
(Gcumisa, 1994: 76)

(He kept quite and climbed down
He opened its mouth.

...

He went across, scooped up water and made it drink
He closed its mouth and got inside in a hurry,

He pressed the accelerator and it yawned aloud...)

It is interesting to note that Gcumisa uses a common personification of a car in a very fresh manner. Zulus often refer to the bonnet of a car as *ikhala* (nose) but the poet has given this car a mouth for a bonnet so as to personify the pouring of water into the radiator. When the driver revs it, it yawns aloud like a human being. Gcumisa has chosen his words carefully indeed!

In Sinembali, C.S.Z. Ntuli uses personification to tell us a story about the events and weather conditions that were a prelude to the birth of his brother. He uses Sivunguvungu and Siwulukuhlu to personify the wind and the rain and introduces the two entities as two dignitaries who had come to visit Osizini homestead. Ntuli renders this personification more authentic and plausible by including his own paternal grandmother in the narration. This makes the events more life like:

Zafic'intombi yakwaNzuza lapho,
Yazithi janti nje yaval'umlomo.
Isithunzi senkosikazi sazisinda;
Dica, bohlololo, zanyobozele.
(Ntuli and Ntuli, 1973: 55)

(They met the daughter of the Nzuzas there
Who looked at them and closed her mouth.
The dignity of the wife overwhelmed them
Their fury abated and they felt ashamed.)

The poet has used the above lines to tell us that only the grandmother's rondavel was spared when the inclement weather conditions wreaked havoc on the homestead. We feel however, that the poet's use of personification seems to be farfetched in the following lines:

"Sikhulekile Nkosikazi,
Esomhambi yinso yenyoni!"
Kaphendulanga oKaSomago,
Wazizinzisa waphak'uphafu;
Zazotha, bobofiya, iziphakanyiswa
OSivunguvungu noSiwulukuhlu.
(Ntuli and Ntuli, 1973: 56)

("We greet you Madam
And we ask for something to eat!"
Somago's daughter did not reply
She made them settle down and gave them food,
And they were calmed, the dignitaries,
Sivunguvungu and Siwulukuhlu.)

We feel that the poet somehow gets carried away in his use of personification and includes aspects that do not fit well in personification. The act of giving food to Sivunguvungu and Siwulukuhlu defies personification as used under normal conditions. There is no evidence in the story that may suggest what this alludes to. The poet, however, has been very successful in the overall narration to depict events that occurred long ago by making them very vivid through the skilful use of personification.

C.T. Msimang also uses personification to tell a story about the arrival of death or any unwelcome condition:

Ilanga lase lizihambe,
Lase lingishiye ngedwana.
...
Ekungqongqozeni kwakhe ngaqhaqhazela;
Wangen'endlini ngingamvulelanga,
Wahlala nami ngendlovuyangena,
Walala nami ngendlovuyangena.
(Msimang, 1990: 12)

(The sun had gone
And left me alone.
...
When she knocked I shivered
She entered without my having opened the door
She stayed with me by force
And slept with me by force.)

The above lines show that poets use personification as an effective storytelling device. In other words personification enables them to weave a story that depicts the poet's feelings and emotions about a particular subject. If Msimang had not used personification in a story form, the above poem would have been ordinary because

things would have been expressed in the usual manner that poets employ when they applaud or lament certain conditions that trigger their inspirations.

As we have pointed out, personification is the best means of describing how things happen in a story. This is due to the fact that inanimate objects are given human qualities and attributes that the reader is familiar with and that best depict what an artist wants to say. Nxumalo uses personification to indicate loss of hope about the return of a lover:

Uhambe washishimba nezimoto
Wagwinywa zinkungu zamahlathi.
(Nxumalo, 1989: 37)

(She left in fast moving cars
And was swallowed up by the forest mist.)

The above lines tell us that the narrator has lost hope that his lover will ever return. We all know that a forest is a dangerous place in which wild animals dominate. Its density and thickness can make one get lost and never find the way back home. In this poem the forest is compared to a person who has a mouth with which to swallow food. Swallowing is usually a very swift process. We feel that the narrator implies that his lover left him suddenly without any notice or farewell gesture. When food has been swallowed, there is no hope that it can be retrieved from the mouth, throat or stomach. Food that has been vomited loses its former appetising appearance and taste and becomes useless and disgusting. The narrator therefore suggests that even if the lover may return, there are no chances that things will ever be the same again. His lover is therefore beyond retrieval as it happens when food is swallowed down.

Musicians do not seem to bother themselves about using personification in their compositions. Even when personification does occur it lacks relevance in the development of events in the story. We feel that the use of personification as a storytelling device should not sound contrived but must feature as a natural ingredient in the story and enhance clarity and vividness to the characters and events as depicted by an artist in a composition.

6.3.1.2. SIMILE

A simile is used when an artist wants to compare two things that share common qualities and attributes. In most cases comparisons are made by making use of formatives such as *njenga-, okwe-, kuhle kwe-*, etc. This is in line with an assertion by Cohen (1973: 51) who explains:

A simile makes a direct comparison between two elements and is usually introduced by like...or as...

There should be common features between the entities that are compared. In this regard we concur with Shipley (1970:304) who defines a simile as:

A comparison of two things, of different categories because of resemblance and because the association emphasizes, clarifies or in a way enhances the original.

In a story a simile can be used to clarify how events take place. The reader or audience is able to grasp the full meaning of the action if it is compared to an entity or action that is familiar and that can be easily associated with the events as depicted in the story. In *Usuku Losizi*, Vilane uses a beautiful simile to illustrate the behaviour and actions of a character:

Ngisashwibeka okukanobuhle wasedolobheni
Oshayela phezulu kuhle kukasayitsheni
Umbhal'omkhulu wawususobondeni
Mina? Elami igama? Ngenzeni?
Unembeza waqal'ukubal'amatwayitwayi.
(Vilane in Mathenjwa, et al., 1997:11)

(I was still swinging like a city model
Who walks gracefully like a police sergeant
A bold writing was already on the wall
Me? My name? What have I done?
I panicked and started worrying.)

The story is enriched by the use of the above simile. We are able to imagine how the character was walking because he is compared to a fashionable city model that

parades proudly in front of the audience and adjudicators. A model walks briskly, just like a police sergeant who is supposed to hold his chin up. We are able to feel pity for this teacher who has to face the sad news that he has been deployed to a distant area. The impact of this to the teacher is clarified by the use of yet another beautiful line as a means of comparison:

Unyazi olunjena ngalugcina kuSawuli wasendulo.
(Vilane in Mathenjwa, et al., 1997:11)

(I last heard of a lightning like this in Saul of olden times.)

Although the above line cannot be regarded as a simile in the strict sense of the word, we feel that the poet is very selective in choosing a suitable incident to clarify how the events of the day affect him. In the Bible narrative, Saul was struck by lightning and went blind. On recovering, he assumed a new assignment of spreading the good news to the gentiles. The poet seems to compare his situation to that of Saul as he also has to start a new job at a new school as soon as possible.

In some cases a simile is used to describe characters in a story. This is very effective if such description and comparisons have an impact on how events unfold in a story. C.S.Z. Ntuli uses a beautiful simile to illustrate the confrontation between Mkabayi and one of his many suitors, Zwide kaLanga:

Seza ngeqele isithole sikaJama,
Seza sicokaza njengomvimbazane.
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975: 61)

(The beautiful one of Jama approached
She was walking proudly like a young fowl.)

Umvimbazane is young fowl that has not yet matured to egg laying stage. Comparing Mkabayi to *umvimbazane* alludes to the purity of her youth. *Umvimbazane* also spots beautiful and attractive colours. Its body is full of vigour and energy and is not yet marred by fat that accumulate over the years. As she approaches, Mkabayi therefore walks with the same pride, confidence and awe-inspiring magnificent strides that send

shivers through Zwide's body and renders him speechless. Ntuli uses yet another beautiful simile to illustrate how Zwide responds to Mkabayi's beauty:

Wazizw'eselula efana nekhasi,
Wezw'esifubeni kuwubugidigidi;
Waphum'endleleni sengath'uliqubu
...
Wath'uyakhuzela wankwankwaza
Wath'uyakhuleka wankwankwaza.
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975: 62)

(He felt as light as a leaf,
He felt his chest pounding
He emerged from the path like a feather
...
When he tried to greet her he stammered
When he tried to salute her he stammered.)

The poet compares Zwide to a leaf in order to demonstrate the extent of the fear that engulfed him when he saw Mkabayi. This is remarkable if we consider that Zwide was a king renowned for his pride and bravery, but all that evaporates when he sees Mkabayi. A feather is also weightless and is used by the poet to illustrate that Zwide's status and dignity shrank to insignificance in front of Mkabayi. These similes augur well with how events eventually unfold: Zwide was left speechless and retreated empty-handed without uttering a single word of proposal to Mkabayi.

Musicians do not make use of similes in the same manner as poets. Most of the similes that are found in songs are common similes that feature in everyday conversation and are not unique enough to be regarded as artistic expressions. Ntuli (1984: 152) argues that such similes have lost their effect through repeated use. In most cases they have no impact on illustrating the vital aspects of a story. Mfazomnyama, for instance, uses the following simile in a song entitled Mama Wenzani? In this story siblings have become enemies because of a family conflict. The narrator complains:

"Buya phela mfowethu Maphonyophonyo
Ungahambeli nxany'okwelanga lasebusika."

("Come over my brother Maphonyophonyo
Do not travel on one side like the winter sun.")

This simile features in everyday language and has lost impact as a means of describing in a fresh and vivid manner.

There are, however, instances where musicians make use of beautiful and apt similes that paint a very clear picture about the events in a story. Bhekumuzi Luthuli, for instance, uses a simile to illustrate work conditions in Safa Saphela:

Yebo madoda, sengabuyela emsebenzini
Noma kunjalo, ikhon'ent'engephul'umoya:
Selokhu ngabuya bangigax'i-*night shift* waya waya,
Ngisebenz'ebusuku njengekhandlela, *six to six*.

(I have returned to work
But still something makes me sad;
Since my return I'm doing night shift right through
I work at night like a candle, six to six.)

The narrator compares himself with a candle that is lit only at night. The common element is also the frailty of the candle and the vulnerability of the character in the story, as he has to persevere under harsh conditions. The night shift arrangements seems to create problems for him because he explains:

Ngiyafa, yi-*night shift* ngapha
Ngapha ngivika umthakathi.

(Things are bad, I have to contend with night shift
And at the same time try to dodge a witch.)

A simile can therefore be an effective means of comparisons that make us visualize the extent of the circumstances in which the characters find themselves in a story. A skilful artist makes use of a simile in order to avoid tedious and unnecessary details and explanations. The effectiveness of a simile of course depends on the ability of an artist to use entities that are easily identifiable as sharing common features.

Above all, the inclusion of a simile in a narrative should have direct bearing on the events that unfold in the story. In Indod'ethand'inyama, Vusi Ximba tells a story of a greedy man who has slaughtered a beast but does not want to share the meat with other people:

“Incane kabi le nkomo
Ayikh'ikhona, ingangegundane
NeBhunu lingibulele ngemali
Akusal'abant'engibaziyo:
Angiyihamb'imizi yabantu.”

(“This beast is very small
It is small like a mouse
The Boer also charged me a lot of money
Let only my acquaintances remain behind:
I never visit other people's homes.”)

Ximba uses this simile to make his character as convincing as possible and also to emphasise his meanness. The use of this simile has a bearing on the events that later unfold in the story: the man chases away everybody who had come to partake of the meat and nobody is given preferential treatment, even the local Zion congregation members are thrown out of the premises.

6.3.1.3 METAPHOR

A metaphor is like a simile in that it uses qualities of one object to describe another object. The difference is that while a simile says something is like something else, a metaphor says something is something else. Both are effective devices that artists use with the objective of comparing one thing with another. Metaphors are generally regarded as superior to similes. Wainwright (1987: 268) explains:

Certainly metaphors do demand more of one's intellect than similes because the latter point out the specific aspect referred to.

According to Okpewho (1992:99) a metaphor is:

A type of comparison that is made implicitly by direct reference: A

is B.

Artists often use metaphoric language when they tell stories. This is done with the aim of enhancing the effect and impact of the events and characters or personalities that are depicted in the narration. The story then becomes clearer and more interesting if the artist has been able to choose appropriate metaphors to tell a story.

Ntuli (1984) and Mngadi (1993) contend that some metaphors become common and lose their impact and effectiveness when they occur in everyday speech or are incorporated into idiomatic language that prevails in everyday usage. A beautiful lady is commonly called a flower, which is a good metaphor indeed but has somehow lost its impact because of overuse. Artists also use such metaphors, but we are not going to focus on them because we feel that they do not necessarily display unique qualities of storytellers in Zulu music and poetry.

Izibongo display an abundant use of metaphors that tell stories in a very vivid way. In the praises of king Zwelithini, the bard uses the following metaphor:

Ubhejane phum'esiqiwini.
(Hlongwane, 1995: 106)

(Rhinoceros come out of the game reserve.)

The bard uses a rhino as a metaphor to tell a story about the dispute that prevailed when king Zwelithini had to assume kingship of the Zulus. There were those who felt that he was still too young and instead had to focus on his education and let Prince Mcwayizeni attend to the Zulu kingdom. King Zwelithini therefore is compared with a powerful rhino that has to use force to fend off attacks.

In Wayinhlwa Mntanomuntu! Ntombenhle Nkosi uses the following metaphor to refer to Winnie Madikizela-Mandela:

Wajika wayibhece
Lon'eligwazwa bume.

(Nkosi in Ntuli, 2002: 49)

(You have become a pumpkin
That is stabbed hurriedly.)

This shows that metaphors are also used to indicate a state of being a victim. The poet uses a well-chosen metaphor that tells a story about how Winnie was attacked from all directions by the media, politicians and the general public. Winnie is portrayed by the poet as a soft target, hence the use of *ibhece* as a metaphor. This serves to emphasize the overall tone and mood of the whole poem. *Inhlwa* is a metaphor that indicates loneliness, rejection and isolation. This seems appropriate as Winnie has had to be on her own on numerous occasions. We also feel that the poet uses this metaphor to indicate that Winnie has isolated herself because of various accusations that have been levelled against her, especially during the TRC hearings.

In some cases the whole composition may be in the form of a metaphor. In Ayithi Nyaka! by M.S. S. Gcumisa, the poem is about a car, its driver and many passengers who are on a journey to an unspecified destination, except that the destination is referred to as the land of milk and honey. The car seems to be moving nowhere although the driver keeps reassuring passengers that they will reach their destination very soon. There is anxiety and trepidation when some passengers realise that their car is making no progress. Some manage to jump down early enough and get into faster moving cars:

Kwababehleli ngaphambili abanye
Sebamane baqathaka banombela kwezinye

...

Abayibonayo ukuthi kayithi nyaka
Sebamane bancibilika kuhle kwamazolo

...

Sonke sibuya kuyo njengokugiya,
Nanxa sayehla isitakla sihlehla nyova.
(Gcumisa and Gcumisa, 1994: 75)

(Some of those who were in the front seat
Decided to jump down and got into other cars

...

Those who realised that it is making no progress

Have evaporated like dews
...
We were also once aboard
Although we left it unceremoniously.)

Unfortunately those left behind are not expected to leave the car and those who do so are at great risk of stirring the driver's wrath:

Kwakhondathi udliwa yinkwankwa
Nokugxum'azijwibe phansi kway'useyakufisa
Ngob'ukuling'ukwehl'ebonwa
Kuyoding'avalelise.
Kwakuthi vu angelinge...
(Gcumisa and Gcumisa, 1994: 76)

(The conductor is also thirsty
He even contemplates jumping underneath it
Because to jump out in full view
Will result in death.
He can't even utter a word...)

We feel that the car in this poem has been used as a striking metaphor for an organisation or political party whose manager or leader is not progressive and inspiring enough for certain members who feel threatened and restricted in many ways.

Sometimes poets use beautiful metaphors coupled with personification. This often happens when they have to 'make up stories' so as to express their feelings about unwelcome phenomenon such as death, bad luck, etc. *Intombi* (maiden) and *isheseli* (suitor) seem to be favourites among many poets who often use these as apt metaphors that feature in the narrative account in the poem. Gcumisa tells the following story that uses *ukweshela* (courting) as a metaphor in a very interesting and thought-provoking manner:

Ntokazi kasifo ngixolele
Sal'usudeda udele
Kunin'ungifikel'ekuseni,
Emini nantambama,
Uth'angikuqome, ngikugane, ngigoy'elawini?

...
Uphose wangijong'okwejongosi
Ngingaboni buhle bami kepha!
(Gcumisa in Ntuli, 1975: 47)

(Lady of death forgive me
Move aside and give up
How many times have you confronted me in the morning
During the day and in the afternoon
Asking me to accept your love, marry you and stay in your room?"

...
You have persued me as if I am a young lady
Although I see no beauty in me.)

In order to make his plight understandable to the reader, Gcumisa compares death to a persistent suitor by telling a story of a young lady who goes to fetch water in the morning and is accosted by a man who begs her to marry him. This frustrates the lady because she does not understand why the man chooses her as she admits that she is not a beautiful person who can command such respect and pursuit from suitors. This of course refers to the poet's belief that death should leave him alone and concentrate on more suitable candidates. The use of this metaphor is quite remarkable because a lady is not expected to court or make advances to a male. In using this metaphor, the poet shows that death is doing what is not acceptable and should therefore live the poet alone.

D.B.Z. Ntuli uses a similar metaphor as a storytelling device in Umnkenenezo:

Waba nesineke sokungilandela
Ngibhul'amazolo ngiyokha amanzi,
Wankeneneza endlebeni yami.
Waba nenkani yokungivimbela
Ngithwele inyanda ngiphuma kothenza.
(Ntuli and Ntuli, 1973: 30)

(You had patience to persue me
When I braved the dew to fetch water,
And echoed in my ear.
You blocked my path stubbornly
When I carried firewood that I had collected.)

We feel that the use of this metaphor is quite fitting as it depicts what happens in real life between a lady and a very persistent and determined suitor. The Dark City Sisters show us a similar scenario in their song entitled Insizwa:

Ngithe ngihamba
Ngahlangana nensizwa yangibambezela.

(While walking
I met a young man who delayed me.)

This makes us conclude that poets often avoid using metaphors in isolation. Instead they base their stories on a metaphor with the aim of enforcing theme and message.

6.3.1.4 SYMBOLISM

Symbolism is another effective device that artists use so as to create vivid images and depict how events occur and how characters behave in a story. Peck and Coyle (1984: 71) state that a symbol is an object that stands for something else and can be a word which, while signifying something specific, also refers to something beyond itself.

There is a very close similarity between a symbol and a metaphor, primarily because both concepts are used in making comparisons. A metaphor, however, is very explicit while a symbol requires meaning to be inferred. The interpretation of a symbol is also more subjective as it depends on individual perception and conclusions. Heese and Lawton (1968: 64) give a clear illustration of the difference between a metaphor and a symbol by explaining:

The difference between a metaphor and a symbol is that while a metaphor is an implied comparison between two fairly specific things, and is based on one or more correspondences, a symbol is a representation rather than a comparison, a way of making the abstract concrete, and is based not on direct correspondence but rather on more general associations.

Nowottny (1968: 64) also offers a clarification of the difference between a metaphor and a symbol:

With metaphor, the poet talks about object X as though it were Y; he uses Y terminology to refer to X. With symbolism, he presents an object X, and without his necessarily mentioning a further object, his way of presenting X makes us think that it is not only X, but also is or stands for something more than itself...

Reaske (1966: 109) contends that there are public and private symbols that can be used by artists in their compositions. According to Reaske, if symbols are used repeatedly, they are interpreted in the same way by everybody. This then makes them become public symbols. Private symbols are those that are used by an artist in his or her own peculiar manner in order to make them suit his or her composition. An artist may also, according to Msimang (1980), Esslin (1991), Mcimeli (1993) and Sibiya (2001) use traditional or local symbols. Traditional or international symbols are symbols that are commonly interpreted in the same manner all over the world. A dove, for instance, is universally accepted as a symbol of peace.

Local or national symbols are symbols that have relevance to a specific culture and society. Msimang (1980: 73) explains:

By local symbolism we mean those symbols which are peculiar to a particular society and therefore lack a universal appeal.

Symbolism only has relevance in a story if its inclusion has some bearing on the events and characters that are used by the narrator. Symbols should therefore be chosen for their effect in best illustrating how events unfold in a story.

Zulu artists, particularly poets, make use of various sources from which to draw symbols that are used to enhance the story's appeal. Nature seems to be the most useful source. Mountains are used to symbolize success and ability of a character to overcome tragedies and adversity. Rivers are used as a symbol of challenge, effort, determination and successful execution of plans. Msimang uses water and river as symbolism in Ngiyakhumbula:

Ngathatha ipeni nesileti

Ngaqonda ezizibeni ezinzulu
 Ngabafumanisa beshay'idadamu
 Abanye ngabafumanisa betshuza.
 Kulo mfula abanye bayaminza
 Bebe abanye bewela chaphasha!
 Abanye njalo bami osebeni
 Ngoba bethi umsinga ujulile
 Ngiyakhumbula kwakunzima.
 (Msimang, 1982:53)

(I took a pen and slate
 I headed for the deep pools
 And found my peers swimming afloat
 While some were diving underneath.
 In this river some drown
 Whereas others swim across!
 Others stand on the shore
 Saying it is very deep in the river
 I remember, it was difficult.)

In this poem Msimang provides us with an autobiographical narrative of the educational challenges that have faced him since he was dispatched by his mother to school clutching a slate and a pencil. Water and pools symbolize challenges that are encountered in educational pursuits. Some succeed and some succumb to fear and failure.

In Dingane's praises we get the following lines:

Owel'iMbozam'umntakaJama,
 Wawel'iMbozamo kwash'iziziba.
 (Nyembezi, 1995: 45)

(He crossed Mbozamo river, child of Jama
 He crossed Mbozamo river and the rivers ran dry.)

These lines allude to how Dingane carried out the assassination of Shaka. The bard mentions the Mbozamo river, not to suggest that Dingane literally crossed this river, but rather to illustrate the huge task that Dingane had to undertake in order to gain access to the throne. During Dingane's times, crossing a river was always a daunting task that demanded excellent swimming skills. The river is therefore used by the bard

in this story as a symbol of hurdles that Dingane had to overcome in his determination to assassinate Shaka.

Weather conditions can also be used in a symbolic manner. In Okwami Okwezandla, the story takes place on a day that is full of dark ominous clouds. This is a symbol of tragedy that later strikes and leaves Nokwethemba hopeless:

Ntambama izulu lakhuphula amafu
Lahwaqa, lagqunqa, laklwebha umlilo.
(Ntuli and Ntuli, 1973: 68)

(In the afternoon the sky was overcast
It frowned, it darkened and emitted fire.)

Nokwethemba sends her son to meet her husband who is coming home from work. While the thunder rages on, Nokwethemba waits in vain for her husband to arrive home. The husband is later found murdered, thus confirming that clouds were an ominous symbol of sad things to happen.

In some stories, places are used as features of symbolism. Usually cities are a symbol of moral decay, deceit and criminal activities. Characters often go to cities and never return, as is the case in Ingodosi by Gili KaNobantu. There are stories in which characters eventually return home, albeit in pathetic conditions. This happens in Ndoda by Shabangu where Ndoda returns home after many years in the city. He is very old now and has no money.

In many stories city life symbolizes loose morals. Girls are plenty and offer no resistance to men's advances. In some cases girls make the first moves. This is of course unheard of and frowned upon in a traditional Zulu setting. In Igileselina, Vusi Ximba shows how girls behave in cities. They roam the streets at night and are easily available and offer no resistance when within minutes a new lover takes them home to consummate the relationship:

Ngase ngithe ngakuthol'okunye eBerea ebusuku

....

"Helo baby,"
 "Hhayi Bhut'uMavusana
 Ungab'usayihlupha ngokukhuluma sengiyakujola."
 "Hawu nay'inhlanhla yami, ekhaya-ke mntanami."

(I met one in Berea road at night

...
 "Hello baby",
 "No brother Mavusana
 Don't bother about proposing, I already love you."
 "It's my lucky day, let's go home then.")

In Nami Ngikhihla Esami, Khumalo in Nyembezi (1981:66) shows how beautiful city girls collude with *tsotsis* or gangsters to rob innocent victims. In this poem a young man from the bundus meets a beautiful and charming lady who immediately falls in love with him. They go shopping and the woman eventually leads the man to *tsotsis* who rob him of his valuables.

In most cases, when characters are in the cities they despise their origins and discard them in favour of norms and values that are promoted by city life. In Ngixoleleni Mathongo Ohlanga by T.M. Masuku, Junjuluzi goes to the city and changes his name to Jones MacCube. The influence of city life on him is evident in that he despises all that has to do with traditions and his cultural and family background:

"Hheyi, suka wena! Uthi ngilobole?
 Abelungu bayalobola yini?
 Ek is Bra Terrible, my boy-uyabona?
 Ngifuna i'nice time' sonke isikhathi.
 Umama ongizalayo angisamazi..."
 (Masuku, 1973: 28)

("Leave me alone, you say I must pay *ilobolo*?
 Do white people pay *ilobolo*?
 I'm Bra Terrible my boy, do you see?
 I want nice time all the way.
 I don't even care about my own mother...")

When there are disputes in the families that reside in townships, characters flee to nearby single men's hostels in search of peace and tranquility. Hostels therefore are a symbol of refuge and peace of mind in many stories. In UMajazi by Khansela and

JBC, for instance, Majazi is physically abused by his wife and flees to Denver hostel to escape from his wife. In Sibongile by Soul Brothers, a husband decides to leave his family because things have become unbearable for him:

“Sengikhathel’ukukhuzana nawe Sibongile
Nomama wakho kodw’anifun’ukulalela.
Kungcono nginisiye nalo muzi
Ngiyohlal’ezimpohlweni.”

(“I’m tired of reprimanding you Sibongile
Together with your mother but you don’t want to listen
It’s better if I leave you with this home
And stay at a single men’s hostel.”)

Human beings can also be used symbolically in a story. In most cases human behaviour symbolizes more than how we normally perceive it in daily life. In Amagade Ahlabayo, Gcumisa uses the act of dressing up as a symbol of proper and acceptable manner of doing things. He tells the story about how Dingane assassinated Shaka but later failed to meet the nation’s expectations:

Bamsusa esigqikini owayebekwe uMvelinqangi,
Laqhwakela-ke igamanxandukwana lelo.
Lathi liyabhinca umutsha lawuhlanekezela
....
Lithi libamba ubhoko kanti
Lilubamba inhlanekela.
(Gcumisa in Ntuli, 1975:35)

(They removed from throne the one appointed by God
And the novice took his position
When he dressed up, he put the loincloth the other way round
...
He tried to hold the stick
But held it the other way round.)

Dingane’s inability to rule the nation properly is likened to a person who fails to dress properly and handle his fighting weapons accordingly. Gcumisa therefore regards proper dress code as a symbol of acceptable behaviour. *Ubhoko* is used to fend off enemies and must always point towards an attacker. In this story the character does the

opposite: *ubhoko* points at him and this is suicidal indeed. The inability to handle it properly is a symbol of failure on Dingane's part.

There is evidently a wide range of symbolic expressions that are used by Zulu musicians and poets to enhance the depiction of events in their stories. The few examples that have been given above are an attempt to illustrate how Zulu artists make use of traditional and local symbols to add flavour in the stories that are told by means of music and poetry.

6.3.2 OTHER FORMS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Artists make use of many other forms of figurative language expressions through which they tell beautiful and interesting stories. We are only going to mention a few that we feel are relevant in storytelling.

6.3.2.1 HYPERBOLE

Artists often use the hyperbole as an effective storytelling device. In most cases the hyperbole is used to magnify the heroic deeds of the personality or character that features in the story. Stories that are told in *izibongo* often show a lot of exaggeration that is deliberately done by the bard to convince the audience about the heroism of the praised personality. The king is always portrayed as a very brave conqueror who wipes out opposition with greatest ease. This is evident in Dingana's praises:

Owadla uPiti kumaBhunu
Wamudla wamtshobotshela.
(Nyembezi, 1995: 48)

(He who devoured Pieter among the Boers
And swallowed him up with ease.)

In a tribute to Sibusiso Nyembezi, D.B.Z Ntuli tells a story about victorious expeditions that Nyembezi took part in, which of course resulted in prosperity. On certain occasions Nyembezi seemingly travelled to Swaziland to conduct workshops

for the benefit of Swazi writers. Ntuli uses the following lines to illustrate the fruitfulness of Nyembezi's contributions:

Wamemeza waze wayomemeza nasoSibeni lwaseSwazini
Owalunika imbewu wayichelela ngemijuluko nezinyembezi
Kwafulwa izikhwebu ezinganethanga letshitshi
Kwambiwa amadumbe angangekhanda lendoda,
Nanamuhla kalokhu ayibonwa inkengane kwaNgwane.
(Ntuli in Groenewald, et.al. 2002: 39)

(You gave a loud call even to Usiba of Swaziland
Which you gave seed that you irrigated with perspiration and tears
They harvested maize cobs as big as a virgin's thigh
They dug *madumbes* as big as a man's head
Even up to this day there is no famine in KwaNgwane.)

The use of hyperbole in the above poem is an indication of the extent of Nyembezi's contribution in the literary field. When commenting on the use of hyperbole in poetry, Thwala (2000: 144) explains:

In poetry hyperbole is often a means of celebrating, in an exaggerated manner, human ideals, for instance, ideals of love, education and socio-economic power.

In most cases one incident of victory is portrayed as a daily occurrence. This is again done deliberately with the aim of showing that the praised personality is a hero indeed. In the praises of Mfiliseni Magubane we get the following story:

Ntombi zimqabulel'emnyameni
Ngob'ekukhanyeni zesab'amasok'azo.

(He who is kissed by ladies in darkness
Because in the light they are afraid of their boyfriends.)

This is put in such a way that the singer is shown as having many girlfriends who have to meet him in the dark for fear of reprisal but we suspect that this may have happened only once, not as a daily occurrence as suggested in the praises.

The narration may sometimes be in the form of hyperbole where the exact size of an entity is extremely reduced. In the epic on Mandela, Zulu (1999:13) says:

Kant'ucu luzawuqin'entanyeni kokaMadiba umntwana

...

UMqhekezo waphenduka wangangentende yesandla...

(Things became unbearable for the child of Madiba

...

Mqhekezo became small like the palm of the hand...)

The poet uses a hyperbole when he says Mqhekezweni shrank to a small size that can fit in the palm of the hand. This, however, is done deliberately to indicate that the forced marriage that was imposed on Mandela and his cousin resulted in great agony. They could not find peace at Mqhekezweni. The place seemed to be too small for them to move around freely and peacefully and avoid the arranged marriage. It is then that the two young men decide to depart for the big city. Zulu tells the story further:

Makhathaleni lavel'eliyilona qhinga likhangayo,
Izinsizw'ezimbili zafakan'imilomo,
Zathi, "Masiboph'imigodla semuke,
Izindlel'ezibhek'eJozibele zivuliwe!"
(Zulu, 1999:13)

(Eventually an attractive plan emerged
The two young men had a discussion,
And decided, "Let's take our things and leave
The roads to Johannesburg are open.")

Vusi Ximba also uses hyperbole in Indoda Ethanda Inyama. In this song the main character is frugal and very fond of meat. When he slaughters a beast he does not want neighbours to partake of the feast as is customary. He laments:

"Le nkom'engiyihlabile incane kabi
Kayikh'ikhona, ingangegundane."

(The beast that I slaughtered is very small
It is small like a mouse.)

This indicates that this man feels that there is not enough meat to share with community members. He claims that the beast was very small, just like a mouse. This is of course gross exaggeration.

Sometimes an artist may exaggerate and include events that never took place. In the praises of king Zwelithini, the bard tells a story about what happened when the king was travelling by plane. He had to relieve himself during the trip and this happened as the plane was passing over the then Transkei. The bard uses the hyperbole in a humorous way to tell us things that did not happen at all:

Mfula kaNdab'ogobhoz'ekhanda
LikaMathanzima kwelaseKoloni
AmaXhos'onk'enway'izimpandla
Athi, "Tshyini liyanetha mfo ndini!"
Kanti kugobhoz'uMageba.
(Hlongwane, 1995: 116)

(River of Ndaba that flowed on the head
Of Mathanzima in the Cape Colony
All the Xhosas scratched their bald heads
Saying, "It is raining my brother."
Whereas it is Mageba that is flowing.)

In some cases it is not clear if the artist is using a hyperbole or is a victim of misconception and ignorance. This happens, for instance, in a song entitled Itherelina by Vusi Ximba. A man faints and is taken to hospital. We are then told that the hospital personnel revive him by pouring cold water over him. This of course is impossible to happen in a hospital because medical practitioners frown up using water to revive an unconscious person. Another explanation may be that Ximba says this to exaggerate the extent of the character's dilemma and to enhance the plausibility of his story to the vast majority of the listeners who are familiar with using water when a person faints.

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6.3.2.2 HUMOUR

Humour is an essential ingredient in storytelling. It is the use of effective and enchanting humour that grips the audience and makes the storytellers popular. Humour manifests itself in various forms in the stories that are found in Zulu music and poetry.

We must emphasise that humour is very subjective: what one finds humorous may not be so funny to the next person. We feel, however, that some of the examples that we are going to give are what can be generally regarded as humorous features of stories that are narrated by Zulu artists in music and poetry.

Artists often choose a title that is humorous in order to entice the reader or audience to the composition. The title of one of Vusi Ximba's songs is Umthandazi Ejoyintini. The juxtaposition of these opposites in the title amuses and raises curiosity to know more about the events that will unfold in the story. The listener does not feel let down when he hears the whole song that tells a humorous story of a preacher who is conducting a service next to a shebeen. A band arrives at the shebeen and the congregation is enticed by this and leaves the preacher while he is still deep in prayer:

Bafik' abafana beziginci ejoyintini
Kwaba wukuzidumela
Eguqile ethandaza
Amantombazan' agumul' iminazaleth' ayilahla phansi
Aphum' ayozidansela ngale
Wathi eyothi, "Amen!" kwakungasekho muntu.

(The guitar players arrived at the shebeen
As soon as they started playing,
While he was kneeling and praying;
Girls discarded their church uniforms
And went out to dance on the other side
By the time he said, "Amen!" the room was empty.)

The preacher succumbs to temptation and eventually joins his congregation and all of them seem to have good time:

Watholakal'esevuma ngekhandu
 Wangena washay'indlamu
 Lwaqhamuk'ucwephana lwentombazana
 Lwathi, "Hhayi, akwenziwa kanje bhuti."
 Lwamkhombisa, hhayi zabuya.
 Bamthelela ngesivalo ugologo.
 Wahlina, hhayi, okwesibili waziyele.

(He was soon nodding his head
 He entered and performed *indlamu* dance.
 A very thin girl came forward
 She said, "No, this is not how it is done, brother."
 She showed him and they started dancing
 They poured him whiskey in a bottle lid
 He grimaced, but was soon serving himself.)

We can't help but laugh at the unexpected, yet humorous turn of events. T.M. Mazibuko (1971) also uses a humorous title in Kwandiza Izixembe Kumakoti. We are immediately amused because we associate this with fighting and want to hear more about the events and the participants therein.

A story may be humorous because of how the narrator describes a character. The physical appearance is the most commonly used. In Mkhize's UZanani noGobhoza, a character is simply defined in the following way:

Phakathi komnyango omncane
 Indoda eyisideku yavela
 Seyithukuthele sekuthi ayisangane...
 (Mkhize, 1973: 24)

(In the middle of the small door
 A big corm like man emerged
 And was very angry...)

J.C. Dlamini uses vivid description in many of his poems. In some cases the behaviour of a character is humorous:

Ungqwazi lwakwabo lusho ngamagwagwa
 Luggoka kahle, lucothoze kahle
 Esontweni lwehla lwenyuka
 Luhlel'abantu ngoba behlelekile

...
Phakathi esontweni kuyathandazwa, uyayaluza

...
Nantuyana selukhuluma namakholwa
Lugcizelela iziyalo zoMfundisi.
(Dlamini, 1981: 14)

(The tall one has big ears
He dresses well and walks slowly
In church he moves up and down
He arranges people because they are orderly

...
He moves around while others are praying

...
There he is talking to other churchgoers
Emphasising the pastor's words.)

Storytellers use humour even in stories that depict characters in serious and sombre situations. In other words, the intention may not necessarily be humour but the manner of expression may make us laugh. In *Ngeke Baxole Nkosi* by C.S.Z. Ntuli, a witchdoctor prays for forgiveness. His confession tells a story about his cruelty that resulted in many deaths and suffering. Even though he pleads guilty, he denies some false accusations that are levelled against him by the community:

Sebengenezela kodwa, Nkosi
Bangibophel'amanqin'enyathi,
Bathi indangala nayo ngeyami
Eseng'izinkomo zabo.

...
Okwami yimikhovu kuphela
Nayo futhi mibili nje zwi.
Utokoloshe-ke usemdala...
(Ntuli in Ntuli, 1975: 55)

(They are exaggerating, Lord
They tell lies about me
Saying the baboon that milks
Their cows is also mine.

...
All that belong to me are *imikhovu*
And there are only two of them.
Well, the *tikoloshe* is very old.)

The whole of Buthelezi's I-V.I.P YakwaGimbisele Township is humorous. The story takes place at a funeral. As we all know, a funeral is a formal respectable occasion but the opposite occurs in this story. Firstly, the speaker, who alleges that he is a close friend, describes the deceased in a humorous manner:

"Kokunye bekuthi uma umbingelela
Akuthi jejemuzi ngezinxemu zakhe
Obekulula ukuba uzibone noma
Zisezibukweni..."
(Buthelezi, 1982: 7)

(On some occasions when you greeted him
He would look at you with his squint eyes
That were easy to see despite being
Hidden by glasses.)

He then divulges secrets that reveal how the deceased accumulated wealth by killing people to be used in *ukuthwala* ritual. There are shouts of objection from the family of the deceased:

"Hheyi umfowethu lona
Okhuluma ngaye kanjena wena!"
"Wo, ngiyaxolisa bakithi
Bengicabanga ukuthi kukhulunyw'amaqiniso.
Ngimazi ephethe ikhanda lale nsizwa
Libizwe yinyanga yeNyasa..."
"Hheyi wena sibhedi ndini!"
"Ngiyaxolisa ningixolele
Ngiyabonga ngokude ningikhalima."
(Buthelezi, 1984: 7)

(Hey, it's my brother
That you are busy insulting!"
"Oh, I'm very sorry,
I thought we were expected to tell the truth.
I know him carrying the head of this man
Taking it to a medicine man from Nyasaland..."
"Hey you fool!"
"Please forgive me
Thanks for restraining me now and again.")

In Mab'amanga, by Vusi Ximba, we find characters in a very tense situation. A furious shebeen queen has come to demand money that a priest owes for liquor that he purchased on credit. She storms in during a church service. The priest tries to placate her:

Wath'ezwakala
Wayesesh'izint'ezingekh'emaBhayibelini,
"I'm very rich and kind
Ngizokukhokhela nkosikazi."

(He was heard
Uttering words that are not found in the Bible,
"I'm very rich and kind
I'll settle my debts.")

While this on its own is quite amusing given the venue of the confrontation, we are more amused by a comment from one of the congregation members:

Yezwakal'eny'inkosikaz'isijabula,
"Yehheni bakith'ubab'umfundis'usezobholofitha
Nang'esesh'o *rich and kind*."

(A woman was heard saying excitedly,
"Our priest will soon be prophesising
He is already speaking in tongues.")

In some cases humour is coupled with irony. In Amathambo by Vusi Ximba, a man writes a letter telling his wife that he has found employment as a truck driver in Durban, while he in fact is only a rickshaw puller. His wife gets excited and comes to Durban to pay him a surprise visit. When she arrives in Durban, her son sees his father pulling a rickshaw. When he tells his mother, she responds mockingly. This is how the story goes:

Kumbon'okuyingan'uyise
"We ma, uyambon'ubabayi?
Yilona-k'iloli likabhokweni
Leli alidonsayo?"
"Suka wena, yilokhu wakhomba
Yonk'imiphuphe yeTheku le
Uyihlo sekwaba ngumuntu wothaya njengothikithizemnela
Hhay'indaba yensangu lena."

(The child recognised his father
 "Mummy, do you see dad?
 Is this the brewery truck
 That he is pulling behind him?"
 "Leave me alone, you keep pointing
 At all the Durban scum
 Your father now wears a tie like a ticket examiner
 Not this useless thing.")

She is not aware that '*umphuphe weTheku*' she is referring to is her husband.

In *Inkelenkele YakwaXhosa*, there is excitement about the news of rebirth and regeneration that Nongqawuse brings to the nation. This is manifest in the humorous action of an old man:

Kwaphum'ixheg'eselibhencela nhlanye,
 Lathath'ubhoko ladondolozela
 Liqinis'imisiph'emilenzeni;
 Lagcob'amafuth'ezimvub'ekhanda
 Khon'izinwele zizobuyelana;
 Laqal'ukuphoth'amadev'angwevu.
 (Vilakazi, 1993: 39)

(There emerged a very old man,
 He took a walking staff and supported himself,
 He stretched the muscles of his legs,
 Smeared hippopotamus fat on his head
 So that his hair could come together
 And started twirling his grey whiskers.)

It is amusing that the old man is enthusiastic about his appearance on the dawn of the promised new day. The irony is that this day will bring pain and death that will destruct all the hopes of rebirth, abundance and happiness to the Xhosa nation.

The use of a hyperbole can also result in humour. This is evident in the praises of king Zwelithini where we get an amusing story about the king's trip to Cape Town by plane. On the way past Transkei he relieves himself. This is how the bard exaggerates the events in a humorous way:

Mfula kaNdab'ogobhoz'ekhanda
 LikaMathanzima kwelaseKoloni
 AmaXhos'anway'izimpandla
 Athi, "Tshini liyanetha mfo ndini!"
 Kanti kugobhoz'uMageba.
 (Hlongwane, 1995: 116)

(River of Ndaba which flowed on the head
 Of Mathanzima in the Cape Colony,
 The Xhosas scratched their bald heads
 Saying, "It's raining, my brother!"
 Whereas it is Mageba that is flowing.)

The few examples that we have given above show that artists have a lot of stylistic devices at their disposal. When used effectively, such devices result in compositions of outstanding quality that display beyond reasonable doubt that musicians and poets are storytellers of high calibre.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to show how style plays a vital role in effective storytelling. While each artist seems to have a unique manner of telling a story, there are common idiosyncrasies that prevail in stories that we find in Zulu music and poetry. Features such as insertion demonstrate that Zulu artists are aware of the impact of a story, especially in conveying a lesson. In many instances, artists insert stories in a song or poem in order to illustrate a point and show how the reader or audience can derive a lesson from the events that take place in a character's life.

We were worried, however, by artists who insert stories that seem to have no relevance in a composition. Mfazomnyama, in particular, is guilty of inserting stories that do not serve any obvious purpose in the story. In most cases he inserts stories in order to draw our attention to his beliefs and personal experiences.

Allusion is another interesting feature that we also looked at. In *izibongo*, *imbongi* alludes to stories that elevate the hero's status in the eyes of the spectators and the nation. Such allusions are made with the knowledge that the audience is familiar with

the events that are merely mentioned in passing by the bard. Msimang (1988: 233) supports the bard's freedom to make allusions. He elaborates:

Moreover, the bard does not feel duty-bound to make his allusions into history in a chronological sequence of events. He must have taken it for granted that his audience knew the history of their kings, and this was usually the case. Little did the bard know that centuries after his death, academics would 'exhume' him and demand him to account for his omissions and his flaws.

Although we agree with Msimang's views, we would like to emphasise that allusions can be a hinderence to the reader or listener's enjoyment of the story. This happens when an artist alludes to very vague events or those that are only personally known by him or her.

In this chapter, we also looked at other stylistic aspects such as dramatization and summarization and indicated why we believe that Zulu artists are dynamic and creative storytellers who use every available opportunity to narrate memorable and sometimes extremely humorous stories. In most cases, artists do not interfere much with the narration but rather let the characters dramatize the story. Instead of going into lengthy and elaborate details, artists sometimes give a summary that is clear enough for us to comprehend and enjoy the whole story. Although this may look like a very easy feat to accomplish, we showed that summarizing demands a lot of skill and selectiveness on the part of the artist.

There are of course many stylistic features that are not necessarily unique to musicians and poets. This also emphasizes the fact that musicians and poets do not compose in a vacuum but are also influenced by universal storytelling styles. Other prose narratives such as novels and short stories, for instance, make use of the first person narrator. This tendency is also very common in stories that are found in Zulu music and poetry. The use of the first person narrator as a stylistic feature enhances the theme of the story. If, for instance, a story is told because of its didactic relevance, the lesson in it becomes clearer if the events in the story are portrayed as the personal experiences of the narrator. The mood of the story is also enhanced if the first person narrator is used.

In Bhekumuzi Luthuli's song entitled Wakhathazeka Umoya Wami, we are able to identify with the narrator who laments the sad loss of his brother who was brutally murdered. Luthuli uses the first person narrator to tell a sad story in the following lines:

Wakhathazeka umoya wami
Uma ngizw'ukuthi uPhakamani'akasekho
Wakhathazeka 'ma ngizw'ukuthi
Utholw'esemathambo mhlophe.

(I was very sad
To learn that Phakamani has passed away
I was sad to hear that
They found him long after he had died.)

We feel that the impact of this story would have been less effective if the third person narrator had been used.

We also noted that Zulu poets are endowed with impressive mastery of the language that enables them to depict stories in a moving and thought-provoking manner. The praises of the kings in particular, display an abundance of metaphors, symbols and other manifestations of figurative language that make us applaud the unpretentious dexterity with which poets weave stories that portray heroic deeds of the many brave men and woman whose uncompromising patriotism moulded our proud nation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PERFORMANCE

7.0. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to look at performance and how it impacts on the story that is told in a poem or song. We are going to look at how performance is defined and also at performance theories to familiarize ourselves with issues that pertain to performance. We are also going to consider some performance events that indicate the vastness of the talent and skill that our artists display in making their compositions as interesting and enjoyable as possible.

7.1 PERFORMANCE DEFINED

An apt definition of performance is difficult to arrive at. Dalrymple (1983: 71) comments:

The description of any kind of performance is fraught with difficulties. Very few of the elements of the performance exist beyond the ephemeral duration of the performance itself. A film or video tape of an actual performance is a subjective record of a director or cameraman.

With regard to inevitability of performance, Thom (1993: 1) explains:

Performance, it seems, surrounds us. Through the technology of video recordings and compact discs, it has invaded our living rooms. It has even invaded our lives, according to those sociologists who inform us that we are performing all the time.

Performance is basically the final product of an artist's composition. Every composition is supposed to be conceived, arranged and refined for eventual performance in front of an appreciative and enthralled audience. Ogede (1997:7) emphasises that songs are realised in a performance and that performance is the medium through which songs attain their distinctive qualities. Ogede's view suggests that an artist has to display a unique and distinct style of performance for each song.

With regard to the storytelling aspect of music and poetry, performance plays a very crucial role of enhancing and making the events, character and theme of the story as life-like as possible. A performance enables the audience to see the storyteller in the flesh. This often forms the realisation of the audience's preconceived mental pictures about the artist, the characters, the setting and the events in the story.

7.2. BASIC PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS

There are basic elements that form a performance. These elements are crucial in making a performance a reality. For a performance to be a success, an artist has to take these elements into consideration and work out how to handle each aspect so as to make his or her artistic work as enjoyable as possible. When it comes to the vital aspects of a performance, scholars such as Ntshinga (1993) and Dlamini (1995) mention three basic elements that are indispensable in a performance, i.e. the audience, the performer and the performance. We feel, however, that a fourth aspect should also be included, i.e. the venue where a performance takes place. We feel that the venue also plays a crucial role in the full realization of a performance.

Let us now look at each of these elements and consider how they influence a performance, particularly with regard to the storytelling aspect of the performance.

7.2.1. THE PERFORMER

Behague (1984: 14) defines a performer as:

An individual who acts with the self-belief and probably with some group's approval that he or she has acquired a respectable amount of knowledge and skill in a particular musical tradition and that he or she should be able to present those materials for listeners in a coherent acceptable fashion.

A performer has to display great skill and effort in order to meet various and sometimes extremely demanding expectations of the audience. In some cases there are

psychological implications that a performer has to contend with. Wilson (1985:132) observes:

Performers are, by definition, very much in the public eye. Often they are considered to be god-like creatures; there is great speculation as to what they are like in person. Just to see them, touch them can be a thrilling experience for their devoted fans.

This is the storyteller that we look at for the portrayal of the story in the song or poem. In many cases, the performer plays various roles in a performance: he acts as a singer, narrator, character, etc. depending on how the story is depicted in the composition. Dlamini (1995: 152) points out that a performer employs body movements, facial expressions, gestures, vocal tone and all other devices that can be perceived and interpreted by the audience. It is through these skilful artistic expressions that communication between the performer and the audience can be successfully accomplished.

There are vital aspects of a performer that play a crucial role in the effective and successful enactment of the story in the composition. The physical appearance of the performer serves to attract the audience and in most cases affects the plausibility of the story that the performer tells. We have indicated in the preceding chapters how Mfiliseni Magubane tells a story through the following lines in his praises:

Untombi zimqabulel'emnyameni
Ngob'ekukhanyeni zesab'amasok'azo.

(He who is kissed by ladies in darkness
Because in the light they are afraid of their boyfriends.)

When Mfiliseni performs live, the audience is able to believe this story because he casts a handsome figure that can easily lure ladies into deceiving their long standing boyfriends by arranging nocturnal clandestine rendezvous with him.

The age of the performer may also be crucial with regard to the plausibility of the story in the composition. Mshoza's song entitled Kortes is about lovers who fall in love and eventually get married. The age of the performers in the performance,

however, affects the plausibility of the story because they are too young to be of marriagable age. Mshoza is about thirteen years old. So is Mzambiya. In the music video, for instance, it would have been more convincing if older people had been used to support the storyline, so that Mshoza and Mzambiya concentrate on singing the lyrics only.

In Sibali by Khumbula, the story is about child abuse. The music video of the song shows a very young girl who is hardly twelve years old being assaulted by an old man. The girl eventually falls pregnant. The age of the characters in the performance is quite convincing and this enhances the plausibility of the story in the song. The same can also be said of the husband in UBaba KaMdudu who appears in the video performance as a respectable middle-aged man who is not supposed to be engaged in the illicit extramarital affairs that his wife accuses him of.

Dress code is another aspect of the performer's appearance. With regard to this, Watkins (2000:111) contends that:

An associative reading shows that in the performance of dance and music, meaning is conveyed through additional channels such as clothing style, for example. In performance, the chief concern is with the cultural processes and products that are externalisation of the body in various contexts of verbal and nonverbal communication.

The performer's dress code is also essential in creating a relevant mood that is vital in making the audience receptive to the performance. Dlamini (1995: 153) emphasises the role of a relevant dress code in a performance:

Dress conveys the mood of the occasion and also assists the performer in her activity. In the first place dress informs the audience more about the person who is performing.

In most cases dress code does not seem to play a pronounced role with regard to storytelling in a performance. There are few cases, however, where dress code is intertwined in the story that is depicted in the performance. This was observed during a performance by Abafana Benkokhelo at Dalton hostel, Durban on 10 March 2002. In

the song entitled, Le Ndaba Kayisapheli, the characters have to consult a *sangoma* to resolve issues in the story. During the performance of this song, the lead singer was dressed like a *sangoma* and performed the appropriate ritual dancing that is typical of a *sangoma*. This proved very effective in making the story real to the audience.

The relevant dress code for a character in the song is essential during a performance. Ntombinkulu, for instance, is a female character in many songs by Makitaza. During a performance, Makitaza, who happens to be a man, dresses like a young woman, with tights, high-heeled shoes and a head-cloth to match the character of Ntombinkulu. This of course pleases the audience and makes the stories in the songs more convincing and the performance a memorable pleasure to watch.

The performer's movements play a vital role in the portrayal of the story during a performance because they are noticed and interpreted by the audience. The most significant part of the performer's body is the face. The way the face moves to indicate various expressions affects to a very large extent, the story that the performer conveys to the audience. With regard to the role of the face in a performance, Hilton (1987: 94) contends that:

The face gives conscious and unconscious signals about the mood, attitude and state of health and attention. Its signals are smiles and laughter to express pleasure...frown and tears for anger...Such signals are accepted at face value by the audience: when a character cries, he is sad, when he smiles, he is happy.

The performer can use his head, trunk and hand gestures as effective tools in storytelling. Gestures, for instance, can be used with the performer's narration or instead of the storytellers' comments. The character's words of consent, for instance, can be accompanied by the nodding of the head, or in the absence of such words, a character or performer may simply nod his head.

Body language plays a crucial role in enacting what happens in the story. The performer often uses hands to dramatize events in the story in order to make them more real than when the song is heard on the radio and as appealing to the audience as possible. In the performance of songs that tell love stories, for example, hands are put

across the chest, with the right hand touching or pointing at the heart to indicate love and emotional involvement of the character depicted in the story by the performer.

Mobility of the performer during a performance displays his creative and artistic abilities. Agile legs denote vigour and strength and can be used to enhance plausibility of the story. There are cases where immobility can be used effectively with storytelling, for instance, to denote shock and embarrassment. A good performer will stop moving at strategic and crucial points during the performance so as to await the response of the audience to the story.

Sound is also of vital importance in a performance. With regard to storytelling in music and poetry, the performer uses the voice to tell the story. The effective portrayal of the story depends on how the voice is manipulated to create relevant sounds, to lower it, raise it, etc, depending on the demands of the story and characters.

A clear voice is essential in any performance. Zondi (1995:12) clarifies that:

The oral poet knows that his audience is large, therefore he must have a strong, loud and clear voice which will convey the rhythm inherent in African languages.

Msimang (1976: 367) explains that *imbongi* received preferential treatment in olden times, he was offered rich, fatty soup so as to make his voice smooth when he sings the praises of the king in front of a very big audience.

A successful and talented performer is the one who is able to use his voice to depict various characters in the story. Vusi Ximba is always at his best in this aspect. He lowers his voice accordingly and makes it sound as feminine as possible to indicate the speech that comes from a female character in the story. He does not end there, the pitch is used to indicate temper, mood and behaviour of the characters. Khansela also excels in changing his voice to depict various characters in the story. In UMajazi, he plays various roles: he is Majazi, Majazi's wife, a female neighbour and a security guard that stands at the entrance to Denver hostel. All these roles are performed convincingly and add reality, humour and plausibility to the story.

In some cases members of the group use their voices to depict various settings in the story. Abafana benkokhelo do this in their performances. When for instance there is a love scene, they ululate to indicate that the lady has accepted the suitor's proposals. When there is a war scene, chants and sometimes stamping sounds are uttered by group members to enhance the real-lifeness of the story.

7.2.2 THE AUDIENCE

The performance is aimed at an audience that expects to be entertained by a talented and skillful performer. Whatever the artist composes, the final product is aimed at the audience and the performer's efforts and talent are generously rewarded with the satisfaction that derives from performing in front of an appreciative audience. Finnegan (1970: 10) illustrates the vital role of the audience in a performance. She comments:

A further essential factor is the audience, which, as is not the case with the written forms, is often directly involved in the actualisation and creation of a piece of oral literature. According to convention, genre, and personality, the artist may be more or less receptive to his listeners' reactions-but, with few exceptions, an audience of some kind is normally an essential part of the whole literary situation. There is no escape for the oral artist from a face-to-face confrontation with his audience, and this is something which he can exploit as well as be influenced by.

With regard to the role of an audience in a performance, Thom (1993: 205) has this to say:

Because performance is for an audience, the audience's attention can play between aspects of the performance and aspects of their own lives.

This means that an audience is able to interpret the performance and relate it to real life experiences and surroundings. If the audience identifies with the content of the performance, response is spontaneous and often results in dancing, screaming and many other manifestations of the audience's satisfaction with the performer's skills.

In some cases the audience can have remarkable influence on what the artist will perform. With regard to music, for instance, the audience may 'demand' to hear a particular song. During Mbongeni's performance at the Royal Showgrounds on 1 September 2002, the audience wanted him to start the show by singing the controversial song entitled AmaNdiya. He had to plead with the audience and explain that the song was in the line up and would be heard later in the show. When Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mchunu performed at the Playhouse, Durban on 13 October 2002, some members of the audience were screaming and pleading with them to sing Asimbonanga, a song that was popular during the peak of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The artists simply ignored the audience and concentrated on the song that were scheduled for the evening's performance.

The audience can also indicate their familiarity with the song and their interpretation of it. When Mbongeni played Isitimela SaseZola during the same show at the Royal Showgrounds, some members of the audience formed a long line that resembled a train and danced, with each dancer putting both hands on the next person's shoulders to show how a train moves. This was a clear indication that the audience can also play a vital role in displaying creativity and improvisation as manifestation of the response to the performance.

In storytelling the audience participates by clapping hands, ululating, laughing, etc. during various parts of the story, depending on the skill of the performer and the appeal of the story that is conveyed to the audience. In the performance of *izibongo*, for instance, shouts of "*musho!*" form the audience's assent with the bard's views about the praised personality and indicate an appeal for more stories about the hero's achievements and triumphs. The ululating indicates that the audience is appreciative of the story that the performer tells in the performance of the composition.

In *izigiyo* performance, the audience is the integral part of the performance and consequently of the story that *izigiyo* tell. With regard to this, Gule (1990: 50) avers:

The participation of the audience in oral poetry is an indication that the people are not merely being manipulated like puppets but are actively

involved as participants who respond to the bard by uttering Musho, Musho!

The person who performs *ukugiya*, interacts directly with the audience that responds accordingly. With regard to *ukugiya* performance, Gunner in Clayton (1989: 21) cites three integral performance elements, i.e. the background song, a short repetitive chant and the dancing of the performance. The audience participates, particularly in the song and the chant or the actual shouting out of *izigiyo*.

In most cases the audience initiates the performance by calling out the praises even before the performer stands up to perform or comes out in the open. This happens when the potential performer is popular with the audience. When a performer jumps up to perform, the audience shouts out his praises. A well known performer will be accompanied by a thunderous roar from the audience. In some cases the performer asks a question and the audience responds. This indicates that the audience is quite familiar with the story that *izigiyo* of the performer tell. When Bhubesi Mdlalose performs, for instance, he asks his audience:

“Ngajunywa, ngajunywa yini mina?”

(“I was taken by surprise, who took me by surprise?”)

And the audience responds:

“Wajunywa, wajunywa yinja!”

(“A dog took you by surprise!”)

When the late Manyikwe Ntuli performed he would engage his audience by saying:

“Kwangisuka kwangisuka!”

(“I am feeling it once again!”)

And the audience would respond:

“Shikishela khona!”

(“Go for it!”)

Halfway through the performance the performer often starts a song and the audience joins him. In most cases a popular *ihubo* is used:

Wawukhona yini kwaNobamba
Mhla sidikadikwa zinsizwa?

(Were you present at Nobamba
When we were crushed by enemies?)

There are also cases where the audience is involved throughout the performance. This happens, for instance when a person who performs does not have *izigiyo* of his own, but wants to perform anyway. In most cases, the option is then to use a popular nursery rhyme, “Sawubona Wethu” as *izigiyo*. The call and respond formula between the performer and the audience is used:

“Sawubona wethu!”
“Yebo wethu.”
“Uphumaphi na?”
“KwaMatshekwana.”
“Wadlani na?”
“Isinambathi.”
“Singani na?”
“Ngomcengezana.”
“Abantu pho?”
“Musa dad’ukungiphathela...”

(“Greetings, fellow man.”
“I greet you too.”
“Where do you come from?”
“From Matshekwana.”
“And what did you eat?”
“Isinambathi.”
“How was it served?”
“In a small bowl.”

“And what about people?”
“Don’t mention that...”)

The actual *ukugiya* starts when the performer and his audience reach “Musa dad’ukungiphathela...” part of the nursery. The performer starts stamping the ground or moving around the ‘stage’ while the audience claps hands to the rhythm of the performance.

A lukewarm audience may also affect the performer. An interesting observation was made when Sigubhu performed at Gugu Sibiyi and Zenzele Khoza’s wedding in Msinga on 16 August 2001. The audience did not respond accordingly and the performer asked angrily:

“Nathula nje, nilambile?”

(“Why are you quite, are you hungry?”)

He then shook his head and sat down. This shows that the audience plays a very crucial role in the performance. A performer cannot perform on his own without the enthusiastic participation of the audience.

7.2.3. THE VENUE

The place where a performance takes place plays a crucial role in making a performance a success and a realistic experience for both the performer and the audience. In other words an appropriate venue can enhance the aesthetic appeal of a performance while on the other hand a good performance can be marred by the choice of an unsuitable venue.

The venue is in most cases determined by the nature and type of the occasion where a performance has to take place. An open veld or space is often the obvious choice for various performances, particularly in rural areas where scarce resources and religious and cultural requirements stipulate specific venues for certain occasions and

performances. During a traditional wedding where various types of performances take place, *isigcawu* is used. This is usually an open space or open veld in the immediate vicinity of the homestead where a wedding takes place. *Isigcawu* should ideally be wide enough to accommodate a large number of spectators as well as the participants who will perform various roles during the wedding.

One of the exciting as well as solemn moments during a wedding is when *ukuthetha ubulanda* ritual has to be performed. This is the time for the introduction of the in-laws. The head of the family from the bride's side comes out in the open, accompanied by close members of the family and introduce the bride's family to the in-laws as well as the whole community. This introduction is in the form of reciting the bride's lineage, shouting out names as well as praises of the ancestors and the living fathers of the bride.

The use of *isigcawu* as the venue when *ukuthetha ubulanda* and other *ukugiya* performances take place makes it possible for the performers to display their skills and the audience to witness for themselves how performers are able to express themselves. When someone *giyas*, for instance, the audience shows its appreciation and even participates in the performance in various ways. Those who participate are usually well dressed to fit the occasion because they are aware that all eyes will be on them.

The disadvantage to the use of *isigcawu* is that when the bride's lineage is introduced, the performer may not be loud enough for all the members of the audience to hear. And also, when somebody *giyas*, the voices of the ululating women may also drown the performance making it impossible to hear what the praise lines are.

In some cases the yard, *igceke* of the bridegroom's homestead may be used, especially when *umabo* or gift giving by the bride takes place. This session is always used for singing and *ukugiya* when those who have been given gifts show their appreciation by dancing and performing *ukugiya*. This venue is often too small for enthusiastic performers, particularly young males who are always eager to catch the eyes of beautiful ladies who often grace such occasions. On 8 September 2002, there was *umabo* at Khuzwayo homestead, Maphumulo district. This took place at the courtyard

or *igceke* that is squeezed between two big houses and some few rondavels. The venue restricted the vibrancy of the occasion because there was no enough space for performers. Many performers who stood up to *giya* were only able to move a few steps and retreat back, thus leaving the audience let down. Even when the turn for the groom came, he merely stood where he was, just demonstrated a few antics while his praises were shouted, shook his head and sat down. We are sure that the audience would have witnessed a lovely performance, had the space been adequate for the exuberant movements that always accompany *ukugiya* performance.

Isibaya or kraal is also an ideal venue for performances, particularly *ukugiya*. When there is a feast, males gather in *isibaya* and sit down in a big circle and eat their share of the slaughtered beast and wash it down with frothy beer. When the meal is over men show their merriment and appreciation to the host by performing *ukugiya* and singing. *Isibaya* makes it possible for females and children to come closer and lean against the poles of the kraal so as to have a closer look at the performers and at the same time participate by ululating and shouting out the praises of the performer.

The most exciting moment is when a performer's antics cause clouds of *umquba* or kraal manure to fly up in the air. This is of course regarded as an indication of the performer's vigour and is greeted with enthusiastic approval from the audience. When *ukugiya* takes place in a venue like *isibaya* the audience is able to derive maximum enjoyment of the performance. It is easy to hear all the praise lines because the crowd is usually smaller. There is also no pushing for better view that happens when *isigcawu* is used as a venue. The participation of the audience is also minimal, there are no young maidens who join the performer and dance around him, thus making it difficult for some members of the audience to witness the performance to the full and hear all the praise lines.

With regard to music, stadiums are often used as venues where performances take place. Stadiums have a capacity to accommodate as many spectators as possible thus creating a very vibrant mood during a performance. Technological advances in terms of sound enhance the performance and make it possible for the audience to enjoy the

performance to the full. A platform or stage is usually erected for performers thus making it possible for the audience to see all the singers dancing on stage.

A stadium as a venue allows for maximal audience participation through dancing and joining in singing with the performers. Excited audience members often leave their seats and go down to the open field to dance. If they are remarkably skilful or able to perform some amusing or unusual antics, members of the audience can become a centre of attention on their own. During a music festival at Royal Showgrounds in Pietermaritzburg on 1 September 2002, two very fat ladies who looked quite inebriated caused a stir when they performed *twalaza* dance while Rebecca Malope was singing. This dance involves a lot of buttock shaking which was funny to look at if performed by two fat ladies. As a result, the audience forgot about Rebecca for a while and focused on the two dancers.

The disadvantage of a stadium as a venue is that one may be seated too far from the performers thus making it difficult to see all the action. Weather conditions may also be unfavourable and make the performance not as enjoyable as one would have liked.

Indoor venues are also favourites for various types of performances. There are weddings and parties that take place in venues such as churches and community halls. This of course has remarkable bearing on the performance and audience participation. When an indoor venue is used there is a great sense of intimacy between the performer and the audience. When the performer sings or speaks, he or she seems to be addressing each member of the audience directly and intimately. In some cases a performer may mingle with the audience or ask one or two people to join in the performance.

An indoor venue such as the Playhouse Theatre in Durban creates more opportunities for a lively and informative performance, particularly with regard to including many aspects that may otherwise have been impossible to include in a performance that takes place in a different venue. This goes a long way in enhancing the storytelling aspect of a performance.

During a live performance by Sipho Mchunu and Johnny Clegg at the Playhouse on 13 October 2002, one was able to witness how an indoor venue can be used effectively to provide more entertainment for the audience and create a mood that is impossible to generate in a venue such as a stadium or an open field. The most remarkable and distinct feature of the show was the big screen behind the performers. This screen was used for various purposes. When the artists were performing, the screen showed slides that accompanied some of the songs that were performed. In a song such as Mfazomdala, for instance, visuals added more dimension to the song. This song tells a story of a woman who subjects a child to excessive beatings and the visuals were used to show how this happens. Slides were also used to show excerpts that tell a story about how the group was formed and the challenges that they have faced over the years. The group was also able to use slides to show various dance styles from performances in Msinga, Mkhomazi, etc. in order to demonstrate to the audience how the general public performs certain dance routines.

An indoor venue, however, can be very restrictive, especially with regard to audience participation. The Playhouse, for instance, is often characterized by a mood that is more formal and makes spontaneous ululations a very rare occasion. This is of course quite different from the vibrancy that one experiences in a performance held at a stadium or *isigcawu*. Sitting arrangements often make it difficult to dance to the songs that are performed on stage. During Mchunu and Clegg's performance, for instance, some members of the audience, particularly Africans, had to resort to merely clapping hands as it was quite difficult to move freely between seats and go to the front and dance as is often the case at other venues. This was evident when a popular song such as Impi, was sung. Had this been at a stadium, the audience would have expressed its response differently.

The formal nature of an indoor venue such as the Playhouse also makes it difficult for members of the audience to approach the performers on stage and shower them with tokens of appreciation such as handkerchiefs, handbags, etc. as can be the case when a performance takes place in *isigcawu* or a stadium.

The above discussion has been able to indicate the vital role that a venue plays in enhancing the full realisation of a composition when it is performed for an audience. In some cases a performance may be marred by an inappropriate choice of venue. As we have already indicated, what is most obvious is that audience participation depends a lot on the venue where the performance takes place.

There are of course many other cases that can be cited as venues for performances but which are not going to be discussed here because they are not relevant in this study.

7.2.4. THE PERFORMANCE

Music and poetry were traditionally an aural experience that also provided the pleasure of seeing the performance. There were many occasions that created opportunities for performances: weddings, rites of passage, ceremonial feasts, etc. With regard to poetry, *izimbongi* entertained spectators during various religious and cultural ceremonies such as the reed dance, the first fruits ceremony, etc. *Imbongi* also recited the king's praises before the king's warriors embarked on a journey to fight with an enemy. There are many other occasions during which music and poetry compositions were performed in public, mostly for entertainment purposes.

A very sad state of affairs is that performances are becoming a rare occasion, as most of the music that is available is pre-recorded and can only be heard on radio, television or cassette and compact disc recordings. The most worrying trend is that even on joyful occasions such as weddings and parties, pre-recorded music dominates at the expense of the vibrant and spontaneous singing and dancing that used to be an innate pride of the Africans. With regard to this trend, Pewa (1995) complains that South Africans are in danger of losing their rich heritage of composing, singing and dancing to music.

Poetry performances are even scarcer, with the exception of poetry readings and recitations during funerals and cultural activities that are often arranged by the education department for schools. In rural areas there are still occasions such as feasts and weddings where *ukugiya* performances take place.

Music and poetry performances are vital in storytelling. It is during a performance that a story becomes more enjoyable, alive and credible. A good performance has more impact than the text and leaves an indelible mark on the audience.

Let us look at the two types of performances that can play a vital role in storytelling through music and poetry.

7.2.4.1.LIVE PERFORMANCE

A live performance takes place in front of a live audience. Shuker (1997: 198) comments:

The term 'live' performance is reserved for those situations where the audience is in close physical proximity to the performance and the experience of the music is contagious with its actual performance.

The most crucial role of a live performance is that the audience is able to see the performer in person. This can be a memorable experience, particularly to fans who have been listening to an artist singing on the radio or television. Some lucky or daring members of the audience sometimes get a chance to touch their idol and even dance with him or her. During a show that featured Shebeleza at Royal Showgrounds on 1 September 2002, two fans were invited to come on stage and dance with the singer. There is no doubt that these fans will always cherish fond memories of this once in a life time experience that can only be provided by a live performance.

When Joe Nina and Steve Kekana performed during the same show, some members of the audience were surprised to see Steve Kekana perform intricate choreographic movements with such amazing skill and ease. One fan was heard saying, "*Shame, akasadansi nje kahle, yisono lesi.*" (Shame, he dances so well.") This shows that a live performance can reveal many things that people may be ignorant about. In the case of Steve Kekana, who is blind, his live performances are a public confirmation that physically challenged people are as normal as anyone else and are capable of doing many things that ordinary human beings find no difficulty in carrying out.

A live performance is characterised by a sense of immediacy and finality. According to Kamerman and Martorella (1983: 7):

The 'star' is able to project himself, his performance, and, ideally the work directly to an audience, at best bringing the prewritten, planned, rehearsed and prepared score directly and immediately to life and to the audience. The quality of immediacy of performance thus embodies the directness of communication.

This means that the audience shares intimacy with the performer who is in close proximity. This intimacy is an incentive for the performer to do his best to display all his creative abilities. The audience on the other hand is able to express emotions, mood and feelings spontaneously by clapping hands, ululating, etc. depending on how the performance affects them. Proximity of the audience in a live performance therefore enables the performer to do an on-the spot gauge of the audience's response to the composition and make prompt and spontaneous adjustments to the performance if necessary and possible.

In most cases the performer is able to interact with the audience and make them feel that they are part of the composition or story that is told in the composition. During Mbongeni's live performance of the song entitled Isigqebhezana at Royal Showgrounds on September 1, 2002, he interrupted the narration and asked the audience:

"Ukhona phakathi kwenu ofake isigqebhezana?"

("Is there anyone amongst you who is wearing *isigqebhezana*?")

There were of course mixed responses from the audience, but the general mood was that of exhilaration at being made part of the story that the song tells.

An artist may also use a live performance to provide the audience with essential background information about certain songs. During a live performance on 13 October 2002, Johnny Clegg told an interesting story behind a song entitled Bullets For

Bafazana. Bafazana has been with Clegg, Juluka and Savuka for many years. When there were faction fights at Msinga, where Bafazana comes from, there were attempts to kill him. This affected the whole group and on several occasions arrangements had to be made to hide and protect Bafazana from assassins. After this very moving narration by Clegg, Bafazana was called upon to come on stage. He emerged and immediately started to *giya* while Clegg and the rest of the performers shouted out his praises. The audience gave Bafazana a standing ovation. Needless to say, only a live performance can provide such an interesting perspective on the lives of the performers.

During the same show, Clegg told an interesting story about how he got his praises or *izigiyo*. One day, when he was still a young boy of about sixteen years of age, he was walking down Rissik Street in Johannesburg with a group of Zulu friends with whom he was going to a nearby hostel for a traditional dance session. He was carrying his *izimbadada* or sandals made from a car tyre, in a 'checkers' plastic. Then they came across a group of drunken men. There was some argument and a fight ensued. Young Johnny ran for his life, still clutching the plastic with his prized sandals. When he later met with his friends who had survived the fight, they already had *izibongo* for him:

Mabaleka noshekazi kuliwa.

(One who fled with a 'checkers' while the fight was on.)

This shows that a live performance can provide more information and background material on many issues pertaining to the songs as well as the performers. This information is always well received by the audience.

A live performance is also characterized by a great sense of finality that rises from the fact that a live performance is supposed to be a once-off event. The performer has to do his best because there is no provision for revision, rewinding and starting afresh when a mistake has been made because each action is final. It is for this reason that Kamerman and Martorella (1983:73) say that moments of performance occur and once performed are forever lost. This seems to be the most serious disadvantage of a live

performance because once it is over, it only remains in the spectator's memory and will evaporate as time goes on.

One cannot find exact words to define what takes place during a live performance: nothing can substitute first hand experience. It is definitely for this reason that in isiZulu there is a saying that '*amehlo awaphathelwana*' which, loosely translated, means that an absent person cannot borrow eyes from the person who saw the performance. Scholars particularly find it very difficult to put as clearly as possible, the exact details of a moving experience that accompanies a live performance.

There is no doubt that a live performance demands more of the performer's skill, focus and effort. Shafer (1992: 15) observes:

The performer has a special problem: his or her work is produced and seen at precisely the same time. In other areas of the arts, such as painting, writing and composing, etc. the audience sees only the result of the creation. In any kind of live presentation the audience is present during the process.

A live performance is an effective storytelling medium because it enables the audience to experience what lacks in a text such as a song or a poem. Aspects of a story that the composition tells become real during a live performance because a performer can easily and readily add some specific details that are necessary to enhance plausibility of the story. In *Zinkinga* by Ihhashelimhlophe, the story is about a father who is brutally murdered:

Bambulele ubaba
Zinkinga zinkiyankiya.

(They have killed my father
This is a serious problem.)

In this story there are no details about how the narrator's father is killed. Interestingly enough, during a live performance of this song on Human Rights Day, 21 March 2002 at Mpumalanga, details about how the murder occurred were provided. By using the index finger, the artist was able to indicate that his father's throat was cut open. The

inclusion of this detail is important in accentuating the brutality of the murder and arousing sympathy for the father's son who narrates this sad story.

A live performance by Abafana Benkokhelo at Dalton Hostel Hall on 10 March 2002 was a fine and impressive example of how artists can be innovative when it comes to storytelling through music in a live performance. Abafana Benkokhelo is the name of an *isicathamiya* group. A lot of interesting observations were made about this group: eight members appear on the cover of their albums, but there was a larger cast of about fifteen members during the live performance. This means that the live performance provides more for the audience than the original recording on cassette or compact disc does.

An outstanding unique feature of Abafana Benkokhelo is that in a live performance they include drums, percussions, trumpets and yet still maintain the *isicathamiya* style of music. The inclusion of such instruments makes their songs last longer during a live performance and allows the group to engage in more dancing, while the band plays without any vocal accompaniments. This obviously leaves the audience spellbound.

We would like to mention two songs that were performed by Abafana Benkokhelo on this memorable day. The first song is Icala. This song tells a story of a family dispute about the rightful owner of the cattle that were left behind by the late head of the family. During the performance of this song, members of the group hold their arms over their heads, resembling the shape of the cattle's horns. This of course has relevance in the story depicted in the song. Part of the song has the following words:

“Icala lalezi zinkomo zikababa
Kanti liyophela nini?”

(“When will the issue
Of my father's cattle be resolved?”)

After these words, two members of the group come forward, approaching the audience, carrying fighting sticks to indicate that the issue will be resolved through

fighting. They engage in mock fighting for a few seconds. Suddenly one collapses and lies motionless on the ground. Other group members come to the rescue; restrain the victorious fighter and carry the defeated one back to the rest of the singers amid thunderous applause from the audience.

There is no doubt that such a dramatic enactment enhances the plausibility of the events in the story. This also indicates that a live performance has more for the audience member who are able to experience the story through a more vivid depiction of the characters and events in the story. A live performance allows for inclusion of many facts and details that are impossible to provide in a short studio recording of the song.

In another song entitled Le nkinga, a character is worried about illnesses and bad luck that seem to follow him wherever he goes. He then decides to consult a *sangoma* in order to know the cause of his problems. When Abafana Benkokhelo start singing this song, the lead singer is absent and only joins the group later to coincide with the part in the story when a *sangoma* has to be consulted. When he comes on stage, he is dressed as a *sangoma*, carrying *ishoba* in his hand and performs the ritualistic dance of *izangoma*. This again has relevance in the story that the song depicts. One has to be there during the performance in order to get these illuminating details that are impossible to accommodate in a studio recording of the song.

On 7 May 1992, Nomashizolo Msimang, who plays *umakhweyana* musical instrument, did a live performance for Zulu Language Board Meeting guests. His sharp sense of humour and dramatization skills thrilled his audience. One of the songs that were well received is the one entitled Ukugula Kukamfowethu. The first person narrator in this song tells a story of a jealous man who decides to kill his brother so as to get his beautiful wife. This must be understood against the backdrop of Zulu culture that allows one to marry the widow of one's deceased brother.

In this story, very scanty details are provided with regard to how the brother will be murdered. The narrator mentions cups of tea and we assume that poison has been

poured in the tea that has been drunk by the brother of the jealous man. When he starts feeling ill, his jealous brother is extremely excited:

“Ukugula kukamfowethu kuyangethembisa
Sengizothol’unkosikazi obomvu:
Thatha, mkhuhlane, thatha kufa
Ummango uyehlela!”

(My brother’s illness gives me hope
That I will get a beautiful wife:
Take him fever, take him death
Things are getting easier.”)

There is a sudden and very dramatic turn of events, however. The narrator starts feeling sharp pains and cries out for help. He is sure that he is going to die:

“We ma, we ma, ngafa, ngafa!
Kuphambane izinkomishi!”

“I’m dying, oh mother!
Cups have been swapped!”)

He starts shaking and collapses on the floor. There is regret in his voice when he says:

Ukugula kukamfowethu bekungethembisa
Bengithi ngizothola umfaz’obomvu.

(My brother’s illness was giving me hope
I thought I was going to get a beautiful wife.)

Without a live performance, the story in this song would not have been so dramatic and enjoyable. In a live performance, Mashizolo was able to enact actions that are impossible to depict in the text alone. His facial expressions were quite revealing, especially when he mentions how he is excited about his brother’s illness and looks forward to getting his brother’s wife.

There are many cases, however, where a live performance is a disappointment and an embarrassing experience. A song may be a masterpiece who one listens to it, only to find that the performance does not do justice to it. Sensitive members of the audience

are often offended by explicit sexually suggestive dance routines that have unfortunately become a norm in many live performances. Performers such as Boom Shaka, Amaponi, Mbongeni Ngema, etc. are notorious for their dance styles that leave very little to imagination. Boom Shaka, for instance, were once sternly reprimanded in public by Nelson Mandela who took offense to their dance techniques when the group performed in his honour.

One of the most dramatic live performances in Zulu is *ukugiya*. Every male is supposed to have praises that record experiences in life. These praises are then used in *ukugiya* when there is a feast, a wedding or any personal achievement such as acceptance by a lady, etc. As we indicated when we discussed the audience above, even when one does not have *izigiyo* there are some standard nursery rhymes that one can resort to. The late G.S. Zulu, was an author who used to receive awards during Usiba Writers' Guild ceremonies and would show his joy through *ukugiya*. He did not have praises of his own and would use "Sawubona Wethu" in his performances. This always thrilled his audience and many Usiba members will always have fond memories of Mageba and his performances.

In most cases *izigiyo* or *izihasho* reveal a lot about the subject and his experiences in life. There are *izigiyo* that are associated with how a person looks. A tall man is usually called *Ntamb'ende kalayini* (long twine) and one who is dark in complexion, *Nkuz'emnyam'iyazon'izithole* (black bull that spoils young cows.) Mkhulumeleni Makhoba's *izigiyo*, for instance were:

Njini faya,
Ndong'ezibomv'ezilal'amankentshane!

(Fire engine
Red dongas in which hyenas sleep)

Mkhulumeleni was very light-skinned indeed, hence the reference to the red colour of the fire engine and the red dongas.

Most of *izigiyo* tell a true story about some events that took place in the subject's life. Sithole (1968: 49) explains that a person who *giyas* also tells us a story:

From what he says, people can learn of his past experiences or his future since these brief utterances are mainly based on personal expressions of failure and achievements.

Vana Zungu's *izigiyo*, for instance have the following story:

Zul'eladum'ezansi komuzi ko-Eli
Lashaya inathingi.

(Thunder that rumbled below Eli's homestead
And struck nothing.)

This event took place in the early seventies. It was early in the morning and suddenly there was thunder and lightning. As a result a tree at Zungu's homestead caught fire but nobody was injured. Zungu obviously felt that an enemy was behind this and that the thunder bolt was aimed at killing him and his family, but of course it struck 'nothing'.

In *izigiyo* performance, it is not always possible to enact the story that the praise lines tell but the performance is dramatic enough to illustrate the subject's suitability for the heroic deeds portrayed in the story. In most cases, the fighting motif is prevalent: a person who performs usually holds his stick and fights an imaginary person. In other cases, a performer imitates a fierce animal like a bull to indicate that he possesses the same qualities.

For some audience members, use of bawdy language and dances that have sexual connotations in *izigiyo* tend to spoil the enjoyment of the performance. Groenewald (1998: 202) makes the following interesting comment about bawdy language as used in performances:

Verbal art would not be verbal art without the use of bawdy language on occasion. Since praise poetry is meant by and large to edify and to maintain the best possible image of the subject, criticism and bawdy language does not feature often. Yet it must be included as shock treatment, as it were, against

complacency, even at the risk of children being present.

The few examples that we have cited above support our belief that a live performance plays a vital role in enhancing the story in a song or poem. One must mention however, that not all artists are innovative and creative enough to make use of the opportunity that a live performance provides for making the story more vivid, detailed and enjoyable to the audience. There are cases where a composition tells a good story but the performance lacks the appropriate flexibility and resourcefulness of the artist to enact the events and characters in the story on stage for the benefit of the audience. We therefore applaud the ability of artists like Nomashizolo and Abafana benkokhelo and many others who are able to dramatize a story and make it more meaningful and enjoyable to the audience and still retain the beautiful stylistic requirements of the specific musical genre. This also shows that a live performance is indispensable for the effective actualisation of a composition and the plausible and moving depiction of the story that an artist wants to narrate in a composition.

7.2.4.2 PSEUDO-LIVE PERFORMANCE

The advent of technological inventions has created many possibilities that have resulted in recording performances for instant enjoyment at the touch of a button.

With regard to a pseudo-live performance, Shuker (1997: 198) explains:

A pseudo-live performance takes place at one remove, as it were, from the original or actual performance and is usually experienced through intermediary technology such as the television, or in one of the various recorded formats via radio and sound production systems.

Music videos have become popular means of entertainment and many artists have been exposed to the public through this medium. Music videos have relevance in storytelling by creating vividness to the story as viewers are able to see more of what cannot be depicted on stage during a live performance of the song.

Music videos rely on visuals and the impact thereof on the story, the depiction of characters and effective conveying of message and theme. Music videos are an attempt to retain the visual aspect that should prevail when a song is performed live for an audience.

Characters that only exist in the listeners' imagination come to life in the music video. This is primarily due to flexibility with regard to choosing actors who will best portray characters in the video. With regard to We Baba kaMdudu, for instance, the song does not mention the age and the physique of the father. The music video adds more dimension to this song because it features Mdudu's father as a huge flamboyantly dressed man who aptly fits the role of a playboy that is depicted in the song.

The music video is also able to include aspects of the story that are not mentioned or included in the song. Some of the lyrics in We Baba KaMdudu go like this:

“Ungishiy’ekhay’uzohlal’emaflethini
What’s going on?
Ngific’izimpahla zakho zi-ayiniwe
Kant’uban’ohlala lapha?”

(“You left me at home to stay in a flat
What’s going on?
I found your clothes ironed
Who is staying with you?”)

In the music video of We Baba KaMdudu, the song starts in the rural area when the wife boards a taxi that takes her to the city. She is carrying a baby on her back, a fact that is not mentioned in the song. The inclusion of this detail enhances the story and makes viewers feel more pity for this woman who is married to a husband who cheats on her.

A music video can also be used to include more information about the theme of the song. A song entitled Sibali by Khumbula tells a story of a brother-in-law who sexually abuses a child. When the music video starts, the screen shows this information:

Eight out of ten of sexual abuses are committed by family members.

The video of the song then shows how the abuse happens: while the child prepares to go to school, the rapist, who is apparently not working, enters and molests her. The child later falls pregnant and reports the matter to her mother. This results in the apprehension and arrest of the culprit. The video ends when the culprit is handcuffed and escorted by the police to the police van. Then the screen shows this information:

The molester was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment.

The above shows how a music video can be used effectively to provide more essential details in order to emphasise many points about the theme and the lesson of the story. In this case the objective is clear: the audience is warned that the arm of the law is very long and perpetrators of indecent assault and abuse will always be severely punished.

Music videos are indeed a very effective means of storytelling. There are even cases where songs that do not tell any story, are performed with a beautiful plot and storyline in the music video. This usually happens in music genres such as jazz and fusion. In a jazz song by Jimmy Dlodlu, entitled Ushintsho, there are no lyrics but we get an interesting story in its video version. The video shows a character who struggles but eventually attains his dreams and acceptance by people. This shows that in making a music video, producers and artists always consider the power that a story always have in a composition. The message in the song seems to be best conveyed by means of a good story that is used to support the song.

Like in a live performance, there are cases where a music video can depict a song in manner that can be offensive to a sensitive and conservative audience. A song may be harmless enough in its original studio recording version but portrayed differently in the music video. The main source of this problem is often the dances that are performed by the singers in the song. As we indicated in an earlier comment, views may differ with regard to this as everybody is entitled to their opinions. Some may find such videos acceptable and not an embarrassing scene to watch.

7.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have tried to make it clear that a composition only comes to life when it is performed in front of an audience. This is where the skill and talent of an artist is put to the test. The audience plays a crucial role in a performance because of its participatory function by showing approval through ululations, laughter, applaud, etc. In some cases, the audience becomes part of the story that the artist tells. This often happens in *izigiyo* in which the full realization of a performance and portrayal of the story depends on participation of the audience.

Some of the live performances that were given as examples illustrated that a story becomes more meaningful in a performance because an artist is able to include many aspects that cannot be accommodated in a studio recording. Abafana Benkokhelo, for instance, were a marvel to watch when they dramatized some of the stories that are found in their songs. They showed that through innovation, artists can use dress code, gestures, and facial expressions to make the storyline in a song more vivid and plausible.

The use of music videos is a very effective tool in providing the essential visual elements to the events, setting and characters in a story, thereby making it more real to the viewers. Viewers are provided with an opportunity of seeing the characters in action. This makes them identify more with the events in the story. In most cases, more details about the story are furnished in the music video. In the song entitled We Baba KaMdudu, for instance, the music video is able to furnish many vital aspects that lack in the original studio recording of the song. In the video, the story starts when the wife boards a taxi from the rural area. When she arrives in town she finds enough evidence that his husband is cheating on her. The video even shows us the age and the physique of the straying husband. All these details make us appreciate why the wife is complaining about her cheating husband.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 LOOKING BACK

The aim of this study was to illustrate how Zulu artists use music and poetry to tell stories. We indicated that although many scholars have conducted research in music and poetry, there has been little focus on the storytelling abilities of many Zulu artists that abound in many songs and poems. We felt that there was a need to applaud the skillfulness of Zulu artists that enables them to weave interesting stories that enjoy remarkable popularity among many people.

We reiterated the widely accepted view that music, poetry and storytelling are an integral part of a Zulu person's life. Every activity and occasion centres around music, hence a wide range of songs for weeding, harvesting, rites of passage, etc. that are always accompanied by beautiful singing and energetic dancing. With regard to the role of music to Africans, Msomi (1975: 27) explains:

If an African can talk and walk, he can also sing and dance.

A Zulu person is introduced to music at a very early stage. A mother always sings a song to her baby and in most cases this song tells an interesting story about the events surrounding the birth of the baby or the mother's life and experiences at her in-laws. Sithole (1968: 16) comments:

A pregnant woman, in addition to worrying about the name and health of the baby to be born, will ponder over the song she will sing when the baby is born.

Storytelling is also a skill that many Zulus possess and use for both entertainment and didactic purposes. Folktales are a remarkable manifestation of stories that fascinate, educate and thrill us even though some of them have been in circulation for many centuries and were conceived by illiterate people and passed on orally from generation to generation. We find abundant evidence of storytelling that displays impressive

stylistic features and occurs in rich everyday language such as riddles, proverbs, etc. Interestingly enough, even Nomgqigqo, a character in Mbongeni Ngema's play entitled The Zulu, has this to say about the storytelling abilities of the Zulus:

I come from a tradition of storytellers. Even in heaven where I come from, Zulus tell beautiful stories.

In the introductory chapter of this study, we defined various types of music and poetry that we find in Zulu and how artists have displayed their skill and talents when participating in various genres under these two concepts. Various types of Zulu music and poetry display features of storytelling. In traditional music such as *amahubo*, *imilolozelo*, etc. artists convey meaningful messages to the audience by making use of stories. Such stories display interesting and realistic conditions that prevail in the community.

Stories about personal achievements and experiences are told through music and poetry. In *izigiyo*, autobiographical details are provided in the form of a story that tells us how, for instance, the performer got the scars that we see on his face. In *izibongo*, for instance, a bard sings praises that are a biographical narrative about the king. Although laudatory in nature, *izibongo* are a storytelling medium that tells us a long story about how, for instance, the subject attained kingship. The enemies that were defeated feature as characters that make the story even more authentic and plausible, thus elevating the status of the king to lofty heights. In recent times, where kings are no longer involved in large scale battles and faction fights, *izibongo* still comprise stories about a king's involvement in resolving issues of a political nature, his role as a symbol of unity to his subjects, etc. Even trips to overseas countries are noted and feature as narratives that reaffirm the king's heroic achievements.

In the introductory part of this study we indicated that we are going to regard as Zulu music and poetry any composition that is in Zulu language, irrespective of whether or not the artist or performer is a Zulu person. As we know, there are artists such as Johnny Clegg, Brenda Fassie, etc. who use Zulu in their songs although they are not Zulus. What we also emphasised was that in most cases we were not going to

concentrate on the type or style of music but on the lyrics and their content. This was going to widen our scope to include many songs that may not be regarded as traditional Zulu music or modern Zulu music in the strict sense of the word.

We indicated that we were going to rely on certain theoretical approaches in order to clarify some points in our discussion. We looked at Jakobson's communication model to illustrate how stories in Zulu music and poetry are used as a means of communicating essential messages to the society. This model suggests that artists have to consider, amongst other things, the relevant code that will best facilitate the expression of opinions in a manner that will be convincing and acceptable to the audience. The communicative role of Zulu music and poetry reveals that stories are not told for their own sake but rather as an effective tool in arousing and sustaining dialogue and debate about issues that prevail in the society.

The narratological approach helped us appreciate how stories in Zulu music and poetry are conceived and relayed in a meaningful way. This approach stipulates essential elements that form the backbone of a story. The views that are expressed by narratologists such as Rimón-Kenan (1985), Genette (1983), etc, with regard to basic elements that constitute a story, confirmed our belief that many songs and poems that are composed by Zulu artists can be safely regarded as stories even though they do not always seem to conform to rigid plot structures that are found in prose narratives.

The stylistic approach highlighted how Zulu artists make use of various stylistic devices to add flavour to their artistic compositions, thus expressing the unique creativeness and dexterity of each artist. We were able to see that the unique manner in which artists express themselves should not be regarded as a shortcoming and a sign of inferiority but should rather be applauded even if such forms of expressions seem to deviate from the norms that occur in daily speech.

When we discussed plot it became very clear that Zulu musicians and poets are highly gifted storytellers. The chapter on plot revealed how requirements such as plots of character, action and thought are satisfied. We were able to illustrate how many stories, no matter how brief, still display basic plot structures with exposition, rising

action, climax and resolution. We also looked at how some artists tell stories that lack some of the plot elements but still retain excellent qualities of a good story. We attributed some unique plot constructions to the tendency by Zulu artists to make use of devices such as allusions, insertion and summaries in telling their stories.

Characters that are found in Zulu music and poetry are quite interesting and often leave a lasting impression on the mind of the reader, listener or audience. This is of course irrefutable evidence of the artists' ability to create life like characters that appeal to us and remind us of people that we encounter in real life. Poets in particular are experts when it comes to portraying characters and making them as vivid to us as possible. Many poets, for instance, have been able to portray historical figures as if they once met them in person. This is evident in poems such as Buzani KuMkabayi in which C.S.Z. Ntuli tells a story about how Mkabayi thwarted attempts by dignitaries such as Zwide, Phakathwayo and Dingiswayo to capture her heart. In this story the poet paints an impressive picture of Mkabayi's physical beauty that enhances the impact of the story and leaves a lasting impression on us.

Even when it comes to fictitious characters, poets excel in character portrayal. In Sonta, for instance, J.C. Dlamini captures our imagination when he describes a pretentious churchgoer who is arrogant and wants to be given higher positions in the congregation. He parades during sermons, does not close his eyes during prayers and performs many disturbing antics so as to draw attention to himself. By using the dramatic technique, Vusi Ximba provides a very convincing character portrayal in Indod'ethand'inyama. Although no physical description of the character is provided, his personality and behaviour enable us to create our own mental pictures of him. Ximba uses humour to indicate the character's obsession with meat. He takes over the cooking responsibilities from the women who were helping out, injures himself with an axe while chopping firewood and vehemently refuses to go to hospital for treatment:

Uyolunyathel'ukhun'alusakaze ngembazo
Az'ayinqamul'amazwane,
Akezwa nom'eselimele.
Bamemez'omakoti balay'ikhaya,

"Awu *shame* we muntu weNkosi
Nank'amazwan'akho
La ubucandela khon'asanyakaza..."

(He stamps the firewood and crushes it with an axe
Cutting his toes in the process,
He doesn't even feel that he has injured himself.
The young brides of the household call out,
"Oh, shame poor soul,
There lie your toes
Where you were chopping wood, they are still moving.")

Zulu artists use music and poetry to tell stories for entertainment and didactic purposes. Stories cover a wide range of themes that comment on issues of national and universal relevance. There are popular themes such as love, death, politics, religion, etc. With regard to love themes, for instance, artists show that love can be painful when couples do not treat each other with respect. In some cases stories indicate that true love can endure and overcome many obstacles. In Brenda's song entitled Nomakanjani, for instance, we find a lover who confesses her everlasting love despite negative comments from outsiders:

"Noma beth'unuk'umlomo
Ngeke ngikushiye
Ngikuthanda unjalo."

("Even if they say you have bad breath
I will never leave you
I love you as you are.")

Themes on religion reveal certain beliefs that show how Zulus look at life and all the issues that are related to it. With regard to death, for instance, many stories reveal that many Zulus have a strong belief in the role of ancestors in deciding people's fate. In some compositions, ancestors are responsible for death, particularly in deciding when a person is supposed to die. Many beliefs are accompanied by performance of certain rituals to appease and show assent to ancestors' decisions. In Juluka's song entitled Izingane Zami, a man is convinced that he is about to die and believes that his forefathers are calling him to join them. He then slaughters a beast, which is in accordance with the Zulu customary ritual:

Bese wangibiz'ubaba
 Wathi, "Mfana wami, isikhathi sami siphelile
 Hlonipha futhi wondle unyoko."
 Bese wathi, "Wisa le nkunz'esibayeni
 Sose isibindi sayo, ngiqobele mfana
 Sengiyahamba, bayangibiz'emzini kababa..."

(Then father called me
 He said, "My boy, my time is over
 Show respect and look after your mother."
 He then said, "Slaughter the bull in the kraal
 Let us roast its liver, cut some pieces for me boy
 I'm leaving, they are calling me at my father's home...")

In most cases artists avoid overt didacticism when expressing their views and feelings about issues that are addressed in their compositions. Characters and events are allowed to convey the relevant message without the narrator's intervention. When necessary, artists come to the fore and express in explicit terms their objections towards certain undesirable behaviour. A story is then used to illustrate the point that an artist wants to drive home. Mirriam Makeba And The Skylarks, for instance, warn us about the dangers of alcohol and tell a story as supportive evidence:

Ijini madod'iyabulala
 Ijini madod'ichith'imizi.
 Wafik'umakot'ekuseni,
 Wafik'umakot'edakiwe
 Ekhuluma izindaba
 Engabuzwanga muntu.

(Gin really kills,
 Gin destroys families.
 The young bried arrived in the morning
 The young bride arrived drunk
 Spreading gossips
 Without being prompted.)

When we looked at style, we observed a remarkable manifestation of impressive stylistic features that permeate Zulu music and poetry as a storytelling medium. Artists make use of various stylistic devices that reveal some unique artistic skills. In most cases, allusions play a significant role as impressive stylistic devices that are used in storytelling. *Izibongo* make use of allusions where *imbongi* assumes that his audience

is familiar with the details and events that are portrayed in the story that the praise lines tell. Even in cases where the audience is not familiar with the events alluded to, stories are told in a manner that retains their appealing qualities. In other cases stories are told in brief summary form. This implies that an artist should be very selective in choosing relevant details that will form the story without leaving the audience unsatisfied and with many unanswered questions.

The most remarkable feature is that stories are 'inserted' in songs and poems for various reasons. When an artist wants to convey a lesson to his or her audience, he or she may simply insert a story that will accompany his or her composition in order to illustrate the point. In some cases, however, there is no justification for the inclusion or insertion of a story. In many of Mfazomnyama's songs, stories are inserted without any apparent reason, thus making them irrelevant and unsuitable. This, on the other hand, may not be regarded as a shortcoming but rather as an indication that Zulu artists have an abundance of stories that always need telling and therefore tempt artists to insert them in their compositions regardless of their irrelevance. This also results in songs that comprise more than one story. *Isicathamiya* music in particular makes use of songs that are a medley comprising three or four different stories in one song and nobody seems to frown on this tendency.

The most remarkable stylistic feature is that of the episodic nature of many narratives. Artists have kept us updated on stories that have interested us over the years. In the early seventies Soul Brothers, for instance, first introduced us to Sibongile and her parents. We have followed the story of this family in various albums that have revealed the challenges and obstacles that each member of the family has had to endure over the years. Khansela No JBC have enjoyed enormous popularity with the three songs that feature Majazi who is subjected to daily beatings in the hands of his rude wife. In a recent interview on Ezodumo on 20 October 2002, Khansela admits that sales of the three albums that feature Majazi have surpassed the sales of 16 previous albums released since the group was founded. In fact, the third and latest album sold 15 000 copies in one week! Khansela firmly attributes this success to Majazi character. This of course shows how a good story can have impact on the artist's popularity and therefore justify a follow up or serialization of the story.

This study indicated how style is regarded as a manifestation of an artist's ability to use language as an effective means of expressing ideas and opinions. We applauded the impressive manner in which poets in particular make use of beautiful language to create tintilating stories that appeal to us and make us want to hear more. Imagery such as symbols, similes and metaphors feature abundantly in many stories. In some cases the whole story may be in the form of a metaphor. This happens in a humorous yet forceful story by Gcumisa entitled Ayithi Nyaka! which tells a story of people who are aboard a car that fails to move forward. The driver tries to placate the passengers while trying desperately to make some progress. Eventually some passengers decide to pull out, leaving the car, its driver and many desperate passengers still on the road to nowhere, with an uncertain future looming ominously over their heads. We are able to infer, however, that maybe the poet has deftly used a car image as an apt allusion to a political party, a club, a company or an organisation that, in the narrator's view, seems to lack progressive inclinations.

Humour as a stylistic feature was very interesting to look at. We indicated how artists such as Vusi Ximba, J.C. Dlamini, etc., excel in this regard. Humour prevails even in stories that depict tense and sombre occasions and conditions. Characters are described with a sharp sense of humour. Actions and events are portrayed in a manner that evokes laughter in us. All this is aimed at making the story as interesting as possible. Sense of humour that prevails in many stories is a remarkable feature and an asset that is not possessed by everybody. What is even more remarkable is the fact that even though humour is a common occurrence in many stories, it does not mean that such stories are senselessly funny and therefore useless and meaningless. The message and meaning is always retained.

With regard to the role of humour in a story and particularly in character portrayal, Ntuli (1998:116) comments:

Sense of humour stimulates the reader's imagination and thus contributes to the vividness of the character and indirectly promotes the delineation of the character.

Artistic creations are aimed at an audience. In other words, an artist's composition is only fully realized when performed before an audience. This is where stories come alive and display the unique talent and capability of individual artists. There are many elements that influence the success and effectiveness of a performance. The venue of the performance, for instance, may play a vital role in how the audience enjoys a performance. If, for example, an open veld or *isigcawu* is used, audience participation is maximized but words of the performer are drowned by the noise of the appreciative audience. In some cases the audience surges forward to have a closer look at the performer, thus making it difficult for other people to enjoy the performance.

A live performance puts an artist's talent and entertainment skills to the test because he or she must exhaust all the resources in order to keep the audience hooked to the performance. When commenting about this, Ntaka (1997:32) explains:

Live performance of *mbhaqanga* music demands a lot from performers. The music is not just a matter of singing and playing instruments. The performance involves body movements, gestures, melody and rhythm. A lot of energy is exerted by performers.

The advantage is that there is always an instant and on the spot feedback about the response of the audience to the performer's magic. If there is a need for improvement and even improvisation, the performer is able to quickly make necessary adjustments. With regard to music performance, Lobamijiko (1984:3) comments:

The musician is always on the alert to change his repertoire or his style of performance at the slightest indication that his host is not enjoying the performance.

A live performance is always a memorable experience for the audience as it provides more than what a studio recording is capable of. The audience and fans are able to see their favourite artists perform in person, right in front of them. With regard to this, Wilson (1985: 57) says:

People are particularly excited by the immediate presence of performers who have exceptional appeal due to looks,

confidence, voice, fame, wealth or such like and it can be powerful enough to result in fainting.

This proximity and intimacy between the performer and the audience enhances the impact of the stories that are found in many songs and poems. In a live performance, a skillful artist is able to enact and dramatise the story and make it real and life like to the audience. Abafana Benkokhelo, for instance, were able to use their live performance as a realistic storytelling platform. In a song that tells a story about family members who have to contact a *sangoma*, the lead singer came on stage dressed as a *sangoma* for effective dramatization of the story. This of course shows that a live performance provides opportunities for the audience to watch the characters in action.

The most recent trend is to use pseudo-live performances in the form of video recordings of the songs. This has proved to be very popular with the younger generation whose addiction to the television screen is phenomenal. Pseudo-live performances enhance the visual aspect of the story because viewers are able to follow the whole story as it unfolds on the television screen.

A video recording of a song provides more details than the studio recording. In a song such as Ubaba KaMdudu, for instance, the video recording shows Mdudu's mother leaving her home in the rural area to visit her husband in the city. She boards a taxi that drops her off on the street next to her husband's flat. The original song does not provide these essential details because the singer starts the story when the Mdudu's mother is already confronting her husband about his affairs with other women in the city. The video also shows us the type of ladies that her husband hangs out with. This of course makes the story more interesting and shows that a video recording of a song can play a crucial role in enhancing the plausibility of the story.

There are, however, cases where a video recording spoils a good song, especially where characters are scantily dressed or are involved in scenes that can be regarded as offensive to sensitive viewers. We must hasten to mention, however, that this may be

a biased and subjective opinion because there are many people who are crazy about music videos that may be regarded as obscene by other viewers.

A very sad state of affairs is the rapid decline in the live performance of music, particularly on communal occasions such as weddings, parties, etc. The main source of entertainment seems to be recordings of popular artists who have taken the place of family and local choirs that were always a highlight of any gathering. Pewa (1995:152) laments this imminent loss of our musical heritage by saying the following words:

South Africa is in danger of becoming a society of listeners and not of music composers and performers, because of the growing consumption of media-fed performance.

The above statement indicates that if we are not careful we may one day lose most of the gems that our music and poetry provide.

This study was an attempt to show why we believe that Zulu artists deserve a place among renowned storytellers. They display a unique style of storytelling that accounts for the huge popularity they enjoy amongst the public. In most cases the stories that are told by Zulu artists are not fictitious. This means that one can learn a lot from real life events and experiences of the historical figures whose lives have been preserved in story form by these capable artists. In many prose narratives, stories centre around fictitious characters that are only an artist's imagination and creation. The impact of such events is not as direct and influential as that of the events that affect real life characters. Epics are a fine example of this. We are touched more and prone to be influenced by the experiences of heroes such as Shaka, Mandela, Cetshwayo, etc. as portrayed in epics by Msimang, Zulu, Gcumisa, respectively.

Zulu music and poetry have played a very significant role in preserving our history for future generations to come. Stories that are told by Zulu artists paint a vivid picture about many significant episodes of national and universal interest. Caluza's Imfuluwenza for instance, tells us how this 1918 epidemic wiped out many lives and

left many traumatized survivors. Stories about tragedies such as the sinking of the Mendi, the Effingham train crash, the Coalbrook mine disaster, etc., have all been recorded in moving stories by our artists. Details about these events that touched many of our people's lives will always be available for future generations.

If we listen to some of the stories that our artists tell we can also have an idea about how things have changed. In the late 1940s, the Manhattan Brothers told a story about a petty theft in which ten shillings were stolen:

Lanyamalal'ishumi losheni
Lintshontshwe ngaboShabalala.

(Ten shillings disappeared
They were stolen by Shabalala and friends.)

If we consider the value of the rand at the moment we may feel that the amount that is stolen in this song does not deserve some serious mention. But the story draws our attention to how much one could purchase with ten shillings at that time. After stealing ten shillings Shabalala and friends go on a buying spree:

Ngibabonil'ukushona kwelanga
Bethwel'inyama namasak'oshukela.

(I saw them at sunset
They were carrying bags of meat and sugar.)

There are of course many other things that can still be said about stories that are told through Zulu music and poetry. Our study was only a cursory evaluation that was aimed at highlighting how Zulu artists are endowed with remarkable storytelling abilities as evident in the abundance of stories that we find in many compositions of impressive standard.

8.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In our introduction to this study we indicated that this was going to be a general evaluation of storytelling techniques in Zulu music and poetry. The scope of this study therefore did not allow us to give a detailed analysis of each and every individual artist as a storyteller. We believe that there is a need for an analysis of musical narratives that are produced by prolific storytellers such as Vusi Ximba, for instance. Vusi Ximba's music relies largely on stories that permeate almost each and every song that he sings. A closer look at his music and a detailed analysis of the various themes that he comments on, character portrayal, humour and many other aspects of this master storyteller will be very valuable in exposing the artistic ability of this artist to as many people as possible.

We also feel that a detailed analysis of Zulu epics is long overdue. In the past there used to be complaints about the dearth of this subgenre but there has recently been a steady increase in the number of epics by many talented poets. Gcumisa, for instance, has produced a moving epic on Cetshwayo. Msimang has written an epic that paints yet another vivid picture about the heroic deeds of Shaka. A milestone in Zulu epics has been Zulu's contribution that sings praises to Nelson Mandela who is an international symbol of the struggle for emancipation. The availability of these epics paves way for many research topics. One can, for instance, look at the point of view that is adopted by poets in epic narratives and evaluate whether there is anything that epics add to historical details as we know them.

Little mention has been made about performing arts in Zulu. This study revealed, albeit in passing, various manifestations of skill and innovation that is found in the performance of music and poetry. *Izigiyo* performance, for instance, is a fertile ground for research. A study can be conducted with the aim of evaluating the form and content of *izigiyo*. One can also make a comparative analysis of various forms of *izigiyo* performance styles and how aspects such as venue, occasion and gender influence a performance.

This study did not focus on traditional songs that are used on weddings, *umvalelo*, (a traditional all night singing and dancing party), *umgqumshelo* (a form of dance performed on the eve of a Zulu traditional wedding), etc. An analysis of the nature, content and performance of such songs can also be a valuable contribution.

Zulu music and poetry have been affected by Western influences. Has this influence enriched or weakened our artists' creative expressions? A study can be undertaken to evaluate how Zulu artists have embraced Western stylistic forms and how these have been blended to brew unique compositions with a strong and distinct African flavour. Issues of imitation can also be addressed, particularly with regard to artists such as Amatshitshi Amhlophe, Izingane ZoMa, etc. in order to determine how this affects certain music genres.

We made some interesting observations when we discussed the various themes that are addressed by artists in their compositions. Female artists often express their dissatisfaction about physical abuse, cheating and many atrocities that are perpetrated by males. Males, on the other hand, also address issues that display their concern with victory in love relations, workplace conditions, etc. A comparative analysis of some themes by certain artists can reveal more about the world view of the artists and how their opinions impact on their fans' behaviour.

Zulu artists have been involved in controversy as a result of some of their compositions. Mbongeni Ngema has aroused a lot of debate and fingerpointing with his latest release, *AmaNdiya*. Phuzekhemisi has faced a wave of criticism as well as applause because of his songs that accuse political parties of letting the masses down. A study needs to be undertaken to determine the role of music in arousing debate and expressing sentiments and aspirations of the masses. Such a study can be invaluable in pointing out how freedom of expression affects Zulu artists.

There are of course many other aspects that can still be researched in order to highlight the enormous contribution that has been provided by Zulu artists through music and poetry. With regard to the storytelling function of Zulu music and poetry, we feel that what we were able to mention and discuss in this study will arouse more

interest and pave way for much needed research in this area. We wholeheartedly hope that this humble attempt will be an invaluable contribution in the study and appreciation of Zulu music and poetry.

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