

THE EDUCATIVE VALUE OF FOLK TALES AMONG THE ZULU

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aim of this paper is to bring forth the educational value of folk tales as well as the relationship that existed between grandmothers and grandchildren.

Education is an old phenomenon amongst Zulus. It existed long before the white man came with a formal type of school. Duminy (1968:19) quotes the well-known social Anthropologist, Prof. M.J. Herkovits, who said about education of Blacks:

What the European brought to the African was schooling which, however important it may be, constitutes but a portion of the total process of social and cultural learning .

This is a clear indication of the fact that Zulus, illiterate as they were, did have their own customs and beliefs that they wished to preserve and transmit to younger generation. The only way of doing this was through oral literature. Their philosophy of life that ran like a golden thread through all the generations was preserved in their artistic and creative stories which were related around fire by grandmothers in the evenings. This was education in the true sense; for the elder members of the society were concerned about the type of adult they had to bring up. The different type of educational system brought by whites has misled some people to believing that Blacks/

that Blacks were ignorant before whites came.

Duminy (1968:23) maintains that:

"The important point is that the Bantu were not 'ignorant' before the Europeans came, although some Europeans believed this so passionately that they even convinced some of the Bantu of it. Their children were not brought up in a vacuum but in a very specific social situation."

- 1.2 Without any further elaboration, it can nevertheless, be stated that the 1976 disaster experienced by the present education system has traces of ideologies to the effect that education is a process of unconditional introduction of knowledge and ways of a 'superior culture' without any regard for the cultural outlook of the Blacks.

This leads us to the idea that schooling and education should not be viewed as synonyms. Duminy (1968:20) endorses this by saying:

If education had to do with classrooms, books, wall charts, headmasters, then there would be no education to be found in African tribal life and we would not have been able to write these words under the title "indigenous education".

As time waits for no man, education of the Blacks has undergone drastic changes. Initially adults were concerned with the education of their children.

This we find in folk tales that were mainly related by grandmothers, as well as the initiation schools that were conducted by adults with an aim of exposing the youth to the culture and customs. Nowadays the interest of education is gradually shifting from the adults to the children who have a say as to what they want to be taught. This, however, does not mean that school sillabi cannot accommodate our philosophy of life that is embedded in our folk tales.

Going back to the "school" around fire we realise the multipurpose nature of this setting. Although some authors like Hart as quoted by Duminy (1968 :28) believe that:

" education before puberty is haphazard,
normless, even valueless",

we cannot agree with this because several Black Authors and informants believe that education prior to that of initiation schools was very important and a number of didactic implications could be noticed from it. Mkhize (1975:) says:

Ziwunthombo wolwazi lwakithi lomdabu
abalushiya beludlulisele kithina
abadala bethu, nathi esekufanele ukuba
siludlulisele kubantwana bethu
nasezizukulwaneni ezizayo .

(Introductory remarks)

(The folk tales are the source of
knowledge of our nation that was left by our

old people and we also have to pass it on to our children and generations to come).

From this the value of our folk tales cannot be said to be bleak, for as they were meant for entertainment and amusement, they also served as educational.

- 1.3 The didactic implications from a number of our folk tales cannot be over emphasised. Before the coming of the missionaries with their western type of education, Zulus were very keen in passing on to their children what they valued, so that they could become "ideal" adults. Their only means of this type of education was by word of mouth. In all types of Zulu literature we notice some measure of instruction and education. Nyembezi (1963:xii) says about proverbs:

All proverbs, whatever situation they describe, be they humorous or grim seem to have a common base in that they may all serve to instruct .

Even though proverbs were not accommodated in the evening sessions of story telling, they formed part of daily speeches, but in them we notice the instructional value attached by the elders to serve as a guide to the children who were to become adults in future. Riddles on the other hand formed part of the evening occasions in that they were related by both children and adults. In some families riddles

were related prior to 'izinganekwane', the aim being to keep the audience alert, attentive and ready for stories. Unlike folk tales, riddles could be related any time of the day, and folk tales were strictly reserved for the evening after the greater part of the day's work had been completed.

Folk tales, unlike riddles and proverbs, may not be regarded as specifically created for the purpose of teaching. They in their plots and characters, display several themes which in their final analysis carry the didactic implications. The different themes show what the actual philosophy of life is. They display the do's and dont's of the general outlook of life of the Zulus.

Zulu "folk tales" are basically divided into myths, legends and fables, which all have different themes. The other significant characteristic of izinganekwane is their division into motifemes which are different actions in the story that the teller uses in the formation of the story.

I do not intend this as a review of traditional literature but to bring to the fore some of the most important educational - instructional features of the informal school conducted by grandmothers in the evenings around the fire.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF IZINGANEKWANE

2.1 DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS AND METHOD

Izinganekwane were highly instructional and didactic. Even though the created story can have animals as main characters, the theme was not overshadowed by these. The main and interesting characteristic was that of method. Grandmothers in their narration would not tell the aim of the story to the children, but funny enough this would not go unnoticed because children would deduce it from the story. This is one method used extensively by modern educators in schools. This method is the same as that used by the greatest teacher, Jesus Christ, whose parables indicated the answers without his elaboration. Novelists also use the same method for they do not drive down our throats their moral values in many pages, but we as readers, deduce from their stories the aim and morals.

Mofokeng (1951:195) says:

The same should really be expected of these tales which like short stories have even less space and time than the novel for stressing a moral that stands so clearly from the story

In izinganekwane, the didactic implication cannot go unnoticed even when not mentioned.

Msimang (1975:74) in his book "KUSADLIWA NGOLUDALA" says:

Okhokho babethanda ukwexwayisa
nokubekela abantu imigoqo yokuthi
ungakwenzi lokhu, ungakwenzi lokhuya.

(Great grand parents enjoyed warning and giving people advice that you must not do this, you must not do that).

Animals are found to play an important role as characters in izinganekwane. Marivate (1973:59) says:

Characters may be exclusively animals or human beings, or both, but the main thing in the tale is the moral, the rest being secondary .

Big powerful animals are usually fooled by the small animals like the hare. As these stories are meant for children, animals serve the purpose of entertainment as well and children would not regard them as unreasonable. In Mofokeng's dissertation there is an argument as to the belief that primitive man is nearer animals, and this therefore brings about the belief that animals speak and act as man does. Mofokeng (1951:185) does not accept this for he claims:

Scientifically even today we do not know what the truth of the matter is .

2.2 LACK OF STYLE

Because our folk tales were not written down, there is no one style peculiar to them, but there are as many styles as there are narrators. Narrators could forget certain portions this is the time when Mofokeng (1951,:182) comments thus:

'She lends individuality to it by adding minor apparently unimportant individual touches here and there. An ideophone there an interjection there, now a gesture, now a smile, now a song.

As only she can sing it with her individual voice; now imitating this character, now that one .

This will be the particular individual's style; given to the next narrator, the style will change drastically. Junod (1927 Vol 11 :218) believes that

Each narrator has his own style,
speaks freely and does not feel in
anyway bound by the expressions used
by the person who taught him the tale

This emphasises the idea that style in folk tales is an individual matter. Because these were not written down or memorised, the storyteller would get the chance of narrating and composing at the same time.

Neethling, (1980:2:50) maintains that:

Die verteller beklee 'n kardinale posisie binne 'n mondelinge tradisie, enersyds as draer van die tradisie, en andersyds as individuele kunstenaar wat deur sy besondere anslag, verbeeldingskrag en improvisasievermoë die tradisie lewendig moet hou .

We are here reminded of the important role the grandmother as narrator plays. She has to try her best to make her story so lively by improvisations here and there so that the audience will always remain alert and interested. Story tellers are known to be very sensitive to an inattentive audience, basically because their stories are not for entertainment only that they can be ignored so easily. They carry the vital moral code that listeners have to adhere to as members of the Zulu community.

2.3 THE EVENING AS THE STORY TELLING TIME

Another characteristic feature of izingane kwane is that they were not related during the course of the day. The belief attached to this was that people who relate stories during the day would grow horns. This had never occurred to anyone, and it could be that people had to see to it that their day's work was finished first. Story telling is very interesting and time consuming, if told during the day, people would not have enough time to finish their daily duties.

Guma (1977 :34) says:

The fact that they are told at night has the effect of heightening the fantasy and adding to the effectiveness of an able narrators dramatic techniques. If told by the day, one is usually advised to put sticks of grass into one's hair for fear of growing horns on the head.

Marivate also endorses the idea that Black societies practiced the custom of story telling during the night rather than during the day. He maintains that amongst many beliefs adhered to by Tsonga people, there is the belief that the father of the person who tells the story during day time will be stupid at the tribal courts. In Giyani area the belief is that the one who tells stories during day time will grow horns, and at Chief Thomo's place they believe that a person will die when telling stories during the day. This shows that the nature of misfortunes differ from place to place.

These beliefs may differ with ethnic groups respectively because story telling was so interesting and involving that there had to be a special time set aside for the special occasion of the day.

Junod (1927, Vol 11, :212) believes:

... the prohibition comes from the fact that this game is so popular that

they are afraid to devote too much time to it.

Several informants believe this was an interesting part of the day. It is therefore unfortunate that the modern youth only has to listen to "Isicephu sikaGwaqaza" (An episode of the story "Gwaqaza") during the evening radio programmes. The programme of izinganekwane only comes during school hours, so it should be suggested that schools should accommodate these programmes.

2.4 GRANDMOTHERS AS NARRATORS

These tales were mainly meant for children, but the grandparents were the main tellers of these tales. This does not mean that other people could not. According to Scheub, youngsters were trained by their elders to relate stories. Any person could tell stories, but not everybody could tell stories effectively. The power of imagination, memory and also intelligence affected story-telling. Age is a contributory factor in story telling because children under sixteen cannot be as artistic as older people. Very old people too appear to be very forgetful. It surely needs a mature mind for a teller to co-ordinate telling and performance, hence Scheub's differentiation between performer and teller.

Neethling, (1980:2:54) maintains that:

Die ouer vrou het heel wat meer informasie verskaf benewens die refrein, en veral die lang stukke dialoog wat in die kind se verhaal afwesig was, is opvallend. Dit is duidelik dat die kind hoofsaaklik van oorgelewerde kernclichés gebruik maak, terwyl die ouer vrou haar stempel op die oorgelewerde kernclichés behendig in haar eie komposisie in te werk.

This indicates a marked difference between a story related by an adult and that of a youth. The young people are not always successful in maintaining the balance between the plot, theme and imagination. It is inevitable that the folk-tales as products of people should be involved with some of the customs, beliefs and superstitions. Some of the customs, we realize, may remain in the tales long after the people have ceased to observe them; e.g. in the story "Intombazana namavukuthu" (the girl and the doves) the girl could not move out of the house because it was during her menstruation period. She had to stay put. This custom is nowadays no longer honoured, and girls can go and fulfill their duties anywhere anytime.

2.5 SINGING AND DANCING

Singing and dancing played a greater part in storytelling as it broke the monotony in between. This kept the children ever attentive and keen to hear stories being continued. Besides breaking the monotony

some of the songs were apparently magic formulae which when sung were followed by some miraculous events. e.g. a song for itshe lika Ntunjambili (Ntunjambili's stone) Songs were not compulsory for all tales. We have some tales without songs; e.g. the story of Umuntu nenyoni enya amasi (the man and the bird that defecates sourmilk).

Mofokeng (1951 :208) quotes Torrent as saying:

...the typical Bantu tale consists of two distinct parts, one sung and the other narrated .

An emphasis can be made here to the fact that singing varied not only with the type of tale involved but also in some instances, with the individual teller. Structurally all songs had two parts, namely; the solo part which was sung by the narrator, and the chorus which was sung by the audience. The words of the solo part generally carried the message of the song, and words of the chorus part simply conveyed no meaning. Marivate noticed with Tsonga tales that nobody ever started singing without an initial solo part by a leader who was always a narrator. For some reason it did occur that the audience did not know the song. When the narrator noticed this, she taught it to her audience.

Beauchat (1958 :187) states that:

.... if the people present do not know the song, the person who tells the folktale

teaches it to everyone .

2.6 IMITATION

Mimicry is one of the chief characteristic of story telling. The narrator lends an indescribable vividness to the story by the use of an ideophone here, an interjection there, now a gesture, now some facial expression, now imitating the zin with a hoarse gruesome voice, now imitating the rabbit with a high squealing voice. Finnegan (1970:350) states that:

The fact that most of the animals portrayed are well known to the audience their appearance, their behaviour, their calls, so often amusingly imitated by the narrator - adds definite wit and significance...

Imitation helps in enhancing the story of the narrator and a clear picture of the theme will remain embedded in the minds of the children. Scheub (1975) believes that each performer has his own personal material of inherited tradition which is given life not by means of the written word, but with the body and the voice imaginatively and rhythmically utilized.

3. FORM AND DELIVERY

3.1 There are various styles of the delivery of the folk tales; these vary according to the narrator and her environment. The usual varieties are:

Kwesukela (It happened long ago) or

Kwesukesukela (It happened long long ago)

To this, the audience would respond thus:

Cozi! others use Cosi!

we are really not aware of the meaning of this, but it could be thought to mean - tell us or tell it to us. Msimango (1975:80) has another variety of the audience's response as:

Siyiphekela ngogozwana siyifake phansi

kwembiza

(We cooked it in a small pot and put it under the big calabash).

This has no direct significance to the story as such, it is a mere indication of interest and expectation from the audience that is now ready for the story. From the response, the narrator moves directly to the tale. She usually does not indicate whether it will be a legend, a myth or an animal tale. Guma (1977:33)

gives the Sotho form of the story delivery thus:

The narrator usually begins with the words;

Ba re ene ere ...

(they say it happened that ...)

This however is subject to variation. He further goes on to say:

This is then followed by the story itself with the names of the chief characters appearing quite early, usually immediately after the introductory phrase.

The atmosphere and feeling depicted from the first part of the story is usually low and sad because it is when the narrator exposes the problematic instances of the story. This is the crucial time of the story for every member of the audience to grasp so that as the tension builds up, no one should be lacking information. The first episode can reveal disequilibrium, lack, conflict, interdiction which will be soon violated to create anxiety and tension. This is what really makes a story. Marivate (1973:85) believes that:

An error in life makes a story .

It is a departure from normality that creates problems and need for solutions. This is an art used by modern novelists and short story writers whose success will be clearly seen in the handling of the plot, the theme and characters. In the story of Nanana boselesele; Nanana moves from normality by exposing her children to the dangerous "Sondonzima". It is this violation that set the story rolling for there were bound to be consequences.

3.2 Several authors believe that during narration, the narrator pitches her voice high and in most cases she will speak fast. Pritchard (1967, :19) noticed that:

The illiterate teller speaks too fast and if persuaded to speak slower is checked in his habitual delivery .

Mofokeng (1951) also subscribes to the belief that these stories were related in a relatively fast speed where lengthy introductions were avoided in P178 he endorses this thus:

Once the story has started it moves rapidly towards the climax .

While the narrator delivers her story, the audience is not left out to be passive and unattentive. The narrator occasionally threatens to discontinue the narration once the audience is unattentive. Besides providing the narrator the experience of experimenting with her tales, the audience plays a vital role in story-telling.

Marivate (1973:25) states that:

The audience is not passive. The listeners show appreciation by their attentiveness, laughter gestures and active response to the teller's performance. By becoming directly involved, the audience actually helps in the actualisation and creation of the story at the particular moment of narration .

This explains explicitly that there has to be a very close and neat face to face confrontation between the narrator and her audience. This is the confrontation similar to that of the teacher and his pupils in a classroom situation. Like the teacher, the narrator is always concerned with the level of concentration as displayed by her audience. She may decide to directly involve the audience by making certain

members act out certain parts in the narration, Audience participation has been noticed to provide as an excellent training method for future story-tellers, hence most people who have been exposed to a story telling environment know how to narrate a tale or two.

Scheub (1975 :46) declares:

The performer, as we have seen, neither memorizes the narratives nor does she undergo a rigid and formal apprenticeship to "learn" plots and techniques. She has witnessed many ntsomi productions, and her memory has distilled from those experiences certain songs, chants, actions, characters, sayings and other memorable incidents and details which form a loosely structured image in her memory and can later be recalled when she desires to construct a ntsomi.

Several informants agree to the fact that they were never taught, in a formal way, how to relate an inganekwane. Because of interest and necessity, they were forced to remember, re-organise and relate the stories they once heard. This brings about the different patterns of story telling, but with similar themes. The beauty of it all is that; here are people who have never known the rules of poetic techniques and qualities, but each time the stories

are related, one invariably comes across certain qualities peculiar to individuals but filled with beauty. Each time the Zulus create, aesthetic value comes out clearly.

It is with regret to note that the coming of the missionaries with their culture and doctrines, made Zulus see flaws in their culture. There is much that the modern Zulu has lost without much gain from the western culture either. The writer believes that the old Zulu, illiterate as he might have been, was by far a superior being comparatively. His philosophy of life could be found expressed in everything around him. His culture, his custom, his manner of treating strangers displayed his beliefs and values. What of the modern Zulu?

4. CONTENT AND THEME

Narratives, though meant for fun and enjoyment, have been noticed to have different categories. The classification of narratives is based on content. It is because of the difference in subject matter that we have the following:-

4.1 MYTHS

Old Zulus had a very inquisitive mind. Around him were several queer phenomena that baffled him. To give an explanation which would be factual he composed myths. These stories have been noticed

internationally for the original sense of the word Muthos and it comes from Greece. Amongst myths we notice an explanation about some natural phenomena like, mysteries of life, love, death and hatred. The didactic implications come out pronounced even in such stories. In the story about the lizard and the chameleon (An explanation about how death came about) the narrator clearly exposes the importance of attending promptly to instructions. Death would not be there if the chameleon did not go about feeding on mulberry ^{ies} (ubukhwebezane) instead of delivering the message to the people. In her choice of words, the narrator creates a serious atmosphere to let the message come out clearly.

Marivate (1973 :57) contends:

They are usually sacred and are told in serious circumstances .

It cannot be disregarded that most narrators as well as their audience were aware of the other implications; e.g. the didactic implications when relating the story. What is of interest is that these were there.

4.2 LEGENDS

Like myths legends are regarded as true, but they are set in a remote period. Legends have been found to have historical facts such as the name of the particular character in them, but because of time this has somehow become shrouded in mystery as to be semi-mythical.

4.3 FOLK TALES

This is a story handed down traditionally from generation to generation for no purpose other than pleasure of telling a story. These had no didactic lessons in them and were not taken seriously.

4.4 FABLES

Fables had animals as their main characters and were usually didactic. Characters could either be animals or human beings or both, but their main theme is moral. Marivate (1973:59) does not accept the moral aspect as the major intention for he claims:

It must however be mentioned that it has been established that folk tales are told mainly for amusement and entertainment; the moralising function, if present, is always secondary .

This cannot be denied in toto but the fact that there were didactic aspects cannot be rejected either. We are used to the saying "Many a truth is said in a jocular fashion". Children would grasp the message even in the midst of animals and all the fun. In all the different types of folk tales we notice that despite the fact that these were meant for entertainment, educational aspects cannot be overlooked. Vilakazi (1946 :191) subscribed to the same educational belief when saying:

Stories dealing with folk love are primarily didactic and aim at building a moral love .

He further maintained that:

Virtue is rewarded and vice punished,
right conquers might, cleverness gains the
victory over stupidity .

In several of these folk tales we come across animals that have been personified, as well as people being able to communicate with these. One might be convinced that these were purely for entertainment. It is, however, noticed that the presence of animals, both wild and domestic indulging in conversation enhances the imaginative value of the plot of the story to suit the minds of children. The narrator always chooses the animals known to her audience to eliminate misunderstanding. The child as a member of the audience would be encouraged to move around with an open eye, observing different animals and their characteristics.

4.5 GENERAL THEMES

Folk tales have their own themes that indicate the values, beliefs and philosophy of life of the people. We do not have to wait for the narrative with human beings only so as to get to the theme of any nature. Stories with animals only, or stories that include both animals and human beings do have significant

themes. Evidently the themes in common are about activities of human beings in their daily lives. Amongst several themes, we have those that indicate stubbornness, stupidity, selfishness, unreasonableness, cruelty, jealousy, bravery, co-operation, conceit, etc.

The story teller when creating her story had to be very artistic and selective, this could be seen in the good language and well chosen words. In her choice of words, the story teller had to put across a message to the children or her audience. The choice of characters has a tremendous influence on the particular theme of the story. This we notice in characters that could be said to be weak and small but will end up victorious and wiser. This is a clear reflection on our everyday life that the bully people end up frustrated like Goliath defeated by David in the Bible. Powerful bully characters usually depict evil and corruption, but the small weak innocent characters show that right will always conquer might. It could therefore be concluded that even though these stories have animals as their main characters, the aim is to put across the theme in a manner that will suit the interests of the children. The children get the lesson that an underdog will always come out top in life's struggle between forces of wits.

Marivate (1973 :99) maintains:

Tsonga folk tales are either in the form of rescuing the victim or liquidating the undesirable element which caused the disequilibrium. The characteristic feature of these motifemes in Tsonga is that the agent who helps to restore the state of equilibrium is generally the least considered member of society.

This endorses the main idea which is common in all the narratives universal as they are, the idea of might conquered by the little insignificant characters. Junod (1927 Vol 11:204) refers to this thus:

The same idea runs through the group of stories which I have called the wisdom of the little ones.

Khalulu and Chakijana in our izinganekwane are the weakest characters that always prove to be clever and they outwit the powerful strong animals like elephants and lions. Obviously no story is watertight, the different themes can overlap. Other common themes are disobedience and unfaithfulness do not pay, crime does not pay, etc.

5. MOTIFEMES AND GENERAL SETTING

In the struggle for creation, the story teller had to organize her story in such a way that different stages could be noticed in the movement of the story. It is a general practice that the first stage of inganekwane indicates peace and calmness, e.g.

Narrator: Kwesukela

Audience: Cozi

Narrator: Kwakukhona inkosi nendodana...

(There once was a king and
his son ...)

The beginning of the story indicates a peaceful feature which is not sustained for a long time, but is disturbed by the introduction of a villain who will be the disturber of happiness. The narrator uses her artistic qualities in making the audience feel the discord caused by the villain, and anxiety in the problematic situation created by the disturber of peace. In her creation, the story teller tries to introduce a character that will alleviate the situation so as to restore things to normality. This is exactly what we find in our modern novels and dramas. We usually have the protagonist; the man who carries the story, the antagonist, a threat and tormenter and the tritagonist; one who is the cause of conflict or may intervene to bring about peace. There is, however, no prescribed method and standard for creation and narration of izinganekwane. Each narrator uses her own style and pattern and combination of story telling. Junod as quoted by Marivate (1973:93) also referred to Tsonga folk tales as a plastic matter unconsciously undergoing constant and extensive modification in the hands of story tellers. He says that these stories are transmitted from one person to another to such

an extent that the new types, new combinations are adopted.

This then gives us the indication that story tellers do use patterns in their plots, these patterns can also be referred to as motifemes. Marivate (1973:80)

defines motifemes thus:

A motifeme is a morphological unit in a story. A morphological unit of a story is a single action in a plot narrative.

This is noticeable in our izinganekwane for we find narrators who introduce situations that depict lack as well as those where lack is liquidated. The lack in our narratives can be caused by various circumstances. These can be famine, death as well as emotions of want, desire or need. For example in the story of Nanana boselesele one might say this is fiction; a story told for fun, because there is no human being that can possibly live and survive inside the elephant's tummy. This draws us back to the essence of these tales. These were merely meant for the child-like mind which knows of no possibilities and realities. This mind is not yet prone to rationalism. All what we see as impossibilities does serve the purpose of folk narratives and that is amusement and fun with moral lessons for the children.

It is in the midst of fun that we observe the theme and purpose of the narrator. In Nanana boselesele

the theme could be said to be "A person goes as far as he thinks". As we normally say; "the sky is the limit"; one can achieve anything as long as one is well motivated and determined. Nanana with her pride wanted to prove that she could defeat Sondonzima and she eventually did.

From this story we notice the following motifs:

The first motif is lack or desire to prove power.

The next motif is violation; when Nanana purposely exposed her children by leaving them unprotected for Sondonzima to get.

The third motif is consequence; when Sondonzima swallowed the children. Some of our stories may be found to end at this juncture when one gets the consequences of his or her violation, but Nanana wanted to prove herself powerful and she had to maintain her pride. Here we realize the stage where the narrator uses one of her artistic touch by allowing Nanana to be swallowed by the elephant as well. To be practical Nanana could have devised some other less dangerous means like attacking Sondonzima rather than allowing herself to be swallowed for she had no certainty that there was life inside Sondonzima's tummy. This is a display of the narrator's art in the plot for she knows that Sondonzima would be destroyed and Nanana's needs satisfied. This stage or motif we call Liquidation of lack.
The motifs in this story can be seen as:

Lack, Interdiction, Violence, Consequence

Lack liquidated.

Even in such a story we notice a good lesson for the ambitious daring characters, that nothing can stand on the way of an ambitious person. This story of Nanana gives us one of the characteristic features of the motifs in our izinganekwane. The lack liquidated is either in the form of rescuing the victim or liquidating the undesirable element which caused disequilibrium. The other common characteristic feature of the motifs in our tales is that the agent who is always of help to restore the state of equilibrium is generally the least considered member of the society. Here we find that the whole village was in constant fear of the bully Gondonzima; but Nanana, a female that is observed as a perpetual minor in Zulu custom, got rid of the terrible beast.

Junod (1927 Vol 11:204) has also noticed this with Tsonga tales for he has classified the tales having such motif under one group. To explain his classification, he is noted to have said:

The same idea runs through the group of stories which I have called:

"the wisdom of the little one .

The least considered members of the society may not form the main theme of the tale, they may form the sub-theme. In the story of Nanana beselesele the sub-theme could be:

THE WEAK AND THE DESPISED CAN
PERFORM HEROIC DEEDS AND SO MAKE
A RESCUE IN TIMES OF DANGER.

In most of our izinganekwane we realize that the important motifeme that sets the movement of the story is around the error. It is the error that makes the story for once the character in the story departs from normality, from the accepted code of behaviour, there are bound to be consequences. The narrator has to provide rules in her story which in turn will be violated. This creates the story. In African languages narrators use the accepted norms, the moral code as their rules which when violated bring about punishment. For example, in the story of Intombazana namavukuthu (the girl and the doves). The girl is given instructions not to move out of the room because of her menstruation period. The doves came and forced the girl out of the house. The girl, because of her violation of the given rules, suffered the consequences of not respecting her parents' instruction by being taken by the doves away to the bushes. Here we notice an important custom of the Zulus who sternly believe in younger children respecting their elders. Respect is the key word in our culture.

In the narration of such stories as Intombazana namavukuthu, one cannot miss the narrators' feeling of disgust for her choice of words will explicitly depict no sympathy with such a child. Guma (1977:33)

noticed the narrator's feelings in one of Southern Sotho's stories and says:

The narrator's feelings are carefully concealed throughout the story. But the manner in which he has arranged his facts, indicates which way he is inclined.

This emphasises the fact that story tellers were artists in their own old style. They did not have to combine a jumble of words and facts to form a story. They had to plan the plot, to choose appropriate words for the story, and to use particular gestures to bring out life in certain dramatic incidents. One begins to wonder as to why all the fuss? Why not relate the story to children and then leave everything for them to see? It now dawns in our minds that it had to be a mature mind to carry all the artistic responsibilities and to weave in the do nots of the culture.

We have now seen that story-telling demands a lot of selection to bring about the different motifs and patterns despite the simplicity of plots in general. The value of folk tales cannot be over-emphasized. Even though the radios have taken the place of evening pastime, we should appreciate the programme of "Amdokwe" at 9h00, for children can still enjoy

stories. It cannot be a waste of time if teachers could find a period or two wherein stories, riddles and proverbs could be handled.

6. AN ANALYSIS OF DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS IN "IBIBINE NESIKHOVA"

Amusement has become the accepted word to most people, so much that they tend to be skeptical when one talks of some didactic implications as found in these tales. I have had interesting discussions with some of my informants who maintain that grandmothers were not aware of any didactic implications when relating evening stories. Msimang (1975:72) says:

Kunokuba balimise ngesihloko bathi
isikhwele sibi futhi sinomvuzo obuhlungu,
babemane baxoxe inganekwane ka Buhlaluse
benkosi, esifundo sayo siyohlala silingoza
kubantwana ...

(Instead of saying it outright that jealousy is evil and has bad results, they only related a story about Buhlaluse and its lesson will *Always linger in the children's minds.*)

We cannot say that grandmothers were not aware of any didactic implications, it is only their method that did not openly reveal the aim of the story. I have here chosen a common tale which, I believe, has significant educative implications that cannot go unnoticed by any audience.

Msimango (1975:79) . Ungcede nesikhova

1. LACK: Kwesukela umdali wathi ezinyonini aziboza kuye phezulu emafini ukuze azibekela inkosi yazo. Nempela zahlangana zonke ukuze zindizele phezulu, sezitsheliwe ukuthi eyozishiya zonke yiyona eyobekwa ibinkosi. Nebala laqala ijubane.

2. VIOLATION: Ungcede ezazi kahle ubuphelimandla bakhe, waqonda ukuthi ngeke alunge, washeshe wadala icebo elalizomsiza. Wabona ukuthi njengoba ukhozi lumaphiko abanzi kangaka nje yilona oluzodla ubhedu lushiye zonke izinyoni, wayesethi coshoshu phezulu kwamaphiko alo. Pho ingqungqulu yakwabo isho ngamaphikokazi angaka, nongcede emncanyana kangako, aluzwanga nakuzwa ukuthi kukhona okubelethe kulo. Ezinye izinyoni zakhathala endleleni, lwaphumelela lodwa ukhozi selukhathele. Wabhula izimpiko kabili, walushiya kude, kwaba ukuphumelela kwakhe, waba inkosi yezinyoni.

3. CONSEQUENCES: Lesisenzo sobuqili sazicunula ezinye izinyoni zasonga ukukubulala okungungcede. Kwabaleka kwayozishutheka emgodini zehluleka ukukukhipha.

4. INTERDICTION: Nazo-ke sezinxusa uSikhova ukuba alinde emnyango womgede ukuze ungcede angalokothi aphume engabonwanga. Zikhetha isikhova

nje phela zethembe lamehlo aso amakhulu-
kazi angangawekati.

5. VIOLATION: Sikhova ndini uzishisele ubuthongo aphume pulukutshu ungcede engabonwanga. Zimbone ezinye izinyoni ziyobuza kahle esikhoveni. Zisifice sikhovile sithi ungcede usesemgodini.

6. CONSEQUENCES: Zisingqofe isikhova zilwe naso, sesihamba sizishutheka nje engekho ozosilamulela. Siyigobe siqonde ehlathini elimnyama, sihlale khona imini yonke size siphume ngokuhlwa zonke ezinye izinyoni sezilele. Kuze kube namhlanje isikhova yinyoni yobusuku, emini yesaba ezinye izinyoni. Cosu, cosu, iyaphela-ke.

(It happened that the Creator said to the birds that they should come up to him so that He may install their king. The birds met so that they should fly up after being told that the one that will fly highest will be king. The race started. The warbler knowing very well that he was powerless, quickly decided to think of a plan that could help him. Realising that the big winged hawk will fly the highest leaving all the other birds, the warbler settled himself comfortably on his wings. The giant hawk with powerful wings could hardly

feel that there was a warbler on its wings. Many birds could not make it and they got tired on the way; the hawk was the only one to make the grade. When it was just about to reach the goal, the warbler started off fresh as ever while the hawk was very tired. He only flew twice, leaving the hawk behind, to success and he became the king of birds.

This cunning act annoyed the other birds who decided to kill the warbler. The warbler ran away squeezing itself in holes where nobody could get it out. The owl was then requested to act as a "watch man" so that the warbler should not dare escape. The owl got chosen because of her big cat like eyes. Poor owl fell asleep and the warbler escaped. The other birds seeing their convict quickly dashed to the owl for a satisfactory explanation. They found the owl waiting thinking that the warbler was still in the hole. The other birds got very cross and started biting and fighting the poor owl and it went about hiding itself for there was nobody to protect it. It ran off to a dark thick forest where it stayed for the rest of the day and started to move around at night when other birds were asleep. Till today an owl is a nocturnal bird for at daylight it is afraid of other birds.

That is the end of the story.)

6.1 STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

6.1.1 STYLE

The narrator is factual in her style. Every fact follows another with a cumulative impact on the reader or listener. Short sentences have been used with clarity and logic. This gives the story the picture of the actual occurrence rather than a mere story.

The narrator has used striking syntactical constructions which have brought more emphasis to the story. The use of the copulative yyona brings out the importance of winning the race to be king. The narrator could have said iyó which would be less emphatic. The reader or listener gets the clear picture of a helpless warbler by the use of the coined noun - ubuphelimandla which somehow justifies the warbler to cheat. The narrator uses words that expose the state of the animals in its maximum. To show the strength of the hawk she uses:

Ingqungqulu - The great expert
amaphikokazi - the hawk's great wings.
nongcede emncanyana - the tininess of the
warbler.

The narrator has composed the ideophone from the verb 'suka' (go, move) to sukiyane to bring out the swiftness of the warbler from the hawk's wings.

6.1.2 THE NARRATOR'S FEELINGS

The reader or listener cannot miss the narrator's feelings even when she has used common words and idiomatic expressions. The narrator is also annoyed by the warbler that cheated for she uses the word kwayozishutheka which shows that the bird had no place to hide; it went about forcing itself into holes. The use of the concords ukukubulala oku... shows that the narrator looks at the warbler with disgrace and disgust. She gives it no respect for its behaviour; hence her reference to the bird as it - a thing- with no dignity.

6.1.3 THE EDUCATIVE SIGNIFICANCE

From this story one may notice its explanatory nature for children get a clear explanation as to why the owls fly in the evenings only, and not during the day. There are other didactic implications like:

- (i) A person who cheats like the warbler will get punishment. The narrator clearly indicated this for the warbler was called by its name (ungcede) throughout, but the tone and name immediately changed when ngcede was discovered to be a cheat and she refers to it as okungu... This concord is commonly used to refer to people we look down upon, for one reason or another. Ngcede lost her "personal" qualities to be it a mere thing because of her disgusting

behaviour.

It is from such incidents found in stories that children are given the message:

'Evil is punished and virtue rewarded'.

- (ii) There is a reward in every good deed, hence the title "king" would be given to the bird that flew the highest. The narrator as the adult member has the duty to guide the children to realising the bare facts of life. Life without competition would be hollow. Children must be aware of competition and also of the importance of doing one's best without cheating. The narrator has clearly given the lesson that other members in any society or gathering do not accept a dishonest member. From this story children will always remember that they have to be honest so as to be accepted by their colleagues; and not to be like Ngcede who ended up being a disgrace.

We have realised that norms and beliefs are to be found in all societies no matter how underdeveloped. These form strong pillars for every society and to be a happy accepted member, one has to conform to these norms. The grandmother as a responsible adult has to educate the young one to realise that there are certain expected ways of behaviour that make a person accepted by other members. This, she does through the stories she creates which while

entertaining, will be the carriers of her messages to her grandchildren. Her main theme is always centered around the custom, beliefs and norms of the Zulu society.

7. EVALUATION

7.1 Even though some people may regard izinganekwane as nothing but a form of entertainment, the educating aspect is always noticed. Zulus like all the other African societies have for ever been concerned with the upbringing of their children. A child who is not well behaved always reflects a bad impression on his parents and people will comment:

'Ingane kabani le ekhuliswe kabi kangaka, abazali bayo abazalanga babola amathumbu.'

(Whose child is this that is so badly brought up. His parents did not give birth they have wrotten intestines; (they have been failures)

We can therefore conclude that because the parents have to take the blame of a misbehaving child, they always took it upon themselves the task of guiding and disciplining the child so that he does not embarrass them. In African Studies Vol 9, No.1 March 1950, Pitje in his article "Traditional systems of male education among Pedi and Cognate tribes" says:

The above nónwane (tale or legend) emphasizes the role of parents in the upbringing of their children and their misgivings and disappointment when the latter become bad citizens .

It is in the various themes found in folk tales that we are made aware of the values that bring about shame when not adhered to. In some of the themes we have warnings towards disobedience, jealousy, selfishness, cruelty, dishonesty, etc. Evil is always condemned and receives due punishment while bravery, co-operation, love and disciplined acts are extolled. It is in these folk tales that we see the value system clearly displayed.

7.2. The telling of tales has a socialising uniting factor in that the whole family gathers around fire.

Children are exposed to the experience of warmth found in the family. It is during this period of the day that children are taught respect and mutual understanding of the family members. This endorses the common saying "home sweet home", for this period is always filled with joy, warmth and laughter.

7.3 Folk tales expose children to the richness of the language. In these stories there is to be found vocabulary, idiomatic expressions as well as several proverbs. The important thing here is that; not only are children given the chance of acquiring expressions and vocabulary, but they also see how

these are used in sentences. It is this very language that will enhance the child's understanding of his environment. Children are also encouraged to go about with an observing eye, keen to notice different animals and their peculiar behaviour. As future story tellers, children will be able to use their environment effectively.

7.4 Folk narratives are used as a tool to maintain order and harmony in society. This harmony could be sustained and achieved through the observance of the moral code that apply. In her piece of work, the narrator is noticed to use characters whose behaviour subscribe to the expected norms honoured, while those characters that disregard values are punished. Kunene, in his article *writer; Reader and Character* (1976:244) says:

"The oral artist synthesised all these elements in society and told a narrative in which they all contributed to the total didactic purpose of the story".

The didactic aspect of izinwanekwane could not be achieved without the aesthetic. One only needs a close, immediate identification with the performer or story teller, as well as the actions that exist on the narrative surface to learn proper conduct. Like all artists the narrator's feelings can always

be found enclosed in the words he chooses.

For a disgusting action, that needs to be condemned, the narrator will use strong merciless words that will betray her genuine feelings.

8. CONCLUSION

Stories related by Grandmothers around fire formed part of the Zulu traditional literature. Because grannies could not read or write, they created stories for their grandchildren from which important norms and beliefs could be noticed. This practice of giving rules to children that "you must not do this or that" in the form of stories is noticed even with some of the Christian values. To tell people that as christians they have to honour the seventh day, a story was created that the ^{re} was a woman that continued working on the seventh day. As her punishment, God took her together with her child and placed them on the moon. Because there is a woman-like figure when one watches the full moon, people believed it even stronger that working on the seventh day is forbidden. This shows that we really cannot deny the fact that there was a particular intention in every related story besides entertainment. Of course entertainment was the main thing but it carried with it important didactic implication, rules that had to be honoured by children to be accepted members of the community. It has been noticed that narrators struggled in their various individual patterns to make their stories interesting so that their messages will remain embedded in the listeners' minds.

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