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Both sides of the camera: anthropology and video in the study of a Gcaleka women's rite called Intonjane.

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little chance of paternity or damages being claimed (ibid: 35).

> Today there is a good deal more equality between the sexes, although the ideology of male dominance is still found among young men and older people of both sexes. Education and urban experience have probably contributed to women's greater equality with men and also the belief that the subordination of young women is something of the past associated with 'traditional' ways
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> (McAllister, 1994: 36).

In naming the initiate '*intonjane*', a woman's role is wrested from its social context and formally defined in terms of a 'traditional', subservient identity. Cast within a powerful, patriarchal framework, this act of labelling serves to tell women that they have a singular identity. In this context, the haranguing by elder women, particularly, as a display of authority which sets them apart from younger women makes sense. While these overt acts of haranguing suggest conflict, the religious context of the rite - the powerful linking of cattle and ancestors, milk and fertility, and the inherent patriarchal associations - in fact leaves no room for any real challenge of the conservative values underpinning the rite.

The importance of *intonjane* as a medium for re-socialisation, particularly of women, becomes evident in situations of increasing social instability, where education, migrancy and betterment schemes threaten the social fabric, and the very survival, of the community

(McAllister, 1992). The rite becomes useful as a vehicle of power, symbolizing at a macro level the re-appropriation of authority in everyday life.

The video footage of *intonjane* therefore highlights the complex ways ritual constitutes and defines women's identity, while detailed performative analysis of the recorded footage also brings to light a substantial body of material concerned, generally, within the social order. But most interestingly, the footage, analysed in the light of recent research, suggests that the rite may serve as a vehicle for the re-appropriation of authority by elders. Hence, initially, this research defined *intonjane* as a means for women, individually, to increase their authority. However, the interactive methodology of shooting, which encouraged participants to guide the focus of the camera, meant an unanticipated bulk of footage of men's activities was collected, revealing that the ritual could also be defined as a vehicle for male elders to re-assert authority in the community, particularly, over women. This would explain why *intonjane* may still regarded, by elders who must authorise its undertaking, as a rite worthy of performance. But the evidence suggesting the rite as a vehicle of appropriation for elders is not sufficiently conclusive when only women's activities are analysed. Let us therefore turn to another body of evidence, collected in the course of recording *intonjane*, and assess what this data can contribute towards our understanding of the ritual.

Prior to the ritual beginning, the research was guided in its focus by literature on the rite, as well as by local women's descriptions of *intonjane*. Both concentrated on a woman's perspective of the rite. Once filming began, a recording methodology, striving towards an interactive research process, was adopted. Ritual participants were encouraged to share authorship of the footage by guiding the researcher's gaze towards those ritual aspects deemed important at the moment of enactment. What emerged during the recording process was that participants would direct the focus towards women's activities until the moment the male ritual leader, Nothimba, assumed authority. Then, in the eyes of participants, female activities would move, automatically and unquestioningly, from the foreground to the background, providing only a context to male speechmaking and ritual activity. Only when male elders were absent or their work finished would female activity again assume the foreground. This change in camera- and participant-focus, from women to men, as disclosed in the video, was at the guidance of both male and female informants.

The original point of significance focusing primarily on women was therefore clearly inadequate. Concentration on this aspect was driven by an imagined script, held by the women and the researcher, drawn from a normative notion (substantiated by the literature) of *intonjane* as fundamentally a women's rite. Nevertheless, the flexibility of the recording method accommodated a broader collection of data out of which new perspectives

could be drawn. It became clear, from the footage, that another script was at work in the ritual, requiring a further performative analysis which included men's ritual activities and participation, if a more complete understanding of the rite was to be achieved.

CHAPTER 4: MALE ORATORY AND ACTIVITY

Introduction

At *intonjane*, formal speeches were delivered by men [27, 30, 60, 109], both encouraging the initiate and blessing her with wishes for fertility, good health and good fortune. Much like women's songs, these speeches created a frame around the ritual, marking its start and finish, as well as delineating major ritual divisions.

> It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group
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> (Sapir, quoted by Douglas, 1970: 20).

The male role of invoking fertility, health and good fortune upon the initiate, of blessing her with a happy and successful life, makes men a pivotal part of what was, on the face of things, a woman's rite. The themes contained in these blessings will be shown to have been central to the performance and efficacy of this female rite. Yet the blessings will also be seen as being communicated in an essentially male way, reflecting male assumptions about the nature and role of both women and men, and about the values the elders, who spoke the blessings, hold dear.

Likewise, encouragement was also a central mechanism in speechmaking at *intonjane*. Kratz argues that verbal encouragement is critical to the efficacy of ceremonial transformation as it creates 'an inescapable net of social pressure, thrown at the girls from many directions at once through repetitive urging, claims of unfulfilled responsibility, provocative challenges, and reiterated requests' (1994: 175). As Okiek initiates have to face painful excision without flinching, it is to be expected that encouragement is central to that ritual's success. This was not the case for the *intonjane* who, by comparison, spent a few weeks in quiet seclusion. It was not surprising, therefore, that, while verbal encouragement was present, it focused as much on the speaker and other participants as on the initiate, and dealt as much with the society's values as with the individual's contribution.

But besides making speeches, the implements, costume, food, behaviour, colours, locations and patterns of participation of men and boys were saturated with notions about, and associations with, the social relations and values of their lives. The symbols they used, again and again in this and other ceremonies, re-created a sense of tradition and its value, including ideas about authority and power. Video footage clearly captures the multivocality of symbols, interwoven, repetitively, throughout the fabric of the rite. More significantly still, the interactive filming method demonstrates the extent to which participants in the ritual prioritised

these male dominated aspects of the ritual, thereby drawing attention to these particular symbols.

Included below are discussions concerning the four formal speeches given at the rite [27, 30, 60, 109]. These speeches are analysed, moving backwards and forwards between written and recorded texts, looking at men's speaking - both formal and informal, and their action, utilisation of space and manipulation of symbols, within the context of the themes of gender, age and authority, kinship, community and Xhosa identity.

Gender

At *intonjane*, men's speeches [27, 30, 60, 109] supported the idea, at one level, that this was a woman's rite, protecting her fertility and health and transforming her status in the eyes of the community. At another level, however, the words chosen and the non-verbal context of delivery began to demonstrate assumptions about the nature and role of men and women. Captured on video, a recurring theme is revealed in men's speech which, when linked to patterns of spatial organisation, communicates a powerful message about the society and its values, about the secondary status of women in contrast to the authoritative role of men.

Firstly, of the four speeches Nothimba delivered, his opening speech at *umngeno* [27] was his shortest and least formal. The later speeches were performed before his male

peers in the cattlebyre. The opening speech was performed primarily before an audience of women in the main hut. These areas - the main hut and the cattlebyre - are the abodes of the shades. Nothimba talked from the entrance, in both cases. As the place where the ancestors linger (Berglund, 1976: 239), his position served to appropriate religious authority and power by association.

Nothimba's words formally opened the rite, bestowing blessings upon the initiate before she proceeded into seclusion, yet the speech took on a diminished status reflected in the lack of epic qualities evident in the two later speeches given in the cattlebyre. This suggests the secondary status of the largely female audience.

Nothimba acknowledged the small, almost informal scale of the occasion, firstly, by his reference to 'we', without clarification of who he meant (when, in later speeches he unfailingly outlined his genealogy); he omitted any formal reference to lineage or cultural identity; also in his brevity (he offered a quick introduction and explanation and then handed over to Nolele); and, finally, in the absence of any reference to cattle which, we will see, were an important recurring symbol for appropriating the female form and for conveying authority upon male elders.

The blessings of good health and long life ('a healthy future') he bestowed on the initiate were couched in terms which implied male perceptions of women as

emotional, as complainers, and as subject to ill health. He said the rite was being held 'before she [the initiate] complains of ill health'. It was a preventative measure, therefore, both securing her well-being, through appeasement of the ancestors, and that of the homestead which would otherwise be subject to her complaints. The use of such words as 'trouble' in connection with the initiate also implied assumptions about the nature of men and women. Men (both in a living and ancestral state) protected and safeguarded the homestead, while women brought trouble to the homestead!

In statements like 'she should be able to get everything she wants, including her own children', women's fertility was blessed and her reproductive role acknowledged, however her productive role - in building, cooking, fetching water, washing, raising children - was ignored. In every context except reproduction, she was characterised as potentially troublesome and emotional.

Nolele conspired in this gender stereotyping by praising Nothimba. She called him 'great' and 'wise' and used his praise name ('S'khomo'). This served to encourage him to continue supporting women's needs as women cannot perform the rite without male sanction and support. It also publicly legitimized his assumption of authority.

Nolele thanked him for reminding them that this ritual needed doing. In fact, her words contradicted information that it was the initiate who first spoke of the rite to

her mother, who then obtained permission from her eldest son. Nolele spoke metaphorically, therefore, recognising that, without appropriate male sanction, the ritual could not have taken place. Only senior males enjoy the authority handed down by their agnatic forbears to hold a ritual. The initiate's reliance on family members to lobby for her and on a senior male of her natal home to authorise or host the ritual encouraged conformity from her. Implied in her request for the ritual to be held was her recognition and acceptance of the authority of the homestead head whose position was genealogically defined and inherited. Hence, ancestor worship is closely linked to the agnatic kinship system (Kuckertz, 1990: 227).

This opening speech was the only one in which a response was given by a woman. It is significant that the Nolele, chosen as ritual leader of women's activities, was an elder, a contemporary and, in terms of age status, apparently an equal of Nothimba's. Yet she clearly acknowledged the superior authority of her male peer. She was not thanked or praised for her role. This conformed with male notions of gender in which the male organizes and commands, and the woman follows. It implicitly disguised the active role of the *ikhankata* and, by implication, of all women at the rite and in daily life.

Men, by contrast, were portrayed as organisers of consequential matters (like rituals), operating with

reason and forethought. When, at *umtshato* [60], Nothimba drew an analogy between the eldest ox (about to be slaughtered) and its younger 'brothers' and Ntothoviyane (deceased) and his younger brothers, he was explicit in honouring the deceased in the male line and in foregrounding the role of men in ritual. He lauded himself, his own role and the role of men in ritual performance. The implication was that the male role of conferring blessings of protection and well-being was central to the efficacy of this women's ritual and to the general good fortune of women.

Through enactment and thematic content, elders' speeches served to bring young people and women under the aegis of control by male elders. Without the opening speech [27], the ritual could not begin. Hence, the speech not only marked the start of the ritual, but also established, from the outset, the crucial role played by men in this women's rite. Speechmaking legitimized the authority of the elders, as it could not be just any man who took this role.

Even more significantly, at *umngenandlini*, mobilizing the symbols of male religious and jural authority at *umngenandlini* [30] - the cattlebyre, the ritual slaughter, the ancestors, and women - signified, for Nothimba, 'the beginning' of the ritual, even though the initiate was placed in seclusion some five days earlier. He implied that the initiate's transition was only effected by the ritual interventions of elder men. At

umtshato [60], Nothimba linked remarks about women, in his speech, to oxen. Video reveals that the joining of cattle and women in the minds of the audience was a central and repetitive feature of speechmaking at *intonjane*. Ideally, the rite of *intonjane* prepared a newly menstruating girl for marriage and childbirth, hence fertility was an important focus of the rite. A girl's fertility brought cattle to her father at marriage with the transfer of cattle as bridewealth (*lobolo*). *Lobolo* is 'necessary to the birth of a legitimate person' (Kuper, 1982: 22). Hence the girl's private parts are referred to as 'her father's cattle' (ibid: 20) and her value linked to her capacity to bear children (Broster, 1934: 1976). Cattle and women are thus the two prime resources of any homestead and the two most important symbols of wealth and good fortune, both controlled by men.

The video footage shows how, throughout the rite, but particularly on the wedding day [60], these symbols were joined in many different ways, interlinking with metaphors of kinship and community in a web of social ties which reminded the initiate, and all participants, of their place in the social hierarchy. The delineating of an individual's place was a recurring theme, appearing in terms of gender, as it did here, but also with regard to age and kinship.

When the opening speech [27] took place, in the main hut, it was without ritual slaughter and no male elders

participated other than the host who opened the rite. However, when speeches occurred in the cattlebyre, addressed to the ancestors [30, 60], the formality and length of the speech reflected its increased importance in male and female eyes. Significantly, this was a woman's rite yet the footage reveals that they were required to listen from without the cattlebyre. This connoted their secondary status as females. Within the cattlebyre, the male elders sat on benches, against the fence, to the left and right of the gate post [55]. The host spoke from the position of greatest strength, the entrance, nearest the right-hand gate post [30, 60], signifying his controlling role in the ritual (Berglund, 1976: 239). Women stood outside, looking in, while the younger men stood quietly at against the sides of the cattlebyre. Young boys milled around outside, unless they had managed, unobtrusively, to find a position inside against the fence [60]. Hence we can see that in the patterns of space utilisation revealed in the video footage, physical differences in position, age and gender were directly linked to degrees of status, authority and power.

Assumptions of gender, awarding seniority and authority to men and situating women in their secondary place, were explicitly put forth in Nothimba's rejoinder to the chief [109] that the men did not bother about ritual dress as this was, after all, only *intonjane*. Yet neither did women wear the 'traditional' yellow-ochre skirts which were often worn at circumcisions. Only for the brief

periods of dance and procession [30, 60] did women of the agnatic group adorn themselves formally with blankets. Likewise, Nothimba donned a blanket across his shoulder only when he stood to make his speech in the cattlebyre. None of the other men or women wore such symbols of ritual occasion. The detail of dress captured by video reveals, then, that for both women and men, this rite had less status than male initiation rites where formal ritual costume was more frequently donned. Dress was therefore a clear indication of notions of ritual and gender value.

Only men made speeches, calling upon the ancestors to bestow blessings upon the initiate, and gave verbal witness of ritual performance through their responses to speechmaking. Through this oration, and through the 'antiphonal', call-and-response form of blessings (Kratz, 1994: 168), in which male listeners responded repetitively with a short phrase of agreement ('so it is') [30, 60], power and authority circled amongst the men in a manner exclusive of women. Male solidarity was called for in ritual speeches and created in the call-and-response participatory form. The elders led invocations and ratified ritual work. However, they could not conduct the ritual alone. The answering call from other male participants was crucial as their response both condoned the blessings and the elder's position as spokesperson and organiser.

In controlling speechmaking, men were given the last word

in a forum which allowed them to express and re-create their sociopolitical authority. Furthermore, speechmaking became a medium for legitimating that authority through emphasizing the 'essential and "natural" differences between men and women' (Kratz, 1994: 317), that is, for reiterating assumptions about gender hierarchy.

It is clear, therefore, that

> the context, definition of the event, and verbal expression all show the inherent tensions of gender relations
> (Kratz, 1994: 196).

From the outset, cultural assumptions of men's superiority in gender roles were enacted and reaffirmed in ritual performance of speeches, just as they were also implicit in the act of directing the camera away from women and onto men. Both Nothimba and Nolele perpetuated stereotypical views of women, disparaging them almost unthinkingly [27]. These patterns of behaviour and rhetoric only became obvious when the footage was examined closely and repeatedly. But was this indicative of real or symbolic conflict?

Kratz argues that denigration can, after all, be 'a deliberate rhetoric of encouragement through scornful challenge' (1994: 195). Furthermore, Nothimba clearly acknowledged women's ceremonial tradition when he mentioned the sheep and goat being for the initiate's

mother. The patterns, spatial organisation and manipulation of symbols and language which video reveals are useful in helping to answer this question about the nature of ritual conflict.

While on the one hand, women conspired in gender stereotyping which set themselves in a position of inferiority to men, the video footage also reveals them actively demonstrating leadership qualities (as witnessed in the direction of the *ikhankata*), reliability (in the support shown by the agnatic group), and responsibility (as shown by the initiate's young assistants). The footage shows all ages of women illustrating qualities which contradict the very stereotypes put forward and legitimated in men's oratory. Furthermore, in dance, song and verbal sparring, women offered alternative perspectives on both male and female roles. Literature on previous research conducted in Folokhwe concludes that the `women's position as sustainers and nurturers of the household contradicts the rural ideology of female subordination' (Heron and Cloete, 1991: 20) and argues, in fact, that women exert considerable influence on their husband's views.

Hence, while women's words and actions seemed to challenge men, and while men's activities appeared to diminish or ignore the female contribution outside the realm of reproduction, an atmosphere of expectation and enjoyment, particularly amongst elders, which the video footage reveals suggests that the rhetoric of conflict surrounding the nature and role of men and women was a

largely symbolic airing of gender tensions. It was a way of dealing with pressure or anxiety in a manner which facilitated and encouraged constructive daily social interaction and which reinforced, generally, the conservative social fabric of the community.

Authority and age

The footage demonstrates how notions of hierarchy and patriarchal authority, linked to assumptions about gender and age, pervaded the ritual performance in the utilisation of space, in behaviour, in language and in the manipulation of speech. When Nothimba finished his opening speech to his female audience in the main hut [27], Nolele took over - and the quiet respect, with which the women listened to Nothimba, was broken [27]. With its capacity to capture atmosphere, the video shows a woman interjecting with a joke and the mood quickly lightening. Although Nolele's direction of the ritual was crucial to its successful completion and efficacy, her authority was targeted primarily at specific individuals and not at all present. An audience may or may not have listened to hear if she performed her role adequately, but only those people she specifically directed paid special attention [27, 28]. This contrasted with the male elder who addressed, and was attended by, all present at the rite, including the ancestors [27, 30, 60, 109]. The change in atmosphere was indicative of the differing degrees of authority - of his seniority - despite their both being elders.

In the act of conducting formal speeches, elder men demonstrated how they organised speech itself. They proved their leadership skills not just through the controlling of ritual, but through the more subtle means of controlling language and, thereby, the ideas, assumptions and behaviour of their audience. The opportunity to display this skill was awarded only to - and was carefully protected by - the elders who, as the religious, political and jural leaders, were the speechmakers on these formal occasions. Giving speeches was, after all, an opportunity to reinforce authority by demonstrating experience and skill in ritual knowledge and practice, particularly when making speeches from within the cattlebyre and addressing the ancestors [30, 60] (Kuckertz, 1990).

The language Nothimba used in his speeches was persuasive and reasonable rather than coercive, proving his leadership skills. Nothimba addressed his audience, including the initiate (even if she was out of his hearing), in an adult manner, outlining his responsibilities and efforts on her behalf. Implicit was the suggestion that his audience's compliance would prove their maturity. The framework of mature, co-operating adults provided an example for the initiate of what was expected of her. While this may have been an obvious lesson to a newly menstruating young girl, it could also have served to re-socialise older women, to reconcile, under the auspices of the elder men, the independence or self-reliance of a mature woman, particularly after a

husband's long absence on migrant labour.

Nothimba developed his arguments using linguistic devices to rhetorical, emotional and pragmatic effect. For example, at *umtshato* [60], Nothimba used different kinds of repetition. He repeatedly referred to himself, to the initiate and to Ntambayithethi (the ox/ancestors). He also reiterated certain phrases and themes, like those referring to his role as slaughterer and to his relationship with the initiate. These repetitions situated him in a relationship of control and authority over both the ox and the initiate, and thereby, symbolically, of all men over all cattle and women. This pattern of asserting authority over all productive and reproductive resources is clearly and repeatedly offered on video.

Nothimba used interrogative constructions (Kratz, 1994: 182), such as 'What do these remarks refer to?', demanding responses to what were essentially rhetorical questions and phrases. His use of rhetorical constructions was provocative. His references to the sacrifices his homestead was making created a network of obligations which bound the initiate and the audience by responsibility. The controlled, yet powerful emotion of his speech, quite unlike the relaxed, often joking conversation which preceded or followed it, demanded attention and respect.

The footage clearly shows how the occasion moved to a

more powerful, more emotional note, while the same reasoned argument prevailed, through the use of lexical intensifiers (ibid: 193), that is the repeated use of the same emotive words. Nothimba faced inwards, talking not to his audience, but to the ox itself. He repeatedly called the ox's name, imploring his ancestors to hear his words, to be appeased by his actions, and to attend to his family.

Nothimba also cleverly drew upon such poetic devices as metaphor, analogy and symbolism to captivate and convince his audience of his superior ability to speak and to lead. Still facing the centre of the cattlebyre, talking directly to the ox which was about to be slaughtered, he drew an analogy between oxen and brothers. The ox, symbolising the ancestors, was entreated to bless those present. He wove 'traditional' expectations, such as the outlining of genealogy and the praising of one's ancestors by the calling of praise names, together with improvised and spontaneous responses, like his linking of trouble to both girl and ox. The ox was giving trouble by not standing still, and the girl, by virtue of her gender, was expected to be troublesome. The manipulation and organisation of language reinforced and legitimated the elders' authority.

The atmosphere within and without the cattlebyre is vividly captured on video [30, 60]. It reveals the simultaneity of activities which, layer upon layer, served to move the ritual forward and intensify the drama

of the occasion.

When Nothimba made a speech to Chief Dalingozi from within the cattlebyre [109], he began by calling for attention as there was 'somebody' speaking. His authority and seniority within this ritual context made him a 'somebody' with the right to address the participants and the chief. The attention of the chief was in recognition, and a legitimation, of that authority. Yet this speech, delivered also in ritual context from within the cattlebyre, was not directed at the ancestors. It was strictly between senior men, in recognition of their status. The other men may have listened as they chatted and ate, but they did not respond. It was a rite of recognition of seniority and authority between the chief and Nothimba.

The spatial data the video [109] provides reveals that Nothimba faced outward, talking to the chief directly, rather than inwards towards the centre of the cattlebyre. The chief and the other elders remained seated throughout and the elders continued chatting while the chief addressed himself directly to Nothimba. Compared to the utilisation of space in the cattlebyre during speechmaking the day before [60], clearly no ancestral respect was shown. That they were in the ancestral cattlebyre and in the presence of the chief appeared to be insufficient reason to motivate them to stand to attention. It was only when the ancestors themselves were being addressed that everyone stood respectfully and

listened closely. Then, the sacred nature of the occasion made the experience take on a reverential tone absent from normal speechmaking.

In capturing atmosphere and spatial organisation, therefore, video reveals crucial data about events. The footage discloses the status of speakers, audience, speech and occasion through the manner in which space was utilised. As with the performative analysis in the previous chapter, it is clear that there is, again, concordance between social and bodily expressions of control (Kratz, 1994: 68).

Video's capacity of simultenaity, in capturing action and speech, is particularly useful. When Nothimba called for meat at the arrival of Chief Dalingozi [109], he said 'Let it [the meat] come to where "the people" [the elder men] are'. In calling to the younger men to serve them and in distinguishing them from the elders (the 'people'), he endorsed assumptions of age, status and hierarchy which award seniority and authority to elder men and situate younger men in a position of lower status, as servers.

The footage reveals too that material items carried, as well as the clothing and posture of the elder men further substantiated their authority. Men wore long trousers and only boys wore shorts. Older men bore themselves with a steady, slow dignity, rarely running or hurrying, indicative of the measured reason with which they assumed

responsibility. They usually carried, or kept near them, a carved wooden staff. Religious significance of the rite was represented by the blankets adorned by Nothimba and the women, worn for his address of the ancestors and, by the women while they danced during the period of the ritual slaughter. Nothimba discarded the blanket only to set about his ritual task more efficiently. The possession and manipulation of material items, as metaphors of power, signified, then, where authority was vested.

It was through 'cross-contextual associations' - revealed in repeated viewings - invoking blessings, appeasing the ancestors, and entreating the living and the deceased using linguistic and poetic devices, while manipulating symbolic objects and patterns of space utilisation, that speeches 'combine political, jural, and religious authority and become genres of power' (Kratz, 1994: 175). Nowhere was this more evident than at the climax of each feast, when the ritual stabbing was carried out.

Nothimba's speechmaking built emotively towards the point when the ritual goat or ox was stabbed and cried out [30, 60]. The animal was being offered to the ancestors, yet remained in the land of the living. Fusion between these two apparent contradictions was brought about through the animal's cry, which united the two worlds, of the living and the ancestors, within the confines of the ritual (Holbrook 1986: 11). This cry was what Austin (1962) calls a 'performative' or 'illocutionary' act. Within

the ritual context, the sound of the animal's cry and the responding cry of 'So it is!' from the ritual participants did not merely say something, it actually did something: it effected a particular contextually- and conventionally-defined transition on all the participants. The animals cry 'mediates the elder's words to the ancestors' (Kuckertz, 1990: 239). This was evidenced by the fact that, in the eyes of the community, only with the cry of the ox [60], did the day of ritual climax become called *umtshato*, or the wedding day. Until the ox cried, informants said, the day remained unnamed. 'Tradition', and the power it conferred, was epitomised in the male authority of both living and dead to name and define the idealised goal of the initiate - that is, to be married and to move from the protection and authority of one male figure, the initiate's father, to another, her husband.

Cheers of 'So it is!' reached even the ears of the initiate in her seclusion hut, reassuring her and the rest of the audience of the presence of the ancestors and lending powerful credibility to Nothimba's authority. He then jubilantly concluded his speech, directing the ritual slaughter to begin. This central role of male elders was encapsulated in Nothimba's words at *umngenandlini* [30] of 'now this is the beginning'. It was only through his invocation of the ancestors that the ritual had any religious power. Every word, every act, every song that had preceded this moment would have been rendered futile if the ancestors did not then show their

presence. Thus the blessings of the male elders and their command of the ritual slaughter, witnessed by others, lifted an otherwise secular rite into the realm of the sacred.

In controlling this performance, male elders embodied an almost mystical power which re-created, reinforced and sanctioned their religious authority. It was as if all of Nothimba's blessings were answered with the cry of the goat or the bellow of the ox, as if the entire performance, led by him, had been moving towards this one point - and the power of this moment, encapsulated in the leadership of the male elder, as witnessed by the adult men and women, was pivotal to the transformation process of the ritual. More than any other method, the simultaneity of video documents this intangible, affective dimension of the ritual.

Nothimba quite clearly linked the sacred power of the ox and the ancestors to the religious authority of his performance. He said, 'Because my sons are not here, I am the slaughterer' ('So it is') [60]. His focus on genealogy emphasised the patriarchal line of inheritance of religious authority. He made it clear that it was through his invoking of the ancestors that blessings of good fortune and fertility were brought upon the initiate and her kin, that transformation was effected.

A ritual substance, manipulated as a metaphor of power, was the blood, drawn from the fatal wound, which, as

video shows, was collected in a bowl and placed at the gatepost behind Nothimba [31]. The placement and utilisation of this powerful symbol embraced a host of associations. Blood, as always, was ambiguous. The blood of the initiate, supposedly newly menstruating, represented both her death as a child and her rebirth as an adult, including her newly developed capacity to give birth (Ngubane, 1977: 127). The blood of the slaughtered ritual beast likewise was ambiguous. It represented the bridge between the living and the dead, the taking of life to give life (ibid: 121). The death of the beast, besides giving adult life to the initiate, represented the deceased male line in honour of whom this ritual was being performed. The placing of the blood behind Nothimba signified his communion with both secular and sacred patriarchal authority. The bowl of blood itself embraced the religious and secular power of the ritual, embodied in Nothimba. It was, together with the stabbing of the beast, a most powerful representation of his authority.

The spear that was used to kill the animal [30, 60] was carefully guarded as it carried the blood of the ritual animal and had to be protected against witchcraft (ibid). The role that male elders played in consecrating items and substances from nature for ritual use was indicative of both the political and religious authority they held over the geographical and cultural terrain of their community.

That this ritual was a forum for the expression, re-creation and reinforcement of authority by the elders was also evident from the use to which the blood was put. It rested behind Nothimba's seat for a full day [31], and on the second day it was shared by the senior men of the agnatic group. Only male clansmen cooked and ate the blood of the ox. However, where the blood was of a sheep and a goat, elder men of the agnatic group shared the blood of the goat and elder women, that of the sheep. In appropriating the ox blood and sharing of that symbol most strongly identified with the ancestors, the superior authority of male elders was clearly established in the hierarchy of age.

Intragender hierarchies of authority existed amongst men and amongst women, revealed on video in patterns of work done by the young and the control and direction given by the elders.

> [Shot 44] At *umtshato*, Nothimba directs a younger man in the division of meat:
>
> 'Just wait. This needs skill to divide it into portions. Do this. You're supposed to take the whole of the back portion and sent it to *intonjane*. How are you going to proceed from there? You have to take a portion from the women's portion and add it on that of *intonjane*... After a while you have to cook it, but you're not going to have a taste of it.
>
> Younger man:
> 'Where shall we get ours?'

> Nothimba:
> 'No! Don't teach me while I am teaching you! What would you be doing? Cut a piece from the women's portion of meat for the girls. Again, cut from yours and give this to the girls. Don't give big portions away. Truly, you will be robbed by these women...'

Nothimba clearly asserted his authority as an elder to pass on his experience and knowledge. He rebuked the younger men for interrupting him and restrained them from giving too much meat to the women. Referring to his skill, he legitimized his authority in terms of his age and experience. His experience was evident in his assertive manipulation of linguistic devices to pragmatic effect. For example, Nothimba did not politely request that the younger men cut the meat in a particular way. Using interrogative and imperative constructions, he commanded them to do it. Cultural assumptions of ritual authority by elders were evident in his manner of ordering younger men to do these chores, in belittling them when they cut portions that he felt were too big - and in their acceptance of his authority. He asked rhetorical questions like 'What would you be doing?' - the unspoken meaning being, of course, that they did not know what they were doing. He derided their lack of experience and, in so doing, appropriated authority for himself and for all the elders, at the same time re-creating and reinforcing assumptions about age and, in his statement 'you will be robbed by these women', about gender.

Nothimba adopted a far more emphatic, yet relaxed style in this conversation than in his formal speeches. His speechmaking rang out in a controlled, yet emotional tone. There was less evidence, in conversation, of that considered tone. Hence, in both formal and informal speech, he demonstrated an array of verbal styles, in each case showcasing his knowledge of ritual and his linguistic skill. This evidence of the increase in personal control that comes with age served to re-create and reinforce assumptions linking authority and age (Kratz, 1994: 217). At the same time, the footage shows how his personal involvement and interest in directing the ritual enhanced the emotional and experiential engagement for all participants and drove the ritual forward.

Ritual was used as an important forum for reinforcing, teaching and learning gender and age differences - through behaviour, language, and use of space and symbolic items - and their relation to authority. For example, women were apportioned more mutton than goat which, belonging to men and ritually killed in the cattlebyre, was the male priority. Young men divided the meat, and young boys fetched and carried branches, knives and so on, while the older men watched and talked and advised [31]. Some of the older women of the agnatic group helped to collect the meat from the cattlebyre [79, 88] and to carve it [91, 92], but most of the work and certainly all of the cooking was carried out by the younger women in the courtyard [94, 96] and younger men

in the cattlebyre [100]. Video reveals how ideas about gender and age were assimilated and naturalized as part of cultural practice, and also how roles were reversed - men usually would not cook - in liminal situations (Leach, 1976: 78).

It was therefore through the enactment of ritual roles that male elders were given a platform for demonstrating and reinforcing their authority over all men and women. But such notions of male dominance clearly take root at an early age and sometimes can be taken to extremes, as references to the sexuality of young boys revealed. On the night of visiting the boys and girls in the seclusion hut, the boys joked late in the evening that they were going to another party in Shixini, to which the girls responded 'Go, we don't care' and 'You can go because you are going to sleep with us without permission.' This idea of sex without permission, of rape, was also referred to elsewhere. Video records one of the songs the young girls singing,

> We saw you. Ke? We saw by handkerchiefs. We raped you on a Sunday. We saw you, we saw you, we saw you [111].

Also on video, the young boys jested about raping girls, while helping to build the seclusion hut:

> We build you a hut to rape. You are not going to rape us. As for me, I will come and rape.

> If you don't hide your private parts, I will get at you when you come back from maNguni [20].

Informants said that some boys (and some older men) did force themselves on young girls during *intonjane*, raping them if they refused to allow sexual penetration.

But references to rape in song and speech could also be the symbolic airing of gender tension - or the term 'rape' could refer to the consequences of illicit, yet consensual, penetration. Informants said that some girls would encourage penetration because there was 'no pleasant feeling' for them if they *metsha*. With a clinic nearby, informants said some girls would go on the pill and indulge in penetrative sex without the *amakhankata* or their families ever finding out. As mentioned in the previous chapter, McAllister's research in Shixini concluded that girls, nowadays, had much greater freedom, enjoying relationships with multiple boyfriends. The pregnancy rate has therefore soared and, frequently, paternity is unknown and damages cannot be claimed (1994: 35). However, after *intonjane*, if the girlfriend or someone else reported that there had been penetrative sex or if pregnancy was discovered, the *ikhankata* could trace who the girl was 'seeing' by checking her written copy of the *isikolo* (register) and the boy would be tracked down and fined.

Informants said fines in 1991 were between R1,000 and R1,500. If this was paid, the boy would be recognised as

the father of the child. The child would then assume the father's clan name even while remaining with the mother. If the boy refused, he was reported to the magistrate, taken to court, tried and, if found guilty, forced to pay - which meant his father would have to sell cattle or borrow the money if it was not immediately available

This financial responsibility, forced on the boy and his family, may have been reason enough for women to taunt the men with 'We will rape you'. Through the obscure lyrics, they could well have been reminding, or even warning, the boys of the mechanisms in place to enforce a shared responsibility for the consequences of sex. This was purely speculation, however, as these lyrics were never satisfactorily clarified in discussions with informants.

What video clearly reveals, however, is that, from an early age, boys began to learn about the power and authority that males, and senior males in particular, wielded and to test this in terms of their expressions of sexuality and sexual force over women. Likewise, young girls' songs and conversations revealed that they learned to defend their bodily autonomy from childhood, contesting men's rights to their person.

Men's activities of speechmaking and slaughter, performed directly to the ancestors, were the only areas of ritual which required concentrated attention from all participants. Despite the fact that women's dance also

served to invoke and appease the ancestors, it did not receive the same focused attention from all participants. Hence male roles at the ritual acquired a significance in terms of authority which cannot be ignored.

The patriarchal inheritance of religious authority was clearly an important weapon of power and authority in the hands of male elders, and their control and manipulation of the symbols, space and language of authority, as shown on video, revealed their intent to maintain and reinforce this power. In entering the cattlebyre to harangue younger men about the apportionment of meat, older women attempted to align their authority with elder men. Together, male and female elders conspired to control the younger generation of participants, but particularly the women. In attempting to control the contested terrain of female sexuality, fertility and reproductive capacity, the concern was clearly of appropriating authority over the activities of younger men, women and children.

Kinship: natal and affinal

Nothimba asserted his authority in this ritual context also by highlighting his relationship with the initiate. He encouraged her conformity by placing a sense of obligation upon her. He did this by personalizing the rite, by reminding her of the expense (when he mentioned the animals to be slaughtered), time and support spent on her behalf, which served to encourage her to conduct herself appropriately for the duration of the ritual.

The reference to a personal relationship, to 'my elder brother's daughter' [27], also set him apart and accorded him status in the eyes of participants as the one apparently responsible for organising the ceremony, feeding the guests and bearing the financial burden (even if the work and cost were shared by others). It legitimated his authority and, at the same time, compelled everyone present to acknowledge the obligations his participation was creating. His words therefore carried enormous rhetorical and pragmatic power (Kratz, 1994: 177). They indicated to all present that, through his patronage and authority, the initiate would experience and be transformed by the rite like none of the other participants, albeit only with their support and encouragement.

That she could not hear him was immaterial. Her presence was implicit in the words he directed at the cattle/ancestors. The importance of kin (both the living, who were present, and the dead, who were appeased) was stressed within a framework which reminded participants of the patriarchal inheritance system which sees religious authority passed on only to elder men.

Nothimba asked for blessings of freedom, success, fertility and old age to be showered upon the initiate [27, 30, 60]. These blessings were to secure more than just her personal success. They were also blessings on the natal family in the form of her reproductive, labour and (by reference to cattle) her *lobolo*-earning

capacities (Kuper, 1982). These were assets which every family would manipulate and protect. Then too, in a normative sense, the initiate would 'traditionally' be approaching a time of marriage and childbirth. Hence, these blessings, by extension, would protect and strengthen ties with the initiate's future affines. In invoking these blessings, Nothimba was therefore demonstrating his authority over the initiate and extending it further over her marital homestead, thus showing his kin's beneficence to the affinal family.

With the performance of *intonjane*, the initiate's value was socially recognised and her person blessed. Her protection and good fortune, sought of her natal ancestors and willed by the community, were brought to her husband's household. This reaffirmed her contribution to that household and cemented her position as wife and mother, as well as strengthening ties between her natal and affinal families. Her marital family was blessed with happiness, prosperity and wealth in the health, reproductive capacity and labour of the initiate, which served to guarantee *lobolo* for the natal family.

In the late 1980s, despite the initiate being long married, it was still appropriate that the rite blessed ties between natal and affinal homesteads. An unhappy wife could return to her natal family, causing all sorts of *lobolo* complications between the two lineages. Hence, blessings for her success became good fortune between lineages, securing peaceful, harmonious relations and

setting a suitable tone - one of success and well-being - for the ceremony.

Besides highlighting his personal relationship with the initiate, Nothimba explicitly acknowledged other ties amongst his natal kin. He reminded his audience of the absence of his two older brothers, and of the seniority and leadership which would rightfully be theirs were they present [30, 60]. In this way, he clarified his own position in the male genealogy of this homestead. Hence, he asserted his control while also acknowledging acceptance of a strict patriarchal line of authority. He reminded his audience that he was conforming to 'tradition', in terms of kinship and gender, and also to 'traditional' hierarchical patterns of authority, which encouraged them to do the same. By outlining the various roles and contributions of those present and absent, Nothimba encouraged the initiate to perform her role appropriately through obligation to her kin. Nothimba's words were symbolic and represented a patriarchal ideal.

Kinship was also invoked indirectly through references to, and about, oxen [60]. Nothimba called upon the presence and protection of the shades by linking his remarks to, or talking directly to, an ox. First of all, the repeated invocation to Ntambayithethi, the ox about to be slaughtered, to 'give us no trouble' [60] served to prevent ill health and to secure good fortune for both the initiate and her kin.

As mentioned earlier, Nothimba repeatedly referred to his brothers, his kin, the role of men in ritual and the ox [30, 60]. Besides foregrounding the role of men in ritual, Nothimba explicitly honoured the deceased in the male line. In invoking the praise names ('Rhudulu, Zulu, S'khomo, Tshangisa') of the agnatic group [60], Nothimba asked for the attention and protection of the ancestors for the natal homestead and on all clan members, wherever they might reside. Speaking metaphorically to the ancestors through the ox, he outlined the purpose of the rite and established his position in the genealogy of authority for the homestead. He explained why it should be he who killed it, ensuring that not only the living were satisfied that all was being carried out as it should, but that the ancestors too were convinced that there was order. Then he told all present that they were gathered together to perform this rite on their forefathers behalf [60]. In calling out the various praise names, blessings were invoked on the homestead, on the natal lineage and on the idea of 'tradition', thereby celebrating stability and constancy in existing roles and relationships, rather than any notions of change.

A powerful symbol of the rite was the ritual spear [30, 60] which Nothimba used to stab the ox. McAllister quotes a male informant in Shixini as saying 'The homestead is built with the spear. If you do not do things at home, you will not have health. If you do not do the customs the homestead will not succeed' (1981: 3). Ritual slaughter, using the spear of the agnatic group,

ensured the shades were well disposed towards the homestead and its inhabitants (ibid).

Although the killing and carving was carried out by a person appointed to the task by the elders of the agnatic group, the host was said to slaughter in that he carried out the ritual task of symbolically passing the spear between the sacrificial animal's legs and stabbing it in an invocation of the ancestors. The act of passing the spear of the agnatic group between the animal's legs served to consecrate it, making it 'wholly acceptable ("clean") to the ancestors' (Kuckertz, 1990: 238) while stabbing 'prevents the animal from bleeding externally, since no blood should be spilled at an ancestral ritual' (ibid: 239). The animal, ritually slaughtered, was being offered to the ancestors, yet remained in the land of the living. The drama being enacted moved to a potent, mystical level where actions and consequences did not need to be rationally defined. The emotional awareness of lineage, ancestral, spiritual participation was dramatically heightened. The affective dimension of this drama is most effectively captured on video.

Once the beast cried out, the ancestors having been invoked, Nothimba retired to his seat of power at the gatepost and the official appointee took over to do the actual work of killing and carving under Nothimba's, and the other elders, direction [60, 61]. When this was done, the spear was placed in the fence of the cattlebyre and left there until the rite was over, whence it was

removed and speared into the thatch of the main hut, until it would be claimed for another rite of the same agnatic group. It therefore linked, closely, the two homes of the ancestors: the cattlebyre and the main hut (Kuckertz, 1990: 245) and brought the whole under the auspices of the authority of elder men of the agnatic group. The spear symbolised the community of agnatic kin and lineage through history, as it linked the present community to the ancestors through its symbolic ritual use. The authority of history and 'tradition' which it embodied rests with men, and particularly elders who wield the spear at ceremonial occasions. This primary importance of the role of elders in ritual contexts was most clearly signified by the leadership of Nolele, who was not of the initiate's clan. It was her task, by virtue of her age and experience, to oversee the activities of women of the agnatic group, including the initiate. Hence, while agnatic solidarity was a significant part of this rite, the authority of elders was clearly of primary importance.

Xhosa identity

In the unscheduled speech to Chief Dalingozi [109], Nothimba used many of the same linguistic and poetic devices as before, drawing attention to himself, invoking seniority and genealogy to legitimize his role; referring to the ox; linking oxen and women; and foregrounding the role of men. Hence assumptions of gender, authority through age, kinship and community were again invoked in

the service of 'tradition'. However, the chief explicitly introduced another theme which had only been implicit until that point, that of Xhosa cultural identity, which he linked to 'tradition'. Nothimba and the chief emphasized different themes, yet their common goal of reifying continuity, through the mechanism of 'tradition', was clearly evident.

Chief Dalingozi praised Nothimba for upholding Xhosa custom, but everyone was reminded of the secondary importance of this women's rite by the little joke they shared about the men not bothering with ritual costume as it was 'only women's initiation'. This perpetuated ideas about the nature of gender and of its relation to authority, just as the idea of 'Xhosa-ness' perpetuated the notion of a uniform Xhosa identity. This background of cultural identity, emphasizing continuity and 'tradition', provided a context for encouraging conformity to age and gender stereotypes and for reinforcing notions of place and identity in which elder men, both by nature and experience, assumed positions of authority and superiority.

Hence, women's activities were preoccupied, mainly, with the domestic domain and women's issues, only explicitly focusing on the community at *umtshato*. Men's oratory, on the other hand, located in the public domain of the cattlebyre, extended beyond the local focus of homestead, agnatic group and community to include all Xhosa-speaking people. This was indicative of the public domain of

their authority in everyday life.

Community

Just as the individuals presence and participation in ritual activities had symbolic meaning for all present, so the absence of expected participants signaled diminished status. Neither Nolele nor Nothimba bothered to attend the closing rites of *intonjane* [130-137] alluding to the importance of adult community support and solidarity, as well as ancestral participation particularly in those spheres dominated by men and the male line.

That this was a rite of solidarity in terms of community was evident in the repeated emphasis put on the presence of Folokhwe people [60]. References to the *baFolokhwe*, the people of the ward of Folokhwe, invoked a sense of custom and 'tradition' being rightfully upheld, of the status quo being maintained. The rite bound community together, reminding them, through ritual behaviour and speech, that the individual and the community were symbolically fused in a relationship of interdependence, hence blessings on one meant blessings on all. This reinforcing of community bonds was crucial as reciprocity and support were relied upon mechanisms for survival in an area where men were often absent and poverty was rife.

The emphasis on community was substantiated by Nolele's role. It was significant that she was not of the natal

clan. It was her elder status which qualified her for the position, and which gave her authority, in terms of age and experience, to lead all women of the community. Her participation signalled the importance of community leadership in this rite.

But the idealising of community was also a mechanism for ensuring social order. Every person was part of a broader community and was expected to conform to the conservative values of their society. *Intonjane* w- a forum for reminding the community of these conservative values and for re-socialising participants, particularly women, into them.

A peaceful, harmonious tone between all participants was suggested by Nothimba, encouraging conflict to remain symbolic and ritualised. In defining the appropriate ceremonial key as one of harmony and co-operation, an image was evoked of ideal community life within a conservative patriarchal framework, of a desire for social peace now and on a daily basis. Conformity to these community values was encouraged.

In referring to a 'day of peace' [60], Nothimba referred to the tone of the ceremony as well as the ideal aspired to in relations between participating lineages and agnatic groups. It was a call for general co-operation and peace. Yet this ideal of community was conveyed through the particularly male perspective of the call-and-response form utilised in speeches. This invoking

and re-creating of an harmonious register was a critical part of creating an experiential context for drawing in all participants, for creating a sense of community and conformity.

In the cattleybre, at the moment of slaughter, it was the community of men who combined in a cry of 'so it is' to lift this otherwise secular rite into the realm of the sacred. Together with the women's contribution, the ritual moved to a heightened plane of significance in this public forum.

Through both the content and the enactment of ritual performance, through the experiential process itself, community participation re-created, legitimated and perpetuated social relations, with their existing assumptions of gender and age, of hierarchy and authority, for the participants and for the initiate. Over time, community participation would serve to create 'a sense of continuity and tradition as a legitimating backdrop to the ceremony' (Kratz, 1994: 168), thereby smoothing any edges of change by affirming continuity, within a framework of tradition.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Gender, generation, tradition and change

> Repetition creates an image of continuity, [and] underlines a sense of history and unbroken tradition (Kratz, 1994: 162).

The study of performance through the recording of video footage allows alternative meanings and purposes of *intonjane* to be exposed, and some understanding to be shed on the central concern of the research: to understand the paradox of why, and to what end, *intonjane* was performed when, on the surface, it appeared to make no sense. Clearly, *intonjane* had several sides and perspectives to it which made it relevant, still, in 1989.

Studying performance through the close, detailed observation possible from repeated viewings, ensured that the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the ritual was revealed and that all of the voices and roles of ceremonial performance were given witness. The driving force of the actors' emotion and experience; the orchestrated trajectories of various media, waxing and waning, eventually climaxing and effecting transformation; the spatial organisation, manipulation of symbols and patterning, and their relation to gender, hierarchy and status; and the cultural assumptions and expectations which provided a background to the process; all became evident through the study of performance. Embraced in the three keys -- semiotic movement, contextual re-creation, and emotional and experiential engagement -- these elements offered us insight into the process of transformation, its meaning for the participants, and the efficacy of ritual itself. In the manipulation of such themes as fertility, sexuality, genealogy, cattle, authority and

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