

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NEGLECTED THEMES IN THE VISUAL REPRESENTATION
OF *ULWALUKO*

by
Sinazo Nqweniso
G19n6342

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Art in Art History
Department of Fine Art
Rhodes University

December 2023

Supervisor: Dr Thembinkosi Goniwe
(t.goniwe@ru.co.za)

Abstract

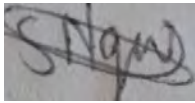
This study investigates the significance of the neglected themes in visual representations of the Xhosa (also AmaXhosa) ritual of manhood called *ulwaluko*. The focus is on attire, cosmetics, language, food, games and music. These themes are part of the various components that constitute *ulwaluko* as a complex and significant practice amongst the Xhosa people, which comprises layered meanings, activities, and procedures involved in the ritual transformation of males from boyhood to manhood. The neglected themes are imperative in the education and socialisation of Xhosa men, and the formation of their identity and pride. Through *ulwaluko*, Xhosa men gain significant knowledge about maturity, cultured demeanour, marriage, family, human rights, and domestic and substance abuse. These teachings are essential in educating, shaping and moulding Xhosa men.

Throughout the three decades from the 1990s to the 2020s, *ulwaluko* has suffered a crisis evidenced by injuries and deaths of initiates through careless procedures of circumcision, irresponsible nursing of the initiates and unfavourable conditions where the education of initiates takes place. This crisis has been a burning subject not only for journalists and scholars but also artists and filmmakers. The crisis dominates visual representations of *ulwaluko* in South African contemporary art. This study argues that even amid fatalities such as pain, injuries and the death of initiates, *ulwaluko* is still an essential institution that contributes to social practices and the moral fibre of society.

Using Afrocentrism and the indigenous knowledge system as theoretical lenses, this study appreciates *ulwaluko* culture by interpreting researched data from an African-centred perspective. This approach produces African knowledge that recognises the African voice and affirms the centrality of cultural experience. The use of indigenous knowledge is to access the neglected themes in popular knowledge and culture by appreciating the Xhosa ways of knowing, being and understanding in contemporary African society.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by complete references. This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Art degree at Rhodes University. I declare that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at another university.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S. Ngwenya', written on a light-colored background.

Signed

16/09/2024

Date

CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Declaration	ii
Contents	iii
List of Illustrations	v
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER: RESEARCH OVERVIEW	1
Context of the Research	1
Theoretical Framework	10
Research Goals	11
Methodology	12
Outline of Chapters	13
Conclusion	15
CHAPTER ONE: ATTIRE AND DRESS CODE	16
Introduction	16
Contextual Background	16
Pre-initiation	17
During-initiation	20
Post-initiation	26
Conclusion	34
CHAPTER TWO: INDIGENOUS COSMETICS	35
Introduction	35
Contextual Background	36
Theoretical Framework	36
Definitions	37
Protection	37
Historical Overview	40
Warding off bad energies	42
Toning and enhancing the initiate's body	47
Ukuqaba imbhola	51
Conclusion	54

CHAPTER THREE: LANGUAGE AND ISIHILONIPHO	55
Introduction.....	55
Contextual Background	56
Theoretical Framework.....	56
What is Language?.....	57
<i>Isihlonipho</i> Language in <i>Ulwaluko</i>	59
African Proverbs, Idioms and Metaphors	63
Respect for Self and Others	67
Manhood Language Through the Concept of <i>Ndiyindoda</i>	69
Conclusion	72
CHAPTER FOUR: FOOD AND BECOMING.....	73
Introduction.....	73
Contextual Background	74
Definition of <i>Food</i>	74
Food and eating in the seven days.....	76
Umojiso ritual.....	77
Cultural identity.....	82
<i>Umgidi</i>	86
Conclusion	88
CHAPTER FIVE: GAMES AND MUSIC	90
Introduction.....	90
Contextual Background	91
Theoretical Framework and Articulation of the Themes.....	93
Ukuqula or ubetha iintonga	94
Music	98
Umteyo	103
Umtshotsho.....	105
Iceya	107
Conclusion	108
CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS	109
BIBLIOGRAPHY	113
APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY	125

List of Illustrations

Figure 1 Trevor Makhoba. <i>Pain in the Mountain</i> . 1999. Painting. Tatham Art Gallery, KwaZulu-Natal Province	2
Figure 2 Sonwabiso Ngcai. <i>Liyahamba Isiko</i> [Moving Custom]. 2018. Mixed-media installation. National Arts Festival, South Africa.....	3
Figure 3 Yonella Nella. <i>Umguyo</i> . 8 January 2018. YouTube video screenshot.....	18
Figure 4 Zusakhe Gaqisa. <i>Umguyo</i> . 10 May 2019. YouTube video screenshot.....	19
Figure 5 Mgcineni ‘Pro’ Sobopha. <i>V Untitled</i> . 2000. Charcoal, drawing ink, blanket on board. University of Cape Town.....	22
Figure 6 Richard Bullock. <i>A Month with Three Initiates During Initiation Ritual</i> . 2015. Photograph.....	24
Figure 7 John Trengove. <i>Inxeba</i> [The Wound]. 2017. Film screenshot. South Africa.....	27
Figure 8 Thandiwe Msebenzi. <i>Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New</i> . 2012. Photograph. University of Cape Town.....	29
Figure 9 Laduma Ngxokolo. <i>Maxhoseni</i> . 2011. Photograph. South Africa	31
Figure 10 John Trengove. <i>Inxeba</i> [The Wound]. 2017. Screenshot from film.....	38
Figure 11 Thembinkosi Goniwe. <i>Face Value Series</i> . 1999. Computer-manipulated inkjet poster print. Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town.....	39
Figure 12 Thembinkosi Goniwe. <i>Face Value Series</i> . 1999. Computer-manipulated inkjet poster print. Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town.....	44
Figure 13 Piper Mackay Photography. <i>Piper and Filed Under</i> . 2015. Omo-Valley-Suri-Tribe-Ethiopia-Suri-body-paint-4.....	46
Figure 14 Hadith Africa. <i>Ulwaluko</i> . 2019. An ancient initiation rite practised by the Amaxhosa of South Africa. Photograph	48
Figure 15 Songezile Churchill Madikida. <i>Struggle of the Heart</i> . 2003. Digital video still	50
Figure 16 Tony Dold. <i>Ikrwala</i> . 2005. A young initiate who has recently returned from initiation school) proudly shows his new social status with <i>isibindi</i> (a paste made from the bracket fungus <i>Ganoderma</i>). Photograph	52
Figure 17 Thandiwe Msebenzi. <i>Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New</i> . 2012. Photography. University of Cape Town.....	68

Figure 18 Thandiswe Masebenzi. <i>Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New</i> . 2012. Photograph	80
Figure 19 Songezile Churchill Madikida. <i>Struggle of the Heart</i> . 2003. Digital video still	85
Figure 20 Ndikhumbule Ngqinambi. <i>Umgidi</i> . 2005. Painting, oil on canvas. Graca Machel Hall, Cape Town.....	86
Figure 21 Eric Lafforgue. <i>Stick Fighting</i> . N.d. Photograph.....	97
Figure 22 Sibaninzi Dlathu. <i>Transcending with Sound</i> . 2022. Pen and colour pencils	99
Figure 23 Nicholas Hlobo. <i>Izithunzi</i> [Shadows] (detail). 2009. Rubber inner tube, ribbon, organza, lace, found objects, steel, couch. Six of eight sculptures. Approximately 200 x 150 x 150 cm each.....	106

Dedication

*This study is dedicated to
my son, Kamvelihle (Kamva) Luniko Panda,
with whom I could not spend enough time during my studies,
but he ingeniously understood that Daddy had to go to work.*

*And most importantly, to my late mother, Nombeko Florence Nqweniso, for she has been my
source of support and encouragement. She made untold sacrifices during my preparation and
completion of this study while committing her time and means to our family.*

Acknowledgements

Gratitude and appreciation go to my supervisor, Dr Thembinkosi Goniwe, for his unwavering and consistent guidance during the preparation of this research and resultant thesis, and to my mentor, Songezile Madikida, for his prompt advice and assistance whenever I needed him.

To my late mother, Nombeko Florence Nqweniso; my siblings, Ncumisa Ntsomi, Zoliswa Nqweniso and Xolelwa Nqgokwe; my son Kamva; and to the Dywili family, who were very understanding and patient with me during my years of study, as I could not attend to some of their important business due to my workload, a heartfelt thank-you.

To the Mellon Inclusive Professoriate Scholarship for their financial support, without which this study would not have been completed, my appreciation.

Lastly, I am most grateful to ooSithathu, Chisane, Ndebe, Khophoyi'nkomo ezibomvu, and my Lord and Saviour for the strength and grace to see me through this project even when conditions were not favourable.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This chapter provides background information on the significance of the neglected themes in the visual representations of the *ulwaluko* initiation ritual. It seeks to explain the importance of food, attire, cosmetics, language, games and music used by (Eastern Cape Xhosa men) when undergoing the *ulwaluko* ritual. These neglected themes contribute to the health and well-being of Xhosa men who, after initiation, are socially integrated into society. The Afrocentric perspective is the theoretical approach this study explores to understand the Xhosa worldview. This approach, including the motivation, methodology, purpose and aim of this study, are discussed in this chapter. At the heart of this chapter is addressing visual representations that overstate and reduce male initiation to circumcision, especially the removal of the foreskin and, in doing so, limit their focus on the problems associated with the ritual. These problems are deaths, injuries, crime and gender oppression that are problematically summarised as the crisis of *ulwaluko* (Bogopa 2007; Vincent 2008; Peltzer and Kanta 2009; Kepe 2010; Mavundla et al. 2010; Venter 2011).

This crisis dominates visual representations of *ulwaluko* in South African contemporary art. The present study responds to this visual domination by arguing that *ulwaluko* must not be reduced to problems and crises when other significant aspects of the initiation ritual exist. The basis of this argument is that even amid fatalities such as pain, injuries and the death of initiates, *ulwaluko* continues to orientate and train boys to become men. During their training, initiates learn the importance of food, cosmetics, language, attire, games and music. For these significant lessons and experiences, *ulwaluko* is still an essential and valuable institution that contributes to human knowledge, personal maturity and social relations. Hence, Xhosa people continue to view initiation as a practice that is supposed to contribute to the moral fibre of society (Ntombana 2011, 637). The ritual is vital in moulding an individual's growth and constructing a social and cultural identity that instils confidence in Xhosa men.

Context of the Research

AmaXhosa is a South African cultural group that takes pride in its traditional initiation practices and customs. The terms *Xhosa* and *AmaXhosa* are used interchangeably throughout this study when referring to the indigenous isiXhosa-speaking people. One of the AmaXhosa's customary rituals is *ulwaluko*, a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood. *Ulwaluko* is

imperative in the education and socialisation of Xhosa men, as well as the formation of their cultural identity and masculine pride. Ngqeba (2021, 163) explains that ‘historically, initiation schools have the responsibility of educating male learners about human rights, family responsibility, gender-based violence, and substance abuse like overindulgence in alcohol and drugs.’ Through initiation rituals, boys receive knowledge not accessible to the uninitiated. Hence, the essence of *ulwaluko* is inculcating a set of defined roles and responsibilities of manhood so that the initiated see themselves as adults (Papu and Verster 2006, 183)

In the three decades from the 1990s to the 2020s, this ritual has been in crisis, made evident by injuries and deaths of initiates through careless procedures of circumcision, irresponsible surgeons and poor nursing of the initiates, and unfavourable conditions where the education of the initiates takes place (Dingeman 2013, 3). This crisis has been a burning subject for not only journalists and scholars but also artists and filmmakers. Take, for example, Trevor Makhoba’s painting *Pain in the Mountain* (1999) (**Figure 1**) and Sonwabiso Ngcai’s *Liyahamba Isiko* [Moving Custom] (2018) (**Figure 2**), and the television series *Umthunzi Wentaba* (2007) depicting Xhosa boys taken to be initiated and the documentary *Ndiyindoda* [I Am a Man] (2013), which is about a young man who lost his penis in *ulwaluko* due to lack of attention by his guardian. The recent film *Inxeba: The Wound* (2017) by John Tremgove depicts the crisis of male initiation.



Figure 1 Trevor Makhoba. *Pain in the Mountain*. 1999. Painting. Tatham Art Gallery, KwaZulu-Natal Province

In Makhoba’s painting *Pain in the Mountain* (1999), the crisis of Xhosa male initiation is about an injury zone, showing a surgeon circumcising a boy depicted screaming because of the pain

of the cutting procedure (circumcision). In the scene, several initiates in different postures express the emotions of unbearable pain. The artist has overstated and reduced initiation to the removal of the foreskin. He depicts the crucial part of the initiation by focusing on what is considered the major crisis. This visual focus overstates and reduces the complexity of the initiation ritual to the removal of the foreskin and the feeling of pain. His visual take is, therefore, questionable when considering arguments made by Lungcuza and Ntombana (cited in Siswana 2016, 165) that the initiation ritual ‘is not merely a cutting of the foreskin, but rather a symbolic cut, which has a deeper meaning related to *isiko* [custom]’.



Figure 2 Sonwabiso Ngcai. *Liyahamba Isiko* [Moving Custom]. 2018. Mixed-media installation. National Arts Festival, South Africa

Ngcai’s *Liyahamba Isiko* (Moving Custom) (2018) is a mixed-medium installation depicting 55 deformed penises modelled in clay. The severed penises are placed on top of a mobile hospital gurney to represent injured initiates admitted to the hospital. Ngcai’s installation reinforces the popularised problem about the initiation ritual, and its visualisation of the injured penises extends Makhoba’s concern with the pain in the mountain. Even Ngcai’s chosen title, *Liyahamba Isiko*, which implies the vanishing of the custom, reinforces the widespread crisis of *ulwaluko* in contemporary society. This crisis cannot be denied or disputed. Focusing on it is essential because it exposes what some critics view as the irrelevance of traditional African customs in modern society. Missionaries and some African theologians encourage the abolition of traditional male initiation practices, arguing that ‘the practice of initiation no longer serves good intentions due to its lost meaning and sociocultural significance’ (Siswana 2015, 15). This view might be necessary but fails to account for the reduction of the complexity and understanding of *ulwaluko* to one of its procedures, circumcision, which has dominated visual

representations of the Xhosa ritual of manhood. This view also neglects the significance of the educational components essential to the moulding maturation of Xhosa men in society.

The present study, therefore, challenges this fixation on the crisis that dominates visual representations of *ulwaluko* in South African contemporary art. The researcher argues that *ulwaluko* is not and should not be defined by the crisis it continues to encounter but by a range of complex processes and procedures necessary for educating, moulding and empowering Xhosa men. Thus, this study investigates the neglected themes that are part of the various components that constitute *ulwaluko* as a complex and significant practice comprised of layered processes and procedures. *Ulwaluko* consists of various stages, such as pre-initiation preparation, the circumcision operation, seclusion in the initiation cultural setting and reintegration into society (Ntozini and Ngqangweni 2016, 1310). These stages relate to Arnold van Gennep's (1960) theory of the three phases of (1) ritual seclusion, (2) separation/liminality and (3) reintegration. Separation is the first stage. It is characterised by symbolic behaviour that represents the detachment of an individual from his youthful social stage in the community (Rasing 1995, 5). In this seclusion stage, individuals separate from their old life as they are in a transitional process presented by a complete change into a new state of awareness. For van Gennep (1960, 74–75), this stage involves cutting away all games and sports the initiate used to play; now, he has to assume the duties and responsibilities of being an adult. In *ulwaluko*, the separation stage includes a boy's head being shaved, old clothes being removed, and him starting to wear the initiate's blanket. Henda (2021, 4) states that

this initiation ritual involves great excitement among AmaXhosa and consists of *umngeno* (the entering, which includes separation of the initiate to the bush). He is still a boy until the circumcision procedure takes place at the bush. *Umngeno* is characterised by the separation phase, which is the first part of the ritual – the boy is temporarily removed to the bush where he remains for about two weeks or a month, depending on the family.

This moment of *umngeno* and circumcision marks the separation from his previous stage of boyhood to a new phase of adulthood. This means that now the boy is adapting to a new life of being an initiate, eating a specific diet, dressing in a particular manner and using the expected language of respect. This sequence is characterised by the leave and cleave phenomenon, meaning that a person leaves the old life behind and is re-incorporated into society, which signifies embracing a new life and new ways of doing things (Henda 2021, 1). Mfecane (2016,

205) (cited in Ngwane 2004,123) states that seclusion in the bush ‘is where he receives instruction about being a man from the *ikhankatha* [male guardian] and other initiated male youths known as *abafana* [initiated male youths]’. These instructions are essential in educating, shaping and moulding the character of the initiates.

For this isolation stage, Victor Turner (1969, 359) argues that ‘liminality is linked with death, to be in a womb, to invisibility, to darkness, bisexuality, to the wilderness, and an eclipse of the sun or moon.’ Liminality is an in-betweenness, an ambiguous state that keeps the person in an unknown realm or level. When one dies, one is separated from life and moves into other unknown spheres of life called *to transition into the ancestral world*. These spheres are also known as *transcendental realms*. Relating this stage to the initiates, the researcher in the present study argues that initiates temporarily live between stages as they no longer occupy the boy’s category and are not yet classified as men. In this transitional stage, the initiates are no longer boys because they have gone through the cutting procedure of *ulwaluko* and still must take all the required steps towards becoming men. The transitional phase comprises *ubukhwetha* (being an initiate), which occurs in the bush. The liminality stage aims to make them step out of ordinary society and socialised framework to alter their social position.

In van Gennep’s (1960) view, the incorporation stage allows Xhosa men to return to their previous environment after liminality. The reintegration stage involves the initiates leaving their initiation school with the new status of being a man who graduated to manhood. This moment of leaving is symbolised by the burning of the seclusion lodge and by washing themselves in the river to remove the white clay (*ingceke*). They are now smeared with a red ochre and given a new name, *ubhuti omtsha*, new clothes, new privileges, and new roles and responsibilities of manhood. The incorporation phase is characterised by different ceremonies that occur in stages but for only one purpose: the incorporation of the new man called *ikrwala* (a graduate) back into the community. The ceremony for the occasion is called *umphumo* (the coming out). After completing their initiation ritual, including the *ubukrwala* (a graduated initiate) phase, they are reintegrated into the community and officially regarded as a man (*indoda*) responsible and able to conduct family matters, community affairs, cultural ceremonies and rituals. The new man is now expected to conduct himself as a responsible adult, attending to social issues that were not part of his life before initiation. Turner (1967, 94) adds that ‘these individuals are assumed to be adults and are expected to behave according to certain customary standards. These standards include a man taking care of his family and leading by

example. Van Gennep's theory provides a valuable background to understanding the significance and complexity of the *ulwaluko* ritual.

Studying the neglected themes is essential for bringing awareness of the marginalised knowledge and benefits of *ulwaluko*. During *ulwaluko* rites of passage, initiates are taught the language of respect and the importance of African metaphors, idioms and proverbs that foreign languages cannot teach Xhosa men. This point is argued by Kepe (2010, 733), who claims that the sacred education of teaching Xhosa men symbolic language 'is fast losing out to English and other languages'. Two aspects of the language taught through the *ulwaluko* ritual are *ukuhlonipha* (respect) and *isidoda* (manhood). The initiates are empowered Xhosa men during and beyond initiation in a sense, as Ntombana (2009, 74) argues, that the educational role of Xhosa rituals does not exist in isolation but is integral to society, and benefits Xhosa social relations and societal structures. This education benefits not only the initiate but also his family, community and society as he learns respectful and dignified ways of talking to people. For Mhlahlo (2009), Xhosa men have an important role in and responsibility towards their families and society: they are expected to be exemplary leaders who provide for and protect their families and communities.

Food is an essential part of Xhosa initiations. This is not only for health purposes but also regarding Belasco's (1999, 30) point that 'sharing food transforms social relationships and it is very hard to have a meaningful social encounter without exchanging some food or drink'. Through food, Xhosa men learn to share, engage in conversations, and forge mature, empowering, and uniting relationships. Food communicates one's belonging, taste, and place in the socio-cultural placement of young and old, as well as men and women. This is evident in initiation ceremonies and social gatherings where young and elderly men and women are assigned to appropriate groups so everyone can belong in their appropriate place. This is not a division but a sociocultural arrangement that facilitates interactions, engagements, relations and order among the Xhosa people. Almerico (2014, 5) notes the influence of food habits on an individual's self-identity by stating that 'eating is a daily reaffirmation of [one's] cultural identity'. The food that initiates eat is an expression of their identity, which helps them better understand the Xhosa diet. Vatika (2018, 5) makes the important argument that 'the main reason we should view food as a form of communication is because it is directly linked to both ritual and culture.'

In arguing the significance of neglected themes of food and cosmetics, the researcher in the present study analyses the artworks of Songezile Churchill Madikida and Thembinkosi Goniwe. In *Struggle of the Heart* (2003) (**Figure 15**), Madikida represents an initiate whose face is covered with white clay and who is chewing maize meal *pap* (porridge), which is one of the essential diets for initiates during their seclusion. Other essential diets include rice, *samp* (dried and pounded corn kernels) and *umbhona* (corn). Dry corn and maize meal *pap* are important for initiates to eat during *ulwaluko* as this food is believed to contribute to their well-being. For example, when initiates lose their energy and strength because of the pain caused by the cut (circumcision), the food gives them strength to endure and restrain (excessive) bleeding, in this way boosting the initiates' immune system. Another health factor is not to allow initiates to drink water during the first week leading up to *ukojiswa* (to roast meat) because water is considered a source that slows the healing of the initiates' wound, especially since the wound is constantly wet instead of being dry due to urination.

Like Madikida's represented initiate, Goniwe's *Face Value* series (1999) (**Figure 11**) depicts a male initiate whose face is covered in white clay. The white clay is for the initiate's cosmetic use to protect his skin, warm him during cold weather, and enhance his aesthetics. For example, the repetitive vertical lines on the cheeks and forehead of the initiate's face in the *Face Value* series are aesthetic inscriptions. The consistency of the vertical lines creates a harmonious balance between the whitened faces. The white clay masks the face to signify the importance of preserving and protecting the health of the initiate's skin from exposure to hot weather, which has the cancerous potential to damage the black skin. The white clay is also believed to protect the skin from bad energies in the bushy forest during seclusion. The white clay represents the identity of the initiate during seclusion.

The white clay conveys the social status and identity of the initiates in Goniwe's *Bona*, *Pace* and *Drum* magazine covers. These visual representations invite an investigation into the significance of cosmetics in the *ulwaluko* ritual. This cosmetic white clay is known as *ingceke*, and the red ochre is known as *imbhola*. Both are used to protect, tone and enhance the visual outlook of the initiate's face and body. Mpako (2011, 238) explains that '*amakrwala* [new initiates] apply red clay, *imbhola*, for toning and moisturising their skin after long use of *ingceke* [African sunscreen lotion]'. These cosmetics are for health, aesthetic and identity purposes. The red clay is used as a skin nourishment and cleansing of toxins. The importance of *imbhola* is to enhance Xhosa men's appearance and make them feel more confident when

wearing their manhood attire. These properties of cosmetics become a beauty aid to help build an individual's self-esteem.

Ulwaluko is integral to the wellness and elegance of Xhosa men in a society where African forms of health, aesthetics and identity are undermined by dominant Western ways of knowing and being. The Western influence on African culture reveals bad influences that made Africans view their forms of health, aesthetics and identity as primitive, outdated and inappropriate. These negative influences turned Africans into appropriating Western ways, so much so that these ways have become part and parcel of modern African life. *Ulwaluko* should be understood as a critical ritual that is guarded against the corrupting Western influence while also contributing to the construction and empowerment of Xhosa men. The ritual fosters their unique cultural identity, dignity and elegance; it teaches Xhosa men to appreciate the fact that they are Xhosa Africans and African Xhosas.

Clothing for the initiated is about different statuses, identities and aesthetics. It is a visual feature evidenced by the attire the graduated initiates or new men wear. The attire expresses the meaning of who the young men are and the new status bestowed upon them, which they have embraced. The new men's attire symbolises *isidima nesithozela* (dignity and elegance) and is a sign of accomplished manhood. The dignity and elegance of new Xhosa men are captured in Thandiwe Msebenzi's *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* (2012) (**Figures 8, 17 and 18**) and Laduma Ngxokolo's *Maxhoseni* (2011) (**Figure 9**). New initiates, known as *amakrwala*, announce their new status through a new dress code and are bound by the code of behaviour. As Gitywa (cited in Duka-Ntshweni 2013, 8) asserts, young men 'are expected to show a more decent, responsible and proper behaviour guided by the norms and values of the community'. Their visual outlook also facilitates relations in social interactions and personal engagements in the family, community and society.

The significance of games and music during *ulwaluko* concerns stick fighting (*ukuqula* or *ubetha iintonga*) and a guessing game known as *iceya*. Stick fighting teaches Xhosa men interactive tactics in tackling and combating an attack and creative skills to tolerate, endure and overcome challenges and pain. It also fosters an aptitude for traditional mediation or facilitation of settling disputes. Yawkey et al. (1986) argue that play is a natural form of learning, regardless of age. For example, by playing, initiates learn adult roles and problems; when they play, they

look and find ways of winning the games, which is an essential skill that a person needs to have.

Music is the art of sound that expresses ideas and emotions through rhythm, melody, harmony and beat. Xhosa people use *amagwijo* as their traditional music for entertainment during initiations and various ceremonies or occasions. Sometimes they use music as therapy to soothe the initiates' pain, frustration and anger but also to bring joy, excitement and spiritual trances or to transit into transcendental realms of *ukubasemoyine* (to be in spiritual realm), as explored by Sibaninzi Dlathu in *Transcending with Sound* (2022) (**Figure 22**) and Nicholas Hlobo in *Izithunzi* [Shadows] (2009) (**Figure 23**).

The themes discussed above have benefits for human relations, interactions and engagements. They cultivate humanist values, morals, ethics, harmony, order, unity and cohesion within the Xhosa and broader African family, community and society. Their meaning and significance are associated with *ubuntu* (humanity towards others). Broodryk (2009) argues that the *ubuntu* personality is the ideal human being that manifests in the living of the ancient *ubuntu* values. These human ideals enable Xhosa people to relate to one another, tolerate one another, and respect others, including the elders. Every individual is taught to keep these values and morals to live longer and avoid bringing a curse on themselves and their family. This set of *ubuntu* values holds Xhosa men together and guarantees their continued existence and appreciation in society.

Mabovula (2011, 40), cited in Mbigi (1997), understands *Ubuntu* to be based on developmental network concepts of group solidarity, compassion, respect, dignity and collective unity. The concepts convey the idea, meaning and value of *Ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* is also about poetry, liberation and community; it is food for the hungry, caring for creation and the validation of one human being by another. *Ubuntu* is the beauty of life that seeps and drips out of the hands and the energy of ordinary people. The smell of possibilities and pathos arises out of struggles against poverty, oppression and inequality. According to Vellem, Lenka-Bula and Dibeela (2015, 231) (cited in Mpetsheni 2019), *ubuntu* contains life-giving metaphorical language and actions, an antidote and an empire. *Ubuntu* is an African value system characterised by Xhosa men caring and sharing manhood.

Theoretical Framework

To frame the neglected themes addressed in this study, the researcher uses Afrocentrism, whose theoretical concepts centre around African perspectives and indigenous knowledge to engage African subjects (Dlamini 2018, 3). These Afrocentric conceptual devices are explored to retrieve and write the neglected themes of language, food, cosmetics, attire, games and music that are nurtured in the Xhosa ritual of *ulwaluko*. Asante (1987, 6) defines *Afrocentricity* as literally placing African culture at the centre of any analysis involving the study of African people. Afrocentrism allows Africans to be subjects rather than objects of Eurocentrism. Gray (2001, 3) states that *Afrocentric* refers to

an idea and perspective which holds that African people can and should see, study, interpret and interact with people, life and reality from the vantage point of African people rather than from the vantage point of European people, Asians, other non-African people or from the vantage point of African people who are alienated from Africanness.

In this study, Afrocentrism implies research that is framed and approached from the Xhosa worldview. A Xhosa worldview is a way in which Xhosa people understand their customs, beliefs, practices and values. This worldview is informed by Xhosa culture and works by recognising and appreciating history and heritage and understanding Africans. It also centres on ways of framing and acquiring knowledge by local people through the accumulation of experiences, informal experiments, accidental discoveries and intimate understanding of the environment in a given culture (Rajasekaran 1993, 13). To use an African indigenous knowledge system is, therefore, to appreciate and advance Xhosa ways of knowing, understanding and appreciating their culture. Xhosa ways of knowing include Xhosa people using *ulwaluko* and *ntonjane* as institutions where boys and girls are respectively taught manhood and womanhood principles that will inform them of their new roles as responsible members of society. These ways are vital in the life of Xhosa people in general and initiated Xhosa men in particular because they are prepared to be the heads of their families who will lead the conduct of family rituals such as *imbeleko* (rite of passage to welcome and introduce a new child in the family to both the living and ancestors), *umngcamo* (sacrifice of stripping of meat cut from the slaughtered goat), *ukojiswa* (to roast meat) and *ukubuyisa nokukhapha* (to bring and accompany the spirit of the deceased ancestors). Through these ways of knowing the Xhosa, the researcher gained an understanding of and knowledge about the customs that helped

him to engage in cultural rituals. He had first-hand experience growing up in a community that values traditional practices. Like most Xhosa males, he had gone through *ulwaluko* in the traditional way. The *ulwaluko* ritual empowered him to have courage and persistence and be a good example in the community by respecting the elders and communicating with other men through the language of *ukuhlonipha*. Dahlberg et al. (2002, 139) state that ‘reflective practice is essential in research, since it aims at raising a thoughtful eye on oneself, which allows the subject to gain self-awareness’. Thus, *ulwaluko* made the researcher conscious of what he had experienced and how the ritual had moulded his identity as a Xhosa man. Manhood consciousness meant becoming mindful of his own experience and giving value to this study because of his understanding of the processes and procedures of *ulwaluko*.

However, theorising *ulwaluko* will provide an understanding of the African worldview, especially the Xhosa perspective. Theorising systematically develops and organises ideas to explain subjects, objects, situations or events. A theory is a set of empirically testable, interconnected ideas or hypotheses formulated to explain these phenomena (Doherty, Boss, LaRossa, Schumm, and Steinmetz 1993; White and Klein 2002). By theorising the neglected themes of *ulwaluko*, *they are organised*, and their significance for Xhosa men is explained. Theorising helps this study link the processes and procedures of this ritual, providing descriptions, summaries, integration and explanations about *ulwaluko*, as well as guidance for additional research and practice that will increase further understanding. Theorising has the strength to generate new research and uncover the critical ways theories benefit educational research by reorganising Xhosa men’s experiences during initiation. Theorising enhances the body of knowledge about *ulwaluko*.

Research Goals

This study analyses the significance of the neglected themes in artworks of South African artists, mainly those of Thandiwe Msebenzi, Songezile Madikida, Laduma Ngxokolo and Theminkosi Goniwe that depict food, attire, language and the cosmetics of Xhosa male initiation. The aim is to demonstrate the complexity and significance of the Xhosa ritual in the education of Xhosa men. According to Mbiti (1992), during the seclusion part of the initiation rite, the initiates undergo an education period. Thus, this education prepares them to overcome difficulties and pain and to gain perseverance and endurance. Myburgh (1981, 145) (cited in

Bongela 2001, 11) states that ‘education aims at satisfying man’s longing to know and understand the universe, including the man himself and the supernatural and his search for a philosophy and a system of values that will give life direction and meaning and his desire to show continuity in his cultural process.’

The present study celebrates the construction of Xhosa men’s identity through *ulwaluko*. It considers Stetes’s (2009) explanation that identity is a set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a role in society, a member of a particular group or claims specific characteristics that identify one as a unique person. In this explanation, identity becomes a significant aspect of Xhosa men. However, according to Ntozini and Ngqangweni (2016, 6), ‘initiates use a vocabulary that is not only a way of defending manhood but also as means of acquiring a social identity and belonging.’ The present study brings awareness of the marginalised knowledge and benefits of *ulwaluko*. The researcher is concerned with the inclusion of cultural and educational functions, where boys learn about the dignity of manhood and how to behave as cultured adults in society.

Methodology

The theoretical concepts used in this research look at Afrocentrism and Afrocentric conceptual devices and their centring on African perspective and indigenous knowledge, more precisely, the Xhosa worldview. These theoretical concepts are informed by theories that generally reflect the African perspective, indigenous knowledge system, human personhood, culture, experience and language explored by Nwoye (2017), Dlamini (2018), Noyoo (2007) and Cakata (2021). This methodology considered Afrocentrism in terms of a subjective approach. Being of Xhosa descent and having undergone *ulwaluko*, the researcher used his knowledge and experience (self-reflectivity) to engage his research topic and, in this way, approach the research from a personally informed African perspective. Self-reflection means self-observation and reporting one’s thoughts, desires, ideas and feelings. It involves internally examining and exploring an issue of concern triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies in terms of self. This subjectivity is with reference to Cakata’s (2021) argument that using indigenous African knowledge helps African people to understand themselves and the world around them much better and in empowering ways.

Creswell (2007, 21) also explains this subjective approach, arguing that ‘researchers make an interpretation of what they find, an interpretation shaped by their own experiences and background.’

This study is qualitative in the sense of Ashley Crossman’s (2020) understanding of collecting and working with non-numerical data. It seeks to interpret meaning from the data that provides an engaged understanding of the social life of particular subjects, populations or places. The approach is also with reference to Creswell’s (2007, 19) explanation ‘of analysing the data to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of the topic being studied’. This research used textual and visual analysis to gather and analyse data. This analysis follows Allen and Hawkins’s (2017, 2) methodology, which understands the employment of language, symbols and pictures in various texts. It also works with Glatstien’s (2009, 1) visual analysis for organising and understanding visual information. This involves looking at artworks and identifying their visual qualities. Visual analysis is used to interpret paintings, photographs, and films representing *ulwaluko*. The usefulness of visual analysis is in recognising the choices that artists made in creating artwork and better understanding how the formal properties of an artwork communicate meaning. Visual analysis is employed as a sharp critical judgement to expose and appreciate the significance of the neglected themes that might be hidden in the artworks. In this study, formal analysis assisted in understanding medium, subject, composition, colour and line. At the same time, contextual analysis examined Afrocentric and indigenous African knowledge, especially the Xhosa worldview. Behrendt (2008) states that contextual analysis is an analysis of a text (in whatever medium) that helps assess that text within its historical and cultural context. Context analysis in the present study allowed an analysis of texts and artworks by connecting and evaluating them within the context of Afrocentrism and indigenous African knowledge. Contextual analysis was helpful in processing and interpreting the meaning of cultural purposes and meanings of Xhosa people and constructing knowledge from such data.

Outline of Chapters

The study comprises five chapters. Chapter One explores the attire and dress code theme, looking at the outfits worn pre-initiation, during initiation and post-initiation. The discussion of the pre-initiation dress code focuses on what, how and why Xhosa boys (*amakwenkwe*) who are about to undergo the *ulwaluko* ritual dress in *umgcizo wamakwenkwe* (torn clothes of Xhosa

boys). During the rite of passage, initiates dress in blankets, whereas during post-initiation, the new man's dress code carries a cultural identity and aesthetics. In arguing these attire themes, this chapter identifies the meaning of the new men's attire, which symbolises *isidima nesithozela* (dignity and elegance) and signifies accomplished manhood. The chapter engages selected theories relating to the meaning of the dress code, aesthetics, cultural identity, dignity and elegance.

Chapter Two investigates the significance of indigenous cosmetics during the *ulwaluko* ritual. Cosmetics are essential for initiates during their seclusion stage. This chapter focuses on the white and red clay that protects, wards off bad energies and tones and enhances the initiates' bodies. The cosmetic practice is called *ukuqaba imbhola* (smearing of red ochre), with a symbolic meaning in the liminal moment of initiates and for announcing the new men and their new social status in the post-initiation stage. These cosmetics are *ingceke* and *imbhola* to cleanse and lighten the skin. The clays used by the initiates and new men are integral to traditional methods of beautification built on indigenous knowledge.

Chapter Three examines the language and *isihlonipho*, which are only known to and used by those initiated in *ulwaluko*. During *ulwaluko* rites of passage, initiates are taught the layered, complex, coded and symbolic language of manhood. This chapter deals with three main themes of initiation language: (1) *ukuhlonipha* (respect); (2) proverbs, idioms and metaphors; and (3) manhood speaking through the concept *ndiyindoda*. The arguments concern the importance of the African language, which is taught to initiates in order to behave, communicate, and engage with the initiated and uninitiated. The initiation language is about empowering initiates about adulthood and the roles and responsibilities of Xhosa men in society. It is about the way of manhood life and the Xhosa people's worldview.

Chapter Four discusses the function of food and becoming during the *ulwaluko* initiation ritual. It explores essential diets that contribute to the initiates' healing, wellness, social relations and communal interactions. Food and eating are important to the initiate's place in cultural arrangement, social status, identity, belonging, and engaging and sharing with others in social activities that forge relationships and unite Xhosa men. The focus is on the first week leading up to the seventh day, known as *umojiso* and *umgidi*, a ceremony that celebrates and welcomes the new man back into the community.

Chapter Five explores the importance of games and music. This chapter deals with three main themes: (1) *ukuqula* or *ubetha iintonga* (stick fighting); (2) music, *umteyo* (African dance), *umtshotsho* (traditional youth party) (3) and a guessing game (*iceya*). Stick fighting is educational as it teaches Xhosa men tolerance, endurance, and how to overcome challenges and pain. It also contributes to knowledge and skills of mediation or facilitation, especially for settling disputes. Music and games are natural forms of entertainment, cheering and therapy on both the individual and collective levels. They also enable social interaction and facilitate communal engagement, helping initiates deal with boredom, loneliness, isolation and challenges during the *ulwaluko* ritual.

Conclusion

This chapter is an introduction and a point of departure for the rest of this study. It guides reading about the contextual background and purpose of the study. It addresses the importance of studying neglected themes in visual representations and argues the significance of these themes in bringing awareness to the knowledge and benefits of *ulwaluko*. This chapter introduced and briefly engaged the themes under investigation: attire, cosmetics, language, food, games and music. These themes are explored in focused and elaborate discussions in the various chapters of this study. Their engagement is through different theories whose overall theoretical framework considers African-centred perspectives and indigenous knowledge systems, especially the Xhosa worldview, to interpret and understand Xhosa ways of knowing and their culture.

CHAPTER ONE: ATTIRE AND DRESS CODE

Introduction

This chapter discusses the significance of attire and dress code associated with the *ulwaluko* ritual. It looks at three themes of clothes, which the initiates dress for during the pre-initiation, initiation, and post-initiation stages of the ritual. The pre-initiation dress code is adopted by Xhosa boys (*amakwenkwe*) who are about to undergo the *ulwaluko* ritual. During initiation and before seclusion, initiates are given blankets to wear. The type of such blankets is a cultural marker of status, identity and meaning for initiates. This chapter further discusses a short skirt-like design that initiates make and wear in the summer season. For graduation, initiates are dressed in a blanket known as a *rug*, given as a sign of accomplished manhood. Post-initiation, those who have graduated are known by their dress code, identifying them as new men, *amakrwala* (new initiates). These different dress codes are symbolic markers of cultural and social identity. They indicate status, behaviour, roles and responsibilities that a new man is expected to adhere to, guided by the norms and values of the community. This chapter focuses on these different dress codes and their importance to the Xhosa male undergoing the *ulwaluko* ritual.

Contextual Background

In the current debates and visual representations of *ulwaluko*, the attire of initiates and new men is neglected, although some scholars and artists marginally engage with it. This chapter explores the complexity and significance of the attire worn in the *ulwaluko* ritual. It looks at the aesthetic ways artists employ clothing in visual representations. Investigating the clothing of Xhosa men, the chapter considers different statuses, identities and aesthetics associated with the initiates and new men. The attire shows a visual feature that provides information about boys and the graduated initiates or new men. The attire expresses the meaning of who they are and their new status. The new men's attire symbolises *isidima nesithozela* (dignity and elegance) and signifies accomplished manhood. This chapter discusses the works of Mgcineni 'Pro' Sobopha titled *Plate V: Untitled* in the *Blanket Series* (2000) (**Figure 5**), using the blanket as his medium of creative expression. It is this particular blanket that the initiates usually own during seclusion. Thandiwe Msebenzi's *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* (2012) (**Figure 6**) and Laduma Ngxoko's *Maxhoseni* (2011) (**Figure 9**) are examples of the attire worn

by the newly initiated men. By interpreting the dress code represented in these works, this chapter demonstrates what attire means to newly graduated men. As a visual outlook, these men's attire facilitates social interactions and personal engagements in the family, community and society.

Pre-initiation

Ntombana (2011) explains that boys (*amakwenkwe*) at 18 years and older are expected to undergo initiation as a rite of passage to becoming men. Before undergoing an initiation process, Xhosa boys go around the community announcing that they will be attending initiation school. This moment of the announcement is the pre-initiation, which also involves *ingxelo* hosted in one of the boys' homes, specifically in a six-corner house or *ebuhlanti* (kraal). Nombembe (2013, 43) defines *ingxelo* 'as a small social gathering whose main function is to officially inform people within the vicinity and relatives known as *amakhaya* that the boy is grown-up and intends to be circumcised'. The pre-initiation ritual involves *umguoyo*, *umtshotsho* or *ukukhonya*, a ceremony characterised by dress, dancing and singing. This ceremony is a socialisation of the uninitiated boys who are about to go for initiation and are known to be walking together as a group (*isigqubu*). Ntombana (2011, 94) asserts that

in the 1960s *imitshotsho* youth organisations were visible in Xhosa areas and were marked by anti-social behaviour which included stealing openly, alcohol abuse, confiscating other people's belongings and abusing women even in the seventies, it was observed that *imitshotsho* youth organisations were still functioning even though they were losing popularity, but still, the life of boys to be initiated were characterised by criminal behaviour, dagga-smoking, and drinking.

Boys who are about to undergo the initiation ritual are characterised by their clothes, known as *umgcizo wamakwenkwe*. For *umguoyo*, boys signify their boyhood status by wearing torn clothing (*umgcizo*). The torn clothes are a non-verbal statement that communicates the cultural identity of Xhosa boys. The clothing is the visible expression of who they are and what they are about to undergo. Seeing boys dressed in such clothes informs community members that *umguoyo* ceremony will take place. *Umgcizo wamakwenkwe* relates to Boomsma's (2020) definition of clothes as forms of dress that alter our bodies into something noticeable and meaningful in a specific context. *Amakwenkwe* are responsible for designing *umgcizo* by

cutting their old clothes to create visual forms of appearance they would go around showing in their communities singing and dancing. The purpose of cutting their clothes is to display that they are leaving boyhood and will undergo the separation stage. Pinnock (cited in Mhlahlo 2009, 48) observes that ‘the separation stage is usually dramatic in nature and involves procedures that are noticeably different from those of [the] everyday’. This alludes to one of the three stages of van Gennep’s liminal theory (1960), the seclusion stage. In this first stage, individuals separate from their old life, which will be presented with a complete change of discarding all old clothes they will no longer use. This phase is characterised by symbolic behaviour that represents the detachment of individuals from their belongings within the social community. In some families, boys are not allowed to cut their clothes as they would be kept for younger brothers or given to the disadvantaged. In such cases, Caciswa Nombembe (2013, 45) argues that ‘boys distinctively dress in brief shorts either with their upper torsos unclothed or clad in maroon, blue or green vests. Around their loins, on top of their shorts, the boys put on *imithika*, skirt-like attire made of animal skins.’



Source: Nella (2018)

Figure 3 Yonella Nella. *Umguyo*. 8 January 2018. YouTube video screenshot



Source: Gaqisa (2019)

Figure 4 Zusakhe Gaqisa. *Umguyo*. 10 May 2019. YouTube video screenshot

Figures 3 and 4 are screenshot images of *umguyo* ceremony with a crowd of people carrying sticks, singing and dancing. The images depict *umgcizo* moments attended by Xhosa boys carrying sticks. Boys use these sticks to engage in stick fighting, one of the important games played during *ulwaluko*. These boys show pride in their boyhood identity by celebrating the end of their boyhood stage. Ntombana (2011, 95) observes that ‘during *umguyo* the boys usually demand their rights which comprise of a certain number of *umqombothi*/traditional beer containers and a certain number of bottles of brandy; it varies from area to area.’ This illustrates a confirmation of the farewell of those going to be initiated. An agreement from their peers is reached as the uninitiated will leave the *ubukhwenkwe* (initiation) stage to *ebudodeni* (manhood)

Umgcizo worn by the Xhosa boys signifies celebrating and preserving the boyhood experience and culture. In its cultural settings, this attire is a symbol of connection and serves to instil a sense of belonging and communality. Horn (1990) and Beck (2005) state that ‘values and life styles are reflected in the clothes we wear and they are usually the basis on which the immediate impressions are formed.’ Their ideas relate to Horvat’s (2009), who proposes that good conduct and fine speech are a mark of a refined person, and dress is a socially distinguishing mark. Those going to the initiation are seen and judged by how they dress and conduct themselves.

During *umguyo*, boys wear rattles on their ankles and hands, which they shake to make sounds. Traditional rattles are made from natural materials such as cocoons. Phibion (2006, 80) argues that ‘each cocoon is dried and filled with pebbles or small stones. A pair of cocoons is sewn to a long cord of plaited fibre or strung on strips of leather’. Therefore, rattles form part of *umgcizo*

dress and are never alone but always accompanied by other instruments such as *ibhamu* (clappers) and whistles known as *iimpempe*, which are blown to create aesthetic expressions. Songs such as ‘*Ndibona uSaluka bye-bye*’ (‘I am seeing my co-initiate bye-bye’) are also sung during the ceremony. Madikida (2001) defines *usaluku* as referring to one’s co-initiates, initiates of the same age group who undergo the initiation ritual in the same year. During *umguyo*, people of the community, especially women, would be ululating (*bayiyisele*) to show excitement and support for the boys.

Following *umguyo* is the *umngcamo* ritual, which takes place on the day the boy starts his initiation. It is performed inside the kraal (*ebuhlanti*), a sacred space for conducting most family and community rituals. Ngxamngxa (1971, 187), cited by Ntombana (2011, 95), states that a ‘goat is slaughtered and a boy is fed a roasted *intsonyama* or *umshwamo* (a strip of meat cut from the right foreleg) usually by the soon to be *ikhankatha* to the soon to be initiated.’ However, some families do not slaughter a goat, a ritual procedure informed by the family clan. In performing this ritual, Ntombana (2015, 96) explains that ‘words are spoken to the ancestors; some are words of appreciation for protecting the boyhood life, words of pleading to the ancestors to protect the boy during the initiation and words to invite the ancestors to partake in a meal (*sidlo*)’. At this stage, *ebuhlanti*, a boy is no longer surrounded by his peers but the initiated men. *Inkankatha*, the one appointed by the family to take care of the initiate during initiation, shaves the boy’s hair. The shaving is to let go of boyhood hair, and he is asked to take off his clothes and is given a new blanket. Then, a small amount of goat’s hair is mixed with the hair taken from a cow’s tail and woven into a necklace-like string or ribbon, which is put around his neck (USAID/AIDS 2005, 84). The goat’s hair and the traditional necklace are believed to be symbols of medicine that will protect and guide the boy during the initiation. The next step is the departure, which marks the separation of men from women on their way to entering the initiate lodge (Carstens 1982, 510).

During-initiation

Once the boys have worn the blanket and all processes and procedures have been followed at home, they are then escorted by young and elderly men to the mountain. During this moment, a song called *Somagwaza* is sung in the procession to the hut (*ibhoma*):

Somagwaza

Somagwa-za, yoweh, ha weha we somagwaza, sakugwazangalo' mkhonto. Yiho hooo iyoh weeeeh, somagwaza sakugwaza ngalo mkhonto!

The lyrics of *Somagwaza* convey the story of a man who is about to be circumcised using a two-sided sharp spear to become a man. *Somagwaza* is purportedly a 'vehicle' song that accompanies the uncircumcised Xhosa boys to the sacred location where men are 'made' (Siswana 2016, 164). Fundile Majola (2012) explains his journey to the sacred land:

In song, we were led into the idling bakkie with all the senior men, leaving our mothers, sisters and girlfriends emotionally touched and visibly teary. We travelled through the dusty and pothole-infested streets of New Brighton and fifteen minutes later we were in the bushes. On arrival, we saw men still working on erecting our new house known as *iphempe*.

Majola experienced sadness during his time as he was taken away from his family. However, the journey was to bring about change in his life. Xhosa boys have to distance themselves from their old life so that they can form a new identity. Generally, an *iphempe* is situated away from the homesteads, where women do not frequently pass. While the young men build the hut, the elderly men will be seated at a distance, monitoring the progress and, at the same time, enjoying their beer (Nombembe 2013, 52). It is always interesting to witness young men singing and dancing when building the initiates' house. *Ulwaluko* entails, among other things, the cutting procedure (circumcision). On the day of the actual circumcision, the boys sit near their huts and wait for the surgeon. The *ingcibi* comes to the boy and uses his assegai with a single motion to remove the foreskin. Immediately after the operation, the surgeon instructs the boy to declare himself a man by saying, '*Idiyindoda* [I am a man]' (Mgqolozana 2009, 78). As Nelson Mandela (1994, 4) argued, this is an 'essential step in the life of every Xhosa man.' After this process, they are ordered to cover themselves with a blanket and get inside their huts. The initiates will use the blanket for three to six weeks during their initiation. The initiates wear no clothes, are not supposed to meet women married to their clan and spend the duration of their seclusion with only a blanket to use for clothing and sleeping (Mgcineni 2001, 44).



Figure 5 Mgcineni ‘Pro’ Sobopha. *V Untitled*. 2000. Charcoal, drawing ink, blanket on board. University of Cape Town

In *V Untitled* (2000) (**Figure 5**), Mgcineni ‘Pro’ Sobopha depicts the private part of the human body (which might be sensitive to viewers). This image is one of the nine blankets series the artist produced using the type of blankets specifically worn by initiates during their seclusion. In *V Untitled*, the artist cropped the initiate’s body and depicted his penis severed during circumcision. There is a bold, straight black line running from the left-hand to the right-hand side of the image and, in the middle, is a diagonal line running from the bold line that connects to the lines that render the visual form of the genitals of the initiate. Going down is a scalloped line that forms the shape of the initiate’s buttocks. The lower part of Sobopha’s artwork is occupied by geometric lines and shapes such as triangles.

The use of the initiate’s blanket as a medium of artistic expression by the artist is significant. Culturally, the bold black line of the blanket (running horizontally across the upper area of the artwork) has a symbolic elegance and mystery. The ambiguous stage of being *umkwetha* creates this mystery. The black line contrasts with the white colour of the blanket, signifying the innocence and purity of the Xhosa initiation ritual. Mandela (1994, 4) discussed the significance and function of this blanket by stating that ‘immediately after the blow had been

delivered (circumcision), an assistant who follows the circumcision master takes the foreskin that is on the ground and ties it to a corner of the blanket.’ This is done to safeguard the initiate’s foreskin from disappearing and to show that the blanket becomes a safe place. These reasons confirm that the initiate’s blanket has multi-purposes.¹ Another important blanket used by initiates is the one with red lines instead of black lines. The colour red on the blanket symbolises the initiate’s blood and where blood resides during *ulwaluko*. Red also denotes the death of boyhood behaviour and the sacrifice of animals, introducing the initiate to his ancestors. The presence of red in this blanket extends the bond to both the living and dead members of the initiate’s family.

John Mbiti (1992) argues the significance of blood shedding, stating that it is a covenant or a solemn agreement. The bloodshed binds the person to the land and, hence, to the ancestors. Vincent (2008, 83) argues that ‘once the individual sheds his blood, he joins the stream of his people and truly becomes one with them.’ In contrast, red indicates danger to the Xhosa women as they are not allowed to come into contact with the initiates, especially in the first two weeks of *ulwaluko*. Patterns and shapes in Sobopha’s *V Untitled* have a visual meaning and message that communicate the cultural aesthetics of Xhosa people to keep them alive. During the Winter season, initiates use this blanket to keep themselves warm. This point is argued by Boosman (2020, 6), who states that ‘clothing, first and foremost, serves the functional purpose of protecting the human body against the elements. It offers warmth and protection to our bodies, thus enabling us to deal with the world in ways that the naked body cannot.’ Therefore, the initiates’ blankets are the protection that helps the *abakwetha* survive the cold weather while in the bush. In Summer, initiates and their guardian become creative and start designing their blankets for hot weather.

¹ Concerning the blanket, see <https://www.crosspolynations.com/2019/06/26/306/> Accessed on 27 October 2021.



Source: Africa Geographic

Figure 6 Richard Bullock. *A Month with Three Initiates During Initiation Ritual*. 2015.

Photograph

Richard Bullock's *A Month with Three Initiates During Initiation Ritual* (2015) (**Figure 6**) is a photograph of initiates wearing their blankets in different styles. This photograph presents the first initiate, who is wearing his blanket over his shoulders in the foreground. The blanket appears to be tight around the neck because he has double-folded his blanket and has put a rope inside the folds before wearing it. This rope will allow the blanket to surround the wearer and leave the front of the blanket open. Underneath it, the initiate is wearing only a skirt-like outfit wrapped around his waist. According to Mhlahlo (2009), this *waist garment* outfit is known as *umbhingo*. In the front of the blanket is a vertical line forming a stick held by the seated initiate. The initiate is wearing shoes, and during *ulwaluko*, shoes are important in protecting the initiate from walking barefoot and preventing the initiates from getting injured. The second initiate on the left-hand side of the middle ground is leaning on his stick on top of a mound known as *isidulu*, wearing a dress made out of his blanket. His attire consists of an upper vest and a short skirt covering his private parts. The significance of this dress is to conceal and protect his private parts from being seen in public. The third initiate is wearing only a short skirt and is holding his blanket with the stick in a horizontal manner.

A Month with Three Initiates During Initiation Ritual portrays different colours on the initiates' blankets; for example, the first initiate is wearing a maroon blanket with dark blue strips on the

sides. While the dress of the second initiate is grey and has white stripes on the short skirt, the third initiate is wearing a brown skirt with cream strips and round cream shapes. Thus, the mentioned colours demonstrate that there are no restrictions on the colour of the blankets used during the *ulwaluko* ritual. Regarding these different styles of blankets, the initiates are able to gain design skills that help them to think and express their visual outlook during the Summer season, which is made apparent by *A Month with Three Initiates During Initiation Ritual*. The blue and white colour of the background, which is the sky in the photograph, communicates a meaning and symbolism of healing and energy. Culturally, when initiates start designing their clothing, it symbolises that their wound has healed, that they have gained energy to go around, and that they are referred to as *inqadalala* during initiation. At this stage, they have endured the challenges and responsibilities of the crucial stage of initiation (circumcision). Those wearing the red and white blankets are referred to as *new bride (omakoti)*, especially on their first arrival in the bush.

Thus, the initiates' blankets are visual markers of their status and identity. Tseelon (1995) (cited in Cavusoglu (2019, 841)) argues that 'self-realisation, which is acquiring, reflecting on and transferring meaning from clothing to the selves as wearers, is a critical element of shaping and developing desired identities.' By wearing the black or red and white blanket, initiates start showing a self-consciousness that they are on the journey to the manhood phase. This self-realisation benefits them to know their identity of *ubukwetha*.

Rasing (cited in Mhlahlo 2009, 48) argues that 'an initiated male no longer falls into the category of boys, and is not yet classified in the category of men. He is not a boy because he has gone through circumcision. He is not a man as he has not yet taken all necessary steps towards becoming a man.' During this stage, initiates become nobody because they have no social status. This point is argued by Victor Turner (1969, 359), who claims that 'liminality is linked with death, to be in a womb, to invisibility, to darkness, bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.' The in-betweenness becomes an ambiguous state that keeps the initiate on an unknown level. This ambiguity stage is made evident by a taboo of not calling an initiate by his name but referring to him as *ukhwetha* (singular). Separating initiates from their names is to show them that they are no longer the same persons they were before initiation. The transition phase is when the participants learn the appropriate behaviour for the new stage they are entering (Ntombana 2009, 75). This phase also means that initiates need to

internalise their new emerging self. This point is reasoned by Mayatula and Mavundla (cited in Vincent 2008, 85), who write:

Xhosas see initiation rites as a symbolic death, through pain and isolation from the society, from which springs new life and rebirth as a new being, a man, who has outgrown everything related to childhood. It enables incorporation into the society as a new responsible member who will contribute to its values and orderly existence. The ritual encompasses a whole set of values and norms and is not merely an excision of the prepuce. A person who has undergone the ritual is expected to think and behave in a new and constructive manner unlike before, when he was a boy and all manner of antisocial acts were tolerated from him.

Post-initiation

After three to six weeks of seclusion, the third initiation phase follows, which van Gennep (1960) calls 'reintegration'. It is a phase denoting that the initiate has achieved his transitional stage of *ulwaluko*. In Xhosa communities, this phase usually takes place early in the morning on the day of the coming-out ceremony. This ritual is characterised by the initiate removing his blanket. Elders instruct the initiate's guardian and young men to escort him to the river to bathe, which cleanses his body. Mhlahlo (2009) states that when the initiate returns from the river, his status is no longer referred to as *umkhwetha*, but he is now called *ikrwala* (a graduate). During this process, elderly men inspect the graduate and check if his wound has healed correctly. This is where he receives instructions about being a man from these elders. Those who have ushered the graduate are gifted with a bottle of brandy known as *ibhotile yohlamba ikwekwe*. After cleansing, the young man is given a brand-new blanket to wrap around himself and a black stick known as *umnqayi*. This new blanket is known as a *rug* and is called a *graduation blanket*. The following step is the graduate being taken away from the mountain and escorted to his community by men who sing *Somagwaza*, the same song they sang while escorting the boy to the initiation.



Figure 7 John Trengove. *Inxeba* [The Wound]. 2017. Film screenshot. South Africa

John Trengove's *Inxeba* [The Wound] (2017) represents one of the significant aspects of *ulwaluko*. **Figure 7** is a screenshot taken from the film *Inxeba* (2017) which deals with Xhosa male initiation. This image depicts two graduates who are covered with blankets following each other. The first graduate is wearing a blanket with a curved line created by his body shape and horizontal lines crossing. These lines create a square shape that fills the entire blanket. The colour of the lines is black, and in between them is a shade of red. The blanket is brown, with white appearing in some areas. The second graduate is also wearing a multi-coloured blanket dominated by black lines, some diagonal lines that intersect with vertical and curved lines that form a rhombus shape. Blue and white colours on the blanket show up, forming a square shape closer to the interaction of the black lines on the blanket.

Andile Mayekiso (2017, 100) states that 'the initiate will be given a stick and his blanket will hide his face, limiting his vision. He is not allowed to look back to his house when it burns down.' It is believed that if he does look back, that would be bad luck for him. In contrast, the graduates in **Figure 7** are not holding *umnqayi*, expected in a Xhosa coming-out ceremony, but their faces are concealed from the viewer. Mabena (1999) argues that this blanket is tied around the new man's head and face so that he cannot be seen again by the bystanders, especially the women. The background is occupied by men holding up their sticks to play stick fighting (*ukudlala iintonga*). Stick fighting could involve actual fighting or people pretending to be fighting (Mhlahlo 2009, 155). The stick-fighting game could go on until the men reach the graduate's home.

The new blanket is important to the newly graduated man as it symbolises his journey to manhood. It is a journey defined by challenges that tested and pushed his character during the

construction and strengthening of his manhood. Thus, the graduation blanket is a sign that he has accepted the challenge and come out strong through hard work to obtain his new status of manhood. For Xhosa society, this blanket portrays a proud moment that symbolises the traditional initiation *isiko* (custom) that has succeeded (SABC n.d.). At the same time, for families, it is a sign of relief that speaks to the safe homecoming of their sons from the initiation that has been infested with injuries and deaths of initiates. The dress of a graduation blanket communicates what has been achieved within Xhosa social structures. Dress confers identities on individuals as it communicates positions within these structures (Higgins and Eicher 1992, 13). Thus, another significant feature of the graduate blanket is that it represents the belief system of the Xhosa community to the world.

However, as the crowd reaches the initiate's home, the graduate sits down in the kraal while women are ululating for the return of their brother. Elders welcome back the graduate, and after that, the aspect of the coming-out celebration (*umgidi*) starts. Connor (2010) defines *umgidi* as 'a general term to refer to a celebration or feast marking the coming out of male initiation, the purpose of which is to demonstrate final acceptance into the initiate's paternal clan.' During this process, the new man will be given gifts such as new blankets, clothes and chickens in the form of *ukuyala*. This is called *ukusoka* (giving away gifts to the new man and sometimes to his guardian). Throughout this period, with elaborate rituals and celebrations, emphasis is placed on togetherness and sharing. A new name is given to the newly initiated man (Mgcineni 2001, 44). This name is *ubhuti omtsha* or *bhuti krwala*. After this, the initiate will be taken to a house of men known as *indlu yomfana*. The house of men usually consists of young men entertaining and welcoming the *ikrwala*. Early in the morning, the new man goes to the river to bathe with his *ikhankatha* (older brother) and wash his face and body. After returning, he will start wearing *iimpahla zobudoda* (manhood clothes).

However, it is difficult to trace the origin of the new man's dress among the Xhosa people. Historically, the traditional dress of African people prior to their contact with European missionaries was animal skins, but they are now 'gentleman's' clothes; for example, some of them were used as protective medicine against sickness, harm, and jealousy. This was the African worldview before colonialism. However, indigenous people were coerced or encouraged to adopt European dress norms to demonstrate their progress towards civilisation or modernity (Roces and Edwards 2008, 8). This alludes to Xhosa men who adopted and adjusted the Englishman's clothes according to their customs to show that they were not

backward. The dress choice of a new man distinguishes the Xhosa man's materiality, pattern and design, which are different from features of other South African groups who practise male initiation such as the Sothos.

Thus, the new man's dress is clearly recognisable. Mkheswa et al. 2014, 2789) state that 'being a graduated initiate (*ubukrwala*) is regarded as the crucial stage in the initiation ritual among the Xhosa speakers and at this stage an initiate is presented to society with a new status, new clothes, new rights, duties and responsibilities.' He dresses differently from other men. His attire is formal: a khaki blazer, trousers, shirt, hat, and shoes. Newly graduated men dress this way for three to six months. Socially, the significance of this type of dress is that it is linked to the societal customs of the Xhosa people. For instance, as soon as a Xhosa initiate is re-integrated into the community as *indoda* after weeks of separation, his manhood status, known as *ubudoda*, is judged less by having a circumcised penis and more by his public conduct: dress code, responsibility, respect and avoidance of violence (Mfecane 2016, 4). His dress code becomes a text that produces multiple meanings, such as how new men do things and conduct themselves in the community.



Figure 8 Thandiwe Msebenzi. *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*. 2012.

Photograph. University of Cape Town

Thandiwe Msebenzi (2012) *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* is a photograph of eight newly graduated men wearing the dress code of manhood. Msebenzi's title, *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, suggests that being a graduate does not only mean being new in the body but also in appearance. Some new men wear straw hats, wide-brimmed black hats and other colour-blocking caps. Some hats are usually decorated with feathers. Edwards (2008, 42), in

his article titled ‘Dressing for Power: Scholars Robe, School Uniforms and Military Attire in China’, points out that ‘European-style suits and hats or military formal dress invoked notions of modernity, power and progress.’ In Xhosa communities, hats have different meanings attached to them. For instance, *amakrwala* wear hats to symbolise their manhood status in society and to appear like gentlemen. Hats boost their confidence in being a new man and make them see themselves kings. They also wear hats for the natural purpose of protecting their heads during hot days.² These newly graduated men are all students at the University of Cape Town, where the *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* project was photographed. In the university context, the presence of the new graduates symbolises progress as young Xhosa men are becoming educated and occupying spaces that used to be foreign to them. The graduates are wearing different styles of blazers; for example, some are made from corduroy, while others are suede or velvet. Some of their blazers are checked to match their caps, and others are navy sports jackets. On the left-hand side of *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, the first new man is wearing a check cap dominated by a red colour. Yellow lines also form a circle that creates the beauty of colour blocking. These men are wearing diverse coloured shirts, such as black and white, and the top buttons of their shirts are completely buttoned up, but a tie is not worn. Through this attire, *amakrwala* gain *isidima nesizothela* (dignity and elegance), which are depicted by how *amakrwala* walk in the streets. Their walks must be dignified by walking slowly and looking down while carrying their black stick in a horizontal manner. This is one of the expressions of Xhosa male initiation. When someone is dressed in a particular attire or costume, others can judge his culture; thus, clothing is a form of communicating or representing culture (Tajuddin 2018, 4). With this understanding, the new man’s dress code communicates and reflects *imvelaphi* (heritage and history) of Xhosa men and how they want to be seen by others. King (2015, 64) cited sociologist Crane (2000), who argues that ‘we should interpret dress not as a “closed text” like language, with relatively stable/fixed meanings, but rather as “open texts” that constantly acquire new meanings.’ In this regard, dress becomes a visual text that helps us to interpret and describe visual materials to produce multiple meanings.

Going back to *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, *amakrwala* are shown seated around a big table, and their body gestures are almost uniform, with their hands on the table. Some of these new men are concentrating their focus on one man occupying the centre of the

² Thandiwe Msebenzi’s artist statement of *Oobuthi Abatsha: The Old and new*, see <https://10and5.com/2015/02/23/featured-oobhuti-abatsha-the-old-and-the-new-by-thandiwe-msebenzi/> accessed on 01 November 2021

photograph. This image indicates that these men are in a meeting and discussing issues related to *ulwaluko*, such as health crises and legislating the ritual. These men are custodians of African culture and representatives that form part of the structures in organising programmes that will help minimise the increasing injuries and deaths of initiates. Kepa (2010, 731) argues that ‘the government of the Eastern Cape has attempted to involve non-government organisations, civic organisations, traditional leaders, and traditional circumcision surgeons and nurses in making the ritual safer.’ All the mentioned structures are important aspects of *ulwaluko*. In *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, new men are portrayed in concentration mode, judging by their body language, which communicates a commitment to the long-term interest of *ulwaluko*. During this time, *Obhuti Abatsha* are admitted as community members and could now carry out the social duties and responsibilities of adults.

The responsibility of new men is to preserve the ritual by meeting regularly to oversee and evaluate progress in the training of surgeons and guardians about the importance of their skills and hygiene during initiation. Another important aspect worth noticing in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* women are absent in these discussions. Culturally, women are not allowed to have a say in matters of manhood. In this sense, as Gitywa (1976) (cited in Kepa 2010, 732) states, ‘women are associated with uncleanness or impurity known as *umlaza*, a condition to the norms of the ritual as observed in the past, disqualifies a person from handling anything that will come into contact with initiates.’ The custodians of *ulwaluko* still embrace their beliefs even in a changing society where women have equal rights with men. Traditional leaders cannot accept change; they are not easily influenced by modernity, especially those interrelated to their belief system.



Figure 9 Laduma Ngxokolo. *Maxhoseni*. 2011. Photograph. South Africa

Laduma Ngxokolo's *Maxhoseni* (**Figure 9**) is a photograph that represents five newly graduated men wearing their modern manhood attire. It differs from Thandiwe Msebenzi's photograph, *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*. *Amakrwala* in *Maxhoseni* are shown wearing diverse trousers; some are white, some grey and others black. The new men usually have a handkerchief folded in a triangle and inserted in the top pockets of their jackets or pullover jerseys. In both photographs of *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* and *Maxhoseni* is, however, absent. The *Maxhosebu* photograph portrays two men on the left-hand side wearing hats; on the right-hand side, there are two wearing caps; a fifth man is occupying the background, where it is not clearly shown whether he is wearing a hat or cap.

These men are also wearing different types of jerseys with varied patterns. The man in the background is wearing a pullover jersey with blue vertical lines running down his chest from the V-neck of his jersey. Some of the blue lines come across from the sides. The man on the right-hand side is wearing a black shirt with a round-necked jersey with knitted patterns. These patterns are created by brown triangles separated by a black cross to match his shirt, and the jersey sleeves are white. The second man is wearing a cap and a V-neck jersey with white zig-zag lines starting from the front and reaching the sleeves. This jersey has horizontal lines that create a rhombus shape in yellow, green, white and orange. The first man on the left-hand side of the photograph is wearing a V-neck cardigan with buttons. This jersey comprises brown dots, wavering lines, and right and left triangles meeting one another. Inside these triangles are orange ones in kite shapes. The second man is wearing a hat with a similar button-down cardigan, but it is in a zig-zag, blue-dotted and wavy line pattern and has white sleeves.

Today, *amakrwala*, with their attire, reflect the current trends in fashion. Young men bring different styles to the cities, which are shunned by the elders who resist or see them as disrespectful to tradition (Mayekiso 2017, 101). The elders resist change, but culturally, the patterns in *Maxhoseni* have a significance that represents the culture and genealogy of the Xhosa people. This is publicised by how the artist has arranged the lines and shapes that create a visual attractiveness of the jersey. When a new man wears this jersey, he becomes attractive to the girls because of its aesthetics. Tajuddin (2018, 3) argues that 'clothes worn by someone have hidden meanings and messages; even clothes no longer only function as protectors but also to show their social status in society.' In Xhosa communities, *amakrwala* dress presents social status and reflects the cultural survival of male traditional initiation that is still practised

in modern society. This is revealed by how artists have revived the dress code of *amakrwala* from khaki clothes to meeting the current needs of modernity.

Landuma's choice of colour in *Maxhoseni* has a symbolic meaning that speaks to an African perspective. A symbol represents something else, mostly an abstract idea, either by association or resemblance (Ruth Njoroge et al. 2012, 59). The figures in *Maxhoseni* stand in the place of *amakrwala* and, at the same time, represent the invisible meaning of their dress codes. Dereje Debeli (2013, 231) states that 'the meaning varies from one another as we go along different ethnic clothes. Yellow represents fertility (exemplified by eggs or yoke), green stands for renewal and growth that is seen in plants by representing birth and death'. The use of yellow in *Maxhoseni* signifies *ulwaluko* as a space where Xhosa male identity is nurtured. Cultural identity, as Coleman (cited in Adeyemi 2012, 14) noted, 'is the feeling of identity of a group or culture, or of an individual as far as the individual is influenced by being a member of a group or culture'. In the context of *ulwaluko*, green indicates the transition from boyhood to manhood in which a new self will be born. The combination of colours marks the developmental ways Xhosa people understand their universe. Haye and Wilson (1999, 3) argue that 'dress is clearly part of that construction of meaning'. This construction of meaning affects one's ideas about oneself, attitudes, values and beliefs. For example, the newly graduated men are prohibited from entering taverns or shebeens. When it is hot, they are not allowed to take off their blazers because it is believed that they will be taking off their elegance, which they must maintain. This point is argued by Disele (2011, 5), who states that 'traditional dress may be defined as the ensemble and design which is representative of the community or is identified with a particular cultural behaviour and particular cultural values'.

Thus, *amakrwala* in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* are depicted seated around a big brown table, and the only visible part of their body is their torso. Behind the newly graduated man who occupies the centre is a big window with red and yellow curtains. On the right-hand side of the photograph is an A2-size artwork hanging on the wall. *Amakrwala* in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* are wearing hats and capes similar to those in *Maxhoseni*. In contrast to *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, where *amakrwala* are wearing blazers, those in *Maxhoseni* are wearing pullovers and cardigans with long sleeves, as new men are not allowed to reveal their arms. They are also shown standing while those in *Maxhoseni* are seated. In *Maxhoseni* and *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, *amakrwala* vary in numbers. For example, in *Maxhoseni*, there are eight of them, unlike *amakrwala* in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The*

Old and the New, who are five in number. In *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, the balance is noticeable through how the *amakrwala* are arranged in the photograph: two on the right-hand side and two on the left, with one occupying the background. While the majority of the *amakrwala* in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* are looking in one direction towards a new man who takes centre stage, in *Maxhoseni*, *amakrwala* are presented looking in different directions; for instance, two men on the right-hand-side are observing those on the left-hand side and those on the left are looking in different directions.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the neglected diversity and complexity of the cultural dress associated with Xhosa male initiation and its links to the initiates' maturity, social status and identity. *Umgcizo* clothes and *Maxhoseni*, which reflect the transformation phase of Xhosa men's clothing, were examined. The arguments in this chapter are read in terms of Venn Genep's (1960) three stages of separation, liminality and reintegration. The chapter highlighted the dignity and pride attached to the new men's attire by observing its meanings and symbols that often accompany the heritage and history of the Xhosa people. It also showed the resilience of *ulwaluko* and the power of dress to underscore the beautiful images of male initiates and new men in modern society.

CHAPTER TWO: INDIGENOUS COSMETICS

Introduction

This chapter explores the significance of indigenous cosmetics in the visual representation of *ulwaluko*. It focuses on four main aspects drawn from white clay and red ochre cosmetics, which have medicinal properties for (1) protection, (2) warding off bad energies, (3) toning and (4) enhancing the initiates' bodies. In the context of *ulwaluko*, these cosmetics are known as *ukuqaba imbhola*. Protection is about taking care of the physical bodies and psycho-emotional state of the initiates, who can be vulnerable during the ritual. This chapter also investigates the bad energies and negative spirits that visit or attack the wellness of the initiates. By covering their body with white clay, the initiates are able to protect themselves and ward off bad energies and negative spirits.

Throughout human history, clays and soils have been used for religious, artistic, cosmetic and therapeutic purposes (Mphahlele 2011, 1). Thus, using white clay and red ochre is vital in indigenous rituals and is a feature of African artistic expressions. In Africa, the use of clays is not limited to the making of pottery and architectural construction. Clays form an integral part of African cultural well-being. They are applied in many traditional rituals, cosmetics and medical practices to treat various ailments and diseases. The two traditional clays are used among indigenous people in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Xhosa men and women use clay to lighten their skin tone to enhance their good looks and fulfil their desire to appear that they have fairer skin; for example, initiates and new men announce their new social status with *ingceke* and *imbhola* to cleanse and lighten their skin. The clays used by the initiates and new men are integral to traditional methods of beautification built on indigenous knowledge. Buthelezi (2018, 22) argues that the 'exploitation of these properties of clays suggests that people are aware of their ability to cleanse, purify and protect the skin.' Mpako (2011, 237) concurs with Buthelezi, asserting that the functions of white clay are to protect and serve to identify the boys as in-training. The belief is that the initiates are covered with white clay as a medium of spiritual protection or a sign to those outside the initiation. Thus, this chapter explores the significance of indigenous knowledge of traditional cosmetics used by Xhosa men. This knowledge has been neglected because of the intrusion of modern cultural changes. Therefore, this chapter seeks to provide an understanding of and preserve indigenous knowledge about the use of cosmetics during *ulwaluko* and raise awareness of indigenous traditional cosmetics that will increase the significance of local cosmetics.

Contextual Background

This chapter addresses the significance of the neglected theme of cosmetics in *ulwaluko* within Xhosa belief systems. Cosmetic clays that are used traditionally in the Eastern Cape Province have not been investigated in the past, and their benefits during and post-*ulwaluko*, as well as their properties, are ignored. This chapter establishes the importance of cosmetics in the status and identity of initiates and newly graduated men. The cosmetics used in the ritual comprise the white clay known as *ingceke* and red ochre known as *imbhola*. This chapter explores the functions of both cosmetics that are used to protect, ward off bad energies and tone skin; these cosmetics give the visual appearance of the initiates' bodies during initiation. This chapter analyses the works of Songezile Madikida and Thembinkosi Goniwe. Madikida's *Struggle of the Heart* (2003) presents an initiate whose face is masked by white clay. Goniwe's *Face Value Series* (1999) depicts a portrait of a male whose face is masked in white clay, similar to Madikida's initiate. These works will be discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter deals with the theoretical concept of traditional cosmetics used in Xhosa male initiation rituals and describes the knowledge of how to use these clay properties. This chapter discusses theorists of *ingceke* and *imblola* such as Mpako (2011) in 'Ceremonial usage of clays for body painting according to traditional Xhosa culture' and Buthelezi (2018) in 'Application of soil indigenous in rural communities of Eastern Cape'. In this chapter, I refer to the work of Matike (2011) in 'Physico-chemical properties of clayey soils used traditionally for cosmetics in Eastern Cape', whose main concentration is on the body beautification, sun screening and cleansing stages of *ulwaluko* rituals in cultural settings. I also engage Hunt's (2011) ideas, which are discussed in 'Cultural and social influences on the perception of beauty: A case analysis of the cosmetics industry'. Power's (2010) research on 'Cosmetics, identity and consciousness' discusses cosmetics as a primary element in cosmology, and the painted body becomes an art object. The arguments in this chapter align with the significance of the local knowledge of cosmetics. Mpako, Buthelezi, and Matike's theory are connected to African ways of beautifying the body, which helps this study to gain strength in interpreting indigenous cosmetics.

Definitions

Cosmetics is a word whose original definition is derived from the Greek word *kosmos*, the plural form of which means ‘adornment’ (Khan and Alam 2019, 1). While Raja et al. (2016, 579) define *cosmetics* as ‘substances which are applied externally to improve appearance’. Aranaz (2018, 10) builds on this definition by asserting that cosmetics are substances whose properties are meant to enhance or embellish external surface of the human body. Both definitions are significant as they state that cosmetics are applied and used to improve the appearance of the body. *Cosmetics* is a general term used for all preparation, external conditioning, and beautifying of the body. It is also used to lighten dark spots and the skin to retain its smoothness and suppleness at the moisture level at which the skin needs to be maintained. The white and red clay among Nguni people is used in traditional ceremonies.

In the following subtheme, the chapter focuses on and discovers the significance of *ingceke* as protection during *ulwaluko*. The chapter looks at the screenshot in the John Trengove film *Inxeba: The Wound* (2017) (**Figure 10**) and the cover of *Bona* magazine featuring Goniwe’s *Face Value Series* (1999) (**Figure 11**).

Protection

Dold and Cocks (2005) (cited in Mwinga 2019, 5) argue that ‘indigenous people of the Eastern Cape Province still use and prefer certain traditional plant cosmetics for beauty, health, well-being and as social status indicators.’ Some of the clays are soft stones that are mined in various parts of the Eastern Cape. These cosmetic stones can also be seen during *ulwaluko*. They are now common within cultural or heritage ceremonies, highlighting the developmental ways of the people of the Eastern Cape. Thus, during initiation periods, body painting is sometimes used as a camouflage to hide the initiate’s body from being easily identified and protects him from witchcraft (Mpako 2011, 237). During this time, the initiate’s identity is unseen by evil spirits that would want to attack him; for example, on his first day of initiation, only the face of an initiate is painted with mud, known as *ijikoko*. In the following days, he starts using *ingceke* to protect his body. *Ingceke* serves as a mark of his status of *ubukwetha* in the process of becoming a man. The painted body helps people, especially married women who are not supposed to come into contact with the initiates, to be able to identify *abakwetha* and take a different path. Traditionally, body cosmetics are mixed with natural ingredients and smoothed on the initiate’s skin using the fingers and sticks. The initiate also prepares his cosmetics by crushing *ingceke*, mixing it with water and then stirring it to become thicker. *Abakwetha* take

measures to protect themselves by strengthening their own resistance and that of their family members to withstand harm.

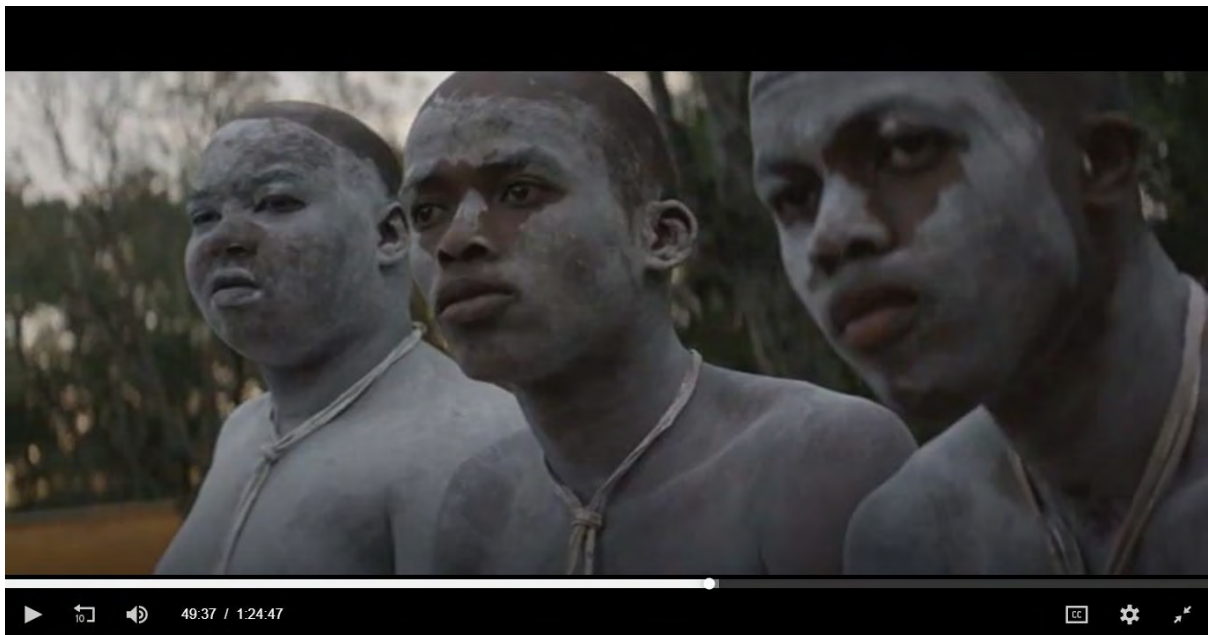


Figure 10 John Trengove. *Inxeba* [The Wound]. 2017. Screenshot from film

Inxeba presents three initiates whose faces are covered in white clay during their traditional Xhosa initiation. These initiates have protected their skin with *ingceke* to survive conditions such as the heat of the sun and cold weather in the Winter season. These initiates are shaped by formal elements such as lines; for instance, on the right-hand side of their bodies, the first line starts from the neck section and travels to the head, then goes down the shoulder. Another line joins from the second initiate's shoulder and journeys to create an ear, which continues to form a face shape. The third line connects from the second initiate's head and outlines a round shape that formulates the initiate's face. The initiates in *Inxeba* are wearing similar traditional necklaces that protect them. The purpose of wearing these protective necklaces is to give initiates strength and enhanced health so they can endure the hardships of manhood. Their facial expression is portrayed in comparable ways with their mouths closed. They are looking toward the left as if seeing something that captures their attention. The two initiates on the right-hand side are smeared with white clay but do not touch the section around their eyes, unlike the third one, who painted his entire face.

Kenneth et al. (2011, 1) argue that 'it is believed that colours, similar to those of the solar spectrum, were commonly used in body and face painting because the sun was seen as a

also seen on his forehead. This initiate is looking in the direction of the left-hand side. The whitened faces symbolise Xhosa initiates in *ulwaluko*. *Bona* magazine, which forms part of the national media and which published images of *ulwaluko* rituals, is represented as the primary goal of the media, namely, to make social issues known to the public. Culturally, the significance of masking the face signifies the secrecy of traditional male initiation, and the series of lines on the face symbolises the openness of a secret rite. This point is argued by Goniwe (2005, 82), who claims that ‘in producing this work in the *Face Value Series*, [he] took into account that even though secrecy is in the public, not everyone can access it because the secrecy requires a password.’ Goniwe’s words suggest that the significance of *ulwaluko* is not accessed by those who did not go through its processes and procedures, but only those who went through the rite of passage of *ulwaluko* possess the password, and they understand the complexities and significance of this practice. Thus, the manifestation of whitened faces is also crucial in illuminating how identities are not given; they are constructs and produced and are thus not static, and people explore and play around with their own identities (Goniwe 2005, 93). Hence, the initiate is introduced into this new identity that demands that he shows self-care during his initiation; for example, everyday initiates must adhere to certain roles and responsibilities such as smearing *ingceke* on their bodies. This helps the initiate to learn to take care of his body so that it does not have a bad smell.

Historical Overview

Historically, Thembinkosi Goniwe and his contemporaries, such as Mgcineni’ Pro’ Sobopha and Songezile Madikida, were troubled by the works of Steven Hilton-Barber’s exhibition of the *Northern Sotho Initiation Ceremony* (1990) and Peet Pienaar’s *I Want to Tell You Something* (2000). Hilton-Barber’s photographs of a Northern Sotho initiation ceremony, which was exhibited at the Staffrider Annual Competition at the Market Theatre Gallery, represent a group of initiates undergoing a rite of passage. These photographs were seen as not contributing to the education and the identity formation of the people who practise this ritual; instead, they distort what constitutes the significance of *ulwaluko*. Andrews (2019, 6) argues that there seems to be an imposition: the person gazing at the image or framing the image in the lens of the camera is white, empowered, an outsider, while the person reflected in the mirror – that psychically unsettling, alien body image – is a black, disempowered, voiceless insider. Black bodies are framed and marginalised as if they cannot represent their cultural practices from their worldview. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986) argues that a colonial child is made to stand

outside a product of a world external to himself. This is meant to distract and undermine a people's culture and the meaning it carries for them.

Thus, Pienaar's work entitled *I Want to Tell You Something* (2000) is not different from Hilton-Barber's work. Pienaar's work portrays the penis of the artist wanting to be initiated by a Black woman doctor in public. The procedure was videotaped and projected as a video installation with his severed foreskin bottled in a glass jar for sale in a commercial gallery space, where it was auctioned on the Internet (Goniwe 2017, 143). The artist found using a woman doctor to access African culture easy. In the Xhosa male initiation, whiteness and femininity are excluded, and Pienaar is misrepresenting how the processes and procedures in *ulwaluko* operate. The woman is the one who will perform the work for a white male artist, and this suggests the dominance and subordination of the Black subject. In *Orientalism*, Said (1978) observes how the invaders forced their language and culture on their victims while they neglected and distorted the cultures of the Orient in their interest to exploit and destroy what the Orient appreciated before in the name of enlightening them. Pienaar's work does the same in *ulwaluko* because it exploits a people's culture. The distortion of Hilton-Barber and Pienaar required Madikida, Goniwe and Sobopha to re-identify what has been misrepresented by producing works that signify their cultures. Madikida, in his *Liminal State* (2003) artistic statement, argues that when private rituals are misrepresented, those who try to correct the misrepresentation reveal more private information, and this increases the chance of further misinterpretation since certain kinds of private information can only be understood in a context of familiarity. Madikida acknowledges that he might be complicit in perpetuating the misrepresentation that reveals secret rituals.

The consumption of African cultures by Steven Hilton-Barber and Peet Pienaar caused tensions and conflicts among Black artists who felt that their traditional rituals were misrepresented by outsiders who did not possess a password for *ulwaluko*. These conflicts triggered Madikida, Goniwe and Sobopha to see a need to respond to what white artists have represented to the public. Madikida's *Struggles of the Heart* (2003) (Figure 19) is about standing up against Hilton-Barber's work and the misrepresentation of Black initiates' rites of passage. It also re-examines what is secret and what is not about traditional initiation. Interestingly, Goniwe (2005), cited in Ndangam (2008, 210), has defended Hilton-Barber's work as a critical reflection of media intrusion into the private and sacred aspects of the ritual, which has turned it into both a spectacle and a consumable. Thus, Goniwe's work was provoked by how media

consumption intrudes into secret spaces and subordinates the significance of *ulwaluko*. Sobopha's works depict the initiate's body not as an intruder but as the person who went through the *ulwaluko*. For him, this was to represent Xhosa culture in his artistic practice and to self-redefine and recover the significance and values of *ulwaluko* that led him to self-consciousness. Believing in the worthiness of tradition, particularly as the bearer of heritage and ancestry, Madikida has a problem with people who (intend to) undermine it and its significance in contemporary society. Thus, assertively, he considers people who do so to be 'undermining his beliefs' (Goniwe 2017, 222). This caused Madikida to advocate for the elimination of all elements that damage his Xhosa male initiation. To some degree, Xhosa artists partly have access to the representation of initiation rituals in their works because their Blackness is not regarded as the Other, like Steven Hilton-Barber's and Peet Pienaar's representations of African ritual.

In the following sub-theme, the importance of cosmetics for warding off bad energies is discussed, and so is the initiates' traditional initiation rite of passage explored by observing Goniwe's *Drum* magazine of his *Face Value Series* (1999) (**Figure 12**).

Warding off bad energies

Culturally,³ when initiates are painted with clay, it is believed that the white clay will ward off all evil attacks during their journey to manhood. Ettagale (1999) and Mpuchane et al. (2008) (cited in Matike 2011, 7558) argue that 'in many African communities, the traditional usage of clays for cosmetic purposes is a common practice.' They believe that boys' and girls' bodies produce a bad smell, which is associated with puberty. The grey clay (*isinuka*) is also used as a cure for acne (known as *umgqwaliso*), which is said to be a reaction to *ukulama*, meaning that a person has come face to face with an evil creature used for witchcraft. '*Imimoya emdaka ijongwa njengento emnyama elungileyo imhlophe. Ubumnyama bubumdaka, ubumhlophe bona kukucoceka, le* [Evil sprites are seen as darkness while good sprites are seen as whiteness]' (Buhlebezwe Siwani 2015, 81). The necessity of using white clay during *ulwaluko* is because white represents good things and is seen to remove evil things that are associated with darkness. Seemingly, because of evil or envy (known as *umona*), a jealous person can bewitch an

³ *Ulwaluko*; an ancient initiation rite practised by the amaXhosa of South Africa, see <https://hadithi.africa/ulwaluko-an-ancient-initiation-rite-practised-by-the-amaxhosa-of-south-africa/>.

ukuthakatha (an initiate). Manton Hirst (2005, 3) argues that ‘among the Xhosa, the distinction between witchcraft and sorcery, both of which are referred to by the term *ukuthakatha*, is blurred in thought and practice. Witchcraft is an innate psychic power that causes illness or misfortune, whereas sorcery uses various substances derived from plants, animals and humans as poison to harm.’

Culturally, Xhosa communities believe that *ukuthakatha* exists and, hence, for the duration of their initiation period, *abakhwetha* (boy initiates) and *iintonjane* (girl initiates) paint their faces and bodies with *ingceke* or *ingxwala* (white clay). It functions as protection and a deep cleansing agent while, at the same time, combined with the attire, serves to identify the boys as in-training initiates (Mpako 2011, 238). When cosmetics are neglected during *ulwaluko*, the initiates reputedly turn their backs on themselves and withdraw their protection (*ukukhusela*) from *ingceke*, exposing them to the harmful effects of witchcraft and sorcery. The ignored cosmetics are seen to chase away one’s rivals or enemies. Ma’or et al. (2006) (cited in Sisai 2010, 27) state that ‘spas all over the world use special clays for acne treatment and other skin diseases.’ The colour of clay is used to identify its function: yellow clay, which newly graduated men use, is believed to be effective against bacterial infections, and red clay is used for cleansing the skin and reducing aches in the joints. The cleansing process removes surface dirt and dust while at the same time sloughing off the superficial keratinised layer of the skin.



Figure 12 Thembinkosi Goniwe. *Face Value Series*. 1999. Computer-manipulated inkjet poster print. Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town

Thembinkosi Goniwe's *Face Value Series*, which appropriates the cover of *Drum* magazine, depicts the second initiate with a whitened face. This initiate faces the viewer, unlike the face in the *Face Value Series* of the *Bona* magazine cover, which is looking to the side. The *Drum* magazine whitened face with *ingceke* is similar to the *Bona* magazine *Face Value Series*, which shows a pattern of lines on the initiate's forehead and cheeks. *Drum* magazine also forms part of the media primarily aimed at Black readers. *Drum* uses different phrases: at the bottom of the *Face Value Series*, there is a catchy phrase in yellow, purposely to attract the reader's attention. This phrase, 'Injured novice tells all', reinforces the crisis about traditional initiation. This expression in the *Face Value Series* implies that the initiate narrates to the magazine the reasons why he left *ulwaluko*. This alludes to the symbolism of the patterned lines on the initiate's face, which show *ulwaluko* being open and in the public domain. This is an intrusion by the mass media into male initiation that was not supposed to be seen in magazines and films or on television, heard on the radio or made public on other platforms. This interference shows the lack of respect and audacity of those who exercise *ulwaluko*. Siwani (2016, 42) argues that 'while what happens there is public knowledge, only people who have been through the process know what happens. It is still something that is based on the principle of a secret.' However, the texture of the initiate's face in the *Face Value Series* is not smooth, as the initiate had not brushed off the white clay after it had dried up. The pattern of lines on the cheeks and forehead

of the initiate is different in terms of the direction in which the face is looking. The background of the *Bona* magazine *Face Value Series* is green compared to the backdrop of the *Face Value Series* in *Drum*, which looks whitish. Socially, green is the sign of the bush where initiates spend their seclusion period, while light blue is a sign of healing. In these *Face Value Series*, phrases in red and yellow are presented. However, on the *Drum* cover, the phrases occupy the left-hand side, while on the cover of *Bona*, they are on the right and left.

Across Africa, the skin was and still is regarded as a blank canvas to be decorated in various ways.⁴ Mauss (1950), cited in Power (2010, 15), states that ‘the first and most natural instrument or technical object of human beings is the body.’ In the context of *ulwaluko* among the Xhosa people, the body is used as a social canvas to map out its values, identity and beliefs, including the designation of status, sex, gender, role and responsibility (Mgcineni 2001, 34). Initiates’ bodies become a surface on which they can paint with cosmetics of *ingceke* in different patterns and designs that reflect the body’s transition into their culture. The body is a rich and fascinating object of social and political theory upon which individual, clan, ethnic and societal values are inscribed to enhance some ideological needs (22). The initiates use *ingceke* to map out their progress during the initiation by decorating their bodies with animal stripes such as zebra and tiger stripes. Horvath (2019, 2) argues that ‘the resemblance between zebra stripes and the bright stripes of traditional bodypainting were hypothesised that these body paintings have the advantageous effect that they protect humans visually against the attack of blood-sucking horseflies.’ The significance of zebra stripes used by initiates is believed to reduce the attractiveness of the hazards of the bush. When *abakwetha* wear cosmetics, they become animal-like, which makes them not vulnerable to unseen spirits and dangerous animals.

⁴ Body painting, see <https://www.encyclopedia.com/sports-and-everyday-life/fashion-and-clothing/clothing-jewelry-and-personal-adornment/body-painting>.



Figure 13 Piper Mackay Photography. *Piper and Filed Under*. 2015. Omo-Valley-Suri-Tribe-Ethiopia-Suri-body-paint-4

Figure 11 is a photograph by Piper Mackay Photography, titled *Piper and Filed Under* (2015), portraying two human bodies painted with white clay. The relation between strong vertical and horizontal lines determines the series of white clay on both bodies. The first human body shows the back view of the body with lines starting from the back of the shoulder and going down to the waist. These lines are close to one another, and around the buttocks they start to form a curved shape that works together with the shape of the buttocks. The initiate's arm is adorned with vertical and diagonal lines connected with lines from those on the shoulder and dots. The second human body is shown from the front. The folded hands seem to be hiding the private parts. The lines on the first human body are similar to the ones on the second one in terms of the vertical lines. These lines are formed by smearing white clay and the human skin produces the black lines. The black and white colours are opposites; each colour has its own meaning and symbolism. Arif (2004) (cited in Eric 2008, 445) states that white 'is taken as a sign of beauty, purity, cleanliness, and happiness, and is a symbol of power and privilege'; for instance, the white lines in **Figure 11** indicate the innocence of the initiates, which resemble the character of a zebra. In the context of *ulwaluko*, initiates never lose hope and keep struggling to stay alive in the bush. Hence, the zebra has the characteristic of survival and flourishes in the wild and on harsh land. This shows that *abakwetha* value their resources of cosmetics, which is very important to them in order to remain free from bad energies all the time because, in their life, initiates need to be protected from the mortal enemy who uses witchcraft.

A wide range of designs, mainly geometric shapes from different sizes of dots and circles, lines and sometimes simplified birds or animal features are painted on the face or any other part of

the body, signifying a variety of cultural ceremonies and rituals (Mpako 2011, 238). Traditionally, Xhosa people believed that the illness of the initiates was the result of the activities of the *ubugqwirha*. *Ubugqwirha* can cause the state or condition of the initiates undertaking *ulwaluko*, which is sometimes described as being crazy (*igeza*) or mad (*ukuphambana*). Kropf and Godfrey (1915, 401) (cited in Hirst et al. 1996, 262) argue that the ‘Xhosa verb *ukuthakatha* means to practise evil in secret against another, an activity that apparently includes employing poison and witchcraft to cause injury to life and property.’ They are also used in warfare and in ceremonies for curing the sick.

Thus, initiates are protected from animals such as lions and baboons that would want to hunt them, and that is why *abakwetha* must always wear *ingceke* to stay safe. In **Figure 11**, the colour black, which is in the background, works together with the white design lines of both bodies. *Ingceke* and patterns are used for the immediate recognition of the initiates’ status and identity. Cash (1989) (cited in Ramshda and Manikanan 2014, 48) argues that ‘physical appearance is not simply a fixed, immutable attribute, but rather is altered by individuals to manage and control their self and social image.’ Socially, the initiates determine how they want to be perceived by constructing the desired images. This construction is not static because it permits initiates to modify themselves by becoming accustomed to and experimenting with their new status and identity.

The following section of this chapter focuses on realising the significance of *ingceke* and *imbhola*, which enhance the visual outlook of initiates during their traditional initiation. This is more evident in Hadith Africa’s photograph titled *Ulwaluko* (2019) (**Figure 2019**), an ancient initiation rite practised by the Amaxhosa of South Africa (2019) and Songezile Churchill Madikida’s video piece titled *Struggle of the Heart* (2003) (**Figure 15**), which will be discussed.

Toning and enhancing the initiate’s body

African cosmetics in indigenous communities are linked to aesthetic or decorative qualities. They are concerned with the visual and are associated with individual style, representing what is measured as beauty. The enhancement of the body plays an important role among many African peoples and is used in everything from feasts to weddings and funerals. During *ulwaluko*, initiates do not use white clay only to mark their status and identity; they also use

their bodies to become a field upon which they demonstrate visual beauty. For example, Goniwe (2005, 92) explains the importance of beauty and cosmetics in the ritual:

Various forms of beauties and cosmetics that are not restricted to those sexually produced in popular magazines dominated by Euro-American aesthetics[:] I was thinking of repressed or marginalised beauties and cosmetics whose significances are beyond or more complex than those popular ones we are bombarded with, ones that at times are no less pornographic. Thus, I deliberated on referencing those beauties/cosmetics that are local and particular with Africans.

Goniwe's argument about African beauties and cosmetics forms an essential part of the significance of the marginalised knowledge and the benefits of white clay during *ulwaluko*. There are many aspects to enhancing initiates' bodies; for instance, *ingceke* helps to preserve and enhance the initiates' skin complexion, to prevent pimples and body rashes, and to make the skin smooth. However, thinking about beauty and cosmetics on initiates' bodies turns them into works of art that emphasise the visual outlook of the Xhosa ritual. Exposure to aesthetics and beauty signifies the initiates' physical strength, energy and well-being.



Figure 14 Hadith Africa. *Ulwaluko*. 2019. An ancient initiation rite practised by the Amaxhosa of South Africa. Photograph

Hadith Africa's artwork *Ulwaluko* (2019) (**Figure 14**) is a landscape photograph depicting the whitened naked body of an initiate. On the left-hand side, there is a line that forms a visual outline of a mountain that starts to travel down the initiate's hands and changes into a zig-zag pattern as it travels to his forearm and goes up to outline the initiate's face and then travels to frame the head. This line goes behind the initiate's body towards the right-hand side of the edge of the photograph. The significance of this outline is to create the horizons of the landscape. At the centre of *Ulwaluko* is an initiate occupying the foreground of the picture plane, and between his thigh, arm and stomach are spaces that form triangle shapes. Between the initiate's back and his arm is a dark space forming another triangle, and the outer lines between his leg and thigh form an isosceles/triangular shape. The initiate's body parts, such as his head, legs, and arms, work together to create a body posture represented by looking in a left-hand direction. The initiate is also wearing *ityeba* on his waist to safeguard his initiated penis.

In the background is another initiate whose entire body is covered with white clay. He is also depicted as sitting in a similar pose to the initiate, who is the focal point. However, his legs and body posture are shown to be unlike that of the first initiate. This repetition of initiates covered with *ingceke* creates a visual sense that organises the photograph into a recognisable visual outlook, establishing a sense of balance in the composition in *ulwaluko*. The second initiate is represented in a small proportion to demonstrate the distance between the one as the focal point of *ulwaluko*. Socially, it is typical to see initiates position themselves like this during their initiation. The significance of this practice is that it allows initiates to go around the bush naked, find a space they like, sit down, and open their legs to let the fresh air come in. The fresh air significantly allows the initiates' wounds to dry and speed up healing. When initiates walk naked, no one can see them except other initiates because initiations are always situated away from homesteads. The sky in *Ulwaluko* is light blue with white and greyish clouds. Socially, when the sky is like this, it suggests a moment after rain, but the rain is gone as the clouds are clearing. The green grass in the middle ground of *Ulwaluko* also indicates it was raining earlier. The colour of the grass is dark and light; for instance, the right-hand side is dark, which suggests a shadow known as *ithunzi*.

When one moves one's eyes and follows the shadow across the middle ground to the left-hand side of the image, one sees that the colour of the grass starts becoming lighter. Manifested here is where the light strikes off the grass, a colour effect achieved when yellow and green are mixed. Several elements in the photograph create a sense of unity, particularly from the

foreground, where the initiate is seated on the rock then into the middle ground, which connects to the backdrop. Another element that works together is the sky, which is organised by combining blue and white. The diversity of colours used in this photograph, such as the green and the white of the initiates' clay, unifies the composition.



Source: Artthrob.co.za/04may/artbio.html accessed 10 April 2022

Figure 15 Songezile Churchill Madikida. *Struggle of the Heart*. 2003. Digital video still

Struggle of the Heart (**Figure 15**) by Songezile Churchill Madikida is an image of two nearly identical faces of an initiate that are covered in white clay, resembling the initiates in **Figures 11** and **12**. What is presented in the faces of the initiates in **Figure 15** are closed eyes, the nose and the mouth. The significance of the closed eyes, as argued by Jao et al. (2013) (cited in Feng et al. 2021, 1), is that 'closing the eyes is believed to focus concentration on internal information, limit external distractions, and induce interoception and self-awareness.' For these two initiates in *Struggle of the Heart*, closing their eyes symbolises the thoughts that enable them to pay attention, create self-awareness and engage in internalised critical debates. Closing eyes reminds one of the neglected aspects of the representation of *ulwaluko*. Thus, *Struggle of the Heart* (2000) should be seen as expressing the struggle in the social space of the everyday experience and the need for cultural meaning and ideals of not only Xhosa men or initiates but also the majority of Black South Africans who contest for the visibility, recognition and appreciation of their cultural identities (Goniwe 2017, 226). Goniwe's

assertion also speaks to the need to bring the cultural identities that are born when initiates mask themselves in the cosmetic of white clay to the fore. *Struggle of the Heart* also indicates the endurance of internal pain as a sign of the initiates' visible resilience during the *ulwaluko* ritual.

In *Struggle of the Heart*, the initiate's mouth shows movement when eating maize meal *pap*. *Ingceke* is applied neatly on the initiate's face, as it has not been double layered as in the *Face Value Series*, which shows a rough texture. This communicates traditional methods of beautification in terms of smooth and rough textures. The black background in *Struggle of the Heart* works well with the initiate's white face.

In contrast, in Africa's *Ulwaluko* (**Figure 12**) the initiates are represented in the whole body, unlike in *Struggle of the Heart*, which shows only two frontal views of the initiate's face. *Ulwaluko* and *Struggle of the Heart* are similar in illustrating the initiates with *ingceke*. Furthermore, *Ulwaluko* is in landscape format, unlike *Struggle of the Heart*, which is in portrait format. The initiate's face in *Struggle of the Heart* is frowning, a facial expression contrasting with *Ulwaluko* that only reveals the body posture of the two initiates. *Ulwaluko* and *Struggle of the Heart* differ in their backgrounds; for example, *Ulwaluko* depicts the bush environment with the horizons and the sky, unlike *Struggle of the Heart*, which has a flat backdrop.

The following section explores the significance of *ukuqaba imbhola ebomvu* as aesthetics during the post-initiation ritual by discussing Tony Dold's photography.

Ukuqaba imbhola

During the coming-out graduation ceremony, the newly initiated males sit down on the grass mat known as *ikhukho*. During this moment, the girls are served a brandy known as *ibhotile yonqaba ikrwala*. His girlfriend or sister paints the initiate's face with red clay (*imbhola*) to indicate the new man's social status. This cosmetic is used for enhancing and toning and is usually mixed with unsalted butter to help moisturise the face. Tony Dold (2005, 124) explains that 'natural red ochre called *imbhola* is applied for an initial period of approximately two weeks after returning from seclusion followed by the daily application of *isibindi* for up to three months. *Imbhola* is harsh on the skin and *isibindi* not only indicates the young men's new social status but is also a natural restorative.'

Imbhola restores the skin complexion of the *ikrwala* after using *ingceke*. To this day, red and yellow are still significant colours in Australian First Nations' cultures as they represent peace and are often included in everyday rituals and ceremonies (Kenneth Hunt 2011, 1). At present, red ochre is mainly used during cultural ceremonies and heritage events where people showcase their heritage and history.



Figure 16 Tony Dold. *Ikrwala*. 2005. A young initiate who has recently returned from initiation school) proudly shows his new social status with *isibindi* (a paste made from the bracket fungus *Ganoderma*). Photograph

Ikrwala, the work of Tony Dold (2005), depicts a tightly cropped photograph of a young man who recently graduated from traditional initiation. This new man is wearing a black wrap known as *iqhiya* tied around his head. The colour of this headwrap in *Ikrwala* is black, and it benefits the new man in that it shows that he has authority and elegance. This authority allows him to participate in social rituals. This headwrap is secured with six safety pins to prevent it from falling into his face. A new man's headwrap is usually positioned at the new man's eye level. The curved line of the *iqhiya* partially hides the new man's eyes. The significance of the headwrap is to hide the side view of the new man because he is not allowed to look sideways. The new man wears a headwrap on the first day post-initiation before he can change into wearing a cap or hat. The new man has applied *isibindi* to his face, which is reddish in colour. The red ochre is mixed with water and used as a mask and a face wash. Hill and Barton (2005,

293) (cited in Rifkin 2012, 132) state that '[c]olour has been shown to affect the outcome of contests in humans, with red offering a significant advantage in terms of the achievement of victory.'

In *ulwaluko* terms, the red of *isibindi* has the same connotation of a new man's achievement in the state of manhood. Socially, it is believed that *isibindi* removes pimples and blemishes. When *isibindi* is dry after being applied, its texture becomes rough, and this is also an important property that primarily allows the red ochre to stick to the skin. The red ochre is a sign of the cleansing process and purification of the white clay that *ikrwala* has been using during the incorporation phase. This signifies a change of cosmetic use from one particular developmental phase of taking care of the skin to another. The traditional red ochre can thus provide the skin with a new complexion as it contains active ingredients that serve as effective cosmetic components. *Ukuqhaba* by a new man is also to show that he represents spiritual or ancestral authority. The significance of *ukuqhaba* is that it helps a new man communicate with his ancestors and be recognised by them. For the same reason, he uses *isibindi* to hide his identity from societal harm. Goniwe (2005, 92) argues that the newly initiated 'perform acts of masking and unmasking. Their various personas function as masks concealing and revealing their interior selves, even masking or disguising anger, frustration, joy, insights and introspections.' These various persons also allude to initiates who practise masking and unmasking themselves by *ukuqaba* before going to public events to represent their cultural identity.

However, it has been demonstrated that *ikrwala* becomes a new man for a period of three to six months after *ulwaluko*. During this period, the practice of *ukuqhaba* becomes his daily mundane routine until the day he takes off his clothes and *imbhola*. This ritual is known as *ukukhulula* when the *ikrwala* buys a bottle of brandy and calls his older brothers around the community to disclose his intentions to take off his clothes and *ukuqhaba*. Culturally, this ritual of *ukukhulula* cannot be done without this bottle of brandy and the older brothers as witnesses. This ritual becomes significant when other initiated men who are not present during *ukukhulula* deny the new man his rightful manhood privileges. But those men who were present and witnessed the ritual would tell those not present that the ritual was done. Thus, after this ritual, the new graduate is officially permitted to stop *ukuqhaba*, and he can start wearing whatever he likes and become a full member of his community.

Conclusion

It is significant to note that the discussion in this chapter is more about the importance of traditional cosmetics, which are losing their recognition because of modern-day cosmetics. This point is argued by Mushtaq Ahmad et al., who assert that ‘the knowledge is likely to be lost because of interference of modern cultural change.’ Unfortunately, these cosmetics have been neglected and received little attention from researchers despite forming a significant part of indigenous knowledge systems. Hence, in this chapter, efforts were made to understand the utilisation of Xhosa knowledge and worldview about using white clay and red ochre as the cosmetics used by initiates and newly graduated men. Thus, this chapter has shown three significant phases of traditional cosmetics in the initiation ritual. The first is the protection phase, which includes hiding the initiates’ identity from witchcraft. It also marks initiates’ status as *abakwetha* during *ulwaluko* and as protection against climatic conditions such as hot and cold weather. This section is supported by a visual representation of the film *Inxeba* [The Wound] (2017) by John Trengove and the *Face Value Series* (1999) of Thembinkosi Goniwe. The second phase is warding off bad energies such as *umgqwaliso*. This section is supplemented by the work of Songezile Churchill Madikida titled *Struggle of the Heart* (2003). This phase is followed by the third, toning and enhancing the initiate’s body. It involves an initiate’s body as a visual outlook and canvas representing aesthetics and beauty through various patterns and decorative lines, such as those resembling a zebra, that have cultural significance. *Ukuqaba imbhola*, the fourth phase described in this chapter, deals with the aesthetic of *imbhola* that forms part of the various components that make up the new identity of Xhosa men. *Imbhola* also contributes towards Xhosa men being satisfied with the achieved status and allows them the dignity of the self. This chapter also provided a historical background of the visual representation of *ulwaluko*. This background involves South African white artists’ intrusion into the male initiation of the North Sotho and Xhosa people, which had long been ignored. Thus, this led Black artists to intervene visually in speaking their culture. However, for the maintainability and long-term conservation of these indigenous cosmetics, it is essential to actively include locally based knowledge, which was realised in the benefits and functions of *ukuqhaba ingceke* and *imbhola*.

CHAPTER THREE: LANGUAGE AND ISIHLONIPHO

Introduction

This chapter explores the significance of the language and *isihlonipho* used in *ulwaluko* (initiation), which is central to the rite of passage to manhood. The chapter covers three main themes drawn from language: *ukuhlonipha* within *ulwaluko*; African proverbs, idioms and metaphors; and manhood language through the concept of *ndiyindoda*. The chapter focuses mainly on *ukuhlonipha* language during *ulwaluko* in empowering Xhosa men during and beyond their rite of passage and including knowledge of respect for the old and elderly men and women in society. For example, during initiation, Xhosa men are taught dignified ways of talking to elderly people and to respect those who went to the initiation before them as their seniors. The *ukuhlonipha* code of respect has been upheld by the Xhosa people. In dealing with the subject of *ukuhlonipha*, which is a cultural concept signifying respect amongst the AmaXhosa, one has to recognise that it is not peculiar to this group only. However, other groups, such as the AmaZulu, and the Tswanas from ancient times, have used *ukuhlonipha* language as a way to order family and clan relations and to enjoy peaceful coexistence. The AmaXhosa also observe the mispositioning of restrictive rules through *ukuhlonipha*, in which a practice is negotiated that allows people to make a meaningful contribution to the transformation of society.

This chapter also explores the teachings initiates receive through the uses of African proverbs, metaphors and idioms of the Xhosa universe. These uses are meant to bring awareness and benefits of figurative expressions by Xhosa people to know themselves and the world around them. Andiswa Mvanyashe (2019, 1) argues that ‘proverbs and idioms are a source of indigenous knowledge that could be useful in guiding, instilling a sense of pride and helping to establish an identity.’ In this chapter, Xhosa proverbs are analysed because they reveal the significance of the sacred education of symbolic language. An attempt is made to highlight some of the rationales behind the use of proverbs and to discover their complexity, as well as some of the benefits of using figurative expressions.

This chapter explores the concept of *ndiyindoda* that the newly graduated men gain. This is achieved through knowledge of what it means to be *indoda* (a man) and that which permits

them to develop a Xhosa cultural identity. The significance of this identity is that it allows Xhosa men to attach several meanings to what it means to be a man.

Contextual Background

Chapter three explores the significance of the neglected theme of language in *ulwaluko* in the Xhosa community. Mberia (2015, 57) argues that ‘indigenous African languages are important archives. They contain information on various aspects of life, including people’s philosophy and worldview.’ The use of *ukuhlonipha* and *isidoda* language during and after *ulwaluko* is significant, and they both empower Xhosa man to believe in themselves and bring what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986) refers to as ‘decolonising the mind’. This relates to colonialism which undermined the languages of the colonised people and made them lose trust in their languages. The young and upcoming generations need to know their own language because English tends to dominate the mother tongue (*ulwimi lwenkobe*) when it comes to communicating with people in everyday life. Knowing the Xhosa languages prevents them from vanishing and reinforces their power in the formation of Xhosa men. This chapter establishes the complexity and meaning of Xhosa men’s use of African languages in the *ulwaluko* ritual. The discussion on the concept of language addresses a knowledge gap in the visual representation of *ulwaluko*. In using African proverbs, idioms and metaphors, the present researcher drew on Sisinda Cakata (2021, 90), who argues that using ‘figurative expression’ is to confront the continuous [mis]treatment of indigenous languages as stepchildren of knowledge transmission in South African education.’ This is an approach to use in trying to document African worldviews that seem to be losing their essence in contemporary society. The present study uses one of Thandiwe Msebenzi’s photographic works titled *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* (2012) (**Figure 17**) that embodies newly graduated men (*benzithile*) seated in a circle speaking *ukuhlonipha* and *isidoda* to introduce, validate and defend their manhood to their initiation mates. This argument is developed in stages to articulate important aspects of respect that fall within the African worldview.

Theoretical Framework

Chapter three looks at the need for *ukuhlonipha* with specific emphasis on its linguistic significance. It should be noted that this chapter specifically observes *ukuhlonipha* and *isidoda* language. The chapter works with theories that generally reflect on language, as developed by

Edward Sapir in *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech* (1921) and Zethu Cakata in *South Africa Belongs to All Who Speak Colonial Languages* (2021). In Cakata's work, the focus is particularly on her use of proverbs as a position of strength for indigenous people. Cakata's work is helpful in its orientation to Afrocentrism; it will strengthen this research by grounding it in the culture and history of the Xhosa community, in which the researcher seeks a closer understanding of the *ulwaluko* ritual. Another work of hers, titled *The Status of Indigenous Languages in Post-apartheid South Africa* (2015), is also used as a basis for discussion. Mberia's book *The Place of Indigenous Languages in African Development* (2015) is also explored.

What is Language?

Many definitions have been put forward in trying to understand and explain what language is. A few are discussed here. According to Edwards (1921, 7), language is a 'purely human and noninstinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols'. Edwards's definition is the most relevant to this study, given the emphasis it places on language as a purely human method of communication. Hyun Ko (2016, 2) concurs with Edwards's understanding of language and states that 'language is a method of expression, ideas or emotion that is used and comprehended by a group of people and sometimes refers to the grammar, syntax, or order used for its components.' Both these definitions conform language to a means of communication. Karl Max (1986, 13) believed that the language of real-life production was co-operation, communication, language and the expression of relations between humans. People can therefore not communicate and express themselves without language. Finegan and Besnier (1989, 2) state that 'to understand language is to understand that language has two directions and its fundamental task is to link voice to meaning and feeling, consequently, language is like a coin whose two sides are responsible for expression and content.' Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, 14), in turn, argues that language is more than just a means of communication but also a carrier of culture. This indicates that language and culture are not separate entities; they work together. Language is an essential part of culture and a carrier of its processes and procedures. Gill (2013, 1) argues that 'culture can be described as a system of knowledge, belief, procedure, attitude, and artifacts that is shared within a group.' Thus, a given culture consists of many features. Idang (2015, 98) argues that 'culture

is distinct a way of life, is accumulated over time by a group of people who share a common language’.

Thus, during Xhosa initiations, initiates are introduced to the language of *ukuhlonipha* and *isidoda* to communicate and interact with one another. Initiates are taught to respect the elderly people and other members of the community who are senior to them. John Henderson Soga (1937, 36) calls the practice of teaching people to respect one another *ukuhlonelana kwabantu* (respect people accord to one another). With *ukuhlonipha*, Xhosa people are able to respect one another and express themselves to other men during traditional ceremonies. Several scholars have tried to define the word *ukuhlonipha*, and most approach their definitions from an African cultural viewpoint. For instance, Soga (1931, 208) argues that

the word *ukuhlonipha* to respect, to reverence, to be bashful, is used in connection with these various renderings, according to the circumstances of the case. It is usually applied to the custom whereby a married woman is debarred from using the name of her father-in-law – *usondoda*, and must avoid all words whose initial syllable is the same as the initial syllable of her father-in-law’s name or indeed any word that includes the whole of the father-in-law’s name.

The above statement defines *ukuhlonipha* as a practice that is applied in various situations, such as married women. In this instance, the woman is prohibited from calling her mother-in-law, father-in-law and other male elders by their names; instead, she mutes *ukuhlonipha* to show them respect. Herbert (1990, 303) argues that

ukuhlonipha is the name given to a range of social avoidance customs practised by the Nguni speakers. The general use of the term in the socio-linguistic literature is restricted to a linguistic taboo process whereby women are barred from pronouncing the names of their fathers-in-law and other senior male affine. Among traditional Xhosa and Zulu speakers, it is not only the name itself that must be avoided, but also any of the composite syllables. Thus, a woman whose father-in-law is named Bongani must avoid the name itself and the syllable *bo* and *nga* wherever they occur in speech. Since it is not only the name of the father-in-law but those of all senior affine and the mother-in-law that must be avoided, the effect on each individual woman’s speech may be dramatic.

Herbert's explanation concurs and expands on what Soga has already said in defining *ukuhlonipha* practised by Xhosa and Zulu married women. Herskovits (cited in Myburgh 1981, 146) points out that 'among all peoples, children learn basic skills and acquire the basic knowledge necessary for life in their environment. They learn to control their bodily process, to speak correctly on different levels, to interpret the conduct of others, to observe the required morals and etiquette and sometimes to perform ritual.' Herskovits's account does not specify which category of people practise *ukuhlonipha* because he uses a generalisation by saying 'all people', which indicates that everyone is thought to respect and know how to speak to others in a dignified manner.

Ukuhlonipha is a significant feature of all people to which they respond with submission. People are not born respectful; rather, they learn to respect through socialisation. Ntuli (2000, 33) (cited in Ingrid 2012, 68) points out that 'respect among the Nguni is held with such great esteem that children are taught from a tender age to avoid the use of what is regarded as impolite words which when used might be regarded as disrespectful.' *Ukuhlonipha* is expected from all members of society, young and old, men and women. The language of respect is exposed both verbally and non-verbally. Sog (cited in Bongela 2001, 26) argued that '*le nto intlonelo nembeko ibikho, abantwana bebahlonela kakhulu abazali, umntwana engenalizwi ntweni nokuya esele wangumntu omkhulu usabethwa ngabakhulu kunaye. Suka yena abaleke ebonisa imbeko ngokwenjenjalo*' [respect among children was something vital, they respected their parents to such an extent they will not talk back to them even if they are adults]. Soga claims that children respect their parents more, and even if the child gets older, they still must show respect to those who are older than them. This implies that by respecting one's superiors, one is grounded in societal beliefs.

The significance of *ukuhlonipha* will now be discussed in the context of *ulwaluko*:

Isihlonipho* Language in *Ulwaluko

Mavundla et al. (2009) and Mgqolozana (2009) argue that the language of respect taught in the initiation schools is one of the key aspects of the ritual. During *ulwaluko*, *abakwetha* are thought the language of respect known as *isihlonipho sabakhwetha* because it is one of the important processes that initiates must follow and communicate with. It benefits them to absorb respectful ways of speaking. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003, 129) (cited in

Fandrych 2012, 67) state that ‘language is a social phenomenon, and as such it reflects the society which uses it as gender structures and people’s access to participation in situations, activities, and events, hence to their opportunities to perform particular speech acts legitimately.’ Linguists apply this explanation of the language use of a particular group, such as initiates, to educate and empower them about adulthood and the roles and responsibilities of Xhosa men in society. Thus, the way Xhosa men use the language of respect is intentional, as it has an impact on the views held by the initiates and newly graduated men in the environment of their daily lives.

It is believed that if an initiate does not communicate with *ukuhlonipha*, he is considered rebellious and referred to as *umkwetha ongenantlonipho*. One of the initiation procedures is that the initiate needs to learn and speak the language of respect. According to Finlayson (1999), traditionally, it is believed that should the initiate fail to respect this custom by not using the initiate’s vocabulary, his circumcision wound will not heal, or some misfortune might befall him; for example, the inability to father children. The cultural belief of disrespectful behaviour that causes misfortune, for example, can escalate and make the initiate ill, resulting in the hospitalisation of an initiate. Some conservatives attribute these sicknesses and deaths to the negligence of adhering to initiation rules and regulations that are based on the need for *ukuhlonipha* and one to participate in the heritage of *ulwaluko*. However, when initiates are not communicating via the language of *ukuhlonipha*, their guardians will discipline them for *ukungahloniphi imithetho*, especially when they are taught how to speak the language. Culturally, in order to avoid misfortune and discipline, it is important that initiates utilise and comprehend *isihlonipho sabakwetha* by knowing the honourable ways of referring to people, places and things; for example, an initiate is not called by his name but known as *umkwetha* or *umzwayi* (an initiate), while their guardians are known as *amakhankatha*. The linguistic rule of *ukuhlonipha* requires the initiate to replace the actual names of people, places and things; for instance, during *ulwaluko* Xhosa men refer to *isiqwathakazi* (woman), thus avoiding calling her by her name. These linguistic restrictions apply primarily to oral usage. All societies have a code of respect designed and modified through the ages to maintain peaceful coexistence (Radoko Ntsimane 2007, 118).

Another example of respect among *abakwetha* is that the initiates are not allowed to greet their visitors with a handshake; rather, they must use their stick (*intonga*) to greet. The initiate holds the edge of the stick, and the visitor greets in the same manner: both shake the stick as a sign

of welcoming and showing respect to each other. The visitor also salutes the whole group of initiates using the initiation salutation code. When the visitor gets closer to the initiate's house, the visitor shouts the salutation code: *Makwending!* (referred to someone that you know you can defeat) and the initiates inside their huts respond by saying: *Ngqeziya!* to acknowledge the arriving guest. In so doing, they express respect for the other and their own ancestors. This represents the type of respect Xhosa men have for one another. The respect that is shown towards the other, especially those who went through *ulwaluko* before them, is substantially more profound and significant. The failure to observe this procedure is still viewed as an assault on the elegance and dignity of the visitor and could lead to disciplining the erring initiate.

Initiates not only use the verbal practice of *ukuhlonipha* but also show it in their appearance; for instance, newly graduated men whiten their bodies with white clay and red ochre, and their dress code and cosmetics represent *ukuhlonipha*. This manifests not only in *ulwaluko* but also in *amagqirha* when they practise *ukuhlonipha* in their rite of passage in accepting their calling. This symbolises that Xhosa communities value the significant aspect of *ukuhlonipha*. Furthermore, *ukuhlonipha* in ancestral worship is central and ancestors receive special respectful names such as *abaphantsi* (ancestors) or *abalele ukuthula* (those sleeping peacefully). Various rituals known as *imisebenzi* of *ulwaluko* are performed; for example, *umojiso* (roasted meat) and *umgidi* (traditional celebration) are ceremonies where ancestors are addressed for *ukubulela impilo* (give thanks for living) of initiates before and after initiation. Edwards (2015, 276) argues that 'ceremonies are believed to ensure continued health, protection, and prosperity when they have been performed'. For instance, culturally, for *ukucela indlela kwabaphantsi* (276), initiates need to use *ukuhlonipha* language for ancestors to guide and protect them on their journey. Speaking in *ukuhlonipha* and having a 'spiritual relationship with *abaphantsi*, thus, provi[des] a sense of security, anchoring and confirming their descendant's identity, sense of belonging and purpose in life' (Edwards 2015, 276). Traditionally, by using the language of respect, the African child feels connected to his or her ancestors, who are important in the life of Africans. For Xhosa people, the language of *ukuhlonipha* is informative, as Myburgh (1981, 145) (cited in Bongela 2001, 11) states: 'education aims at satisfying man's longing to know and understand the universe, including man himself and the supernatural and his search for a philosophy and a system of values that will give life direction and meaning and his desire to show continuity in his cultural process.'

It has become obvious, therefore, that the significance of *ukuhlonipha* culture, which is the pride of the Xhosa nation today, has become hard to practise. Consequently, the language of *ukuhlonipha* can be a rather boring and difficult practice for *abakhwetha*, yet it is one of the fundamental aspects of *ulwaluko*. Fandrych (2012, 70) argues that ‘consistent linguistic avoidance requires a remarkable presence of mind and it is not surprising that the mastery of *ukuhlonipha* is seen as an achievement’. Thus, this also applies to an initiate who has mastered the language of respect: he is known as *intshantshararha*. Culturally, *intshantshararha* is the person who has understood and internalised the *ukuhlonipha* terms, and he has become the source of inspiration to those who want to learn the language of respect during *ulwaluko*. Ntozini and Nqangweni (2016, 6) argue that ‘learning *isikhwetha* vocabulary is significant as it is an important part in cultural socialisation of initiates’. The use of *ukuhlonipha* by Xhosa men is perceived as a significant source of dignity, identity and pride in the linguistic practice and is important in traditional knowledge. *Ukuhlonipha* plays a fundamental role in traditional Xhosa customs as the proper way to conduct oneself within the community. Kepe (2010) (cited in Siswana 2015, 58) highlight the fact that ‘*ukuhlonipha* is related to the secrecy of protecting the nuances and intricacies of traditional practices from the general public and *uninitiated* people’. This was done to prevent the African language and culture from public consumption because the language of respect ‘is also located within the understanding of using codes as a way of communication when AmaXhosa men are together, for example, when they are sitting in the kraal (*ebuhlanti*) and engaging issues. This is an exciting way of communication that speaks to the ‘notion of respecting culture and embracing the importance of indigenous languages’ (Siswana 2015, 49). Currently, the practice of *ukuhlonipha* is undergoing a notable shift. For instance, the language of respect during the period of *ulwaluko* is being mixed with foreign languages. There appears to be very little or, in some communities, nothing left to observe of the *ukuhlonipha* language. This is because people now occupy urban areas where they adapt to the new environment. Levitas and Morris (1984, 10) (cited in Bongela 2001, 8) concur with the above argument by affirming that

the blending of traditional culture with that of the West has resulted in interesting and sometimes bizarre permutations and adaptations. Whatever the form of these customs, they have shown a remarkable resilience to change and to survive and adapt to their new surroundings. Generally, the tendency has been for traditional societies to be swallowed up by western culture. In South Africa, the ways of the past persist largely because they provide an anchor that continues to give meaning to a number of Black people. Their

traditions and customs provide them with a link between the present and the past and a sense of belonging to something enduring in a rapidly changing society

When considering the argument made by Levitas and Morris, which does not refute the blending of cultures, one sees that the language of respect still shows resilience because initiates are still educated through it every season when initiation takes place. The importance of such practice suggests that those undergoing a rite of passage are connected to the living and the dead. Thus, 'indigenous societies such as the AmaXhosa, in addition to ancestor worship, also regard totems and special animals as religious symbols and are therefore revered in the same manner as ancestors' (Bongela 2001, 11). This is viewed as a symbol of *ukuhlonipha abaphantsi*. To uphold respectable relationships between the living and the dead, it has become a sign of respectful practice at traditional rituals, where brandy is served to allow the ancestors to sip the drink first before it is given out to people for general drinking. For example, *injoli* (a person known as a food server) pours a few drops of *utywala* on the floor and then serves beer to the general men of the community. Mhlahlo (2009, 123) argues that 'this is a process that is followed, giving it to the ancestors first'. However, an *injoli* cannot serve men and draw the attention of men in the kraal or in the house of men and be allowed to deliver his service and speech without having a jacket over his shoulders as a sign of respect for the *abakhuluwa nabaninawa bakhe* (young and old). When *injoli* disrespects the manhood code of respect, he is restricted from participating in manhood rituals and charged (*uyadliwa*). This might lead to him being disqualified from his position and being expected to apologise. To be forgiven for not showing respect where men are gathered, for instance, he needs to purchase a bottle of brandy.

The following section demonstrates the importance of proverbs, idioms and metaphors in the education of Xhosa men.

African Proverbs, Idioms and Metaphors

Nyembezi (1954, xii) (cited in Makuliwe (1997, 5) asserts that

proverbs are a useful means of studying people. They show how very observant the people are, for the habits of birds, and animals and behaviour of nature generally do not go unobserved. They reveal what it is that people adore and despise. They reveal what the

people's outlook in life is, and will provide the students of human nature a peep into the character of a people.

In the above quotation, Nyembezi suggests that proverbs are representations of people that can be important in communicating knowledge about the nature of people by drawing similarities to animals. Thus, Mokitimi (1997, xii) (cited in Costandius 2007, 3) remarks that 'many proverbs act as catalysts of knowledge, wisdom, philosophy, ethics and morals'. African knowledge and philosophy are rich in proverbs, which contain African ways of being in the world. Proverbs bring out the essence of a given situation through which people gain intelligence. Sometimes, proverbs come with prohibitions that are primarily used to communicate significant meaning to Black Africans. Cakata (2021, 91) argues that 'this is due to the fact that our proverbs, as in the nomenclature of Europeans, are not simply for linguistic aesthetics but for buttressing our deep thought which by and large captures our worldview as African people.' This indicates that proverbs define how African people think about themselves and their world.

Hence, Boateng (1983, 331) (cited in Costandius 2007, 5) points out that proverbs are 'validators of traditional procedures and beliefs' and warns that rejecting the Black African heritage 'will leave Black Africans with a feeling of lost identity'. Thus, the use of proverbs by Black Africans, such as Xhosa people, becomes self-identification. This shows that proverbs are part of African culture, and African languages are rich in heritage. According to Daniel, Smitherman-Donaldson and Jeremiah (1987), proverbs are central to abstract thinking and reasoning. Proverbs pass on a message figuratively in ways that are not obvious and literal. During *ulwaluko*, a proverb such as *umntu uyinkosi uzazi* (a man is the master of himself) can be used to characterise the initiates' self-knowledge and self-respect. This proverb means that a person knows himself or herself and is strongly used to empower Xhosa men to practise self-definition and self-worth. This proverb, therefore, teaches young Xhosa men never to allow anyone to define who they are in the manhood stage except themselves. Rattray (1916, 152) (cited in Finnegan 2012, 402) argues that 'proverbs are essential to life and language and without them the language would be but a skeleton without flesh, and a body without soul'. Proverbs are important to life as they encourage and, as a language, bring one to a sense of being and one's essence.

The practice of proverbs is highly used among Xhosa people and their context depends on the cultural context in which they are spoken. Proverbs advance their significance from the situations in which they are used; for example, in the initiation processes, the male elders use proverbs to inform the initiates and to warn them about their roles and responsibilities. A proverb such as *indlovu ayisindwa ngumboko wayo* can be used in that context. This proverb means that ‘an elephant does not find its own trunk heavy’, which means your problems and difficulties are never too big for you to handle. *Indlovu* symbolises the initiate, and *umboko* signifies his penis. In other words, this proverb expresses that an initiate’s duty is to fight and care for his wound (circumcision) until it reaches the final healing phase. This proverb relates Biblical Scriptures, which states: ‘No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way so that you can stand under it’ (Corinthians 10: 13-16). Ehondor (2017, 3) argues that ‘proverbs are similar to metaphors, they are sayings or stories intended to assist learning, either formal learning or in informal, family or folk learning’. These proverb lessons and coping devices during the initiation period and beyond become a way of life. In Xhosa communities, figurative expressions are consciously used not only to make fundamental points but also to exaggerate their language use so that their listeners can love and appreciate them. Proverbs become part of art because they are fascinating to our essence. Finnegan (2012, 410–411) states that ‘their literary significance emerges not only in the beauty of proverbs’ words and form, their sense of detachment and generalisation, and their connections with other genres of artistic expression, but also in the aptness and perceptiveness with which they are used in an actual context.’

Thus, Cakata (2021) states that ‘the imagery in our use of proverb language unites us with our essence because nature is the source of our spirit’. The importance of knowledge in proverbs and their imagery, which are practical and physical, can be beneficial in guiding our spiritual being. However, Guma (1967, 166) defines an *idiom* as a ‘characteristic indigenous expression, whose meaning cannot ordinarily be deduced or inferred from a knowledge of the individual words that make them. Unlike proverbs, idioms do not have a fixed and regular form to which they adhere at all times. They are changeable and are seldom, if ever, used in their basic form.’

Guma’s explanation indicates that an idiom is not static but can be applied in various life situations, such as *indoda idla ukubila kwebunzi layo*, which means that ‘men eat their sweat’. The men’s sweat symbolises their hard work, and *ukuphandalela intsapho yayo* (hustling for

his family). This illustrates the importance of idiomatic language in education, which often challenges Xhosa men to use the sweat of their brows to shape their lives entirely. This expression is used in everyday communication so that Xhosa men can grasp the importance of sweat in the manhood phase of their lives. Seboni (1980, iv) (cited in Ramagoshi and Joubert 2016, 1) states that ‘idioms are categorised as imaginative language’ and as ‘devices used to add spice to a language and instil an appreciation of the beauty of one’s language’. Using idiomatic expressions advances the beauty of a person’s language. However, Costandius (2007, 4) argues that ‘metaphors used as an aspect of a teaching method could be effective because they could enhance the conceptualisation of abstract ideas’. Metaphors tell only part of the responses and initiates must be actively involved in carrying out and trying to understand the meaning of metaphors during initiation education. For example, in the film *Inxeba* (2017), when Xolani is having a conversation with Kwanda uses figurative language: *kwangenainja enomgada yaza kuye*, which means a dog with a skin disease (rash) came into Xolani’s hut. Socially, when a dog with *umgada* bites a person, it affects his or her body and causes illness and death. With this idiom, Xolani is demonstrating to Kwanda that he was faced with death during his time as an initiate because he had to dress and undress his circumcision wound, as he was by himself without *ikhankatha*, unlike Kwanda being fortunate to have him as his guardian.

Hence, the practice of isiXhosa proverbs and idioms contributes to educating Xhosa men about their culture, customs, history, and heritage. Take as an example the figurative expression: *tyebele ngaphakathi nje ngendlazi* (your fatness is inside like a mousebird). Mesatywa and Jordan (1971, 22) (cited in Mvanyashe 2019, 4) describe the mousebird as the bird that eats mice. Although it looks small, it is fat on the inside. The symbolic meaning of this proverb is that a person is knowledgeable, but he or she does not show what he or she knows. The fatness represents the knowledge a person has. Fatness can also be related to riches. Culturally, initiation schools are seen as a significant symbol of the source of ‘fatness’ because it is where Xhosa men are groomed for the status of manhood.

The African proverb ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ means that the responsibility for raising a child is communal with the larger family, known as the *extended family*. Everyone in the family participates, especially the elderly, in taking care of children. This proverb takes the African worldview that highlights the values of members of society, such as taking care, self-sacrificing for others, and sharing what needs to be done. Mikucka and Rizzi (2016, 94) argue

that ‘the saying it takes a village to raise a child, suggests that not all the burden of raising children needs to rest on parental shoulders’. For instance, during *ulwaluko*, family members, relatives, and men of the community are actively involved and supportive and respond to critical and challenging events such as the building of the initiates’ house (*ibhoma*). Without their care, nurturing, and compassion, no initiates or newly graduated men would exist. The use of the existing indigenous knowledge is crucial for empowering and grooming upcoming generations; as the Xhosa proverb says, *inyathi ibuzwa kwabaphambil*, which means ‘we learn from those who are already experienced’ in the *ulwaluko* ritual. Proverbs are often about animals or birds, not because Africans have some mystical closeness to nature but because the animal world impinges closely on many people who live in relatively rural and sparsely populated areas (Ruth Finnegan 2012, 393). Africans’ understanding of how animals behave helps them to personalise the human experience, which ranges from general truths of advice, warnings and comments that inspire everyone to act and behave in certain ways. Oduaran and Oduaran (2006) (cited in Ehondor 2017, 4) describe figurative language as the ‘core of verbal interaction in Africa’, and Yankah (1989) calls it the ‘palm oil with which words are eaten’.

Respect for Self and Others

Undergoing an initiation benefits Xhosa men by instilling respect for self and others. In support of this belief, Siswana (2015, 77) states that it has shaped relationships with others in a significant way: ‘It makes me feel like I’m someone who cannot do harm, so that makes me do the best I can because I know that there are people looking up to me and I don’t want to disappoint them.’

Here, he expresses the significance of respect that helped him to forge good relations with others. The language of *ukuhlonipha* in African communities will keep on lighting the way and supporting men in displaying respect for one another, which can lead them in the right way to coexist. According to Mbiti (1970, 108) (cited in Mpetsheni 2019, 20), ‘whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group’. This is where the Xhosa expression *umntu ngumntu ngabantu* comes in, which means that each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed in relationships with others or a person is a person because of other people. Hence, members, clans and relatives perform traditional African cultural rituals. Mabovula (2011, 40) argues that ‘the philosophy of *ubuntu* espouses a fundamental respect in the rights of others, as well as a deep allegiance to the collective identity.’ Respecting one another is an essential condition for

communication, for working together and is a significant device for addressing issues of the community. *Ulwaluko*, as an institution of learning, cannot function without respect amongst its custodians, given that respect forms part of the processes and procedures of the ritual. In the initiation context, *ubuntu* is seen as a pillar with dutiful characteristics in relations among Xhosa men. The meaning of *ubuntu* is that to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on that basis, establishing human respect with them (Mabovula 2011, 41). This is evident during *ulwaluko*, where young men known as *abafana* respect the elders referred to as *amaxhego*. This code of respectability also enables the elders to have mutual respect for the young. It displays a good impression of *ubuntu* amongst community members and the importance of one's cultural placement by showing dignity and consideration towards the elderly, who continue to play a significant role during the *ulwaluko* ritual. Roux and Coetzee (1994, 243) (cited in Mpetsheni 2019, 62) argue that 'the distinctive collective consciousness of Africans is manifested in their behaviour patterns, expressions and spiritual self-fulfilment in which values such as the universal brotherhood of Africans, sharing and treating other people as humans, are concretised.' For example, when a Xhosa man makes an *isiphoso* error during rituals, the collective existence and intersubjectivity serve as the basis for supportiveness, co-operation, collaboration and solidarity in covering up his disgrace, which is acknowledged as *ihlazo* (disgrace).



Figure 17 Thandiwe Msebenzi. *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*. 2012.

Photography. University of Cape Town

Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New (**Figure 17**) is a photograph that portrays newly graduated men kneeling (*benzithile*) on a wooden floor. These new men are inside the hall,

which is defined by horizontal floor lines that define the square shape. The new men occupied the centre of the floor, wearing manhood clothes, hats, and caps. In *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, *amakrwala* are represented in a circle in different positions; for example, some are only depicted revealing their back view, while others are showing their faces.

Culturally, the space inside the hall and the formed circle by the newly graduated men represented in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* symbolises *ithungo* (open space) *ubuhlanti* (kraal) and *indlu yomfana* (house of a young man). To demonstrate the above, *ithungo*, for example, can be seen as a space where Xhosa men address one another during the *ulwaluko* ritual. Historically, Mvanyashe argues (2019, 10), ‘*enkundleni* or *inkundla* was used for the person who is accused of the offence. This highlights the fact that the indigenous justice system had an order and laws that needed to be followed properly like the modern Western court laws.’ Illustrated here is that the Xhosa people had their own ways of addressing those who committed injustice in society. The symbol of a circle signifies *ubuhlanti* (kraal), as Nobuntu Penxa Matholen (2021, 8) points out: ‘*ubuhlanti* is the space where one speaks to ancestors and it is a space where family keep their cattle’. *Amakrwala* in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* represent the kraal, which is regarded as one of the significant spaces in the lives of Xhosa men. When *ikrwala* returns from the initiation school, he learns how ancestors are addressed, as he will speak on behalf of his family clan. However, *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and New* depicts an exclusive gathering of freshly graduated men; the photograph suggests that women are not permitted to partake in this gathering, as they are forbidden to enter *ebuhlanti*.

The next theme to be discussed in this chapter is manhood language as the construction of Xhosa men’s identity and pride by analysing the concept of *ndiyindoda*.

Manhood Language Through the Concept of *Ndiyindoda*

Vincent (2008) (cited in Mfecane 2016, 5) argues that ‘the *ubudoda* manhood status among amaXhosa is grounded primarily in the physical body (penis). Not only does the penis serve as a site for the symbolic location of manhood status; it is also a medium through which men can “validate” and “defend” their manhood status in times of need’. For Xhosa men to validate and defend their manhood status, they need to understand the vocabulary of manhood. The circle made by *amakrwala* in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and New* becomes that time of need and also

the space where *amakrwala* usually validate and defend their manhood concept of *Ndiyindoda* (I am man) through one of the processes and procedures of *ulwaluko*, known as *ukudodisa*. During *ukudodisa*, one man will stand up while others are seated like those men depicted in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and New*. The one man stands up and will occupy the centre of *intungo*. Once he starts to speak, others will be quiet and listening to show respect for him.

Steve Biko⁵ popularised the expression, ‘Black man you are on your own.’ Biko’s statement is relevant as *ikrwala* needs to speak the manhood language and demonstrate it by defining the concept of *Ndiyidoda* as *uzimele geqe okanye umafunga angajiki*. The phrase *uzimele geqe* means that a man is on his own and cannot hide behind other men, especially during *ukudodisa* and beyond. During *ukudodisa*, the new man’s freedom depends on himself. He is also expected to internalise the responsibility of standing by his words by committing to the say *ungafunga angajiki*, which means that a man does not turn against his word. Cakata (2021, 93) states that ‘language could thus be allegorised as what water is to the crocodile. It allows a people to image themselves after its essence, which essence gives the impetus to seize the power’ for ‘self-defining as a position of strength’. Manhood language is like water to a crocodile, as Xhosa men cannot function well without knowing it, especially during traditional rituals. See one of Cakata’s (2015, 61) participants, Ntando, asserting:

Your originality goes with your language; how can I put it, *amasiko* like traditionally, like if I am among people who speak English, I’ll develop a sense that I am more like those people. If they do not do cultural related things, I’ll also abandon my culture because I’ve adopted their ways. I may start thinking it is also best for me to turn my back on these cultural related things forgetting that it’s my originality. Because I use their language, I’ll start thinking I am like those people. And turn my back on my culture and all that.

Ntando’s argument indicates that language and culture are connected, and language is the vehicle for carving one’s identity because it defines what it means to be a Xhosa man. Burke and Stete’s (2009) understanding of identity is that it is a set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a role in society or a member of a particular group. They claim

5 Bongani Mahlangu interviewing Bantu Biko. Extract from his quotes, <https://www.news24.com/News24/Interviewing-Bantu-Biko-Extracts-from-his-Quotes-20120912>.

that particular characteristics identify an individual as a unique person. In this instance, identity becomes the meaning that Xhosa men provide when they think about themselves.

However, according to Ntozini and Ngqangweni (2016, 6), ‘using this vocabulary is not only a way of defending manhood but also as a means of acquiring social identity and belonging’. Manhood language aids Xhosa men in claiming their cultural identity that puts them in their rightful place. Language, therefore, becomes the perpetual trademark of the awareness that our connection and relationship with the habitat is intelligibly meaningful (Cakata 2021, 93). *Isidoda* language is like that trademark that frames Xhosa men’s conceptualisation of self. Biko (2019, 3) states that ‘who we say we are, what friendship we form, what groups we associate ourselves with are all expressions of identity.’ Cakata (2021) states that without self-definition, Xhosa men will live a life of the Other, which is set up to fail because no one comes to the world to follow an assignment that is not theirs.

The imperative to defend or validate the manhood status stems from the fact that information about *ulwaluko* is a closely guarded secret (Soga 1931). To ensure that those who have not undergone *ulwaluko* do not pass as *amadoda*, AmaXhosa devised a special language of communication among *amadoda*, which is imparted to traditionally circumcised Xhosa initiates during the separation period (Mgqolozana 2009). Language includes and excludes. It is through this special language that boys and men who were circumcised in the hospital are excluded from the ‘circle of legitimacy’ (Connell 1995, 79), referred to as *esidodeni* in isiXhosa. Initiates are required to memorise this language since it serves as admission criteria into ritual spaces. Manhood language is used for admission criteria and as entertainment at the house of men gatherings in the evening and at ceremonies and celebrations. Thus, Connell (2001, 57) (cited in Mfecane 2010, 7) argues that the status of being an *indoda* is not simply an outcome of a passive body, namely the circumcised penis. It ‘results from a sustained, active engagement with the demands of the intuitional setting’ Connell (2001, 57) (cited in Mfecane 2010, 7). *Isidoda* language is an integral part of *ulwaluko* culture, which demands that the initiate be actively involved in learning it. As Cakata (2015, 14) argues, ‘language is a tool through which culture and identity are communicated and passed on from generation to generation. When a people lose that tool, many aspects of who they are perish.’ This alludes to initiates who do not use manhood language as their means of communication to have a better understanding of their Xhosa identity.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to explore the significance of language during the *ulwaluko* rite of passage. This chapter discussed concepts afforded by language. It looked at *ukuhlonipha*, African proverbs, idioms and metaphors, respect for the self and others, and manhood language through the identity of *ndiyindoda*. For its theoretical lens, it worked with Edward Sapir's ideas discussed in the book *Language*; it applied Sisand Cakata's notion on the use of proverbs as a position of strength (2021) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986, 14) argument that language operates at multiply levels, such as a tool of communication and a transporter of culture, identity and values. Furthermore, as mentioned before, the use of *ukuhlonipha* by Xhosa people is perceived as a substantial source of dignity, identity and pride in linguistic practice on the part of indigenous traditional knowledge. In addition, when one is speaking to *abaphantsi*, he has to do that in a dignified manner that represents respect. This includes *ukuhlonipha* gestures of greeting, the respectful way of referring to people, places and objects, and a man wearing a jacket when addressing other men as a sign of respecting them.

This chapter further revealed that when a person respects others, that person is practising the *ubuntu* philosophy, as the proverbs state that *umntu ngumntu ngabantu*. Sayi (2017, 67) (cited in Mvanyashe 2019, 2) also argues that 'proverbs reflect the historical and cultural experiences of African people'. Sayi's argument indicates that using proverbs is a uniting aspect in indigenous African communities. Noble (2015) (cited in Cakata 2021, 91) urges us to use 'metaphoric memory embedded in our languages to fight against epistemic hostility with which people of African descent world over have to contend'. Metaphoric expressions in our language have become a tool that one can use to realise downgraded African knowledge. African languages are essential tools in the process of doing away with epistemic violence, defined by Gayatri Spivak in 1985 as 'Eurocentric Western domination and subjugation of former colonial subjects through knowledge systems.'

This chapter also tackled several complex and significant concepts of manhood language, such as *Ndiyidoda* (I am a man) in educating Xhosa men to *be oozimele geqe okanye omafunga angajiki*. This education benefits Xhosa men to belong and have a social identity that allows them to participate in cultural rituals. This chapter recommends the retrieval of indigenous languages and the need to do away with the pressure to abandon a language in favour of a more dominant one, which has been direct and forceful.

CHAPTER FOUR: FOOD AND BECOMING

Introduction

Food and eating are elements that are filled with many layers of meaning, from basic existence to spirits of development and social connection. This chapter discusses four primary neglected aspects of food. First is the first seven-day period of *ulwaluko*, when the initiates' diet is believed to contribute to their healing process. The second is exploring the values and beliefs of the *umojiso* ritual, which takes place after the seven days of initiation. Of importance here is sharing food to exchange ideas and form long-lasting relations, which relates to the third aspect of the vitality of cultural identity. The *umojiso* ritual is a moment when relationships are formed to unite Xhosa men, whose responsibilities include preserving bonds through meal sharing. The fourth aspect concerns *umgidi*, a celebration ceremony marking the return of the initiates from seclusion. These primary aspects of food are engaged with reference to the significance of the ritual to initiates and Xhosa men at large. Meal traditions become the window into understanding people's minds behind their practice (Souisa 2018, 7).

This chapter discusses food as an integral aspect in the formation of cultural identity that defines one's status, diet and place in cultural arrangement. The construction of identity has a significant role in society, and thus, shared food finds individual and collective identity which helps initiates to understand Xhosa foods. In rites of passage, rituals such as wedding ceremonies, funerals, and birthdays, food is one of the significant aspects of ritualisation. Food occupies a central position in multicultural gatherings and engagements; for example, different communities partake in a mutually pleasurable experience in Malaysia by tasting and eating different cuisines (Perry 2019, 188). The same perspective can be used in the Xhosa community, where Xhosa men consume food for enjoyment. During these social gatherings, for instance, in *ulwaluko*, sheep and goats are used for traditional purposes such as communicating with ancestors and the living. However, in visual art, food has been used in various ways as a memory, idea and political tool that speaks back to the degradation of people's cultures. Studying food in the context of *ulwaluko* means learning how and why Xhosa people associate food with rituals and symbols that focus on cultural beliefs and values.

Contextual Background

This chapter investigates the value of food in the *ulwaluko* ritual, which is neglected by most writers who are more focused on water restrictions and imbalanced food as primary reasons for the deaths of initiates during male initiation. However, this chapter discusses what initiates eat, and why they eat what they eat. In this regard, the imbalanced diet and water restrictions that are common and expected at the *ulwaluko* ritual are practised to teach initiates patience and endurance for the outside world. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the significance of food and how certain food types are reserved for particular ceremonies; for instance, during initiations, food forms part of all rituals. The chapter demonstrates the benefits of food and eating for the initiates' health and strength and how sharing food builds and transforms social relationships to reaffirm cultural identity. To study food and eating is significant both for its own sake and since food is essential to human life. It is important to give exposure to the indigenous knowledge of certain foods of the Xhosa people.

To understand why Xhosa men eat the way they do during the *ulwaluko* ritual, this chapter looks at how South African artists employ food as a theoretical medium in their work. Artists discussed are Churchill Madikida in his work *Struggle of the Heart* (2003); Thandiwe Msebenzi in her photographic work titled *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and New* (2012); and Ndikhumbule Ngqinambi in his painting *Umgidi* (2005). The cultural link shows how artworks in different mediums represent the importance of food. These artworks are of significance in this chapter because they depict food and eating as expressing status, sharing and identity, which help Xhosa men understand the value of Xhosa foods. The artworks connect food to rituals, symbols and belief systems.

Definition of *Food*

Food⁶ can be defined as anything solid or liquid that, when swallowed, digested and assimilated in the body, provides essential substances called *nutrients* and keeps it well. According to Holtzman (2006, 362), food is a basic necessity; 'that stuff that we as organisms consume by virtue of requiring energy, a substance nourishing and sustaining our bodies'. Holtzman

⁶ For more definitions of *food*, see <https://ncert.nic.in/textbook/pdf/kehe103.pdf>.

understands that food provides people with energy and enables them to grow. Ram (2020, 55) concurs with Holtzman's consideration of food as 'the most basic needs of human beings; its main objective is to satisfy hunger and to meet the nutritional needs of the body'. Food plays a significant role in people's lives and is closely connected to their existence. Douglas and Gross (1981) point out that food is necessary for physiological and social needs. It is a nourishing substance that is taken into the body to sustain life. While Counihan (1999, 6) expands on what Douglas and Gross (cited in Aktaş-Polat and Polat 2020, 280) have put forward by affirming that 'food as a glorious thing in the center of biological and social life, expresses that we eat food for days, seasons, and years to satisfy our physical hunger, our emotions and to feed our bellies'. For instance, some people eat significant quantities of food when they are stressed and sad to satisfy their emotions.

Thus, Anne Murcott (1982, 203) states that 'cultural significance of food and eating focuses on social values, meanings and beliefs rather than on dietary requirements and nutritional values'. This alludes to Xhosa male initiation schools where food is not used so much in dietary and nutritional values but is more based on the cultural values and beliefs that are attached to food; for example, initiates eat dry foods that are perceived to be important for their status and identity. According to Barthes (2008) (cited in Perry 2019, 184), 'food is a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations and behaviour'. Therefore, food has an ability to communicate one's cultural values and beliefs. Gunkel (2016) (cited in Perry 2019, 184) describes this ability to have multiple and different meanings in various contexts as the 'polysemy of food' and defines *food* as a system of communication, a type of language through which people express identities and relationships, including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, festivity and sacrality. Gunkel's statement about food has numerous meanings and can be interpreted in many ways based on its use and context; for instance, white *pap* during the incorporation stage symbolises the formation of manhood status. There is also the idea that food shapes who we are and carries people's cultures.

The following sub-themes explore what diet initiates eat during their first seven days of *ulwaluko*.

Food and eating in the seven days

During *ulwaluko*, a boy known as *inqalathi* is responsible for helping the initiate by taking food two to three times a day to the mountain. In transporting the food, the boy is urged to take a short path. Culturally, the importance of this is believed to ‘prevent evil spirits from entering the food of an initiate’ (Mhlahlo 2009, 109). The boy must always observe this belief about food when transporting the initiate’s breakfast, lunch and supper. Traditionally, a sister of the initiate is responsible for cooking the food at the homestead. However, nowadays, it can be anyone, such as the mother or relatives. For example, Lupton (2012, 39) (cited in Tatti 2019, 12) states that food is strictly connected to the concepts of femininity and motherhood, and the ‘family meal and the dinner table are potent symbols, even metonyms, of the family itself’. During the seven days, an initiate is given *samp* without beans, oil and salt as his daily diet. Drinking clean water is not permitted because it is perceived to make the initiate’s wound wet instead of keeping it dry. However, another way is used to come to terms with thirst. Elliot (1975, 85) mentioned this method by uttering that an ‘antheap mixed with water is made for initiates to drink and avoid being thirsty.’ A further significance of this mixture is that it makes the ‘heart of the initiates strong like an antheap, so that he does not become a coward in future’. This teaches the Xhosa men to be brave because bravery is seen as one of the significant qualities of manhood.

However, initiates are restricted from eating oily foods because food restrictions are important and have educational value in their lives. The educational aspect of this restriction is that it empowers initiates to control and overcome their body needs. The consumption of dry foods by initiates is a sign of resilience which builds their character for the outside world. Jansen (1997, 94) mentioned the month of fasting, which is seen as an ‘excellent exercise in controlling one’s needs and desires’. Culturally, for example, dry foods are believed to help curb initiates’ sexual desires during their early days of initiation because their circumcision wound is still new and that might cause the healing process to be delayed. Thus, from time to time, sexual desires are triggered by physical or mental stimulation that allows the initiates’ penis to erect. Jansen (1997, 94) notes that fasting from certain food ‘not only improves one’s personality, but is also favourable to health, good for the atonement of sins, and a source of spiritual merit’. In the context of *ulwaluko*, for example, the period of seven days is seen as an excellent health practice.

Fischler (1988, 284) states that ‘no food is appropriate for everyone, at all times, in all circumstances, in any quantity.’ Culturally, the food that initiates eat is suitable for their status; hence, the food has been eaten by generations of *abakwetha*. The food has more power to supply initiates with energy for performing several types of activities, such as sitting, standing, walking and running, and activities that are done during *ulwaluko*, such as gathering wood for making a fire to cook, keeping them warm in the cold weather and help them with their singing when they are required to do so by their guardians or in the pre-coming-out ritual known as *iceya*. In *iceya*, the initiates play a game called *ingcakaza*, with co-initiates using small sticks. An initiate is helped to cope with the pain (*ukunyamezela*) and dietary restrictions by the frequent visitors and the company of the guardian, who keeps him entertained by telling him stories (Ncanca 2014, 52).

The following sub-theme explores what transpires in *ulwaluko* after seven days of food restrictions, and the focus is based on the *umojiso* ritual, where initiates are reintroduced to the usual pleasures they were used to prior to their initiation.

Umojiso ritual

After seven days of restricting certain foods, a ritual called *umojiso* (roasted meat) is performed. During the day of this ‘ritual an animal is slaughtered for the initiates to celebrate and be proud of both their achievements and the promising recovery of their wounds’ (Ncanca 2014, 53). An initiate is given a strip from the right foreleg of the roasted sheep and the rest of the flank is kept to be eaten by *umkhwetha* (initiate), *ikhankatha* (male guardian) and *abahambeli* (visitors). The meat from the animals mentioned is important because it is believed to be medicine for the initiates. However, the *umojiso* ritual is not only about celebrating and slaughtering an animal; it is also a sacrifice and thanksgiving to ancestors for protecting the initiates. The meat of the goat and sheep is used as the medium of communication with *abaphantsi* (ancestors). Culturally, the sacrificed animal becomes the bridge used by the initiates to cross over to manhood and ancestors are believed to be the ones who give initiates good health. Thus, Ncanca (2014, 52) says ‘the main [aspect] of [the] *ukojiswa* ceremony is to release [as in breaking the fast] the initiates from certain food and other taboos where initiates are allowed to visit other initiates.’ Thus, the object is to give the initiates freedom to eat fatty foods and to be able to move around the bush.

The significance of *umojiso* is that it marks the initiates' freedom from restrictions on dry foods such as *samp* without beans, without salt, and not drinking clean water. As the ritual proceeds, a speech is delivered by the elders of the family to allow the initiates freedom. Some families bring *amarhewu* (unfermented beer) and bread. Moyo and Funani (2019, 122) argue that it is at 'this stage that the initiate recovers, when he finally gets to eat food with vitamins which will assist the body to fight the bacteria which will delay the healing process'. *Umojiso* is a significant turning point in the life of an initiate during his incorporation phase of *ulwaluko* and after this ritual. The initiate knows that he is preparing to go home. Thus, requests such as asking for the food he desires to eat can now be made to his parents or relatives and those who cook for him. During this time, the initiate is 'free to engage other fellow initiates, is allowed to visit other huts, and go for long walks or hunting' (Ncanca 2014, 53). Though initiates are permitted to eat fatty food, they are expected to observe certain restrictions even after the *umojiso* ritual, such as not drinking soft drinks which might cause them to delay going home on the set date. Nevertheless, when the food is prepared, the meal creates order, security and identity during rituals. Meals themselves become a ritual; for example, during *ulwaluko* on the seventh day after the difficult times of endurance, the animal is slaughtered in the name of initiates as a sign that they had survived the first trying times and are now ready to be accepted as *amadoda*. Thus, eating the sacrificial animal and other foods gives initiates more hope for achieving the manhood phases.

The *umojiso* ritual is a feast when Xhosa men attend and appreciate the practice of eating, drinking and socialising with other men. Munn (1986), Murphy (1986), Buitelaar (1993), Feeley-Harnik (1994) and Brown (1995) (all cited in Sidney Mintz et al. 2002, 107) state that 'eating in ritual context reaffirms or transforms relationships with visible others, even participants in ritual meal bring very different religious understandings to the event'. This alludes to the *umojiso* ritual as a space and occasion to forge relations through eating and drinking *umqomboti* (Nguni traditional beer made from maize, maize malt, sorghum malt, yeast and water). This cultural practice is portrayed even in isiXhosa literature. In the novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* by A. C. Jordan (1940) and (1974), for example, whenever men gathered in a homestead, they would converse over an *ilala* of *umqombothi* (a container with traditional beer) or *amarhewu*. Eating and drinking help Xhosas to engage with current affairs, as well as their history and heritage. Thus, sharing meat or alcohol is a significant sign that helps men to share their manhood with others. This is an indication of their place and status in manhood. Mhlahlo (2009) says that men receive their share, known as *isabelo* (dishing out of

food), during rituals, which is a method used by the community to approve and appreciate them. This practice occurs orderly in terms of groups, such as elderly men, middle aged, young and newly graduated men. This is how things are done to allow everyone to have something to eat while sharing it with others. Mauss (1966) argues that sharing is at the core of food. Mealtimes create opportunities to build relationships that strengthen and change the social order (Ochs and Shohet, 2006). These relations are important because they empower Xhosa men to know their adult roles and responsibilities as members of society.

Moreover, mealtimes are when we share our food, our tastes, our values (Counihan, 1999), our joys and our sorrows, and we eliminate our aspirations. Sharing food is a practice through which people are able to think and speak about anything; for example, in the ‘eating together’ activity, people come together not only to enjoy the meal but also to exchange ideas and experiences. Thus, eating food together facilitates the exchange of information about people’s culture. Food can bring people together and create bonds and lifelong friendships and relationships (Perry 2019, 184). The *Umojiso* ritual becomes a space to share more than food. This means that food is a vehicle for Xhosa men to get to know one another and a tool for building social and political relations; for instance, food is also rendered in *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994), where Nelson Mandela talks about ‘sharing it with his fellow inmates from different racial groups, enjoying Indian food that was brought by his friends when they visited him in prison’ (Moropa 2016, 247). This shows that food and eating imply social acceptance, and sharing a meal with another person connotes equality. Moore (1957, 77) states that ‘food and eating, in and of themselves are looked upon as symbolising interpersonal acceptance, friendless, sociability, and warm.’ This perception is observed throughout many societies. As Nokele (cited in Moropa 2016, 248) noted, food means hospitality, unity and sharing among Xhosa people. During *umojiso*, *isabelo* signifies the importance of Xhosa men breaking bread together and sharing food forms their unity during rituals, which is a vital device to establish relations. To some degree, this type of breaking bread is widespread; it has been a significant aspect that contributes to the development of the Xhosa men and their knowledge about Xhosa foods. Food is a symbol of an entity of certain groups, such as the Xhosa people, with cultural value as an area of social action to manifest and express something according to social change and social integration. In *ulwaluko*, food and eating teach initiates to share food with others to survive. This aspect of food is a symbol of values and solidarity that must be shared with everyone, and, to some extent, this type of food sharing is widespread; it is a significant contributor to the development of the Xhosa heritage and history.



Figure 18 Thandiswe Masebenzi. *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*. 2012.

Photograph

Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New (**Figure 18**) is a photograph of a round table with four legs. Zig-zag lines shape the legs of this table. The function of these lines is to determine the shape of the inconsistent legs; for example, the line at the bottom of the four legs has defined a round shape, and as the line travels upwards, it creates a cube shape. The space between the first two legs in the foreground is wider than the space between the two legs that occupy the backdrop and the one on the side of the table. Thus, the legs in the foreground are more visible than the ones in the background; for instance, they are shorter in length than the ones in the front. This happens because the shape of the legs is composed of lines that define a four-dimensional space, while its top is composed of a round shape. In *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, three plates of food are depicted on the table. These plates are composed of a line that defines a round shape in order to hold the food. The plates are arranged in a triangle shape. This placement is a sign that shows how those who will eat the food from these plates will sit around the table. However, in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, there is a sense of repetition of lines, shapes and colours that work together to create Thandiwe's photograph. For example, the plates on top of the table are repeated with the table legs. This repetition is necessary because it creates a sense of balance in the composition. In *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, there is a representation of complementary colours: the metal plates are in

different colours, such as light green and light yellow, while the table has dark brown legs that work together and complement the floor and the wood on the wall. However, the blue *shweshwe* cloth used to cover the table is lighter on the left-hand side to highlight where the light falls. Gradually, the light shifts from light to dark across the right-hand side of the cloth to show a shadow. Thandiwe Msebenzi's photograph, *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*, refers to what initiates eat during and after their initiation.

However, the home table does not have chairs on which people can sit and eat their meals. Thus, this work represents where people sit when eating in their home environment. In the context of *ulwaluko*, this indicates that the food on the metal plates is for the newly graduated men, as the title *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* implies. Culturally, the food on the plates signifies the new men's place of belonging post-initiation, which means they are part of a larger group, such as a family. Barthes (2008) (cited in Perry 2019, 184) argues that 'through food, a person can access his or her culture, past and nationality.' The food in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* is important because it represents the culture and history of the Xhosa people, which helps the newly graduated men to know and understand their history. This teaches them to have a better understanding of their families.

The white colour of the *pap* characterises the new life of manhood, *Oobhuti abatsha*; it signifies innocence. The artwork also embodies the significance of the dignity portrayed towards those who consume the food. This is attained by the presence of the *shweshwe* cloth that covers the top of the table to show elegance and also for aesthetic purposes. Socially, if the table is attractive, it creates a significant and good eating experience for the diner, and the tablecloth protects food from dropping onto the table. Thus, the three plates represent the unity and a sense of belonging. In the *Cultural Dimension of Food* (Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition 2009, 16), it is argued that 'dinner', for example, is a prevalently relational moment during which a process of building and sharing intimacy and closeness is set in motion, and there exists an emotional involvement. Eating and sharing food form one's individual and collective identity, which helps people understand who they are as a group. Tatti (2019, 11) used the family meal and dinner table to 'identify the importance of sharing for individuals who will be active participants and social actors within society'. A dinner table becomes a symbol that connects people to be one. The following sub-theme explores food as a marker of cultural identity:

Cultural identity

Culturally, the sharing of meals has been considered to be one of those practices that develops and constructs an identity, but also a practice that reinforces gender relations and manhood ideology. The ideology of manhood is when older men start to define *ulwaluko* to develop initiates and create a new identity for men. Heaney (2010, 16) cited in Falk (1994) and Lupton (2005), who reason that eating is perceived primarily as an act of incorporation that involves emotions, pleasures and feelings but also, as Fischler (1988) and Caplan (1997) argue, food as ‘creation, maintenance and the formation of identities’. The sharing of food has the power to influence how people see themselves. For instance, during *ulwaluko*, initiates are taught that men eat meat and drink traditional beer. Jansen (1997, 93) states that ‘eating habits are not only a means to construct collective identities, but also to inculcate virtue and to build character and individual identity.’ Thus, the manhood philosophy pertaining to food is significant as it also develops initiates’ identity in loving meat. Claude Fischler (1988, 275) points out that ‘food is also central to individual identity, in that any given human individual is constructed, biologically, psychologically and socially by the foods he/she chooses to incorporate.’ Fischler’s statement indicates that food is a symbolic medium that reaffirms one’s cultural identity: what initiates eat reveals their social status. Prem Ram (2020, 54) explains that ‘food is considered a group identity which reflects the importance of food in their culture’, but also in the sense of Bourdieu (1989), who has stated that the choices people make over what they eat reproduce their class position symbolically. This point is argued by Allison James (1997, 74), who explains that ‘in most cultures, rites of passage which mark changes of social status and hence identity are accompanied by special kinds of food or rules about its consumption’. The food taboos during *ulwaluko* are not meant to punish the initiates but to build them and mark their social identity. Nkengla Asi et al. (2016, 5) argue that the food taboo ‘acknowledged by a particular group of people as part of its ways, aids in the cohesion of this group as it helps that group stand out amongst others, assists that group to maintain its identity and creates a feeling of belonging.’ Therefore, restricting certain foods is necessary because it makes a group different. Anne Murcott (1982, 203) elaborates that ‘the cultural significance of food and eating focuses on social values, meanings and beliefs rather than on dietary requirements and nutritional values, meanings and beliefs rather than on dietary requirements and nutritional values.’ It may be argued that eating a particular food tends to transfer some values and meaning to the eater; for instance, the red meat of *umojiso* is believed to give *abakhwetha* strength and is associated with ancestors. Murcott (1982, 204) states that ‘what people are

prepared to take inside their bodies reflects their social identities, and their membership of social groups’.

To understand what people eat is to understand their culture; as Almerico (2014, 5) noted: ‘food is part of who we are which ties us to our families and holds a special worth to a person’. This means that food is part of us, and we are part of it. According to Lupton (1996, 1) (cited in Dates 2009, 73), ‘food and eating are central to our subjectivity, or sense of self, and our experience of embodiment, or the ways that we live in and through our bodies, which itself is inextricably linked with subjectivity’. The consumption of certain foods in a diet is crucial because it is an expression of people’s worldviews. Food defines people’s rituals and cultures; for instance, people follow specific food patterns in certain rituals, such as religious ceremonies, funerals, and weddings. Cohen (1968) (cited in Paul Fieldhouse 1995, 79) hypothesises that ‘these important life events signify changes in socioeconomic relationships and responsibilities; as food usages commonly symbolise social relationships, changes in the latter are noted symbolically by displays, exchanges and consumption of foods.’ This confirms that food is a reflection and a formation of people’s identity, expressed by eating certain foods and restricting themselves from eating other foods for cultural significance. The diet consumed during *ulwaluko* produces and is used to express group identity. Often, initiates eat collectively, and this means that they receive and distribute food amongst themselves as the representation of communion. Mauss (1954, 10) (cited in Jansen 1997, 103) claims that ‘to give something is to give a part of oneself, a part of one’s nature and substance, while to receive something is to receive a part of someone’s spiritual essence.’ Eating unites the person who is eating with the group that is eating. Moldanova (2016) (cited in Aktaş-Polat and Polat 2020, 281) ‘emphasised that there is a link between food and individual or cultural memory and concluded that eating had become a cultural experience in addition to an effective tool leading to building social and ethnic groups.’ When one devours traditional food, it creates a memory and origins. Holtzman (2006, 363) states that memory is the ‘notion of experience or meaning in reference to the past’. For example, when Xhosa men eat the initiation diet, whose recipe has been inherited and prepared for *abakwetha*, they relate to their past and present. This helps them to become attached to initiation foods. Bessiere and Tibere (2010) (cited in Almansouri et al. 2021, 79) explain that this food heritage has been defined as ‘the set of material and immaterial elements of food cultures that are considered as a shared legacy or a common good’. In that sense, the initiates’ food is a shared legacy that connects and honours those who came before with the concept of eating certain foodstuff in the diet of *ulwaluko*.

However, Helen Mendes (1971, 11) (cited in William 1999, 38) writes in *The African Heritage Cookbook* that food, like art, music and literature, is an authentic expression of a people's culture. Throughout the history of African Americans, food has provided more than physical sustenance. It has provided one of the few vehicles through which Blacks have been able to preserve their African heritage. Thus, food is an aesthetic experience which is comparable to a work of art; for instance, *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* is a good reference because it represents food in the home environment and symbolises unity and togetherness of three people signified by the three plants. This marks family time. The artwork gives evidence of how cultural creativity conveys value and the benefits of sharing food. Holtzman (2006) (cited in Aktaş-Polat and Polat 2020, 281) saw food as a rich area for preserving historical identities and discovering memories.

To continue eating indigenous food is not only to preserve people's identities but also their heritage. Brillat-Savarin (2002, 3) instructs: 'tell me what you eat: I will tell you what you are'. Brillat-Savarin's expression about food indicates how and what one eats, which informs identity formation and performance. This shows that food is expressive and significant in people's perception of who they are. According to Brulotte and Di Giovine (2016) (cited in Almansouri et al. 2021, 790), food, as inherited from the past, 'serves nowadays an important role as a cultural identity in the multicultural environment'. The influence of inherited food is significant in informing the present generation about their belonging, taste and placement in society.



Figure 19 Songezile Churchill Madikida. *Struggle of the Heart*. 2003. Digital video still

Songezile Churchill Madikida's *Struggle of the Heart* (2003) (**Figure 19**) represents a video and stills that form part of Madikida's *Liminal States* (2001) exhibition that depicts an initiate's white masked face ingesting and regurgitating *pap* (maize meal porridge). The initiates seem to be struggling with chewing the stiff *pap*. Madikida (2001, 6) states the following in his artistic statement:

The underlying concept is an attempt to reflect on the consumption of stereotypical images of black cultures. It is also an attempt to demonstrate the need for cultures, traditions and religions to adapt and transform for their own survival. On the other hand, the regurgitating illustrates a need for cultures to rid themselves of elements that could jeopardise the continuity of such practices.

Thus, the consumption of white *pap* by the initiate highlights how food is used as a tool to speak for the neglected aspect of *ulwaluko*. Madikida's statement also encourages the need for the *ulwaluko* ritual since it shapes Xhosa men's identity which helps society to some degree. The regurgitating symbolises the neglect of people's identity and culture. In *Struggle of the Heart*, the initiate disregards the fixation with eradicating *ulwaluko*. The initiate is presented eating large amounts of *pap*. His facial expression is indicative of his experience. This is a sign that he is not finding pleasure in his food, but he continues to force himself to eat until the *pap* falls out of his mouth. Even Madikida's title, *Struggle of the Heart*, implies eating and vomiting the *pap* underpin the struggles to retrieve the neglected self. Madikida (2001, 6) argues that 'this is his way of contributing to society's struggle in reclaiming and redefining, on our own terms, our identities, cultures, traditions, religions, dignity, spaces and way of life.' In the context of *ulwaluko*, this work is important because it helps Xhosa men understand themselves and the world around them through food. O'Toole (2004) (cited in Margaret Garisch 2015, 16) states that the 'significant identity formation rituals that Madikida himself attests to symbolically transposes food's inherent capacity for absorption, digestion and discharge.'

Thus, *Struggle of the Heart* has similarities and differences when compared with *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New*; for example, both works signify food in the context of *ulwaluko*. However, they differ in how they illustrate the *pap*. In *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old*

And the New, the artist exhibits three plates of food on a dinner table to symbolise those eligible to eat *pap*. In contrast, *Struggle of the Heart* shows an initiate eating *pap*. The food in *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and New* is meant to be eaten post-initiation by the newly graduated men and by family members. *Oobhuti Abatsha: The Old and the New* and *Struggle of the Heart* reveal different elements, such as the way they employ the principle of composition and their choice of medium. *Struggle of the Heart* is a video still in portrait form, while *Oobhuti abatsha: The Old and New* is a photograph in three dimensions. These elements are important because they make food a subject that matters and to be recognisable.

Umgidi



Figure 20 Ndikhumbule Ngqinambi. *Umgidi*. 2005. Painting, oil on canvas. Graca Machel Hall, Cape Town.

Ndikhumbule Ngqinambi's work *Umgidi* (2005) (**Figure 20**) is a painting that depicts a scene of the *umgidi* ceremony. *Umgidi* comes from the word *ukugida* (to contribute to the other) (Ntombana 2011, 97). The hosts of *umgidi* are traditionally projected to provide *imfanelo*, such as a certain number of bottles of brandy and several containers of *umqombothi* for each group of older men, mature men, women and young women. Relatives, friends and the community attend *umgidi* to donate groceries, alcohol, meat money and clothes. This ceremony becomes a formal entrance characterised by a meal in common and the exchange of gifts. Van Gennep (1960, 28) (cited in Moyo and Funani 2019, 123) notes that it may further involve eating, drinking and smoking together, being attached to one another, being covered together or sitting

together on the same seat. This ceremony is important in showing love, dignity and pride to the family hosting the *umgidi*. Thus, in the foreground of the painting is a black-and-white dog close to the woman wearing a white apron and orange dress. This dog is following the woman who is going in the direction of the right, carrying something in her hands that might be food. On the right-hand side of the painting is the representation of three big pots that are specifically used for cooking during *umgidi*. One of the pots is closed, and two out of the three pots are open and on top. They are white in colour, which symbolises the colour of food. Steam is coming out of the two pots to show that the food is hot since food during *umgidi* is cooked on fire outside the house, a space known as *iziko*. The practice of cooking by Xhosa men and women is a symbol that marks a transition of food to culture, which will be given to society. Preparing food is an essential process because it refers to a cultural and social step. This cooking practice is linked to history and people's heritage.

However, the pots are positioned in a triangle manner, similar to the position of the three women behind them occupying the middle ground. This repetition creates a sense of balance and serves to order the painting into an identifiable outline. The women in the middle are wearing different clothes: the woman on the left-hand side is wearing a long red dress with a short white apron around her waist, and the second woman on the right is wearing an orange dress with a cream top and around her waist she has tied a blue band. This band and apron are used to show dignity and respect for the *umgidi* ceremony. The women who occupy the back are wearing blue dresses and brown aprons, and two of them complement each other by wearing a red head cover (*iqhiya*). On the left-hand side, two older men are standing together and having a conversation. They are both wearing long vintage blazers (*idyasi*) in different colours, such as brown and blue. They are both wearing hats. Culturally, hats are used by *amaxhego* to signify *ukuhlonipha* during the *ulwaluko* ritual. In the background are two women behind the two older men on the left-hand side attending the *umgidi*, and a crowd of people are next to them. Some of them are men positioned on the right-hand side of the painting carrying sticks in rhythm to imply *ukuxhentsa* (dancing), celebrating and welcoming the new man into manhood. The combination of different colours in *umgidi* works together rather than against one another, creating a unified effect in the painting. The texture of the work is consistently the same and unlocks the meaning of the scene of *umgidi*.

Culturally, the coming-out ceremony also includes the slaughtering of cows, sheep, and roasted and cooked meat. People are allowed to occupy their rightful places in categories such as

amaxhego (old men), *oomama* (old woman), *abafana* (young men) and *iintombi*. This means that the allocation of food and alcohol will be circulated and shared according to the appropriate groups. In *umgidi*, everyone is allowed, unlike during the *umojiso* ritual, where women are not allowed to attend. All the food and alcohol consumed during the *umgidi* ceremony are given to people so that they can have the energy and strength to celebrate and mark the arrival of the new man in the family. Thus, *umgidi* is also a way to appease the ancestral spirits who protect the journey of the new man to manhood. In the article titled *Some Food Customs and Beliefs* (1973,2), Galli states the following:

Among most of our African people, there exist strong beliefs, fears and respect for the spirits of the ancestors. If the ritual goat sacrifice were omitted, the anger of the ancestors would become apparent by their ‘burning’ the child and its subsequent failure to grow and thrive. *We* would describe the condition of the child as a case of kwashiorkor, but our Nguni people would attribute the poor condition and skin breakdown to the anger and punishment of displeased ancestral spirits. To restore the equilibrium would call for elaborate rituals, animal sacrifices and the expensive services of the traditional practitioners, the diagnostician – *sangoma*, and the therapist – *inyanga*. These beliefs are handed down through the ages and pass from generation to generation. These beliefs transcend education or social status. They have become deeply ingrained and are resistant to change. They are embedded in a semi-magico-religious belief and taboo system.

The ritual reflects Xhosa values concerning food, which are connected to the dead and living. These beliefs educate the new generation about the need to respect their ancestors, and their individual and collective lives will be restored.

Conclusion

This chapter has documented the knowledge of food during the *ulwaluko* ritual. It outlined the themes of the seven-day period (*umojiso*), sharing of food, cultural identity and *umgidi*. These are significant and complex aspects concerning the neglected theme of food. This chapter explored what initiates eat during their first week at the initiation school and linked food with ritual practices that contribute to the education of Xhosa men and the construction of their identities. *Umojiso* ritual plays an essential role in the human relationships of Xhosa men, who have claimed another dimension of food sharing, which assists them with forging bonds,

exchanges, and experiencing manhood. When initiates eat traditional food, they gain a cultural experience and knowledge connected to the history and heritage of *ulwaluko*. Individual and collective development of a strong identity is constructed, therefore of a more defined appreciation of their manhood status. This chapter has represented food as a metaphorical measure of the world, which allows people to interpret the meaning of life and make itself a precious teaching. Piercarlo Grimaldi et al. (2019, 36) state that ‘gestures and words, in particular those that relate to the forms and practices of food must be saved, archived and communicated because today the knowledge that passed from mother to daughter, from grandmother to nephew was interrupted.’

CHAPTER FIVE: GAMES AND MUSIC

Introduction

This chapter explores the significance of games and music during the *ulwaluko* ritual. The focus is on the themes of stick-fighting (*ukuqula* or *ubetha iintonga*), music, African dances and a guessing game known as *iceya*. Stick fighting is an ancient art of *intonga* practised amongst Xhosa rural communities. Ntuli (1996) and Leitch (1996), cited in Coetzee (2000, 199), argue that ‘stick fighting was an opportunity for men to build courage and skill, distinguish themselves as proficient warriors in the military ranks, and earn respect in the community’. It is argued that *ukuqula*, in the past, transmitted sentiments about manhood that were similar to those in more recent times. The origins of Xhosa stick fighting have been lost, and its ancestry is buried; its practice is a spirited testimonial to an ancient and respected tradition. This chapter does not outright condemn foreign cultural influences but suggests only adopting aspects that can enhance Xhosa indigenous knowledge and project their cultural identity.

The researcher is aware of the essence of games and singing games and, therefore, has protected and re-tooled them to educate Xhosa youth. This awareness enables the Xhosa people to understand and take pride in their cultural heritage. It is crucial to document indigenous knowledge of traditional dance, which is intertwined with the fabric of the African indigenous community’s sociocultural experience. Though Western cultural pressure in terms of what Goslin and Goslin (2009) (cited in Amlor 2016, 71) describe as ‘the combined effects of economic, social and environmental changes . . . [is] encroaching upon various indigenous games and creating a high risk of losing these games to Western-influenced modern games’. *Ukuqula* is the expression of a Xhosa people’s cultural life that is not celebrated. In Africa, stick fighting is used to reaffirm significant meanings of a people’s life and cultural identity. Stick fighting is a cultural game played by two people engaged in a fight. The importance of *ukuqula* is the power of testing one’s strength and technique. The game is played during the coming-out ceremony of *ulwaluko*, where Xhosa boys and men test their skills, techniques and bravery in a spectacle.

This game is also used for entertainment during the coming-out ceremony. The fighter thus remains in control of himself and his attempts to entertain the audience while beating the opposition (Coetzee 2000, 109). During the fight, the fighter must impress the audience by ensuring optimal ability to ward off blows and protect his body. This chapter explains the significance of stick fighting for educational purposes. It teaches Xhosa men to tolerate, endure and overcome pain and acts as traditional mediation or facilitation to settle disputes. Should it happen during the *ulwaluko* ritual that two men are not getting along, they are given a stick to fight against each other and settle the matter instead of engaging in a violent fight. In this instance, no man would want to lose the fight. It teaches or encourages them to tolerate, endure and overcome the pain of *ukudlala iintonga*, which is vital in the contemporary context in which Xhosa men have turned to gangs, and use knives and guns. *Iceya* is a game played by initiates a night before their coming-out ceremony. In this game, small matchsticks are used. One player hides the matchstick in his hands, and others will guess which hand he has the stick in. Yawkey et al. (1986) stress that play is a natural form of learning regardless of age. By playing, initiates learn adult roles and problem-solving; for example, while playing, they look for ways to win the games, which require artistic skill for a person to master. These game activities help promote Xhosa men's development in various ways. Play contributes to their intellectual, cognitive and emotional growth.

Contextual Background

This chapter looks at the practice of stick fighting as it is practised and engaged by Xhosa boys and men. It analyses the game by looking into the methods and rules used and other cultural practices linked to it. The games and music are as old as the Xhosa nation itself. In Xhosa communities, several ceremonies can be used to set up games and music; for example, during *umguyo*, *umngeno*, and *umphumo* at the initiation school. These are the rituals where stick fighting can take place, and music, as an art form, has become significantly included in the process of *iimidlalo*, which is the construction of the identity of the Xhosa people. This chapter further attempts to determine the importance of games and music and how much value Xhosa people still attach to them. In Xhosa rituals, music is not separated from dancing.

Traditional dances are the pivots around which cultural practices revolve among the Xhosa people in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Traditional dances such as *umteyo* and *ingqongqo* are rooted in religious rites and cultural ceremonies. Besides being a source of

indigenous knowledge and artistic traditions, traditional dances are avenues to re-enact the Xhosa people's history, social life and culture. The transition from boyhood to manhood ceremony involves significant aspects of indigenous knowledge, beginning with the *ukudlala intonga* (stick fighting) *umteyo* dance performance, songs, costumes and the local musical instruments utilised in the ceremony. Martin Amlor (2016, 63) argues that 'indigenous knowledge, perceived as cultural norms and values that collectively inform, educate and give identity to people in a society, still remains an African cultural legacy.' This relates to Xhosa men being educated during their initiation into the Xhosa world through games and music. The transition of this education is from one generation to another through memory, verbal communication and some specific activities. These cultural elements are educative and, hence, are considered crucial as bearers of meaning and dispensers of understanding within the African cultural context and project the identity of the Xhosa people. The *Ulwaluko* ritual is an ideal, vital and conducive school for these games and music.

The importance of a secluded space is that it allows learning to take place; for Xhosa men to be taught the skill of defence through *ukudlala iintonga* (through song and dance,) which helps them to gain knowledge of Xhosa genealogy and be able to perform their roles and responsibilities within the *ulwaluko* setting. Reyes and Fernandez (2019) are of the view that indigenous knowledge is largely transmitted and expressed through the encoding of sociocultural performances of everyday activities such as storytelling, dancing and singing. *Imidlalo* and songs in Xhosa communities have been structured and targeted towards providing amusement and other sociocultural values to the young and old. Games restricted to males are deemed energetic and laden with physical strength. The games are most often performed in the summer season. Munyao (2010) (cited in Amlor 2016, 64) similarly states that 'African indigenous game performances are often held during the dry season as compared to lesser participation during the rainy season.' However, in Xhosa communities, *ulwaluko* takes place both in winter and summer, and the games and music are practised during both seasons. However, some games, such as *iceya*, are seen as most suitable to be performed in the evenings, unlike *ukudlala iintonga*, which is practised during daylight. This chapter was written in response to the need to explore the importance of Xhosa traditional music and dance as expressive tools to retain indigenous knowledge, values and musical practice, to help create and promote awareness and the use of indigenous knowledge among the Xhosa people.

Theoretical Framework and Articulation of the Themes

Chapter five explains the importance of games, music, and dances, which are expressive tools for retaining indigenous knowledge. In Xhosa games, song and dance are important as a natural form and are part of orality in traditional cultures and ancient art. This chapter examines theories that speak in depth about stick-fighting games, music and African dances. The theories regarding stick fighting include Marrie-Heleen Coetzee's (2000) *Playing Sticks: An Exploration of the Zulu Stick as Performance*. This theory is important and connected to African ways of being by understanding stick fighting as a ritualistic, performative expression of social identity for both fighters and their audience. The experiences of African people throughout the African world are an essential element to the spread-out African worldview. The traditional interactions between the stick fight audience and performers convey a sense of unity and enjoyment, reinforcing the Xhosa people's cultural identity. Xhosa men have created a ritualistic theatrical performance in stick fighting that allows them to reaffirm their ties with their history and heritage. According to Sabelo Nxumalo and Kay Longhurst (2015), stick fighting is as important as physical exercise as it gives Xhosa men strength and bravery in order to fulfil their role as strong men in society. Nxumalo and Longhurst's argument on Stick fighting is centred and central to Africans seeing themselves as agents, actors, and participants of neglected stick performance. Scholars such as Ryan (2011), de Lara, Danhauer and Kemper (2005) argue that music acts as therapy to help initiates undergoing the ulwaluko ritual deal with the initiation challenge. Music soothes their pain, frustration, anger, joy, excitement and spiritual transit in a transcendental realm such as *ukuba semoyine*. Kathi Kemper and Suzanne Danhauer (2005, 282) argue that 'music is widely used to enhance well-being, reduce stress, and distract patients from unpleasant symptoms'. Music is significant in reducing anxiety and improving mood. The pain and frustration might be caused by circumcision and the delays in its healing process. This chapter explains the importance of game songs as a natural way for Xhosa men to deal with difficulties such as mental and emotional (or psycho-emotional) motivation and strengthening confidence and determination. Kuwor (2017) states that games and songs are important in learning to accept, express and solve challenges in a positive way. They are also significant in acquiring social skills. In this chapter, themes of music such as *ingoma zokwaluka* (initiation songs), *intlombe yabafana* (musical gathering), *amagwijo* (collective songs) and *ingqongqotho* (zink beating) by women are discussed. According to Finnegan (1970), games and game songs are part of oral literature transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation, like the orality of heritage, memory, history and culture.

Knowledge is passed down through music and is also of a community's memory: themes to elucidate and substantiate. This chapter explains the significance of music during Xhosa rituals and its effect on the community. Music is a contributing factor in uniting Xhosa men. Theories expounded on here regarding music include that of Deirdre Hansen (1981) in *The Music of the Xhosa-speaking People*, T. Doling et al. (2018) in *When Cultural Significance Songs Are Decontextualised: The Initiation Song Somagwaza; A Case Study*, and Syned Mthatiwa (2020) in *Singing Morality: Initiation Songs, Imagery, and Moral Education in Rural Malawi*. These theories examine the importance of music during initiation rites and how it imparts knowledge and moral values that help initiates embrace their cultures. As the study focuses on traditional dance, the abovementioned approach was appropriate. This approach recognises traditional Xhosa dances for what they are and values the expressions of those who perform them. This theory is employed to understand African dances such as *umtshilo*, *umteyo* and *ingqongqo* performed by Xhosa women during initiation. These theories convey knowledge and the importance of traditional games and music during initiation rites. The theorists mentioned above involve placing Africans as self-willed agents and give strength to the neglected themes under investigation.

Ukuqula or ubetha iintonga

Ukuqula is a significant aspect of the fabric of village life and the rite of passage from boyhood to manhood of generations. This is a group of boys who are at the stage where they will go for *ulwaluko*. They are found moving in a group and would always make their presence felt, especially when there is an *umguyo* traditional party. This ceremony marks the arrival of young boys who are ready for the manhood stage. This group of boys will always chant lovely songs and entertain their guests with melodious music accompanied by the most current way of dancing. When they start fighting, singing and dancing happen, while others blow whistles and beat drums.

The significance of *ukubetha iintonga* is to display skill and courage. Stick fighting allows men to build courage and skill, distinguish themselves as proficient warriors in the military ranks and earn respect in the community (Ntuli 1996; Leitch 1996). Xhosa men show off the skill and charisma they learned from stick fighting in the veld. The sticks used are from bushes and collected and stripped of bark. They need to be slender but very hard. Making a stick is an extended exercise; the suitable bush must be chosen first. Once the stick is selected, it is dried

inside a particular storage room for three years. Sticks could be put in a special chimney to speed up the process, making them dry faster, but many sticks get broken during the process.

Mashiyane (2008, 1) states that '*intonga* is used primarily as a sort of a walking stick. However, perhaps the main reason for carrying an *iintonga* is that, traditionally, a male is not expected to undertake any form of journey empty handed.' The most popular stick-fighting chant on the journey going to and coming back from Xhosa male initiation is as follows:

Qula kwedin kabawo,
Khawuzenazo kwedin bawo,
nazo kwedin.
[Stick fight, my brother
Bring it on, young boy]

This repetitive chant brings excitement to those who sing it and symbolises the ritual in which the community realises and affirms its unity. Those who sing the song become the audience. Ntuli (1996) (cited in Coetzee 2000, 106) indicates that an audience is always present at a stick fight. Dalrymple (1987, 29) argues that 'some are more directly involved than others, everyone believes that their presence makes some impact on the efficacy of the ritual.' The importance of the audience in stick fighting is to encourage and praise the fighters and to judge the fight. Msimang (1985) (cited in Mashiyane 2008, 2) says this game is also popular among the Zulu people and is called '*ukungcweka*'. During the *ukubethe iintonga* game, grown-up men also take part, and this happens on the journey, taking Xhosa boys to the initiation.

When a Xhosa boy leaves his home, he is completely covered in a rug, and the sound of sticks rattling in the air accompanies him while the ululation and the chanting build up. *Iimidlalo yesintu* are forms of recreational physical activities which, according to Mwenda (2011) (cited in Almor 2016, 1), 'are guided by formal or informal rules, by which participants must abide'. Thus, a participant may engage in competitive or non-competitive activities for several reasons, such as prestige, recognition, status or a combination. Playing games is a source of leisure and a means of attaining indigenous knowledge that forms part of the Xhosa culture. Sutton-Smith et al. (1995) (cited in Almor 2016, 1) define a *play game* as 'a competitive activity in which participants contend with each other according to a set of rules'. During *ukubetha iintonga*, many sticks sailing into the air at once becomes beautiful. *Ukuqula* is also competitive, which

is not different from other games; for example, during *ulwaluko*, egos are at stake and often the game turns out to be bloody. The *ukudlali iintonga* game follows specific procedures. To play, the initiate needs two necessary items: (1) *intonga youkuqula neyokuhlanganisa* (stick for striking) and (2) *intonga yokuqula* (stick for defence). The Xhosa man and his two fighting sticks are inseparable. He always keeps them with him no matter the cost. *Intonga yokuhlanganisa* is for self-protection against blows from the opponent. This stick fighting may last any length of time. For many, it lasts for less than three minutes. Usually, it depends on who strikes first and strikes at a place that would force the opponent to retire. If the blow is good, the opponent will immediately give up by falling. Usually, the head is targeted. There are two types of blows to the head. The first one is not so hard, and the recipient will end up with a swollen spot but with no blood oozing out of the wound. This is called *iduma*. The second blow is more brutal and leads to blood-shedding. During the *ukuqula* game, the man waits until his opponent is ready. He must have in his hands *intonga yokuqula neyokuhlanganisa*. The opponent is viewed as still challenging as long as he has his *iintonga* and is still on his legs. Mashiyane (2008) says that just like in any ordinary game, some players may attain a high playing standard and become champions. Such a player is known in Ndebele as ‘*ingwenya*’ or ‘*ikutani*’ (champion). The champion in *ukubetha induku* in his community will gain respect and become the pride of his family. He may carry that title until he dies. Nurturing children through African-centred education is what Amlor (2011, 28) stresses as ‘that which will in future, make them champions of their professions, culture and reservoirs of indigenous education that would not only benefit the youth of today, but also help them to preserve and transfer the acquired knowledge to the generation yet to succeed them.’

In a Xhosa cultural context, the winner has a right to choose girls, and girls are allowed to refuse, but being chosen is considered an honour. The champion points his stick toward the girl he wants to date. If she puts a necklace around the stick, it means she is willing to date him. Garvey (1990) (cited in Amlor 2016, 1) corroborates this position and opines that ‘play is not just a pastime activity, but a useful cultural tool that satisfies certain needs and purposes of adults, adolescents, children and cognitively, advanced non-human species such as primates.’ For initiates, during their stay at the initiation school, stick fighting becomes their daily activity, and sometimes, an older, remembering his youth, would grab a stick and playfully fight the initiate. In this instance, the initiate cannot fight back but is forced only to defend himself. The stick-fighting game is valuable as part of manhood culture but also as an activity that is an imperative cultural tool of socialisation and a repository of native education that enhances

cultural construction and perpetuation of societal values that shape the total being of the young as they grow into maturity.



Figure 21 Eric Lafforgue. *Stick Fighting*. N.d. Photograph

Eric Lafforgue's *Stick Fighting* (n.d.) (**Figure 21**) represents two young boys engaging in *ukubetha iintonga*. This stick-fighting game is taking place in the fields. The boys marked their bodies with white clay, and each one held his fighting stick. The boys' body posture differs from the one they adopt daily. The one on the right-hand side has a swerved body while his arms are up above his head. The boy, who is wearing a dark green cloth is holding his stick in a lower direction facing forward. Barba and Savarese (cited in Coetzee 2000, 180) argue that 'the stance of a stick fighter, for example, is characterised by readiness to move in a stylised manner, and corresponds to what they call decided body'. The fighter can hit any part of his opponent's body, but there is one rule that strictly prohibits one from hitting the other when the latter is down. When an opponent is down, he has no power to fight back. *Ukuqula iintonga* is about the significance of imparting native education to children in order to shape and mould their formative stages of life. *Ukudlali iintonga*, as a cultural tradition, fulfils an important role in Xhosa communities by assisting in upholding the heritage and history of the Xhosa social system. Stick fighting helps Xhosa men to socialise and transmit the social norms of the community. This is a way to return to their cultural roots and revive indigenous entertainment forms, such as playing games to promote the teaching, learning, and preservation of indigenous education. Leitch (1996) explains that 'part of the entertainment in stick fighting derives the fighter's ability to use comic elements in his style of fighting'. Besides its entertainment value, in Xhosa communities, *ukudlala intonga* instils truth, discipline, commitment and respect for others, peer tolerance and unity of purpose as one people.

Music

The heart of music is sound, working with duration or time to express and convey human ideas and emotions in creative forms of rhythm, melody, harmony and colour. It has been a part of the Xhosa people for thousands of years. For centuries, music has been used in indigenous African religious rituals as part of communal and personal rites (Krause, 1998, 90). Throughout time it has been used for religious, societal and cultural purposes. Whether viewed objectively or subjectively, music is considered a healing factor. In the cultural context of the Xhosa people, *amagwijo* as traditional music serves the general role of music, that of entertainment. It served to colour the ceremony, giving a contemporary initiation ceremony a traditional taste. It entertains the initiates and the community during the graduation ceremony. The community members enjoy singing, entertaining and reinforcing good moral songs that are also meant to encourage males to be strong when facing the circumcision aspect of *ulwaluko*. Songs prepare Xhosa males psychologically so that during initiation they do not run back to their homestead.

During seclusion, songs are seen as a therapy to soothe initiates' pain, frustration and anger; they also bring joy, excitement and spiritual transition in a transcendental realm such as *ukuba semoyine*. The songs sung during initiation can affect the initiates' inner world, soul and emotions. It can lead initiates to feel happy, creative, enthusiastic, and think positively, treating their worries caused by anxiety and stress of being *umkwetha*. It is a fact that certain modes of music styles such as *amagwijo*, *ingoma zokwaluka* and *intlombe yabafana* have rhythms, be they slow or fast, which are inherent with spiritual and physical curative effects on human beings; in other words, songs keep initiate vibrant and alive in their journey to manhood. Muyassar (2021, 86) argues that 'music shapes a person's spiritual outlook. Among the many means of moral education, the art of music has a special place. Music is a powerful tool for knowing about life and educating people. The art of music is a specific type of human activity whose function is to provide aesthetic service to society.



Figure 22 Sibani Dlathe. *Transcending with Sound*. 2022. Pen and colour pencils

Sibani Dlathe's *Transcending with Sound* (2022) (**Figure 22**) is an artwork made with a pen and colour pencils depicting the face of a person looking to the left. The person is wearing a headset which symbolises that he or she is listening to music. The round shape of the headset placed on the ears manifests the musical note symbols. These notes are also represented all over the face with diverse colours; for example, some are yellow and red, and others are blue and pink, all in zig-zag lines. From the head to the right side, these lines start creating a transcending movement. The repetition of the lines creates a sense of visual rhythm that is analogous to music. The rhythm and repetition of colours represent the importance of music in humans, which makes them transcend into another world. This is what *Transcending with Sound* means: a person is removed from the material world and brought into transcendent experiences that take them away from the material world, that take them out there, in here, towards the divine, in the spiritual arena. Bernard (2009, 3) (cited in Mary Alberic 2004, 22) defines *transcendent music performance* as 'the experience of rising above normal physical and mental fears and concerns to a peak experience that is remembered and sought after again and again'. During the *ulwaluko* ritual, Xhosa men also experience a trance when performing, singing, and dancing, which takes them out of the real world and into the spiritual world. *Transcending with Sound* relates to Xhosa men attaining transcendence; their body-brain experience predictably changes into slow breathing. The slowing down in their breathing in *Transcending with Sound* is apparent from the closed ears and eyes of the depicted face. The

person transcends into another world, consulting consciousness for a moment. As *Transcending with Sound* continues, the face starts changing to another state, signified by the head evolving as if floating into the ocean. This shows that the person is engaging his thoughts and feelings because music has the ability to take one into another sphere. Bennett Reimer (1995, 1) (cited in Bernard 2009, 3) refers to ‘the power of music to alter the reality of human experience and to alter humans’ way of being’ as experiences of profundity in music’. As he continues to describe these experiences, Reimer draws on the concept of transcendence:

This power reaches to the very roots of the human condition that humans are conscious of their individual and collective existence in a world both including them and transcending them, on which they are dependent for life and meaning and to which they contribute life and meaning. (3)

The power of transcending into a state of peace and calmness contributes to the well-being of a person, which prevents illness. Transcendence has two main apparatuses: The first is the forgetting of oneself and one’s self-consciousness transcendence in the sense of loss of self-consciousness, self-awareness and self-observing of the adolescent depersonalisation. When Xhosa men engage in traditional dances such as *umteyo*, they become absorbed and fascinated by and concentrate on the music. In his book, *The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the Third Millennium* (1993), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi draws a relationship between flow and transcendence by explaining that a sense of transcendence is often a part of flow experiences. The flow of experiences he speaks about concerns the forging of connections between flow of sound and human emotions in ways that the person feels a sense of wholeness and harmony ‘as if the boundaries of the self had been expanded’ (xiv).

According to Frank (1985) (cited in Osmanoglu and Yilmaz 2019, 21), the main goal of music therapy is to improve the quality of life and the ability to express oneself by reducing distress, fear and anxiety. When Xhosa men sing *amagwijo*, they embrace and reflect the values of discipline, individual empowerment and group solidarity. Music and dance both foster and mirror processes of social transformation. In African culture, they are important mechanisms for reaffirming relationships. As performing arts, they provide opportunities for fun, strength and stress release. The songs address real-life experiences in which the initiates find themselves as they play their new societal roles. O’Hagan (2016) and Ruutel (2002) (cited in Osmanoglu and Yilmaz 2019, 21) state that ‘music causes significant changes in the nervous systems of

the brain and changes in the waves such as beta, theta, alpha, and delta in the brain'. Music is an important stimulus for the physical and psychological treatment of people. It can be said that with the musical melodies and rhythms created within the existing harmony, music meets the need for psychological and physical well-being. This process embraces the whole sphere of life, leisure, praise and encouragement, self and corporate entertainment (Karoki 2014, 36). When music is practised, people will be at ease and their spirits will be entertained. Babacan (1998), cited in Osmanoglu and Yilmaz (2019, 20), reported that in the mother's womb, the mother's heartbeats sound like music to the baby, the baby feels peaceful, and leaning on his or her mother's chest after birth comforts him or her.

During the coming out phase of *ulwaluko*, Xhosa men gather in one place and form a house called *indluyesibane*. In this house, the newly graduated man is entertained by *amagwijo* to welcome him back into society after seclusion. Xhosa men and young girls sing *Amagwijo*; the girls are known as *intombizabafana*. During this ritual, singing *amagwijo* has a powerful effect on the human psyche and expresses singers' feelings in a unique artistic language. For example, one of *amagwijo* sings as follows:

Tsana tsana ndinohambo
Tsana tsana ndinohambo
Ndibeka eMonti
Tsana tsana ndinohamba
Ndamshiya umama ibuhlungu intliziyo
Tsana tsana ndinohambo
 [Baby, baby I am leaving
 I am going to East London
 Left my mother with a broken heart]

This song tells the story of a person embarking on a journey to East London, perhaps to find greener pastures. During this journey, the person is leaving behind his mother with a broken heart because of the separation. In short, it is through the art of music that Xhosa men transmit orally to tell that it is a journey that people will take to find whatever they are looking for, and they will leave those who are close to them crying. *Amagwijo* sung during *ulwaluko* in the house of men help to preserve the musical heritage of the Xhosa people. They help people not only to cope with the separation created by *uhambo* but also encourage them to express their

psycho-emotions through movement and dancing. The person affected by *amagwijo* alone is being united with others in society. The use of *amagwijo* by Xhosa people is coming to terms with their emotions in ways that nurture their well-being. Singing and dancing in the house of men is to exchange music with one another and gain valuable insight into another way of life. Singing has the power to alter men's mood, change perceptions and inspire change. During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Xhosa men came together in the house of men and were creative and composed the struggle song:

Ramaphosa uyamthanda umahlalela
Uvele aminke three hundred and fifty (ZAR 350)
Ramaphosa uyamthanda umahlalela
uvele aminke three hundred and fifty (ZAR 350).
[Cyril Ramaphosa loves unemployed people
He gives them three hundred and fifty]

The repetition in the song relates to the socio-economic conditions unemployed South Africans face. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most people lost their jobs, which necessitated South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and his Cabinet to devise ways to deal with the job losses. Instead of providing jobs, the president gave unemployed South Africans a relief grant of three hundred and fifty South African rands (ZAR 350). The song *uRamaphosa uyamthanda umahlalela* plays a significant role in the struggle against poverty. It serves as a vehicle for transmitting information about what unemployed South Africans are experiencing. Culturally, the song educates the newly graduated men about what is happening in South Africa. The newly graduated men are expected to grow into role models and community members. The songs stimulate the arousal of interest for those who have not yet initiated the activity. These *amagwijo* songs are meant to cause them to desire to be initiated. Herndon (1971, 33) views cultural performance as an 'isolatable segment of activity considered by a group of people to be encapsulations of their culture which they exhibit to visitors and themselves.'

Umteyo

Albert Mawere Opoku (1965, 19) defined *dance* as 'a language or mode of expression springing from the heart, using movements and gestures which have their counterparts in our everyday activities, to express both special and ordinary experiences'. Comparing Opoku's definition with the views of other dance scholars, including Green (1998), Spencer (1985) and Kaeppler (1978), one begins to see the reality that dance does not happen without people and, therefore, to understand African dance inevitably requires an in-depth study and understanding of, and appreciation for, the entire culture of the African people (Kwashie Kuwor 2017, 2). The *umteyo* dance is called the 'shaking dance' by Seridaran (n.d.) and Kehinde (2016) because it involves quick chest shaking that causes the entire spinal column to quiver. The performers often wear small bells across their thorax and tin rattles filled with stones referred to as *izikhunjane* around their lower legs to emphasise the vibrations of their shaking bodies (Mtiya 2012; Gulwai 2007). The significance of *umteyo* is learning to move, act, and react with one's body, channel emotions, and understand how emotions travel through the body. It is a way to learn to free oneself and to think. Joseph and Petersen (2008) are of the view that cultural dances serve 'to distinguish one social group from another within a society because participating in dance is typically predicated on one's place in the community's social structure.' For example, the *umteyo* dance symbolically portrays societal duties in Xhosa initiation rites, particularly in the *umguyo* (transition from boyhood to manhood) ceremony. The *umteyo* traditional dance is performed by young boys, known as *amakwenkwe*, before they are initiated into manhood (Mtiya, 2012). The *umteyo* traditional dance becomes an outlet through which the *amakwenkwe* express their history and their knowledge of the natural world. Chielotam (2012) states that traditional dance is viewed as a significant instrument for gaining a deeper understanding of human beings and their culture. Mtiya (2012) posits that the various traditional Xhosa dances performed during initiation ceremonies, rituals, and social gatherings help to sustain their customs and traditions and educate the people about their culture, traditions, and history. Mtiya (2012) also opines that the Xhosa people perform traditional dances during formal and informal ceremonies for pleasure and ritual. For instance, dances are performed to welcome important dignitaries to the community and during social events, including traditional or cultural family occasions, to relate to ancestors (Mtiya, 2012).

Umteyo dance plays an integral part in the living tradition as an exploration of the essence of *amakwenkwe*. Traditional dances investigate people's ways of living, familial and tribal

relationships, processes, devotion, and the intent with which the dance is constructed and presented (Murphy, 2007). This traditional dance represents how the Xhosa people convey stories and feelings. *Umteyo* dance is an ancient art form and is an element of the performing arts in Xhosa culture. In the past, this Xhosa dance was used to express emotions and celebrate nature. Through dance, they communicate with other people and express emotions. *Umteyo* dance is their emotional and physical outlet. They dance to relax and enjoy, express emotions and communicate with others. They appreciate the company of a group which shares the same passion and interests, and like the contentment of being part of a social network around the world. It is a language in its own right, not in the way that speech is, but rather like thought without discursive logic – thought beyond language. It demands that one gives oneself over to sensations. Bettina Holzhausen (2005, 211) writes: ‘It follows a path, a channel of thought – and of meaning’ in the way ‘dance is a lesson of freedom’ (cited in Pontbriand 2001, 18). Dance has played a vital role in people’s ability to communicate and celebrate events. Some songs address social issues in the communities (Holzhausen 2005, 22); for instance, *ukutyityimba* dance showcases the rich cultural heritage of the people during the performance. According to Akas (2013), it is what is entrenched in the culture of a people that can be expressed through dance movement.

Onwuekwe (2006) opines that indigenous dance goes beyond the movement to express indigenous knowledge and portray people’s sociocultural values. Sullivan (2001, 4) states that ‘dancing is a non-verbal expressive and communicative language that can both cement and extend bonds between individuals’. The significance of African dance as an appreciation of the skilful performance of movements is integral to social and cultural occasions that acknowledge the pleasure it gives an activity in its own right, entertaining and giving pleasure as the expression of commotional life. African dance occupies a central place in Xhosa culture, embodying energy and a graceful beauty flowing with rhythm. Dance is a means of marking the life experiences of Xhosa people. Dance is connected to the rich African musical traditions expressed in African music. Dance has a unity of aesthetics; for example, it binds a community and helps individuals understand their role in their communities. It keeps community life vibrant, contributing to a sense of security, safety and continuity. It helps people’s spiritual, emotional and social well-being. According to Cheska (1987) (cited in Amlor 2016, 1), ‘in making reference to sociocultural games, the use of songs and dance together with other related art forms like ornamentation, drama and literature are elements that enforce the beliefs and satisfy the needs of the society in which the performers are located.’

Umtshotsho

Momoti (2002, 35) argues that ‘leading a secluded life can be boring for the boys but when their wounds have healed satisfactorily, they become involved in social activities such as *ukutshila*, dancing’. In describing the *umtshotsho* dance, Momoti (2002) describes how the dancers vigorously move their buttocks and pelvic region back and forth, causing their skirts to alternately rise and fall, opening like a fan with an exhilarating swishing sound. According to Sparg (2014), the head is nodded at regular intervals. The *umtshotsho* is a traditional Xhosa dance performed to celebrate the *abakhweta* (circumcised boys) initiation ceremony (Momoti, 2002). According to Sparg (2014), the *umtshotsho* dance performance attracts numerous spectators who enjoy the initiates’ outstanding display. The dancing is rigorous and tests the dancers’ endurance, as it begins at midday and continues until sunset, except for brief pauses for dancers to adjust a skirt or headgear. The dancing is competitive, and the judges are older, more experienced men. The best dancer (*intshili*) is rewarded with gifts (Pahl et al., 1989). They instil confidence in the initiates by allowing them to perform in front of an audience while being formally recognised by the adults (Mbusi, 2011). This fosters pride and a strong sense of belonging. Mtiya (2012), citing Elliot (1970, 88), explains that the coming-out dance performed by young men when leaving the initiation school is to instil the significance of being a man and assuming responsibility. Traditional dance reflects the cultural life or traditions of a group of people and is an expression of the people’s cultural identity. The *umtshilo* traditional dance is deeply rooted in the *abakhweta* initiation ceremony, an artistic expression linked to the ceremony. The *umtshilo* dance display is perceived as one of the significant events in Xhosa culture (Sirayi, 2012; Soga, 1931; van Niekerk, 1999). The initiates’ spectacular performance demonstrates self-respect, identity and pride as the *abakhweta* rejoice and entertain themselves as a reward for reaching this stage (Momoti, 2002). Dancing is equivalent to performing activities that are characteristic of social awareness, which transcends the physicality of the human body fitness and become the means of expressing cultural heritage and identity. Dance connects people to a society or culture in many universal and personal ways that deepen their understanding of their world and themselves. Synthesising personal knowledge and experiences with an understanding of dance movements reinforces how students perceive the feelings and ideas evoked in a dance work and its impact on them.



Figure 23 Nicholas Hlobo. *Izithunzi* [Shadows] (detail). 2009. Rubber inner tube, ribbon, organza, lace, found objects, steel, couch. Six of eight sculptures.
Approximately 200 x 150 x 150 cm each

In 2010, Nicholas Hlobo presented a sculptural installation in his Standard Bank Young Artist exhibition titled *Umtshotsho*, which consists of the rituals accompanying the transition from youth to adulthood. *Umtshotsho* lessons seemed to function as a medium for gaining age-appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes so that the youth could meet their personal and social needs. The focus is on that time when children are beginning to think and act like adults; they desire to explore life, date, go out at night, and find alternatives, such as going to bars and clubs. Hlobo's work displays how today's youth are different from those of earlier in enjoying and exploring their lives. Hlobo's work is not trying to tell a story about an old way of partying for teenagers but looking at the new conventions and drawing similarities between different times. *Umtshotsho* consists of two installations: *Izithunzi* [Shadows] (**Figure 23**) and *Kubomvu*. In a darkened room, the central installation, *Izithunzi* [Shadows], is a gathering of eight figures resembling jellyfish, pumpkins or ghosts. Some are freestanding and others are suspended or seated on a sofa. Constructed primarily from rubber inner tubing, the figures are made individually with lace, organza and ribbon details.

Thus, the *umtshotsho* dance is held in numerous kraals over the three-month seclusion period. The main event is held at the kraal that houses the circumcision school. There is a special dress made for dancing known as *umhlambi*. The dress is worn in the form of a kilt made of dry palm

leaves. The headdress made of dry grass is called *ixhonxo* and partially covers the initiate's face while dancing (Momoti 2003, 35). The dancing of the initiates is, however, confined almost entirely to the lower limbs. It consists of pelvic twisting movements and jerks accompanied by skyward jabs of the extended arms and forefingers. Participants, who usually emerge from an *intlombe*, say that their physical aches and pains have disappeared. Others maintain that they feel young in body and mind, and others that they have been rejuvenated (Vanners 1984, 62). Historically, dance was often performed in rituals, worship, and social celebrations, and it was considered a means of entertainment and self-expression. Today, dance is still a part of traditional events but also an element of new innovative performing experiences.

Iceya

Iceya is the most popular initiation game. This game is played by two persons or a number exceeding two. The players sit in a circle, and each has a little piece of wood and a grain of corn. Theal (1820) describes the game as follows:

It must be so small that it can easily be concealed in a folded hand and a player is allowed to have more than one. When the game of *iceya* starts, the initiates who are playing will have small stick either in his hands and throwing both arms out against others initiates, *ikhankhatha* who is the opponent and announcing himself as *umhlanganisi* or *ipambo*. The opponent also throws his arms out the same way, so that his right hand be the opposite of the first players left, and his left opposite the first players right. The tightened hands and if the sticks are found to be meeting, the first players which is the initiate wins and the other loses but, for example, if the sticks are not matching, the game continues until there is a winner. The winner is greeted as the best and given bottle of brandy. Xhosa men often spend the whole nights playing *iceya*.

Iceya is a significant game during *ulwaluko*. It is played in the mountains a night before the coming-out ceremony. Still, due to violence at the initiation schools, families prefer it to be hosted in the kraal in the homestead. Young Xhosa men often spend the whole night playing *iceya* with the initiates, singing and drinking *umgqombothi*. The importance of *iceya* is to teach Xhosa man the ability to think and guess who is in possession of the hidden stick. It also encourages them to accept failure because the person would not always know which hand

possesses the stick during this game. The initiates are taught their responsibilities as they enter a new phase of manhood.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the themes in this study, namely music, *umteyo* and *umtshotsho*, *umnqgungqo*, and *iceya*, that form part of the various components that make *ulwaluko* a complex and significant ritual.

This chapter discussed the importance of games and music during *ulwaluko*. It addressed the importance of studying the neglected themes of *ukudlala iintonga* in bringing awareness of the knowledge and benefits of *ulwaluko*. This chapter described stick fighting as a ritualistic theatrical performance that allows Xhosa man to reaffirm their ties with traditions, history and heritage. Thus, *ukuqula iintonga* is important for helping Xhosa men endure pain.

As regards music, the chapter dealt with the importance of *amagwijo* as a vehicle that helps Xhosa initiates deal with and soothe their pain, frustration and anger whilst also bringing them joy, excitement and spiritual trance. Music cannot be separated from dance. This chapter argued the significance of *umteyo*, where Xhosa people learn how to move, act, and react with their bodies, channel emotions, and understand how emotions travel through the body. Thus, *abakhwetha* play *umtshotsho* and *iceya* to instil confidence; they allow the initiates to perform in front of an audience while being formally recognised by the *umnqgungqo* performed by Xhosa women. These performances are an important sign of celebrating the *ulwaluko* ritual.

The guessing game of *iceya* is used to make Xhosa men use their minds during the play. The significance of these neglected themes fosters pride and a strong sense of belonging in the Xhosa cultural context.

CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS

This research aimed to investigate the significance of the neglected themes in the visual representation of *ulwaluko*. It focused not on the common topic of circumcision and its surrounding controversies, which are extensively reported on in the media and debated on public forums. Instead, the researcher investigated attire, cosmetics, language, food, games, and music, which are central to the complex practice and process of *ulwaluko*. In exploring these themes, it is noteworthy that this research has unpacked and documented some of the essential components that marginalised knowledge, experience and benefits of *ulwaluko*.

Regarding attire, this research addressed the importance of the pre-initiation dress code, mainly focusing on what, how and why Xhosa boys or *amakwenkwe* who are about to undergo the *ulwaluko* ritual dress themselves. It also looked at the initiates' blanket and the new man dress code that carries a cultural identity and aesthetics. The chapter identified and appreciated the meaning of the new men's dress code, which symbolises *isidima nesithozela* (dignity and elegance) and signifies accomplished manhood. A culture can be judged by its clothing, which takes the form of cultural communication because clothing reflects a culture (Tajuddin 2018, 4). That is why the new man's dress code communicates and reflects *imvelaphi* (heritage and history) of Xhosa men and how they want to be seen by others. According to sociologist Diana Crane (2000), as cited by King (2015, 64), 'we should interpret dress not as a "closed text" like language, with relatively stable/fixed meanings, but as "open texts" that constantly acquire new meanings.' In this regard, dress becomes a visual text that helps one to interpret and describe visual materials that produce multiple meanings.

For cosmetics, this study established that white clay and red clay are vital in protecting, warding off negative energies, toning and enhancing initiates' skin. The clay also distinguishes and recognises the initiates, as well as announces the new men's new social status. *Ingceke* and *imbhola* are used to cleanse and lighten the skin. Mpako (2011) argues that the function of white clay is to protect and serve to identify the boys as in-training. During the seclusion period, body painting is sometimes used as a camouflage to hide the identity of and project the initiate against witchcraft (Mpako 2011, 237).

This study presented the language of *ukuhlonipha* during *ulwaluko*. It looked at African proverbs, idioms, metaphors and manhood language. Initiates are introduced to *ukuhlonipha* and *isidoda* language to communicate and interact with one another and their guardians. This language teaches Xhosa men to respect older people and other members of their community, especially those who are senior to them. Nqangweni (2016, 1314) argued that ‘learning *isikhwetha* vocabulary is significant as it is an integral part in cultural socialisation of initiates’. The language of *ukuhlonipha* carries and imparts knowledge about the history and heritage of the Xhosa people. Xhosa men validate and defend their manhood status through their understanding and use of manhood language, which is coded and authoritative.

The study demonstrated the significance of initiates’ diet, which contributes to their strength, energy and health. Jansen (1997, 94) notes that fasting from particular food ‘not only improves one’s personality, but is also favourable to health, good for the atonement of sins, and a source of spiritual merit’. It has been argued that food also contributes to the creation of relations during *ulwaluko* by uniting Xhosa men in society. This implies that ‘eating in ritual context reaffirms or transforms relationships with visible others, even participants in ritual meal bring very different religious understandings to the event’ (Sidney Mintz et al., 107). Eating meat and drinking alcohol together during initiation provide Xhosa men with moments to share their manhood with others.

Regarding games and music, this study explored the importance of *ukuqula* or *ukudlala iintonga* in teaching Xhosa men about tolerance, endurance and overcoming pain and for traditional mediation or facilitation of settling unresolved matters. It was argued that *ukudlala iintonga* is significant in helping Xhosa men to turn their backs on knives, gangs and guns. *Amagwijjo* and other traditional songs cannot be separated as they are a source of indigenous knowledge and artistic traditions. They are integral to ceremonial rituals and traditional dance, serving as avenues to re-enact the Xhosa people’s history, social life and culture. It has been said that games, music, and dance activities help promote the development of Xhosa men in various ways and contribute to their intellectual, cognitive, and emotional growth.

The themes mentioned above revealed the significance of the African ways of knowing that contribute to the identity formation of Xhosa men in society. This undertaking is a theoretical methodology in line with Cakata’s (2021) argument that using indigenous African knowledge helps African people to understand themselves and the world around them much better and in

an empowering way. Being an African has helped the researcher understand the Xhosa universe's original and developmental pathways. His experiences and knowledge of *ulwaluko* contributed to interpreting this research on Xhosa history and heritage.

This study demonstrated the complexity and significance of the *ulwaluko* ritual, which contributes to the education of Xhosa men and the socio-cultural sustenance of the Xhosa people as a community and a nation. This accomplishment was tackled through the use of the language of respect and the importance of African metaphors, idioms and proverbs that foreign languages are unable to comprehend and posit in the education of Xhosa men. This reinforced the importance of celebrating *ulwaluko* as one of the essential rituals in constructing Xhosa men's identity, character and behaviours that mould their dignity and inculcate pride and elegance as a cultured human being. These are values that Xhosa men appreciate about the ritual; hence, there is a critical need to investigate them in ways that illuminate their significance and educate both the Xhosa community and the non-Xhosa community.

It is hoped that with his study, the custodians of *ulwaluko* and the Xhosa community will value their African cultural practices more and uphold their significance amid its challenges and adversaries (Mhlahlo 2009; Gwata 2009, Ndangam 2008; Vincent 2008). The Eastern Cape Province, the country and the broader society will learn more about the *ulwaluko* ritual and how Xhosa men can express themselves through attire, food, cosmetics, language, music and dance, and games that are vital components of their way.

This study also provided an understanding of how visual artists can constructively engage the neglected themes of *ulwaluko* in their artistic production instead of concentrating only on problematic aspects that undermine, limit and deprive the broader society of a better and more complex understanding of the significance of this ritual. This research will undoubtedly benefit scholars who make *ulwaluko* their research subject (especially within the humanities and social sciences).

Given the limited space and focused scope of this study, it has been impossible to cover and document all the thematic aspects of *ulwaluko*. Other significant themes that deserve investigation are *imbeleko* (rite of passage to welcome and introduce a newborn child into the family to both living and ancestors) and *ukukhulula* (to stop wearing a new man's attire and start wearing everyday clothes). Also important is the critical role of women's involvement in

the various stages of the *ulwaluko* rituals: before, during and after initiation. Women contribute to the transformative development of Xhosa men. These thematic aspects, components or activities are equally important in the complex understanding and practice of *ulwaluko*, and thus future research should study them. What this study has articulated brings to light the meaning and relevance of *ulwaluko* in modern society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adeyemi, O.B. 2012. 'Dress and Identity in Yorubaland, 1880–1980.' PhD thesis. Leiden University. <https://scholarlypublications.universiteitleiden.nl/handle/1887/20143>. Accessed on 23 April 2022.
- Africa Geographic. 2015. Richard Bullock. *A Month with Three Initiates During Initiation Ritual*. <https://africageographic.com/stories/xhosa-circumcision-ritual-south-africa-its-hard-to-be-a-man>. Accessed 27 October 2021.
- Aktaş-Polat, S. A and S. Polat. 2020. 'A Theoretical Analysis of Food Meaning in Anthropology and Sociology.' *Review Article* 68 (3): 278–293. <https://doi.org/10.37741/t.68.3.3>. Accessed 25 April 2022.
- Alhamdani, F. 2016. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Methodology: Artistic Approach. *International Journal of Development Research* 6 (10): 9774–9779.
- Allen, M. 2017. *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Communication Research Method: Textual Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Almansouri, M. Verkerk.R. Foglian. V. Luning.P. A. 2021. 'Exploration of the Heritage Heritage Food Concept.' *Trends in Food Science and Technology* 111: 790–797.
- Almerico, G. M. 2014. Food and Identity: Food Studies, Cultural, And Personal Identity, *Journal of International Business and Cultural Studies* 8: 1–7.
- Amlerico, G.M. Food Identity: Food Studies, Cultural, and Personal Identity. PhD thesis. University of Tampa.
- Amlor, M. Q. 2011. 'Oguaa Fetu Afahye: A Music and Ritual of the People of Cape Coast in Ghana.' *Music and Ritual: Musika Jornal* 7: 6–32.
- Amlor, M. Q. 2016. 'Imparting Indigenous Knowledge Through Traditional Forms of Entertainment: The Role of Ewe Play Games.' *World Journal of Social Science* 3 (2): 63–74.
- Andrews, G. 2019. 'The Broken Mirror: A Lacanian Perspective on John Trengove's Film *Inxeba* (The Wound).' *Imbizo* 10 (1): 1–13.
- Artthrob. 'Songezile Churchill Madikida. *Struggle of the Heart*.' 2003. www.artthrob.co.za/04may/artbio.html. Accessed on 23 November 2021.
- Asi Nkengla, L. Teri. D. T. Meyer-Rochow.V. B. 2018. 'Influence of Food Taboos on Nutritional Patterns in Rural Communities in Cameroon.' *International Review of Social Research* 8 (1):2–6.

- Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition. 2009. *Position Paper: The Cultural Dimension of Food*. 17 December. Parma: Fondazione Barilla.
- Belasco, W. 1999. 'Why Food Matters.' *Culture & Agriculture* 21 (1). 27–34.
- Bernard, R. 2009. 'Music Making, Transcendence, Flow, and Music Education.' *International Journal of Education and the Arts* 10 (14): 1–22.
- Biko, H. 2019. *African Reimagined: Reclaiming a Sense of Abundance and Prosperity*. Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Boomsma, Y. 2020. *The Fabricated Self: The Role of Clothing in Identity Development*. MA Dissertation. University of Twente.
- Brillat-Savarin, J. 2002. *The Physiology of Taste*. Canada: General Publishing Company, Ltd.
- Bullock, R. 2015. *A Month with Three Initiates During Initiation Ritual*. <https://africageographic.com/stories/xhosa-circumcision-ritual-south-africa-its-hard-to-be-a-man>. Accessed 27 October 2021
- Buthelezi, N. N. 2018. *Application of Soil Indigenous Knowledge in Rural Communities of Eastern South Africa*. PhD thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal. <https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/b55eb179-219c-425a-9019-5e858c137570/content>. Assessed on 21 October 2021.
- Cakata, Z. 2015. 'In Search of the Absent Voice: The Status of Indigenous Languages in Post-apartheid South Africa.' PhD thesis. University of South Africa. https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/20147/thesis_cakata_z.pdf?sequence=1. Assessed on 14 September 2021
- Cakata, Z. 2021. *South Africa Belongs to All Who Speak Colonial Languages*. In *SASINDA FUTHI SISELAPHA (STILL HERE): Black Feminist Approaches to Cultural Studies in South Africa's Twenty-Six Years Since 1994*, edited by Derilene (Dee) Marco, Tiffany Willoughby-Herard and Abebe Zegeye. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Caplan, P. ed. 1997. 'Approaches to the Study of Food, Health and Identity.' In *Food, Health and Identity*. Chapter 4. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Carstens, P. 1982. 'The Socio-economic Context of Initiation Ceremonies Among Two Southern African Peoples.' *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 16 (3): 505–522.
- Cavusoglu, L. 2019. 'Self-representation Patterns and Fashion Consumption Behavior: New Insight for Social Media Marketing.' Global Fashion Management Conference, Paris.
- Coetzee, M. H. 2000. 'Playing Stick: An Exploration of Zulu Stick Fighting as Performance.' *South African Theatre Journal* 14 (1): 97–133.

- Connor, T. 2010. 'Umgidi at the Mabambas: Gender, Practice and Performance Among Farm Workers in the Sundays River Valley.' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36 (1): 95–111
- Costandius, E. 2007. 'An Exploration of the Use of African Proverbs and Metaphors in Visual Communication Design Course.' MA dissertation. University of the Western Cape. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/58913254>. Assessed on 12 October 2021
- Cresewell, J. W. 2007. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication Inc.
- Crossman, A. 2020. An Overview of Qualitative Research Method: Science. <https://www.thoughtco.com/qualitative-research-methods-3026555>. Accessed 30 June 2021.
- Dahlberg, K. N. Drew. M. Nyström. 2002. *Reflective Lifeworld Research*. Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.
- Danhauer, S. C. Kemper. K. 2005. 'Music as Therapy.' *Southern Medical Journal* 98 (3): 282–288.
- Dates, M. K. 2009. What We Eat: Food Consumption and Identity in the United States. MA dissertation. College of Arts and Letters. University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Debeli, D. 2013. 'African Textile Design and Fabric Arts as a Source for Contemporary Fashion Trends.' 2nd International Conference on Science and Social Research. Published by Atlantis Press.
- Dingeman, J. Rikjen D.J. Dakwa. P. 2013. 'Ulwaluko: Problem Analysis of the Situation in Pondoland.' 6: 1–12.
- Dlamini, T. 2018. Using Afrocentrism to Explore African Values in Selected Short Stories Prescribed for Grade 10 English First Additional Language Learners in South Africa. MA dissertation. University of KwaZulu-Natal. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/304374749>. Assessed on 11 November 2022
- Douglas, M. Gross. J. 1981. 'Food and Culture: Measuring the Intricacy of Rule Systems.' *Social Science Information* 20 (1): 1–35.
- Duka-Ntshweni, N. 2013. Amakrwala Experience as Learners in Buffalo City Secondary School: Implications for School Leadership and Management. MA dissertation in Education. University of Fort Hare. http://vital.seals.ac.za:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/vital:16191?site_name=GlobalView&exact=sm_creator%3A%22DukaNtshweni%2C+Nomonde%22&sort=sort_ss_title%2F. Accessed on 16 March 2021

- Edwards, S. 2015. 'Some Southern African Views on Interconnectedness with Special Reference to Indigenous Knowledge.' *Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* 14: 272–283.
- Edwards, L. Roce. M. eds. 2008. 'The Politics of Dress in Asia and the Americans': *Dressing for Power: Scholars' Robes, School Uniforms and Military Attire in China*. Academic Press. Portland.
- Edwards, S. 1921. *Language: An introduction to the study of speech*. San Diego. Harcourt Brace.
- Ehondor, E. 2017. 'The Concept of Proverbs as Theoretical Category in Communication in Africa.' MSc term paper.
- Fandrych, I. 2012. 'Between Tradition and the Requirements of Modern Life: Hlonipha in Southern Bantu Societies, with Special Reference to Lesotho.' *Journal of Language and Culture* 3 (4): 67–73.
- Fieldhouse P. 1995. 'Social Functions of Food.' In *Food and Nutrition*. Boston, MA: Springer, Boston, MA. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-3256-3_4. Accessed on 17 May 2022
- Finegan, E. and N. Besnier. 1989. *Language: Its Structure and Use*. North-Western University
- Finnegan, R. 2012. 'Proverbs.' In *Oral Literature in Africa*. Cambridge: Open Book Publisher.
- Fischler, C. 1988. 'Food, Self and Identity.' *Social Science Information* 27: 275–293.
- Galli, E. 1973. 'Some Food Customs and Beliefs in South Africa.' *Nutrition and Food Science* 73 (2): 5–7. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb058557>. Accessed 14 March 2022.
- Gaqisa, Z. *Umguyo*. 2019. 10 May. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPZ8GqcTR7k>. Accessed 23 October 2021.
- Garisch, M.I. 2015. 'Consuming Pasts: Imaging Food as Identity and (Post)Memory in Post-apartheid South Africa.' MMA Fine Arts dissertation. Rhodes University. https://commons.ru.ac.za/vital/access/manager/Repository/vital:2508?site_name=Rhodes+University&view=null&f0=sm_format%253A%2522pdf%2522&f1=sm_type%253A%2522Masters%2522&sort=null&f2=sm_citation_publication_date%253A%25222015%2522&f3=sm_type%253A%2522MFA%2522&f4=sm_subject%253A%2522Food+in+art%2522. Accessed on 15 June 2022
- Gennep, V. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. London: Rouledge and Kegan Paul.

- Gilll, T. G. 2013. 'Culture, Complexity and Informing: How Shared Belief Can Enhance Our Search for Fitness.' *Information Science: The International Journal of an Emerging Transdisciplinary* 16: 71–98.
- Glatsein, J. 2009. *Formal Analysis: The Elements and Principle of Composition*. New YZork: Artsedge. Kennedy Center.
- Goniwe, T. Gqola. P. D. 2005. A Neglected Heritage: The Aesthetics of Complex Black Masculinities *Agenda* 63 (2): 80–94.
- Gqeba, N. G. 2021. 'Exploring the Interaction Between School Governance and Traditional Leaders Regarding Ulwaluko.' *International Journal of Education And Research* 9 (3): 157–168.
- Grimaldi, P. Fassino.G. Porporet. D. 2019. *Culture, Heritage, Identity and Food. A Methodological Approach*. European Union: Interreg Central Europe SlowFood-CE.
- Guma, S. M. 1967. *The Form, Content and Technique of Traditional Literature in Southern Sotho*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Haeney, J. G. 2010. 'Culture, Memory and Health: An Intergenerational Study in Liverpool.' PhD. John Moore's University. <https://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/5979/1/521106>. Accessed on 10 June 2022
- Haye, A. and E. Wilson, E. eds. 1999. *Defining Dress: Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity*. Manchester University Press.
- Henda, N. 2021. 'Rite of Passage of AmaXhosa: Revised.' *Academia Letter*. 38.
- Herbert, R. K. 1990. *Anthropological Linguistics*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) Press.
- Higgins, M. E. Eicher. R. J. B. 1992. 'Dress and Identity.' *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 10 (4): 1–8.
- Holzhausen, B. 2005. 'Traditional Dance in Transformation: Opportunities for Development in Mozambique.' MA dissertation. University of Leeds. <http://www.nestcepas.ch/pdf/dissertation>. Accessed on 09 July 2022
- Horvat, M. T. 2009. 'Manners Make Life Easier.' *Manners Customs, Clothing* <http://www.traditioninactionhttp://www.traditioninaction>, Accessed 25 October 2021.
- Hyun ko, S. 2016. 'Decolonisation of Higher Education: Dismantling Epistemic Violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa.' *Transformative in Higher Education* 1 (1): 1–8.

- Izu, B. O. Villiers. .A. 2021. 'Expressing Indigenous Knowledge Through Traditional Dances.' *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities* 7 (4): 388–399.
- Jansen, W. 1997. 'Gender Identity and the Ritual of Food in Jordanian Community.' *Food and Foodways* 7 (2): 87–117.
- Jordan, A. C. 1940. *Ingqumbo yeminyanya*. 1st edn. Alice: Lovedale Press.
- Jordan, A. C. 1974. *Ingqumbo yeminyanya*. 2nd edn. Alice: Lovedale Press.
- Karoki, M. H. 2014. 'The Role of Traditional Music in Girls' Alternative Rite of Passage Among the Amiiru.' MA dissertation. Kenyatta University. <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/12042>. Accessed on 13 August 2022
- Kdemir, N. 2018. 'Visible Expression of Social Identity: The Clothing and Fashion.' *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences* 17 (4): 1389–1397.
- Kepe, T. 2010. 'Secrets That Kill, Custodianship and Responsibility in Ritual Male Circumcision in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. *Social Science & Medicine* 70 (5): 729–735.
- Khan, A. D. Alam. M. N. 2019. Cosmetics and Their Associated Adverse Effects A Review. *JAPSR* 6 (1): 1–6.
- Kheswa, J. G. Nomgcoyiya. T. Adonis. P. Ngeleka. S. 2014. The Experience and Perception of Graduated Initiates Towards Traditional Male Circumcision in the Eastern Cape. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science* 5 (20): 2789–2798.
- King, I .2015. 'What to wear': Clothing as an example of expression and intentionality. *Argument*, 5 (1): 59-78.
- Levitas, J. Morris. J. 1984. *South African Tribal Life Today*. Cape Town: College Press.
- Mabovula, N. N. 2011. 'The Erosion of African Communal Values: A Reappraisal of the African Ubuntu Philosophy'. *Inkanyiso, Jnl Hum and Soc Sci* 3 (1): 38–47.
- Madikida, C. S. N.d. *Liminal States*. [http://www.academia.edu/1825583/Liminal States](http://www.academia.edu/1825583/Liminal_States). Accessed 28 October 2021.
- Mahlahlo, A. P. 2009. What is Manhood: The Significance of Traditional Circumcision in the Xhosa Initiation Ritual. MPhil Sociology and Social Anthropology. University of Stellenbosch.
- Majola, F. 2012. 'A Man Who is Not a Man. ' *Mail and Guardian*. <https://thoughtleader.co.za/a-man-who-is-not-a-man/>https://thoughtleader.co.za/a-man-who-is-not-a-man. Accessed 25 October 2021.
- Makuliwe, M. T. A. 1997. *Ingqokelela Entsha Yezaci Namaqhalo EsiXhosa*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

- Mapara, J. 2009. 'Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Zimbabwe: Juxtaposing Postcolonial Theory.' *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 3:139–155.
- Mashiyane, Z. J. 2008. *Iintonga: Stick Fighting; Ndebele Perspective*. Faculty of Arts Conference Proceeding. University of Zululand.
- Matholeni, N. P. 2021. *Nomophulelani na umfazi: Ndiyindoda: An Investigation of the Place of Pastoral Care in Relation to Both Jesus' Masculinity and AmaXhosa Masculinity*. *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 7(1): 226–2385.
- Maurice, D. Dodd. R. 2010. *A Leaner Resource on the Art of Nichola Hlobo*. Johannesburg: Standard Bank.
- Mavundla, T. R. Netswera. F.G. Bottoman. B. Toth. F. 2009. 'Rationalization of Indigenous Male Circumcision as a Sacred Religious Custom: Health Belief of Xhosa Men in South Africa.' *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 20 (4): 395–404.
- Mayekiso, A. 2017. 'Ukuba Yindoda Kwelixesha' ('To Be a Man in These Times'): Fatherhood, Marginality and Forms of Life Among Young Men in Gugulethu.' PhD thesis. University of Cape Town. <http://hdl.handle.net/11427/24447>. Accessed on 15 August 2022
- Mberia, K. 2015. 'The Place of Indigenous Languages in African Development.' *International Journal of Language and Linguistics* 2 (5): 52–60.
- Mbiti, J. S. 1992. 'Introduction to African Religion.' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25:669–671.
- Mbusi, N. 2011. 'An Investigation into the Use of Traditional Xhosa Dance to Teach Mathematics: A Case Study in a Grade 7 Class'. Unpublished MA dissertation. Rhodes University.
- Mesatywa, E. W. Jordan. M. A. C. 1971. *Izaci Namaqhalo EsiXhosa*. Cape Town: Longman.
- Mfecane, S. 2016. "'Ndiyindoda" ["I am a Man"]: Theorising Xhosa Masculinity.' *Anthropology Southern Africa* 39 (3): 204–214. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23323256.2016.1208535><http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23323256.2016.1208535>. Accessed 20 February 2022.
- Mikucka, M. Rizzi. E. 2016. Does It Take a Village to Raise a Child? The Buffering Effect of Relationships with Relatives for Parental Life Satisfaction.' *Demographic Research*, 34:943994. <http://www.demographicresearch.org/Volumes/Vol34/34/http://www.demographicresearch.org/Volumes/Vol34/34/>. Accessed 03 January 2021.
- Mintz, S. W. C. du Bois. C. M. 2002. 'The Anthropology of Food and Eating.' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 99–119.

- Mnisi, K. 2014. 'Traditional Music in South Africa.' *Music in Africa*. <https://www.musicinafrica.net/magazine/traditional-music-south-africa>. Accessed on 08 July 2022
- Momoti, N. K. 2002. 'Law and Culture in the New Constitutional Dispensation with Specific Reference to the Custom of Circumcision as Practised in the Eastern Cape.' MA dissertation. Rhodes University. https://commons.ru.ac.za/vital/access/manager/Repository/vital:3685?site_name=Rhodes+University. Accessed on 06 July 2022
- Moore, H. B. 1957. 'Diet Therapy: The Meaning of Food.' *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 5 (1): 78–82.
- Moropa, K. 2018. 'Depiction of Indigenous Food in Translated isiXhosa Folk Narratives and Biographies.' *South African Journal of African Languages* 38(3): 247–254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2018.1518017>. Accessed 10 March 2022.
- Moyo, L. Funani.Y. 2019. 'Exploring the Role Played by Media in the Representation of Xhosa Traditional Male Circumcision in South Africa.' *J Hum Ecol* 67 (1–3): 120–13.
- Mpako, M. P. 2011. Ceremonial Usage of Clays for Body Painting According to Traditional Xhosa Culture. *Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* 10 (2): 235–244.
- Mpetsheni, L. 2019. Ubuntu: A Soteriological Ethic for an Effaced *Umntu* in a Post 1994 South Africa: A Black Theologian of Liberation Perspective. PhD thesis. University of Pretoria. <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/75269>. Accessed on 04 February 2022
- Mtiya, Z. 2012. Amaxhosa Traditional Dance. Unpublished Treaties. Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha): Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.
- Mtuze, P. T. 2004. *Introduction to Xhosa Culture*. Alice: Lovedale Press.
- Murcott, A. 1982. 'Symposium on Food Habits and Culture in the UK: The Cultural Significance of Food and Eating.' *Proc Nutr Soc* 41:203–210.
- Murcott, A. 1982. 'The Cultural Significance of Food and Eating.': *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* 41 (2): 203–220.
- Muyassar, T. 2021. 'The Role of Music in the Development of Society.' *Multidisciplinary Peer Review Journal* 7 (1): 2581–4230.
- Mvanyashe, A. 2019. 'IsiXhosa Proverbs and Idioms as a Reflection of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and an Education Tool'. *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies* 29 (2): 1–14. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6663-9649>. Accessed on 15 April 2022

- Myburgh, A.C., ed. 1981. *Anthropology for Southern Africa*. Pretoria: J. L. van Schaick Publishers.
- Nayoo, N. 2007. Indigenous Knowledge Systems and their Relevance for Sustainable Development: A Case of Southern Africa. *Kamla-Raj Enterprise* 167–172.
- Ncanca, M. 2014. *Yithi Uyindoda!* (Say, You Are a Man!). MA dissertation. University of Stellenbosch. <https://scholar.sun.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/8f4bf50a-a8fa-4769-aa6b-e1ab9fb152e9/content>. Accessed on 19 February 2022
- Ndamba, G. T. Manwa. L. 2011. 'The Language of Dress Among the Subcultural Group of the Dzimbabwe People in Masvingo, Zimbabwe.' *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 2 (6): 436–44.
- Nel. P. 2005. 'Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Contestation, Rhetorics and Space.' *Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems: A Cross-Pollination and Critique* June 4 (1): 1–11.
- Nella, Yonella. 2018. *Umguyo*. 8 January. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbkYzHF5ayE>. Accessed 21 October 2021
- Ngxamngxa, A. N.N. 1971. 'The Function of Circumcision Amongst the Xhosa-speaking Tribes in Historical Perspective.' In *Man: Anthropological Essays Presented to O. F. Raum*, edited by E. J. de Jager. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.
- Njoroge, R. N. 2012. 'Cultural Transmission, Fashion, and Beauty.' *A Historical Perspective*. Ch. 6. 59–66. Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Nokele A. B. B. 2016. 'Umphokoqo, the President's Favourite Dish: Can Food Be Translated?' A paper presented at the Food and Culture Conference. University of Catania, Italy.
- Nombembe, C. 2013. 'Music-making of the Xhosa Diasporic Community: A Focus on the *Umguyo* Tradition in Zimbabwe.' MA dissertation. University of the Witwatersrand. <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/fbf09ca5-f5af-434a-9374-9c2a5cfd457c/content>. Accessed on 23 May 2022
- Ntombana, L. 2009. 'Xhosa Male Initiation and Teaching of Moral Values: An Exploration of the Role of Traditional Guardians in Teaching the Initiates.' *African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge System* 8 (1): 73–84.
- Ntombana, L. 2011. Should Xhosa Male Initiation Be Abolished? *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 14 (6): 631–640.
- Ntozine, A. Ngqanwana. H. 2016. 'Gay Xhosa Men's Experience of Ulwaluko: Traditional Initiation.' *Culture Health & Sexuality* 18 (11): 1–10.

- Ntsimane, R. 2007. The *Ukuhlonipha* Code of Respect and Cultural Tension Around the Zulu Nurses: The Case of the Emmaus Mission Hospital. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 2:115–133.
- Nwoye, A. 2017. An African Theory of Human Personhood. *Psychology in Society* 54:42–66.
- Osmanoglu, D. Yilmaz. H. 2019. ‘The Effect of Classical Music on Anxiety and Well-Being of University Students.’ *International Education Studies* 12 (11): 18–25.
- Papu, J. Verster. A. 2006. A Biblical, Cultural and Missiological Critique of Traditional Circumcision Among Xhosa-speaking Christians. Bloemfontein: University of Orange Free State. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/actat/article/view/49044>. Accessed on 20 February 2022
- Peltzer, K. Niang. C. Adamson. S. Bowa. K. Okeke. L. Boiro. H. Chimbwete. C. 2007. Editorial Review: Male Circumcision, Gender and HIV Prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa: A (Social Science) Research Agenda. *Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS* 4 (3): 658–667.
- Perry, M. S. ‘Feasting on Culture and Identity: Food Functions in a Multicultural and Transcultural Malaysia.’ *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies* 23(4): 18 –199. <http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2017-2304-14> Accessed 20 April 2022.
- Phibion, S. D. 2006. ‘Bakalanga Traditional Music Instruments (*Zwilidzo Zwa Ntolo Zwe Bakalanga*).’ *Botswana Notes and Records* 38:74–88.
- Rajasekaran, B. 1993. A Framework for Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge System into Agricultural Research and Extension Organizations for Sustainable Agricultural Development in India. PhD thesis. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. <https://dr.lib.iastate.edu/entities/publication/8895f289-8af0-42af-880d-5280e00ea2a3/full>. Accessed on 19 May 2022
- Ram, P. 2020. ‘Impact of Rituals, an Important Aspect of Food Culture on Hospitality Sector: A Study of 5-Star Hotels of Delhi NCR.’ *International Journal of Research and Review* 7:1–10.
- Ramagosh, R. Joubert. I. 2016. ‘Preserving Cultural Heritage by Teaching Idioms to Young Learners as Part of Imaginative Language in Setswana.’ *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 6 (1): 1–10.
- Rasing, T. 1995. *Passing on the Rites of Passage. Girls’ Initiation Rites in the Context of Urban Raman Catholic Community on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Leiden: African Studies Centre.

- SABC. 'Three Initiates Found Dead at an Initiation School in the Eastern Cape.' <https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/three-initiates-found-dead-at-an-initiation-school-in-the-eastern-cape>. Accessed on 29 October 2021
- Sampson, L. 2010. 'Clothes that Make the Man.' <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/lifestyle/2010-04-11-clothes-that-make-the-man>. Accessed 10 November 2021.
- Sapir, E. 1921. *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace.
- Soga, J. H. 1931. *The AmaXhosa Life and Customs*. Alice: Lovedale Press.
- Soga, T. B. 1937. *Intlalo kaXhosa*. Alice: Lovedale Press.
- Souisa, N. N. 2019. 'Sharing Meal, Sharing Life Together: An Anthropological Perspective on the Significance of Sharing Meal Ritual Based on the Religious Life.' *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 187:7–10.
- Sullivan, S. 2001. 'On Dance and Difference: Bodies, Movement and Experience in Khoesān Trance-Dancing Perceptions of "A Raver".' *Africa e Mediterraneo Cultura e Societa* 37: 234–241.
- Tajuddin, F. N. 2018. 'Cultural and Social Identity in Clothing Matters: Different Cultures, Different Meanings.' *European Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 1(4): 21–25.
- Tatti, R. 2019. 'Negotiating Cultural Identity Through Eating Habits: Second-generation Immigrants Talk About Memories, Values and Cultural Heritage Attached to Food. BA dissertation. Malmö University, Faculty of Culture and Society. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1482409&dswid=-1843>. Accessed on 23 May 2022
- Teodorescu, B. Colin. R. A. 2015. 'The Base Articulation of the Liminality Concept.' *Review of European Studies* 7 (1): 97–102.
- Turner, V. 1969. 'Liminality and Communitas in the Ritual Process' In *Structure and Anti-structure*. 359–374. Chicago, ILL: Aldine Publishing, Abridge.
- USAID/AIDS Mark. 2005. *Becoming A Man During AmaXhosa Ceremonial Rites of Initiation: A Manual for Teaching Traditional Surgeons and Attendants About Circumcision and Social and Sexual Responsibility*. Washington, DC: USAID/AIDS.
- Vatika, S. 2018. Food: Identity of Culture and Religion. Article. Andrews College of Arts
- Vincent, L. 2008. 'Cutting Tradition: The Political Regulation of Traditional Circumcision Rites in South Africa's Liberal Democratic Order.' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34 (1): 77–91.

- Wa Thiong'o, N. 1986. 'Decolonising the Mind.' *The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Portsmouth.
- William C. W. 1999. 'Soul Food as Cultural Creation.' *Journal for the Study of Food and Society* 3 (1): 37–47.
<https://doi.org/10.2752/152897999786690717><https://doi.org/10.2752/152897999786690717>. Accessed 15 April 2022.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

<i>Abafana</i>	initiated male youths
<i>Abakhweta</i>	circumcised boys
<i>Amagwijo</i>	collective songs
<i>amakrwala</i>	new initiates
<i>amakwenkwe</i>	young men before they are initiated into manhood
<i>amarhewu</i>	unfermented beer
<i>amaxhego</i>	old man
<i>bhuti krwala</i>	new name given to a newly initiated man
<i>ebuhlanti</i>	kraal
<i>ibhotile yonqaba ikrwala</i>	a bottle of brandy given for smearing
<i>iceya</i>	guessing game
<i>iduma</i>	lump on the head
<i>idyasi</i>	long vintage blazers
<i>igeza</i>	crazy
<i>iimidlalo</i>	plays
<i>iimpahla zobudoda</i>	manhood clothes
<i>iintombi</i>	girls
<i>iintonjane</i>	girl initiates
<i>ikhankatha</i>	initiates guardian
<i>ikhukho</i>	African grass mat
<i>ikrwala</i>	a graduate
<i>ikutani</i>	champion
<i>ilala of umqombothi</i>	container with traditional beer
<i>imbeleko</i>	rite of passage to welcome and introduce new child in the family
<i>imbhola</i>	red ochre
<i>imidlalo</i>	games
<i>imvelaphi</i>	heritage and history
<i>indlu yomfana</i>	house of men
<i>indluyesibane</i>	house of men
<i>indoda</i>	regarded as a man

<i>ingceke</i>	white clay
<i>ingoma zokwaluka</i>	initiation songs
<i>ingqongqo</i>	zink beating
<i>ingwenya</i>	champion
<i>ingxwala</i>	white clay
<i>intlombe</i>	youth party
<i>intombizabafana</i>	girls of young men
<i>intonga</i>	stick
<i>intonga yokuhlanganisa</i>	stick for defence
<i>intonga youkuqula</i>	strike stick
<i>intshili</i>	best dancer
<i>iqhiya</i>	head cover
<i>isabelo</i>	dishing out of food
<i>isidima nesithozela</i>	dignity and elegance
<i>isigqubu</i>	walking together as a group
<i>isiko</i>	custom
<i>isinuka</i>	grey clay
<i>ixhonxo</i>	headdress
<i>izikhunjane</i>	tin rattles
<i>iziko</i>	hearth
<i>izithunzi</i>	shadows
<i>liyhamba isiko</i>	moving custom
<i>nuka</i>	smelly
<i>oomama</i>	woman
<i>pap</i>	porridge
<i>ubetha iintonga</i>	stick fighting
<i>ubhuti omtsha</i>	new name given to a newly initiated man
<i>ubukhwetha</i>	being an initiate
<i>ubukrwala</i>	a graduated initiate
<i>ubuntu</i>	humanity towards others
<i>ubuqwirha</i>	witchcraft
<i>ugqwaliso</i>	bad energies
<i>uhambo</i>	journey

<i>ukojiswa</i>	roasted meat
<i>ukuba semoyine</i>	spiritual realm
<i>ukubetha induku</i>	stick fighting
<i>ukubuyisa nokukhapha</i>	to bring and accompany the spirit of the diseased ancestors
<i>ukudlala iintonga</i>	stick fighting
<i>ukugida</i>	to contribute to the other
<i>ukuhlonipha</i>	respect
<i>ukukhulula</i>	to stop wearing new man's attire and start wearing everyday clothes
<i>ukukhusela</i>	protection from <i>ingceke</i>
<i>ukulama</i>	a person has come face to face with an evil creature used for witchcraft
<i>ukunyamezela</i>	pain
<i>ukuphambana</i>	mad
<i>ukuqaba imbhola</i>	cosmetics
<i>ukuqaba imbhola ebomvu</i>	smearing red ochre
<i>ukuqula</i>	stick fighting
<i>ukusoka</i>	giving away of gifts to the new man and sometimes to his guardian
<i>ukuthakatha</i>	initiate
<i>ukutshila</i>	dancing
<i>ukutyityimba</i>	dance movements
<i>ukuxhentsa</i>	dancing
<i>ulwaluko</i>	Xhosa/AmaXhosa rite of passage from boyhood to manhood
<i>umbhona</i>	corn
<i>umgcizo</i>	torn clothes
<i>umgcizo wamakwenkwe</i>	torn clothes of boys who are about to undergo the initiation ritual characterised by their clothes
<i>umgidi</i>	traditional celebration of coming out of the initiates
<i>umgqwaliso</i>	grey clay cure for acne
<i>umguyo</i>	transition from boyhood to manhood
<i>umhlambi</i>	special kilt-like dress made from dry palm leaves worn during seclusion period

<i>umlaza</i>	uncleanliness or impurity
<i>umngcamo</i>	sacrifice of strip of meat cut from the slaughtered goat
<i>umngeno</i>	the entering, which includes separation of the initiate to the bush
<i>umojiso</i>	roasted meat for the initiate
<i>umona</i>	evil or envy
<i>umphumo</i>	the coming out
<i>umqomboti</i>	Nguni traditional beer made from maize, maize malt, sorghum malt, yeast and water
<i>umteyo</i>	shaking dance
<i>umtshilo</i>	dance of the initiation
<i>umtshotsho</i>	traditional Xhosa dance performed to celebrate the <i>abakhweta</i> (circumcised boys)