

AND STILL THEY DANCE AND SING:
THE SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING OF
SWAZI WOMEN'S TRADITIONAL SONGS

BY

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A thesis presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Education
at Saint Mary's University

JUNE 1994



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ISBN 0-315-95857-X

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ABSTRACT

Patriarchy, capitalism and colonisation have intersected in the struggle to maintain control over women. These forces have also intersected to reproduce and sustain structures that largely promote European culture. The conservation of these systems is developed and maintained in educational, political, economic and cultural locations. This study explores how, in the face of such forces, the Swazi people could critically preserve their culture while awakening women's critical consciousness of their traditional subservient status in the Swazi society.

In this thesis, Swazi rural women's traditional songs are recorded partly as a way to communicate women's experiences and, in so doing, to interrupt patriarchal relations. The songs in this study are also used to increase awareness of Swazi rural women's status and their truly radical role in society. The songs are also used to awaken our identity consciousness as a necessary means to preserve Swazi culture.

To achieve the goals of this study, these songs should be merged into the school curriculum where they may tell stories of women's lives, experiences, contributions and concerns. By using the formal school curriculum, schools are recognized not just as an ideological state apparatus successfully used to promote European culture but also as possible places of

struggle that could be used to promote Swazi culture as well. To actualize this possibility, Paulo Freire's concept of critical literacy is suggested as a means by which Swazi rural women, school-going children and teachers may develop a critical consciousness in which social realities of patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism are recognised and addressed critically.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am profoundly grateful to the Swazi women whose collective singing voice and narratives are the heart beat of this thesis. They participated in this collective process with strength, warmth and gave unselfishly of their time to make this work a reality. I thank them all for trusting me, for sharing their lives and for their captivating, beautiful and genuine smile. Ngiyabonga /thank you.

I am also deeply grateful to my professor and academic adviser Ursula Kelly who read, criticised and encouraged this project. Doubtlessly, thanks for help in weaving the loose threads into the form of the complete tapestry in which it now appears goes to her. I am equally grateful to Robert Sargent for his patience and guidance in the completion of this study.

This thesis is born out of a time of intense emotional pain. Dorothy Pollock, I thank you for your endless love. You have a good heart. Lisa Mosher and Tiblet B. Kidanu, thank you for your unending friendship, love and words of encouragement. I do not think you realize how much your friendship meant to me as a foreign student thousands of miles away from home. You are true friends I will cherish forever. Tiblet, thank you for your tireless co-operation in the typing of this work. Thami Kunene, thank you for your friendship, support and helpful discussion on a number of issues. I thank you all.

Lindelwa Ntutela-Murangi, you are a true friend of my

mind and soul. Thank you for critical exchange. Joy Mannette, your critical advice has not gone unnoticed. You are special.

The co-operation of Ludzidzini Royal Residence, the Sebenta Adult Literacy Institute, Swaziland Television Broadcasting Corporation (STBC), Swaziland Broadcasting Service (SBS), Hhohho Regional Education Office, Swaziland National Curriculum Center (NCC), University of Swaziland Research Unit Center, the Dean of the faculty of Humanities, Dr. Lwandle Kunene, Ezulwini Primary School, Embasheni Primary School, Entfonjeni Primary School, Engonini Primary School, Mjinggo High School and Matsapha High School enabled me to collect data and, hence, complete this study. I offer my sincere gratitude.

Especially, I thank my mother, my mother's sister, my children, brothers and sisters, sister in-laws, nephews and nieces for their love, encouragement and patience. I love you and always will.

Finally, this project would have been impossible without funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother,
ulaMazibuko.

and
to the memory of my two brothers
Mqiniseli M. Motsa
1952-1979

Ncedze J. Motsa
1949-1992

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INTRODUCTION

LOCATING MYSELF:
THE PERSONAL AND/IS THE POLITICAL

It seems proper that I should begin this study with some mention of the reasons which have made me think it important that I write a memorial of so uneventful a life as mine. I understand that what I have to relate will not pass unnoticed in this age of change where women's voices are beginning to be heard globally. It may be useful that there should be some record of a Swazi woman's voice from a culture that is unusual and remarkable.

A motive which weighs more is a desire to acknowledge the persons to whom I owe a debt for my intellectual and moral development; some are of recognized eminence, others less known than they deserve to be, and one to whom the most is due, my mother. The world has had no opportunity to hear her voice, but now, through me, her daughter, the world will hear of her internal struggle. My professor, Ursula Kelly, has taught me that sisterhood empowers women by respecting, supporting, encouraging and loving. By advising me to write about myself, she has encouraged my own empowerment through the development of a voice that will discover and explore the true self.

To open the story of my life, a quote from bell hooks (1989) is appropriate. hooks states that,

[t]here is much that is private, that must be openly shared, if we are to heal our wounds, hurt caused by culture, if we are to record and realize ourselves (p.3)

This autobiography is my own "pedagogy of liberation" and it is the discovery and exploration of self. When my supervisor advised me to use my autobiography as a foundation upon which to shape my thesis, I felt honoured and I immediately looked back at my life. I feel I have been empowered with a voice that has been silenced. I have discovered that this autobiography unfolds certain questions that may have been inadequately or prematurely closed. This autobiography exhibits the impulse to assemble and also to dismantle the traditional teachings of my mother's strong but silenced voice. To begin, the self emerges from a mythic framework of traditional teachings which have entered and to a certain degree shaped my life. This "empowerment of self", by breaking the silence, will definitely disrupt some of the much cherished cultural traditions of Swaziland.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

I was born in a rural area in the Manzini district in Swaziland. It was not necessary for my mother to go to a hospital to give birth to her seven children (except for her last child) because there were old women present who had always done the midwifery job. My family was respected in the community. My father owned a grocery shop and practised

commercial farming, specializing in growing cotton. My mother also had her own business, sewing school uniforms for the neighbouring schools. My parents' businesses generated enough revenue to provide us with a comfortable life. We ate well and we dressed well. Actually, according to Swazi rural standards, we were a well-to-do family. Because of scarcity of public transport in the sixties and the long distance to our school (which was believed to be offering better education as compared to neighbouring primary schools), my father bought each of us a bicycle which was considered to be luxury in those days. Our father loved us and spoiled us with material things. To a certain degree we enjoyed the spoils of capitalism. We loved our father for everything he did for us. Brought up in such a respected family, I felt proud of my parents. My mother looked happy and proud to have been married to such a clever, hard working man. My mother spoke highly of my father, probably because she had nothing to complain about.

As a young girl I was always with my mother. Together, we went to women's rural projects where we were taught how to sew, crochet and knit. It is during these projects that I witnessed women composing and dancing to traditional songs. To me the songs were meaningless and I never enquired about them from my mother who never composed such songs. Because of her Christian conviction, she did not associate herself with certain Swazi traditional practices. She denied this part of herself by accepting certain teachings of the missionaries

which discredited our traditions.

I accompanied my mother to adult classes where she had enrolled to further her education. In these classes I found women in the majority. I never questioned my mother about the remarkable absence of men because, as a child, I had no right to question things that concerned adults. Only as an adult did I have an answer. Men, literate or not literate, had nothing to lose. The socio-economic structure favoured them.

However, this sweet life was short-lived and came to an end when I was twelve years old. My father decided to marry another woman. I was still naive and attended my father's wedding. During this time my mother had started to shout at us and would even beat us for trivial mistakes. However, in my country, culture tends to be the shield that protects male domination and suppresses the women's voice. It is this silencing role of culture to which Brydon and Chant (1989) allude when they print out that "the roots of women's oppression or voice denial must be sought in social and cultural structures" (p.8).

My father, as a Swazi man, had a right to have more than one wife without expecting any resentment from my mother. As a Swazi woman, she had to fight her pain and humiliation silently. According to Swazi culture, my mother was my father's "child" just like we were his children. He had paid bride wealth for my mother. However, my mother failed to endure the pain and humiliation. She temporarily overcame the

anger and humiliation by leaving my father's household. She took us with her against my father's will, and my father vowed that he would never give any assistance in bringing us up. As much as her people welcomed her back, she was now faced with the extra pain and humiliation of facing society's insulting look. My mother knew that society would never view my father's second marriage as a humiliation to her. They would acknowledge it was probably painful, yes, but as a woman, her pain should be concealed.

We moved in with, our grandmother who lived in another district and we stayed there until the chief of the area allocated my mother a piece of land on which to put our future home. As a woman my mother could not be allocated land so she had to take my eldest brother with her to the chief's area. The chief could not discuss issues of land with her. There should be a man present even if he had not come of age. He is a man; he has a voice. What is interesting is that my mother did not give any of my four brothers the privilege of directing family matters.

My grandmother financially depended on my mother's sister, a teacher by profession, who was married to a South African who had died just before my father's second marriage. She had had to leave South Africa with her four children to live with my grandmother, who was also a widow and had endured a polygamous marriage. I lived in the midst of women who, in one way or another, have been victims of the patriarchal

social order. Not a single one of these women had ever been vocal about the pain, anger and humiliation they suffered in their lives. Other than seeing them struggle to raise us, any other kind of pain was successfully concealed. However, to me, they showed women's dignity and power: power that signifies internal strength, the right to determine one's choices in life. I consider them as women who have overcome passivity, dependency and inferiority within their silence.

My mother has very little education and, therefore, little social mobility. Initially she had gone up to grade four and, through adult education correspondence, she went to grade seven. Of course everything came to a stop when she had to work day and night for our survival. She was able to go as far as grade four because of my grandmother's efforts and clever tactics. My grandfather was against girls attending school. He believed that by taking her to school, she would be exposed to bad influences and she would never find a husband. My grandmother would have my mother's uniform hidden every time she left for school and she would put it on, on her way to school. When my grandfather discovered that my mother went to school, my grandmother had to pay dearly for being disobedient to her husband's word. My mother's sister was able to finish school because my grandfather passed away while she was still young. It is these single women that raised us but never freely expressed how much they had to endure and forego.

After we had been allocated land, with the help of my

eldest brother and sister, my mother was able to build us a home. Possibly to ensure we did not see her struggle to make ends meet, she sent my younger sister and myself to convent schools. My father had sent my brothers to a government boarding school and my eldest sister to a convent school before my parents separated. My mother maintains that although my father had vowed not to help her with our welfare, he paid for some of our school expenses. To cater to our other needs she had opened a business to supply schools with jerseys and school tunics. She had somehow managed to buy herself a knitting machine. She maintains that while married to my father she barely used her income from her business. She told me that she reserved that money because she did not know what the future held for her. She was an active member of the women's rural development project in her community and she was chosen as a spokesperson for these women. I would describe these rural development projects as places for women to use and enhance their leadership skills, to enjoy and expand their self-confidence and to rejoice in mutual respect. At the same time, these projects gave some men more room to get away with their irresponsibility. With love, commitment and zeal, my mother devoted herself to the success of this project which enabled her to broaden her sewing and knitting skills. She also acquired other skills that helped her generate more money. For instance, she was involved in poultry-raising and she grew a vegetable garden. She had also vast cotton fields.

She used my father's skills of commercial farming. With the help of the rural development project co-ordinator, she was able to find a market for her chickens and vegetables.

My mother also attended rural development project conferences held in different agricultural colleges in the country. From these conferences, my mother would share with us songs composed by women participants. The songs of this women's group were different from the traditional songs composed by Swazi rural women. Their songs did not have the rhythm, melody and style of the Swazi traditional songs. However, they were enriched with women's concerns and realities. I was now a grown woman and I understood the messages conveyed in these songs. From my mother's voice and face, I could tell how happy she was to be a full participant in the rural projects. I assumed she was happy because she had attained self confidence and she was able to accumulate enough money to meet our basic needs. This was her own secret she was not ready to share with any of her children. To her we were still babies who would be unable to understand her struggle, so it was best to keep it as an internal struggle, a secret that she believed she could share only with God. This is indicative of my mother's devotion to Christianity. She is an active member of our small Methodist church in the area. I have always paid attention when my mother prays. It has always been her tradition to pray in the morning at 5.00 and in the evening after supper. I cannot recall any day that would pass

without my mother thanking her Creator. As we gather in the living room every evening, reading the Bible (in turns) and singing hymns, I would watch her serious, anxious face full of sorrow because she was now silently talking to her confidante. She would sing in a low, lost voice and I would hear her choke in her singing because she was crying. I would see tears streaming down her tired but beautiful face. In her prayers, my mother has always prayed for the sick, for those toiling in jails, for those who have lost their beloved ones, for our rulers, for peace in the world and for her children. When praying for us, she would break down and cry. We have always cared for her, cried with her, laughed with her and worried with her, but she has never shared any of her secrets with any of us. She has always ended her prayers with these words:

"God, you know I am a woman who has got nothing and who is not of any worthiness, other than the children you gave me. You know all my problems and needs, I cannot recount them."

At times I would wish my mother could relate or confess her internal struggle to God, but she has never because she believes God knows about it. This is a woman who has endured a lot of pain silently. In 1979, she lost a twenty eight year old son in a car accident. It was the first death in this close knit family and it shook the whole family and the community that witnessed my mother struggle for our survival. However, it is this very woman who consoled us and told us that God commits no mistakes. In 1991, she lost her mother and

again she attributed it to be God's will. In 1992, she lost a forty two year old son who died of cancer, whom she had witnessed suffering in a hospital bed. Again, it was God's will; "His will must be cherished", were my mother's words in her wreath dedicated to her late son.

AS A HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT

When I expressed concern to my mother about how expensive this convent school was, she told me,

"I would not like you to be like me. I would like you to get the best education so that you could have a better future and be independent, for you do not know what tomorrow holds for you."

She cautioned me about boys and how they could entice me into a relationship with results that might shatter not only my life, but hers, too. I never dated any boy during my school years. I only started dating during my first year at university. I was in my third year and only twenty years old when I got pregnant. I felt I had betrayed my mother. It took me months to tell my mother I was pregnant. When she finally discovered it, she did indeed feel that she had been betrayed. She considered herself a failure as a woman: a woman that failed to stay in a marriage; a woman whose eldest daughter also had a broken marriage; and, now, one of her youngest daughters was pregnant. What a shame for her, I am sure she thought. Although I was pregnant she did not want me to get married; she felt I was still young and I might find another

man to marry. To her my pregnancy had brought another humiliation; she was not prepared to see another marriage collapse. As though this humiliation was not enough, she had to live with my newly born baby for she did not want me to be disturbed in my studies. She took on the responsibility of this baby as if it were hers. To society's eye she was promoting young women's pregnancy outside marriage. She went with my baby to all women and community gatherings and to church. She never concealed the fact that it was my baby. Again she had to rebuff society's insults and scornful eye. On the other hand, I did not feel guilty about having a child outside marriage. To me my mother had been denied a happy life because of society's approval of certain cultural aspect that humiliated a woman.

At school I worked hard in all my subjects. My mother was my motivator. She always encouraged me to work hard. In all the letters she wrote to me, she said,

"This education that I am giving you is your spear.
You will use it to fight the injustices of this world".

She had silently taught me to be strong and independent. When I was at secondary school, I was chosen as a head girl and I carried out duties with vigour, love and dedication. The school authorities trusted me and the students respected me. I was a responsible young woman who tactfully and successfully voiced students' concerns to the school authorities.

In the classroom, history was my best subject. Initially, the principal (a nun) had forced me to take science subjects

because I had done well in my junior certificate examination. However, I had lost interest in mathematics because of discouraging words that constantly reminded girls that they were not good at the subject. Sadly and ironically, it was a woman teacher who instilled these discouraging words in us. Certainly, this teacher, considered herself a rare female species. Against my will I attended the science class for a week. Unwilling to frustrate myself, I enrolled in the arts stream where I would do history, my favourite subject. I found history subject to be real, exciting and thought-provoking. I honestly marvelled at the heroes depicted in the history books without noticing the absence of women heroines. I had not noticed it because of the place culture had given to women.

I always scooped prizes on speech and prize giving days: prizes for being the best history student and prizes for displaying good leadership qualities. My mother was always there on such occasions to marvel at her daughter's achievement. After the event, we would hug each other and in tears we would try hard to swallow the emotions that came, either because of excitement or because of the hidden pain.

I remember my Form Three English teacher who had asked us what we would do with our first salaries. I excitedly and proudly told him that I would buy my mother something beautiful. He did not appreciate my answer, which I had naively thought would excite him. He told me I was a

hypocrite. It was as if he had slapped me across the face. I did not know the meaning of the word hypocrite but by the way he said it, I could tell it was not a pleasant comment. After class I checked for its meaning in my Oxford Dictionary and my fears were confirmed. I was angry with him because he failed to understand why I had given him such an honest answer. As a student I had no right to approach him. During our time teachers were more feared than respected. Furthermore, he was not only an adult but he was a white man. Today I attribute his comment to a culture clash and also to the fact that as a man he failed to identify the woman to woman bond that my tone revealed. I was deeply hurt by his comment and I vowed that I would never again tell a stranger about my feelings in case they make a mockery. I kept my feelings and my values secret and would only disclose them to my mother to comfort her when she was upset.

I did exceptionally well in Form Five. I wanted to pursue a degree in law, a male's domain, for a long time. Again the fear of the unknown gripped my mother's intellect. She advised me against taking law. Applying her religious doctrine, she told me that she could not bear to see her daughter defend killers and rapists. She asked me how I would explain all this to God on judgement day. She also advised me, "stick to the field that you can handle, otherwise you will strain and exhaust yourself in a male domain, with lots of frustration and little rewards". I tried to defy her advice. I told her

how I would like to see some of our laws changed: laws that would have favoured her and have pined down my father and many other irresponsible men. She told me it was not my father's fault but hers; that my father loved us and he did not want us to come with her. Our father did love us and was interested in our progress in school. From my mother's talk I deduced that my mother held herself liable for her sufferings. She had decided to sentence herself to this cultural guilt. Despite her advice, I applied for the Bachelor of Law course. My application was turned down by the scholarship selection committee. I was asked by one conservative if I was aware that I was playing with fire because this was a male domain. I was told to enrol in education. To them, that is where I belonged, in the classroom. To them, the few women that had been admitted into law were enough. I do not blame my mother for her advice; she has been society's victim on numerous occasions. Perhaps she felt the need to be overprotective of her daughter, who might suffer pain and humiliation, like herself by disrupting certain traditional structures.

Enroling as a humanities student did not bother me at all. A White woman professor from the United States of America taught us a course on feminism. I loved this course because it touched a sensitive nerve and, with zeal, I tackled my first assignment addressing issues that concerned my insurbodination as a woman. It was as if I had been empowered with the freedom of speech. However, it was hardly two days after I had

submitted my assignment, that I was told my professor wanted to see me. Perhaps, I thought, I had too freely expressed myself about how women are treated in my country. Fear gripped me and I felt I might have crossed the boundaries. Deep down I decided that, come what may, at least what was in my paper was nothing but the truth. I felt that if I explained myself to her as a woman and she would understand. But, the worst was yet to come. I found my professor raging with anger. She had just arrived in the country and she probably had her own preconceptions about Blacks. She told me to get the book that I had used for my assignment. I innocently told her that all the books that I used were listed in my bibliography and that I used them to support my ideas. She told me she had been to the library and she had read each and every book that was on my bibliography but she still could not locate where I got my ideas. She told me I had plagiarized because she did not believe I was capable of expressing feminist ideas that well. I was shattered and trembled with humiliation and shock. I walked away from her office like someone that has been caught stealing and had been shamed in public. It was as if everyone knew what I had gone through with this professor. It was only when I was in my room and had cooled down from the shock and humiliation that anger engulfed me. I had read about the slave trade and how Blacks were treated in the ships by the merchants and sailors and how they were treated by the so called masters. I had read about the work of the colonialists

and how we were looked down upon. It had naively escaped my mind that we were different, she was White and I was Black. What an awful manner of reminding me who I was in her eyes. I quickly classified her actions as blatant racism. I did not want to be called a barbarian so I composed myself and confidently walked to her apartment. I greeted her with a smile (an inborn smile that is at times mistaken for loyalty) and started by apologising for causing her the trouble of going through my lengthy bibliography in order to prove my guilt. However, I told her that I had not come to prove myself not guilty of plagiarism because she would never accept the possibility of Black innocence. I told her she was highly obsessed with racism. She tried to deny it but I told her I understood her obsession and that she need not worry about a grade for my paper because I had decided to drop the course. When she tried to plead with me I remembered my high school teacher's word, hypocrite, and, I thinking this word suited this situation, I boldly told her she was one. With this experience, my dormant disgust for white imperialists' ridicule of Africans as stupid and incapable was activated. She was not aware of the pain that lingers, wounds and perverts the psych of its victim, leaving its mark in the soul (bell hooks, 1992, p.184). She had painfully reminded me of how my continent was associated with darkness and primitiveness, hence a need to "civilise" its inhabitants. However, I refused to let this painful reminder rule my life. I politely

dismissed it as a White person's problem and if she/he refuses to eliminate it, it is because she/he benefits from and enjoys it. Due to racism I was denied the knowledge that would have provided me with skills to study women's subordination in my country. Actually racism had overshadowed sexism. My experience confirms the notion that the scars of white racism against Blacks overshadows the scars of sexism (Kathleen Weiler, 1988, p.76).

My childhood experiences of my mother's strength, coupled with my adulthood experiences, were my pillars to tackle my future assignments. I used them as my model in the classroom situation making sure my students tackled any concept with a critical mind. I also ensured girls did not take a back seat in class discussions.

To conclude my autobiography, I will return to my mother's community in the rural area where I belong. Despite the lack of some facilities enjoyed in the urban areas, the rural areas represent to me little islands of peace and tranquility. Since my childhood, nothing has changed much in the customs and rhythm of life.

As I drive from my urban home to my mother's home, I see cows lying on the road and I know I have reached my roots. The bumpy road leading to my mother's house is a signal of purity, untouched by the artificial pollution of the asphalt. Reaching my mother's house meant the touring of her relatives homesteads for my mother always insists we visit each and

every member of her extended family because they offered her a shoulder to cry on when she was deserted by my father. As well it is part of our culture to visit all relatives and neighbours. As I move from one homestead to another, crossing the rivers and passing the wells, children are playing in the water, the cattle quench their thirst and soak in the muddy water of the rivers. In the same water, women do the laundry and then stretch it out on the river banks. I always feel a lump in my throat because I know I am getting closer to some of my mother's relatives who have suffered in silence. When I visit, I always take with me some money and small gifts for the women. These are the women that bell hooks (1984) and Paulo Freire (1970) would say are suffocating in their own silence because they were taught to endure pain and humiliation.

It is from such rural settings, from such women, that this thesis records the singing voice. It does not only document and analyze the singing voice but the talking voice as well. These are the women that Audre Lorde (1988) would say are comfortable with many different ingredients that constitute their identity. They do not pluck out any aspect of themselves to deny the other parts of self. Freire (1970) maintains that by denying ourselves we are objectifying ourselves. They are rural and traditional in outlook and they are proud of these ingredients that constitute their identity.

Doubtlessly, then this project has its roots in my own past. My mother, a victim of certain structures of patriarchy, helped me develop a critical awareness of my own social reality. While my father remained a respected and famous man in his community, my mother, on the other hand, braved financial humiliation for her children's welfare. My mother's story is not different from the stories of the women I had the privilege to talk with during the data collection. A need to clarify things in my mind became even more pressing after listening and talking with them. It was necessary that I reconstruct my own past in light of the Swazi women's critical awareness. I realised that, in the past, in ignorance and indifference, I had gone past these women. The only women who mattered to me were my mother and her relatives.

To understand more clearly some of the complexities of living under a patriarchal and a former colonised state, I decided to visit the "margins" and capture the Swazi women's traditional songs that capture their ways of knowing. Between the months of May and August, 1993, accompanied by my video camera, tape recorder, note book and my son Bongile, I entered the world of these women and I recorded 132 songs that the women compose in the four Districts of Swaziland. In each District I spent a minimum of six hours listening to the women's songs and narratives. Initially they did not trust me. They labelled me as one of the inquisitive educated Swazi who had come to write about their way of life. They saw me as an

intruder. They outrightly composed a song calling me a sly person.

Sly person,
 Give this sly person
 So that she could write and go.
 What have you come to write about?
 Have you come to write about boundaries?
 Have you come to write about our families?
 Have you come to write about our customs?
 Just give her what she wants
 So that she goes away.
 She has come to write about us.
 It does not matter.
 Give her the go ahead
 So that she finishes and goes.

Ciligotjwa,
 Mnikeni lociligotjwa
 Atowubhala acedze.
 Utowubhala ngani?
 Utowubhala ngetemncele?
 Utowubhala temndeni?
 Utowubhala ngemasiko?
 Mnikeni, abhale ahambe.
 Utowubhala ngatsi.
 Akusenandzaba.
 Mnikeni, atowubhala ahambe.

As I talked, laughed, grimaced with emotional pain, and at times, sang and danced with them, they began to accept me as part of them and as their child. Somehow, I caught them in their everyday life. In the songs, I discovered readily available the contributions, accomplishments, concerns and the status of Swazi rural women. By conducting oral interviews with them, I enriched my own experience and realised the depth that Swazi society owes these women.

I recorded the songs because I wanted the women to speak for themselves. The songs depict the politics and passions that deeply season Swazi women's knowledge. By ignoring the

significance of the composition of the songs, we are denying women's own politics in which the songs are drenched. In collecting the songs, I seek to document, expose, dislodge and, through critical literacy, explode certain culturally reproduced structures that justify the patriarchal social order. In the face of this, there is a need to resituate women's social concerns, responsibilities, contributions and struggles to the very centre of our educational institutions. Critically exploring rather than denying women's knowledge will help the young and educated develop a critical awareness of their Swazi identity.

The remainder of this thesis is divided into four chapters.

The first chapter focuses on women's role and status in the Swazi society. In particular, attention is paid to the discourses that have surrounded cultural representations of rural women and their own reflections as objects and subjects of exploitation and subordination. This chapter is enriched with the voices and narratives of the women. They talk of their experiences and use songs to support their versions of these experiences. This chapter reveals the Swazi women's ways of knowing and living.

The second chapter is an outline of the theories that help to shape this study: the integration of feminist theory and Paulo Freire's critical literacy theory. As well, I use production theories in order to analyze the acts of

resistance, struggle, and counter-hegemony that challenge the dominant Swazi educational and cultural institutions.

The third chapter enters into women's social, political, economic and cultural experiences through the outburst of their voices. Through songs, the lives and stories of Swazi rural women have been relegated and their resistances have fermented. It is through the songs that I have been able to analyze their social reality and unravel their intellectual notion of "feminist" scholarship.

Chapter four opens space for creative radical suggestions that move toward what could be a deep decolonisation project. Such a project will unravel embedded colonial structures in our education system and will critically examine women's social realities in our cultural locations while also provoking feminist and identity awareness. In this chapter, I further examine the contradictory position of our educational and patriarchal structures that intend to promote Swazi culture. Without a critical examination of our cultural structures and the colonial baggage in our school curriculum, the young and educated will continue to shun their identity.

This project, therefore, grows out of the lived politics of rural and so called "illiterate" Swazi women. These women resist marginality yet they live the lives they are expected to live and in so doing, they preserve the Swazi patriarchal order. I now turn to the role and status of these Swazi rural women in a Swazi traditional setting.

CHAPTER ONE
THE ROLE AND STATUS OF
SWAZI RURAL WOMEN.

Critical reflection on the role of Swazi rural women has been neglected, and accurate historical information must be collected if we are to preserve their true social reality. It is often said that those in control, either in the academy or politics, tend to dismiss voices that are outside their constitution. Kirby and McKenna (1989,p.19) articulates this notion when they say,

part of what it means to be outside the "ruling apparatus" is that we do not hear our own stories. If our experience is described it is usually explained in terms and language that are not our own. When we begin to interpret ourselves and say together with others on the margins that "this is my story, this is our story," the power dynamics begin to shift.

This chapter, therefore, uses Swazi women's traditional songs to tell women's stories and unravel their social reality. Furthermore, since colonialism is part of our history, Swazi rural women's concerns cannot be independently discussed without mentioning how they are intricately intertwined with colonialism. Ollenburger and Helen (1992) argue that by ignoring the story of colonization in feminist scholarships we remain marginalised not only as women but as men as well. They maintain that the complications of

patriarchy, capitalism, and colonization tend to be ignored such that it gives false impressions of rural women. However, I will struggle to prevent the colonial legacy from submerging my mentality as I discuss the impact of some cultural structures that demean women as depicted in the songs.

THROUGH THE CONTEMPORARY SWAZI EYE

It is a compelling argument that the way in which a society comprehends its traditions is essential to its awareness of itself because traditions signify continuity and cultural identity. However, as Swazi, we cannot deny that, since we are a developing society and victims of colonialism, we have experienced an economic, political and social change which has affected our traditional structures. Practices such as lobolo (bride wealth), polygamy, and labour division, have lost their traditional significance in contemporary Swaziland, now only to be defended by conservatives and people who claim to be more patriotic. For instance, a famous Swazi radio personality and a self proclaimed polygamist, defending certain traditional practices, said that he finds it surprising that women complain about their rights:

women have inalienable rights which always ensure them of their rightful place in our custom and their rights are observed by all. (The Swazi Observer, 1993, p.9).

I asked some Swazi men the implications for women's

status of some of our traditional practices depicted in the songs. One man was very much annoyed with me. He felt I had organized the women to unjustly attack the traditional norms. He did not understand why long- established traditions should be questioned. "Our forefathers underwent the same system-no one ever questioned it. What you, young woman, is doing undermines the very fibre of our culture which you claim to be promoting", he commented with disgust.

This point may be true, to a certain degree, but the painful truth is that some of our traditional practices have kept women in a subordinate position. The fact is that some traditional practices, which may have made sense in yesterday's Swaziland, are dysfunctional in contemporary Swaziland.

This project will not try to counteract the good of our traditional practices, but neither will it try to defend any traditional structures that have denied a rural Swazi woman equal status with men. The point is, Swazi traditional practices have been greatly affected by change. Are we going to sit back and say 'lafa elihle kakhulu' / the once treasured is no more existing: it is dead, or are we going to be realistic and accept change and preserve what we think will be appreciated by all citizens of the Swazi Kingdom?

Nhlapo (1992,p.44) says,

it is true that our culture and history had been disdained and denigrated by our colonial masters and missionaries. However it is crucial that while part of the process of freeing some Swazi from the

colonial mentality is to revalue our culture, it is true that this must not proceed blindly. Just because a custom is Swazi does not mean that it unquestionably enhances Swazi life, and therefore fails to oppress. It is important to identify what is positive, what is benign, and what is detrimental and should be disowned.

Unfortunately, if we continue nursing the obsession of conservatism and patriotism, we may find ourselves losing the little cultural pride that is left. It is a fact that the young and some educated individuals are shunning some of our traditional practices. Again, Nhlapo (1992,p.116) says,

the most striking way in which African society expresses its panic at the march of change is its attempt to preserve or revive cultural practices in the family sphere, long rendered inappropriate by today's social, political and economic context. Anachronistic adherence to so called 'African ways' poses obvious problem for the cause of women's rights. Yet total abandonment of these values may pose an even greater threat to social cohesion by creating a cultural vacuum in circumstances where there are no substitutes.

I, therefore, echo his words, for I believe that this change does not mean we should lose our identity as Swazi. At the same level, we should be cynical of claims about immemorial traditions, or the hope that we can ever return to values from a pure Swazi past. It is incumbent upon every citizen of this Kingdom that whilst trying to preserve our culture, we should also find ways of ensuring that cherished Swazi values are not expressed in a form that de-humanises women. Prince Sobandla, inaugurating a symposium on women's issues, said,

today I say to those who have love for our country, let us say it loud and clear and together with one voice that the intolerance and bigotry of some of our citizens towards women and other minorities must be looked with a scornful eye and treated with contempt it deserves- this is neither a challenge nor a threat to the opposite gender and all those who have not started thinking clearly and meaningfully. (1992, pp.13-14)

In order for this inevitable change to be acceptable without much regret, especially with "the opposite gender and those who have not started thinking clearly and meaningfully," the answer is to take what is useful from other cultures and to keep what is most important in ours. We all know, however, that this is not always easy because a group that has been enjoying the status quo provided by cultural norms will not give up such norms easily. Majahenkhaba Dlamini (1992,p.27) said,

it seems, however, that unless we liberate ourselves mentally, we shall not succeed to liberate ourselves in any other way from what we conceive to be the bondage of timeless customs and traditions. I perceive that unless we understand the root cause of this controversial inequality, neither act of Parliament, nor King's Decree shall succeed to liberate us from the self-imposed social and cultural bondage in which the woman is the victim of overt and covert discrimination.

Tradition and change will always clash. Women have been patient long enough. They now need to stand up and question some of the cultural structures that have kept them in a subordinate position. Majahenkhaba Dlamini (1992,p.28) supports this notion when he says,

a great deal of this equalisation process will

depend on women themselves. They wear the shoe, they know where it pinches. It is not upon men to say women in Swaziland are not discriminated against when women feel they are.

Of course, women are not legally second class citizens of this Kingdom although often treated as such. Nor would men like to be placed in such an oppressed situation. We should thus treat every individual, regardless of gender as valuable first class citizens of this Kingdom.

In this chapter I will examine the social, economic and political role and status of Swazi rural women. The cultural foundation which is the basis for forms of behaviour and perceptions of reality cannot be ignored. Change has not bypassed the rural Swazi woman. She is no longer as isolated as she was. These are women that Mirriam Dlamini (1992) says form the cornerstone of the economy and, therefore, should not be sidelined or marginalised. These are the women that Linda Vilakati (1982) says might be illiterate, but not unintelligent. These are the women that Prince Sobandla (1992) says are the prime movers within the development process rather than welfare recipients, vital agents of change rather than passive by-standers, and strategic actors in the search for innovative approaches to food security rather than helpless victims of poverty. These are the women (during my data collection) I found intimidating, intelligent and experienced. I felt very ambivalent about my intention to comment on their work and to give it a critical analysis.

While these women, and many others outside this group, are still captured in demeaning cultural structures, we must not let them down. These are women who have danced and have sung with a smile to the tune of the establishment. These women compose and sing from experience. They have a mixture of humour and good judgement. Despite the heavy load they are carrying, they still dance and sing with a smile.

THE LOAD IS HEAVY

The women warmly welcomed me, generously giving me what I wanted to see and to write. I felt self-conscious, as if examining inner secrets of their lives, for these songs say so much about their social life that I felt almost uncomfortable peering into this heavy burdened life. I found this part of my data collection emotionally exhausting. I felt such solidarity with these women because I associated them with my mother and my grandmother who have had similar experiences. These are the women with whom my grandmother, in particular, has laughed, talked, discussed, and exchanged experiences and observations.

The negative economic impact of colonialism on Swazi women should not be ignored. Gates (1985,p.229) says,

European imperialism has changed the terms of any African discourse. Whatever radical praxis the present may require, the imprint of the past should not be ignored.

The Imperialists' economic structures reinforced traditional

patterns of domination and subordination. These economic components are mirrored in other major locations such as political, educational and familial systems. We are, therefore, compelled to link the models of patriarchy and women's economic burden to the economic expropriation of human and natural resources in the colonization process. Ollenburger (1992,p.29) describes women's living in former colonized areas as producers and reproducers based clearly on capitalistic cost-benefit calculations. She asserts, "colonization and the introduction of cash economy, the introduction of tax interrupted the division of labour infrastructure" (1992,p.29). It is unfortunate that, today, whenever we recall the economic status of African women prior to colonialism, it sounds unconvincing and over-romanticized. However, Ollenburger (1992) argues that colonialism ushered in an economic value of unpaid labour which is defined by the arrangement of patriarchy compounded by colonialism. This kind of arrangement imposed on women a double burden. It has also created an unforgivable drift between women who question gender inequities in our societies and men who have painstakingly tried to defend traditional structures.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A WOMAN

" Who is home? " A roaring voice asks a few metres from a house. " 'Akunamuntfu babe. Ngitsi nje bantfwabakho' / there

is nobody here, father, only us, your children," answers a submissive voice from the house. This is a common conversation between a husband arriving home in the evening and his wife in a Swazi rural homestead. The woman has been socialised into seeing herself as a child, hence the answer: it is us, your children, who are here. What does this say about a Swazi rural woman? What roles are assigned her? What assumptions can be made about her status? We cannot deny the fact that Swazi pay much allegiance to respect. We are known as a nation that has respect for people, especially elders and foreigners. Unfortunately, a married woman is sometimes deprived of this human characteristic in the virtue of being 'sidzandzane sasemtini', an alien girl.

I asked these women what it means to be a woman. In every region, the answers were similar. Almost unanimously, they believe of their status and role that:

1. to be a woman means to bear children and fend for them; to be a woman means to work hard for your children so that they could be able to go to school and have school uniform;
2. to be a woman means to be under a man or husband; to be a woman means your life is governed by your husband; to be a woman is to be someone who is a wife and was paid lobola for and she is expected to respect and please her husband and in-laws and be at their service and mercy all the time;
3. to be a woman is to look after the home\house - cooking; gathering firewood; carrying water; ploughing the fields which includes processing, storage, preservation; house repairs; care of livestock.

The following extract from Nhlapo, Vilakati and Ferraro (1992) echoes some of the women's definitions of what it means to be a woman.

Swazi consider the production of legitimate offspring a social obligation of adult men and women... The capacity to produce offspring is more important than all other human endowments. Women are expected to become wives at some stage in their lives and as wives they are required to be, first and foremost, mothers (p.51, 118).

More often one would hear a Swazi woman say, "If it were not for my children, I would have long left this home and gone back to my people". In a Swazi traditional marriage, women do not have a right to custody of their children in the event of leaving the man. Divorce is a difficult concept in a traditional marriage. A woman usually will not consider leaving her husband because that would be tantamount to abandoning her children.

All the women I visited answered the question, what it means to be a woman, by saying that it means to bear children and fend for them. I then realised how much women had to endure just to enable them to be with their children. A married woman is expected by her husband and her in-laws to produce children. Hilda Kuper (1963) says that

Swazi marriage is essentially a linking of two families rather than of two persons, and the bearing of children is the essential consummation of wifehood (p.22).

If there is one custom that is firmly embedded in Swazi

society, it is that of lobolo. Many educated Swazi women, and even Christians who have always despised Swazi customs, are not prepared to be married without the passing of lobolo. There is a strong belief that 'kute umntfwana weliSwati wamahhala'/ there is no Swazi child for free. 'Ungumusa wabani'/ who is your father? is the first question that any Swazi adult would ask a young Swazi if they meet. Children are in the centre of this controversy. For instance, if a man dies having not paid lobolo, his parents or relatives will have to pay lobolo to ensure the children know who their father's people are, which in turn ensures that the father's people are free to make any claims over the children. The widow cannot take any major decisions that affect the children's well being without the knowledge, consent or approval of the patrilinear relatives. That is why the lobolo custom is alive and well in all sectors of the Swazi community. Of course, patriarchal attitudes are also alive and well in the Swazi society. Kuper (1963, pp.18-19) says,

By giving lobolo, the children are made legitimate and become entitled to the benefits of the father's lineage. The children build up the lineage of the father and the size and influence of the homestead.

Nhlapo (1992, p.119) echoes Kuper's observations:

The role of women as mothers has a great impact on their lives. There are interests which need to be protected and they are superior to those of the partners- may be summed up as survival-through-procreation. Its origins lie in the overriding need for the family, the lineage and the clan to reproduce themselves and ensure their survival.

Lobolo definitely gives power and authority to the man over his wife. That is why when a woman decides to leave a marriage, she can take only her clothes. Women do not enjoy a great deal of choice. Because of children, many women prefer to remain in a frustrating and humiliating marriage. This tradition of lobolo puts the man securely in a position of power over his wife and entrenches subordination. Empowerment, where it exists, is still something conferred on women by men, and the individuality of self for women still remains strangled. Such unpleasant traditional qualities are symptoms of women disempowerment.

While deliberating on this issue, one woman said the following song might have been composed to signify the fact that, when a woman leaves her husband, she cannot take the children with her.

Lomalenje is at home
I dreamt
We saw her carrying her bags.

Usekhaya Lomalenje
Mine ngibhudzile
Sambona atfwele tikhwama.

Another woman, known as laKunene (the prefix la- stands for daughter of), said, "that is why when I beat my children, my mother in-law tells me that 'angitanga nemntfwana' / I never came with a child to this home". In other words, she does not have a child. The children belong to her in-laws.

When the women said that to be a woman means to work hard

for one's children's welfare, I realized how much sacrifice these women have made on behalf of their children. In the process, out of choice, they have promoted the social and cultural patterns of conduct which oppress women.

Khetsiwe Dlamini (1992,p.41) says,

women are a core and engine of human development. It is the woman who conceives and brings up a child. The maternal care of a child is in the hands of a woman. Proper nutrition and healthy development of a child is in her hands. Added to this, the majority of children are able to go to schools through the efforts of their mothers who work very hard to find money that has to pay for their fees.

The rural women have done great and honourable deeds but have received little or no generalised publicity. They have contributed more than any other group of Swazi women or men to the economic welfare of their families. The reward for all this hard work is poverty and often a fight for survival for these already overburdened women who are used as the economic shock absorbers of their families.

When I asked the women of their role in the economic welfare of their families, they told me that they carry a heavy load, especially with men being away to the urban area and children being in school. Dlamini and Akinnusi say,

With working husbands absent from home, women are decision- makers (only in light issues) and manage households. The dual role of women and occupational responsibilities means that they often have a prolonged working day. Yet these additional charges do not give women authority, security or material facilities for their livelihood to raise their social status (1992,p.5).

Due to out- migration, the agricultural labour force has become predominantly female. Traditionally, the head of the homestead makes decisions in all matters concerning the homestead. Some women with migrant husbands expressed the view that this situation was a real obstacle to progress in their different activities. They indicated that decisions about major changes in crop production, livestock and other important aspects to improve their production are in the hands of their husbands who may not be around when the problems arise. Credit facilities, for instance, may not be processed on the initiative of a married woman since the husband is the one who disposes of the security. Basically, the process of decision-making poses a problem in most tasks which are the direct responsibility of women.

One woman, laMasilela, said that men's presence does not make any difference. The fact is "as women, we are the core of the household, the main food producers, the ones solely responsible for domestic labour, the bearers and rearers of children". She said that on top of all this, they still have to engage in income generating projects which enable them to supplement their income as subsistence farmers. Such supplementation further enables them to buy basic commodities such as sugar, salt and soap that they cannot obtain from tilling the soil. Above all, with the income they generate from the projects, they are able to take their children to school. Despite all this, at the end of the day, women are

still seen as "women", inferior to men, bearers of children and domestic servants without pay. From these women's analysis of the heavy load they are carrying, it clearly indicates that the sexual division of labour allocates to women specific domestic tasks which place an excruciatingly heavy burden on women's daily lives. Majahenkhaba Dlamini (1992,p.28) comments,

there is nothing wrong with men and women being different but equal, for human beings are not the sum total of their roles prescribed in part by their gender, and in part by a host of other variables. Differences based on sex alone therefore should not be used by anybody as a justification for the inequality between men and women.

Patriarchal attitudes apparently cross all boundaries, uniting all men in their continuing exploitative practices. Can our society succeed in changing women's lives without recognizing this and confronting it directly?

I asked these women to sing a song that depicts their economic role in the family. It was as if I had touched a sensitive nerve. Many songs were sung, but I will quote only three:

1. I got married young.
I do not have any energy left.
All my energy got wasted in marriage.
All my energy, all my strength is gone, oh my Lord.
I got married young.
All my strength is gone.
Marriage has defeated me.
All my energy is gone.
Marriage has defeated me.

Mine ngendza ngimncane.

Aphelil' emandl' ami.
 Aphelel' ekwendzeni.
 Aphelile Nkhosi yami.
 Ngagana ngumncane.
 Angiphelel' emandla.
 Inkhonto ingehlulile.
 Aphelil' emandl' ami.
 Nekwendza kungehlulile.
 Inkhonto ingehlulile
 Aphelil' emandl' ami.
 Nekwendza kungehlulile.
 Aphelil' emandl' ami.

2. How much food do you give my mother, you bride,
 Because she has lost weight.
 She has sunken eyes.
 Oh the old woman has gone thin.
 She has even sunken eyes.
 You will meet her on the way carrying a supporting
 stick.

Umphakela kanjani lomake yemakoti,
 Ngoba sewondzile.
 Sewunetingobho.
 Waze wazaca umuntfu lomdzala.
 Uze unetingobho.
 Utawuhlangana naye aphetse lubhoko.

- (b) We are dying of hunger in this home.
 Food is behind the door.

Safa yindlala lapha ekhaya.
 Emabele asemuva kwesivalo.

These songs show that a woman is a producer of food to
 feed her family, in-laws, immediate and extended family
 members and, at times, passers-by who are community members.
 In a Swazi context, the family is extended to include
 grandparents, in-laws and distant relatives. There is nothing
 wrong with such structures, which show humanity. However,
 these structures have been abused by the beneficiaries in
 allocating physical responsibilities solely to woman. For

example, if a rural woman wants to live in harmony with her in-laws, her pots should always be full of food, accompanied by 'umqombotsi'/ a traditional brew. Hilda Kuper (1963) says that it is important for the woman to win the favour of her in-laws for her future happiness. Nhlapo (1992) agrees with Kuper when he says that women's lives, particularly in terms of personal independence, are subjected to the needs of the family and this serves to subordinate the interests of women as persons. He says that "if that structure masks inequality under the disguise of group interests, women (lacking a say in the articulation of those interests) are certain to be disadvantaged". The good behaviour and generosity that she should show to her in-laws means that the woman will have to work hard in the fields to produce enough to feed all these people throughout the year. It is not the generosity aspect that is burdensome and bothersome, it is the abuse of the woman's physical energy.

I have the most vivid image of a Swazi rural woman in the family plots wearing a big sun hat, her legs straight and arms stretching, weeding day in and day out under clear skies and hot sun. Often this work is done with a baby on her back and the only rest might be when the infant cries in hunger and the mother finds a place at the edge of the field to nurse her child. She is the first one to awaken for she must prepare food for the husband and other family members. She can be in her field as early as 5:00 am and she will work until midday

when the sun, high in the sky and burning hot, is too harsh to work under. When she returns home from the fields, the woman's work is only partially done. Fortunately, today, the woman does not have to process the food herself. There are public grinding mills where the maize can be processed. Fire will have to be made either in a coal stove which she might have struggled to possess or on the floor in the kitchen. The lighting of the fire comes only after hours of searching for fuel, often travelling long distances as the supplies near home are depleted. Water for cooking, for washing dishes, and for ablutions must also be collected. It is unfortunate that not all rural areas have clean tap water. Christabel Motsa, who has acknowledged the heavy burden carried by these woman, says,

women as we are all aware, do most of the work to gather food and fuel from the environment to sustain their families. It is women who have to travel long distances in search for firewood and water as dams get silted from the erosion. Women are an invisible workforce and therefore the resource managers. Their knowledge and expertise is completely ignored by those in positions to make decisions on environmental policies (1993,p.46).

It is the same woman who has to do the family laundry which is often done at a river's edge or other water source, a journey of greater or lesser distance. The house and the living area must be swept and cleaned. Food must be cooked. It is the woman who will have to find vegetables or meat to go with the porridge. And throughout the day, as a backdrop to

all the other work, is the never-ending responsibility for child care. All these tasks are carried out with minimal, if any, access to technology that could shorten the time involved and reduce physical strain. Mirriam Dlamini (1992) says, in most instances, work that is undertaken by women in agriculture, handicraft and other household activities, is undermined and ignored by government and the public. This untangles the mystery of why, despite today's technology such as tractors and better weeding techniques, rural women have not been eased in the burden and drudgery of subsistence farming.

Policy-makers and planners should not hide behind high sounding phrases like integrating rural women into development. Rural women long integrated themselves into development. Women do most of the work on farms and at home. What needs to be addressed is how we could transform the institutions that subordinate women so that these women could benefit most from their contribution to the economic and social development of their country.

COURAGEOUS AND PERSEVERING WOMEN:

WHAT LITERACY MEANS TO THEM

It is difficult not to respect the incredible courage and perseverance shown by these women despite the heavy load they

are carrying. Assertive, yes, they have been, and with determination and perseverance they have beaten some odds that have come their way.

These women are great fighters of illiteracy, poverty and hunger. Some of the women who were interviewed from eMbeka and eMaphalaleni areas attend the 'Sebenta' / to work, (King Sobhuza II named it Sebenta because it was intended to serve adults who have to carry out their domestic duties in the morning) adult literacy classes. They spoke of their gains from this programme and mentioned some handicaps to their progress.

With their domestic work load, one would assume that adding literacy classes to their daily tight schedule would be more than most could handle, particularly women with children. However, there are more women in Sebenta classes than men. Women from the eMbeka area claim that through Sebenta classes they have learned: health care hints; farming hints in terms of the right type of seeds and fertilisers to use; harvesting tactics; and toilet building and its significance. For instance, they have built toilets in community schools and in their homes. They are the ones who build bricks and then build the toilets. They have been taught about hazardous habits to children like swimming in dams. The women believe that the basic elementary ability to read and write began to open them to a whole world from which they felt excluded. These words were echoed by the women from eMaphalaleni.

Women from both communities also have to find time to

attend rural development projects and also to work on their handicrafts. For handicrafts, for instance, they do grass weaving of mats, hats, baskets, bags, bangles, brooms and curtains. They also make beads, clay bowls, drinking pots and brewing vessels. Handicrafts have played an important role in augmenting the income of women's families'. Linda Vilakati (1987), trying not to underestimate the importance of handicrafts in these women's economic lives, comments:

whenever planners, programme developers and project directors are faced with the question, 'how do we develop viable income generating activities for women?' The first thing that comes to their minds is handicrafts. The myth is that handicrafts are women's work. Something they do well, an activity that presumably does not interfere with domestic responsibilities and one that requires a low level of investment and short resale periods. Rarely do we bother to look at the realities of the situation in terms of the lives of the women the project proposes to serve. It is necessary to review carefully projects which are designed to help rural women to increase their income.

I echo Vilakati's argument. Rural projects do offer many opportunities for women to acquire self-esteem, skills and some eminence in their communities. However, there is a tendency to assume that women's specific projects respond fully to women's needs while on the other hand, these projects may result in the marginalization and separation of women from mainstream development activities and from participation in setting national priorities and agendas. This observation applies particularly in cases where women's specific projects

are focused on economic issues. There is a danger of involving the women in traditional, marginal activities, such as handicrafts, poultry-raising, uniform making etc, with low economic returns and little in the way of change in women's status. As well income generating projects do not mean that women's poverty blues are over, neither does it mean that her traditional status has been elevated.

The plight of the eMbeka women demonstrates how insignificant women's work is to those who have power. Embeka women maintain that their major handicap is the absence of a road. Since there is no road, there is no bus service. To reach their actual destination, they walk a distance of over 20 kilometres from the bus station. Whenever they go to the city to collect their farming implements and supplies, they find it strenuous to carry some of the stuff on their heads. They complained that this retards their progress because they cannot even take some of their produce to sell in the city. They cannot even start on a communal vegetable garden because their produce might spoil due to lack of accessible markets. In general, rural women have discovered the significance of running vegetable gardens because they allow them to eat better and healthier. They also carry their handicrafts on their heads to the bus station. These women maintain that they have moved from one office to another trying to negotiate for a road and a bus route service.

Further determination was shown by the group of women

from eMaphalaleni who were able to start a piggery project. In general, rural women have kept themselves in touch with the world by listening to the radio. This particular group, for instance, got the idea of raising pigs by listening to radio rural development programmes where women talk about their projects. They did not have money to start the project but they had to get some means to visit the other women who had their project already on the move. They persevered, went to the city and found their way to the Canadian Aid and European Economic Community (EEC) offices where they were able to acquire some financial help.

These women have gained a new sense of self. Despite hindrances, they persevere and speak out and enter offices that they would have never entered before gaining confidence through the adult literacy programme. These are women who, when community matters of importance are discussed, are not included because men say women cannot think!

One woman commented, "when people do not know reading and writing, they are afraid". Once this fear begins to withdraw there is ecstasy in the power they derive from their new found skills. Literacy has definitely assisted the quest for self empowerment. For those rural women who have managed to persevere and overcome these obstacles, horizons have widened progressively, lifting the veil of ignorance in a series of small victories. Women who brought with them to class their low-self-esteem, their insecurities and fears, women coming

out of a situation where they are dependent and subordinate have so much to overcome, but overcome they did, even if only in minimal ways. These women thanked King Sobhuza II for initiating the Sebenta classes. Showing their appreciation and their concern to see it flourish and be given the attention it deserves, they sang the following song:

Let me report to King Mswati at Ludzidzini
 About the adult education
 Which was given to us by King Subhuza II.
 Both the Queen Mother and the King should be told
 About the adult education.
 Both the Queen Mother and the King should be told.

Sale ngimbikela naMswati eLudzidzini
 Ngale mfundvo yalabadzala
 Lesayinikwa ngu Sobhuza
 Sale atshelwa nemakhos'onkhe
 Ngalemfundvo yalabadzala.

As I looked at these women, who dash to gatherings where they find peace and dance their tiredness away, inevitably my emotions took over. From the workload, there is tiredness in their eyes that tells of the longing for rest. It so much reminded me of my mother, I failed to control my emotions and I cried. I cried for myself, for my mother, for all Swazi women, and all women of Africa.

Drawing from the heavy load that these women carry, Linda Vilakati (1982) observes:

these hard-working, shrewd, productive women are agents of development and are resources upon which development planners should draw. (p.51)

It is cruel injustice that women who play such an important

role in food production in rural Swaziland do not have such access to adequate extension services and training. Women are responsible for most of the agricultural labour but because they have no access to training courses, to improved techniques, to loans, credit and marketing facilities, they continue to cultivate the land using techniques which they were taught by their mothers. Khetsiwe Dlamini (1992),

women farmers in Swaziland have experienced persistent bias in the delivery of agricultural services from Government. For instance, it is the men who go for short agricultural workshops. Although women do more than 50% of agricultural work, their participation in farming and credit co-operatives is very low. Women do not enjoy the benefits of being members of these co-operatives, such as getting credit for fertilizer, improved seeds and pesticides.

Despite the obstacles articulated by Khetsiwe Dlamini, Swazi rural women are receptive to changes and are quick to grab opportunities that will help them to improve their quality of life. (Dlamini and Akinnusi 1992, p.23). For instance, where possible through their new-found economic independence, women are moving away from their dependence on men. A co-operative productive life, being outside of the restrictions of the family structure, enhances this independence. It further enables women to make their own decisions. Women are running the co-operatives themselves. Co-operatives based on different projects such as raising pigs have been established. These women enjoy their fruits of labour in total equality and democracy. In this way, the co-

operatives are breaking definitively with the social basis of women's traditional subservient status. That is why they could compose and sing the following songs which criticize men's attitudes about work:

1. Men are silly.
Let us exchange the domestic work.
Let men do the cooking.

Emadvodza ayeyana.
Akuntshintshwane,
Sekupheke emadvodza.

2. Heavy boots at the door.
It is best to give the loin skin to me.
You do not want to go and work.
Why are you not working?

Ingwabela isemnyango.
Kuncono unike mine lamajobo.
Awufuni kuyosebenta.
Awusebenti ngani?

3. You lazy dog.
You only get active at night.
The fields are not ploughed.
Lazy dog,
You only get active at night.

Vila lenja.
Ukhutsala ntsambama.
Emasimu alele.
Wena ukhutsala ntsambama.

Because of these co-operatives, a new relationship has been created in the family. Women have contributed to the upkeep of the family more than men and in a way that is socially recognized. Women have somehow stopped being just family beings and, instead, they have become social beings. It

is in this that a new set of gender relations is occurring within the family and it is occurring because women are demanding it.

On the other hand, while education can play a major role in helping women realise the importance of infant and child care, building of latrines, initiating income generating projects, and so on, without reorganizing women's role and status in production and without gender struggle, progress will be limited.

IS IT BECAUSE I AM A WOMAN?

Kuper (1963,p.120) observes,

Women in conservative Swazi society have a status inferior to that of men: all their lives they are minors; on marriage they become aliens in the patriarchal homesteads of their husbands, subjected to restrictions in behaviour and language, and to humiliations and jealousies associated with a polygamous society; they are excluded in communal political deliberations- although their presence in such meetings is expected.

Revealing further the subservient status of Swazi woman in a traditional setting, one woman I talked with told me that a Swazi woman does not stand in the midst of men to express her viewpoint. If she has a worthy idea that she would like to share with the community, she can always communicate it to her husband. She must also be modest about how she presents it to the husband lest she tamper with her husband's superiority complex. She must not show that she is more clever than the

husband. However, the husband will pretend the woman's idea is invalid. The man will silently admit to himself the nobility of the idea and during communal political meetings, he will raise the idea as his. This woman maintained that a man's success is a woman's pride. Under no circumstances could a man disclose the wife as a source of the noble idea, partly because a woman is thought to have a feeble mind. If a man brings up a stupid point in a communal political meeting, for instance, he is told by other men to sit down because he is said to be thinking like a woman.

Mirriam Dlamini (1992) says that a contribution made by women is hardly ever appreciated; women's opinions, as well, regardless of their importance and validity, are generally ignored in our societies. The women sang the following song to support the authenticity of their argument.

You chiefs, what are you monitoring?
 The issue that was left pending in the Royal kraal is bad.
 We reported it at Phondo (King's residence).
 We reported it at Ludzidzini (Queen Mother's residence).
 Hey you chiefs of kaNgwane, what are you monitoring?
 The lion (the King) roared at Phondo.
 The lion roared at Ludzidzini.
 The issue that was left pending at Ludzidzini is pretty bad.
 Hey, you headmen, you are supposed to be the nation's custodians.
 What are you doing?

Nine tikhulu nigadzeni?
 Yimbi lendzaba leyasala esibayeni.
 Sayifaka ePhondo.
 Sayifaka eLudzidzini.
 Tikhulu takaNgwane, nibukeni esiveni?

Labhodla ePhondo.
 Labhodla eLudzidzini.
 Yimbi lendzaba layasala esibayeni.
 Nine tindvuna nigadzeni esiveni?

For instance, in most community leadership, there is not a single woman representative. They are often by-passed, simply because they are women. Therefore, one tends to wonder if women have to suffer all kinds of subordination just because "their creator made them female instead of male". Hilda Kuper (1963) says that, based on this belief, in a Swazi traditional society equality between a husband and a wife is not expected or desired. The pattern of out-migration ties women to agriculture but their decision-making powers are limited. Land is allocated to males and thus women are dependent on males (fathers, husbands, brother, sons) for access to land. In the absence of a 'booming' voice that is the male head of the household, women are unable to secure more land for new activities; nor do they have access to loans necessary to provide equipment, fertilizers, seed and other inputs. Despite these problems, a striking aspect of these women is their love of the land, their independence and self-assured strength and their ability to cope with family needs.

Undisputedly, in this way, some traditional structures have contributed to the subservient status of women and, hence, stagnation of the rural economy. These structures have also placed a heavy load on the woman who will have to depend on subsistence farming and, at the same time, find viable

alternatives for earning cash.

MUSIC IS OUR PLATFORM

Swazi woman's traditional music has outlasted all kinds of modern music. It has remarkable staying power, and seems to provide the voice for rural woman's separatist agenda. I listen and watch a good deal of our traditional music and traditional dances and I enjoy much of what I hear and see, although much of what I hear saddens me.

When I asked laKunene if women have a platform to express themselves, the answer was 'yes they do'. She said, "we always empower ourselves as women through songs." She maintains that every Swazi has a right to compose a song of any political nature. She sang to me this political song:

Here at kaNgwane, Queens and Kings have always been installed.
 We install chiefs; they are fired.
 We install headmen, they do not want them.
 We install Dzeliwe (a former Queen Regent);
 they do not want her;
 She gets fired.
 Here in the land of the Swazi, we have seen the unseen.
 Prime Ministers are installed;
 They are not trusted.

Lapha kaNgwane, tsine kadze siwabeka emakhosi emhlaba.
 Sekubekwa tikhulu, niyaticosha.
 Sekubekwa tindvuna, abatifuni.
 Sekubekwa Dzeliwe, naye abamfuni, niyamcosha.
 Bondvunankhulu bayabekwa, abatsenjwa.

To support the fact that Swazi rural women have and still use songs to empower themselves, another young woman sang to me the following song:

Everyday, I cook for the dogs.
However, those that live with them do not get fat.

Solo kwasa nje ngiphekela izinja.
Wo! abanoni labahlala nazo.

She used this song as her vehicle to convey her bitterness surrounding her life with her husband who had taken another wife and had set her aside. However, she was expected by both her husband and her in-laws to carry out her domestic duties as before. She said that, by composing this song, she wanted her husband and in-laws to be aware that she was not happy with the treatment accorded to her and that her in-laws should come to her rescue. Another woman in a similar situation composed this song:

You unwanted woman,
Come out and run away for yourself.
You who is hated,
Come out and run away for yourself.
You who is rejected,
Come out and run away for yourself.
You who is despised,
Come out and run away for yourself.

Mfati labakwalako,
Phuma utibalekele.
Mine labangenyanyako,
Wena lowaliwako,
Phuma utibalekela.
Mfati loweyiwako,
Phuma utibalekele.

Whoever said that women in a polygamous structure do not hurt must have been a man! The women I visited condemn polygamy and they have even composed songs that depict the bitter life surrounding women in a polygamous family.

I asked another woman to comment on the above song. Although we were discussing rural women's means of making themselves heard in a traditional setting, we ended up discussing the ills of polygamy. The woman said, "My child, why do you have to ask me why this song was composed? It is obvious that women do not want polygamy, but when a man decides to take another wife, he does not discuss it with the first wife. She is expected to be passive and pretend all is well. She cannot protest. She is only a woman who came to ask for marriage." She then sang a marriage song sung on the first night of the bridal party's arrival in which the bride asks to be accepted into the family .

We have come to ask for marriage, mother of my darling.
We have come to ask for marriage.
We come from far.
Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Sitocela inkhonto nabosingani.
Sitocela inkhonto.
Siphuma khashane.

"That is why these songs are composed", she continued, as though the song had fuelled more energy into her emotions. "We promised in marriage that 'siyolibamba lishisa'/ we will handle it even if it burns. We are able to ease the frustration through music."

Another woman, who could not wait for her turn to come, said, "but if a man has four wives, how can he satisfy them all? He will be the only one who gets the satisfaction because

he has all the power to do as he pleases. He can visit me once a month if he likes. If I complain I will be taken as an immoral woman. My co-sisters will mock me and say 'ngiyayitsandza indvodza' / I love a man". She then sang the following song to support her argument:

I was drunk.
 You should not lock up one of you (co-sister) in the kitchen.
 Hey, you woman, you really love a man.

 Mine bengidzakiwe.
 Ungabokhiyela lomunye edladleni.
 Nawe mfati uyayitsandza indvodza.

An outsider, seeing these women dancing and singing with a smile, would swear they did not feel any emotional pain and yet they hurt deeply and suffer much.

Songs that describe jealousy in polygamous homesteads were composed by women in such settings. Here are two examples:

- (a) Even when I talk in a low voice
 Or whisper, my co-sisters report me.
 She reports me, she exaggerates to the husband.
 How am I supposed to talk?
 She carries me like an ant.

Ngibatse ngikhuluma kancane,
 Uyangihleba, uyangitsatsa zakwetfu.
 Uyangitsatsa, uyangitfitsa endvodzeni.
 Sengitawukhuluma ngitsini?
 Iyangitfutsa intfutfwane.

- (b) You are despising me,
 You woman who is loved by the man.
 You who always sleeps with her legs apart.
 You are despising me,
 You woman who is loved.

Wena uyashobzela.

Mfati lotsandvwa yindvodza,
Mfati longamangqolo,
Wena uyashobzela.
Mfati lotsandvwako.

It is clear that, by composing songs, Swazi rural women are refusing to fully accept the traditional structures that place them in subordinate, demeaning and humiliating positions. These women deserve to be respected as intelligent human beings, capable of solving problems and of participating in the fields of politics, in national and domestic decision-making agendas and, with training, access to credit facilities, land etc., and thus in economic development.

SUMMARY

Nhlapo (1992) asks:

What is it about custom that is inimical to women's rights? Is it everything that emanates from an attitude to women in marriage and in the family which sees them solely as adjuncts to the group, a means to the anachronistic end of clan survival, rather than as valuable in themselves and deserving of recognition for their human worth on the same terms as men? (p.110)

Rural women in particular have struggled to be both proper and accomplish their extensive work schedules. What cannot be disputed about their role and status is that the reality of rural women's lives has been both hard work and real economic contributions to their families' well being, whether through school fees earned by a mother's handicraft

sales or poultry- raising sales.

On a day-to-day basis, it is the women, not the men, who shoulder the worries of bringing up children, of getting home on time to attend to their household responsibilities and getting up before dawn the following morning to begin the daily chores again. Despite all this, these women have faced problems of recognition of their labour. And still they dance and sing with a smile.

When I listened to the songs that depict the cruelty of the drought that gripped the Southern region of Africa, I could understand the cruel contradiction for women: hard as their lives may be as producers for the family subsistence as well as keepers of the household, it is harder still when they cannot even work the land and are unable to keep their children nourished. But still they dance and sing with a smile.

The most interesting aspect of the whole jigsaw puzzle is that these women dance and sing with a smile as they suffer humiliation under the in-laws and co-sisters. They dance and sing with a smile even as they struggle to make money to take their children to school. They dance and sing with a smile in victory when they receive Sebenta literacy certificates. They dance and sing with a smile in appreciation when they receive financial help from different organizations. They dance and sang with a smile even when the country was undergoing political turmoil under the Liqogo inner council regime. They

dance and sing with a smile to show love and loyalty to the monarchy. And still they dance and sing with a smile when the man has taken another wife. They just dance and sing, always wearing a smile.

Drawing from the heavy load that rural women carry, there is a tendency to believe that African women are strong. I personally find such conclusions to be sarcastic and mocking of the woman who is the victim of tradition and colonialism. bell hooks (1981) comments:

Usually when people talk about the strength of black women they are referring to the way in which they perceive black women coping with oppression. They ignore the reality that to be strong in the face of oppression, is not the same as overcoming oppression, that endurance is not to be confused with transformation.

As women we will have to fight assumptions that only men are real farmers and that subsistence farm work is a mere extension of a woman's housework and hence we are expected to farm as a matter of course. Our failure to confront the sexual division of labour in the home, limits a woman's potential and keeps her locked into old patterns of overwork and subordination. It is vital to have our traditional values reassessed so that it be possible to free women from many of the traditional conventions which contribute to their subjection.

Despite all this, still they dance and sing with a smile. Anyone outside their margin may expect them to look serious with the load of their responsibilities. Yet, they smile

often. When they laugh, they blossom with the power of women, of humour, of relationships and of love (bell hooks, 1984).

Swazi rural women are no doubt victims of patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism. Since their daily lives are drenched in oppressive situations, their awareness of patriarchal politics deriving from their lived experiences cannot be denied. They have developed strategies of resistance which are depicted in some of the songs. The next chapter therefore attempts to build critical theories upon which this awareness could be maximized.

CHAPTER TWO
THEORIES OF SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION

The gap between the Swaziland of yesterday and the Swaziland of today is always widening. In the process, national self-identity continues to be misplaced, rural women are pushed further to the margins of society and the school is still a site of the former colonialists' cultural production and promotion. This process could be described as a reproduction of old habits for, as Kwame Nkrumah (In Aloo, 1989, p.7) admits "the anti-colonial struggles [had] invariably led to neo-colonial situations because the inherited structures remained intact". These habits legitimize the inferior status of rural women accorded to them by the history of the colonialists and certain Swazi cultural forms. The school promotes the former colonialists' knowledge, language and culture which legitimizes the ideological domination over the "self" of both society and individual.

It is unfortunate that it is the educated who legitimize the process of elevating foreign culture. Government (which is largely male-dominated) itself is slow to take effective measures to correct the situation because it enjoys the status quo privileges handed over to it by the colonialists. I echo Aloo's reasoning when she argues, "while it can be said, on the whole, that the current identity crisis is a legacy of the colonial past, it is now obvious to us that the policies

pursued in the post-independence have compounded it" (1989,p.7) . The government blames the youth for shunning Swazi culture. Apple (1979) wisely argues that such tactics tend to focus blame on the victims and encourage solutions directed solely at them, while simultaneously directing attention away from the broader social, economic, and cultural factors that created the conditions being labelled. To curb this malignant disease of cultural devaluing which is eating the Swazi society, government introduced traditional music into the school. Convinced that the problem has now been solved, it sits back and relaxes. Weiler (1988,p.28) points to the artlessness and incompleteness of such measures in addressing cultural consciousness:

Such a view ignores the constraints of the material world and the various forms of power and privilege that work together in a complex and mutually reinforced process to make up social reality as we know it. It also ignores the complexity of consciousness and the existence of ideology and culture.

The songs, however, do depict the way of life of the Swazi. Subtly the children are digesting both the negative and positive forms of our cultural life. By introducing the unsifted forms of our culture into our unrefined educational system, are we not competing with the former colonialist culture that has always existed in our formal education system? Are we not placing and promoting a double patriarchal burden (that is, the Swazi and European patriarchal forms) on the shoulders of young women? European patriarchal forms are

still prevalent in the text books, and in our teaching and organizational manner. Kelly (1993,p.75) writes,

The re- establishment of a culture of colonization continues today through these hierarchies and through the silences which permeate the many stories we tell ourselves through...text books.

Both patriarchal forms, unrefined as they are, are left to be consumed by our children and, in the process, the children are expected to love their identity. Is the burden not too heavy on them since they are expected to deal not only with the contradictions but the expectations of both societies? It appears that if there is one thing that the school has succeeded in doing, it is in producing culturally disoriented, albeit literate, minds.

Kelly suggests a form of resistance this way:

Challenging any position within colonialist ideology that of dominance or marginalization, necessitates, that a reader "read against" and resist many of the assumptions and positions offered through and by a text. Such "reading against" is an act of cultural survival, which demands that we ask questions of the stories and representations we accept as defining us. (1993,p.75)

For this reason it is important to capture the complexity of cultural preservation while at the same time drawing rural women from the margin to the centre. Furthermore, it is necessary to attempt to critically awaken the Swazi educated middle class to realize their own mental subordination created by exchanging Swazi identity for the former colonialists' culture. Kesteloot supports the above notion by arguing that

the inherited educational structure gave birth to a class of "highly civilised" individuals. "It is this class which will come to stand apart from the great mass of the people" (1972,p.18). The exchange rate for such status is unbelievably high and uncompromising because it involves the loss of the "self". If left unaddressed, it may remain an unforgivable and unsettled debt to be inherited by our children. Aloo (1989) asserts that Africa's identity crisis "is the crisis of the people of Africa, the essence being their failure to transform the order forged during the colonial era". She provides a counter- strategy to resist this kind of hegemony. She suggests,

we believe that the most fundamental and underlying principle of redefining our identity should be that of structural transformation, a notion which challenges the economic, political and cultural forms of domination which, are found at the international, national and household level (1989,p.7).

Reinforcing Aloo's assertion, Kelly (1993,p.74) provides us with another kind of resistance when she comments:

Unpacking internalized colonialism- the acceptance of knowledge and beliefs about one's history, culture and experience formed through the conditions of domination- is the first step toward revisioning and envisioning more powerful forms of cultural identity and expression.

Through the interviews with this sample of Swazi rural women, they reveal their concerns for and struggles to be brought to the centre while not losing grasp of their culture.

In the process of revelation, a sub- theme emerges, that of preserving culture, using the school as a platform.

Placing women's experiences at the centre provides one with new insights on feminist scholarship. In view of the fact that rural women in Africa have always been placed at the margin by the academy, hence reproducing what Weiler (1988) calls class structures and class cultures, there is a need to bring them to the centre, where they belong. Swazi rural women's feminist knowledge has been thriving in institutional locations of oral traditions other than the academy. It is now time to have them transferred to the academy, partly for future reference. These women are not commonly perceived as intellectuals because they were denied formal education. Swazi rural women neither have the intellectuals' definition of feminist theories nor the command of the language. However, I find these women's songs to be a "militant" ground to employ the course of resistance against women's subordination and against cultural alienation. While these songs foster love for one's identity, they also represent Swazi women's feminist thinking. By singing together, these women express a collective and self-defined Swazi feminist consciousness. Furthermore, by using women's songs, one is re-interpreting, re-affirming and analyzing Swazi women's already existing, but unrecognized, feminist contributions.

The composition of song creates a unique Swazi woman's standpoint on "self" and society. Focussing on Swazi rural

women's songs which depict their experiences, I view their "world through a both/and conceptual lens of the simultaneity" of historical and cultural forms of oppression (Collins, 1991, p.221). I present the songs as Swazi rural women's emerging power of feminist knowledge. The mere composition of the songs gives them a status of self- defining, and self-reliant individuals addressing and confronting political, historical, economic, social and cultural forms. The traditional marriage songs, for example, speak to the importance that knowledge and experience play in the empowerment of an oppressed group.

To form a base for the theoretical debate that this chapter entertains, I regard it necessary to explain what I mean by culture and feminism in the context of this study.

The bone of contention in this project is culture because, first, in the name of culture, women have been placed in the margin, and second, our culture has been marginalised by the educational system imposed by the colonialists. However, it should be noted that our politicians only remember the importance of cultural preservation when their status quo is threatened or questioned. For instance, when they realise that there is no order among the youth or within a professional group, they will lament the loss of respect for our culture. Rural women, on the other hand, who have remained obedient to our traditions, are not incorporated into the "modern" structure. These women keep patriarchy intact while

men scramble for the seats left by colonialists and promote and reproduce white patriarchy by not making major readjustments to our educational system. They conserve or tolerate white patriarchy because it provides and strengthens them with the maintenance of the capitalists' status quo. Women are left to stand as containers or storerooms of our cultural products which men and a class of educated Swazi access and reference whenever the interests of patriarchy and capitalism need strengthening.

What is most interesting is that Swazi women and men share colonialists ridicule of their culture and the subsequent disorganization of family. Men, however, have allowed themselves to be reduced into joining the colonizers under the pretence of taking what is rightfully Swazi, that is, our independence. This confirms a hurting truth that, "the fabric of our lives is stitched" with silent collaboration with colonizers, patriarchy and disdain for selfhood (Lorde, 1988, p. 272). The cultural preservation programme undertaken by policy-makers is shallow. It does not address the real problem of culture shunning. Rural women's major concerns are not taken seriously. The songs that carry the message of their cultural life are politically ignored.

Bunch (1978, p. 338) maintains that we must face the fact that in some occurrences male powers are validating the continuation or advocating the adoption of practices oppressive to women by branding them "cultural" and/or

"resistant" to Western influence. Women must select out from their cultures what is best and what is oppressive. They must refuse to acknowledge any forms of domination of women whether in the name of tradition or in the name of "modernization". Women become highly skilled in surviving situations which oppress them. Therefore I regard patriarchal power as a social accomplishment of a political nature located within a larger set of political, economic, and social relations. Patriarchy waxes power, coupled with capitalism, to control women.

The paradox is that, in this study, culture represents a hegemonic as well as a counter-hegemonic force. It represents itself as a hegemonic force in cultural institutions where it models oppressive characteristic for women. On the other hand, it represents a counter-hegemonic force when it is acknowledged in the classroom as a critical force that would promote Swazi culture while at the same time fighting those cultural structures that demean women. In the context of this study, the question that emanates is: how do we comprehend the concept of culture? This question demands an answer, given the fact that inequities are socially circumscribed by culture and cultural images and practices produced, reproduced, reinforced and reshaped in the context of lived relations and the day-to-day experiences of the people.

What is culture?

According to E. B. Tylor (In Toure, p.18) culture is a

complex thing which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, laws, customs and all the dispositions and habits acquired by men and "women" of society. However, these components that build culture are not static. Luzbetak (In Toure, p.19) says that

cultures change perpetually because the individuals in the society or the cultural architects constantly modify their cultural plans, improve and adapt their behaviour to the caprices and exigencies of their physical, social and ideological milieu.

Change, like stability, is both a positive and negative element in cultural dynamics. Negatively, cultural dynamics can produce changes which lead to cultural shunning, disintegration or even death. Contact with Europeans and colonialism and the sustaining of the European school curriculum are typical examples of the external causes of cultural disintegration in Swaziland. The disintegration is promoted by the people in power who have failed to draw a genuine and critical cultural policy that would justifiably accommodate all Swazi citizens irrespective of sex.

Wilhelm Reich (In Shor, 1980, p46) puts it this way: "[e]verything that creates or maintains a bond with the bourgeois order, that supports and reinforces it, is an impediment to 'identity consciousness' ". As much as we are justified to accuse and condemn the colonialists as being responsible for the disintegration of our culture, at the same time, "we continue to assimilate, sometimes blindly and

unconditionally, Western cultural exchanges" (Toure, p.19). The Western way of life is the snare in which we (especially, the educated middle class Swazi) allow ourselves to be caught. Actually, we are the co-authors, accomplices and co-responsibles for the on-going culture crisis. We have collaborated with the alien dominant culture in marginalizing our own. Our problem is that we lack a coherent cultural policy, a cultural renaissance brought about not by a blind return to the past but a balanced fusion of the best elements of the Swazi model and Western model.

According to Freire (1970), people are the makers of culture and, therefore, culture, as made, is subject to change. Freire asks that if we can change nature, which we did not make, then why can we not change the institutions, which we did make? In this query, Freire points to the importance of human agency and the centrality of Swazi rural women in the creation of historical processes. We therefore need elements of resistance that will become the focal point for the construction of different sets of lived experiences, experiences in which we can find a voice and maintain and extend the positive dimensions of our own cultures and histories. By adopting and adapting Freire's critical literacy programme we will be able to analyze reality and become critically conscious of our situations.

Since this study also utilizes a feminist theoretical analysis of Swazi rural women's status, it is crucial to

clearly define that analytical framework. It is important, in this study, to establish a suitable definition of feminism because of the political and social connotations that it carries. Its origin somehow betrays it. For a change, in Swaziland, something imported from the Western world is met with blatant suspicion. Quite likely, the reason for scepticism lies in feminism's investigative and interrogative approach to patriarchy. Feminism has met with unpopularity and suspicion in certain circles in Swaziland and people in power generally shun it. However, in this study, I use feminism as a form of resistance to Swazi cultural forms that demean a Swazi woman. I also employ feminism as a form of awakening critical awareness. It is used to provoke gender awareness in the youth by having rural women's cultural status introduced into the school curriculum. Women's songs, it is suggested, may be used as an experiment for the creation of critical awareness.

Collins (1991) argues that if we want to be well conversant with the thoughts and lives of Black women as intellectuals, we have to review our way of thinking about who is an intellectual. Swazi rural women, for instance, have not had the privilege of finding public and recognised institutions for their ideas and in which their songs could be analyzed and academically appreciated. It is crucial, therefore, that if we are serious about preserving our culture, we should revisit these "organic" intellectuals who

would be our prime and pure resources. Collins (1990,p.14) writes,

reclaiming the Black female intellectual tradition also involves searching for its expression in alternative institutional locations and among women who are not commonly perceived as intellectuals.

Otherwise, as Anderson (1993,p.350) notes, the exclusion of rural women from systems of social thought and from the institutions in which thought is produced will continue to distort what we know and how we are able to effect social change on behalf of all groups.

What is feminism?

According to Anderson (1993,p.8) feminism is hard to define because it contains a variety of political perspectives and ideas. For her, feminism is "the transformation of institutions to generate liberating social changes on behalf of women". Anderson's definition is flexible enough to accommodate Swazi rural women. I would define feminism as a form of political consciousness of women's social realities. Through feminist consciousness, women are able to see and articulate their social realities and in the process formulate strategies to counteract the dominant forces that perpetually suppress this consciousness. Swazi rural women, for example, have oral feminist literature of their social reality articulated through their songs. They have attempted to use adult literacy as their form of resistance against economic

subordination and exploitation. Freire's critical literacy method, coupled with feminist pedagogy, would maximize their feminist intellectual thought.

According to Manicom (1992,p.380), feminist pedagogy literature includes intense discussion of issues central both to feminist and to other progressive pedagogies. Lather (1991,p.122) adds that feminist pedagogy is aimed at: interrupting relations of dominance; challenging dominant patriarchal frameworks; making visible women's actions, achievements, and concerns; and causing social change. It is crucial therefore that the Swazi school include lived experiences, as well as historical experiences, of Swazi rural women articulated through their voice and music. Attention to women's experiences is the cornerstone of feminist pedagogy. Since these women are authors of the voice that articulates their experiences, they should be given an opportunity to construct and deconstruct the meaning of their social reality in a critical literacy class. With this historical background, I turn to outline the nature of the theoretical debate and the competing and conflicting perspectives within it.

THEORETICAL TRADITIONS

This study is shaped by a framework developed out of the integration of feminist theory and Paulo Freire's critical literacy theory. According to Weiler (1988), both theories

share an underlying concern with the relationship between the individual subject and an oppressive social structure. She further argues that both theories accent that social structures and knowledge are socially framed and thus are open to challenge and change. In order to address the relationship of culture and education adequately, a synthesis of these two perspectives- critical educational theory and feminist theory- is needed. The critical educational theory will form the base of the analysis because, in this study, it provides possible answers to the controversy of cultural preservation. It further provides a strategy of raising the critical consciousness of all subordinated groups, the victims of patriarchy and capitalism. Weiler (1988, p.4) supports this notion further when she argues for the moral imperative of and emphasis of critical educational theory on the need for both individual empowerment and social transformation. That is, it emphasizes the need to develop critical consciousness in students as well as the need to change society as it is presently arranged.

The purpose of the theoretical framework in this study is not merely to describe or uncover interpretations of social dynamics arising from cultural or colonial legacy, but is also to challenge the kinds of hegemonies which have produced and reproduced social contradictions and inequities. Critical literacy is used as the counter-strike challenging hegemonic forces of patriarchy and internalized colonialism. According

to Lather (1991), critical theories intend to "enlighten", "empower" and emancipate people from oppression. She maintains that critical inquiry responds to experiences, desires, and needs of oppressed peoples by focusing on their understandings of their situations. She further argues that critical teaching, for instance, must be premised on a deep respect for the intellectual and political capacities of the dispossessed. Swazi rural women have composed songs which depict their possession of critical thought. Critical literacy would therefore aid the deconstruction of the historical and cultural forces that promote and reinforce oppressive structures on women. The aim of introducing critical literacy, therefore, is to reconstruct critical thought into emancipatory action. Freire (In Shor, 1980, p.48) describes the literacy process as,

a cultural action for freedom, ... a process through which men "and women" who had previously been submerged in reality begin to emerge in order to re-insert themselves with critical awareness.... the right of self-expression and world-expression, of creating and re-creating, of deciding and choosing and ultimately participating in society's historical process.

Women's classes can help provoke critical reflection on models of patriarchal authority. Women are the custodians of our culture. However, the lack of attention to the culturally oppressive structures that their songs depict, shows the selfishness of patriarchy. These women are regarded as "the labouring hands of society [and] the hands that do the work of

society are not supposed to think or feel" (Shor, 1980, p. 51). In Shor's theoretical analysis of false consciousness, he maintains that

a whole battery of cultural instruments are at work to produce false consciousness, that is, manipulated action and reflection which lead people to support their own oppression (1980, p. 55).

He describes false consciousness as an irrationalizing form of power which accustoms people to police themselves by internalizing the ideas of patriarchy and an identity inferiority complex. The great power of dominated thought is that people refuse the means of their own liberation while taking responsibility for acting in ways which reproduce their powerlessness. Freire describes false consciousness as follows:

Submerged in reality, the oppressed cannot perceive clearly the order which serves the interests of the oppressors whose image they have internalized.... the oppressed feel an irresistible attraction towards the oppressor and his (sic) way of life. Sharing this way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration. In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressor, to imitate him, to follow him. This phenomenon is especially prevalent in the middle-class oppressed, who earn to be equal to the "eminent" men of the upper class (1970, pp. 48-49).

Such a sense of powerlessness convinces the oppressed that the system cannot be changed. Drawing an example from Swazi women's traditional songs on marriage, it is evident how mother-in-laws reproduce their powerlessness in patriarchy by

transferring their oppression to their daughter-in-laws. (See song, no.14, p.186). bell hooks (In McLaren and Leonard, 1993, p.149) says that it is important to realise that "we are objects and that we should move from object to subject. We are colonized people struggling to decolonize, to transform society". Swazi women suffer double colonization, of patriarchy and of European colonization, that alienate their educated children from them.

This form of cultural politics can be resisted by the introduction of critical literacy as perceived by Paulo Freire. Freire, like many feminists, provides a rationale for the development of alternative forms of progressive social and political thought including an Afrocentric conception of the social world, of knowledge and of culture (McLaren & Leonard, 1993, p.3).

The kind of learning which is the focus of literacy is the reconstruction of the conditioned habits of domination and resistance in teachers and students. Paulo Freire speaks of education for transformation and empowerment. To apply his theory into practices which would be relevant to Swazi rural women who attend adult literacy class, we can adopt the strategy he utilized with "illiterate peasants" in Latin America. Freire (1970) wrote,

From the beginning, we rejected the hypothesis of a purely mechanistic literacy program and considered the problem of teaching adults how to read in relation to the awakening of their consciousness... We wanted a literacy program which would be an introduction to the democratization of culture, a

program which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, ones in which the students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention.

According to Shor (1986,p.190), critical literacy does not "inject students with dominant ideology. It does not place cultivated expression on a pedestal. Neither does it present traditional subject matter as the fixed form of wisdom". Critical literacy in this manner will cut across the artificial boundaries created by class cultures and class structures. Critical literacy, therefore, starts with the basis of knowledge as exhibited by students. Students' expressions and perceptions are basically the terrain from which transformative pedagogy begins. Robert Pattison (In Shor,1986,p.192) defines literacy as the "passionate awakening of the mind". To achieve this awakening, the Sebenta adult literacy class needs acknowledge and respect the language students already possess. Shor (1986,p.192) says that critical literacy and desocialization accept the intersection of the verbal and the political, the self and society. The act of learning is strong enough to challenge as well as to confirm the dominating culture we inherit.

These theoretical frameworks have enabled me to bring into perspective the significance and means of analyzing the historical and cultural forms that have dominated the Swazi educational institution and the Swazi cultural traditions. In using these frameworks, my wish is to bring into perspective

the understanding of why and how the Swazi educational system has continued to reproduce and sustain the former colonialist culture. I also attempt to bring into focus rural women's feminist agenda that has been marginalised within feminist theoretical frameworks. These women have also been marginalised by the inherited educational system which promotes class structures that have no mercy for an "illiterate, poverty stricken woman" despite her endless efforts to give education, food, clothing and comfort to her children. The irony is that it is this form of education that turns the child into a new self-centred and disoriented somebody. Women have continued taking their children to school. These women are not afraid that their children will grow up to join patriarchy and testify against them. They are not afraid that their children will grow up and prefer the Western way of life and shun their traditions and their parents. This is not the kind of education that these women want to give to their children; neither is it the kind of education that these women want for themselves. The works of critical educational theorists will provide a counter-theory that will resist this educational hegemony. These theoretical frameworks provide tools for addressing and resisting the reproduced and sustained status quo of the dominant groups, that is, the former colonialists and Swazi traditional patriarchal forms. In short, these theories will also challenge the habit of sustaining hierarchies of privilege.

CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

According to Weiler (1988), critical educational theory rests on a critical view of the existing society. She argues that society is both oppressive and exploitative but it is also capable of being changed (p.5). In a capitalist world, a world characterized by the survival of the fittest and a world in which patriarchal forms are active and therefore promoted and sustained, there is little room for entertaining a subordinate culture. The greed for material possession surpasses the element of humanity. Weiler (1988,p.29) also suggests that "capitalism and patriarchy are related and mutually reinforcing of one another". In the case of Swazi rural women, for example, they have struggled as subsistence farmers; they have struggled to generate income through different projects; and, to maintain their sanity, they have joined adult literacy classes and have socialised with each other by coming together to compose songs, to sing and dance about their experiences. Their songs on marriage, for instance, are full of the pain of Swazi patriarchy. Still, they are expected to remain at the margin when, in reality, these women are the principal foundation and support of society.

Maria Stewart (In Collins,1991,p.3) says,

we have pursued the shadow, they have obtained the substance; we have performed the labour, they have

received the profits; we have planted the vines,
they have eaten the fruits of them.

Don't such women deserve to be brought to the limelight of society and be respected for who they are? Collins, admiring such women's position and status, declares, "those individuals who stand at the margins of society clarify its boundaries- by not belonging to the centre, emphasize the significance of belonging" (1991,p.3). Rural women who have no defined means (defined by the dominant group) in this world are pushed further to the margins so that they could not pose a threat to the existing hegemony. Since educational theory empowers the self so as to transform society, it must find its way into the school system and into adult literacy programmes. In the school, it can nurture a critical consciousness in students which will enable them to question the dominant paradigms of our education system. Collins offers another dimension of counteracting patriarchal hegemony. She maintains that self-conscious struggle is needed in order to reject the patriarchal conception of women and to value women's ideas and actions. However, it is this tradition of educational theory that has addressed the issue of provoking a critical consciousness in women and students. Fanon (In Collins 1988, p.5) declares,

suppressing the knowledge produced by any oppressed group makes it easier for dominant groups to rule because the seeming absence of an independent consciousness in the oppressed can be taken to mean that subordinate groups willingly collaborate in their own victimization.

Critical educational theory encompasses theories of reproduction and production. It is these theories that I will use to investigate and interpret notions of power as portrayed by Fanon.

REPRODUCTION THEORY

This theory is concerned with the pattern of existing social structures that repair and reproduce themselves. Both social and cultural reproduction theorists see schools as institutions that transmit social and cultural reproduction by having students accept and take for granted existing inequalities. Schooling, it is argued, is deeply connected to the class structure and bourgeois cultural capitalism.

Bourdieu and Shor provide the base upon which hegemony constructs itself in the schools. Bourdieu (In Giroux, 1983, p.39) argues that the school and other social institutions legitimate, and reinforce and thus reproduce, through specific behaviour and dispositions, the existing dominant society. Bourdieu argues further that a child does not only internalize the cultural messages of the school via the latter's official discourse, but also through the messages embodied in the insignificant practices of daily classroom life. Shor (1986) provides the base upon which hegemony constructs itself. For instance, we would see the present

Swazi school as a present and future major location of reproducing and conserving colonial and patriarchal hegemonic forms. Shor says that the internalizing of dominant and dominated consciousness is the effective heart of schooling. He sees schools as "functional" or "dysfunctional" to society, at any instance, to the degree it prepares student attitudes appropriate to the needs of an unequal social order (p.169). Apple (In Shor, 1986, p.ix) says that we should always ask a series of questions about the knowledge that schools teach and the ways they go about teaching it. " 'Whose culture?' 'What social group's knowledge?' 'In whose interest is certain knowledge being taught in our educational institutions?'" Such questions require a critical theory to battle against the hegemonies that control the education institutions in Swaziland. Apple maintains that education needs to be seen as both a cause and an effect of ideological, political and economic movements. The analysis of school by reproduction theorists raises questions about how a Swazi nation, which lived under colonial rule for over 60 years and has been independent for only 25 years, inherits a culture of identity crisis and disorientation which causes it to accept Western values too easily and uncritically. Such questions give a direction to Swazi educational planners to realize the crux of the problem. The problem is not primarily or solely with the youth, but moreso with the European curriculum that has been left to carry out the reproduction and conserving of the

"bourgeois western culture". We have failed to reconstruct the arrangement, "forged during the colonial era". Dickenson (In Collins, 1991, p.28) argues,

it is a fundamental contention of mine that in a social context which denies and deforms a person's capacity to realize herself, the problem of self consciousness is not simply a problem of thought, but also a problem of practice, the demand to end a deficient consciousness must be joined to a demand to eliminate the conditions which caused it.

As Freire (1970) argues, the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressors' tactics, the oppressors' relationships within the oppressed.

If consumers (in this case the colonised) are made to deny their own culture in order to buy foreign goods and culture, then producers are exploiters and perpetuators of class structures and class cultures. This is an exchange programme. We exchange our identity for foreign goods. Bowles and Gintis (1975) deconstruct this social reproduction further. According to Althusser (1971) the school is a state apparatus. Since schools are a state apparatus, Bowles and Gintis (1975) argue, they are not only aimed at communicating necessary technical skills to individual workers but, on a more general level, they exercise to conserve the pattern of the social formation. By so doing, schools execute an ideological function through providing legitimacy to the capitalist mode of production and the social inequalities

which it brings about. In the Swazi case, the structural characteristics of schooling reproduce the former colonialists class structure and class culture by preparing students to be consumers and admirers of Western culture, while actively encouraging them to shun their own identity. Through such schooling, children learn to look down on illiterate parents. Such schooling does not provide answers to the woman who has struggled to take her child to school, and who, in turn, presents her as a social misfit. Analysis derived from reproduction theory provides an apparatus of how a Western-oriented educational system functions according to the logic and ideology of the Western capitalist world and how the Swazi have sustained and reproduced it even after 25 years of independence.

Writing within the same theoretical framework, Basil Bernstein looks at language use in relation to class. He argues that schools use middle class language in the transmission of knowledge, which therefore puts working class children, as a "mentally colonized group", at a disadvantage since many of them are forced to learn in language codes foreign to them. Bernstein's argument about the use of language in promoting class structures and class cultures provides insights into culture shunning in Swazi society. As much as English has its advantage in empowering us to understand the culture of the Western world, it has also been too costly to our identity. The theories of Bourdieu and

Passeron have also been demonstrated in the history, literature and language of the Western culture being identified as the most "valued" knowledge to be learned by Africans in general. Bourdieu and Passeron argue that the schools' relative autonomy enables it to serve external demands under the guise of independence and neutrality, that is, to conceal the social functions it performs and so to perform them more effectively. Employing and legitimating the language and the culture of the alien dominant groups is an act to reproduce and conserve, in the Swazi case, the former colonialists' class structures. Through this stratification, the Swazi are placed in a disadvantaged position for they learn in a foreign language and, simultaneously, are disenfranchised from our own history and literature. Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1986) argues,

for too long, Africans have been thinking and working in a foreign language, so that solutions are also sought in a foreign context--- Culture is seen as a product of history, which in turn reflects the image- forming agent in the mind of a child. Our whole conception of ourselves as people, both individually and collectively, is seen to be based on those pictures and images transmitted through the spoken and written language; colonial domination imposed control through culture, thus effectively controlling economics and politics and the people's tools of self definition in relation to others.

Aloo (1989) rightly maintains that such social commentators consider promotion of our own national language crucial to our liberation. It is therefore equally important that when our oral history is articulated in the classroom it be so done in the Siswati language in an effort to create greater balance in

the schooling situation.

These theories provide insights into how and why class structures and class cultures can be reproduced and maintained. Theories of production provide us with the strategies of struggle and resistance to such oppressive reproduction.

THEORIES OF PRODUCTION

Weiler (1988) outlines theories of production as those theories concerned with the ways in which both individuals and classes claim their own experiences and contest or resist the ideological and material forces imposed upon them in a variety of settings. Such analysis focuses, for example, on the ways in which both teachers and students in schools produce meaning and culture through their own resistance and their own individual and collective consciousness (p.11).

Thus critical production theorists base their reasoning on the social construction of meaning and the ways in which dominant forms of language and knowledge can be critiqued and made problematic. Furthermore, critical production theorists put emphasis on the power of individuals to make meaning, while recognising the power of structural determinants in material practices, modes of power, and economic and political institutions (Weiler, 1988, p.13).

The theories and practices of Paulo Freire and Antonio

Gramsci have played a significant part in influencing critical production theories. Gramsci is concerned with the diverse ways in which dominant groups in any society impose their own perception of reality on subordinate classes and how these subordinate classes can formulate counter- institutions to establish their own understanding of oppression in order to oppose and transform it. Gramsci employs the hypothesis of hegemony to investigate the ideology of social control "with various locations, structures and with a wider sense of cultural values, and attitudes that go beyond the conscious control of ideas" (In Weiler, p.17). While Gramsci reckons that individuals will serve the institutions that transmit dominant ideas (hegemony), he further argues for the power of individuals to counter hegemonic control. Thus Gramsci believes that hegemony is always in the process of being reconstituted since it is open to resistance by historical subjects. Gramsci's investigation of hegemony is crucial to understanding why the Swazi educational system persists in sustaining and reproducing a Western- oriented curriculum. Gramsci's use of hegemony also helps us view schools not just as an ideological state apparatus successfully used to promote Western culture but as possible places of struggle that could be used to promote Swazi culture as well.

Equally important are the works and theories of Paulo Freire whose critical literacy work is important because it emerges from historical experiences of colonialism and

imperialism, a history the Swazi share. Furthermore, the majority of Swazi rural women adults are increasingly finding that education is a crucial means of empowering themselves, especially in the economic, and social arenas. What these women have in common is their lived experiences under post-colonial rule and within Swazi patriarchal culture. These women have decided to use adult literacy education as a jumping-off point to arrive at a broader and deeper understanding of the self and to transform their social reality.

It is Freire's critical literacy process that provides for an education system that is empowering and resistant to internal and external exploitative forms. According to Freire, like every group that suffers oppressive power relations, "women" are thus challenged and justified to resist and transform their condition through critically analyzing their social reality. Swazi rural women's struggle for a critical literacy could bring about a new form of social practice that might overcome alienation (an alienation of being left at the margin) and develop self-awareness as autonomous subjects rather than simply as victims or objects of society. Freire's theory holds out to "women" the promise that they can question their situation and take action to transform it by spelling out the conflicts that reside in their daily lives. Freire believes in the power of individuals to develop a critical consciousness of their own being in the world.

Like Gramsci, Freire has faith in the power of individuals to critique hegemonic ideology and establish a counter hegemony through critically understanding how the world functions (Freire, 1987, p.136). Furthermore, Freire calls for a kind of pedagogy in which teachers recognize and respect the consciousness and culture of their students and, at the same time, are able to create a learning situation in which students can articulate their understanding of the world. Thus Freire insists that students and teachers must seek to "understand the forces of hegemony within their own consciousness as well as in the structured historical circumstances in which they find themselves" (In Weiler, p.18). While Gramsci's analysis of hegemony is crucial to the conceptualization of counter hegemonic measures, Freire provides the actual process through which Gramsci's hegemonic concept may be applied. In other words, Freire's theory of critical consciousness can be used to enhance the understanding of classroom practices in the Sebenta adult literacy programmes and in all other educational institutions. Women, in this study, use education as an act of resistance against certain forms of culture that have always exploited them. In the context of this study, songs are analyzed as a form of expression against a system of exploitation and oppression. Recognizing and legitimizing such resistance enables a view of "Swazi rural women" as individuals who are not simply acted upon by abstract structures but who

negotiate, struggle and create meaning of their own (Weiler,p.21).

The inclusion of feminist theory in the overall process of social transformation implies a call not only for the elimination of class stratification but also for the elimination of all forms of subordination, including the subordination of women. In this context, it becomes possible to envisage power, not in terms of domination, but rather as a capacity for taking action to transform reality. Freire reckons that recognition of each individual's ability to appropriate reality through naming and reading empowers that individual to know that reality can be transformed. Critical education recognises the value of individual experience in social transformation. In the same process it reclaims the meaning and value of diversity in the construction of a new collective subject. Furthermore, from a feminist perspective, a critical literacy becomes a major force that fosters reflection and analysis tending to an interpretation of life as it is lived by women, giving privileged consideration to their experiences and attitudes as interpreted within their social context.

This pedagogical approach requires an ideological transformation, a demystification of the perceptions that women have of themselves and their society. Such an approach calls for an hypothesis of liberation that envelopes every dimension of human enterprise. Freire's theory of critical

literacy is one of the possible guides by which to work for this change. A critical educational theory confronts a traditionally and historically discriminatory social order by offering a new approach to life, a new alternative historical and cultural programme- a programme of creating a comprehensively human society.

Useful, too, are the works of Henry Giroux who attempts to investigate how schools are both expressions of social and cultural reproduction and locations of the production of individual subjectivity and class culture. He elaborates a theory of ideology that will provide the theoretical basis for "investigating both educational texts and practices and the role of schools in a way that takes seriously the issues of agency, struggle and critique." (Giroux, 1983, p.23). Thus, for Giroux, ideology amalgamates "critical thinking and a transformative consciousness" (Weiler, p.23). Giroux's analysis of ideology is important in that it binds critical thinking with transformative action; it is only when individuals are critical of themselves and want to act upon their experiences that social transformation can occur.

The concepts of hegemony, resistance and struggle in relation to capitalism and patriarchy help untangle the interlocking forces of feminism and culture. While the reproduction theories discussed are important for the understanding of why and how the European educational system that has dominated the Swazi education system has been

reproduced, sustained, and maintained, it is equally important to understand the theories which encompass the concepts of struggle, hegemony and resistance in the analysis of transformative action. As Weiler (1988) points out, it is important to keep in mind the relationship of schools to the society at large and to take into consideration the realities of race, class and gender in terms of power and control; at the same time we need not underestimate the power of individuals to act upon the forces that exploit and oppress them. It is for this reason that I seek to analyze the complexity of the educational system and to argue that while such an education system encourages us to remain essentially recipients and objects of European culture and Swazi patriarchal forms and ready to be culturally exploited by the dominant culture of both worlds, it can be also employed to provoke a more conscious, critical and perhaps radical group of Swazi people. Collins (1991) argues that

empowerment involves rejecting the dimensions of knowledge, whether personal, cultural, or institutional, that perpetuate objectification and dehumanization. Individuals in subordinate groups become empowered when we understand and use those dimensions of our individual, group, and disciplinary ways of knowing that foster our humanity as fully human subjects.

It is crucial therefore to utilize and bring both teachers and students together to analyze and critique hegemonic ideologies through exploiting the very sources that are meant to alienate us from our identity. By deconstructing the conceptual

apparatus the dominant group uses, the theories provide the subordinated Swazi with an apparatus of resistance in the form of critical literacy.

Whatever the roots of the crisis of cultural identity and women's subordination internal or external, or a combination of the two, their solutions can only be the result of a critical educational system and feminist frameworks that would begin from an African agenda. Swazi rural women have long struggled to define and demand their rights, using cultural fora (in a form of music) with which they identify. Introducing the critical literacy programme is merely magnifying the already existing characteristic of self-empowerment that these women develop. They have used song expression to investigate all sources of domination, historical, cultural, political, social and economic. As Swazi women we will have to struggle against colonialists and cultural male interpretations of society in order to express a woman's self-defined standpoint which has been traditionally subjugated knowledge in the academy.

Critical education accents the need for decolonization of the Swazi mind from the effects of colonialism and Swazi patriarchal cultural forms. This dual decolonization process will critically awaken the Swazi's consciousness of who she or he really is. This multi-dimensional awareness could evoke a political and cultural awareness of having subtly consumed foreign ideas while also moving away from one's own culture.

Such awareness could bring about a social and psychological fulfilment that has been defied for decades.

The colonial legacy has been neatly described by some women in Aloo (1989, p.10): "so far we have been the crutches of the legs the developed world and "the patriarchal social order" have been standing on. Time has come to strengthen our own legs".

The kind of empowerment women need in order to "strengthen their own legs" is described by Audre Lorde:

...I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self. But this is a destructive and fragmenting way to live. My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves, without the restrictions of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living.

In the words of Toni Cade Bambara (1970), revolution begins with the self, in the self.

The Swazi rural women have all the ingredients that constitute their identity. It is from their singing and dancing that we capture some of these ingredients. The songs are too rich to rebuff. The next chapter, therefore, is a description and use of the songs composed by Swazi rural women.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION AND USAGE OF SONGS

Observing these women sing and dance, wearing a smile, it is difficult not to lament the little public knowledge available about any of them. By recording their songs, my intention is not to romanticize their struggle but to declare for it the attention it deserves. Some of the songs are used in the main body of the thesis because they demonstrate aspects of the arguments I present about the social reality of these women. Placing the remainder of the songs in an appendix is by no means meant to further marginalize these women's voice.

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Swazi women's traditional songs, not unlike African-American rap, are not just music but also, a look, an attitude and a lifestyle. The woman who tells the story is the lead singer. The other women in the background chant and either agree or disagree with the lead singer. In the following song, for instance, the woman is beaten by her husband and she is appealing for help from the other co-wives. The co-wives (their voice in parentheses) tell the husband to beat her.

Here is the man killing me!

(Beat her man).
 Here is a man stunning me.
 He has been misinformed.
 (Beat her man).

Here is a man killing!
 He has been informed.
 (Beat her man).
 I have tried to plead and beg.
 Here is a man stunning me.
 He has been misinformed.
 (Beat her man).

Help! help! woman.
 The man is beating me.
 He is killing me.
 (Beat her man).
 He has been misinformed.
 He was told in bed.
 He is fed with stories in bed, on a pillow.
 He is killing me.
 (Beat her man).

Everyday, I shield myself from big canes.
 Here is a man beating me.
 (Beat her man).
 I shield myself from big canes.
 The man beats me everyday.
 (Beat her man).

Nansi indvodza ingibulala bo.
 Mshaye ndvodza.
 Nansi indvodza ingihlolela.
 Inemagama ekutshelwa.
 Mshaye ndvodza.

Inyandzaleyo Bafati!
 Nansi indvodza ingishaya.
 Iyangibulala.
 Mshaye ndvodza.
 Inemagama ekutshelwa.
 Inemagama emcamelo.

Ngahlala ngivika tagila.
 Nansi indvodza ingishaya.
 Mshaye ndvodza.

In the above song, the woman dances alone while telling

a story. This kind of music and dance is called "kutsamba". The nearest American example could be break dancing. However, kutsamba is not as strenuous and vigorous as break dancing can be. Also, in kutsamba, the woman dances and sings at the same time. The woman gestures as she sings certain verses to show the audience how she shields herself from the husband's canes. As she relates the story of how the man is informed about her, she stops dancing and stands upright. This is skilfully done to draw the audience's attention. The words in the song are very important to her because they are relating an emotional incident. To her the presence of the audience means an appreciation of her music and that it is interested in listening to her story as well. While she tells the story, the other women are seated and chant in the background. In the process of chanting, they also clap hands. At times the lead singer will command the women in the background to clap and chant loudly. To her this signifies their interest in her song and it fuels her to dance with vigour. The kutsamba type is a woman's favourite song. It is very significant to the composer because it usually depicts a social misfortune that befell her. Occasionally, one woman at a time will join the lead singer in a dance to indicate appreciation of her composing and dancing talents.

As the woman sings, there are artful changes in her voice, posture and the expression on her face. In a song about two rival co-wives, for instance, the lead singer will

skilfully shift back and forth between the solicitous, modest junior wife and her blustering, majestic senior (Harold Scheub, 1992). This shows the woman's talent and work of art involved in traditional song composition.

After witnessing and listening to a live performance of Swazi women's traditional music, one can easily be struck by its brilliance. For instance, if you do not recall the individual words, you will probably recall the flow or rhythm, and the way the words were arranged, or the rich voice and heightened tone of the performer and the melody of the song.

The problem with the written song is that it is rooted before the reader's eyes. Therefore, someone who has never witnessed a performance of Swazi women's traditional music may find the written or transcribed songs monotonous and repetitious. However, to the composer, repetition of verses or lines is the most powerful form of expression. She is able to represent her emotions with the strongest impact possible, whether they are emotions of anger, unhappiness or pleasure. The repetition shows how a Swazi woman composer arranges her words precisely to capture a certain pattern and tune. This kind of art requires rhythmic coordination and accurate memory, qualities which the Swazi rural woman composer has.

The women's creativity is of great magnitude. Their song composition moves with the times. Every social, political or economic occasion or incident is accompanied by its own songs. In the midst of all this experimentation, certain basic

principles of song composition such as tone, rhythm and tune remain. In most cases, in the composition of new songs, the women fit in new words to an already established tune and rhythm.

Another interesting feature is that most songs are not rigidly tied to just one occasion. The women tactfully experiment with words, lines and verses in an already established song in order to fit the occasion for which they are singing. For instance, a song initially composed for traditional wedding ceremonies was used by another group of women during an inauguration of their poultry project. In the original song the bride invites her sweetheart, the bridegroom, to join her in the dance:

The beautiful birds that dance and sing
 In the morning when the sun rises,
 They think you were deceiving me and yet you are there.
 Come out and let us watch you.
 Come out my darling, I would like to see you.
 Come out to the open.
 Come out, I would like to see you.
 Just come out, we would like to see you.

Magwagwa lahlehl' ekuseni nakuphuma lilanga.
 Yela nabonjobo, yela nabonjobo isesangwani
 Awuphume sikubone.
 Phuma singani sami sikubone.
 Phumela ebaleni sikubone.
 Batsi udlala ngami kantsi nguwe.
 Phumela ebaleni.
 Phuma ngikubone.
 Phuma phela sikubone.

The poultry project women decided to treat one dignitary from the Ministry of Agriculture who helped them get some financial assistance as their sweetheart. The dignitary was now

presented as a bride in the song and the women represented the bridegroom. The song was adapted and given a cosmetic touch to fit the occasion:

The beautiful birds that dance and sing
 In the morning when the sun rises,
 They think you were deceiving us and yet you are there.
 Come out bride and let us watch you.
 Come out our darling, we would like to see you.
 Come out sweetheart, come out to the open.
 Come out, we would like to see you.
 Just come out, we would like to see you.

USES OF THE SONGS

Who is the audience for such music? All Swazi people. The music reveals the core of our society. It is part and parcel of the rhythm of our life as a Swazi nation. It gives expression to our life's reality, carrying with it political and social dimensions consumed in cultural elements within a historical context. Women primarily use the songs as their means of protests, lamentations and expressions of different expectations and points of view. These women "constantly define themselves within their struggles against dominant oppositional forces in society" (Lihamba, 1992, p. 53). Some of their songs may sound ambiguous and yet they depict to the careful listener the clever employment of parables by the women composers.

In the same tone, to the same tune, these songs also salvage, incorporate, preserve and arbitrate certain elements which serve the interests of the Swazi male society. In some

of these songs, women fight constantly against their inevitable dissociation and alienation from certain traditional forms of society. On the other hand, music, like culture, is not static. The very same women have some songs rearranged and given a cosmetic touch to provide new meaning and values in order to resist and to act against the problem of certain cultural practices being driven out of the centre of popular life (Lihamba, 1992). It is no surprise, then, that some of the songs of today's Swaziland deal with the emotional turmoil of change. They try to unfold the inevitable crisis of values affecting the youth and the educated, for whom the imported cultural structures of society appear more attractive than making the most of the indigenous ones. The following song depicts a traditional woman's emotional turmoil of change.

You will always lag behind,
 You girl of permed hair.
 You will remain with your permed hair,
 You who wear tight pants.
 You will always lag behind, you girl of permed hair.
 You of permed hair, you of permed hair,
 You will always lag behind,
 You girl of tight pants.
 You will remain with your red lips
 You will remain with your powdered face
 You girl of permed hair.

Uyawusala njalo ntombi yemphemo.
 Uyowusala uphemile.
 Uyowusala njalo uphemile.
 Yemagcoka ibhotsotso.
 Uyowusala njalo ntombi yemphemo.
 Yelomphemo yelomphemo.

This song shows a traditional woman fighting for her

husband's affection against a younger woman who has beautified herself with Western cosmetics. Scornful, she mocks her rival who has adopted the foreign "sophistication" of using powder, lipstick and permed hair which the traditional woman finds unusual because there is no room for such "sophistication" in her life. As well she may be genuinely despising this sophisticated woman for trying to change her natural Swazi beauty. It is, however, interesting to note that some men would like to have a taste of both worlds while the traditional woman is stuck with one.

The rural women, who are the main custodians of these songs, have intelligently played with ideas, realities and contradictions of their lives and society. This analysis reveals itself in almost all their songs, varying in degrees only with the nature of the song.

In their marriage songs, for instance, the mocking verses and lines give broad expression to the struggles of the female. A tug of war between a free choice in marriage and social prescription is depicted in one of the old songs and the woman is ready to attack what she feels interferes with her freedom of choice. Although arranged marriages are now unheard of, protests against them existed long before women in Swaziland heard about women's rights. In this particular song, a young woman has defied her parents and refused an arranged marriage. Her father, in particular, is angry with her because her choice is not wealthy. Getting married against her

father's will deepens her crippled sense of duty for the groom has not paid lobalo for her. This deepens the irony of her freedom of choice and she tells the groom to prove her father wrong by working hard to finish paying lobolo, her attempt to ease her conflict by the fulfillment of traditional sanctions. Such a song unveils a conflict which escalates into a struggle between reason and a conditioned unconscious. It is not her who is wrong to have married a man of her choice, but it is society that is wrong in granting her father the right to sacrifice a woman's happiness in the name of custom. The woman is aware that society is wrong by granting her father such power over her. She then composes a song with some hope that society will listen:

My father, who does not treasure me.
I am afraid of the hatred in my father.
My father who hates me,
My father who sold me,
My father who does not treasure me.
I am afraid of the hatred in my father.

Babe lodlala ngami.
Ngiyayesaba inzondo kubabe.
Babe lonenzondo.
Babe lotsengisa ngami.
Ngiyayesaba inzondo kubabe.

Songs on the significance of cattle in our society provide a pathetic picture of a girl who uncritically accepts the notion that lobolo is the sole measure of her worth. This song supports that notion:

You do not have cattle, my darling.
How are you going to pay for my lobolo, my darling?
You do not have a cow, you do not have even a penny.
You do not have a penny, you do not have a cow.

You do not have a cow my darling.
 You are full of love; you do not have a cow.

Awunankhomo singani sami.
 Utangilobola ngani?
 Awunankhomo, awunapeni bo.
 Ugwele lutsandvo, awunankhomo.
 Unelutsandvo, awunankhomo.

In the same song the women composers in trying to mock the traditional contradictions in their lives. They acknowledge the fact that, traditionally, lobolo has a special significant place in our society. As much as they do not dispute that, what about the man who does not have cattle but has love instead? They ask, then, should they forsake their love for lobolo? They are torn between two conflicting realities.

Most of the marriage songs tell about conflicts and rivalry between co-wives, about marital problems, in short, about anything that touches on the everyday experiences of women in a traditional setting. Women, the songs suggest, are more likely to follow the guidelines of tradition. These songs, therefore, shape expectations of feminine behaviour. As participants in traditional practices, women do more than simply participate in the transmission of their image; in some measure, they help sustain the oppressive societal structures but they also unveil the ills of traditional marriage life. However, some songs are a symbolic rejection of the selfish patriarchal interests that thrive in the old structures. Some wedding songs, for instance, depict a dreaded moment by every

woman; it is a point when a woman becomes a thing. She gives up her constitution, her nobility, becoming a thing in the service of the man who has married her and his family. Here is a sample of some of marriage songs:

- (a) Go well, my mother's child.
 Oh it is hard in marriage.
 Please, you must go well, my sister.
 You must take care of your mother in-laws.
 Oh it is hot in marriage.
 You must behave yourself.
 Oh it is where people grow weary.
 Oh it is so difficult; it is where one grows weary.
 You must greet your in-laws for me.
 Oh we are tired, we are tired.

Ubohamba kahle mntfwanamake.
 Hamba kahle mntfwanamake
 Ngoba kuyashisa emendvweni.
 Ubophatsa kahle nabomaketala.
 Ubohamba kahle mntfwanamake
 Ngoba kulukhuni ekwendzeni.

- (b) I told my father, you subject of the King.
 Oh my mother, I told my father
 That to get married is like abandoning oneself.
 To get married is like throwing away your own
 bones.
 I even told my mother, you of the King,
 That to get married is like throwing yourself away.

Nababe ngimtshelile boNkhosi.
 Hha yelamake.
 Nababe ngumtshelile,
 Kutsi kwendza kutilahla.
 Kutsi kwendza kutilahla ematsambo.

The songs on polygamy represent women's emotional distress in a personal yet rational analysis of the plight of women in a polygamous setting. Here are an example of a song composed by women in a polygamous setting:

Me, I will not shut my mouth.

Hey! shut up you woman!
 No! I will not shut my mouth,
 Shutting it for a woman,
 A woman who has just arrived
 And she has taken away my husband,
 My own husband.
 I will not shut up.
 Hey! just shut up you woman!
 I will not be quiet.

Angeke ngithule mine.
 Thula mfati.
 Angeke ngithule,
 Ngithulele umfati,
 Umfati lotsi afika,
 Angitsatsele indvodza,
 Indvodza ingeyami.
 Angeke ngithule bo.

Women's political songs depict their awareness of Swazi history and existing political systems and events. For instance, some of their songs became the medium through which they communicate their awareness of colonialists' practices, such as land division. The following song, for example, depicts their knowledge of colonialists' practices:

They are fighting over the right to land.
 Whose country is this?
 This is not their country.
 This country is for the King.
 The whites are fighting over the right to the land.
 Mabhala (nickname for a concession seeker) is
 Fighting over the right to the land.
 This is the King's country.
 Mabhala is selling it.
 This country belongs to the King.
 They are fighting over the right to your farms.
 This is not your country.
 This is the King's country.
 Boers this is not your country.

Sebabanga live.
 Lelive labani?
 Lelive akusilo labo.
 Lelive leNkhosi.

Belungu bayalibanga.
 Mabhala uyalibanga.
 Lelive leNkhosi.
 Mabhala ubanga live.
 Mabhala utsengisa ngalo.
 Lamapulazi babangisana ngawo.
 Lelive akusilo lenu.
 Lelive leNkhosi.
 Mabhunu, lelive leNkhosi.

In political songs, they show how much they are aware of this. Despite their absence in the political spheres, through music they have created their own platform. For instance, the song "the issue that was left pending in the cattle byre" echoes society's structure that vests all decision-making power in senior males. Although this leave women with few choices, the women act with awesome determination when blocked from an important issue. See the song, "You chiefs, what are you monitoring?" (p.50).

If a person becomes eminent in society, a song is composed that depicts her or his role. The women are quick to compose on his or her good and bad practices. For instance, they have composed songs on the practices of the Prime Ministers of Swaziland. An interesting song was composed based on the drought that engulfed the Southern region in the years 1991-1993. The women criticized what they believed to be the shoddy work of the Drought Relief Committee. The chairperson of the committee, Ben Mshamndane Nsibandze, the former Minister of Labour, was once Deputy Prime Minister of Swaziland. He is now the Regional Officer of the HHohho region. Here is the song:

Could you please tell Ben Nsibandze for me that, oh no,
 we are dying of the drought, of the drought.
 Could you please tell Mshamndane,
 Tell him for us please,
 Oh we are dying, of the drought
 Oh this drought.
 What is most surprising is that he has already
 distributed food to the Gilgal community.
 Could you please, on my behalf, report my plight to Ben
 Nsibandze.
 This drought is killing us at Phonjwane.
 Could you please tell Mshamndane on my behalf.

Sale ningitshelela lo Ben Nsibandze,
 Hawu safa somiso, somiso.
 Nibongitshelela Mshandane.
 Sitsheleleni yena.
 Hawu safa somiso lapha ePhonjwane.
 Sebakutfolile naseGilgal.
 Aseningitsheleleni Ben Nsibandze,
 Kutsi safa somiso.
 Ngitsheleleni Mshamndane.

Actually, song and dance permeate the whole spectrum of Swazi traditional life. Moments of leisure and informal celebrations, for instance, are great occasions for singing all types of songs. I witnessed a lobola ceremony in Sihhoye. The community heard that there was a lobola ceremony in one of the homes in the area. After they had finished their morning domestic chores, men and women came in numbers to witness the ceremony and indulge in meat and Swazi brew. In Swazi society, it is not necessary to send invitations for such ceremonies. The success of the ceremony is actually gauged by the number of people who show up in the home. It was their leisure time and songs depicting a romantic spirit were sung. The voices of both women and men gave way to jovial satire as they assemble on the yard under a tree that provided them with shade. They

assailed one another in turn with mocking songs filled with erotic abuse. The following songs depict a jovial mood:

- (a) The man of a coat is always sick
When he is expected to sleep at my place.
The sickness only attacks him in the morning.
He falls sick when he is supposed to come to my place.

Indvodza yelijazi iyagula uma iyolala kami.
Kuyicala ekuseni.
Iyagula uma iyolala kami.

- (b) Your thing (penis) must be nice
Hey, you father of Mantombane.
Mantombane's mother even cried.
Your thing must be nice.
Let me have a taste of it,
Your thing is nice.

Ifanele kubamnandzi intfo yakho.
Yebabe waMantombane,
Ifanele kubamnandzi intfo yakho.
Awungentelantele.

- (c) When I try to put him on the sides,
He gets angry.
When I try to put him on the sides,
He gets angry.
But when I put him in front,
He smiled to himself.

Sengibatse ngimbeka ngala watfukutsela.
Sengimbeka ngembili uhleka yedvwana.

The rural Swazi women's ways of exposing their treatment by society is laudable. The bottom line of lullabies composition, for example, is intriguing. The mere fact that the lullabies are composed by women and used by women and girls is another fascinating feature. When we are born, our mothers and sisters nurse us with lullabies. We often assume

that lullabies are sung for children. However, the ideas and feelings expressed in them are those of grown ups, the people who look after the babies and children (Nandwa,1990). Here is one lullaby sung by a single mother who needed financial help after the child's father deserted them.

Lolololo my child,
Climb on my back, my child.
They have been paid at Bhunya.
Where are we going to sleep today?
They have been paid at Bhunya.
Let us go, my child.
Today, at the compound, they have been paid.

Lolololo mntfwanami.
Meme mntfwanami.
Baholile eBhunya
Siyolalaphi namuhla?
Baholile eBhunya.
Asambe mntfwanami.
Emathendeni baholile.

Before the introduction of the industrial world, men took pride in ensuring they catered to their families. However, today, some men find it easy to abandon their children and their responsibilities as parents. At the same time, Swazi society ridicules prostitution. When some women use prostitution to earn a living they are scorned and ridiculed. Society seems to forget that women too are victims of the material world. The women composers have neatly interwoven both features in this lullaby. In this beautiful work of art, the songs garnish, exhilarate, and create features to bring fresh light on social themes.

WOMEN'S TRADITIONAL SONGS

The following is a sample, with accompanying explanatory notes, of women's traditional songs that depict their lives in marriage and their political and historical awareness. Part of the explanatory notes are the women's narratives. Some of the songs depict a counter- strategy to different forms of dominance.

Marriage Songs

I can see ulaZulu (the daughter of Zulu),
A young wife,
A woman that beats a man.

Ngiyambona ulaZulu.
Umfaz'omncane.
Umfaz'oshay'indoda.

This song is about a young woman who does not only bully her husband but also batters him. Customarily a woman is not expected to beat her husband. The song, however, is neutral; it does not openly defy nor credit the young woman. Somehow, the women feel the man deserves this treatment because he decided to take another wife. The young woman in this song crosses the cultural boundary and beats her husband.

You are stingy, you miser.
You pinched a stone and blood oozed.
You are stingy in your home.
You must learn to be generous.
There is no entry into your home, you miser.
You really refuse.
We are dying of hunger in this home,
Food is behind the door.

Uyemana yemagotolwane.

Wancinta litshe laphuma ingati.
 Ubofundza kwephana
 Akungenwa kakho yemagotolwane.
 Ubofundza kwephana.
 Akungenwa emtini wakho yemagotolwane.
 Uyalisa.

The in-laws and, at times, community members would sing such a song if the woman does not cook in abundance. In-laws always expect food in abundance when they visit. It is worse if they stay with the woman because she is expected to spend most of her time cooking and brewing traditional alcohol so that in-laws, including extended family members and members of the community when they visit, should not starve. In order for a married woman to be popular with her in-laws and community members, her pots should always be filled with food, accompanied by "umqombotsi"/a traditional brew. Of course, this means that the woman will have to work hard in the fields to produce enough to feed all these people throughout the year. Failing this, she will be ridiculed through songs.

Colonialism and development greatly disrupted the traditional division of labour which, in the past, had somehow eased some of the burden from the women. For instance, all family members would work in the fields. But, today, men go to the urban area to find jobs and children go to school. The woman, therefore, remains in the home with the old people and she is expected to do all the jobs.

Historical and Political songs

What wrong did Gwamile commit?
 We are afraid of the rivalry.
 The Ngwane people have rivalry.
 People are running away from the spears.
 It is frightening.
 I am shocked of the Ngwane tongue lashing.
 What do the Ngwane people buy?
 They buy spears.
 They are running away from spears.
 It is frightening.

Gwamile wadla ziphi?
 Sesaba umbalo.
 Bakangwane banembalo.
 Abantfu babalekela umkhonto.
 Kuyesabeka.
 Wo kuyizwe.
 Ngesaba tiphoso.
 BakaNgwane batsengani?
 Batsenga imikhonto.
 Babalekela imikhonto.
 Kuyesabeka.

A courageous, wise and brave Queen Regent popularly known in oral Swazi history as Gwamile, ruled the Kingdom from 1899 to 1921 on behalf of her grandson who was too young to be officially installed as King. He was Sobhuza II. Gwamile, assisted by her counsellors, ruled wisely and cautiously. She saw a need for education and, therefore, started a school at Zombodze near her royal residence. King Sobhuza II attended this school. In order to complete his secondary education, he went to the Cape Province in South Africa. Thus, Sobhuza II was able to obtain a higher education because of his brave and shrewd grandmother, Queen Regent Gwamile. The inner council, known as Liqogo, that ruled with Gwamile, did not want Sobhuza II to go to school in South Africa. They claimed that it was not safe for a King to leave his country. They devised all

sorts of strategies to stop Gwamile from sending the King to school. They even said that she wanted to kill the King so that she could rule. One woman said that Gwamile composed the song herself because of the opposition that she met from the Liqogo, and Swazi women sing it even today. She maintains that they sing it in solidarity with the Queen Mother when there are social and political disturbances.

In this song, Gwamile is actually ridiculing the royal elders who did not want King Sobhuza II to go to school in South Africa. Gwamile was adamant that he should get some education in order to be able to understand not only the English language but also to be able to understand the British ways of governing. She seemed to be the only one who foresaw the importance of education for a head of state, especially during the colonial era. King Mbandzeni, who ruled at the time of the European intrusion, signed away half of what is today Swaziland because he could neither write nor read. Gwamile, therefore, felt that the Europeans capitalised on the African inability to read and write the English language, an inability that cunningly took away what belonged to the indigenous people.

The Royal elders, however, did not want to be liable for any misfortunes that could befall the King in the foreign land of South Africa. They no longer trusted the colonialists, especially the Afrikaners. They were not aware that by allowing their fears to engulf them at the expense of the

King's education, that they were putting the future of the country into the hands of the same people that they feared.

The following song represents a brave spirit of sisterhood from a group of women who is not always taken seriously because of what is considered their rural and traditional outlook.

Let it be one,
You mother of the calf (referring to the crown prince).
Hear are spears.

Aselibe linye.
Yeka nabonkhonyane yelive.
Nankhi 'mikhonto.

After the demise of King Sobhuza II, the country experienced a politically uneasy climate. By composing this song, women wanted to show the Queen Mother that they cared. Through this song these women gave Her Majesty their moral support. They appealed to her for help in creating one nation. Through the song, they told her that, as women, they would help her fight this bloodless war.

Hey you white people of Germany!
They are coming.
They are fighting an endless war.
The whites are fighting.
The whites of Germany.
These white Germans are coming.
Things happen.
The war is endless.

Yela labelunga baseJalimane bayeza.
Ilwa kayipheli.
Kulwa belungu baseJalimane.
Bayeza belungu baseJalimane.
Kuhlala kwenteka.
Imphi kayipheli.

The women who sang this song maintained that this is one of the old songs that was composed by women during World War II in 1945. Swaziland was a British protectorate. Like other British colonies, it had to send soldiers as a form of paying allegiance to the British crown. The nation was briefed about the war, hence this song.

The King is expensive.
 The son of the King is expensive.
 We have never seen a King like him.
 We have never seen a King like Sobhuza,
 A king who came back with our land.
 The King came back with the land from the Whites.
 The King came back with the land from the English of
 the world.
 A King that came back with land
 From the people across the seas,
 The English of the world.

Okandaba udulile.
 Asikayiboni iNkhosi lefana naSobhuza.
 INkhosi leyabuya nelive kulabamhlophe.
 Leyabuya nelive kumaNgisi emhlaba.
 INkhosi leyabuya nelive,
 Kubantfu bangaphesheya,
 EmaNgisi omhlaba.

King Sobhuza II was officially installed King in 1921. He ruled the Kingdom from 1921 to 1982. This song gives the King credibility for his tireless and brave campaign in regaining Swazi independence from the British rulers. The most intriguing part of the song is that these women refer to the British as the "English of the world" and that is their description for the empire. They maintain that since the British moved all over the world in their material acquisition spree, they ended up controlling almost the entire world and their language dominating the world. This piece of information

was narrated by a Swazi woman who had no contact at all with a classroom.

Give him his position.
 Give him,
 Give him his position.
 Hey, you men of the area
 Give Mdluli his position.
 Give this Mdluli,
 Give him his position.
 Hey, you men, why are you chasing him away?
 Give him his position.
 Mvelase what did you do,
 Hey you child of the headman?

Mnikeni sikhundla sakhe.
 Mnikeni, mnikeni sikhundla sakhe.
 Yemadvodza akhile, mnikeni loMdluli.
 Mnikeni lesikhundla.
 Yemadvodza nimcosheleni?
 YeMvalase wenteni?
 Mnikeni lomntfwan'endvuna.

This song was composed by the women of Mbasheni in Northern Hhohho district. They maintained that they did not have a chief. The young man, Mvelase Mdluli, who should have been chief of the area, had not been installed. These women discovered that there was a power struggle among the elders of the chieftain's household. They felt it was their duty to tell the power-mongers that they give the chieftain's position to the right person, Mvelase Mdluli. The women felt that Mvelase was cheated out of his position.

Hey you Mbokodvo National Party people,
 You must tell Bhekimpi (former Prime Minister) that the
 Swazi Monarch is back.
 What kind of a national party that has spots?
 Tell Bhekimpi that our country is back.

Awuyembokodvo uyehheni, nibotshelana.
 Tshelani Bhekimpi kutsi libuyile lakaNgwane.

Mbokodvo lenjani lemacabhacabha.
Tshelani Bhekimpi kutsi libuyile lakaNgwane.

This song is rich in political sarcasm directed to the Swazi government. King Sobhuza II abolished all political parties in the country. The Imbokodvo Party was in power when this decision was enacted. People have always maintained that the country is in the hands of the Imbokodvo National party. These women, therefore, are addressing the people in authority to tell their friend Bhekimpi that the King is back. In short he has had more than his share of power: the rightful person was back. They say that the party had spots because the authorities were divided amongst themselves.

SUMMARY

These women songsters are walking libraries of Swazi history and culture. By going to them quickly to collect from their lips the knowledge they have of our Swazi heritage, we would be recording for our society a most valuable asset. Their songs could be used as guidelines for preserving our identity and giving rural woman and others a critical education of her place in society. They can be used as a main tool of education and social propriety because Swazi beliefs, social, legal and political concepts and decrees are expressed in them, and they contain the highest forms of creative and

artistic entertainment.

These women are our agents, our intellectuals, wealthy with knowledge and enormously strong in traditional society. They are historians, legal experts, political advisers, teachers, "feminists," and entertainers all at once. They are vessels which store women's secrets many centuries old.

History holds no puzzle for these women. They have composed songs that unravel some old mysteries of our doings. Through songs, they bring to life the deeds and exploits of Queen Mothers and Kings for younger generations. These women are traditional tutors of Queens and Kings. Through songs and oral traditions they teach them the history of their ancestors so that the lives of ancients might serve them as an example. We cannot completely detach ourselves from the past. Judging from these Swazi songs, the world is not young. These women have recorded enough to convince anyone that in their songs they live with the past and the present. They do not need to open up a book to read an already transcribed, impure material about their own lives for they have it all. They need only to have their critical awareness sharpened and activated through a critical education obtained in their Sebenta programme carried out through their language so that its originality is not lost. These songs cut across the sexes, the various age groups and social classes. These women fear nobody. What a fascinating and denied reality.

The next chapter analyzes the concept of the importance

of culture preservation while provoking and maximizing women's critical awareness of their social reality. According to bell hooks (1992,p.110) "an important part of any decolonization process is critical intervention and interrogation of existing repressive and dominating structures". As noted in Chapter 2, I have used Freire's critical literacy concept as a means of achieving the goals of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

CURRICULUM AND CRITICAL LITERACY

This chapter focuses mainly on rural women and the Sebenta adult literacy programme. Despite the fact that men too attend the adult literacy programme, they have been purposely bypassed in this study because the male position privileges them to certain colonial and cultural acceptances which have been denied women. While their positive contributions to culture preservation cannot be ignored, neither can their role in sustaining structures that discriminate, demean and oppress women. These are structures inherited from our culture as well as from colonialists which according to Freire (In McLaren, 1993, p.174), men must learn to renounce together, as men.

In this chapter, I offer suggestions for why and how Swazi culture could be preserved and, in the process, further awaken women's critical consciousness of their traditional status in Swazi society. The marrying of these two generally opposing doctrines is important for the Swazi society which is trying to sustain its identity by promoting cultural activities in the country, especially traditional dance and song. It is also important to address women's traditional status as depicted in the songs so that we may understand the reasons for the shunning of culture especially by the young

and educated. The significance of looking into our colonial history, as well, should not be ignored. Freire (1968,p.57) declares, "--- looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who [we] are, so that [we] can more wisely build the future". Once this consciousness is developed, it is my hope that we will be able to work out our cultural preservation project calmly without any fear of pressing psychological deadlines. All Swazi citizens need to awaken from certain colonial and patriarchal stupors. Freire (1968,p.9) maintains that when the oppressed come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves, [they] often take the initiative in acting to transform the society that has denied them this opportunity of participation. Hope and Timmel (1984,p.4), using Freire's theory asserts that no education is ever neutral. They maintain that

Education is either designed to maintain the existing situation, imposing on the people the values and culture of the dominant class, i.e. domesticating the people, or education is designed to liberate people, helping them to become critical.

Critical education is therefore employed as the frame of reference to achieve the objectives of this study. The non-formal Sebenta literacy programme is used as a primary frame which attempts to accommodate the formal education structure. I felt it necessary to address both programmes, the formal and informal education systems in order to minimise the cultural

gap that one would create by addressing only one system and to allow for a more full-fledged educational approach.

This study utilizes critical educational theory because it is a powerful component of attempts to empower any group in the political, economic, social and cultural arenas. The present Swazi education structure has succeeded in keeping the Swazi educated group immersed in a setting in which critical awareness is not fostered. The education system is one of the major tools for the dissemination of colonial identity which has reproduced European class structures and class cultures. According to Freire (1968,p.13), "this world to which one relates is not a static and closed order, a given reality which one must accept and to which one must adjust; rather, it is a problem to be worked on and solved". It is crucial, therefore, that we carry the struggle for cultural preservation, as well as rural women's struggle for empowerment, into the classroom. To achieve our cultural preservation project, we need to develop a programme that will explore and expose the hidden realities of women's lives and the hidden realities of our education system that promotes not only white patriarchal forms but a cultural identity crisis as well. This programme would help develop new visions of concrete demands and organizational forms that better express women's concerns. It will also help the educated realise their participatory role in collaborating with the colonialists' economic and social order. The traditional status accorded to

rural women is controversial and disturbing. The silent on-going process of the colonization of identity as it is reproduced and nurtured by our education system is equally controversial and disturbing.

While studying the means by which to preserve our culture and empower women using the adult literacy programme as a platform, it is important not to neglect the school which is delicately grooming the child along the lines of gender inequities and at the same time neglecting the child's identity. Formal schooling is one institution that promotes and sustains the system that subordinates women. It is also the same system that disassociates the child from her or his culture by not introducing a subject that deals with Swazi culture. In this way schooling maintains traditional gender roles while promoting the shunning of customs amongst the young and educated middle class. Yet it is this institution that could be used to instill critical awareness of gender inequities. It is also this institution that could be used to assemble our culture and analyze and sift what is no longer consumable today. Somehow, our present education system cannot provide the context we need. This inadequacy poses an obstacle in securing a structure to effectively address these contradictions and our growing awareness of them. On the same note, children are losing their cultural identity through alienation from traditions which happen to appear in the classroom on a minimal scale, only through the Siswati

language. Outside the classroom, it appears in a form of practical dance and song which is not taken seriously by most teachers and some students and is given the status of an extra curricular activity. It is suggested women's traditional songs can be applied to awaken our awareness of rural women's status and their true radical role in society. These songs are also used to shape our consciousness. One of the important aspects of the songs is that they depict the real us, a representation of our society. It is regrettable that the Swazi seem to forget that it might be the very same message carried in the songs that results in some Swazi despising the traditions. That is not to say that we should stop singing and dancing, but we should use the songs to sift the unpopular elements in our cultural practices. Let us compose songs that depict a positive change in our society without a loss of the positive aspects of our identity. There is a possibility that some people might declare it wrong and anti-cultural to analyze our traditional structures. However, if the Swazi are fair to themselves, they should admit if they are afraid of facing reality. If they fail to adopt a realistic attitude they will even lose the traditional elements that could be genuinely treasured. Freire (1970,p.33) declares,

freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. But while dominated by the fear of freedom they refuse to appeal to others, or to listen to the appeals of their own conscience. This is the tragedy of dilemma of the oppressed which their education must take into account.

Freire further provides a form of resistance by means of

praxis, that is, reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it. He argues that genuine reflection leads to action but that action will only be true praxis if there is critical reflection on its consequences.

Critical education, therefore, should be utilised as a means to fight internalized colonial and cultural subjugating structures. By allowing ourselves to emerge from this kind of dual subjugation, we shall be able to use critical education to preserve certain traditional practices and women will be able to address and analyze their concerns. bell hooks (In Collins, 1991, p. 69) asserts that

as subjects, people have the right to define their own reality, establish their own identities, name their history. As objects, one's reality is defined by others, one's relationship to those who are subjects.

It is therefore important for the Swazi educational planners to note that "objectification can be so severe that the other simply disappears" (Collins, 1991, p. 69).

THE SEBENTA ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME

ITS ORIGINS

In 1965, King Sobhuza II promoted adult literacy by introducing a Sebenta literacy programme because he was concerned with the large number of illiterate Swazi people. Initiating this programme the King had intended

to gather into one organization the energies of all the men and women of Swaziland irrespective of race, creed or political allegiance, to fight against disease, poverty

and ignorance through modern community development and education. (Kuper, p.283)

Women have expressed their appreciation for this important programme by composing the song "Let me report to King Mswati at Ludzidzini." (see p.46).

Swazi rural women's love for education is admirable. The emphasis placed on the last two lines of the song signifies their wish for our authorities to acknowledge its significance. Their zeal for and awareness of the importance of education is also depicted in their tireless efforts to generate money to take their children to school. Many women that I talked with say that they do not want their children to be like them. It is very unfortunate that they are not aware of how intelligent and literate they are despite their lack of standard literacy for they measure their worth by the colonialist yardstick.

Freire (1968,p.15) is confident that

every human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the culture of silence, he [sic] may be, is capable of looking critically at his [sic] world in a dialogical encounter with others. Provided with the proper tools for such encounter he [sic] can gradually perceive his [sic] personal and social reality, and deal critically with it.

In Sebenta classes, women come together to seek solutions to the problem of how their families can survive. Through this collective exercise, they are taking command of their lives. This exercise has intensified their understanding of the

social frameworks within which those lives unfold. The most interesting aspect is that through Sebenta these women have come to acknowledge themselves as women constructing a female collectivity.

This analysis is clearly depicted in their self-confessions, noted in Chapter 1, about the wonders of the Sebenta literacy programme.

ITS PRESENT STATUS

Sebenta programmes cater to young and old who did not have an opportunity to attend formal full time classes. They are functional in outlook and relate to the life of the people. Hence, they are adapted to suit the participants' needs. Programmes are conducted only in the afternoon when day school is over. Participants come to the centre every day for a maximum of two hours.

Most Sebenta teachers are ordinary people who have had no previous contact with a teacher training institution. In some instances, any community member who is conversant with reading and writing is illegible for the position.

Our local media, the Swazi broadcasting service gives a full coverage of Sebenta achievements by bringing the students' voices on the air. By so doing, it is trying to motivate and help people understand the importance of Sebenta. To this end it would be useful if this programme could be

given live coverage by the Swazi Television Station. Most Swazi rural people do not have television sets in their homes, however, to have the Sebenta programmes on TV and see and hear women and men talk, sing and dance about their achievements would make our children realise education is not only a Western thing but is part of our Swazi culture.

It is crucial, before any suggestions are made, to be aware of women's position in the present Sebenta literacy programme. This awareness will give us an idea of where to begin with the new critical programme.

Women offer many reasons for joining Sebenta and recount how their lives have changed since they enrolled in the Sebenta programme. Many women said that they had to join Sebenta because of the inconvenience they encountered whenever they had to communicate with their husbands who could be away, usually in the mines in South Africa. For instance, the husbands write and send money, and the women have to ask people to read the letters and count the money for them. Some of the women joined Sebenta to carry out their bank transactions. They found it difficult to know how much they were banking from their different profit-making sales. To make it worse, they had to use their thumbs for signing. They said that this embarrassed them especially with a programme in the siSwati broadcasting service that promotes the advantages of Sebenta adult literacy. Another woman said that today's teachers no longer teach; instead, they expect parents to help

their children with homework. She continues,

these teachers expect us to be conversant even with subjects such as maths and English. To make things worse, we are expected to sign. This used to frustrate me and my children. Other children would laugh at my children when the teacher made fun of them in class for having illiterate parents when there is adult literacy programme for only fifty cents.

This was a major challenge for her. Another woman said that it annoyed her whenever she went to South Africa to sell her handicrafts because she had to complete certain immigration formalities at the border posts. The custom officers would be impatient with her because she would always ask for their assistance. She maintains that the main problem was in South Africa itself when she had to sell the products. She encountered problems with giving customers the correct change. She says that she would spend a lot of time trying to figure out whether or not she was cheated. She maintains that the little counting that she knew, her children taught her. Apparently, she failed to grasp much from them. "Unfortunately there was no way to find out other than going for Sebenta classes", she said. That is where she found peace in herself and now she looks forward to going to South Africa to sell her products.

These women have been able to identify illiteracy as one of their subjugators. They have refused to be silent collaborators with the imposed sanctions that deny them success and economic independence. Instead, they have

collaborated with literacy, "the word", to resist economic exploitation and subjugation.

The sharing of their experiences, hopes and achievements was one of the richest aspects of the research with these women. One woman said to me, women are great thinkers and have enormous hearts. "We have endured so much in life and we can endure the education that the books offer us no matter how complex it is". Another woman came to me and said,

my child, one of my dreams is to learn how to speak English. I had to learn how to count because of my handicraft business. Now if I can be able to speak English, it will enable me to communicate with all my customers from all walks of life upon whom my business rely. You know if you do not know other people's language and yet you need their support, you appear stupid when they talk to you. You simply giggle since you cannot even tell them you do not understand their language. I hate it when it happens to me. Using hands and pidgin language is not the wisest solution.

The women mentioned the obstacles to their educational progress. They have too much work to do and at times when they do not find time to do their homework, their teachers are not sympathetic with them. They go to class tired and their minds are with their unfinished domestic chores, especially the work in the fields. One woman said that she is calling it quits because once she closes her school books, all the information just disappears. She said, "I feel my brain is dead. It cannot kick off. When I close the book my brain also closes. I can see I irritate the teacher. I do not think it is worth the effort". Another one complained about her eyesight. She cannot

see what is written on the blackboard and she cannot read her books or do her homework. She finds this very frustrating and yet she is eager to learn to read and write. Another woman said that, after class, she has to rush home to cook for her husband and, if she delays, the husband might find it 'logical' to take another wife, a wife that will always be home to cater to his needs. These restraints on women becoming literate are another subtle but sharp reminders of the need for gender struggle, a struggle waged in the framework of critical literacy that will reinforce the search for self-empowerment. Freire (In Shor, 1987, p.89) maintains that

the goal of a literacy program is to help students become critically conscious of the connection between their own lives and the larger society and to empower them to use literacy as a means of changing their own environment.

An application of such a theory in the Sebenta literacy programme would be more appropriate to meet rural women's search for a critical address to their societal problems.

Listening to the women's confessions on Sebenta, it is possible to see women's hopes and longings for an undisclosed fulfilment. It is possible to hear in their voices an urgent need to overcome illiteracy and gain access to information.

Increasingly, Swazi women, in general, have discovered that education is a crucial vehicle of empowerment. Soon they will confirm that critical education empowers disoriented and disenfranchised groups in the political, economic, social and cultural arenas. The basic element is to begin with the

experiences of the patronizers and with the certainty that education is a tool to help reconstruct the world into a commonwealth of greater justice, peace and freedom from oppression, subordination and segregation.

The experiences of Swazi rural women are rich. For instance, they cover different themes such as health awareness, agriculture hints and income generating projects. I feel that enough has been written to document the fact that women have been disadvantaged by development. It is now time to move ahead and focus on the ways in which these disadvantages can be rectified. The Sebenta literacy programme, therefore, will have to be transformed into a critical literacy programme which could also be used as a tool for sharing information and personal experiences in a more relaxed arena. New initiatives could be launched, and opportunities for discussion and joint efforts could be developed. This project would offer space for reflection and action that allow us to rework the methodology and techniques of this literacy programme from an anti-sexist, anti-colonialist perspective.

Talking with these women I concluded that they did not compose the song, 'Let me report to King Mswati', because of love for music but, more so, because of a certain need or desire to fulfil. They have seen the importance of Sebenta and they want it expanded and made compulsory. One woman even suggested that government should form a committee that will

ensure all people who were denied education join Sebenta. This far-sightedness into the significance of education made me conclude that it is wrong for the educated middle class to claim that rural women will have to convince themselves that they are arrested in the realms of subordination. They know they are and that is why they have run for shelter under the umbrella of the Sebenta adult literacy programme.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF OUR CULTURE PRESERVATION PROGRAMME

There are many reasons why it is important for the Swazi to preserve our culture. For instance, Zeke Gbotokuma (1992) says,

loss of cultural identity can lead to loss or lack of respect for oneself and also to political and economic under-development. (p.17)

To add to Gbotokuma's claim, Adigun Agbaje (1992) proclaims,

Culture could be used as an instrument of progressive mutation and harness the present to develop the future; To use culture as an instrument of tradition, calling forth and looking back to images and symbols of the past in the service of present needs and particular images of the future. (p.45)

And Cesaire (In Gates, 1985, p.300) maintains that there are two ways to lose oneself: by segregation in the particular; or by dilution in the 'universal'.

By maintaining the European educational system as is

without profound adjustments, the Swazi have collaborated with our cultural invaders. Fior (In Shor, 1987, p.123) argues that domination by a Western curriculum has left the larger part of the population either marginally literate or uncritically literate, politically and "culturally" undeveloped. We need to promote a culture in which all Swazi people will find great enrichment. We should learn to protest the loss of what belongs to us. There is need for a cultural reawakening of consciousness among the so-called too civilised, that is, those who consider themselves too cultured, developed, or 'whatever' to indulge in traditional ceremonies. Some pretend to find it difficult to express themselves in their own language, feeling, perhaps, that they are above it. What a pity, because they do not even speak the 'superior' language to the native speakers' expectation, speaking it with an accent which receives a frown from the native speaker, yet they foolishly despise their own language that they could speak without being frowned upon. This split is what Gbotokuma (1992, p.27) calls 'the disorganisation of the soul and culture'. Therefore, the shunning of our culture, especially by the young and educated middle class, is the major reason that has made the Swazi Government take some measures to try and promote it to the school-going children, for instance.

Giroux's theory of culture offers a clearer analysis of schools acting as agents and collaborators of social and

cultural production. He sees schools as part of a larger universe of symbolic institutions that, rather than impose docility and oppression, "reproduce existing power relations subtly via the production and distribution of a dominant culture that tacitly confirms what it means to be educated" (1983,p.45). In the Swazi case, to be educated is to act white. The culture of our school system represents the economic and political interests of the Western world which is represented by the educated middle class Swazi. Giroux argues that this is not presented as an arbitrary or historical contingent, but as necessary and natural elements of the social order (1933,p.87). Bourdieu further argues that class and power connect with dominant cultural production not only in the structure and evaluation of the school curriculum, but also in the dispositions of the oppressed themselves, who actively participate in their own subjugation (In Giroux,1983,p.88).

The willpower to preserve our culture cannot be underestimated. In the Development Plan (1992/93-1994/95) it is stated:

it is the aim to preserve the country's cultural heritage; teach arts and conduct other cultural activities; and to archive public records. Three public sector agencies are actively involved in these areas. First, the National Museum protects and displays traditional Swazi ethnological instruments and materials and is also responsible for the National Cultural Heritage Programme which prepares publications on Swazi culture and history for information; improves museum facilities; conducts an outreach educational programme; and provides additional training to museum staff. Second, the Sports, Youth

and Culture Section of the Ministry of Interior conducts various cultural activities. Third, the National Archives collects and stores public documents, photographs and other records. (p.152)

This endeavour shows the determination of government to preserve our cultural identity. To prove this determination to find a secure place for our traditions, two executive departments affiliated with the Ministries of Home Affairs and Education are in operation. The government has tried also to instill into our children the love of our culture by introducing traditional song and dance in the school system as part of an extra curricular activity. Additionally, an incentive in the form of a higher salary grade to entice sports and culture teachers to help in the promotion of this programme, was demanded by teachers through their association, SNAT (Swaziland National Association of Teachers). Judging from the budget allocated to these departments to pay the executives and teachers, there is no doubt that this programme should try to achieve its aim of cultural preservation to the tax payers' satisfaction. Both primary and high schools hold traditional song and dance competitions every year in September. These competitions are an incentive to entice children to partake in this promotion of culture. However, not all schools enter these competitions because some schools do not identify themselves with Swazi traditional practices. Such schools are comprised mainly of missionary and private schools. King Sobhuza II observed this stratification as far

back as 1933. To counteract this negative attitude, King Sobhuza II, who was far-sighted, drew a cultural curriculum proposal to be piloted in the first Swazi non-denominational school. Kuper Hilda (1978,p.105), describing Sobhuza's agenda, says,

it was not only the intellectual standard that he wanted to raise; at a 'national' meeting in 1933 he criticized the social effects of the type of education which was being given. 'Children,' he said, 'no longer obey the law of the land, and when they throw away our customs they say they are following the laws of whites but really they do not understand these laws because they only get a little of the ways of the whites, who then say "these people know nothing" and criticise us. He observed a breakdown in traditional courtesy, respect and obedience and an increase in immorality and illegitimacy. This he associated with growing rift between Christians and non-Christians, educated and uneducated. As a remedy, he suggested the adaptation of the traditional regimental system to the modern western school system. Sobhuza was trying to formulate the ideas which later became his explicit national policy: 'choose the good from the customs of others and join it with the good which is in our traditions. Only in that way can we go forward as a self-respecting nation. In order to do this you must know your own customs and start out from them. True education is more than book learning, wisdom is greater than knowledge'.

Kuper (1978,p. 105) continued to say, the initial reactions of most of the missionaries "amazed and disappointed Sobhuza and the nation and showed the depth of their prejudices. They opposed just those Swazi customs specifically directed towards maintaining morality". An attempt at cultural preservation and awareness, then, is not a new undertaking in Swazi society.

Many people who were converted to Christianity believed in the myths perpetuated by the missionaries. They believed

that our traditions are ungodly and barbaric, and, therefore, could not associate themselves with them. If one did not go to church to be exposed to such preaching, the classroom was there to produce a group that disassociated itself from practices that were declared barbaric. Therefore, they considered the participants in our traditions as uneducated and primitive. Such naive thinking is still prevalent in Swazi society, an act of silent collaboration with the colonizers who left the reigns of power to the Swazi in 1968. This thinking would be further described as the process of ethnocentrism at its highest peak. Ollenburger (1992,p.27), maintains that ethnocentrism "dictates that students will learn about the contributions of European literature, art, history and customs". She continues to say that this education will also take place in the language of the dominant group and will be administered by representatives of the dominant group. Formal education, as a borrowed and unchallenged phenomenon, has continued to reproduce patriarchal and capitalist social relations intergenerationally. We have responded to the dominant white group's subordination by continually sanctioning ourselves with the European education system. Connell et. al. (1981,p.114) describe education, as having fundamental connections with the idea of human emancipation, though it is constantly in danger of being captured for other interests. "In a society disfigured by colonialism, the only education worth the name is one that forms people capable of

taking part in their mind decolonization and in their own liberation".

King Sobhuza's attempts did not go a long way and it is possible to foresee a failure of the present attempts at Swazi cultural preservation. Apparently, the present cultural preservation undertaking has not been revised and neither has there been a follow-up. This statement was confirmed by the teachers of the schools I visited. If the Swazi want to be successful in this undertaking, we need to change our approach and attitude toward cultural preservation. There are many problems that need a critical and devoted constructive eye.

The colonialists used the formal classroom and the church partly as forums to impart their culture to the indigenous people. Even today, after twenty five years of independence, Swazi children consume more of the imported culture in the classroom. The marginalisation of the Swazi culture is now continued by the Swazi educational planners. The colonialists left the reigns of power to us, therefore, I believe we are partly to blame. Taking the reigns from the colonialists, we hastily made educational changes that did not fully incorporate our culture. To try and rectify this problem, a cultural preservation programme has been hastily introduced into the school system. It has been introduced as an extra curricular activity and it is comprised only of traditional songs and dances. Since we now hold the reigns of power, all that we need is to be stable-minded and to start

to think clearly. We need not hurriedly protect our identity without a clear sense of direction but neither should we copy and implement everything we get from the outside world.

The problem with the present cultural preservation programme is that it fails to find realistic and fair solutions. It does not address sensitive issues that might be the crux of cultural alienation. The following suggestions to strengthen our cultural preservation programme were developed by the teachers visited and myself.

SUGGESTIONS ON A CULTURE PRESERVATION PROGRAMME

A critical literacy provides increased possibilities for cultural preservation. This kind of approach can accommodate adult literacy programmes, the school curriculum and the higher institutions of learning which include teacher training colleges and the university. This approach will provide teachers with a critical knowledge of how to both theoretically and practically teach the students about our culture. This step is crucial because the teachers are products of an educational system that is silent about the Swazi culture. They are products of a confused era- an era that promotes Western culture in the classroom while only subtly and inadequately teaching cultural values at home. We end up with two cultures at war in the Swazi mind because no programme has been tried to harmonize them. I believe that

only a critical programme could marry the two.

Some Swazi teachers are also products of missionary brainwashing. However, one cannot ignore the fact that certain elements of our culture encourage the shunning of our traditions. As long as there are still unaddressed traditional structures that segregate, demean and subjugate women, in particular, a certain class of our society will disassociate itself from our traditions. And as long as the ills of colonialism are not critically exposed in our school structure, we will remain submerged in our identity inferiority complex. Time is ripe for us to boldly address some of these issues that demean women. Justification of certain traditions that are not popular with women could be one of the main culprits that leads to the shunning of our traditions. We should try to treasure the past without causing an irreparable damage to our culture. De Man (In Gates, 1985, p. 282) suggests that, "we should renounce the nostalgia and develop a desire to coincide. The subject renounces any claim to possession or totalization permitting the other to be itself". I believe that, while in the process of recovering the past, we should not try to please a selfish nostalgia at the expense of society. It is often very upsetting to let the past go, no matter how good or bad. When it comes to traditions, for instance, we tend to be nostalgic and feel we have a duty to honour our ancestors. Yet, I tend to believe that our ancestors would be more upset if we lost

everything. There is a need, therefore, to have our culture incorporated into the school system as content and practice. The young and the educated are a restless group which will enable us to know who we are and what we want and do not want. Our education system needs a new direction that would educate us to discover our Swazi elements of truth ever present in our history and traditions. It is encouraging to know that women's traditional songs preserve aspects of our history and traditions. We have our own literature. What we need is to adopt a critical approach to the songs and to deconstruct them to loosen the shackles of certain subjugating cultural elements and colonial brainwashing. It is highly disturbing to helplessly watch our children feed largely on European literature which De Man describes as "tolerance of an enforced difference" (In Gates, 1985, p. 288). In short we have continuously accepted our place on the margin. An alternative vision for the future of the Swazi is an important element of such education.

Within this new vision of education, cultural activities need not be abandoned. Instead, they should be part of the school and university syllabi. This presence will show school-going children and students in higher institutions of learning that to be educated does not mean that one should despise one's cultural identity. Instead, one should get closer to it to be able to identify the positive and the negative aspects of it. With a critical awareness the chances of despising

one's identity are slim; also, the chances of accepting everything just because it is culture are equally slim. A critical education suggests that respect for one's identity comes first. It also suggests that culture is not static and that it is easier to lose culture than to preserve it. There is no doubt that if our educational system incorporated our traditions into the classroom and provoked students' awareness of the cultural genocide carried out by the imperialists and now by the colonized, the educated class would be more authentic in thinking and more accommodative in manner. We would not have an educated group that despises its mothers just because they are illiterate, wear traditional dress and are rural. Despising the very same woman who struggled to get money to send her child to school with a belief that with education the child will see beyond, develop mentally and think clearly is a most disturbing characteristic of an identity crisis. If our educational system has produced identity outcasts then it is dysfunctional and in need of restructuring.

Education, if imparted properly, could free the minds of the colonised from the indoctrination of the colonizer. It could also free the minds of the culturally addicted from the indoctrination of being overprotective. However, we cannot blame ourselves for being overprotective. The English saying, 'once beaten twice shy' is relevant in our situation in which the missionaries, in particular, ridiculed our culture. It is

ironic that Africa should be built upon themes of the very Western world which finds it difficult to accept us as people who have our own values, principles and beliefs. We are people whose lives have been disoriented by colonialism, thus we carry the burden of a double complex. In the process of freeing ourselves from a colonial mentality of inferiority, we would be able to establish Swazi identity and women's power within Swazi culture. The rich in the 'First World' talk of cosmetic surgery or facelifts; I think we in the 'other world' need to embark on a cultural surgery programme. We need a society whose ugly features could be removed and replaced with more appealing ones for the consumption of the owners and admirers. These women, together, should work out a critical awareness strategy which could be obtained through the Sebenta literacy programme. Of course, the journey is long and lonely for each individual. However, the inner self will have to embark on this long, lonely and challenging journey.

In Sebenta, we should attempt to combine the strength of anti-sexism and critical education. We are not creating a fresh ground for this assignment. Through their songs, the women already have voiced their concerns about gender inequities and the importance of education. All that remains is to maximize women's participation in the Sebenta literacy programme. In the programme, we should extend the critique of injustices to fully embrace women's experiences.

We should bear in mind that critical education begins

from the assumption that women can think very well, that women are as capable as men of making decisions, and that a woman can be somebody.

At this point, it is crucial to give reasons why women's traditional songs have been chosen as an experiment for cultural preservation and an anti-sexist agenda.

WHY WOMEN'S TRADITIONAL SONGS

Women's songs were chosen as the focus of this research because rural women have been politically, economically and socially ignored in Swaziland. They are the worst hit by demeaning, subordinating and oppressive societal structures the roots of which are embedded in culture and colonialism. To add to their already difficult status, they are treated as an uneducated and uncivilised group whose financial woes can only be alleviated by an exposure to income-generating projects (that is, Western notions of development). However, what should be demeaned or despised is the attitude of the groups that look down on these women. I believe that segregation, gender inequities, exploitation and oppression, all stem from denigration. Therefore, the self-proclaimed cultured, civilised and educated group of the Swazi society, including men, need to be re-educated about rural women's status.

Rural women's traditional songs were also chosen because

these women are the guardians of our traditions. They are faithful and loyal traditional citizens. Despite the unfair treatment they receive, especially from the male sector, still they have remained loyal in preserving our traditions. Unfortunately, in most cases, through their songs, they have also unsuccessfully fought for their recognition.

Furthermore, women's traditional music is treated as a form of entertainment by the Swazi nation and its visitors. We are now selling our culture. We have depoliticized it and turned it into a commercial commodity to attract tourists so that government can generate revenue. This revenue does not directly benefit the rural woman composer who lacks the formal education that would expose her to a class of wage earners. Isamah (1992,p.31) says,

Africans erroneously and inadvertently conceptualise culture as consisting mainly of 'singing and dancing'. Yet the songs represent a culture, which refers to 'the way of life of a people, to their traditional behaviour, in a broad sense, including their ideas, acts, and artifacts

Adigun Agbaje (1992, p.44) echoes Isamah's philosophy. He declares,

the problem of definition is, however, blended in Africa's framework by the tendency to define culture in terms of entertainment and yet it practically exists. The present practice of cultural displays in the forms of music, dances and attires trivialise culture and create the wrong impression that the goal of culture is entertainment.

These Swazi women composers are not just actors or

traditional music stars. They should be regarded as a valuable asset and primary resource for our cultural preservation and for anti- sexist agendas. It is fine that their songs are used as an entertainment cultural form because, in the process, our culture is being promoted and preserved. However, by promoting only the cultural dances and songs, we are not solving the problem of cultural alienation. If we assume that the songs and dances do not have any impact on our children, we may be wrong. Ngugi Wa Thiongo (In Alloo 1989, p.9) says, "Culture is seen as product of history, which in turn reflects the image-forming agent in the mind of a child". Therefore, there is a possibility that this silent rejection stems from the message depicted in the songs. It is important that we study what is conveyed in the songs so that the foundation upon which we want to lay our cultural preservation project could remain solid for future generations to come. Upon this foundation, women would be able to address issues of gender by drawing their frame of reference from these songs. How we address what is depicted in the songs will measure our success in cultural preservation and anti- sexist agendas.

Rural women, in particular, have been unfairly treated by the 'advantaged' group in the Swazi society. This group has aided in the process by which these women appear faceless, voiceless and invisible. Actually, if these women had not given themselves a voice through song composition, they would have easily fitted into the above labels. Unless this pattern

changes, the social and cultural gap between boys and girls will continue to widen. Our text books, for instance, have a bias. They depict girls as passive and predominately fulfilling roles of mother and wife. It is unacceptable to teach such limited values in the classroom when we have Swazi women who are strong, courageous and intelligent and capable of many different things. For instance, in historical and political songs, women display their potential for directly and fearlessly addressing sensitive issues. These expressions show the freedom of speech that they have claimed in the absence of a public forum where both sexes could deliberate on social matters. There is a tremendous need, therefore, for educating girls and boys of the genuine status rural women have in society. All Swazi people should be aware of the power and courage of these women. Once young women start to appreciate these women's role in society, they might begin to view themselves positively. This might help minimise the existing psychological gap between boys and girls. Self-acknowledgement boosts one's self esteem. Youth might then stop despising rural women and start analyzing our culture from a constructive critical perspective.

Another adverse effect of Western colonialist formal education is that it has widened the social and cultural gap between the educated and the uneducated. What is interesting, however, is that these women do not display any inferiority complex in the midst of their educated brothers and sisters.

They proudly present their cultural, historical, and political knowledge through their songs in any gathering. The motivation and maturity of these women who attend Sebenta classes are at least equal to that of men and the educated middle class. Davison (1989,p.219) proclaims,

all in all life's ironies amuse them (women)
and they laugh; its injustices anger them
and they shout to be heard.
It is time for us to listen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ADOPTING A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY PROGRAMME

Swazi rural women's participation in different organizations is no current affair, any more than are gender inequities, subordination, segregation and exploitation. What might be new is the anti-sexist approach that will link their songs, which constitute their lives, with struggles against economic exploitation, political discrimination and male domination. In the past, these women have converged around affairs that have no definite anti-sexist agenda. They should comprehend that gender relations embody relationships of domination and submission that are nurtured by an inflexible modern division of labour and are communicated in 'acceptable' different and specific forms of oppression in both private and public spheres. Like every group that endures exploitative power relations, women are thus challenged to confront and

reconstruct their condition. The critical position adopted should hold out to women the assurance that they can question their situation and take action to transform it by revealing the conflicts that exist in their everyday lives. They have done this by legitimizing song composition as a platform for communication.

The Sebenta critical literacy programme can be used as a platform for reflection and, for reclaiming culture-all of which have enormous implications for the daily lives of women. The struggle to improve our status in society demands that we affirm our identity as women. Once they have accepted that identity, it is necessary to raise our consciousness about how we experience reality as women and to reveal our marginalization and oppression as played out in our daily lives. Thus education for women requires an ideological revolution, demystifying the understanding that women have of ourselves and society. Women need an education which is comprehensive and the basic characteristics of which includes an ongoing, consistent and constant program of action. Going further means working from the foundation of our identity as subjects of our own lives and starting from their own experiences as women. Swazi rural women should explore and develop an understanding of their problems as rural women and challenge societal approaches. Essentially, this education is a process of emancipation that envelopes every dimension of the human endeavour.

Great effort has to be applied to the Sebenta programme in order to create practical awareness and to address gender inequities. When developing this programme, for instance, women should be consulted, for they are the ones who have the original material and experience for a suitable curriculum. Much thought should be given to the content, the ideas and the theories which are translated into action through these songs.

Sebenta could be used as a forum whereby women may be encouraged to become conscious subjects of their own history, playing an active role in redefining and realizing the solutions to their political, economic, and social problems.

In a critical literacy class, their analysis will no longer be presented exclusively through social class, but also through gender. This focus provides a meeting place for the development of gender awareness. A critical literacy would broaden the women's prospects for advancement. This approach would begin with how women actually use literacy skills in their day to day lives to see the extent to which the incapacity to read had patterned their preferences and whether critical literacy would create the understandings that would help them enter the domain of public and cultural discourse previously confined to men.

Through oral interviews held with one group of women who attend the Sebenta literacy program, the following recommendations to improve a programme were generated. Foremost, these women feel that Government should make Sebenta

education compulsory and that an adult education association should be formed so that they could come together and discuss issues of importance. They maintain that with such a body in existence, government would likely see the significance of Sebenta.

With the help of government, small libraries should be made available for Sebenta programmes. Since Sebenta classes are held in school buildings after day classes, government should ensure that centrally located schools offer their classrooms to the Sebenta literacy group. Some communities operate with one school which is not centrally located. Since the division of labour in domestic chores is extreme in a Swazi traditional society, this shortcoming poses a problem to many women who are expected to rush back home after class to prepare meals for their families. It is, therefore, crucial for government to help the community find a convenient place to conduct lessons. Women's determination and quest for education are strong. Given financial support, it would not bother them to construct a classroom. They are innovative and fighters of ignorance and failure. They do not believe in failure but in hope.

Teachers should be trained in the fields of educational psychology, political science and sociology. They should be affiliated with the teacher's service commission and should be paid by government.

While selecting teachers, several points have to be kept

in mind: teachers should be given an orientation and refresher courses from time to time. They should be made familiar with adult education. They should be interested in the education of older people who may never have been academically challenged and they should be able to relate to them in a positive way. The students are adults who are rich in experience. The teacher must carry out her or his work with obligation and certainty, realizing the extent to which these learners have been left out as a result of the social and economic conditions of their history. The teacher must use methods that would make the subject matter not only interesting but also socially relevant and understandable.

These women are hard working, sincere and co-operative. In the introduction of such a course, simple methods like story telling, sharing experiences, songs and dances, watching films that promote culture and women's concerns from other regions, role playing in which gender equalities are promoted, talks, and discussions could be used to convey ideas and information. Women could realise that they are not alone in this kind of struggle. Opportunities should be provided for them to meet different people of varying status and age, so that they could realise that they are also important. They should be given time for reflection, discussions and the chance to speak before the class or audience. Mixing and interaction creates a bond of trust and raises one's self esteem. In the process they would realise their strengths,

potentials and needs. On reflection, there is no doubt they would find the experience very enriching.

Teachers should be prepared to live in the rural area and face possible shortages of electricity, clean water and transport. They must be prepared to work hard and take pains to get ready for this difficult task.

When discussing traditional practices that subordinate women, the teacher should be very tactful and avoid the impression of unjustly attacking cultural values. Songs can be used to analyze cultural practices and, in the process, contradictions will unveil. Learners should be made aware of their contradictions and should address the implications. The project should be to eradicate those practices that might lead to the extinction of our culture, that tactfully we would place certain traditional practices in the archives and text books for reflection and admiration and maintain those ones which would be cherished by every citizen irrespective of class, age and sex. They should be convinced that we are building a fortress to protect the good of our culture and that we are promoting it to the young.

Exposure is essential to critical thinking. Exposure to useful knowledge and skills and books depicting stories and experiences of other African women should be brought into the classroom. Participation in activities in the local area with other women's groups should be encouraged. Learners should be given an opportunity to initiate outings and to invite

visitors. Field trips to historical places and other places of interest should be used to broaden their vision and to let the women see some of the historical events they sing about in their songs.

The syllabus should be diverse and should identify itself with the learners' needs. Davison (1989, p.218) says that women "learn best when learning is synchronous with indigenous modes of education and relates directly to their basic needs". Professionals from the fields of agriculture, health and economics should continue to be allocated some hours in the timetable. The Ministry of Health, for instance, should carry out eye tests to curb one of the obstacles the women mentioned.

People are receptive to change if they feel respected in the change process. In this process of critical literacy, they would feel that the teacher shares their concerns. In this way suspicion is replaced with trust and hope. Together, with the teacher, they would work out solutions. They would compose songs that depict the agenda of the critical literacy programme. Through songs the teacher would easily evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the programme which would be helpful in redesigning the syllabus.

The women recommended that most programmes should run in the Siswati language which will partly provide a relaxed atmosphere in which everyone will feel free to contribute. They will think in their language and express themselves in

it. At the same time, the language which is part of our identity would be promoted. Ngugi Wa Thiongo (In Aloo 1989, p.9) says, "Language imbibes culture and thoughts are controlled that way". Together we could record the songs and write books of our culture. Together we could analyze the different messages conveyed in the songs. Together we could see how much knowledge women have of the past and the present. Raising women's self-esteem by showing them that they are important in their own world is a clever tactic in the goal of achievement.

These women should be able to read about the contributions they have made in the country through their endless efforts and hard work. Contributions include building schools, bringing revenue in the country by attracting tourists with their handicrafts, and encouraging and supporting the education of their children. The low infant mortality rate should not only be attributed to the health care motivators but also to the women who have faithfully attended the programmes despite their domestic chores which are strenuous and time consuming. Their role in subsistence and commercial farming should also be recorded. All their contributions, failures or achievements should be recorded and read in the schools. This documentation is available in their songs which are useful material for a school curriculum. The songs are a mirror and seeing our reflection might change the way we look at ourselves.

Having their contributions in text books means that, for the first time, Swazi women would receive national consideration and appreciation for their major role in society. They are now treated as if they are inferior because of their lack of education. Their presence in textbooks would help them realise their own worth and help them gain self-confidence.

It is, therefore, crucial not to lose the traditional aspect of song composition and dance. These women are comfortable with it. They look upon it as a form of self-defined democracy which allows them a freedom of speech. Many people, especially the educated middle class women who have disassociated themselves from such traditions, are often afraid to express their thoughts on gender inequities. They are afraid of confrontation. They are afraid of being declared crazy and pro- Western. As bell hooks (1984) puts it, they prefer to suffocate in silence. Educated middle class women are caught in a dilemma. As much as they envy the freedom of speech the rural women have accorded themselves through song, the educated are often afraid to be identified with them because these women are seen as uneducated and 'old fashioned'. As an educated, middle class woman, I admire these self declared uneducated and old fashioned women because they know who they are. Against all odds they have maintained their dignity. What we, the educated middle class, need to do is to stop being envious of these great women and take a pen and a

paper and record and promote their contributions to society. After all, they are the same women who gave us this pen and paper.

These women have accorded themselves their own sense of dignity which is revealed in the self- confident and dignified manner in which they dance to the traditional songs. They depict a sense of command in their lives. They have composed songs of gratefulness towards King Sobhuza II and their teachers who have given them education. Traditional music has always fostered a strong bond of friendship and solidarity among Swazi rural women. Enabling them to look critically at customs, traditions and history that promote women's subordination would help them redefine their position in society and see negative socialization patterns. The programme must give them the opportunity to develop an empowering sense of themselves as human beings. It should help them realize the possibility of new roles and functions as community members.

CONCLUSION

Formal and non- formal education are two of the most significant instruments for changing people's subjugated position in society. However, Swazi formal education, which is mainly designed on a Western pattern, cannot fulfil our special need for cultural preservation because our society is riddled with certain colonial structures that demean our

culture. To add to this design, our society is also riddled with traditional practices that subordinate and oppress women. The achievement of cultural preservation depends not only on the provision of adequate educational facilities, but also on many structural, cultural and social factors that should be addressed critically. Critical awareness should help to liberate the young and educated from the bondage of colonial brainwashing and adults from the bondage of harmful conservatism and prejudices. We cannot sit and grieve over the disintegration of our traditions; neither should we sit and grieve over oppression and discrimination against women in society. These women have sustained our traditions. They have organised themselves in a traditional way by coming together to compose and sing traditional songs. They have organised themselves by accepting the women who bring to them educational programmes on health and income generating projects. It has been observed in this study that these women are sensitive and receptive to new ideas. Creating a critical awareness of their situation would give them new knowledge and information that may reorient and change their attitudes towards new values in life.

Since the Swazi nation regards education as the most powerful tool of national change and culture preservation, what we need most is a revolution in our educational structure that will trigger an intelligent analysis of our culture and the social status of women in particular. Furthermore, our

cultural preservation programme can be successful only if it is linked with critical education and women's concerns in our system. Critical awareness is an honest measure which exposes and undercuts prejudices and hypocrisy. A person with critical awareness views issues from an intelligent, impersonal and anti-biased perspective. Such people respect every culture while intelligently and calmly devising strategies to instill critical awareness in people to assemble their traditions and sift what is not desirable. It is such qualities that this programme needs in teachers who will be teaching these adults. This strategy is important because, drawing from the colonialists who ridiculed our traditions, people are very suspicious of anyone who tries to portray a negative image of our traditional practices. Therefore, with a constructive and appreciative approach, no one would feel despised or betrayed. Love for our culture would be genuine. The present love is a blind one and, as such, is destructive to the very same thing that we are trying to protect. The critical love for our traditions will enable us to see traditional structures that need to be dismantled. To prevent the creation of a vacuum, we will have to find positive replacements. The feeling of grudgingly wanting to preserve our culture will diminish. We will not feel threatened if we do it ourselves. Such critical and analytical thinking will enable us to develop our discretionary ability.

Awareness can help stimulate the learner's thinking,

which can lead to social change and, simultaneously, to seeing the wisdom of preserving one's culture. Literacy must be linked with critical social awareness. It is what the content of some of the songs reveal that is being shunned and a full understanding of it is needed. If children find American pop music fun, there is little chance they will sit to listen to a woman ridiculing other co-wives. However, if they understand the social implications, they may feel that the traditional music is worth listening to because it depicts our way of life and that, by listening to it, we may understand women's aims and objectives in composing the songs. Such understanding can provide us with an agenda to analyze, sift and sustain our cultural traits. It is not advisable for us to reject our traditions without an understanding of why certain structures existed and without deciding whether or not they are still worthy of preservation. Children might even develop love and appreciate the intelligence displayed by these women in creating their own platform to ease their cultural tensions. In our present cultural preservation programme, there is a tone of despair and frustration which has led us to hastily establish a grossly inadequate cultural programme. The cultural crisis which our society is undergoing threatens our identity and, in so doing, retards and blocks clear thinking about how to create a society with a healthy cultural agenda. Our desire for a Western way of life, coupled with our shoddy efforts to make the best of our culture, have brought with

them forms of cultural alienation, invasion and disorientation.

However, the strength of our culture should not be ignored. The survival of our traditional elements in our language, sacred rituals such as incwala (the first fruit ceremony) and reed dance, attire, song and dance, and other arts speak to its strength. However the strength of these traditional elements should not convince us that our culture is safe. Such false assurance itself creates a threat to our identity. It is true that women, through songs, have fought constantly against applied dissociation and alienation from traditional forms. It is also true that in the same manner they have and are still fighting their marginalisation from demeaning structures. We could, therefore, use the songs as potent manifestations of women's defiance of subordination and as forceful exhibitions of a challenge to cultural alienation. The question that this study has tried to answer is, 'Can education be used to preserve our culture and at the same time provoke in women a critical awareness of their societal status?' Adigun Agbaje (1992,p.43) says,

[w]hile it is true that development is the concern of the entire community, there will always be opposition to attitudes which question traditional structures. It is absolutely essential not to sweep such obstacles aside too brutally but to initiate, a well-planned process, consisting of taking one small, concrete step at a time.

In a changing society dominated by western influences, we should not pretend that we will learn our traditions through osmosis and that we will all see the significance of cultural

preservation. We should not pretend that women are not hurting, that they are not aware they are subordinated and oppressed. We should not pretend we are not aware that women of the educated middle class are afraid to express their concerns and dissatisfaction lest they are declared insane and influenced by Western ideas. To come to terms with such oppression is to build on a self-reflexivity theory. However, Gates (1985, p.282) argues,

but therein lies the question: can one undig the underlying themes of this distorted and complex history of Africa, that should always be built upon borrowed themes of the imperialists?

Documenting rural women's music which partly depicts their daily lives is only the beginning of a long journey to self acceptance. While women are aware of their position in society, it remains unclear to what extent they are ready to accept change without threatening their love and loyalty to custom. There is much anxiety in our society about losing our traditions. I am one of those who is afraid of losing her identity. However, despite this fear, it is necessary to accept that societal structures that subordinate women should be scorned. Such subordination should not be associated with our culture. It is therefore the duty of our education system to present such practices for critique. We have many traditional practices that respect all inhabitants of our society. Let us preserve those so that we can all be proud of being associated with such a dynamic, identity-preserving society.

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A P P E N D I X A

Swazi Women's Traditional Songs

A: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CATTLE

The following songs show how insignificant one's marriage can be without lobolo. (Lobolo means "cattle, or their equivalent in money", which the bride-groom or his father agrees to deliver to the father of the bride). A woman whose parents have not received cattle from her husband is looked with suspicion and disrespect. The situation is worsened because her in-laws do not respect her. In some of these songs we will hear a woman lamenting and also giving excuses because her parents have not received lobolo from her husband.

1. Why have I lost so much weight?
 I am so thin, bones are showing.
 The cattle is at Mashobeni (a place name).
 My father is calling me.
 They say, my father is calling me.
- Ngondzeleni kangaka?
 Ngondze kuvel'ematsambo.
 Tinkhomo tiseMashobeni.
 Batsi babe uyangibita.

The man had not paid lobolo. Therefore, he was not at all taken as a wealthy man by his in-laws which why the woman is called back home by her father. She was not well treated and her parents were angry because they received no cattle from the son in-law.

This song also indicates the heavy traditional workload

of women by expressing the concern about the woman's loss of weight. Women in the rural areas form the cornerstone of the country's economy. Therefore, they do not deserve to be placed in a subordinate position by any member of Swazi society.

2. My in-laws,
 In marriage, I abandoned my mother.
 The cattle is with my in-laws.
 In marriage, it is where people tire.
 Rivalry, rivalry, such rivalry.
 Oh my father, let me go and get your cattle
 Let us go, my father, and get your cattle
 It is yours.
 Oh my father, I abandoned my mother.
 There is no cattle.

Sive ekhakhami.
 Ekwendzeni ngadzela make.
 Letinkhomo letisekwendzeni.
 Ekwendzeni kukamkhatsali.
 Lombango, lombango longaka.
 Asihambe babe silandze emalobolo,
 Tinkhomo ngetakho.
 Maye babe, ngadzela make.
 Akunankhomo.

The woman in this song feels guilty that her parents received no lobolo from her husband so she is volunteering to go with her father to demand what is legally his. She is also bitter about her wasted energy and for having abandoned her mother for nothing. Actually, women feel obliged to work hard in their marriages because of the lobolo. If lobolo has not been paid, they feel used.

- 3(a). Hey other people's cattle are lowing at the cattle dip.
 I have cried and cried but mine (boyfriend) is at KaNgwane (King's residence).

Hey you, my father, up there.
The cattle are lowing.

Nkhomo zebantfu setiyabubula edamu.
Owakami akekho ukaNgwane.
Babe tinkhomo tiyabubula.

- (b) My father says that I should go and get his cattle.
It is too far, it is too far in the foreign land.
Someone has come to lobola.
Oh my father's herds.
Here is my father, he says that I should get his
Cattle.
Someone has come to lobola.
Oh my father's herds.
It is too far in the foreign land.
Come with them.

Utsi babe angilandze tinkhomo.
Kukhashane, kukhashane emaveni.
Ukhona omemezayo.
Maye umhlambi wabobabe.
Kukhashane letiveni.
Buya nato.

The woman feels badly because she can hear the sound made by the cows used for lobolo. The lobolo is for another girl from the neighbourhood. Her lover went to live at the king's place to pay allegiance to the Monarchy and she has been abandoned. Still, she has this love hangover.

4. What about the cattle that is with my in-laws?
Ha ha, there are no cattle.
Hey my mother, what about my cattle with my in-laws?
The cattle, the cattle are with my in-laws.

Letinkhomo letisekwendeni?
Ha ha akunankhomo yehhe.
Letinkhomo, letinkhomo letisekwendzeni.

In this song the woman is mocked because her parents received no lobolo. However, she tells them the cattle are

with her in-laws. In most cases if the man's parents do not like the woman, they never release the lobolo.

B: MARRIAGE SONGS

The following songs are sung mostly on the second day of the marriage ceremony. This is a happy day and the bride and her party sing and dance in front of the in-laws and outside spectators.

5. (a) Oh what a beautiful hairstyle, young bride.
You must be joking you of the King,
I travelled until I was too tired.

Saze sabasihle lesicholo samakoti.
Uyadlala okandaba.
YeLonkantolo ngihambe ngaze ngasokola.
Uyadlala okandaba.

- (b) Subject of the King is playing.
I walked till noon.
I struggled, I suffered.
My sister's cattle.
Oh you were beautiful, my sister.

These two songs express the beauty of the young bride. The in-laws are told that, although this woman is beautiful, because of the hardships awaiting her, sooner or later she will be wearing a troubled face.

6. I left home justly,
Oh yes.
If I were you I would not be deserting my people.
Come my father's pride.
I have completely left my people.
I left with my father's approval.
My father's wish should be fulfilled.

Ngiphume ngesihle.

Woshi hha.
 Umane uyasilahla.
 Kota gcabi lababe.
 Ngiphume ngaphela kubakitsi.

In this song, the bride is happy because she has been officially given away by her father. She actually assumes that, since her marriage has received her father's blessings, everything will be fine. In the very same song, one woman advises her against deserting her people because of the hardships she might encounter. However, the bride is adamant and says that her father's wish should be fulfilled. The second day depicts a joyous mood.

7. I have been contaminated.
 Hey you, Ngwane people, we are in trouble.
 I have touched a spear.

Mine ngonakele.
 Yema Ngwane, sahlupheka.
 Ngatsintsa umkhonto.

A bride is given a spear on the third day of the marriage

ceremony which signifies her total commitment to the marriage. Even if she leaves her husband and decides to marry again, she can not be given a spear for the second time. However, that does not mean less commitment in the new home, although another marriage may bring ridicule and insults because the woman is taken as a failure and as second hand.

8. (a) Pick me up, my darling.

Put me on your shoulders.
Now I can see the heavens.

Awungitsatse dali.
Awungibeke ecebeni.
Sengibona emazulu.

- (b) I told my father, you subject of the King.
Oh my mother, I told my father
That to get married is like abandoning oneself.
To get married is like throwing away your own
bones.
I even told my mother, you of the King,
That to get married is like throwing yourself away.

Babe ngumtshelile BoNkhosi,
Kutsi kwendza kutilahla.
Kutsi kwendza kutilahla ematsambo.
Namake ngimtshelile kutsi kwendza kutilahla.

These two songs mark the intensity of the marriage ceremony. The bride comes out to the front accompanied either by both her brother and sister or by only her sister. She displays her dancing talent to the amusement of all the guests. However, while she may dance to either one of these two songs above the most common song is the second one. The first one was sung by a young educated bride on her wedding day who told me that she did not believe in predetermined marriage problems. It is interesting to note that traditional weddings are increasingly favoured by both the educated and the uneducated (Hlatshwayo, 1993).

The following marriage songs are sung on the third day of the marriage ceremony when the bride wakes up early in the morning, usually between 2 and 3, to go to the cattle byre to cry. She is accompanied by her bridal party. In this ceremony, songs that depict hardships to be encountered in the marriage,

particularly with her in-laws, co-wives (in the case of a polygamous home) and the husband, are sung.

9. Hey you, Madokola Sukati (name of the bridegroom),
 I have done something wrong, oh yeah.
 Hey you, Madokola Sukati,
 I have wronged my father (my father's brothers).
 They say that my darling has no cattle.
 I have done wrong, oh yeah.
 They say my friend has no cattle.

LoMadokola Sukati,
 Sengonile woyehhe.
 YeMadokola Sukati,
 Sengonile kubobabe.
 Batsi singani sami asinankhomo.
 Sengonile.
 Batsi umnganami akanankhomo.

In this song, the young woman has defied her parents and refused an arranged marriage. She is marrying a man of her choice. Her father, in particular, is angry with her because her choice is not wealthy. In this song, she is actually telling Madokola Sukati that her father is angry with her for marrying a poor man. She is not only trying to show the man how much she loves him but also that he should prove her father wrong by working hard to finish paying lobolo.

10. (a) I left my companions sleeping.
 To get married is like deserting yourself.
 I left my companions sleeping.
 Hey you bird, oh yeah.
 I left them styling their hair.
 To get married, is like deserting yourself,
 It is clear to me my father.
 it is clear, it is clear,
 It is clear to me my people, my people.
 Oh it is clear, it is clear.
 The sun rose and I had not slept, my people.
 Oh it is clear, it is clear.

Ngibashiya balele bontsanga.
 Kwendza kutilahla.
 Ngibashiya balele bontsanga.
 Yelanyoni yehhe.
 Ngibashiya bayagayinga.
 Kwendza kutilahla.
 Sekungisele yebabe bo.
 Ncelencele.

- (b) I got married young.
 I have left my companions sleeping.
 I got married young.
 Home is too far.

In song (a) it is only now that the woman realises she has actually entered a difficult phase of her life. By being awakened early in the morning, she has realised that this will be the framework for the rest of her married life. She will be expected to wake up every morning and carry out the family's day to day chores without fail. In both songs, she feels badly that her companions are still having fun. They can still style their hair to their taste, while she is expected to keep her hair either covered in a scarf or keep it in a married woman's traditional hair style.

11. (a) Wherever my mother is, she is restless.
 Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah.
 My mother is restless at the entrance of the reed Enclosure.
 She is touching and leaving everything in the reed Enclosure.
 Wherever my mother is, she is restless.
 I am worried. Hey you, my father.
- Lapha akhona make uyayobayoba.
 Ahhe, ahhe, ahhe.
 Make unqhula, unqhula egumeni.
 Unqhula emnyango.
 Lapho akhona make uyayobayoba.
-

Sengiyandziliba yelababe loya.

- (b) I am stranded today, I am left alone.
 I do not have my people.
 Wherever my mother is, she is hitting against the
 Fence of the reed enclosure.
 Where did I leave my mother today?
 Where is my mother remaining?
 I am lonely I am all by myself.
 Hey you!
 Wherever my mother is, she is restless.

The bride is concerned about her mother, for she knows that her mother is aware of the hardships ahead of her at her in-laws' place. The bride knows that her mother is restless because she underwent the same marriage procedure and she has already experienced the hardships. Her mother's stomach is actually in "knots". That is why when lobolo is paid, it is a must that a cow for the bride's mother should be present. Insulamnyembeti (which literally means the one that wipes away tears) it is a gift from the bridegroom to his mother-in-law as an expression of gratitude for the latter's efforts and troubles in bringing up the daughter. In most cases, when the daughter encounters hardships, the mother encourages her to bear the consequences for they accepted the son-in-law's cattle. However, it should be noted that mothers have always found it difficult to condone their daughters' sufferings in the hands of the in-laws.

12. This child is daddy's firstborn.
 Oh my father,
 We have brought you her.
 We have brought you a slave,
 A slave that will wipe your urine.

A slave that will be your door mat to wipe your mud.

Lomntfwana wekucala kubabe.
Wo yebabe sesimletsile.
Siniletsele sigcila sekusula umchamo.
Sekusulela ludzaka.

This song is sung by her sisters who want the in-laws to note that they are aware of the treatment awaiting their sister. Most of the time, however, it is a futile threat.

13. Hey you, problem, problem,
 You who is at Embo (a place name).
 They say the witch is talking.
 I am the real problem,
 You who is at Embo.
 When I talk they hate.
 They say the witch is talking.

Yelanakane, nakane yami.
Wena usEmbo.
Batsi uyakhuluma umtsakatsi.
Nakane yami sibili.
Ngikhuluma batondze.
Batsi wakhuluma umtsakatsi.

This song depicts the kind of life that the woman will lead. She will be given all kinds of names such as witch. They will attribute any family ill omen to her. For instance, if she is in a polygamous family, (a) if a child belonging to one of the co- wives dies she will be looked upon as the witch; or, (b) if one of the co-wives decides she has had enough and then leaves the home, the newly married wife will be labelled as a witch who cast her spells so as to chase away the other woman whom she may have considered a threat to the husband.

14. I have been brought here like a cow
 whose owner does not have a cattle byre.

Hey you, mother of the young, man.
You do whatever you want to do with me.

Ngitowusiswa njengenkomo.
Umnikati longenasibaya.
Yelanabojaha, udlala ngami.

This song signifies that the woman/wife will never be accepted as a full member of the family and she will always be treated with contempt and suspicion. In this song, the bride maintains that her mother in-law will ill-treat her because she has been given away like a homeless cow. To pay for the given shelter she will have to endure all hardships in this new foreign home.

The following songs were mostly composed by married women who already tasted the bitterness of their married lives either with their husbands or in-laws. Somehow, they reconfirm the words of bitterness expressed in the last songs.

15. (a) I did not have people to tell me, my fathers,
Oh where had I gone to.
A word of warning is strong.
What did I do to myself!

Mine ngandzindza batsheli bobabe.
Livi lekutshelwa linemandla.
Ingabe babe bekayephi, bekayephi.
liculuculu labhasha inhlanyelo bobabe.
Ingabe babe bekayephi, bekayephi?
Ngitamtshela.

- (b) I did not have people to warn me.
A voice of warning is strong.
I wonder where my father had gone to.
This bachelor eats roasted dried corn.
I wonder where my father had gone to, had gone to.
I will tell him.

In these songs, the woman regrets her marriage. She feels

that she did not get a strong warning. In the second song, she specifically laments her father's failure to warn her or rather advise her. When interpreting the second song, the woman said that this man did not perform well in bed which is why, in the song, he is referred to as a "bachelor who eats roasted dried corn". In other words, he did not even have girlfriends to cook for him.

16. (a) Talk, you talkative people.
 They tied me down with spears, like an animal.
 Stop backbiting me.
 They say you, my in-laws are talkative
 Talk, talk, you of the right
 The clan of my in-laws is stabbing me with a spear.
 Stop talking about me, my in-laws.

Khulumani yelomakhulumane.
 Bangafasa ngemkhonto njengesilwane.
 Yekelani kungihleba.
 Batsi sive sekhakhami sinemlomo.
 Khulumani, khulumani nine bekunene.
 Singigwaza ngemkhonto sive sekhakhami.
 Yekelani kukhuluma ngami, sive sekhakhami.

- (b) My in-laws.
 Hey you my in-laws, whom are you abusing?
 Just look my mother's child.
 All my in-laws are abusing me.
 Just look, my child.
 My in-laws are abusing me.
 Just look, my child, how I am.

Sive sekhakhami.
 Yesive sekhakhami sidlala ngami.
 Sonkhe sive sekhakhami sidlala ngami

In these songs the woman is bitter about the abusive treatment she receives from all her in-laws. Through such songs, she is able to convey her message to them.

The following song was popular with all the different

groups I visited, each of whom would come up with its own variation.

17. - How much food do you give my mother, you bride?
What a pity the old woman has grown thin.
How much food do you give her?

Lomake umphakela kanjani?
Waze wazaca umuntfu lomdzala.
Umphakela kanjani?
Ngoba uhlala nawe.

- Greetings my mother.
How much food do you give my mother?
I am referring to you, bride.
I am referring to you, the daughter of
Ndzimandze,
Because she lives with you

- My mother in-law has gone thin.
You, how much food do you give her?

Ungondzele maketala.
Wena umphakela kanjani lomaketala.

This is one song but it is sung by different groups on different occasions. It puts emphasis on the way the bride takes care of her mother in-law. The thinness of the old woman is an indication of starvation. It cannot even be attributed to illness so the bride will have to carry all the blame. This song carries a traditional value of generosity. However, this commendable value is hidden behind the negative treatment given to women.

D: A POLYGAMOUS LIFE

The following songs depict life in a polygamous setting in which womens' lives are wrapped in mockery, rivalry, hatred, jealousy, suspicion and bitterness.

18. What bad luck to be rejected.
 Oh I will sleep alone.
 Oh my dear fathers,
 When I am so beautiful,
 Oh I will sleep all by myself.
 Oh what a beautiful woman to be starved.

Lelikhombo lekwaliwa.
 Ngiyolala ngendlala.
 Maye bobabe lesimolomolo.
 Ngiyolala ngendlala.
 Yeka lesimolomolo.
 Ngiyolala ngendlala.

The man does not visit her despite her beauty. She is complaining that she is sexually starved.

19. Wherever my husband is sleeping,
 My heart sleeps there, too.
 It is sore.
 My love remains with him.

Lapho kulele khona wakami
 Kulele inhlitiyo.
 Ibala emankinjonkinjo.

The woman laments her husband sleeping with one of the co-wives on that particular night. She finds it difficult to accept the fact that since she is in a polygamous setting, they should take turns. Whenever the man is with one of them, she feels betrayed and imagines all kinds of things the man might be doing with the other woman.

20. At last, today it (penis) has entered my co-sister.
 At last it has entered.

Namuhla lungene zakwetfu
Lwahlala lwangena zakwetfu.

Another woman is ridiculed by her co-sisters because the husband decided to sleep in her house after months of neglect.

21. Ha ha ha.
A young bride is laughing at home.
Oh my dear could you please steal for me?
Just do it for me?
Oh my dear just steal for me.
I have travelled places my mother, but Mswati's (the
King of Swaziland) country is different.
Oh hey, dear, just do it for me.
- Gegege, kuhleka makot' ekhaya.
Yelele mntfwanamake,
Awumane ungebelabele.
Uwumane ungentelantele.
Ngihambile make.
Kodvwa lilodvwa laMswati.

In this song the young bride is sexually starved. Now, she appeals to her private lover to sleep with her.

22. You will show me where you sleep.
You! What are you doing minding other people's
business?
What about you, What do you do?
- Utangikhomba laph' ulele khona.
Wena wentani ucaphela tindzaba talabanye.
Wena wentani?

Two women are exchanging words in this song. One is jealous of the other's private life. She appears content with life, yet the man rarely pays her a visit. She is spying on her so that she could report to the husband and probably be

remembered too.

23. Yesterday, I was with you here at home.
 Eat and go, you man; eat and go, you foreigner.
 I was with you here at home.
 I was just stealing for you.
 Take your coat and go.
 I was just stealing for you, you foreigner.

Izolo benginawe lapha ekhaya.
 Dlani uhambe muntfu wekuhamba.
 Mine benginawe lapha ekhaya.
 Bengikwebela.
 Tsatsa lijazi lakho, uhambe.

In this song, a woman is telling her private lover to disappear because the woman is expecting her husband who has been away for too long perhaps in the mines in the Republic of South Africa. She calls the private lover a foreigner because he is only a private lover and there are no other strong strings attached. It is as if the man did not want to leave and that is why the woman demands he takes his coat and leave. Through such songs the impact of migrant mine labour on women and families might be analyzed.

24. These people backbite me.
 Anyway, they do not know me well.
 Whenever they see me, they destroy my character.

Labantfu bakhuluma ngami.
 Kodvwa abangicondzi.
 Mabangibona bangibeka emabala.

Hatred is rife amongst co-sisters. The composer of this song, is perpetually ignored and verbally degraded by her co-sister.

25. Why is my co-sister looking at me?
Horrible eyes,
Eyes of a witch.
How do you look at me?

Ungibukani zakwetfu?
Emehlo gwilli.
Emehlo emtsakatsi.
Ungibuka njani?

The other woman addresses her co-sister as a witch because she hates the way she eyes her. This song depicts strong rivalry between co-sisters and the man is the centre of the controversy.

26. I have been earmarked.
It has clouds, it is thundering.
I am trying to ignore it, but I have been earmarked
Oh my father, I have been earmarked.
Oh the thunder is coming.
Oh I am trying to ignore it, my father and mother.
I have been earmarked, I have been earmarked

Ngikhonjiwe.

These women do not trust each other. One feels unsafe in the presence of the other. One woman is suspicious of the other regarding her as a witch. Whenever clouds gather in summer she panics. It becomes worse if the clouds are followed by a thunderstorm. This woman believes the thunder has been directed at her to kill her.

27. Me, I push my co-sister.
Push her.
Even if she has big bumps.
Push her.
Even if she has big breasts.
Push her.
Even if she has big legs,

I push her.
Push her.

Mine ngiyamshova umgcaki.
Mshove.
Noma anetibunu letinkhulu.
Mshove.
Noma anemabele lamakhulu.
Mshove.
Noma anatitfo letinkhulu,
Mshove.

In this song, another woman is mocking her co-sister, claiming that she can displace her from the husband despite her big body. The other women encourage her to displace her.

28. The old woman is shy.
Oh! to be old.
Old woman, poor old woman.
I am scared of you, old woman.
Why did you come to Dlangeni (place name)?
What had you come for, poor old woman?
Hey you my friend, why did you come?
Why did you come, why did you come?

Lesalukazi lesidala sinemahloni.
Awu kuguga.
Salukazi, salukzana.
Bewuyaphi eDlangeni?
Awuyokwenzani salukazana?

The other women are mocking their co-sister. They consider her to be much older than the husband. They feel she will not cope with the domestic work because she is old.

D: RIDICULING SONGS

29. Here is my problem
What is it?
I want marriage.
There is no marriage.
Marriage, nothing

I have even tried all kinds of cosmetics.
 I have even tried wearing stockings.
 Marriage, nothing.
 As for me, my God,
 I have even tried hitchhiking.
 There is no marriage.
 I have even tried going to bars.
 Oh my God!
 There is no marriage.
 Even my shoes are talking.
 The shoes are talking (the clicking sound of high
 heels).
 Where are the shoes, my father?
 I am talking about the pair of shoes.
 Where are they, my God?
 There is no marriage.
 I want marriage.

Nansi imihlolo yami.
 Yini?
 Mine ngifuna umendvo.
 Umendvo awukho, umendvo do.
 Sengibatse ngigcobisa ikekesi.
 Umendvo awukho, umendvo do.
 Sengibatse ngigcoka emakheyiza.
 Umendvo do.
 Awu mine Nkhosi yami.
 Sengibatse ngishova sitfupha.
 Umendvo awukho, umendvo do.
 Sengibatse ngiya nasemabhareni, Nkhosi yami.
 Umendvo awukho, umendvo do.
 Neticatfulo tiyakhuluma.
 Kukhuluma ticatfulo.
 Tiphi ticatfulo?
 Ngikhuluma ngeticatfulo mine.
 Tiphi babe?
 Tiphi Nkhosi yami?
 Umendvo awukho, umendvo do.

The woman who composed this sarcastic song talks about a woman who cannot find a husband and who tries all kinds of tricks to attract men's attention, but to no avail. She tries to find favours on a pair of high heeled shoes whose heels are worn out because the noise might attract men's attention. Of course that is her belief. It could be that the heels are worn

out because she used this pair of shoes whenever she went out. She has only just realised that these shoes might do the trick which is why she asks her father, even God, about the whereabouts of the shoes.

30. Girl, you are really having it tough.
 You change men everyday.
 Oh Bhuza's (King Sobhuza) children are handsome.
 You girl, you are a flirt.

Ntfombatana wasokola.
 Wagana intshintshi.
 Maye bahle bantfwana ba Bhuza.
 Wena ntfombatana.

This song mocks a woman who seems to have more than one affair at a time. The other women in the song, who live at Her Majesty's residence, seem to know the reason for her flirtatious conduct- the princes are too handsome to resist.

31. Just take Malindane (a regiment), it is all yours.
 It is due to earth's unfairness.
 Pick up any Malindane, they will get finished.
 It is due to earth's unfairness.

Titsatsele Malindane.
 Kungekwakho, tintfo temhlaba.
 Konkhe kungekwakho
 Titsatsele Malindane.
 Titawuphela.
 Tintfo temhlaba.

This song talks about women who have been deserted by their loved ones. They attribute this desertion to natural misfortunes. They tell the men to get any woman they want because they have nowhere to go. Women feel empty if there is no man in their lives. However, the main point is whether or not women should forego their happiness on behalf of empty

love.

32. He held me and pushed me into a corner.
It is your own fault.
Why did you have to agree?

Wangibamba wangivalela ekoneni.
Sono sakho mama.
Uvumeleni?

This woman was accused of committing adultery. However, she tries to defend herself and says that she got involved against her will. In short, she was raped. The other women maintain that she gave the man her consent.

33. I have got no one.
I am a wanderer.
They are laughing at me.
Is there any person who can have no one?

Ngandzindza nelive.
Bayangihleka.
Ukhona londzindza nelive?

In this song the woman laments not finding a man to marry her. She even finds it ridiculous not to have a man to marry.

34. My neighbours hate me.
They hate me and yet we are neighbours.
You must not hate me as I am your neighbour.
Why do you hate me and yet we are neighbours?
What have I done my neighbour?
Hey you, who hate your neighbour.
Who will bury you?
The grave is waiting for you.

Bayangizonda bomakhelwane.
Bayangizonda sakhelene.
Ungabongizonda sakhelene.

This song tells people to love their neighbours because they are their immediate person in the neighbourhood and first ones to know if something was wrong. This song is a lesson to anyone who might be less than neighbourly.

E: The following songs are dedicated to men

35. You will slaughter a big one.
Just leave the kitchen, you are still young.
Come out Lindimphi (a name of a regiment),
Come out.

Utawuhlaba lenkhulu.
Phuma lapha edladleni.
Usemncane.
Phuma Lindimphi.

The women in this song are telling a young man to leave the kitchen where women are having a chat over a pot of traditional brew. The man is told to leave the kitchen because he might fall in love with a woman older than him. Customarily, a man who falls for an older woman is shunned and ridiculed.

36. Hey, you wanderer of other people's homes,
With whom did you leave your home?
You wander around other men's homes.

Yelazungeleza imizi yebantfu.
Owakho wawushiya nabani?
Uzungeleza imizi yemadoda.

This song makes fun of a man who sleeps with other people's partners. As he moves from one homestead to another, his wife finds herself a private lover. That is why the song asks, "With whom did you leave your home".

F: HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SONGS

37. Thank you, Joan Masuku.
 Right now we are at kaGuquka (name of a place).
 Thank you, broadcaster.
 It does not matter that you have not been given food.
 Thank you for recording us.
 The people of Guquka will be heard through our Swazi
 National Broadcasting Service.
 The Guquka place has developed.
 Region, you have developed today.
 Thank you, my dear.
 Thank you, Hlane (the broadcaster's last name).
 Thank you, broadcaster.
 We are starving here.
 Oh you people of the King, we are starving here.
 We have not even received the yellow maize.
 What wrong did we do we people of Guquka?

Siyabonga Jwana Masuku.
 SikaGuquka lapho sikhona khona.
 Ngiyabonga msakati.
 Akusho lutfo kutsi uphetfwe yindlala.
 Ngiyabonga kungena emsakatweni.
 Live lakaGuquka likhulile lamuhla.
 Nkhundla ukhulile lamuhla.
 Ngiyabonga mntfwanamake.
 Ngiyabonga Hlane.
 Sesifile nayindlala bo.
 Maye sesifile yindlala bekunene.
 Nesangalane asikasitfoli.
 Kantsi tsine senteni bakaGuquka.

A woman working with the Swaziland Broadcasting Service had come to record Guquka's women's development projects. They composed this song as a sign of appreciation for the public platform provided to them by this woman. They also utilised this opportunity to tell the country's authorities that they had not received their share of food distributed during the drought period.

38. (a) This drought, this drought,
 It is just too much, maSwati (the Swazi people).

Why are we experiencing such severe drought?
Do we still follow our traditions?
Let us go back to our customs.

Lesomiso, lesomiso.
Lesomiso lesingaka maSwati.
Ngalesomiso ingabe nisawagcina yini emaseko?
Buyelani emasikweni.

- (b) Where do you come from,
You drought, where do you come from?
Hey you drought, where do you come from?
The drought is just too severe.
Pray you, christians,
Pray for this country.

The African Southern Region, which includes Swaziland, experienced severe drought in the years 1991 and 1992. The women felt that it was due to our neglect of our traditions and customs that we had to experience such severe drought. They, therefore, to appealed to the nation to revert to our customs and traditions to prevent any ill omen from befalling the nation again.

39. Oh we are dying.
Drought in the land of the Ngwane.
Even Mswati gave out his food.
Let us live together, you of the king.
Let us live together at Ludzidzini (Royal residence).
What about us?
Who is our King?
Mswati gave out his own money.
It would be better if we all lived together.
Mswati gave out his own food.
- Awu safa somiso kulakaNgwane.
NaMswati uyakukhokha kudla kwakhe.
Bekuncono sihlale sonkhe eLudzidzini.
Tsine sibayiphi leNkhosi?
NaMswati uyayikhokha imali yakhe.

During the drought period, the Swazi government formed a

drought relief committee that would distribute food and water to all the regions. However, it took some time before outlying places were reached. People got restless, and the women decided to compose this song to urge the committee to increase its pace. In this song, this committee is told not to be mean with the food because, after all, it belongs to the King. They even suggest that since the committee is not carrying out its duties effectively, it would be better if the whole Swazi nation could converge at the Royal Residence to get the food directly from the King.

40. Who should get the drought relief food?
 We are dying of hunger.
 We are asking from Her Majesty.
 We are also asking about the slaughtered cows.
 We are dying of hunger.
 We are asking, we are asking from Her Majesty.
 We are dying of hunger.
 We are dying of hunger right at the Royal Residence.
 Exactly for whom are these cows slaughtered?
 We are dying of hunger.
 We are dying of hunger right inside the Royal Residence.

Lesomiso sinikwa labanjani?
 Safa yindlala.
 Siyabuta kuMhlelezi.
 Letinkunzi siyabuta.
 Safa yindlala.
 Safela eNkhosini.
 Kantsi letinkunzi tihlatshelwa labanjani?

This song was composed by women who live around the Royal residence. They claim that during the distribution of the drought food, no one remembered them. The worst thing, they claim, is that they honestly and heartily carry out Royal duties just as men do but they are never slaughtered any cows.

They composed this song so that Her Majesty could listen to their plight.

41. (a) Who should get the slaughtered cows?
 We are dying of hunger right at the King's place.
 Go and report our plight to Her Majesty.
 What is the work of these headmen?
 These headmen are useless.
 What are they monitoring?
 We are dying of hunger.
 Hey, you headmen, why are you quiet?
 Why are you not doing your job?
 How can we die of hunger right in the King's residence?

Letinkunzi tihlatshelwa labanjani?
 Safa yindlala lapha eNkhosini.
 Niyasibika eNkhosini?
 Maye letindvuna tisibukani?
 Safela eNkhosini.
 Maye tindvuna nibukani, nigadzeni?

- (b) Up to now, we have not been given the meat.
 We will now ask it from the Queen Mother.

These women composed this song to alert Her Majesty that the Royal headmen were not doing their job effectively. They were acting against the women, yet, the women were equally involved in the carrying out of the Royal duties. The women maintain that they have severally complained to the Royal headmen who literally rebuffed their complaint. Whenever men return from carrying out Royal duties, more than one cow is slaughtered for them. Of course, headmen are in charge of most of the Royal household matters.

42. We are looking after spears,
 You of the elephant.
 They say, remain you, who never went to war.

Anyway, why are you remaining behind, you of the Elephant?
 We are looking after the spears here at kaNgwane.
 We are having it tough.

Sigadze imikhonto wena weNdlovu.
 Batsi sala wena masala emphini.
 Usalelani wena weNdlovu.
 Sigadze imikhonto lapha kaNgwane.
 Kulukhuni, kuyesabeka.

This song is composed by women who carry out Royal duties. They are questioning those who never pay allegiance to the Monarch. They consider themselves as soldiers who have a duty to serve the nation.

43. We carry out Royal duties at Imfabantfu (King's fields).
 We pay allegiance to our Monarch.
 I thought you belonged to a regiment.
 You do not pay allegiance to the Monarch.
 I thought you were a man, but you do not pay allegiance to the Monarch.
- Sihlehla eMfabantfu.
 Sihlehla eNkhosini.
 Bengitsi ulijaha.
 Wo awuhlehli eNkhosini.

This song mocks a Swazi man who does not pay any allegiance to the Monarch. In this song, the women find pride in carrying out Royal duties and in being identified with a regiment. In this song, the women rebuke people who do not respond to royal summons.

44. - Hey, you men, why are you sitting in your houses?
 Men have been summoned to go to the Royal residence.
 You only see your own King in newspapers.
- Why are you sitting in the house?
 Even Mswati, you will see him in the newspapers.

Mswati wants you to carry out royal duties.
 My King wants you at Hhohho (Northern district).
 You are sitting in the house to take care of babies.
 Mswati, too, needs you.
 You will see your own King in newspapers.
 You will see him in pictures.

Madvodza nihlaleleni lapha etindlini?
 Emajaha ayabitwa kutsi aye eNkhosini.
 Inkhosi yenu niyibona emaphepheni.

Women composed these songs to mock Swazi men who do not respond to royal summons. They maintain that such men can only see and read about their King in the mass media. A man who looks after babies or washes baby clothes is ridiculed, despised and pitied. Most of the time, the woman is blamed for bewitching a man who is thought to be a "yes man". Of course, this song raises questions about how women, too, resist changes.

45. You birds who sing early in the morning,
 We have arrived from Ludzidzini.
 Hey you, of the loin skin at the cattle byre entrance,
 We are watching for the Swazi nation.

Yemagwagwa lahlehla ekuseni.
 Sesibuyile eLudzidzini.
 Yelanabonjobo isesangweni.
 Tsine sigadze imikhonto.

These women live by the Queen Mother's residence and they always accompany her on royal visits. In this song, these women maintain that they are looking after the Queen Mother on behalf of the Swazi nation.

46. King Mswati (the second) is the King at Hhohho.
 They have divided your land.

Oh it is true, they have divided your land.
Oh look, oh look, they have divided your land.

Mswati uyiNkhosi kaHhohho.
Balisika emalegeni.
Yebo sebalisika emalegeni.
Gcamu gcamu balisika emalegeni.

King Mswati II, after whom Swaziland is named, reigned from 1844 to 1869. He was able to build a large Kingdom by conquering neighbouring clans. The Swazi are also referred to as bakaNgwane because of an early Swazi King known as Ngwane.

By 1880, pressure from the Transvaal Boers had reduced the land of the Swazi to its present boundaries, thus excluding many ethnic Swazi (see appendix C:3). For twenty years, the British and Boers competed for political control of the country which lost its sovereignty in 1894. It was finally placed under the British High Commissioner for South Africa in 1902 with the Swazi rulers' jurisdiction restricted to local civil matters. A landrush in the 1880's put nearly all natural resources in the hands of the concession hunters. In 1907, the Swazi were left with only 38% of their original land mass.

This is an old song composed by women during that landrush period in Swaziland. It is very interesting to note how supposed illiterate women show so much insight into the political issues that affected the country at that time. It shows how attentive, observant and analytical they were with all issues pertaining to the country.

47. (a) You child of the lion, oh my father,
 It is yours, you of the King.
 It is yours, you lion of the nation.
 They are just fighting over it, these whites
 This country is yours you of the King.
 They are just fighting you over nothing.
 This country is yours, Your Majesty.

Zinyane lembube, maye babe.
 Ngelakho Nkhosi, ngelakho Ngwenyama yesive.
 Sebamane bayalibanga belungu.
 Lelive ngelakho Nkhosi.

- (b) They are just deceiving themselves,
 Fighting over your land, Bhuza (King Sobhuza II).
 This land is yours, Your Majesty.
 It is yours, lion of the Swazi.

The Swazi nation was built by King Sobhuza I. The women, therefore, acknowledging his significant role in nation building, have always, in their songs, referred to the Swazi land as his. This is one of the old songs composed by women during the times of European intrusion into Africa. Concession-seekers came to the land of the Swazi, mostly during King Mbandzeni's reign. They grabbed land for farming and extracting minerals. There was keen competition among the concession seekers themselves as well as between the British and Afrikaners. The women felt justified in composing this song that assures the King that this was his country and that he should not fear the whites.

48. We did not know what independence was.
 We have now seen it.
 This is what we call independence.
 These are Sobhuza's words.
 This is what we call independence.
 We did not know it.
 MaSwati (Swazi people), now you are independent.
 Those are Nkhontfotsheni's (Sobhuza II's other name) words.
 You are the ones who will destroy your own

independence.
 Those are Sobhuza's words.
 He said, you are now independent;
 You will destroy your own independence.

Besingayati inkhululeko.
 Sesiyibonile.
 Inkhululeko ngiyo leyi.
 Nankho ke emavi aSobhuza.
 Nayo ke inkhululeko.
 Senikhululekile.
 Nankho ke emavi aNkhotfotsheni.
 Maye senitatonela nine.

This song was composed after the Swazi nation had gained its independence from the British in 1968. This song actually echoes the words and advice given by King Sobhuza II to the Swazi people.

49. We install Sozisa (the authorized person);
 We install Ntombi (Queen Mother); they do not want her.
 We install Liqogo, they do not want it.
 We install Bhekimpi (the Liqogo Prime Minister); they do not want him.
 Help Bhekimpi.

Sibeka Sozisa abamfuni.
 Sibeka Ntombi, abamfuni.
 Sibeka liqogo, nalo abalifuni.
 Sibeka Bhekimpi, abamfuni.
 Lamula Bhekimpi.

Bhekimpi was the prime minister during the Liqogo era. The nation did not like anyone who was installed by the infamous Liqogo. Bhekimpi was very concerned with preserving his own position. He told the nation to shut up and stop complaining. In the song, the women sarcastically mimic the Liqogo and ask for help from Bhekimpi to shut up the nation.

50. This country was not like this
 When Sobhuza was King.
 Oh you must be joking you of the King.
 Oh the jail!
 I have travelled long distance
 Until it was dark my companion

Lelive belinganje lisabuswa nguBhuza.
 Uyadlala wena kaNdaba.
 Lijeje.

The composer of this song wanted to let the Liqoqo realize that the nation was dissatisfied with its operations. However, any one who opposed its operations was thrown into jail. The composer maintains that she has seen a lot in her lifetime but, that this situation was unique in Swazi history.

51. One day our Monarchy will come back.
 One day the Ngwane Monarch will come back.

Liyoze libuye; liyoze libuye lakaNgwane.

This song names the fear that engulfed the nation during the Liqoqo regime. The Swazi nation was looking forward to the day when the King, Mswati III, would be installed. The women were impelled to show their hope through this song.

52. Let us have sunshine, sunshine,
 You of the sun, you son of the elephant.
 We are afraid of the spears, of the spears.
 Let it be beautiful, you of the sun, you son of the elephant.
 Let us have sunshine you of the King.

Alibalele, alibalele Malangeni.
 Yelanabonkhonyane yeNdlovu,
 Sesaba imikhonto, imikhonto.
 BoNkhosi alibelihle.
 Alibelihle Malangeni.

Yenabonkhonyane yeNdlovu,
Alibalele boNkhosi.

The nation looked forward to the King's installation. The Swazi people refer to the King as the "sun". The installation, therefore, meant that the nation could now feel safe and confident, and their voice could be heard. The Queen Mother is referred to as an elephant while the King could be referred to as the lion.

53. We heard by rumour mongers
That the King is at Ludzidzini (Royal residence).
Hooray, Dlamini,
Hooray.

Sivile ngebemanga
ukutsi iNkhosi iseLudzidzini.
Gcamu gcamu.

This song was composed by women after there were rumours that the King was back from school and would be officially installed as King. These rumours brought relief.

54. He is back, he is back from school.
There is no one that can defeat us .
We will tell the truth.
Mswati is back, he is back.

Ubuyile, ubuyile esikolweni.
Akekho longahlula tsine.
Sitawukhuluma emaciniso.
Mswati ubuyile, ubuyile.

The nation was thrilled that the King had come back from school to be officially installed. The women maintained that all the bad things that had happened in his absence would be relayed to him. These things had been told to him through

different means, one being the women's music.

Many songs that depict relief and joy after the official installation of the king were composed by the courageous, intelligent and far-sighted Swazi women. Here are some examples:

55. (a) I have always been desperate.
You must not mock a desperate person.
You now want to kill my child.

Kadze ngindzindza.
Ungabomhleka londzindzako.
Nitongibulalela lomntfwana losasele yedvwa.

- (b) To give birth to a boy
Is to give birth to rivalry.
Do you see these men?
They are mocking me.

Kutala indvodzana,
Kutala umbango.
Niyawabona lamadvodza adlala ngami.

- (c) Hey you mother of the boy,
We are circumcising your son on your behalf (a
symbolic ritual)
The mother's boy has gone thin.

- (d) You woman who gave birth.
You woman who gave birth.
You invited problems for yourself.
Oh my father, you woman of kaNgwane,
Here is war.
Who told you about a woman who gives birth to a
King?
Who told you?

Mfati lowatala watikholisa.
Yebabe mfati wakaNgwane.

When a King or chief is installed, it is not a happy occasion for the mother. These songs are composed to signify the danger and bitterness entailed in such ruling positions.

The first two songs depict the grief of a woman whose son is given such a position. She lives in a polygamous home. The mother of the King or chief is the one who starts the third song. Circumcising the boy does not mean the actual physical act but, rather, it indicates that the boy has entered a stage of manhood by occupation of such a position.

When King Mswati III became King in 1986, to commemorate his installation, the following songs were composed. The fourth song, in particular, arouses painful feelings.

56. (a) Mswati is a King at kaNgwane.
 He was installed.
 He has been installed at KaNgwane.
 Hooray, hooray.
 Mswati is the King.
 Oh it is true our country is back.
 Oh at last it is back.
- Mswati uyiNkhosi kaNgwane.
 Wabeka kaNgwane.
 Libuyile laMswati.
 Laze labuya.
- (c) We are here you Ngwane people
 We have come to see something beautiful.
 We are here Dlamini (Royal last name).
 Open for us the Ngwane.
 We have come to see something beautiful,
 You Ngwane people.
 Open for us the Ngwane,
 Open for us Dlamini.
 Oh hooray, we are now here.
 We have come to see something beautiful here in the
 land of the Swazi.
- (d) King Mswati,
 You Swazi people, you are now one.
 Mswati is the King.
 We see King Mswati,
 Mswati who is black amongst the whites.
 Birds are happy.
 They are singing in the Mdzimba mountains.

They are congratulating King Mswati.
 Even other nations are meeting.
 They saw King Mswati.
 Even bees buzzed on the Mdzimba mountains.
 You are the King.

Inkhosi Mswati.
 MaSwati senihlangene.
 Sibon'inkhosi Mswati.
 Mswati kulabamnyama kulabalutfuli.

57. Hey you, Madzanga (a chief area),
 Tell me
 Who is challenging you over your area?
 Who is it?
 Tell me.
 I want to see the person.
 Madzanga what have we done?
 Please could I just see the person?
 I want to see that person all by myself.
 The area is yours.
 Who is challenging you over your area?

YeMadzanga,
 Awungitshela
 Ngubani lokubangisa live?
 Ngubani?
 Ngitshela.
 Sengicela kumbona.

Madzanga is a chief in Eastern Hhohho. There was land dispute between him and another chief Mdvuba. Some of the residents had their homes burned. Women from Madzanga's area, sympathising with him, composed this song.

58. We are finished by the Gaza (the Mozambicans).
 It is the Gaza, it is the Gaza, the Gaza.
 Even our goats, it is the Gaza.
 Even our chickens, it is the Gaza, it is the Gaza.
 Even our radios, it is the Gaza.
 Even our clothes, it is the Gaza.
 Oh we are really finished
 Because of the Gaza people.
 Let us write letters to Mbhokane (a radio broadcaster
 whose is popularly known for his programme on

solving all kinds of problems)
 To untangle this problem.
 Hey you Mbhokane,
 We are finished.
 Untangle the Gaza problem.
 I mean our chickens,
 Our goats,
 Our clothes,
 Our money.

Safa saphela ngaGasa.
 NguGasa, nguGasa, NguGasa.
 Ngisho timbuti tetfu nguGasa.
 Ngisho tinkhukhu, nguGasa.
 Emalediyo nguGasa.
 Timphahla tetfu nguGasa.
 Aibhale tincwadzi kuMbhokane.
 Achache lenknga.
 Awuchache lenkinga ngaGasa.

Mozambique once Portuguese colony, had internal political problems which led the country into a 17 year civil war. Swaziland, as a neighbour to this troubled country, experienced an influx of Mozambican refugees.

Unregistered Mozambicans who are not in refugee camps have been involved in different crimes in the country. The women composed this song to show how serious a problem this had become.

59. My children are failing at school.
 Hey you, teacher,
 You want to tell me
 You are not aware of the problem?
 I do not have any money left.
 There must be something wrong somewhere.
 How come you cannot identify the problem, you teacher?

Kufeyila bantfwabami yethishela.
 Awuboni ngani wena.
 Sekuphela imali yami yethishela.
 Awuboni ngani wena?

This song was composed by women who were unsatisfied with

the teachers' performance in one of the schools.

60. The daughter of Mndzebele (last name),
Talk.
Who came with the solution
To stop diarrhoea?
Tell us.

LaMndzebele, khuluma.
Ngubani loweta nelikhambi lemsheko?
Sitshele.

Infant mortality rates used to be high because of diarrhoea. People used to attribute it to witchcraft. The Ministry of Health however, quickly embarked on a campaign from one region to another, teaching men and women about causes and repercussions of as well as solutions to this fatal killer. LaMndzebele led a group of nurses who visited some of the regions. Because of the advice from the nurses, diarrhoea stopped being a health hazard to infants. One woman, laMahlalela residing near the Queen Mother's residence, composed this song.

61. The nation is tough and fierce.
These people are tough and fierce.

Lesive silukhuni siyesabeka.
Labantfu balukhuni bayasabeka.

The women maintained that this song was composed to credit the Swazi nation for adhering to its customs and traditions despite foreign intrusions, especially during the colonial era.

It should be noted that Swazi law and custom suffered less

interference than was the case with customs in other parts of Africa. The Swazi Monarchy was left very much to the running of Swazi affairs.

62. With whom will I leave these customs?
 I have grown old.
 With whom will I leave these customs?
 Hey my children, with whom will I leave these customs?
 My children, please, you must preserve our customs
 Because we have grown old.
 We do not know with whom will we leave them.
 You must not lose them.
 We wonder with whom will we leave our customs.
- Lamasiko ngitawashiya kubani
 Ngigugile bo.
 Bantfwabami nibowagcina emasiko.
 Ngoba tsine sesigugile.

This song was composed by laMahlalela who lives near the Queen Mother's residence to express her concern about preserving the customs. She was worried that the younger generation lacked the wish to preserve our customs and preferred a Western way of life.

63. Wow, these people are too many.
 They are like blades of grass.
 They are like hair of the cow,
 The cow we killed in the kraal at Lobamba (Royal residence).
 Even my father is a headman.
 Can you see the regiments dancing slowly?
 It is dark in the kraal.
 Oh Mandanda is a headman.
 My own gun burst into flames.
 Can you see the regiments dancing slowly?
 It is dark in the kraal.
- Labantfu bangakanani.
 Bangangetshani.
 Bangangeboya benkhomo,
 Lesayigwaza esibayeni kaLobamba.

Nababe uyindvuna.
 Uyawabona emabutfo?
 Ashaya kancane.
 Kumnyama esangweni.

The darkness, the grass and the hair in this song symbolise the number of people in the royal cattle byre. There is incwala (first fruit) ceremony once a year which is a national event celebrated at the royal residence. This song describes the number of regiments and the way they gracefully dance to the incwala songs.

64. We paid allegiance to King Mbandzeni.
 We paid allegiance to Gwamile.
 We pay allegiance to the present King.
 We are old in the Royal household.
 We paid allegiance to Gwamile.
 We also paid allegiance to Mbandzeni.

Sahlehla kuMbandzeni.
 Sahlehla kuGwamile.
 Sihlehle kulekhona iNkhosi.
 Sibadzala sabutseka.

This song was originally composed by men. The women who sang it to me said that they had to steal it from men because the men, in singing it only rarely, did not give it the full credit that it deserves.

F: MAKHWEYANE SONGS

The following songs were collected from women who played an instrument called makhweyane (see appendix b). The makhweyane players told me that makhweyane brings colour and flavour to the monotony of life. One woman said that she uses music to bring colour into life and to open the eyes to the

mysteries that surround love. I was fascinated when one of my respondents said that "we are the captains of our souls". She said that she played love songs because she discovered that love was the best weapon to conquer the ills and problems of life. I learned that playing Makhweyane was an art and a talent. The most intriguing thing about the Makhweyane players is that they sing in a lamenting voice.

65. I am far away.
 Accompany me, dear.
 Take me half way.
 Accompany me my sister in-law.
 Take me half way.
 I am far away, my sister in-law.
 Oh as for me.

Etinkhalweni mine.
 Ngiphekeletele mntfwanamake
 Uyongibeka lapha.
 Ngiphekeletele mkhula wami.
 Etinkhalweni mkhula wami.
 Hawu kwami mine.

This song was sung by a young woman who had visited her lover. Customarily, if the in-laws approve of a woman's relationship with their son, the sister in-laws would always accompany the woman when she leaves her lover's place in the morning. If she is a makhweyane player, then she will start this song as she leaves the lover's hut with the sister in-law.

66. My friend was here.
 My sister in-law was here to call me.
 My sweetheart was here.

Abelapha umnganami.

Abelapha umkhula wami atongibita.
Abelapha wakami.

A sister in-law plays a major role as intermediary between two lovers. If the lover wants to see his or her partner, the sister in-law is sent. That is why, in most of the Makhweyane songs, the sister in-law has a role.

67. Hey you heart, you no longer sleep.
Sleeping are the eyes only.
Eyes can sleep,
Eyes can wander
And leave the heart yearning and pondering.

Yelanhlitiyo kayisalali.
Kusala emehlo odvwana.
Emehlo ngumaduka.
Inhlitiyo ibalisa.

The singer told me that she composed this song because she felt that she might burst into uncontrollable sobs. She remembered her lover who went to the mines in South Africa and it had been a year since she had seen him. She said that by composing this song she was trying to be realistic about her life and accept it as it was. Through the song medium, she found some tranquility of mind.

68. My sweetheart is handsome.
I like his legs,
I like his clothes.
He has beautiful teeth.
I like his traditional hairstyle.
The characteristics of my in-laws,
Oh my sweetheart is handsome.
I like the way he combs his hair.
I like his back.
I like his teeth.
I like his feet.
I like his attire.

He was here, my sister in-law.
My sweetheart is handsome.

Muhle umntfwanamake.
Ngitsandza netitfo takhe.
Ngitsandza timphahla takhe.
Muhle nematinyo akhe.
Ngitsandza sihlutfu sakhe.
Hlobo lwekhakhami.
Muhle umntfwanamake.
Ngitsandza nemkamo wakhe.
Ngitsandza nabheke le.
Ngitsandza netinyawo takhe.
Ngitsandzas tiphandla takhe.
Abelapha umkhulawami.
Muhle umntfwanamake.

In this song she is admiring her lover.

69. Far away my sweetheart.
Oh as for me my mother,
I am in trouble.
My friend was here.
I am left stranded.
He was here.
Oh as for me.
Today's girls,
They are not real girls.
They wander about.
I have been looking at my in-laws direction.
Oh my mother

Elukhalweni singani sami.
Yemake mine.
Hhawu kwami.
Abelapha umngani wami.
Abelapha ntfombi iyotshela bonina.
Ngisele elukhalweni.
Abelapha.
Hawu kwami mine.
Tintfombi talanyoka.
Akusito tintfombi bomantanthu.
Ngibheke elukhalweni.

She suspects she has been rejected by her lover and that
he may be hooked by the modern women.

70. I am sleeping out in the open.

Mdzimba mountain fall that I could see kaNgwane.
 Mdzimba fall so that I could see Lobamba.
 I am pondering.
 I can not tell my mother
 About my lover
 Because my lover is rejecting me.
 I sleep outside in those far away mountains.
 I was going to Lobamba.
 Mountains that are far that can see
 kaLobamba.
 My heart is pondering, my mother.
 It is pondering about kaNgwane.

Ngilele ebaleni.
 Mdzimba dzilika ngibone kaNgwane.
 Ngibala ngibeka.
 Make ngitengamtshela ngesingane sami
 Ngoba siyangala lesami singane.
 Ngilele ebaleni kuletiya tintsaba.
 Bengiya kaLobamba.
 Ntsaba letikhashane,
 Letibona kaLobamba.
 Ibala iyabeka make.
 Ibala iyabeka kulakaNgwane.

A princess played this song on her makhweyane instrument.
 She remembered her home at Lobamba, kaNgwane. She was unhappy
 with her lover's treatment and she is nostalgic about home.
 She even admired the mountains that are high enough to allow
 her to see home. She is afraid to tell her mother in case it
 hurts her.

71. Mother, the daughter of Nkhosi,
 Passed here, she is crying;
 She is searching.
 I saw her, she is crying;
 She is lamenting.
 She has gone to look for the man.
 She passed here.
 She is crying; she has gone to search for the man.
 It is the morning.
 I saw her she is crying.
 It is morning you daughter of Dlamini.
 She passed here in the morning
 She has gone to look for the man.

The daughter of Nkhosi my mother, she passed here.
 She is crying, she is lamenting;
 Poor daughter of Nkhosi.
 I saw her, she is crying; she is lamenting.

Yemake ulaNkhosi wendlulile uyakhala, uyafuna.
 Ngumbonile uyakhala, uyayobayoba.
 Uyofuna indvodza.
 Sekusile.

The composer of this song had taken this desolate woman's husband from her. As she was moving up and down looking for her husband, this woman composed this song .

72. I do not care even if you can not cleanse me.
 Lomadlozi is a traditional healer.
 She will cleanse me.
 Even Siphiwe who is my sister,
 She will cleanse me.
 Even Siphiwe is a traditional healer;
 She will cleanse me.

Mine angikhatsali noma ungetangigeza,
 Lomadloti yinyanga utangigeza.
 NaSiphiwe waketfu utangigeza.
 NaSiphiwe uyinyanga atangigeza.

In a polygamous setting, some women find it crucial to be cleansed of any bad luck, especially if a man starts to show signs of neglect. Other women also find it necessary to be habitually cleansed so as to remain loved by the man. It should be noted, however, that such an exercise is commonly taken by both sexes.

The following song was composed on the spot by a makhweyane player who was visited by a crew from the Swazi radio station. In the song, she is addressing the radio broadcasters and radio listeners, as well.

73. I greet you, please.
 I greet you, too, broadcaster.
 I greet you all, please.
 Hey you,
 I greet you all, listeners.
 I greet you.
 I am too far, children of the people.
 Oh hey you,
 I am too far at eMhlume (place name).
 I live too far.
 Oh yeah, Mhlume is too far.
 Good bye, please.
 Good bye, please.
 Good bye children of the people, I am gone.
- Sawubona bo.
 Sawubona nawe msakati.
 Yehheni bo!
 Sanibonani nani balaleli ngiyanibingelela.
 Ngikhashane bantfwabami.
 Wo yehheni ngikhashane eMhlume.
 Salani bo.

G: SONGS IN THE SCHOOLS

The following songs were collected from schools around the country. Boys' songs, too, were recorded to balance the flavour of gender relations in schools.

74. Hey you liar.
 Oh me.
 Hey you liar, you liar,
 You lied to me.
 You lied to me, you cousin.
 What bad luck to be rejected!
 You are lying to me.
- Yesiyengayengane.
 Kantsi uyangiyenga.
 Waze wangiyeza mzala.
75. Tsembani (woman's first name) is laughing at me.
 She is laughing at me.
 She is a darling of men.
- Uyangihleka Tsembani.

Simolomolo semajaha.

76. You are pregnant, you Pholile.
You slept on your back.
You got what you wanted.
You are pregnant you Pholile.
You made love.

Wemitsi yePholile.
Walala emagenwane.
Uvile ulayekile.
Wemitsi yePholile.
Walala.

77. Hey you, my brother in-law,
It is already morning.
My brother in-law held me tight throughout the night.
Where are my sister in-laws?
Where are my sister in-laws?
How are you holding me my brother in-law?
You held me such that even my mother had to complain.
My brother in-law how do you hold me?
You held me in sensitive parts.

Wangiphatsa kwaze kwasa yemlam' wami.
Ungiphatsa kanjani?
Kwate kwakhala make yemlam' wami.
Yemlam' wami ungiphatsa kanjani?

Traditionally, a man can sleep with his sister in-law. It is claimed that he has a right over unmarried sister in-laws. He can even marry them.

78. We are all young maidens, my mother's child.
We are alright.
We all have our hair permed.

Siyingabisa yemntfwanamake.
Sisho kahle mntwanamake.
Sisho kahle sipheme sonkhe.

Young women sing this song to reject the other song that ridicules a woman with permed hair and tight pants.

79. (a) I do not sleep outside my father's house.
I do not sleep in the open.

Mine angilal' emzini.
Angilali ebaleni.

- (b) Where is mine?
Where is mine amongst the ten men,
Ten men who manipulate me?
Where is mine?
- Iphi yami?
Lamadvodza lalishumi lادلالا ngami.
- (c) Hey you, flirtatious one,
Oh go and come via this side.
Hey you girl,
We say come this side.

These songs teach moral values. The girls mock a young school girl who flirts with boys and sleeps with them anywhere.

80. Mother, me, I am a girl.
I am a girl.
Look at the packet of sugar.
I am a girl.
Father, me, I am a girl.
I am a girl.
Look at the packet of sugar.
Look, I am a girl.

Yemake, ngiyintfombi mine.
Ngiyintfombi.
Awubheke lelipaka lashukela.
Ngiyintfombi.
Yelababe, mine ngiyintfombi.
Awubheke ngiyintfombi.

As they dance to this song, the girls literally touch their private parts to signify the " packet of sugar " referred to in the song, the connotation being that, since they are girls, their parents will get lobola or money from

son in-laws.

81. (a) I fell in love with a womanizer,
A womanizer that left me to sleep alone.
The womanizer left me in the house.
He left me stranded.

Ngagana ingwabela,
Ingwabela yangilalisa ngedvwana.
Yemalume, uyatatazela.
Ngagana ingwabela,
Ingwabela yangishiya endlini.
Yangishiya eteni.

- (b) I fell in-love with my brother in-law,
My brother in-law who is deceiving me.

Ngagana, ngana sibali,
Sibali wadlala ngami.

In song (b) the young woman is aware that the brother in-law is taking advantage of the traditional value that allows men to manipulate their young unmarried sister in-laws.

- (c) I fell in-love with a loner.
He locked me up in the house.

Ngagana sigwadzi.
Sigwadzi sangikhiyela endlini.

This song mocks a man who has a problem with women because women are rarely attracted to him. If he happens to find a woman who is attracted to him, she is kept a prisoner to prevent her from seeing other men.

82. Hey my uncle,
How have I upset my mother?
I know what the problem is.

I fell inlove young.
 What is it for after all,
 I do not know, I do not know.
 I know I fell in-love young.
 What is it for?
 I do not know.

Yemalume senzeneni nomama?
 Okwami ngigane ngiseyingane.
 Yinto yekwenzani?
 Angati nami, angati.
 Okwami ngigane ngiseyingane.

83. Talk, talk, you teachers.
 Talk you teachers.
 We have come to ask for education.
 Speak up so that we could hear
 Because a baby that does not cry
 Would suffocate at her or his mother's back.
 Talk so that we understand.
 We have come to ask for education.

Khulumani, khulumani yebbothishela.
 Sitocela imfundvo.
 Ngoba ingane lengakhali ifela embelekweni.
 Khulumani sive.
 Sitocela imfundvo.

The following songs were sung by male students when dancing to the men's popular dance, Sibhaca. Sibhaca is a Swazi traditional dance which is performed by hard rhythmic stomping of feet and accompanied by chanting and a powerful constant rhythmic drumbeat. As the young men sang these songs and prepared to dance, they so closely imitated the adult male Sibhaca team that they actually looked like big men in small suits.

84. (a) I do not know my sin.
 Hey you young bride,
 Go back where you come from.
 It is because of your work.

Oh yeah, it is because of your work.

Angilazi icala lami.
Yemakoti, buyela lapho uvela khona.
Imisebenzi yakho.
Wololo imisebenzi yakho.

- (b) This young woman came here to be a wife.
She did not come here to destroy this family.

Lentombi izogana.
Ayizelanga kuzocitha umuzi.

These songs depict the kind of treatment accorded to a married woman. It compliments very well the songs sung on the third day of the marriage ceremony. The woman in this song is not at all treated with respect.

85. There is no benefit in this world
To work for a prostitute.

Akunamasizo kulomhlaba
Kusebenzela ingwababane.

If a woman is caught with another man, she is called a prostitute. If a man is found with another woman, it does not matter because, after all, he is a man.

86. Even if you reject me,
I will not be the first one.
It was created by God.
It is a natural phenomenon.

Noma ungangala.
Kuyobe akucalingami.
Kwadalwa nguSomandla.
Kuyobe izenzo zomhlaba.

To be rejected by a woman is treated casually by males.

87. Give her sidvwaba (a traditional skirt).

She is flirtatious.
She is running away.

Mnikeni sidwaba.
Wehla uyeniyuka
Ngoba uyabaleka.

Once a woman is given the traditional skirt it means she is now married. This practice is accompanied by the smearing of red ochre on the women.

88. Hey you, my child,
Go and get married.
Go and build your own marriage.

Yemntfwanami awuhambe uyogana.
Awuhambe uyozakhela umuzi.

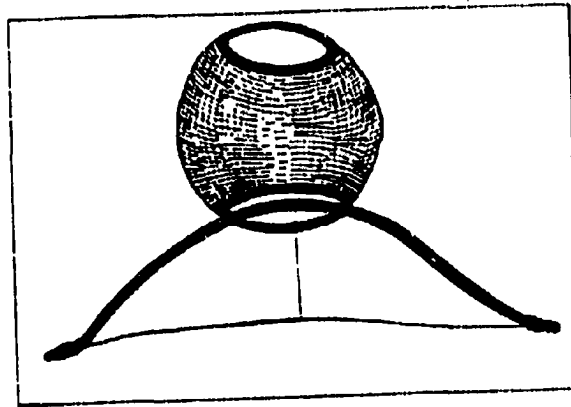
Traditionally, once a girl reaches a certain age, she is expected to leave her parents' home and get married. Of course, the father is expecting lobola. For a mother, it is shameful to have unmarried daughters.

89. Is there anything that defeats men?
If it is there, it should be reported.

Intoni leyehlula emadvodza.
Iyabikwa.

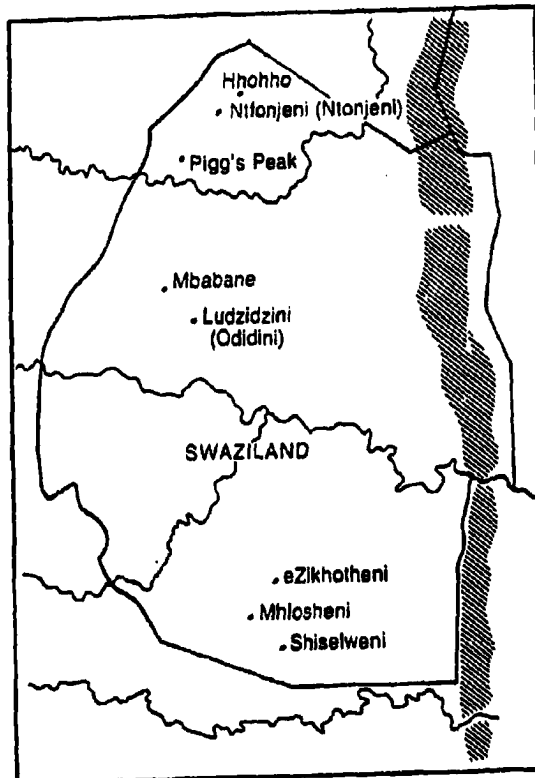
In Swaziland, bravery is associated with masculinity. The young men's songs show that, as a male dominated society, Swaziland uses its culture to reproduce male dominance. The love for our culture can be historically viewed as a subtle ideological instrument used to indoctrinate women to accept and acquiesce to both a burdensome and inferior position.

APPENDIX B



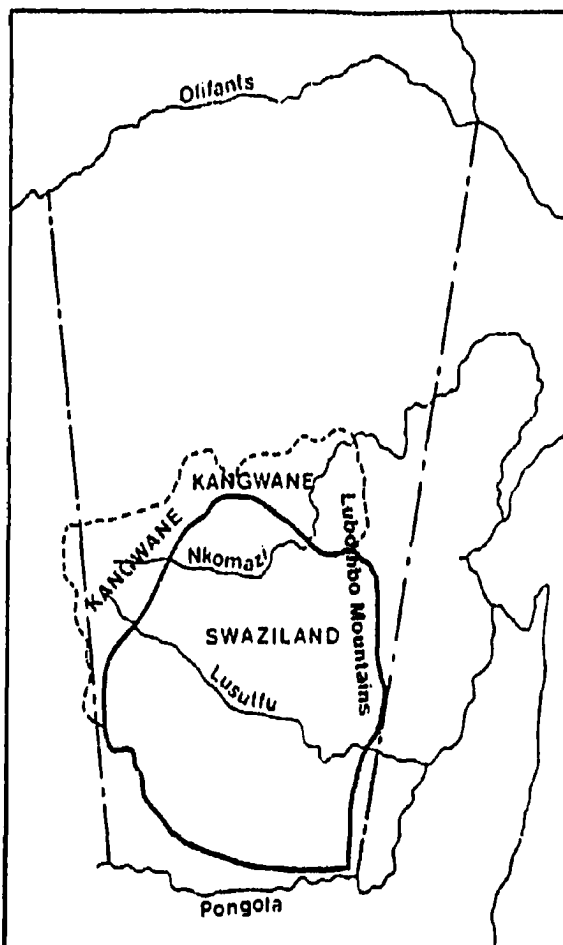
Makhweyana is also made from a calabash attached to a wooden bow. It is very similar to lugubhu. The only difference is that with makhweyana, the string is connected to the calabash, by a short cord, about a third of the way down.





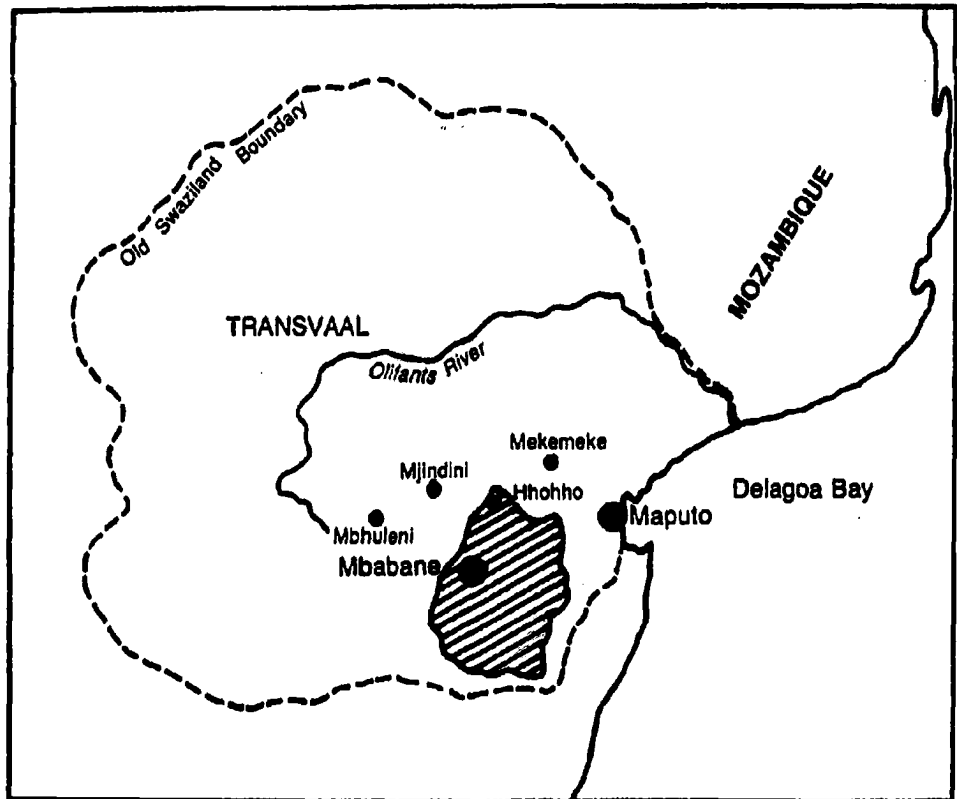
Historical place names

APPENDIX C:2



Swaziland's different boundaries

- Swaziland's present boundaries
- - - - - The boundaries of Kangwane in South Africa
- . - . - The boundaries of Swaziland in Mswati II's reign



APPENDIX D



GOVERNMENT OF SWAZILAND

REFORM THROUGH DIALOGUE

REPORT OF THE
NATIONAL EDUCATION REVIEW COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 1985

population. Hence, resources for educational and other development projects will be strained since the growth of the economy is below that of the population (in the Fourth Plan-period economic growth is estimated to be 2.2 per cent per annum).

2.1.7 The 1975 Education Review Commission recommended that Universal Primary Education be achieved in Swaziland by 1985. This goal has been achieved and as of now the ratio of total primary enrolment to the 6-12 years population is 94 per cent, the 6 per cent is composed of the under and over aged children. This expansion of the primary level has generated a demand for a further expansion at the secondary level. The ratio of total secondary enrolment to the 13-17 years population is 66 per cent. In order to cater for these large increases which are infact due to the high rate of population growth there is need to:

- continue ensuring access to primary education for all children aged 6-12 and
- to make junior secondary places available to all primary school leavers who qualify.

2.2 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS

2.2.1 Up until independence in 1968, education in Swaziland was controlled by foreigners. The Department of Education was run by colonial

officers and the majority of schools was run by missionaries whose main interest was the propagation of their religious ideas. Needless to say, that type of system undermined Swazi cultural values which were regarded as backward and primitive.

2.2.2 The post independence government embarked on a policy of rapid expansion in educational facilities. Education was said to be an inalienable right of every child. Further, in the document titled The Philosophy, Policies and Objectives of the Imbokodvo National Movement, the government stated on pages 27-28, that: "It is the Policy of the Imbokodvo that all education shall be designed to inculcate love for our land, loyalty to our King and Country, self-respect, self-discipline, respect for the law accompanied by the highest degree of knowledge and the building of character".

Whilst this expansion in education was in progress, there was some massive shift towards wage sector employment. This resulted in the growth of urban centres and the rise of industrial towns especially in the Lubombo district.

2.2.3 Swaziland's indigenous population is culturally homogenous and speaks one language. However the country also has a sizeable expatriate population whose needs government had to take care of. This led to the establishment of what came to be known as "English medium schools". But, as Swaziland is a non-racial democracy a number of Swazi parents enrolled their children in such schools.

2.2.4 The changes in the country's social fabric have resulted in the loss of cultural identity especially among the young and educated. Many complaints were expressed at the National Education Review Commission's public meetings about this cultural alienation and it was thought that the school also contributed to it. Although in a number of schools, traditional music and traditional dances are taught and performed, it was generally felt that this was inadequate and a lot of other areas are left out.

2.2.5 The education system is then called upon to inculcate in every Swazi child a sense of pride and identification with his or her cultural heritage. The question is how to incorporate Swazi culture into the system. In the rural areas it might not be difficult if the school is regarded as an integral part of the community and submits to local traditional authority. In that