

Chapter 6

Fighting Women's Cultural Subjugation Using Metaphors, Euphemism and Sarcasm in Izingane zoMa Musical Renditions

Sipho A. Ntombela and Evangeline B. Zungu

Introduction

African popular music, in the form of *maskandi*, is steadily gaining popularity in academic spaces and has been at the centre of African music scholarship. *Maskandi* research has focused on the structural features of its guitar styles (Rycroft 1980; Davies 1992, 1994; Olsen 2009, 2014; Titus 2013), the context and social commentary of its lyrics (Olsen 2009, 2001, 2014) and the artistic techniques used by *maskandis* (Ntombela 2011, 2016). This music genre is also rich in figures of speech, which are part of the African cultural wealth. For example, the *maskandi* group called Izingane zoMa uses metaphors, euphemisms and sarcasm for humour, to voice pent-up emotions and to point out stereotypes that are embraced by the traditional Zulu society. In this context, three figures of speech represent the issues rural people—couples, in particular—face in their daily lives. A discourse analysis approach and an appraisal framework are used to analyse the data collected. The authors aim to extrapolate paradigms of indigenous epistemologies from the use of metaphors, euphemisms and sarcasm while focusing on the way Izingane zoMa use figurative language to highlight stereotypes in traditional society. For analysis, Izingane zoMa songs were chosen to represent how *maskandi* groups use metaphors, euphemisms and sarcasm to reveal some neutral words used by traditional men and women as substitutes for strong sexual words. Pooley (2008: 1) asserts that *maskandi* composers 'articulate shared experiences of poverty, inequality, migrancy and dispossession in South Africa and often use martial, caustic imagery to evince their social critique'.

The aim of this chapter is to highlight how Izingane zoMa uses metaphors and sarcasm to address topics that are regarded as taboo in Zulu culture. An attempt will be made to answer the following

questions: What social behaviour patterns are evident in this musical genre? How does the use of metaphors and sarcasm in the lyrics illuminate the family dynamics in polygynous relationships? To what extent does Izingane zoMa reflect the suffering and oppression of women in rural areas?

Background and contextualisation

South Africa has seen many shifts in social and political dynamics since the advent of democracy in 1994. This stimulated the evolution of *maskandi* music to address previously taboo issues. As Bhabha (1994: 1) notes, 'we find ourselves in a moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion'. *Maskandi* music can be perceived as a conduit for the political, social and psychological feelings of traditional Zulu societies. The songs composed by *maskandi* composers reflect what is happening in their society. They become representatives of and spokespersons for their communities. Olsen (2000: 10) states: 'Maskanda speaks of what it means to be Zulu; it gives shape and form to Zulu identity, not only as a reflection of the reality of lived experience but also as the powerful expression of hopes and aspirations which during the moment of performance become a reality.'

118

The group Izingane zoMa infiltrated a genre that was previously reserved for men. Its leading members are women who grew up in traditional societies in deep rural Zululand, where women are socialised to understand gender roles and their place in society. Men go to work in the cities and wives remain behind to take care of the family and plough the fields. The group uses this platform to vent their pent-up feelings about the injustices of patriarchy and the oppression of women by social rules. Some of their songs reflect how women are suffering because their unemployed husbands are at home but refuse to help with household chores simply because they are men. Olsen (2000: 1) asserts that:

Contemporary maskanda is a dynamic body of Zulu popular music which takes shape in a number of performance styles. It is the transformation of a musical style which was developed at the turn of the 20th century by migrant workers in response to the changing dynamics of Zulu society ... In the broadest sense it is most commonly understood as Zulu guitar music.

In any traditional society, music becomes a strategy for communication about topics that cannot be

openly discussed. The impact of rigid cultures and patriarchy is always at the centre of traditional music. Francis (2008: 4) states:

Music is a very powerful medium [...] It is powerful at the level of the social group because it facilitates communication which goes beyond words, enables meanings to be shared and promotes the development and maintenance of individual, group, cultural and national identities. It is powerful at the individual level because it can induce multiple physiological, movement, mood, emotional, cognitive and behavioural responses.

Music is a powerful force that cuts across cultures and can be used by people to share their feelings. According to Njooa (2005: 7),

music plays a major role in defining national solidarity; it informs our sense of 'place' whether that refers to the physical setting of social activity as situated geographically or a philosophical/stylistic space [...] Music is socially meaningful, not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them.

119

Societies need to have an outlet for their feelings concerning particular issues and topics. It provides solidarity to people who support a common cause. This chapter is important as the focus is on a *maskandi* group whose lead singers are women. In traditional societies, women are rarely given a platform to express their opinions, even on matters that concern them. They are often given instructions on how they should behave and are socialised into submission from a young age as they are taught that a woman's task is to rear children and take care of her husband and family. They are also expected to accept promiscuity in men, which is disguised in their culture as polygamy. The same tolerance is not extended to women, and any woman who engages in an extra-marital affair is ostracised and labelled a village slut. Against this background, Izingane zoMa composes songs that are in conflict with the instructions given to rural women. Their lyrics highlight the suffering of rural women in polygynous marriages when men take many wives even though they cannot provide for them; how men favour some wives above others; the abuse of alcohol by both men and women; and male promiscuity.

In Black African culture, sex and sexual relationships are private matters; therefore, Black African men and women, young and old, find it difficult to discuss sexual matters in public. As a result,

they have to find neutral words for such discussions, but a lack of suitable substitutes forces them to be creative and coin new words. It is thus unsurprising that married couples use such neutral words when they speak in front of their children, parents, in-laws and members of the public. This pressure comes from the fact that most rural people are traditionalists who believe that talking about sex in public is a sign of disrespect, unlike libertarians who believe that sex is just another activity that can be freely discussed (Olen and Barry 1992). Most Black traditionalists ensure that community members conform to the norms and standards set by their forefathers and passed from one generation to the next. Even nomadic people are scolded and embarrassed if they do not refer to romantic love and sex acceptably.

Couples feel uncomfortable discussing sexual matters in public. They discuss these matters either in the privacy of their bedrooms or over the phone. Community members include musicians and some couples who are fully aware of what is happening in their communities. For example, Zulu *maskandis* sing about what they see happening in their communities and teach and warn their audiences about certain things. The *maskandi* group Izingane zoMa shows a particular interest in how couples discuss sex and sexual relationships. In this chapter, the authors look at how this group uses isiZulu metaphors, euphemisms and sarcasm in their songs to disclose how some Zulu couples discuss sexual matters and draw inferences about how this indigenous musical genre can be used as a tool to teach the general public about the neutral words traditional communities use to avoid using unacceptable words when referring to sexual matters. Among the few female Zulu scholars who have contributed to the promotion of gender equality and efforts to claim power are Magwaza (1993, 1999), Zondi (2008) and Zungu (2014). These authors saw a gap in research on how female *maskandi* groups use their voices to speak on behalf of the voiceless to avoid further oppression and subjugation and have positioned themselves as pioneers taking a stand against patriarchy and its abuse and subjugation of women.

120

Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the theoretical insights of Jousse (1997) are employed to analyse the chosen songs. This theory describes the features that preserve oral cultures and traditions. The article focuses on formalism, which, according to Jousse, explains the way in which humans express themselves in oral cultures. In applying this theory, the authors intend to demonstrate how Izingane zoMa uses metaphors and sarcasm to express their feelings about the subjugation of women in rural areas where polygynous relationships are common.

The songs analysed in this chapter reflect the use of metaphors, euphemisms and sarcasm and were taken from different Izingane zoMa albums.

Metaphors, euphemisms and sarcasm used in different songs

Mbaegbu (2015: 177) states: 'Music is the very fabric of African society and is deeply entrenched in culture, it is one of the cultural characteristics that make the African who he is, as a distinct cultural being in the world, for it binds Africans together and gives them common characteristics.'

Commenting on oral strategies, Baker (cited in Prouty 2006: 328) says the following: 'Oral tradition usually suggests something a little more language-oriented. Certainly, the oral tradition says you learn by imitation and all that too, but in particular inference, people pass the information from person to person.'

The collected data show that songs in which the woman or the man complains about issues in their relationship are very common. In such songs, women use different approaches when complaining about their husbands. First, they direct their anger at the co-wives—for example, in the song '*Sengathi Ungazala Intwala*', a woman accuses her co-wife by saying, *Njengoba indoda ngingasayazi isihlala kwakho!* (I do not know our husband because you keep him in your house). The accuser uses an exclamatory sentence to voice her anger, which is misplaced as it should be directed at the husband, who spends too much time with the co-wife. Although the first woman knows that her husband can decide which wife he will visit and when, it is easier to confront the co-wife. However, she should be commended as, though frustrated, she conforms to the rules by avoiding strong words. She uses the euphemism *ngingasayazi* to say that she no longer engages sexually with their husband because the other woman selfishly keeps him in her house for too long. Remarkably, she does all this with ease, which shows that she has enough substitute words in her vocabulary to express her anger. Another example is found in the song '*Umlomo*', in which the woman says, *Yathi mayihamba yahambela ngakwami indoda* (When [our] husband left for [work] he was at my house), and *Yothi mayibuya yobuyela* (When he comes back, he will come straight to my house). In this context, the woman is deliberately being spiteful to hurt her co-wife. She not only boasts about her ability to keep the man in her house but also tells her co-wife how she does it successfully. She says, *Umlomo wami uyashisa* (My mouth is hot), meaning 'My vagina is hotter than yours', which is an unbearable insult. In the song '*Iphela*', a woman complains indirectly to her co-wife. She starts by referring to a cockroach, *Uma liza ngasekudleni kwami iphela ngilenze njani?* (What must I do when the cockroach comes to my food?) The other women respond by

saying *Lishaye ngempama* (Slap it). Next, she asks, *Uma ngabe lingavumi?* (When it refuses?) and the other women reply, *Lipitshize ngonyawo* (Step on it). In the end, it becomes clear that the word *lphela* is used to refer to the co-wife. In another similar song, '*Impukane*', a woman asks, *Uma iza ngasehlweni lami impukane ngiyiyeke na?* (Should I leave a fly when it flies straight to my eye?) and the other women answer, *Ishaye* (Hit it). She then asks, *Ngiyishaye kanjani?* (How should I hit it?) and the reply is, *Ipicize obondeni* (Squash it against the wall). At first, it seems as if she is referring to a fly, but then it becomes clear that she is using the word *impukane* to refer to her co-wife. The last example is from the song '*Ungqesta*', in which a woman sarcastically tells her co-wife, *Angithi phela wena uwungqesta impukane yasebhoshi* (You are a streetwise toilet fly). *Ikwale kanjani indoda?* (How did the husband dump you?) The scenarios above reflect the derogatory remarks between co-wives in real life.

Secondly, they discuss their complaints with their friends and other women in the community. For instance, in the song '*Wagqoza Kabi*', a woman jokingly remarks to another woman, *Nina anazi ukuthi ngayigcina nini indoda inqunu!* (You do not know the last time I saw a naked man!) The exclamation mark indicates that the woman jokes about her experience to conceal her pain. It is said that by sharing one's problems, they become easier to bear. Similarly, when one jokes about an embarrassing situation, it indirectly indicates to others that the situation has been accepted. This woman should be commended for brushing aside her pain and conforming to tradition. The pain she feels does not stop her from using a euphemism: *ngayigcina nini indoda*, whereby she is saying, 'It has been a very long time since I last had sex.' Another example is the song '*Indlu*', in which a woman shares her painful experience with other women. She says, *Sengiye ngithi uma ngihlala ngimise amadolo, ngithi mhlawumbe indoda izokhumbula endlini yayo*, which translates to 'When I am with my husband, I spread my legs hoping that maybe he will miss his house'. In this context, the woman expresses her longing for her husband who seems to have lost interest in her. She tries to seduce her husband by recklessly and deliberately spreading her legs while she sits, but he does not respond. In this context, the word *indlu* (hut or house) refers to her vagina. She may have already tried other strategies to gain his attention without success. Now, she resorts to this approach, which is said to be very tempting to men. In the same song, the woman addresses her husband and says, *Kuyaye kuthi ngoba [umuntu] uyadakwa indoda ingabe izeza endlini* (So if you are a drunkard, the man does not come into the house), meaning 'So if you are a drunkard, the man does not have sex with you'. Although it is not for us to pass judgement on whether the way the man deals with the situation is correct, it is clear that the woman is always drunk. The man could either be unhappy with her conduct or be suffering from erectile dysfunction. Remarkably, the woman

indirectly admits that she is an alcoholic. She says, *Ngena endlini uhlukane nokudakwa* (Get into the house and forget about drunkenness). Including a locative *endlini* (in the vagina) clearly shows what the woman means.

Thirdly, women sometimes direct their complaints directly to their husbands. A good example is the song '*Sengikukhumbule*', in which a woman says to her husband, *Kudala wahamba layikhaya, buya phela uzongibona!* (It has been a long time since you left.) While complaining, the woman also begs her husband to visit her. However, the loneliness this woman experiences is not strong enough to allow her to violate the norm of using euphemisms instead of strong words. What she really means is *buya phela uzongibona* (please come back home so we can engage in sex). When her husband responds to her request, he says, *Thula ngizokuphathela izinto ezimnandi*, which literally means 'Do not cry (complain), I will bring you appetising things', but which in fact means: 'I will bring you my body'. Another example is found in the song '*Baba kaXolane*', in which the woman complains to her husband that he has taken too long to return home. She refers to other women in her neighbourhood who are happier in their marriages because they enjoy regular sex with unemployed husbands and are always with them. She asks, *Kuyoba nini kodwa siqhoshelwa abafazi bomahlalela?* (For how long will unemployed men's wives be bragging [about their marital happiness]?) However, this is a rhetorical question and the man knows she does not expect an answer. The only thing he expects is to come home and give her the attention she desires. While some women complain about estrangement from their husbands, others complain about husbands who have become passive in the bedroom. For example, in the song '*I-TV yasekamelweni*', a woman sarcastically teases her husband by saying, *Waguga madala usushelela ukubuka nje* (You impotent old man, you now date women just to look at them). Undoubtedly, the man understands that he is being deliberately compared to an old man even though he is still young and energetic. The woman further says: *Ayikho into ebuhlungu njengokuthi umuntu azokwenza i-TV yasekamelweni* (There is nothing as painful as when your partner watches you like a TV in the bedroom), meaning that nothing is more painful than when your partner neglects you by neither kissing nor having sex with you. In this context, the woman uses sarcasm to help stimulate her husband to perform one of his important duties, which he has been neglecting. The man is left with no choice and must comply with his wife's wishes to prevent her from further irritating him with sarcasm. The song '*Isidina sikaMahlalela*' presents the opposite—women who boast about always being in the company of their husbands. One woman says, *Sengikhathele ukugqozwa njalo ubusuku bonke ngilambile* (I am tired of always having sex while hungry). The woman is complaining that although she enjoys regular sex, her husband is unemployed and it is unlikely he will ever look for a job.

Another unemployment scenario is revealed in the song '*Ulalephi?*', in which a woman asks her husband where he slept. He replies, *Musa ukubheda, angishongo ukuthi uzoba yiphoyisa lami layikhaya* (Don't talk nonsense, I didn't bring you here [to my home] to police me), which illustrates how stereotypical some men in traditional societies can be. This man talks and does as he pleases without caring about the pain his wife experiences due to his behaviour. Sometimes, when couples quarrel, men resort to using physical power to punish their partners. For example, the song '*Umfaz' Ushaywa Ngani?*' tells of a disagreement between a husband and his wife, who asks, *Awazi yini ukuthi umfazi ushaywa ngani?* (Don't you know a suitable object to chastise a woman with?) meaning, 'Don't you know that a woman is punished with a penis rather than a knobkerrie?' Here, the woman avoids two things: the use of the strong word penis and any other neutral word or expression she might use in this situation. Instead, she uses a submerged metaphor to imply that the right way to discipline a woman is with a penis.

Men who suffer from chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes often experience erectile dysfunction. This creates problems in the bedroom. The affected men consult traditional healers and sometimes doctors working at men's clinics. While doctors rely on Western medicine, traditional healers use herbs such as *Ndwendweni* or *Mabelejongosi* (*Eulophia arenaria*) and *Mbadlanga* or *Bangalala* (*Corchorus asplenifolius*) to treat this condition (Ntombela 2019). Although many men may claim to be skilled at concealing the fact that they have such a problem, their partners quickly notice it. When a man is experiencing problems of this nature, a concerned partner does something to resolve the problem. For example, in the song '*Adam no-Eva*', a woman invites her husband to fulfil his role by showing him a picture of a nude woman and a man. Her husband responds by reminding his wife that she knows *Isibhamu sikaJesus asisasebenzi* (Jesus' gun is dysfunctional), meaning that he suffers from erectile dysfunction. In this case, both parties are aware of the problem, which is why the woman unsuccessfully tries to ignite her husband's passion by using erotic pictures to encourage him to perform his duties. She might have tried other means before and be attempting a new strategy to solve the problem. Another possibility is that she might have successfully used this method previously when the situation was less serious. There may be other remedies that have been tested but failed. In this song, the euphemism of Jesus' gun refers to the penis.

Now, we will discuss men's complaints about their wives. First, we look at the case of a man who complains to his wife, who is about to take a trip, about her co-wife. In the song '*Izingubo ziyabanda*', the man asks, *Ngeke impela ngize ngiqambe amanga. Ngizosale ngothani?* (Seriously, I will not lie to you. What will keep me warm?) by which he means to ask with whom he should have

sex during her absence. The woman sarcastically replies, *Engani ukhona umnakwethu uzosala naye* (But you have my co-wife who will stay with you), reminding him that her co-wife is there to be her substitute. The man responds abruptly, *Engani ngakutshela ngathi izingubo zakwakhe ziyabanda* (But I told you that her blankets are cold), which means that the co-wife does not stimulate him as she does. Two things are revealed here: This man is untrustworthy as he talks ill of his second wife when he tells his other wife about the former's inability to stimulate him. The idea is that some men cannot bear to be separated from their partners.

Second, men direct their complaints to their wives. For instance, in the song '*Sehlukene ngezingubo*', a man complains that he and his wife share a bed but have separate blankets. Although it is unclear whether the man complained about this to his wife, he is not happy and says, *Umkami angisamazi, sekuze kwaphela izinyanga zambili*, meaning that it has been a long time since he and his wife last had sex. One may wonder why the man uses euphemism when the couple is not in public. It is possible that he habitually conforms to cultural norms, whether publicly or privately. The man is suspicious of his wife's activities and concludes that she is promiscuous, even though he has no proof. Therefore, he asks, *Bhodwe lami kazi sewuphekela bani?* (My pot, who are you cooking for?), asking his wife with whom she is having sex. In this context, the pot refers to his wife's vagina. He further asks, *Bheseni wami kazi sewuphakela bani?* (Who would you feed my basin to?). No reason is given for why this is happening or how long it has been happening. The second example is seen in the song '*Ungangithinti singavumelananga*', in which a woman says *Ngicela ukuthi ungangithinti namhlanje ngikhathele kabi* (Please do not touch me today, I am too tired), but means 'Please let us not have sex today, I am too tired'. Although the reason she gives is credible, her husband has several questions, such as: Why is she stopping me today even though it is not the first time she has been to work? Did she work too hard? Did she start elsewhere? Is she promiscuous? If so, who is the man and how long have they been involved?

Discussion

This chapter extrapolates and engages with paradigms of indigenous epistemologies from the use of metaphors, euphemisms and sarcasm while focusing on how Izingane zoMa uses figurative language to highlight stereotypes in traditional Zulu society. The purpose is to draw inferences about how this indigenous musical genre can be used as a tool to teach the general public about neutral words used by isiZulu speakers in traditional societies to conceal sexual words considered to be crude. Two major findings were arrived at: In this context, isiZulu speakers traditionally use

metaphors and sarcasm more often than euphemisms. For example, in the song '*Umfaz' Ushaywa Ngani*', a woman uses a submerged metaphor to imply that the right object with which to discipline a woman is a penis. Although she could have used a neutral word instead of a strong one, she decided simply to imply what she meant. In the song '*Iphela*', the woman pretends to be speaking about a cockroach, but it later becomes clear that she is making a sarcastic reference to her co-wife, whom she thinks should be killed. Another example is found in the song '*Impukane*', in which a woman sarcastically refers to her co-wife as a housefly, which she thinks should be squashed against the wall.

It was further revealed that traditional Zulu society avoids using words that refer to sexual relationships and sex organs by neutralising them. For instance, a penis becomes *isibhamu sikaJesus* (Jesus' gun) because both contain and release material that is released at high speed, meaning that when a man ejaculates, sperm is released from the penis at a very high speed, just as bullets are emitted when a gun is fired. This comparison is relevant to this situation and therefore, the use of the metaphor is effective. However, its weakness is that it is unclear why the penis should be named 'Jesus' gun'.

Indlu

Kuyaye kuthi ngob' uyadakwa indod' ingab' isez' endlini So, if you drink, the man doesn't come into the house

Ngen' endlini uhlukane nokudakwa Come into the house and don't talk about drinking

Sengiye ngithi uma ngihlala ngimis' amadolo When I see him, I spread my legs

Ngith mhlawumb' indoda izokhumbula endlini yayo Thinking that maybe he will miss his house

The group plays on the word *indlu* (room), which refers to the vagina. In this song, the complaint is about the lack of intimacy and sex in the marriage because the husband is unhappy with his wife's alcoholism. *Ukukhumbul' endlini yayo* implies that the husband might show more interest if he sees her in a compromising sitting position.

iTV yasekamelweni

Waguga madala usushelel' ukubuka nje

You are an impotent old man, you date women just to look at them

Ayikh' int' ebuhlungu njengokuth' umuntu azokwenz' iTV yasekamelweni

Nothing is more painful than a person treating you like a TV in a bedroom

Here, attention is drawn to the fact that although men like to marry younger women, older men fail to perform in the bedroom. However, they persist with marriages of this kind. It must be noted that in traditional societies, divorce is only embraced as a last resort when serious marital problems occur. Some wives, therefore, resort to drinking to numb the frustration caused by sexual deprivation. Drinking alcohol is a privilege reserved for men, and women who drink are considered to be promiscuous and unfit as wives.

Baba kaXolane

Kuyoba nini kodwa?

How long will it be?

Siqhoshelw' abafazi noMahlalela

Unemployed men's wives are bragging

Amadod' ab' ayalima nenyama bayayithola

That their men are ploughing the field and they get the meat

Many husbands move from the rural areas to look for better jobs and better opportunities in cities like Durban and Johannesburg, leaving their wives at home to fend for themselves. Due to the high unemployment rate in South Africa, well-paying jobs are not easy to find close to home. Wives who are left behind to look after the household, rear the children and plough the fields feel that they have been given a raw deal. In the above lyrics, the complaint is triggered by the fact that the husband is not working. The word '*inyama*' (meat) refers to the penis. The wife is worried about her husband being away, that she is sexually deprived, and that she is receiving no money from him.

Izingubo ziyabanda

Ngeke impela ngize ngiqamb' amanga

Seriously, I will not lie to you

Ngizosale ngothani?

What will keep me warm?

Engani ukhon' umnakwethu uzosala naye?

But you have my co-wife, won't you stay with her?

Engani ngakutshela ngathi izingubo zakwakhe ziyabanda

But I told you that her blankets are cold

Ngob'uth' awaz' uzobuya nini

Because I do not know when you are coming back

128

This song shows that polygynists sometimes have favourites (*intandokazi*) and spend more time with their preferred wives. The less-favoured wives rarely get to spend time with their husbands, who are always ready with an excuse to avoid going to their houses. The metaphor *izingubo zakwakhe ziyabanda* indicates that the husband gets no sexual satisfaction in the other wife's bed.

Umlomo

Yath' mayihamba yahambela ngakwam' indoda

When my husband left, he was at my house

Yoth' mayibuya yobuyela ngakwami

When he comes back, he will come back to my house

Umlomo wam uyashisa

My mouth is hot

Sharing a husband creates unhealthy competition between co-wives. The word *umlomo* (mouth) is used to refer to the vagina. She believes the husband stays with her because she is good in bed. She feels like bragging to her co-wives that their husband is spending all his time with her.

Ungqesta

Angithi phela wena uwungqesta impukane yasebhoshi You are a streetwise toilet fly

Ihlala noma lumanz' udaka ayibhajwa It stays there even if there is mud, it doesn't get stuck

Ikwale kanjani indoda How did the husband dump you?

The competition for the husband's attention causes co-wives to be sarcastic about each other's pain and suffering. Calling the other wife *impukane yasebhoshi* (a toilet fly) means that she is a know-it-all and shows that the co-wives are happy that she is also ill-treated.

What the *maskandi* singers convey to the public through their songs is authentic, which shows that they are the true, watchful eyes of traditional Zulu society. They effectively use metaphors, euphemisms and sarcasm, which shows that they understand why strong words are avoided in the Zulu context. Relevant figures of speech are used to convey information to the listeners through their songs, which is an advantage when performing for people from a particular culture—in this case, Zulu culture. Using neutral words eases the tension when children, parents, in-laws and random members of the public listen to the music. Moreover, the group adds some words to the public's vocabulary, which guarantees that the accepted vocabulary for referring to sexual relationships and sex organs reaches many people, young and old. This preserves the richness of Zulu culture for future generations as the *maskandi* music genre is played mostly by Nguni radio stations, which have many listeners. For example, uKhozi FM has more than 7 million listeners, Umhlobo Wenene FM has more than 5 million, Ikwekwezi FM has 1.7 million and Ligwalagwala FM has 1.5 million. This music is also available on YouTube and on CDs and DVDs for interested listeners from other cultures.

129

Findings

The *maskandi* group discussed in this chapter uses metaphors and sarcasm to create awareness of gender issues and power dynamics in rural areas. Sex is a taboo topic not easily discussed, especially by women who have been socialised into accepting the dictates of patriarchy without question. The repeated use of the word *ibhodwe* (port) and *ubheseni* (bowl) suggests that it is only men who

benefit from sexual encounters because these utensils are used as containers for food but never get to 'eat the food'. This analogy is supported by the lyrics in which a wife complains that her conjugal rights are infringed upon when the husband spends more time with another wife and neglects the first wife's sexual needs.

The words *umlomo* (mouth) and *indlu* (house) are used interchangeably by the female vocalists to refer to the vagina and indicate that sexual encounters are more about building homes, the lack of which is contrary to the isiZulu saying *indlu engahlali muntu idliwa wumuhlwa* (an uninhabited house gets eaten by termites), which, in this context, may be understood as a warning to husbands about the dangers of spousal neglect as it may lead to infidelity.

These female vocalists play an important role in making women's voices heard. Their complaints about sexual deprivation, neglect and rejection by their husbands are brought to the fore. The ill-treatment of one wife due to a preference for another is always a problem in polygynous families.

Conclusion

This chapter revealed that traditional Zulu society uses metaphors and sarcasm more often than euphemisms. It further revealed that traditional Zulu society neutralises strong words for male and female sex organs as follows: (i) a penis is called *isibhamu sikaJesus* (Jesus' gun); (ii) a vagina is called *ibhodwe* (pot), *ubheseni* (basin), *indlu* (house) and *umlomo* (mouth). This study followed a different route than that of Ntombela (2016), who found that *maskandi* music can be used for literacy instruction for early readers at schools. It also showed that *maskandi* music can be used as a tool to teach the general public, young and old, about accepted words when referring to sexual relationships and sex organs, which are sensitive matters in traditionalist Zulu society. There is, however, a need for further studies on how this indigenous music genre enhances the richness of Zulu culture.

References

- Bhabha, H. 1994. *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Davies, N. 1992. A Study of the Guitar Styles in Zulu *Maskanda* Music. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Davies, N. 1994. The guitar in Zulu *maskanda* tradition. *The World of Music*, 36(2): 118–37.
- Francis, D. 2008. Music makes our lives magical and meaningful, general benefits of music education: advocacy for music education. *Journal of Music*, 30(1): 87–99.

- Jousse, M. 1997. *The anthropology of geste and rhythm*. Edited and translated by E. Siernart and J. Connolly. Durban: Centre for Oral Studies.
- Magwaza, T. 1993. Orality and its Cultural Expression in Some Zulu Traditional Ceremonies. Unpublished master's thesis. Durban: University of Natal.
- Magwaza, T. 1999. Functions and Meaning of Zulu Female Dress: A Descriptive Study of Visual Communication. Unpublished BAHons dissertation. Durban: University of Natal.
- Mbaegbu, C.C. 2015. The effective power of music in Africa. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 5: 176–183.
- Njooora, T.K. 2005. Music composition and its awesome responsibilities. Some hard issues that frame “creativity” and “output”. *East African Journal of Music Education*, 1: 66–83.
- Ntombela, S.A. 2011. Amasu Asetshenziswa Ngomaskandi Emculweni Wabo. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Ntombela, S.A. 2016. *Maskandi*: A critical discourse analysis of indigenous isiZulu songs. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 34(2): 109–20.
- Ntombela, S.A. 2019. Nicknaming among the Zulu: The case of naming medicinal plants. *Nomina Africana*, 33(1): 47–59.
- Olen, J. and Barry, V. 1992. *Applying ethics. A text with readings*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Olsen, K. 2000. Politics, Production and Process: Discourses on Tradition in Contemporary *Maskanda*. Unpublished master's dissertation. Durban: University of Natal.
- Olsen, K. 2001. “*Mina ngizokushaya ngengoma*/I will challenge you with a song”: Constructions of masculinity in *maskanda*. *Agenda*, 49: 51–60.
- Olsen, K. 2009. Musical Characterisation of Transformation: An Exploration of Social and Political Trajectories in Contemporary *Maskanda*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Olsen, K. 2014. *Musical and social change in South Africa: Maskanda past and present*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Pooley, T.M. 2008. *Umaskandi izibongo*: Semantic, prosodic and musical dimensions of voice in Zulu popular praises. *Journal of International Library of African Music*, 36(2): 1–28.
- Prouty, K.E. 2006. Orality, literacy and mediating musical experience: Rethinking oral tradition in the learning of jazz improvisation. *Popular Music and Society*, 29(3): 317–334.
- Rycroft, D. 1980. Tone-patterns in Zimbabwean Ndebele. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 46(1): 77–135.

Titus, B. 2013. "Walking like a crab": Analysing *maskanda* music in post-apartheid South Africa. *Ethnomusicology*, 57(2): 286–310.

Zondi, N.B. 2008. When marriage as an institution ceases to be a partnership: Contested issues of rape and other forms of sexual abuse as condoned by culture. *Agenda*, 74: 20–28.

Zungu, T. 2014. They sing without ceasing. *The Witness*, 26 October 2014.
